Is Islam Compatible with Modernity?
An Analysis of Modernity as Modern Civilization

Sukron Kamil
Email: sukronkamil@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract

The relation between Islam and modernity as modern civilization is frequently faced contradiction. The disclaimer of a secular state for instance, leads to the debate by which the articulation of some Muslims who reject it is much more than those who accept it. Another example is humanism such as religious freedom and capitalism, although the disclaimers of these two issues are softer than those who denied the nation-state. However, the conceptual analysis points out that Islam is compatible with modernity as modern civilization. The main reason is that Islam was first emerged as a critic against the previous religion that was not engage the social transformation for the Arab society before Islam. Islam is also encouraged contemporary thought and social reform with the concept of ishlah (reform) and tajdid (renewal). If this case is measured based on the dimension of modernity, it obvious that Islam Islam as a teaching/conceptual frame/mindset in this article does not have conflict with it. Islam is in line with the nation state, secular country or secularism itself, democracy as political system, rationalism and empirical science, and capitalism. This paper is expected to strengthen the Integration of Islam as society with the modernity as modern civilization in the East and West countries.

Keywords: Islam, ishlah, modernity, modern civilization, secular nation state, democracy, rationalism/science and technology, capitalism.
A. Introduction

As a derivation of the word “modern”, modernity comes from the Latin word *mode* (*modernus*). *Mode* (*modernus*) means new, according to the last mode, now/recent. In this article, what is meant by the word modern is the opposite of the ancient and the middle time of the West, which began in the 16th century or rather the 18th century until today (the 21st century). Modernity means progress / novelty, dynamics, and innovation, both in material form (outer frame) and in intellectual (cultural) form as its basis (inner frame). Modernity is a fundamental change in thinking and other life spheres such as institutions.¹

Therefore, Modernity is a continuous attempt to improve the lives, efforts, and to achieve the progress. Change, development, and improvement are the goal of modernity in the hope that tomorrow will be better than today. This belief necessitates the readiness to change the existing order by preparing the dismantling tradition. In modernity, human life does not rely on the intervention and action of God alone, but leans primarily on rationality and science. Even though, many assumptions of the people in the West who say that modernity, divine revelation, and religious authority as the interpreter of God's will have been lost, at least not diminishing. In fact shows that the priciple of human behavior in modern life depends on human reason and new empirical knowledge. Both can improve human being to be better and believe that safety is not only can be obtained in the hereafter alone.²

Some literature mentions a dimension or measurement of modernity is on the idea of nation-state, rationalism and empirical science, birth control through family planning, capitalism, and

---


Based on the dimensions or dimensions of modernity, modernity can be understood as modern civilization, in the sense of high culture, both in the narrow and broad sense. In a narrow sense, culture is a human value system (mindset and feeling pattern), as understood by Clyde Kluckhon and Parsudi Supralan as a definition believed by the majority of cultural experts. While in the broadest sense, culture is a form of ideas/tastes, actions, and objects that were born by humans, as believed by JJ. Honigmann and Koentjaraningrat.

Although the relation of Islam and modernity are compatible, as will be explained later, Islam often encounters in the opposite. The relationship of Islam to modernity as modern civilization is often visible in the public sphere as a contradiction. For example, in Secular state or secularism, the majority Muslim elites and communities, even the clergy in general are seen as the death knell of religions. To a certain extent, this view is understandable considering that many scholars of the secular social science who argue the same thing. Secularism is rated to the ideas and movements that can make people change their lives from religious life to versatile material, even to even to atheism. In distinguishing Islam with other religions has been placed on the negative views in the concept of the secular state and it looks more significant as one measure of modernity in the Muslim world. This is happened due to the dominance of a claim on Islam kaffah (totality in embracing Islam). Islam is seen as religion and state at once (al-din wad-daulah). In addition, among the great

---


religions, Islam is the religion of the most consistent in articulating that Islam must be embraced totally. For example, Islam is viewed differently with Christians because Christian doctrines have more accommodative views to the secular state or secularism. Gospel Matthew 22: 21 states: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to Him". Of course this perspective is problematic in both the Christian and Islamic contexts. In the Christian context, some scholars do not understand as such, because the Western Christian acceptance of the secular state after the 18th Century French Revolution. And in Islam between religion and state is at least indistinguishable, even the initial form of state in Islam is a multi-ethnic and religious state, as reflected in the Medina Charter in the 7th century.

That assumption can be seen from the provision of MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) No. 7/Munas VII/MU / II / 2005 on secularism, pluralism, and liberalism. The fatwa declares that the three ideologies are not in accordance with the teachings of Islam which are considered as haram (prohibited). The fatwa defined secularism as a flow which separates religion and secular affairs; religion is only used to set a personal relationship with God and human beings, especially in the political area which is regulated only in the social consensus.

The same thing in the matter of humanism which one of its sub is freedom of religion as reflected in the concept of apostasy (riddah). All the books of jurisprudence (shari'a) mention that the punishment

---


7 Religious pluralism is as an ideology sees that all religions are equal and the truth of every religion is relative; every religion should not claim as the only true religion and assume other religions are wrong; all faiths will go and live side by side in heaven. According to MUI, The inner true of islam is religious plurality that an ideology views based on reality. There are many believers who must live side by side. While religious liberalism is regarded by MUI as the liberal thinking on treating religious texts (Al-Qur’an and Sunnah); it only accepts religious doctrine which is in accordance with the mind. See Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Number: 7/Munas Vii/MUI/II/2005 dalam Keputusan, Bagian Kedua: Ketentuan Hukum, Verse (1), and see also Gatra Magazine, 6th Agustus 2005, p. 76-77.
for woman’s apostasy is a death sentence after they are asked to repent but did not want to. The hadith says, "Whoever changes his/her religion, then should be killed". Although it is not been approved by all scholars, this could be considered contrary to humanism as it is written in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which has been validated by the United Nations (UN) in 1948. UDHR as an international law is a product, one measurement of modernity, and as the institutionalization of humanism. In its article 18, UDHR states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes a religion and belief convert, freedom to express religion or faith in a way to do it, practice it, do worship and obey it either alone or together in public".  

The issue of humanism as a measurement of modernity which is often highlighted as a contrast to Islam is women's rights to be public leaders. Although it is being debatable in modern sharia, the traditional sharia is less responsive to this demand. Many classical or medieval jurists or fuqaha (shari'a experts) as al-Khatabi, as-Syaukani, Imam al-Ghazali, Ibn Hazm, Abu Ya'la al-Farra, and al-Mawardi who put prerequisite that the state leader should be not woman. In fact, Sayyid Sabiq, one of the modern jurists suggests the consensus of the scholars of fiqh (Islamic law) on the necessity of men to be a Qadi (judge). Citing the book Nail al-Authar and Fath al-Bari mentions that the head of the state must be a man. Only Imam Hanafi who allows a woman to be the judge in matters of wealth and Imam at-Thabari in all aspects.

According to few Muslim, another measurement that appears on the contrary to Islam is Capitalism. This assumption can be seen from HTI’s view (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia), despite their negative view of capitalism affects the reality of global capitalism that

---

dominates and exploits the Islamic world including in Indonesia. According to HTI in Bulletin al-Islam Edition 442/II/2009, capitalism is considered not Islamic way for some reasons; (1) the banking system as capitalism institution is interest/usury-based which is forbidden in Islam. (2) There is no real market, such as the capital and money markets. (3) The natural resources belong to the state are controlled by individuals, so that it could be a profitable for individuals and not broader citizen. (4) The use of paper currency does not correspond with its value. HTI’s outlook on the Islamic economic system is based on anti-interest banking, real market, the state control of natural resources for common people and the use of dinar and dirham are made from material such as gold and silver.10

As a result, an analysis of Islam in relation to measurements/dimensions of modernity as modern civilization seems significant to put forward. In contrast with the above viewpoint, this paper would like to see the compatibility concept between Islam and measurements or dimensions of the modernity (modern civilization).

B. Islam and Modernity as Modern Civilization

In general, Islam and modernity as modern civilization are highly compatible. They are many factors underlying this; Islam is a modern religion in relation to previous religions in which case Islam affirms and criticizes those religions; The arrival of Islam at that time shows that the religion which is existed before is no longer used as a power for social transformation of Arab society; As the last religion of Abraham, there is a continuity of Abrahamic religious teachings as well as pre-Islamic socio-cultural systems; There are changes, novelty, progress, dynamism, and innovation as a synonym of the modern word in Islam.

Firstly, Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) as the most fundamental teachings of Islam is a form of social transformation of Arab society and it shows the same case in modernity through the United States

---

and the French Revolution that transformed the medieval European society. Secondly, Creed of monotheism, “*la ilaha illallah*” (There is no God but Allah). It means that all human beings must submit to God, not to man or other creatures. In the perspective of *Tawhid*, humans are not a source of truth and not more than God servants. All human beings have the same position. Even if they should be differentiated, the distinction tends to emphasize on the meritocratic aspect. God’s reward to humans is based on their merit (*saha*) especially on the level of piety. Islam is undifferentiated human based on something given or a gift from God like ethnicity, skin, and sex. Therefore, monotheism prohibits the worship of idols. *Tauhid* does not only offer human liberation, but also the confidence and the strength of egalitarian which is not distinguish people based on strata and any attributes.

The basic teachings of Islam at that time and up today are revolutionary in line with social modernity (in the 7th century AD) by showing that Islam is developed in modernity. It offers equality for all people, even between state officials, especially the caliphs as the heads of state who have no institution and relation with the people. So that equality is called as part of human rights. Therefore, it is natural that this system fails with the return of the monarchical system in Muslims Society for about 40 years after Prophet Muhammad passed away and in the early period of Islam in Mecca. The Meccan elite see Islam as a threat to the state power and as the oppressed economic system. Moreover, Monotheism (*Tawhid*) is reinforced in the holly *Qura’n* in Surah al-Ma'un (QS 107) and al-Humazah (QS. 104) which strongly condemn the reality of economic injustice, though it is not an absolute justice that something is emphasized in revisionist socialism like in the theory of John Rawl.

In addition, Arab society in the 7th century can not distinguish between the prophetic and power. At that time, Arab elite assumes that Islamization is merely about a movement to demand the rights and as a reflection of common humanity and the movement against disobeyance on power that does not respect human dignity.
(humanism). Therefore, they are not interested in Islam because the vision of "modernity" has created a threat for their social position.11

There is the same terminology of modernization in Islam, namely tajdid (renewal) or ishlah (reform). These two words have the same meaning are to revive the faith of Islam and its practices in the history of the Muslim community. Those actions are taken because they are considered to have left al-Quran and Hadith. However, these two words also mean doing the revitalization on Islam by reasoning independently (doing ijtihad) based on Islamic guidelines (al-Quran and Hadith) in order that Islam can respond to the challenges, so that Islam could be in conformity with all the space and time (shalih likulli zaman wa makan). In the second sense, tajdid or ishlah as a movement of thought and activity that focuses on the progress, dynamism, innovation and also stickes to the main principle which is agreed upon in Islam (ushul) because the purpose of Islam is ishlah (welfare/repair) (see Qs Hud/11: 88 that calls Islam is ishlah (reformation). Renderring that goal, tajdid/ishlah should be made by the culprit with a willingness to reject imitation (the attachment to imprison traditions and not ushul [principle]), as something that is rejected in modenities. Tajdid existence and reconciliation are written in al-Quran surah al-A'raf/7: 10 and the hadith of the Prophet says: "God will send to the ummah (Muslim society) at the beginning of each century, a group of people who will renew their faith".

Therefore in Indonesian Islamic History, Islam always brings a figure of reformer (mujaddid). It is mentioned in the language of Adonis, those who are doing things such as a change or creativity (mutahawwil) which has the opposite side of Thabit (the establishment in various fields). Although the concept of Adonis

relays on the radical *tajdid* which is committed only on innovation. For the example in the classical period and religious field, there is Imam Malik (712-798 AD) who is considered as one of *mujaddid* (Hasan Hanafi calls him as “Islamic left side” because of its *istishlah* method in establishing a law that has no provision in the Qur’an and Hadith and giving emphasis to human welfare). In the same period about the 13th century is continued by Imam Syathibi or Imam Hanafi (699-767 AD) due to his method of rationality in *fiqh* Islamic Law (ahl ar-ra'yi sect); or to a certain extent, there is Imam al-Ghazali (1111); or the most stable figure is Ibn al-Rushd (1127-1198) who are very rational, or within certain limits by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328 CE), and the last by Muhammad Abduh in modern time.\(^\text{12}\)

The response of Islam (Muslims) to modernity as modern civilization when it was introduced to the Islamic world, such as in Indonesia, especially in the 18th century was not single. There are many responses that arise after.\(^\text{13}\) Beginning from the fundamentalist or revivalists response who tend to reject totally except in the sector of technology. They are political Islam and Jihadist fundamentalism. Those who include in these categories are HTI (*Hizbut-Tahrir Indonesia*) and NII (*Negara Islam Indonesia*) as a political Islamic fundamentalism and JI (*Jama'at Islamiyya*) as a Jihadist Islamic fundamentalism.\(^\text{14}\)

---


Furthermore, Islamic traditionalists reject part of modernity, except in terms of physical (material) which is more widely accepted, for instance telephone, car, and organizational management. In the beginning of NU’s period (Nahdatul Ulama) shows that its religious concept in taking dogmatic, pilgrimage grave, sanctity of the trustees, and the concept of destiny are not free will. Even, in the early to mid-20th century its organization has rejected the modern clothes such as ties and they who wear sarung (sarongs) and then they were known as community of sarungan (Muslim groups who wore sarongs, even in modern formal public spaces).\(^{15}\) However, in general, although categorized as a traditional Muslim wing, in general, NU accepts modernity as a modern civilization, especially in the dimensions/measurements mentioned above and will be explained below.

Almost all modern Islamic organizations receive both material and cultural thought or modernity as modern civilization. Muhammadiyah, the modernist’s organization has been well known by its rejection of TBC (Taqlid [blind imitation], Bid'ah [something that did not exist during the time of the Prophet Muhammad], and Churafat (superstition).\(^{16}\) In running its organization, Muhammadiyah also has the modern business like modern schools, universities as the developed institutions of Islam and a modern science. There is also charitable effort in the form of modern Islamic hospital.\(^{17}\) Moreover, Masyumi which has been famous with democratic thought and attitude tends to be pro-capitalist and law enforcement. The nationalist of the neutral religion (secular) such as Sukarno and Hatta with their political party accept modernity entirely. In spite of that, Soekarno’s acceptance on democracy is not entirely because of his

---


\(^{16}\) Taqlid is to follow one's opinion without knowing its source or reason. Heresy is an action, especially in ritual worship which is not carried by the Prophet and his adherents. While superstition is a story or opinion that is unreasonable and only existed in the imaginary (Look at A. Hanafie, Usul Fiqh, Jakarta: Wijaya, 1989, 11\(^{th}\) ed, p.157 and Depdiknas, Kamus Besra Bahasa Indonesia, Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 2000, pp. 865, 1124).

\(^{17}\) Deliar Noer, Gerakan Modern Islam Indonesia 1990-19942.
strong patrimonialism.\textsuperscript{18} According to Clifford Geertz, the same thing is happened in an ethic concept in the relation to the capitalism which is applied by Protestantism and Muslims. In this region, the pioneer of trading business is led by the santri (Muslim obedient), especially from the modernist Islam (Muhammadiyah and Masyumi).\textsuperscript{19}

Post-traditionalists is arisen from NU organization with its member such as Abdurrahman Wahid. The traditionalist is more receiving modernity than the early traditional generation. Meanwhile, from Islamic modernism (Muhammadiyah and Masyumi) brings up neo-modernists with its member like Nurcholish Madjid. They certainly accept modernity as the early modernist generation have done it, but it has a lot of classical Islamic intellectual works that enrich the insights in accepting or criticizing modernity.\textsuperscript{20}

Because of monotheism in Islam is in line with social transformation, in Islam there is the concept of \textit{Ishlah/tajdid} (improve/renewal [novelty, progress, and innovation]), in general, and the majority of Muslims accept modernity, modernity as modern civilization is compatible with Islam, although there are some people who fight against this modern civilization. The following dimensions of modernity analysis presents that Islam corresponds to modernity as modern civilization:

\section*{1. Islam and Capitalism as Modern Civilization}

Capitalism-- as one of modern civilization --was rejected by the Islamic fundamentalism like HTI (Hizbut-Tahrir Indonesia). This Islamic group considered the capitalism as a forbidden thing for some reasons: (1) a banking system based on interest is forbidden Islam. (2) non-estate market, such as the capital and money markets. (3) The control of natural resources belongs to the state by individuals that

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Tempo} (Magazine), 13\textsuperscript{th} August 2007 and Hebert Feith and Lance Castles, \textit{Politik Indonesia 1945-1965}, Jakarta: LP3ES, 1988, pp. 72-83.

\textsuperscript{19} Nurcholish Madjid, \textit{Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan}, p. 146.

\end{footnotesize}
benefit the individual, not collective. (3) The use of paper currency paper prices does not correspond to their value. HTI sees that the economic system is different from the Islamic economic system which is based on anti-interest banking, real estate market, control of natural resources by the state for the common good, and the dinar and dirham a material of gold and silver.21

Three main ideas of capitalism (individual property rights, competition, and rationality) is generally recognized in Islam. Naturally, capitalism is valid in almost all Muslim countries today. In Islam, there was indeed a hadith reported by Ahmad and Abu Daud who call that a man of association in water, grass, and fire, plus the salt in another narration. However, we can be sure, in Islam; there was no ban at all to have a material property for individuals. In Ushul Fiqh (the fundamentals of Islamic law) formulation ash-Syathibi (730-790 H).22 it is clearly stated that Islam was to safeguard the interests or welfare of human beings. Which dharûri (urgent/not allowed not) of human interests it is an individual right to own property, in addition to the interest of religion (morality), soul, mind, and descendants, as will be explained below. The right of individual property is comparable with the four basic rights of other individuals and society in Islam.

Moreover, an attempt to have the property for the individual as the main idea of capitalism is recommended in Islam, as well as media business. In a business, people are buying and selling, planting, working as an employee with a fixed salary (ujrah), Mudharaba (partnership capital), Musharaka (joint venture), murabaha/Ba’i bitsaman Ajil (sale and purchase with payments later on credit), (agricultural cooperative), gifts (giving due respect the person who was given), muzâra’a grants (ordinary administration), and also inheritance (Qur’an, An-Nisa/4: 11). In fact, the sale and purchase transaction voluntarily in an effort to have the property itself. Islam sees this as a halal thing (QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 275 and An-Nisa/4: 29), even commanded as a duty of a Muslim to make a living for his

---

family (QS, al-Jumu'ah/62: 10 [see also QS. al-Baqarah/2: 233 and at-Thalaq/65: 4]). In a hadith reported by Ahmad and Thabrani, it also explained that the sale and purchase of the good is the most important work, in addition to works by relying on hand (skill or expertise).23

Islam is admitted the notion of capitalism, namely, competition and economic rationality (ratio of profits), as far as could be assessed. In the Qoran, in fact, the competition is literally disclosed, although a general nature: “Compete you in goodness” QS. al-Baqarah/2: 148). Considering the wealth in Islam as part of the goodness, the competition in Islam recognized. The mechanism was unclear, the natural market that is not engineered by some people to seek their own advantage as passing ihtikâr (hoarding). Ibn Khladun and Abu Yusuf (731-798) in this issue argue that principally, the state should not intervene in the market. The new state may intervene when the market is not operating normally. For example, when the price increases, the state should increase imports, if the cause is due to the scarcity of imported goods. According to Ibn Khaldun, if the market does not run normally, it should provide subsidies and forcing people hoarding goods to market.24

Basically, Islam is also in line with the notion of rationality with profit as a measurement stressed by capitalism. The reason is that the main principle of Islamic economics is mutually beneficial (win-win relations), as QS. Al-Baqarah/2: 279. In Islam, as far as can be seen, the three rations of capitalism: the ratio of instrumental, legal, scientific, also does not conflict with Islam. This is because the technology should be seen as an extension of the human hand in its function as the caliph who is authorized to manage, exploit, and prosper for the benefit of nature (QS. Al-Jatsiyah/45: 13). Ratio of law, in Islam, can be seen from the QS. al-Baqarah/2: 282 which ordered that accounts payable transactions (credit), and of course,

other economic transactions, made in writing as proof that do not give rise to doubts and disputes. As for the scientific ratio, can be seen from the Islamic recognition of the importance of man in life by referring, in addition to the revelation, also on the knowledge that is based on the results of empirical research (QS. Yunus/10: 101 and QS. Al-Ghasyiyah/88: 17-20) and rational (Qur'an, Ali Imran/3: 189-190).25

Islam and capitalism are absolutely different in the reality; in the ownership and in join venture. To do economic rationality, Islam is not only concern to the profit but also to the ethic (attitude) as greed and ethic code. In the capitalism profit is everything, greed and free competition between the “small” and the “big” is irrational. Moreover, capitalism in which investment and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly by private individuals or corporations, especially as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth oriented. Unprejudiced and apathetism is be this side. Islam strongly suggests to the empowerment of the poor through philanthropy and charity.26

That is the reason why, in modern history, Islam and capitalism in other side is in one step. It is shown by Bowcock, in his researches about Syi’ah Ismailiyyah in Tanzania. According to him, Syiah has succeeded in economic and its related to Agha Kahan III, Sir Sultan Muhammad Syah, 1877-1960 who believed that Allah has sent them as their leader. He against early marriage of them and pushed to the Ismailiyyah self-sufficient in the education, healthy, and also push them to bring a lot of wealthy as a gift to him for investment and economic sector of Isma’iliyyah. They are pioneer movement as though protestant in Europe. They were survived with hardworking, unconsumtive, simple, and honest. Consistently, they were

reinvestment for better value and profit. Those activities are appropriate with Islam (eat and take what we need).\textsuperscript{27}

In Sunni’s view, base on his research on modern Muslim (Muhammadiyah and Masyumi) in Pare - East Java, besides Chinese, Clifford Geertz found a same thing an ethic concept related to the capitalism applied by Cristian and Sunni. In this region, especially the concept is applied among Santri (a good Muslim).\textsuperscript{28} Clifford compared between a Santris in Java and Protestantism in the west, found a concept of capitalism – in the special side – applied by group of trader, craftsmen, and farmers among them. Two figures of organization called Sarekat Dagang Islam (Islamic Commercial Union) changed its name to Sarekat Islam (Islamic Union, or SI), Haji Samanhudi - merchants in the Batik industry – in 1940 who have had 200 employees in five big cities of Indonesia, and H. Tirto Adhi Suryo who also a success merchants in the Batik industry, both of them have a strong responsibility to protect commercial organization interests from Chinese commercial activist. In the1930s, all of micro commercial and economic activities are hegemonized by Muslim in Java. Further, Thesis of Geert was deeper discussed by Lance Castles in Religion, Politics and Economic Behavior in Java: The Kudus Cigarette Industries (1967). He found this hegemonized by entrepreneur Santri engaged in the field of small and medium cigarette business in Kudus, even though could not growing to be bigger entrepreneur, because among other of structural obstacles.\textsuperscript{29}

In capitalism concept, Islam is empirically tracking to the science and technology as its product. Refer to Qur’an, surah al-Alag, verses 1-5 tells that there are 3 kinds of knowledge recognized: (1) empirical science (\textit{tajribi}). These are facts about the features of something, residing within the objects themselves and can be discovered by exploring objects and noticing their qualities using sense; (2) rastionalist (\textit{burhani}). This is the creation of relationships

\textsuperscript{28} Nurcholish Madjid, \textit{Islam Kemodernan dan Keindonesiaan}, p. 146.
inductively and deductively. Constructed by each individual, inside his or her own head; (3) Illuminatif (‘irfānī/ladunni). Its like a revelation and information that to come to mind (ma’rifah). This is hard to understand the whole things. When the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. It cannot be reached by common people; only special a man can reach it. This kind were not recognized in their first of modern century in the east, but several has recognized currently. The Two of the three are commonly called as kasbi. The Consistency of these three points is a must in Islam. The third point for instance, is completing each other, even though it is still debatable as part of science, as mention in the holy quran Al-Baqarah (verse 2).

2. Islam, Science, and Technology as Modern Civilization

Islam is empirically tracking to the science and technology as one of modern civilization. Refer to Qur’an, surah al-Alag, verses 1-5 tells that there are 3 kinds of knowledge recognized: (1) empirical science (tajribi). These are facts about the features of something, residing within the objects themselves and can be discovered by exploring objects and noticing their qualities using sense; (2) rationalist (burhani). This is the creation of relationships inductively and deductively. Constructed by each individual, inside his or her own head; (3) Illuminative (‘irfānī/ladunni). Its like a revelation and information that to come to mind (ma’rifah). This is incapable of being thoroughly understood. When the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. It cannot be reached by common people; only special a man can reach it. This kind were not recognized in the first of modern century in the east, but several of postmodernist scientist has recognized currently. Two of three commonly called by kasbi. Consistency three of them in Islam are must be, because three of them are completing each other. Even though the last is debatable as part of science, as mention in the holy quran Al-Baqrarah (verse 2).

That’s why, generally, epistemology of empericism is tracing in Islam. The argumentation is found in Quran, such as Quran Surah al-Ghasiyiah, verse 17-20. In this surah, God ask people to use their nazhar (sense) to the universe, such as, camel, sky, earth, and
mountain. Historically, many classic scientists empiric of Muslim on their invention have recognized Islam to empirical science. For example, Jabir bin Hayyan as a chemist, ar-Razi a philosopher, chemist, and medical science, and Ibu Sina as a philosopher and medical science.30

The invention of modern scientists like Ibn al-Haitam - optics and descker of vision theory – He said that light does not the nature of vision. According to this scholar retina is the center of originates from the eye but on opposite enters the eye, and in that manner corrects the wrong opinion of the Greeks about vision and the impressions that it receives are transferred to the brain by the optical nerve, in order that brain afterwards create visual image in the symmetrical relationship for both retinas.31 He also invent to the gravitation theory, and inertia or humidity theory of object. Further, those theories had reached to the technology application that easier human activity in their live and related to the art.32 In other word, science is used to manage natural resources in order to human prosperity.33 Jabbir bin Hayyan, the first essential in chemistry is that thou shouldest perform practical work and conduct experiments, for he who performs not practical work nor makes experiments will never attain to the least degree of mastery. He weighs objects 6,480 times smaller than rathl (about 1 kg). The other is Ja’far al-Shadiq who made a inflammable paper and readable ink in the dark. And also made an additive which, when applied to an iron surface, inhibited rust and when applied to a textile, would make it water repellent. He also made a steelmaking and human protection from toxic elements, plant, animal, and mineral that currently to be a phenomenal invention. He is credited with the invention of many types of now-


basic chemical laboratory equipment, and with the discovery and description of many now-commonplace chemical substances and processes - such as the hydrochloric and nitric acids, distillation, and crystallization that have become the foundation of today's chemistry and chemical engineering and suggested to chemist laboratory located a far from the people. This also said by Umar Khayyam (w. 526 H/1132 M) and Ibn al-Haitam (w. 1040).34

The empirical science growing in the West today is a tradition coming form Muslim scientists. Briffault and George in CA. Qadir recognize this. They say “An Egyptian only made systematically and generalized theories but the analyze and observation systematically to prove the theories is belong to Muslim …. a science that accessed by the experiment appeared after Arabian scientist (Muslim) did and introduced it to the European. A modern science is big contribution of Muslim scientist (Islam).35

Yet, there is also fiqh (Islamic Law) that compatible with modern law and also a literature in Islam that empirical base and realistic recognized by Qur’an mentioned on surah Yusuf containing a short biography about Prophet Yusuf that close to a realistic short story. Moreover,according to Ibu Rusyd (1127-1198) and Najmuddin at-Thufi (657-716 H), when literally the text of the Qur’an and Hadith (two main references of Islam) could not be compromised, rational and empirical findings such as public service is the solution. The way to compromise it is according Ibn Rusyd is through


ta’wil/hermeneutic (understanding of revelation text from the stated to the inferred through the signs containing in the stated text).36

In the theory of criticism of matan (text) hadith, it is also explained that one of the approaches that can be used to measure the validity of a text of hadith, whether the words, deeds, and acknowledgments of the Prophet Muhammad, is a rational and empirical approach, although based on rawî (narrators) the hadith is valid. If any ahad hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (narrated under ten narrators) contradicts the rational and empirical findings, then its validity is in doubt, even to be rejected for practice.37

In Islam, empirical science forbidden to be sacred and revelation is highest position among them. at least, three of it must be using balances so those not be dichotomy (classification split in two). Scientism (the scientific method and approach, and the view that empirical science constitutes the most "authoritative" worldview the exclusion of other viewpoints) or Triumphantism which should triumph over all others is rejected in Islam. Empirical science has many many lacks of it. Such as: as a product of sense, it could be tricked or limited to the surface/partial; only a material of sense; and often not coming from a reality.38 Science basically is a fact and finding of scientist research. Science made by scientist culture.
Sphykman says that science not only about object of analyze but also to the scientist and his philosophy of life. A natural modern science mostly focuses to distance and the creation of the world in which according scientist made by it. Others, Karl Marx looks like hostility to Religion. Freud argued to religion as a neurosis disorder (refers to a mental disorder involving distress where not outside socially acceptable norms) and typically self-conscious and shy. Further, economical science allowing a greed through capitalism and the essential boundary theories.

It is like empiricism, rationalism as a root of humanities also tracking to the Islam and recognized on Qur’an surah Al-Imran, verse 189-190, and in Islam there is also a theology of mu’tazilah (rational) that believes to free will and peripatetic who taught philosophy while walking the truth only to the rationality. As prophet Muhammad said in his hadith: “no religion, for those who are irrational”. And its look like empirical, rationalism forbid to be sacred because it has deficiency as Stanley M. Honner and Thomas C. Hunt said that the deficiency of rationalism is to rise or fly into the air; idea of rationalism sometimes could not be applied caused accelerating change of human knowledge; and its absolutely defend on a general statement (the major premise) and a specific statement (the minor premise) to find a conclusion. Measuring of rationalism has no agreement among the scientists.

3. Islam, Humanism, and Secular State as Modern Civilization

As it is found in capitalism and science, Islam is also tracking to the humanism (human right) as one of modern civilization; as the mission (risalah) of Islam is given for humanity and the universe. Islam is not only respect the humanity (anthropocentrism) but also the world (qur’an 21:107) or ecocentrism. Islam is down to earth to

---

set human free from the darkness to be the lightness (Qur’an 14:1). Islam is not coming for God, but comes for humanity which is in Sunni called as *kemaslahatan* (benefit). According to asy-Syatihibi (730-790 H), a scholar of Maliki sect as above, human benefit here is *dharuri* (emergency) keeping morality to the given, grow (live), sense (education/intellectuality), generation (marriage), and wealthy (economical). In fact, humanity is the basic of argumentation for all that universal and perennial. In line with that, in Islamic jurisprudence (*ushul fiqh*) there is a theorem: “to manage or decide of public issue is defending on the benefit of humanity itself”. It can be said that, humanity (human right) is everything in Islam.

Moreover, according to Najmuddin at-Thufi (657-716 H) and Ibu Rusyd (1127-1198), as mentioned above, when sharia (text) and revelation could not be compromised, humanity is the solution. Humanity here, according to Tyan in Muhammad Khalid Mas’ud is public service or benefit for human being in general that tracking to the humanism. The way to compromise it is according Ibn Rusyd is through *ta’wil/hermeneutic.*

That is why, Islamic leaders have found the suitability of Islam in human right through Cairo Declaration (*watsiqah Huqûq al-Insân fî al-Islâm*) that was declared in 1990. The Declaration contains an Islamic recognition of the right of equality (Quran Surah (QS) 17: 70, 4: 58, 105, 107, 135, and 60: 8); the right to freedom of expression, assembly and association (QS 3: 104, QS 3: 159, QS 2: 170, QS 3: 190-191, 6:50, QS.2: 258 and 44:31, QS 28: 8, 40 and 11: 97-98); the right to life (Surah 5: 45 and QS 17: 33); self-protection rights (QS 90: 12-17 and 9: 6); the right of personal honor (QS 9: 6); family rights (2: 221, 30: 21, 4: 1, and 66: 6); the right of equality of men to women (QS 2: 228 and 49:13); the right of the child of his parents (QS 2: 233 and 17: 23-24); right to education (QS 9: 122 and QS 96: 1-5); the right to freedom of religion (QS 109: 1-6, 2: 256, and 18: 29); the right to freedom of asylum (QS 4: 97 and 60: 9); the right to

---

work (QS 9: 105, 2: 286, and 67: 15); property rights (2: 29, 4: 29); and the rights of detainees (QS. 60: 8).

But it should be known that there is part of a traditional sharia (Islamic law [fiqh]) if its measuring to humanity still has a problematic. In traditional sharia literally is still has a discrimination in favor of women. In-between about age of marriage, legal marriage that recognized by the state, inheritance rights of women, equality the value of women eyewitness testimony to the men, women of their religion are barred from holding public office, and polygamy. But those are - which barred holding the women - not absolutely sharia perspective. In Islam there are many modern sharia perspective which could be applied and suitable to the humanity that directly taken from Quran and hadith with using a methodology that refers to the context. But currently found that those problematics are not about sharia as a rule but its to the human who misunderstanding to apply it. Furthermore, there is a notion that mainstreamly different to general issues understood among to people, especially about equal right of women in Islam. For example, about taking care of home where it should be men obligation to do that, moment allow to marry her (no compulsion to marry), nusyuz (a wife who has no justifiable reason for refusing to obey the wishes or commands of her legitimate husband) can be made by a husband to his wife. a Muslim man to marry up to non-Muslim women is allowed by part of scholars.

And also to the non-Muslim right and Islamic criminal law, both of these are argue to different notion. There are many notion of scholars that suitable to the humanism. Such as capital punishment to the who out from Islam. This is rejected by the classic expert of Muslim scholar further will be discussed as follow.

And others are about secular state in the nation state framework as one of modern civilization. Part of Muslim expert, objectively among the fundamentalism and revivalism of Islam are rejected type of this nation. It can see to the Ikhwan al-Muslimun (An Islamic neo-revivalist movement founded by Hassan al-Banna in


1928 as a critique of Islamic modernism) arguing that Islam a religion and state. Islam is a perfect religion which state include in it as one entity. Islam and state can’t be separated (organic) with Islam as a foundation of rules and Ulama (theologian) as an advisor executable or it could be the highest hierarchy of the state. The scholars include of these are Sayyid Quthub (1906-1966), from Ikhwan itself after al-Banna, Abu al-‘Ala al-Maududi (1903-1979), and in Indonesia is Muhammad Natsir. All of them are rejected popular sovereignty according to the west version, because according them the authority of a state and its government is created and sustained by the consent of God, that’s why forbidden to make regulation that not suitable with God rules. Al-Maududi called the concept of political Islam by theo-democraton, a democracy system in God rules framework through his law. Borrowing from Fazlurrahaman as Plato and Aristoteles, they are look like have self confidence crisis to the intellectual and moral human capacity.

But beside those all, there is an opposite of the first typology. Some of them argued that Islam is a religion that is not unlike any other religion. Islam does not teach the ways of regulating the life of society and state. Islam is a religion not a state. A state is wordly where the instruments are mind and moral of human that temporal. A state is not ruled by a religion. And opposite of it, a state can’t interevent to the religion, because it’s an own private spaces and family matter. Some scholar arguing this is Ali Abd Raziq (1888-1966) as mentioned before. He said that, Muhammad as prophet sent to their world is as messenger of God only, its separated from specifically religious affairs and political. His opinion base on Quran surah Al-Ghasiyah, verse 21-22 (So remind them (O Muhammad, you are only a one who reminds). You are not a dictator over them).

---

In the current practice this model of secular state is embraced by the majority of Muslim countries and supported by mainstream Muslims. For example, in Tunisia. “We will not use a law based on religion”, said General Ennahda, moderate Islamist party, Rached Ghannouchi, at a press conference.48

Even though, for some of expert, this secular typology is same with the first one. If the first is shackled by classical Islamic political thought and practice, then the second type of Islamic political thought is shackled and too fascinated by the secular thought of a nation state of Western modernity. That’s why there is the third moderately rejects of the both. Their third type said that, even Islam has not showing a preference to the specific politic, but in Islam there is moral or ethic containing for human life in society and state, where in application, as long as containing of those, human of people can choose any kind of the best system they want. The scholar who argued this are Fazlurrahman, Mohamed Arkoun, and in Indonesia is Nurcholis Madjid.

Nurcholis Madjidsaid that Islam, both theoretically and practically, has given a political principle. The principle, quoting Robert N. Bellah and based on the "Medina Charter" --the seventh-century Profet Muhammad's deal with non-Muslims – pluralism, tolerance, the equal right of citizen, and justice as aim of a nation. Base on this principle, Robert conclude that, the first a concept of Islam about politic is in the middle of two type that opposite each other (Sayyid Qutub and al-Maududi side, and Ali Abd al-Raziq sides). The second, even has many deficiency, a democracy is very valuable where until now has no comparable of it. He argued that democracy is majority rule minority right where in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens to the majority and minority right, both are respect each other.49

4. Islam and Political Democracy System as Modern Civilization

As a notion to the secular nation state, there are three types of notion to the democracy, as one of modern civilization. The first is accept all about democracy; second is reject all of about democracy, and the third is accept to the principle of it but in other side recognize to the difference. The first and the second types of the notion are regarded as Islamic fundamentalism. According to ‘Abd al-Qadim Zallum: the first category is jihadism Islamic fundamentalism like Sayyid Qutub, and the second is political Islamic fundamentalism or HTI (Indonesian Hizb ut-Tahrir). Both of them argued that democracy is *kufur* (disbelief) system or *ad-dimuqarytiyyah nizhâm kufr* that contradiction to Islam. the arguments is: a democracy is human product, not God creation: part of secular (separation from specifically religious affairs); they argue that the supreme power is not vested in the people but in sharia; in Islam majority has no significance, because the significance is in sharia; and freedom such as religious freedom in Islam, he argues, does not exist, because unconverted apostates in Islamic jurisprudence must be put to death.

Islam and democracy is generally compatible because the content is suitable with the principle of Islam, such as: ‘*adalah* (justice), *syura* (qulluquy), *musawah* (equality), *amânah* (accountability), *ijma’* (consensus), dan *bai’at* (social contract). Some of verses could be found in Quran are Surah al-Imran: 159; Ash-Shura: 38; Al-Hujurat: 13, Al-Ma’ idah: 8, and Ash-Shura: 15. Even for the justice, Ibn Taimiyah said: “God supports for the fair leader even he is a heathen, and He is not supports to the unfair leader even he is Islam”. And also to the freedom of criticism which input for a good idea and as a social control is suitable to *amar ma’ruf*.

---


52 Quoted from Nurcholish Madjid, “Demokrasi”, in *Tekad* Newspaper, No1/th.1, 2-8 November 1998.

**Suman Kalijaga.** Volume 3, Number 1, March 2020
nahyi munkar (QS 3:104). According to Ibn Majah, the biggest jihad is telling the truth to the unfair leader. Beside that, Islam is allowing freedom such as freedom of expression and opinion as long as it has responsibility on the morality and law (Quran surah An-Nisa:59, and Surah An-Nisa :83), also about Freedom of association are in Surah Al-Maidah :2, and Al-Mujadila: 22, and freedom of faith is in Quran surah Al-Baqarah :256 and Yunus :99.\(^{53}\) Furthermore, in Islam, according to Amien Rais, Atheism is allowed as long as not disturbing to public area.\(^{54}\) A murtad (converted to Islam and later rejects the religion) in Islam is no law rule it, if there is rule for it, the consequence is not died. A murtad should be persuasion to come back to Islam. That’s all what al-Baji (w.494 H), Ibn Taimiyah, al-Nakhai (w.95 H). Sufyan Tsurj (w.162 H)\(^{55}\) said about majority principle used to be did not absolutely reflection of the truth for responses to the big religion that effected to the objection people to democracy, according Fahmi Huwaidi all of that only happened to the mushrikeen (devoting worship to anyone or anything other than Allah). As Quran say that thus society is indeed kufr, perverted, not gratitude favor, do not understand God and His teachings (QS. 6:16, 2:243, 12:103, 11:17, 7, 187). In other word, democracy is suitable with principle of Islam.\(^{56}\)

No wonder that Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart research found Muslim supports the democracy as a value and political method. Muslim and western in some cases have differences on the culture, free sex and gender equality for instance. However, in west or America, the conservative religious have the same opinion about this.\(^{57}\)


C. Closing

Based on the explanation above, it is obvious that Islam is compatible with modernity as modern civilization. The reason is that Islam was first emerged as a critic against the previous religion that was not engage social transformation for the Arab society. In this case, Islam in certain measurements like egalitarianism and emansipatorism is a social revolution for the Arab community in the 7th century (even until now). Therefore, Islam is naturally encourage the thought and social reform with the concept of ishlah (reform) and tajdid (renewal). Islam is a religion which emphasize the novelty, progress, and innovation. As a matter of fact, it is understandable enough that most Muslims accept this modernity. In addition, Islam is compatible with the dimension/measurements of modernity: nation state; secular state/secularism at least in the sense of emphasize/attachment to the life of the world (the present and here- ness) by desacralization of everything, except for things that are truly divine/transcendental [or in the sense of freedom of religion, not freedom from religion]); democracy, rationalism, empirical science, and technology; capitalism, at least not in the sense of a multiplication of production and profits based on the principle of the rights to own, competition, and rationalism, including efficient and effective bureaucracy.

Subsequently, the relation between Islam and modernity reflects the tendencies of contemporary major religions as it is developing, even in the secular countries, either in the West or in the East. In the view of Karl Marx, he said that religion is worthless, or in Freud's view, religion is neurosis (neurological disorder/personality disorder) and symptoms of immaturity.58 Therefore, religion does not correspond to modernity as modern civilization. However, according to Peter L. Berger, the process of secularization in modern society does not marginalize religion completely, but makes the religion more rational. The views of classical sociology must have been marginalized in modernity as it tends to pay no attention to the

human aspect as a taste agent.\textsuperscript{59} The existence of Islamic fundamentalists who reject the modernity and the conformity of mainstream Islam with modernity seems to reflect the views of the two different experts above. Islam in the modern interpretation of the experts and figures above are as basis for the reinterpretation of Islam to fit the challenge of modernity as modern civilization in Islam.

Moreover, Islam as a religion related to modernity and at once as modern civilization is also in line with the views of Jose Casanova who stated that acting as an institution of civil society as a balancer power\textsuperscript{60} because of the conformity of Islam with democracy. It indicates that Islam has played a role in public affairs, especially with regard to ethics or values including the source of inspiration and life motivation like the development of modernity in Muslim societies. Islam or religion in secular countries, in general, as Anthony Gidden reveals in his free-market theory of politics, is also possible to compete with the other religions or the other ideological powers,\textsuperscript{61} as revealed by Jurgen Habermas.\textsuperscript{62} Undoubtedly, religion as an institution where space for the interests of human spirituality is given becomes unwarranted to simply disappear in modern society, as narrated by William James, the US philosopher (1842-1910) and also Henri-Louis Bergson.\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Wallah al'lam bis shawab} (God knows the truth).

\begin{flushleft}


\end{flushleft}
BIBLIOGRAPHY


(1999a, February 15). Tekad, No.16/Th. 1.

(1999b, November 9). Tekad, No.2/Th. 1.
