

Abdurrahman Wahid on Reformulating the Theology of Islamic Democracy to Counter Secularism in Modern Era

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Abstract

The democratic state is a secular state, characterized with three elements that are religious freedom, state indifference to religious affiliation, and separation of religious and state affairs. Secular state pretends to separate the management of the public affairs of the state with that of the private affairs of religion and it does not mean to promote secularism. In fact the state provides the fund to the religious organizations played a role of civil society, an important institution for the establishment of democracy and its existence is prior to the establishment of democratic state and was effective tool to challenge the theocratic state. In spite of the flow of fund from the state to private sphere, there is no theoretical relationship between public affair and private one so that modern man suffers from split identity of which some believe as the main cause of the two world wars, gulf wars, and many revolutions risked on human death.

Theology of Islamic Democracy is a new Islamic theology pretends to counter secularism in modern era by breaking the separation wall of public and private affairs to build humanistic civilization. For that purpose Wahid suggests that religion should guide the courses of public affairs, but to play such role successfully religion should leave its conventional theology and build the new one by incorporating the development of modern philosophy and social

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*sciences. Wahid elaborates the intermingle between public and private affairs is a kind of dialectical relationship between the private affairs of the pillars of Belief (**Rukun Iman**) and the public affairs of the pillars of Community (**Rukun Islam**) and both should formulate this intermingle area and Wahid introduces it as *Theology of Social* (**Rukun Sosial**, the Social Pillars). Furthermore, Islam as the religion of law and the source of norms and values pretend to rule all aspects of living and it is just possible for Islam to develop a cultural approach which wants to implement Islamic law substantially.*

Keywords:

public affair, private affair, secular, theology, Islam.

. SECULAR THEOLOGY

Theology of Islamic democracy does not pretend to force the implementation of formal Islamic law into the state, but pretends to introduce substantial Islamic values into modern life at varying social levels, starting from society, the state, and into global and the international level. In Oliver Roy's terminology, Wahid falls into a fundamentalist who wants to implement the principles of religion as manifested in religious laws (*syari'ah*) regardless of the state. Moreover, it is very popular amongst Wahid's followers the concept of religion without the state. Theology of Islamic democracy is not a conservative theology or doctrinal theology which wants to force the implementation of the doctrines of religion which are no longer relevant with the development of human beings. But it is an effort of reinterpreting Islamic universal values in the face of modern demands.

Traditional theology uses the classical approach of Stoic philosophy¹⁾ which relies on logical procedures as the analytical tool. This philosophical approach is a result of the influence of Aristotelian-Scholastic science, not

1) M. Amin Abdullah, 2005, "Democracy and Authoritarianism in Islamic Text: The Implication and the Consequences of having *Bayani* type of Islamic Epistemology in the Political Arena", in *ICIP Journal*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 3.

logical standpoints used by Aristotle or Plato into Muslim world. Its main concern had been with definition rather than with the precise relation between phenomena so that it had lost itself in the search for essences and obscure qualities. It emphasizes the prominent role of ratio to validate the truth of knowledge and views truth based on its logical procedures and results in a black-white categories of the truth. It is unsurprisingly due to its lack of empirical observations by which we find a real feature of humans living with a grey category which mixes the black and white categories of the truth.²⁾

Theology of Islamic democracy is built following the recent development of the birth of social sciences using the observation method for validation of the truth. This approach will unify the truth with doing, considering that the truth is not exclusive from the context by which the truth is applied.³⁾ It is the modern development of theology which combines theology, philosophy, and social sciences. By so doing, religion is applied to solve the problems of human beings and consequently it brings religion into public discourses, not in formal legal form but substantially by means of cultural approach which emphasizes on universal values.⁴⁾

Indeed the concept of truth with doing (*Verum et factum convertuntur*) as the character of divine knowledge had been seen in the Middle Ages, however this philosophy was not developed well due to the influence of Stoic philosophy or Aristotelian-Scholastic science, not by the logical standpoints used by Aristotle or Plato. Furthermore, the Moslem world was dominated by the epistemology of the *Bayani* which emphasis the strictly textual relationship with sacred resources of the Koran and *Hadith*. This type of epistemology feels itself in a grove difficulty to have internal dialogue with the epistemological traditions of *Irfani* (intuitively experienced type of knowledge) and *Burhani* (philosophical knowledge) within the bond of Islamic studies.⁵⁾

Theology defines as a science of God that is how to know supreme reality, or in other words, the source of truth. This term was changing dur-

2) Amos Funkenstein, 1986, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 13.

3) Sumartana, 2005, "Kepekaan Teologi pada Tanda Zaman"[The Need of Theology to Accomodate Modern Developments], in http://www.tokohindonesia.co.id/ensiklopedi/s/sumartana-th/sumartana_th2.shtml, p. 7 <Accessed 2005/03/22>.

4) Amos Funkenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

5) M. Amin Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

ing the Renaissance era in Europe and reached its epoch during the Reformation era with the spread of Protestantism which caused the collapse of monopoly of theology as the profession of clergymen. It implies that clergymen's knowledge of truth became so narrow and at the same time non-clergymen were able to introduce new knowledge of truth which was very useful for the development of the sciences.

Non-clergymen tried to unify theology, philosophy, and the sciences in general so as to theology was not only a matter of God with His essence but also closely linked to the human problems in the world. Consequently it is not enough for the Sunni Muslims to perform religious activities as defined in the five religious duties; they should also concern with the problems of poverty and starving in their society.⁶⁾ For the followers of Protestantism, doing worldly human affairs such as saving money and hard work were kinds of religious duties. Based on this finding it is misleading to label modern Europe as a secular society in terms of there being no belief in God.⁷⁾ Indeed they developed secular theology, not in form of atheism but theology which links the existence of God with the actual problems of human livings; however they still used theology as supernatural knowledge.⁸⁾

Following the concept of religion as an open text, considering the Koran as the most authoritative Islamic teaching resources teaches man through symbols which are open to multi-faced interpretations. Classical Islamic law, as a result of interpretation of the Koran and *Hadits* by clerics were formed and limited by certain situations and conditions which were not free from historical and political context. That is why we should analyze these Islamic laws to revitalize them into the modern era. This is hard work, for so doing there is a requirement for us to find the 'essence' of the message of the Islamic laws. The difficulty lies on the object of investigation, that is Islamic law is actually the discourse of a *subject*. To analyze discourse is to investigate an object which is produced by a subject

6) A. Hasyim Muzadi, 2005, "Busung Lapar dan Konstruksi Keimanan" [Reconstructing New Theology for Solving The Problems of Starving], in *Republika 19 June 2005* <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kedungcinta/message/2165>, p. 3 <Accessed 2005/07/12>.

7) Indeed recently most Westerners do not believe anymore in religion. It is as a result of long process of secularization which is accompanied with the negative effects secularism. It happens due to Christianity as religion emphasize on the belief aspect of religion and lack of law aspect, more precisely ritual aspect, which will remind its followers in God long everyday life activities.

8) Amos Funkenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

and received by other subjects. It is one element of hermeneutics methodology as 'social analysis' which concerns with the social-historical conditions within which agents act and interact. It is to analyze both institutional features and their historical specificity. The second phase of the hermeneutical procedure may be described as 'discursive analysis' which concerns structure as well as the sequence of events taking place for that purpose. The last phase is 'interpretation', to move beyond the discourse of structure and to *construct*⁹⁾

That is why Wahid agrees to treat religion democratically by tolerating other different religious interpretations due to its symbolic nature of text which is risky to adhere with any kind of ideologies; however on converse, this movement of absorbing ideology often finds justification from religion. The acts of appreciating cultures or ideologies are obligatory for religion to have a role as a liberating force, and on contrary the absence of them will mislead religion in protecting the status quo, and interpreting Islam which is compatible with the contemporary demands. However Wahid does not believe that one single of ideology or theology or dogma is sufficient to solve the complexity of human life. He pretends to absorb the positive aspects of all ideology for that purpose; because believing in one certain ideology meant we divide ourselves from the others so that it ignores the existence of the truth on other part. Wahid believes that truth spread everywhere so that he wants to absorb from any resources and consequently he does not devote himself to one ideology.¹⁰⁾

Reinterpreting Islam is obligatory due to the interpretations of Islam as a kind of contextualization of Islamic teachings, of which its truth is limited by the situation and condition as well as the historical aspect where the results of interpretation implemented. The existence of many interpretations of Islam justifies Wahid's perception of Islamic law (*syari'ah*) that just consists of a series of fundamental values which is abstract and universal; meanwhile how to realize these values into reality is a result of *ijtihad*.¹¹⁾

9) John B. Thompson, 1984, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 9-11.

10) Ulil Abshar Abdalla, 2002, "Menyegarkan Kembali Ajaran Islam" [Revitalizing Islamic Understanding], in *Kompas*, November 18, 2002, online http://www.geocities.com/arsip_nasional/agama/agama16.htm?200516, p. 3 <Accessed 2005/07/16>.

11) *Ibid.*, p. 3. *Ijtihad* is 'endeavor to deduce a judicial decree (*hukm-i Syar'i*) on the basis of

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Wahid believes that the character of Islamic civilization is cosmopolitanism namely absorbing truth from other existing civilizations and then creatively forming a 'new' civilization which is more advanced than that of the previous ones.¹²⁾ In other words, Islamic universal values can not be realized on earth, and for human, if they do not interact with and absorb other existing civilizations. Islamic civilization respects human dignity as the ultimate goal of Islamic law (*maqashidusy syari'ah*) which is manifest in the principle of Islamic law known as the protection of five basic human needs (*daruriyyat*), namely (1) the protection of self (*hifz al-nafs*) from any violence; (2) the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*) from any enforced conversion; (3) the protection of family and the next generation (*hifz al-nasl*); (4) the protection of personal property (*hifz al-mal*); and (5) the protection of profession or intellect (*hifz al-'aql*).¹³⁾

Following the cosmopolitan character of Islamic civilization, Wahid develops two approaches for reinterpreting Islam which is compatible with the contemporary demands that are *pribumisasi* and modernization. First is by following *Walisanga* tradition to expound his *Pribumisasi* (domestication) approach as a response to the problem facing by Muslims throughout their history that is how to incorporate the local culture ('*adah*) into norm (*syari'ah*), the same problem should be solved by *ushul al-fiqh*. It is not another term for syncretism because it does not an effort to harmonize the previous beliefs in supernatural power and its eschatological dimension with Islamic beliefs.¹⁴⁾ He wants to remind us of adaptive legalism—'legalism that, while maintaining Islamic principles, also implied a gradual framework for change through religious laws.'¹⁵⁾

In his view, overlapping between the culture and religion are not avoidable as long as human history and inevitably it will enrich the mani-

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the authentic arguments of the *syar'iah*. As the use of the term was gradually extended to cover meditation on and study of arguments of the *syar'iah*, it demanded a knowledge of various branches of learning; and who possessed a knowledge of them was called a *mujtahid* (A.K.S. Lambton, 1964, "A Reconsideration of the Position of the *Marja' al-Taqlid* and the Religious Institution", in *Studia Islamica*, vol. 20, p.126).

12) Mujiburrahman, 1999, "Islam and Politics in Indonesia: the Political Thought of Abdurrahman Wahid", in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 342.

13) Ulil Abshar Abdalla, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

14) Mujiburrahman, p. 342.

15) Abdurrahman Wahid, 1983, "Islam, the State, and Development in Indonesia", in Godfrey Gunatilleke, Neelan Tiruchelvam, and Radhika Coomaraswamy eds., *Ethical Dilemmas of Development in Asia*, USA: D.C. Heath and Company, p. 49.

festation of religion in human living which will create meaningful human life. Indeed both are independence toward each other but they have overlapping area such as the case with philosophy and sciences that one is not able to develop philosophy without the help of sciences but it is mistake for viewing sciences as philosophy.¹⁶⁾

Pribumisasi is to understand Islam which put the local culture into its consideration for reformulating religious law without changing the principles of law itself. It does not pretend to replace religion with culture due to it is concerned with the manifestation of the Muslim's religious life, not to replace the fundamental beliefs of Islam and its formal rituals. It is an effort to implement Islamic universal values by means of incorporating them to the system of local culture or Indonesian cultural system. By doing so, the manifestation of Islam in Indonesia is different from that in Middle East because of its different cultural system. As a result, Islamic laws (*syari'ah*) in Indonesia are slightly different from that in Middle East. This approach does not want to replace religion in opposition with the culture.¹⁷⁾

I call this approach 'historical Islam', which tries to consider thoroughly the influences of certain historical context in the implementation of Islamic law. This approach built on the assumption that it is impossible to introduce Islam within the community without understanding its culture well. For example, Islam was successful on converting Indonesians on a massive scale just after Islam was able to accommodate, corporate, and surpass the Indonesian culture and it took centuries to understand the culture. At first Islam was not introduced into Indonesian society in a doctrinal approach, considering it will contradict to fundamental beliefs of the Indonesians. Of course they modified the Islamic doctrine to fit the situation, condition, and history of the Indonesian people. The best approach was to solve the actual problems of Indonesian society at that time which I call the 'civilization strategy approach'.¹⁸⁾

16) INCReS eds., 2000, *Beyond the Symbols: Jejak Antropologis Pemikiran and Gerakan Wahid* [Beyond the Symbols: Intellectual and Political Action of Wahid], Bandung: INCReS and Rosda, p. 43.

17) Rumadi, 2003, "Abdurrahman Wahid" [Abdurrahman Wahid], in Mastuki HS and M. Ishom El-Saha eds., *Intelektualisme Pesantren: Potret Tokoh dan Cakrawala Pemikiran di Era Keemasan Pesantren* [Pesantren's Intellectual Tradition: Scholars and their Intellectual Works in Golden Era of Pesantren], Jakarta: Diva Pustaka, p. 351.

18) Saefur Rochmat, 2004, *Sejarah Islam Indonesia: Kontinuitas Tradisi dan Modernisasi* [History of Islam in Indonesia: Continuity Tradition and Modernity], Yogyakarta: BPFSS, p. 2.

The historical Islam approach will help Islamic activists to clarify the target of their mission and formulate the method and strategy of the mission. It will hinder the birth of radical Islamists who believe in the universal mission of Islam and consequently they do not agree with the Islamic historical approach which accommodates local culture. In the global context, they are in opposition with the process of modernization which is accused of being part of a Christian plot on the Islam community. They do not want to accommodate both local culture and global culture. It is not surprising, for their top-down approach into religion means that they just understand the religion as written scripturally in the Koran. Moreover, they believe that there is only one manifestation of Islam, so they often accused those who have different opinions of apostasy.¹⁹⁾

The second is to follow the modernization approach,²⁰⁾ namely reinterpreting Islam so as to be compatible with values of modern civilization, such as, the concept of democracy. However, Wahid is critical of modern civilization and tries to guide the courses of modernization in the framework of religious thought. One of his efforts is to formulate a theology of Islamic democracy. This theology of democracy is based on Islamic teachings which highly value the life of human beings which in the Enlightenment era was called humanism and then gave birth to liberalism, but he is critical of the Enlightenment era for adopting both humanism and liberalism as an ideology. As humanist Wahid respects the status and value of human beings, so that he does not tolerate any violence, especially human death in the name of ideology or revolution. Frans Magnis Suseno correctly says that Wahid is not an ideologist but a pragmatist because he will do something useful by all means without a need for binding to any abstract principles except on petty moralistic attitudes.²¹⁾ That is why Wahid often misunderstood by his opponent and his [s]hifting pronouncements, alliances and public stands have led to a joke that there are

19) Bassam Tibi, 2000, *Ancaman Fundamentalisme: Rajutan Islam Politik dan Kekacauan Dunia Baru* [The Challenge of Fundamentalism], translated by Imron Rosyidi, Zainul Abas, and Sinta Carolina, Yogyakarta : Tiara Wacana, pp. 122-123.

20) Wahid prefers to use term of dynamism which is more appropriate to explain the continuation of good old values and modernization of old values to accommodate modern civilization values.

21) Franz Magnis Suseno, 2000, "Gus Dur: Bangsa Mana di Dunia Mempunyai Presiden Seperti Kita!" [Gus Dur: No other countries have president like him], in Ahmad Suaedy and Ulil Abshar Abdalla eds., *Gila Gus Dur: Wacana Pembacaan Abdurrahman Wahid*, Yogyakarta: LKiS, pp. 19-20.

three things you can never be certain about: life, death and Gus Dur.²²⁾

The above two approaches are necessary for religion to make an effort in developing a framework for implementing fundamental Islamic values. Legalistic Islamic laws should be innovated by applying these approaches, but also should be reconciled with fundamental Islamic values. Wahid evaluates the limit of classical Islamic laws (*fiqh*) as a result of efforts of *ijtihad* by classical clerics to be implemented into the modern era. Accordingly, he suggests that Muslims revitalize the Islamic teachings by adopting modern values and institutions and by adjusting to a given culture where Islamic laws want to be implemented. In so doing, he only feels attached to the most fundamental Islamic values in order to make possible a deconstruction process of religious teachings. As long as the most fundamental Islamic value is the concept of the Oneness of the God (*tawhid*) that the God is the center of all things namely everything starts and returns to the God alone.²³⁾

Nasr²⁴⁾ describes this concept of the Oneness of the God convincingly that '*Unity is the nature of the Absolute, a method of integration, a means of becoming whole and also a means of realizing the profound oneness of all existence.*' It implies that every existence of a human being should be reconciled with the principle of "There is no God but Allah" (*La ilaha ill al-Allah*) that man should devote himself just to the God and avoid any subordinate agreements with anti-God power. It is more directly saying, to oppose the tyrannical leaders because it contradicts the vertical dimension of Islam, namely intelligence which is free from any kinds of subordination but the God.²⁵⁾

22) Seth Mydans, 1999, "Revered, Criticized by Some, and often Prankish", in *The New York Times* October 21, Online <http://proquest.umi.com/pqweb?index=23&retrieve...>, p. 2 <Accessed 2005/02/23>.

23) Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999, *Prisma Pemikiran Wahid* [The Paradigms of Wahid's Thoughts], Yogyakarta: LkiS, p. 66.

24) Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1985, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, London: Allen and Unwin.

25) Wahid is appreciated with Nasr so that he and Hasyim Wahid translates Nasr' book titled *Ideals and Realities of Islam* into Indonesian language with title *Islam dalam Cita dan Fakta*, Jakarta: Lappenas, 1981. Please see INCRoS, "Karya Tulis Intelektual Wahid" [Wahid's works], in INCRoS, 2000, *Beyond the Symbols: Jejak Antropologis Pemikiran dan Gerakan Wahid*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya and INCRoS, p. 257.

. THEOLOGY OF ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY

1. The Importance of Theology for Muslims

Wahid considers important the role of theology for religion followers who always consider all activities based on a religious point of view. For them, theology functions as the driving force and at the same time as a standard to evaluate the successes of human activities. All Muslims believe in Islamic law (*syari'ah*) and want to implement it in their life, but they are divided amongst themselves concerning their approaches and strategies. Researchers in this field have already divided these groups into four categories in regards to their strategies for formalizing *syari'ah*.

The first group believes that the formalization of *syari'ah* must be erected in a state without being associated to universal Islamic matters. Their ideology is local and contextual, limited by the territory of a nation-state and does not have a relationship with the concept of *daulah* (political power), as has global characteristics. In the Indonesian context, irrespective of other factors, this model has already taken place in form of the DI (*Darul Islam*) movement in Aceh, West Java, and Makassar. The second group has ideas to establish *syari'ah* in a global context or in other words as a universal Islam. This group basically struggles for *syari'ah* as a global system of law neglecting the territorial borders of nations-states. This group can be seen from the phenomena of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia.

The third group is convinced that the establishment of *syari'ah* should take place wherever and whenever, irrespective of the form of the state. An example of the above group is Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia. The fourth group believes that Islam does not have to be materialized in the form of the nation-state, but rather in the shape of universally recognized values. This group constitutes the majority of Indonesian Muslims who associate with religious organizations of NU or Muhammadiyah. They are not tempted to implement Islam as formal law, although in 1945 some of the followers had made efforts for it via the Jakarta Charter, and this group is not responsible for the recent movement advocating the Jakarta Charter.²⁶⁾

Theology rests on the truth so that theology is very crucial for all religious disciples and only those who are able to claim the truth have author-

26) Lies Marcoes-Natsir, 2004, "The Brittleness of a Woman's Womb in Syari'ah", in *ICIP Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 2.

ity or legitimacy over the society. Then, the question arises about what kind of authority can be claimed by them? Is it only moral authority over society? If it means political authority of rights to rule the state, the truth will be supported by political power. If Islamic truth is based on the political power, it means that Islam does not have universal values which do not need any support from political power. Considering that Islamic theology was not free from the political struggle for power as the basis of implementing the truth, it is parallel with the role of ideology in modern time.

Indeed secularists argue that modern ideology has a long reached implication compared with the previous role of ideology by religion, and they persist that the modern term of revolution was firstly used for the French Revolution in 1789. For them revolution is created by man and it is not a result of impersonal power or just historical cycles. Voltaire, one of revolutions propagators, said '*Il see fera sans un jour une grande revolution dans les esprits*', means that the actors of the revolution have already created ideology with its programs, besides formed an organization which will try to implement the ideology into reality.²⁷⁾ Meanwhile, Albert Camus elaborates the relationship between ideology and revolution as follows:

*Revolution rejects the status quo, it is, as a motivation for political behaviour, enact of choice so that it is justified by the pleasure of the future. Ideology usually provides that justification.*²⁸⁾

However, in the middle ages, theology became the arena of political contest which had misled the Islamic community at the time when some Moslems used armed forces to support their claim of truth. For that purpose they often accused the opponent of *kafir*, that is, those contravene Islamic law so that they are excluded from Moslem and made lawful of killing them. *Kafirs* have no right to hold authority over Moslems and this battle over authority fuels political unrest within Muslim communities. Amongst Muslims there is no agreement concerning those who are categorized into *kafir*, that is, someone has committed a sin. There are three basic positions on the issues of sin. First is the *Khawarij* who believes that those who have committed a sin that demands their death are *kafir*.

27) A.T. Hatto, 1972, The Semantics of 'Revolution', in P.J. Vatikiotis ed., *Revolution in the Middle East and Other Case Studies*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., p. 28.

28) P.J. Vatikiotis ed., 1972, *Revolution in the Middle East and Other Case Studies*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, p. 8.

Second is the *Murji'ah* who views such persons as still Moslems. It is up to God to forgive the big sin or not. The major Islamic sects of Sunni and Shiite follow this moderate stand. Third is the *Mu'tazilaah* who argues that those who have committed such sins are neither Moslems nor *kafirs*.

These theological sects say much about the role of the clerics in Islamic communities. As the successors of Muhammad, they have a duty to interpret the Koran and *Hadits* in conjunction with the development of the Moslem communities. In this way they supplement the mission of Muhammad. However, the contents of their *ijtihad* often contravene the core of Muhammad's mission because they are shaped by political interest. That is why Wahid is critical of the classical interpretation of Islamic theology and ideologies in general for their non-neutral attitude toward the real complexity of life and that certain groups justify violence to further their political interests.

Indeed ideology and revolution quickly acquired a negative sense just after the break out of the French Revolution. It was labeled with perpe- trating doctrine by Napoleon Bonaparte, one of the most responsible for the French Revolution in 1789. The negative connotation of the term 'ide- ology' was preserved by Marx and Engels in their attack on *Die deutsche Ideologie* (The Ideology of Germanic World), the view expressed by 'Young Hegelians' such as Ludwig Feurbach and Max Stirner, for its too preoccu- pied with ideas and the critique of ideas; it thus failed to see that ideas and 'other product of consciousness' are rooted in material conditions of social life.²⁹⁾ Of course, Wahid is not completely in agreement with Marx and Engels and as a Muslim he always tries to make balance in regarding something so that he values the same importance of all aspects of human beings that are ideas, materials, and emotion.³⁰⁾ If he places himself in Marx and Engels side it means that he is in favor of the ideology of Marx, considering that ideology is not something neutral but something of an extreme position.³¹⁾

Wahid is critical of all ideologies and theologies and he tries to man-

29) Terrell Carver, 1999, "Ideology: The Career of A Concept", in Terence Ball and Richard Dagger eds. *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader*, New York: Longman, p. 5. See also John B. Thompson, 1984, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 1.

30) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2003a, "Pentingnya sebuah Arti" [The importance of the Meaning], in <http://www.gusdur.net/indonesia/print.asp?contentOID=1071>, pp. 1-2 <Accessed 2004/05/06>.

31) John B. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

age the dialogue in the middle of conflicting Islamic theologies by the means of the process of democracy. Concerning the problem of the different religious pillars of beliefs between Shiite and Sunni sects, Wahid follows the tradition of modern Islamic thinking from Mahmud Shaltut and Fazlur Rahman. Following Mahmud Shaltut's responses, Fazlur Rahman challenges the Sunni to take Islamic universal values such as justice and equality into their pillars of religion because these pillars are also very important to be implemented into Muslim religious life. It is not surprising that Fazlur Rahman and Wahid have the same responses concerning the Shiite sect and the Mu'tazilah sect which take the principles of justice into their religious pillars constituting the five pillars of religion (*al-Mabdi al-Khamsah*).³²⁾

However, after judging all the above universal Islamic values, Wahid comes to the conclusion that democracy is the most fundamental value for Muslims to take into their religious pillar and it, of course, should be implemented in conjunction with other Islamic values. He criticizes the limit of the Shiite justice pillar due to its potential exclusive character to be claimed as ideology 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 discard the nature of justice itself.³³⁾

Wahid correctly evaluates the Islamic Republic of Iran as a likely classical example of the stolen revolution. At first the Iranian Revolution in 1979 became a medium for all political powers to participate in the revolutionary process, but then it turned into the clerical revolution by means of the Islamic Republic of Iran Party. As a result, the Islamic Republic of Iran was a kind of monolithic religious interpretation and its homogenous religious bodies consolidated the forces of only one major political power which won the revolution and to protect their power from other groups by excluding them from the political process or at least by minimizing, to the lowest level, their influences.³⁴⁾

Wahid agrees with the liberation movement, but he does not tolerate the revolutionary method in the name of the people. It is usual for the rev-

32) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2004, "Konsep-Konsep Keadilan"[The Concepts of Justice], in <http://media.isnet.org/islam/Paramadina/Konteks/Keadilan.html>, p. 1 <Accessed 2004/09/22>.

33) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

34) Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

olutionary movement to find justification from ideology. For instance, the Islamic Republic of Iran tries to find justification from the theology of justice which mingles with the theology of Imamate.³⁵⁾ According to Wahid, the real liberation movement occurs when all man are able to develop their own potential capabilities. It is impossible for the revolutionary method to purport this liberation because of its favor of one major political force. That is why Wahid correctly concludes that the true liberation movement is a non-ideological movement, namely a movement without any particular based 'isms'.³⁶⁾

He does not agree with the Marxism-Leninism's model of transformation which contends that transformation just starts at the time of seizing the power and views on the events that happened before it just a preparation for that transformation. This model also justifies the existence of an *avant guard* of the revolution which will lead the course of the revolution as well as guarantee the revolution not to be misused by those who are irresponsible. Wahid agrees with Marx and Lenin's analysis on socio-economic matters but he is opposed to ideology of Marxism-Leninism as he is critical of all ideologies. For him, transformation occurs before power is diverted into a monopoly of a certain group in the name of ideology. Transformation will happen in the form of the attitudes of all members of the society through the educational process which will last for a long duration.³⁷⁾

2. Theology of Islamic Democracy

The Theology of Islamic democracy is one effort in directing the true meaning of democracy based on the overarching Islamic concept of the Oneness of the God. Considering that democracy is an essentially contested concept whose meaning is disputed and defined in different ways by different ideologies.³⁸⁾ Wahid defines democracy not as an ideology but as an *idea* that different ideologies interpret in different ways. This concept is shared with Terence Ball and Richard Dagger.³⁹⁾

35) *Ibid.*, p. 167.

36) *Ibid.*, p. 170.

37) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2000b, *Tuhan Tidak Perlu Dibela* [The God Does Not Need a Vanguard], Yogyakarta: LKiS, p. 165.

38) Terence Ball and Richard Dagger eds., 1999, *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader*, New York: Longman, p. 2.

39) *Ibid.*, p. 1

The formulation of the theology of Islamic democracy is very important to challenge the above other three strategies of implementing Islamic laws. As cleric Wahid feels such responsibility to formulate theology of Islamic democracy as guidance for Muslims to participate in modern era. If this mainstream of thought develops well in Muslim countries he believes that the other three strategies will fail in their mission. His concern is the spread of secularism which follows the process of secularization in the modern era. By so doing he tries to minimize the global diseases of secularism.

He chooses the concept of democracy as an overarching concept in Islam, however it should be in accordance with the sole Islamic concept of the 'concept of Oneness of God'. He believes that the concept of democracy is more appropriate than the concept of justice to be included into the pillars of religion because it does not like the concept of justice which has a potentially exclusive values, but it just a method of regulating life properly.

In conjunction with the concept of the Oneness of the God, the theology of democracy rests on the truth. It becomes invalid for democracy to hide the truth beyond the instrumental apparatus of democracy, such as institutions and the principle of the majority vote. It implies that the legitimacy of the government depends on the modern concept of democracy and the fundamental Islamic concept of knowledge (translated as truth). The latter aspect is also a requirement for assuming religious leadership in the Islamic communities. Subsequently, it is not enough to introduce the institutions of democracy without developing democratic traditions such as it tolerates some opinions; people are the same beyond the laws; and it establishes a law-enforcement. Meanwhile, the majority vote should be consulted with the truth which can be operated in its consistency with the principle of justice applied to all man without discrimination regardless of their religious background, their nationality, their ethnicity, and so on. It implies that democracy accommodates all elements of political forces, regardless of how insignificant their power.⁴⁰⁾

Wahid's theology of democracy is built on two components of Islamic theology concerning the arrangement of society as follows:⁴¹⁾

40) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2002, *Abdurrahman Wahid Selama Era Lengser* [Abdurrahman Wahid's Post Presidency Era], Yogyakarta: LKiS, pp. 230-231.

41) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, *Menggerakkan Tradisi: Esai-Esai Pesantren* [Revitalizing the Traditions of Islam], Yogyakarta: LKiS, pp. 146-147.

1. How to arrange living (the nature of Islamic human life), and
2. How to manage power.

The above theology is in consistent with his political thought to establish the notion of Islamic universalism and cosmopolitanism which is reflected in the Islamic law principle of the protection of five basic human needs that are protection of self, property, religion, family and profession. These five protections can be achieved by practicing three principles of universal values of Islam as the nature of Islamic human life that are equality (*musawah*), justice (*'adalah*), and democracy (*syura*).⁴²⁾ In Islam, all activities should be based on these three principles which should be arranged neatly to fulfill historical needs by accommodating the unique demands in the specific time and space. That is why Wahid in promoting democracy encourages the other two principles of justice and equality at the same time. Indeed he highly values democracy as the most essential nature of Islamic life because of its natural difficulty to be claimed as the absolute truth.

On the contrary, Tocqueville is completely correct in his saying 'to live in democracy is to live in doubt and it is fully human'. He makes a good metaphor as follows:

One could perhaps compare democracy to the sun that produces light by rolling impetuously over itself and in ceaselessly agitating all of the molecules of which [it is made up].⁴³⁾

Indeed, Tocqueville shares the same concept with Wahid of the role of divinity as the ultimate source of the truth, but it is only in *Das Sein* not in *Das Solen*.⁴⁴⁾ It implies that democracy rests on the truth, but according to him there is no absolute truth, so that it makes sense that democracy gives individual an authority to search continuously for the truth, but he reminds us of no absolute truth. In other words, democracy is the process of thought, and it resembles a syllogism always in search of a conclusion. For him, the world is a closed book, empty of truths and of an absolute

42) Mujiburrahman, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

43) Eduardo Nolla, 1992, "Introduction", in Eduardo Nolla ed., *Liberty, Equality, Democracy*, New York: New York University Press, p. xx.

44) Jean Pierre Dupuy, 2005, "Tocqueville on Democratic Despotism", *Lecture Material of Political Anthropology*, Kyoto: Ritsumeikan University, p. 12.

system so that he criticized correctly the practice of democracy in the United States, where “everyone closes himself off ...completely, and claims from this vintage point to be able to judge the world.”⁴⁵⁾

It is wrong to view democracy as ideology due to its continuously moving concept. If one tries to stop it from moving he has treated democracy as an ideology because he tries to exclude others from participating in the political power arrangement. It is unjustifiable for claiming a vanguard of democracy, but at the same time excluding the existence of minority groups. It means that democracy is in opposite to ideology which justifies revolution or exclusion of other groups in the political process for the purpose of major political power, of course, in the name of people, by claiming it as the vanguard of justice or equality.

As a continuously moving concept, democracy is always critical to the status quo and will demand equality, and the love of equality constantly increases together with equality itself.⁴⁶⁾ Tocqueville evaluates correctly that America is a democratic state but their people should not stop encouraging democracy due to its threat, in his view, caused by the tyranny of public opinion on freedom of thought. He is worried about the dominance of the principle of rule by majority as it consequently devaluates the quality of rational thinking by individual.⁴⁷⁾

Concerning democracy is critical to the status quo it engages with managing the power the second component of theology of Islamic democracy. It should follow the above three characteristics of nature of Islamic human life which will be transformed into applying the principle of checks and balances by accepting the existence of all political groups.⁴⁸⁾ Hoshino Toshiya calls this democracy as endogenous democracy for its respect with the concept of power sharing.⁴⁹⁾ Based on the concept of power sharing, Wahid develops a unique concept of check and balance by developing cultural approach which will be implemented gradually by means of evolutionary process so that it will not develop its own structure with its own

45) Eduardo Nolla, *op. cit.*, p. xix.

46) Jean Pierre Dupuy, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

47) *Ibid.*, p. 7.

48) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2005, “NU dan Kekuatan Politik” [NU and Political Power], in *Duta Masyarakat* <http://www.dutamasyarakat.com/detailkajian.php?id=552>, p. 2 <Accessed 2005/02/11>.

49) Hoshino Toshiya, “Security Communities, Power-Sharing, and Preventive Diplomacy”, p. 65.

ideology, but it tries to find some friends in the existing structure to indignity simultaneous liberation.⁵⁰⁾

The principle of check and balance is also applicable to deal with conflicting concepts of the rights of individual and of state as the source of authority.⁵¹⁾ Wahid elaborates both rights based on Koran (2: 177) which demarcates them with a line of which should be defined clearly by the Muslims. Besides respecting their own rights, a demarcation line is an area for mutual interferences between the individual rights of the Theology of Belief (*Rukun Iman*) and the societal rights of the Theology of the Religious Duties (*Rukun Islam*).⁵²⁾ This area of mutual interference is called by Wahid of the Theology of Public Affairs (*Rukun Sosial*) in which its mission is to provide social welfare. For that purpose, he offers the Theology of Islamic Democracy.⁵³⁾

The public affairs are to implement the truth as a manifestation of *tawhid*, the principle of the Oneness of the God. The normative criterions of the truth should be implemented in real situations gradually because the truth is not just a matter of rational product but also implies an action to implement it in the worldly life. Consequently man should avoid any violence means or in the name of the majority forcing to implementing the truth. Democrats should apply by means of consultation with all political groups to reach approved collective programs, besides providing compensates to certain groups and preparing the necessary conditions for the implementation for collective programs. Accepting the existence of other groups is a fundamental condition for the democratic process and is a condition for mutual dialogue. Dialogue is an arena to search for an applicable truth and commitment of all parties, and it does not pretend to reach the final truth but to search collective programs for enhancement of the

50) Abdurrahman Wahid, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

51) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

52) The Muslims believe in the pillars of belief (*Rukun Iman*) and the pillars of Islam (*Rukun Islam*). Wahid prefers to use terms of theology than pillars but it causes confusing for its application to the theology of Islam because the latter should be applied to Islam as a whole. Formerly the Muslims use theology is only referred to the pillars of belief but now some have tried to use more loosely to the in-depth analytical of all knowledge which rest on the claim of the truth. It is not surprising that the modern development of theology mingles with philosophy and social sciences. I name the socially theology of religious duties for *Rukun Islam* because to be Muslim it means that he should perform religious duties as a part of fulfilling Islamic law (*syari'ah*).

53) *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149.

quality, and standard of life.⁵⁴⁾ Wahid's view of the importance of the principles of checks and balances is the continuation of what classical Islamic thinkers adopted from Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who regarded politics as 'meant ministering to the affairs of the *polis* [community]'.⁵⁵⁾

Based on the above two components, to manage the society in Islam, Wahid convincingly argues that Islam is a religion of democracy.⁵⁶⁾ Indeed he admits at macro level the majority of Islamic countries fall into non-democratic states,⁵⁷⁾ besides, there have not been many attempts to accommodate Islamic laws to modern civilization. At most, Islam as open text, that teaches man through symbols, provides an arena for reinterpretation. Indeed, it is a great and difficult task to reinterpret religious matters. Considering the above difficulties, Wahid tries to launch revitalization programs in religious affairs, not through legal Islamic laws (*fiqh*), but through religious thinking.⁵⁸⁾

Wahid proposes some arguments to support his belief of Islam as a religion of democracy as follows:⁵⁹⁾

1. Islam is a religion of law which defines Islamic laws, as applied to all Muslims, without discriminating against their social class, from the political elite down to the layman. Without such conditions, Islamic laws will not materialize in human life.
2. Islam acknowledges the principles of democracy (*Amruhum syuura bainahum*), to discuss all matters amongst the people, which means that they are free to propose their thoughts to the public and then they can try to reach agreements.
3. Islam always tries to innovate the living, because this worldly life is

54) Saefur Rochmat, 2005, "Aspek Immaterial dalam Modernisasi" [Immaterial Aspects of Modernization], in *Inovasi*, Vol.3/XVII/Maret 2005, <http://io-ppi-jepang.org/article.php>, p. 67. <Accessed 2005/04/04>.

55) Farhang Rajae, 1983, *Islamic Values and World View*, Boston: University Press of America Inc, 52.

56) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2000a, *Membangun Demokrasi* [Establishing Democracy], Bandung: Rosdakarya, pp. 85-86.

57) Steven Ryan Hofmann, 2004, "Islam and Democracy: Micro-Level Indications of Compatibility", in *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 37, no. 6, pp. 652-676.

58) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2003, "Education in A Reinterpretation Process", in Online http://www.gusdur.net/english/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=77&Itemid=67, pp. 1-2 <Accessed 2005/07/19>.

59) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2000a, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86

in preparation to the hereafter life (*Waakhiratu khairau waabqa*), and the hereafter life is better, and is a permanent life. Consequently, the human life level is not static but is in progress to welcome life in the hereafter. In other words, the standard for a good life is in the hereafter, and consequently, this worldly life should be directed to life in the hereafter. Essentially, it is the principle of democracy which implies the collective efforts to innovate life, so Islam called the religion of innovation (*diinul islah*).

Wahid's view on the third point is similar to Nurcholish Madjid and Khomeini who interpret verses (1:6) "*Ihdina al-sirat al-mustaqim*" (guide me to the straight path). In their view, Islam views man as God's creature, which in essence is positive thought and optimistic (*fitrah*), but at the same time has potential limitations. The God sent down Muhammad, the messenger, to explain the meaning of the Koran because of the God's guidance in the Koran in general. Concerning worldly affairs, Muslims are challenged to do *ijtihad*, however, it should be done collectively, due to man's limitations and the complexity of their problems. In the social mechanism, *ijtihad* fosters democracy through a series of discussions and the contestation of arguments by all participants in public, besides they ask guidance from God so as to be able to reach agreements.⁶⁰⁾

. THEOLOGY OF ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ETHIC

Putting the concept of democracy into the theology of Islamic democracy is necessary, for theology is not just concerned with religious matters, but also tied with social context in which the theology is based on for having justification. Now the concept of democracy has become a universal value so that all states try to adopt democracy into their governmental system. Moreover, authoritarian regimes also try to obtain their legitimacy by adopting institutions of democracy.⁶¹⁾

Wahid's obsession to put democracy into the theology of Islam is parallel with his mission to transform *fiqhi qaulaini* tradition into the mod-

60) Masykuri Abdillah, 1999, *Demokrasi Dipersimpangan Makna*, [Democracy and its Confusing Values], Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, p. 83. Wahid and Madjid look like follow Khomeini who interpreted Koran (1: 6). For Khomeini's view please see Farhang Rajaei, 1983, *Islamic Values and World View*, Boston: University Press of America Inc, p. 52.

61) Masykuri Abdillah, *ibid.*, p. 72.

ern era. It is due to his mourn to see that, up to now, just the secular world ideologies which have been leading the process of history, meanwhile religion has little impact on it. This situation forges him to formulate the theology of Islamic democracy as a kind of Islamic revivalism which accommodates modern values. By doing so, Islam will be able to participate in the modern era by developing a democracy which is rooted in religious thought, besides to determine the standards of democracy which are substantively parallel with Islamic universal values. At result, he hopes that the process of secularization in modern life will not divert to secularism which ignores moral guidance from religion.

Theology of Islamic democracy is not an exclusive theology so that it invites non-Muslims to carry out a series of dialogues which will socialize a religious concept of democracy in Indonesia. Wahid also persuades non-Muslims to formulate the same theology based on their respectively religions. In his view, if people are able to adopt some ideas of democracy through religious means it will lead political life in Indonesia to become more democratic. Moreover, believers of all religions will unify into one big theme a political democracy with roots in religious understanding in their religions. At last, religious life is colorized by the commitment of democracy so that political life also becomes democratic.⁶²⁾ This theology of democracy will purport the static toleration concept of co-existence into the passionate toleration concept of love and affection each other.⁶³⁾

Wahid's proposal to encourage dialogue amongst religions has global outreach by inviting all religious leaders and scholars from all quarters of the world. They will discuss and formulate the global ethic as a manifestation of universal values of religions in substantive form, for protecting secularization in the globalization era from becoming secularism. The forces of secularism behind the globalization process are very strong and endanger the existence of humanism as the essence of the universal mission of religion. That is why it is not sufficient for the Muslim alone to challenge this monstrous force of globalization. Subsequently, Wahid is not convenient with the idea of Islamic revivalism promoted by most Muslims, both radical groups and the Muslim majority alike.

62) Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, 2000, "Pembawa Bangsa Pascatradisional" [Post-traditional Leader], in INCRoS eds., *Beyond the Symbols: Jejak Antropologis Pemikiran dan Gerakan Wahid*, Bandung: Rosda and INCRoS, p. 187.

63) Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

If all followers of religion are able to reach an agreement on a common religious missionary target to challenge the secularism movement it means that they are able to halt or at least minimize religious conflicts which are often rooted in conversion issues to other religions. Having a common religious missionary target such as the Islamic vision, due to Islamic missionary, is not just for Muslims but for all people, therefore, we should consider that this mission does not mean to convert them into Muslims. Islamic mission is not to force people into becoming Muslim, but to promote Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alami* (as blessing for all humanity). Concerning their intention to convert to Islam or not is just matter of the God's guidance (*hidayah*), because we can not force them enter into Islam. If we force them they will become Muslim formally, but deep in their heart not Islam. Missionary activities should be done in the framework of dialogue amongst people not based on competition amongst believers which often leads to violence amongst believers.

Wahid, indeed, agrees with the secularization approach but he does not agree with secularism which ignores the existence of God in worldly life. Absolutely he agrees to judge worldly life such as in managing societal and state affairs based on the secularization approach. He considers that worldly life are secular affairs for the God by means of the Holy Koran, which does not ordain the matters in detail, just provides guidance of them in order for society or the state run effectively. Meanwhile, Wahid categories into the religious affairs what are ordained specifically in the Koran, namely, ritual ceremonies and procession (*ibadah mahdlah*) which the God have ordained specifically in the Koran, or by means of Muhammad in the *Hadits*. Indeed, worldly life such as state affairs fixes well by secularization laws as stated by Attas "History is a process of secularization. History of the future is open to change and man is free to create the change."⁶⁴⁾

However, Wahid does not agree with secularism for his conscious belief is that the substantively religious values should guide this worldly life, such as, state affairs in order to be able to run the state effectively. To protect secularization from secularism he draws on the relationship between religion and the state as like the relationship between the soul and body of man. Religion which represents a soul should influence the

64) Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1993, *Islam and Secularism*, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, pp. 16-19.

spirit of state apparatus in running state affairs, and the state as a body needs the inducement of moral ethics from religion. In this matter, the existence of the state is not just a matter of a secular contractual agreement amongst people but to view state as body which is fundamental for implementing universal values as God's substantial teachings. Meanwhile, religion has a mission to establish a justice in the world.⁶⁵⁾

CONCLUSION

People often misunderstand modern era is inevitably secular as a result of the influence of secularists' view that the world develops through three stages that are myth, religion, and modern. The secular character was clearly evidence in the early modern era when the Renaissance era which pretended to introduce humanism faced by the church for its support for theocratic state. Consequently, secularists became sure to build the theory of humanism based on the mythology of Classical Greek, which views that there exists a conflicting and fighting status between sky (God's sphere) and earth (man's sphere) so that both hate each other. Because of the bad experience with theocratic state, European supported the conception of democracy to overthrow the theocratic state so that some people assumed that to establish a democratic state means to promote secularism.

Secularists believed that by nature man is good so that he must be given freedom to develop his ability which then manifests into liberalism. Liberalism demanded the government not offend the rights of human beings which were inherently received by man at birth. It was to criticize an absolute government of the theocratic system and offered the conception of democracy as the only political system which would support the existence of human rights. Then, democracy was intended to overthrow the theocratic states in Europe and tried to find justification from the people to establish a secular state, namely, a state governed not by priests but by the people.

Liberal-capitalists claiming themselves as the valid inheritor of liberalism waged revolution to overthrow the ruling feudal class which tried to

65) Marzuki Wahid and Rumadi, 2001, *Fiqih Madzhab Negara: Kritik Atas Politik Hukum Islam di Indonesia* [State-supported Islamic School of Law: Critic to politic of Islamic law in Indonesia], Yogyakarta: LKiS, p. 30.

find its justification by means of religion. Capitalists was successful in struggling for power but they, then, failed to fulfill their promise for salvation and welfare to all people due to liberalism treated life following to jungle law “survival of the fittest”. Marxism revised it with the conception of society without class, giving all people the same welfare. For that purpose Marxism also waged revolution in the name of the people to overthrow the greedy capitalist class. However communism also failed to fulfill its promise after causing a lot of human death in the revolution due to its contradiction with human nature of competition. Moreover, in 1989 as an ideology communism collapsed after strong political power was not able to support it.

After scrutinizing the conceptions of humanism, liberalism, human rights, and democracy I conclude that the above conceptions are secularism namely in that they rest on the fulfillment of material aspect of human beings. This research agrees with the secular approach to manage human affairs such society, state and the international sphere, but it contends with the conceptions which rests the truth on the fulfillment of material aspect of human being. It criticizes the world ideologies both capitalism and communism which use revolutionary means to obtain their aims because they cause human death which is in contradiction with humanism as the feature of modernity.

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- See also John B. Thompson, 1984, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
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