TRUTH AND NONVIOLENCE: ABDURRAHMAN WAHID ON KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND DEMOCRACY

Saefur Rochmat

Faculty of Social Sciences, Yogyakarta State University

Email: rochmat@yahoo.com

Post-Soeharto authoritarian regime has given a more room for political power contestation amongst different socio-political groups with their different knowledge systems. It is not easy for them to reach a stable agreement as some of them tend to develop an ideological approach to the knowledge. They believe that knowledge is identical to the truth, implying political power. They tend to develop normative approach based on the texts and ignore the existence of the truth of other groups. In this regard, I like to criticize the radical Muslims who are not consistent with the nature of knowledge, requiring an objective understanding of the reality, namely the pure reason of the truth. Opposing to the people's rationality, they tend to develop negative stereotypes of other groups to win the support of the Muslim majority. They also try to mobilize the Muslim masses which are quite often accompanied by violence. Unfortunately, the government often fail to establish public order because of its short-term political expediency. Accordingly, at this *Reformasi* era the constructive dialogues amongst different socio-political groups have not developed fruitfully in public life. In line with this, these radical Muslims blame democratic system as well as the national ideology of Pancasila and they offer Syari'ah (legal formal Islamic law) as the solution for Indonesia. Following Fiqh paradigm, Abdurrahman Wahid accepts the national ideology of Pancasila with its democratic political system. Furthermore, he develops democracy into his core of religious political thought that the arrangement of society constitutes two components that are how to arrange living and how to manage power.

Keywords: knowledge, power, politic, democracy, socio-cultural approach, Abdurrahman Wahid

INTRODUCTION

Reformasi era, following the fall of Soeharto, does not directly result in better life for the majority of Indonesian people as economy does not develop well because of the lack of social capital, namely

political stability. Indonesian has not been able to develop a mature political stability as they tend to develop an ideological approach to the knowledge so that they do not recognise the existence of different systems of knowledge. Accordingly, they have difficulties to reach an agreement on certain issue. On other side, this political instability is not handled effectively by the governmental institutions because some of its officers involved in political rivalries, besides their will of status quo. Actually, the Republic of Indonesia is established based on the concept of modern nation state which separates the political leadership from the religious leadership, although it recognises the ethical role of religions in governing the state.

Within this modern concept of nation state, religious communities of all religions should take in a role of civil society which provides checks and balances to the state. In line with this, they should cooperate with each other to assure that the state respects universal values as well as provide common goods to people. Unfortunately, some religious groups, especially followers of the majority religion of Islam, play political manoeuvres for their own political gains. Moreover, the radical Muslim groups do not try to find the real solution for the problem of underdevelopment and they blamed of the system of democracy as the cause of the problem of underdevelopment. In this regard, they offer Syari'ah as the solution. Some of them try to implement Syari'ah within the Pancasila state and others aspire to establish an Islamic state.

The followers of Islamic ideological paradigm believe that Syari'ah is a truth from God so that they try to implement it in the political system either at national or regional levels. They think that Syari'ah is monolithic as the source of Islam is only one thing, namely Al-Qur'an and Hadiths. They do not take into consideration socio-political system as the context for the implementation of the Syari'ah. In fact, the clerics develop Fiqh, literally understanding, to implement Syari'ah. There are some Islamic schools of jurisprudence which develop a quite different Fiqh in regard to their specific socio-historical contexts. Indeed, the followers of Islamic ideological paradigm believe that knowledge as the manifestation of truth is similar to power and accordingly, they try to use any means to force their understanding of Syari'ah. By so doing, they ignore the very basis notion of truth which requires logical arguments to support their claim of truth. Of course, this is contrary to principle of Islamic teachings which does not justify any method to achieve the goal. Islam pursues goal by means of nonviolence actions, namely *akhlakul kharimah*.

Indonesia becomes more democratic at *Reformasi* era than at Soeharto era, but the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia is still far

from stable as long as different socio-political groups are not able to reach an agreement on common good such as democracy, justice and freedom. For that purpose, they should not develop their systems of knowledge ideologically and they are open to any other systems of knowledge in order to develop mutual dialogues amongst different systems of knowledge as well as to enrich their respective systems of knowledge. At least, there are three mainstream paradigms that are secular paradigm, Islamic ideological paradigm, and the Fiqh paradigm. The first two paradigm tend to develop an ideological approach which try to establish an idealistic state and they try to direct the Pancasila state based on their systems of knowledge. The last paradigm is quite happy with the Pancasila state which tries to develop a mutual relationship between politic, namely power, and religion, namely truth. From this point of view, state is an important tool for public order which constitute pre-requirement for religious order. In line with this Abdurrahman Wahid supported the Pancasila state as long as it does not overly break Islamic universal values and the state supports the development of religious groups to take in a role of civil society which would provide checks and balances to the state.

Knowledge And Truth

Islam obliges Muslim to acquire knowledge and its important manifests in the first verses of Al-Qur'an, namely al-'Alaq 96: 1-5, received by Muhammad the Prophet from God through Gabriel Angle. These verses instruct Muslim to read and to search for knowledge. There are some verses and hadiths which signify directly and indirectly the importance of knowledge in Islam. Accordingly, the clerics and scholars (*'alim*) deserve a noble status and have higher status than others in this world and in the hereafter. This is stated in the Al-Qur'an, verse *al-Mujaadilah* 58: 11 "Allâh will exalt in degree those of you who believe and those who have been granted knowledge". Hadith also says the learned as the heirs of the Prophets.[1] In line with this some clerics of the radical groups claim the authority of truth and demand the Muslims to

---

[1] The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, God will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge. The inhabitants of the heavens and the Earth and (even) the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave (no monetary inheritance), they leave only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion. - Sunan of Abu-Dawood, Hadith 1631

follow their *fatwa*[2] as a part of the implementation of Islamic law (*Syari'ah*). Furthermore, they demand the state to implement *Syari'ah* as the manifestation of the truth from God. In the long run, they aspire to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia. For that purposes, they tend to refer to Al-Qur'an and Hadiths scripturally and to accuse of *kafir* (unbelievers), secularists, liberalists or anti-Islam those who challenge their interpretations of Al-Qur'an and Hadits. Indeed, Muslims do not have the same understanding of the meaning of the clerics ('*alim*) as there is no a class of the cleric with specific education requirement. However, this does not mean that there is no a way for Muslims to reach an agreement on a certain issue.

The radical clerics tend to think knowledge linear to the truth and think for granted of Syari'ah. They also do not think of the limit of the Republic of Indonesia to implement the legal formal Syari'ah. Some of them are even illusionists as they aspire to the establishment of a caliphate which will unify all Muslim around the world. This idea come out of their impropriate thought of the monolithic Syari'ah. This is likely that they do not recognise the existence of other state as well as are blind of the reality of this world that not all Muslims live in Islamic countries. The denial of the existence of other religions is contrary to the Al-Qur'an such as verse Al-Kafirun 6 "*lakum diinukum waliyadin*" (your religion is for you and my religion is for me) which recognise religions of other of Islam. There are some Al-Qur'anic verses and hadiths related to this issue. Indeed, this monolithic understanding of Syari'ah is a modern phenomenon of 19th century when the Muslims faced with the challenge of the modern era. This was to unify Muslims around the world in the pursuit of challenging the domination of the West which had colonised some Muslim countries. In other words, this is an ideological understanding of Islam, not true understanding of Islam. Indeed, ideological approach is a modern phenomenon which develops rational thinking to life. Paradoxically, these radical Muslims do not develop a true freedom of thinking as they interpret Al-Qur'an literally. It is not surprising that they develop a different Islamic knowledge from the disciples of the Fiqh paradigm and Sufism as well as the philosophers. The existence of different systems of knowledge is consistent with God's providence of the tools for acquiring knowledge, namely hearing, sight and wisdom. God says:

---

[2] A fatwā (Arabic: فتوى; plural *fatāwā* Arabic: فتاوى) in the Islamic faith is the term for the legal opinion or learned interpretation that the Sheikhul Islam, a qualified jurist or mufti, can give on issues pertaining to the Islamic law. see Hallaq, Wael B. "Fatwa". *Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*. Encyclopedia.com. Retrieved 22 April 2013.

And Allâh has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allâh) [al-Nahl 16:78]

Syari'ah, literally pathway to be followed, is not monolithic as Muslims develop some kinds of *Fiqh*, literally understanding, to implement Islam. The Fiqh is a contextual understanding of Syari'ah and accordingly, Muslims of different states or regions at different times develop different Fiqh. In this regard, Muslims recognise some schools of Islamic jurisprudence. I argue that Muslim should develop Fiqh paradigm to the knowledge, implying that knowledge is not identical to the truth, but it, indeed, pretends to the truth. In line with this, Islam differentiates between beneficial and non-beneficial truth such as a hadith saying:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "A servant of God will remain standing on the Day of Judgment until he is questioned about his (time on earth) and how he used it; about his knowledge and how he utilized it; about his wealth and from where he acquired it and in what (activities) he spent it; and about his body and how he used it." - Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 148

The Prophet also said: "Knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure out of which nothing is spent in the cause of God." - Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 108

From the above statement we understand that knowledge does not refer directly to the truth as God only give reward to those who provide beneficial knowledge. The one who points the way to something good is like the one who does it. When the knowledgeable person dies, his reward with God does not cease when he dies, rather it continues to increase so long as people benefit from his knowledge. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When a man dies, all his deeds come to an end except for three – an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge or a righteous son who will pray for him." (Narrated by Muslim, 1631)

As I mention above, knowledge has commitment with truth, but it is not similar to truth, and accordingly, the true knowledge will direct people to fear of God by knowing His signs and creation. Accordingly, God calls upon the scholars to bear witness to His Oneness, as He says:

Allâh bears witness that *Lâ ilâha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He always) maintains His creation in justice. *Laa ilaaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be

worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise [Al 'Imraan 3:18][3]

In line with this, whoever conceals the knowledge and deprives the *ummah* of it, God will place on him a bridle of fire on the Day of Resurrection, and he will deserve to be cursed, except for the one who repents.[4]

Knowledge And Power

It is misleading to think that truth, considered by some as the manifestation of knowledge, deserve for power as knowledge needs support from people in order it to be political power. Considering there exist some different systems of knowledge, it is not easy for a given system of knowledge to convince other systems of knowledge on a certain issue. In this regard I like to question the validity of legal formal Syari'ah which has been forced by the some Muslims to be implemented in Indonesia. They do not understand that as this kind of Syari'ah is not supported by the majority of Indonesian Muslims. It means that "truth" of legal formal Syari'ah is not contextual to socio-political system of the Republic of Indonesia. In fact, the majority of Muslims supports the substantive Syari'ah in the form of universal values such as democracy, justice, and freedom. From the above discussion, we understand there are two kinds of Syari'ah that are legal formal Syari'ah and the substantive one. If you have to choose between two truths, one that involves an excessive degree of risk, and another that involves a small degree, then choose the latter, for this is a prudent decision which will ensure the well-being of the *umat*. If you become a leader, don't make a habit of creating difficulties for people. As the prophet Muhammad said, if you are an Imam preaching to a large congregation, especially if there are old and infirm people present, do not read a long chapter of the Qur'an. This is called prudence.[5]

---

[3] Another verse "It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allâh" [Faatir 35:28]. Still another verse "Say: 'Are those who know equal to those who know not?' It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allâh's Signs and Verses)"

[al-Zumar 39:9]

[4] See Allaah says: "Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allâh and cursed by the cursers. Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare (the truth which they concealed). These, I will accept their repentance. And I am the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful" [al-Baqarah 2:159-160]

[5] (Chalid, 2003, pp. 84-85)

Regarding there are many systems of knowledge, Wahid questioned the role of an ideological approach to the life, as we see in his article entitled *Dimensi Kehalusan Budi dan Rasa* [The Dimension of the True Heart and the True Feeling].[6] This article focuses on the important role of the heart which would create meaningful human beings, namely in the form of living in harmony. This article was to criticise those who valued highly the role of ideologies and who, accordingly, considered life based on the formal truth of ideologies, and thus, in Wahid's view, full of conflicts. In the view of ideology, life would be full of regulations and just based on mathematical calculation, which would cause a deficit in the meaning of life. This kind of thought tends to value highly the role of reason for solving the problems of human beings. In fact, some modern sciences and technologies are not able to handle all the problems of human beings and very often, they have a negative impact on society. Accordingly, people should take into their consideration the principle of harmony without which life would be unbalanced as it ignores the true heart.[7] For Wahid, life is not only directed by the certainty of the formal ideological truth: in fact, there are some aspects of human life which should be taken into consideration such as the feeling of uncertainty and of emptiness which would sharpen human beings' sense of feeling. This would direct people to the consciousness of God, the only certain and absolute entity.[8] This writing implies that all ideologies should develop the principle of mutual give and take for their relevancy in the contemporary era to solve the problems of human beings.

Followers of different ideologies fight each other because they do not develop the concept of truth in the context of relationship. Wahid argued that there is not absolute truth in this worldly life so that people are challenged to find the truth in the form of common good, regarding the truth in the context of relationship. Indeed, Wahid believed in the role of divinity as the ultimate source of absolute truth, but it is only in *Das Sein* not in *Das Sollen*.[9] Postmodern scholars have introduced this relational theory of truth to relate truth to power, but they negate the absolute truth. Following Nietzsche's existentialism, they believe that truth is nothing but power moves.[10] Regarding some systems of knowledge, it is not easy to find the truth because it is related to the complexity of life which changes with the passing of time as well as within different spaces. Indeed, the truth is hidden in the particular

---

[6](Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997, pp. 79-82)
[7] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997, pp. 79-82)
[8] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1997, pp. 79-82)
[9] (Dupuy, 2005, p. 12)
[10] (Rediehs, 2015, p. 4)

cultural phenomena, regarding its normative aspect as it intermingles with its cultural bond. In other words, the existence of truth is not independent within the individual's rationality, but it is correlated with social and religious orders. This implies that individual's conception of truth should be negotiated with the society in its manifestation in the society.[11]

Relating to the worldly life, the Qur'an clearly forbids us to claim the truth unilaterally and requires us to accept mutual recognition amongst different groups: your religion is for you, meanwhile our religion is for us (the Qur'an 109:6).[12] All of the parties may implement what they consider to be true and good without enforcing their belief on others and at the same time they know what they are believing is absolutely true. Why do people justifiably formulate this? It is because absoluteness requires looking inward and does not demand conformity from external others who do not believe in it. It is in line with Mahmud Syaltut who believes in two aspects of religious teachings that are *nazhary* (theoretical) and *'amaly* (practical). The former is related to the soul which requires understanding and believing, while the second, is related to the understanding of the actual world of the society so that it is socially grounded, for example, as happens through the formulation of Islamic law (Shari'a).[13] For example, at the time of Muhammad the Prophet, when non-Muslims were firmly opposed to Islamic teachings, for the goodness of all members of the society, God is said to have ordered the Prophet to state that: Really, you or us, who are on the true path or on the mistaken direction, you are not responsible for our mistakes and also we are not responsible for your mistakes. Because it is the God who will collect all of us and then He will judge wisely what we have disputed. Really He is the true judge and He is the most learned.[14]

In social life, there is no need to settle the problems by finding the final truth; besides it very often does not need this at all. In this context, the most important thing is, for all members within social life, to reach agreements on the problems which will serve for the next good thing.[15] For example, in the case of family conflict between husband and wife, they do not need to resolve the problem by settling who is right. It is important for them to reach agreements which will develop cooperation for the better family goals. In other words, in social life, it is not always a final truth which determines the success of cooperation. It

---

[11] Abdurrahman Wahid, (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, pp. 147-148)
[12] (Al-Hillali & Muhsin Khan, 2007, p. 853)
[13] (Mufid, 2010, pp. 73-74)
[14] (Mufid, 2010, pp. 74-75)
[15] This principle can be found in (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007, p. 204.)

should be understood that members of society have different levels of their understanding of the truth. It is also justifiable to give meaning to truth in the context of the relationship[16] so that man/woman should inform and implement the truth in social life eventually with patience by considering people's limitations and their toleration. However, for a man/woman, the truth is absolute in regard to his/her relationship with God as well as to serve him/her with all his/her heart and soul in their activities in relation to the society.

The *fiqh* paradigm justifies the development of truth within the context of the relationship as this builds the Sunni tradition which recognises the two different aspects of science, namely material sciences and spiritual ones. Regarding the truth within the context, Wahid tried to uncover the cultural bond by means of modern sciences and philosophy, but, it should be understood within, Islamic cosmology.[17] In line with this, Wahid agreed with D. B. MacDonald that "Syari'ah (Islamic Law) is the science of all things, human and divine".[18] He understood that Shari'a consists of both the secular and the sacred aspects of life. Regarding the contextual nature of Syari'ah, it requires the continuing efforts of reinterpretation. For that purpose, he acknowledged both the empirical method and the consciousness method as a way to acquire science. With this synergy with all of the sciences he was focused upon integrating the sciences into the spirit of God. This *fiqh*-plus paradigm is similar to Bassam Tibi's idea of Islamic humanism which would function as 'cross-cultural international morality', in which he appreciates Ibn Rushd's idea of double truth as follows:

> Such morality would bring to the fore the work of the first and greatest Islamic political philosopher, al-Farabi....It would also remind scholars of the value that Europeans conferred on the work of the humanist philosophers...in particular of Ibn Rushd's teachings about the *Haqiqa al-muzdawaja* (double truth), which differentiated between philosophical or rational knowledge and religious beliefs or divine revelation and paved the way for modern European rationalism.[19]

Wahid believed that modern sciences are crucial to support the existence of people in this worldly life, but he, as a Muslim, believed that

---

[16] Compare this stand point with that of (Saunders, 2004, p. 164)

[17] Abdurrahman (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999b, p. 90) Gus Dur is willingly to learn and adopt other cultures for the purpose of developing his personal quality as he believes in the eclectic nature of Islam.

[18] Abdurrahman Wahid, (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999c, p. 35)

[19] Basam (Tibi, 2009, p. 69)

Islamic cosmology, namely the *fiqh* paradigm, directs him in his thought about the secular sciences. Moreover, his rationality does not always find the logical arguments from modern sciences, but finds its foundation in the integration of religious sciences.[20] Consequently, Wahid tried to create dialogue within his thought between religious sciences and the secular ones for the purposes of implementing the truth with the realistic actions in the worldly life. Wahid's preoccupation with the Islamic cosmology did not mean that religious sciences are more important than secular sciences because both are interrelated. In line with this, what he was doing in life was finding a balance between the normative aspect of the religion and the freedom of thinking in matters of secular affairs. Accordingly, he understood life as the ability to relate the spiritual vision of the God with actions for human beings in worldly life. For that purpose, he tried to adapt the development of modern sciences and philosophy into the *fiqh* paradigm.

Democracy As A Common Concern Of Different Systems Of Knowledge

Wahid was concerned with Syariah as the core of Islam, but he was different from the followers of Islamic ideological paradigm who advocate the legal formal Syari'ah. In the context of the Republic of Indonesia, Wahid advocated the substantive Syariah in the form of Islamic universal values such as democracy, justice, and freedom. He acknowledged flexibility of Syariah so that it may be reformulated flexibly to adjust to the prevalent social system, including its political system. Accordingly, this substantive is not always formulated by the clerics, it may be formulated by Parliament in the form of Islamic universal values. In line with this, it is possible for some different systems of knowledge to reach an agreement on universal values as well as some good deed. It is negotiation which becomes an overarching principle of societal life, which Wahid defended in his thought on public theology (*rukun sosial*), in which its mission was to provide common good such as social welfare and justice.[21] Wahid may adopt this kind of relational theory of truth from Mohandas Gandhi as he followed Gandhi's teachings of non-violence. Furthermore, he named one of his NGOs with GANDI, meaning "*Gerakan Anti Diskriminasi*" (Non-Discrimination Movement). Laura Rediehs argues that the relational theory of truth inherent in nonviolence offers a better account of truth. She recognises that the correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic theories of truth have their place and relevance, but even taken together

---

[20] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999a, p. 33)
[21] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, pp. 148-149)

are incomplete in their failure to address the relationship between truth and power. She is also critical of postmodern relational theory of truth which its conception of that relationship is incorrect because of its preoccupation with dominant role of power over the truth. Postmodern scholars follow Nietzsche who criticises the notion of absolute truth and his emphasis on the "will to power" and accordingly, they believe that "truth is nothing but power moves". In this regard she agrees with Mohandas Gandhi and the early Quakers who believe in the truth force which wields its own power. This truth is not just something statically there to be observed, but it is dynamic and active. Accordingly, they engaged their lives in a holistic experiential truth.[22]

Consistent with the Fiqh paradigm, Wahid argued that Islamic values and Islamic teachings, as the normative aspects of life, can be meaningfully translated into any social system. Accordingly, he encouraged Muslims to be involved in every kind of societal structure and at the same time to try to advocate Islamic values and perform Islamic teachings.[23] They should realise the existing gap between societal life and the Islamic normative life and they are obliged to perform Islamic teachings within their capabilities. What they should hold in their mind is that the societal systems or structures exist to implement the truth as a manifestation of *tawhid*, the principle of the Oneness of the God. Wahid shared the same concept with de Tocqueville that the role of divinity is the ultimate source of the truth, but it is only in *Das Sein* not in *Das Sollen*.[24] This implies that democracy rests on the truth, but both argue that there is no absolute truth in this worldly life because the ultimate truth intermingles with the worldly socio-cultural and political structures of the society. Accordingly it makes sense that democracy gives the individual an authority to search continuously for the truth. In other words, democracy is a process of thought, and it resembles a syllogism always in search of a conclusion. Furthermore, the normative criteria of the truth should be implemented in real situations gradually[25] because the truth is not just a matter of rational deliberation but also implies an action to implement it in worldly life. Consequently man should avoid any violent means or, even in the name of the majority forcing implementation of the truth. Democrats should apply, by means of consultation with all political groups, to reach approved collective programs, besides providing compensation to certain groups and preparing the necessary conditions for the implementation of collective

---

[22] (Rediehs, 2015, pp. 1-4)
[23] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2007, pp. 196-197)
[24] (Dupuy, 2005, p. 12)
[25] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999c, p. 102)

programs. Accepting the existence of other groups is a fundamental condition for the democratic process and is a condition for mutual dialogue. The agenda of dialogue is to search for an applicable truth and commitment from all parties, and it does not pretend to reach the final truth but to search collective programs for enhancement of the quality and standard of life.[26]

It is likely that Wahid was in agreement with Wahyudi Kumorotomo that:

> democracy is not only a theory of government or state but also a theory about human beings and their societal arrangements. It is about a world view in which moral principles are inherent ...and accordingly democracy is not able to be tied to a given societal institution.[27]

In this regards, Wahid's theology of democracy comes down to two components for the arrangement of society:[28]

1. How to arrange living, namely the nature of Islamic societal life, and,
2. How to manage power.

In regard to the first component of the theology of Islamic democracy, namely the nature of Islamic societal life, there are three principles of universal values of Islam: equality (*musawah*), justice (*'adalah*), and democracy (*syura*).[29] In other words, Wahid's thought on democracy constitutes the principles of the universal Islamic values, similar to that of the Sunni doctrines.[30] This implies that all human activities should be guided by the three earlier principles which should be adapted to the unique demands of a specific time and space. We therefore see that Wahid considered democracy as crucial to religion as it made it possible for religion to develop any apparatus conducive to the growth of religious teachings. Moreover, it enabled religion to appreciate the development of higher thought on human issues such as justice, the equality principle, and human solidarity so that it has relevance to contemporary issues and is capable of guiding both individual and society towards solving their problems. Accordingly, Wahid believed that all aspects of human activity should be directed to fulfilling the protection of five basic human needs, such as preserved by the Sunni

---

[26] (Rochmat, p. 67)

[27] (Kumorotomo, 2005, pp. 66-71) He is a scholar at Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

[28] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, pp. 146-147)

[29] (Mujiburrahman, 1999, p. 348)

[30] Nur (Kholisoh, 2012, p. 9)

tradition, that are: protection of self, property, religion, family and profession.[31] These five basic human needs were similar to the modern concept of human rights and Wahid developed them to include concepts of civil rights and that of economic rights.[32] He also made it clear that it was unlikely for Muslims to accept an autocratic leader because it would mean that they would subsume God to the will of the autocrat.

Regarding these three principles of societal life, Wahid argued that democracy (*syura*) was the most compelling principle compared with the other two characteristics of Islamic societal life that are equality (*musawah*) and justice *('adalah)*. For him, democracy was the most fundamental value for Muslims to take as their religious pillar and he chose it as an overarching concept in Islamic societal life, beyond its relation to the 'concept of Oneness of God'. He believed that the concept of democracy has higher status than the concept of justice in the pillars of religion, unlike justice, which has potentially exclusive implications, it is a method of regulating life properly. Indeed, democracy is not a kind of closed theology (ideology); as it should be practised by considering other Islamic values such as justice and equality, besides its attachment to the *fiqh* paradigm.[33]

In regard to the second component of theology of Islamic democracy, namely how to manage power, it should be carried out consistent with the nature of Islamic societal life so that it requires us to apply the principle of checks and balances by accepting the existence of all political groups.[34] Hoshino Toshiya calls this kind of democracy 'endogenous democracy' due to its approach to power sharing.[35] Based on the concept of power sharing, Wahid developed a unique concept of checks and balances by developing a socio-cultural approach which would be implemented gradually by means of an evolutionary process.

---

[31] In this regard Wahid followed Islamic tradition such as written by Al-Ghazali, see Anang Haris (Himawan, 2000, p. 91)

[32] See Abdurrahman Wahid, 1979, 'Mencari Perspektif Baru dalam Penegakan Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia' [Searching for New Perspective to Establish Human Rights], *Prisma*, Jakarta: LP3ES, December 1979.

[33] Abdurrahman (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999c, pp. 170-185) This is elaborated by Wahid in his article '*Jangan Paksakan Paradigma Luar terhadap Agama*'[Do not Apply the Foreign Paradigms to Islam]. He criticised the limitation of the Shiite pillar of justice being claimed as ideology, due to its potentially exclusive character, such as had been done by Khomeini, who transformed the reformist method of changes into a revolutionary one and consequently it, to some extent, produced a new tyranny which discarded the nature of justice itself. Wahid evaluated the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 as a likely classical example of the stolen revolution which justifies the only major forces in the revolution.

[34] (Abdurrahman Wahid, p. 2)

[35] (Toshiya, p. 65)

Thus he did not develop its own structure with its own ideology, but tried to find some support in the existing structure to instigate simultaneous liberation.[36] Wahid developed this principle of checks and balances based on the Qur'an (2: 177), as mentioned above, which suggested that Muslims foster mutual negotiation. It is through negotiation that the conflicting interests should be resolved. It is also applicable for dealing with conflicting concepts of the rights of the individual and of the state as the source of authority.[37]

References

Al-Hillali, M. T.-u.-D., & Muhsin Khan, M. (2007) *The Noble Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Comentary*. Madina: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of Holy Qur'an.

Chalid, I. (2003) Protecting the umat. In: D. Bourchier & V. R. Hadiz (Eds.). *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reade*. New York and London: Routledge Curzon, pp. 84-85.

Dupuy, J. P. (2005) Tocqueville on Democratic Despotism. In: J. P. Dupuy (Ed.). *Lecture Material of Political Anthropology*. Kyoto: Ritsumeikan University.

Himawan, A. H. (2000) Refleksi Pemikiran Hukum Islam: Upaya Menangkap Makna dan Simbol Keagamaan [Reflection on Islamic Law] *Epistemologi Syara': Mencari Format Baru Fiqh Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

Kholisoh, N. (2012) *Demokrasi Aja Kok Repot: Retorika Politik Gus Dur dalam Proses Demokrasi di Indonesia [Democracy is not to be Confused]*. Yogyakarta: Pohon Cahaya.

Kumorotomo, W. (2005) *Etika Administrasi Negara*. Bandung: Rajagrafindo Persada.

Mufid, A. (2010) *Nyleneh Itu Indah*. E. Yasin (ed.). Yogyakarta: Kutuh.

Mujiburrahman. (1999) Islam and politics in Indonesia: The political thought of Abdurrahman Wahid. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 10*(3), pp. 339-352.

Rediehs, L. (2015) Truth and Nonviolence: Living Experimentally in Relation to Truth. In: J. Dudiak (ed.). *Befriending Truth*. Longmeadow, PA: Full Media Services, pp. 164-181.

Rochmat, S. (2005) Aspek Immaterial dalam Modernisasi. *Inovasi. 3*.

Saunders, H. H. (2004) Relational Realism: Toward a New Political Paradigm for Security. In: R. A. S. n. D. R. Hoover (Ed.).

---

[36] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999c, p. 169)
[37] (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, p. 147)

Religion and Security. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Tibi, B. (2009) Bridging the Heterogeneity of Civilizations: Reviving the Grammar of Islamic Humanism. _Theoria: A Journal of Social & Political Theory_. pp 65-80.

Toshiya, H. Security Communities, Power-Sharing, and Preventive Diplomacy.

Wahid, A. NU dan Kekuatan Politik. _Duta Masyarakat._ [Online] Available from http://www.dutamasyarakat.com/detailkajian.php?id=552, p. 2 [Accessed on November 2, 2005].

_____. (1997) Dimensi Kehalusan Budi dan Rasa. In I. A. Saleh (ed.). _Islam, Negara, dan Demokrasi_.

_____. (1999a) _Kyai Nyentrik Membela Pemerintah._ Yogyakarta: LKiS.

_____. (1999b) _Mengurai Hubungan Agama dan Negara._ Jakarta: Grasindo.

_____. (1999c) _Prisma Pemikiran Abdurrahman Wahid._ In: M. S. Isre (ed.). Yogyakarta: LKiS.

_____. (2001) _Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren._ Yogyakarta: LKiS.

_____. (2007) _Islam Kosmopolitan: Nilai-Nilai Indonesia dan Transformasi Kebudayaan._ Jakarta: Wahid Institute.