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The Tension between Religion and Democracy¹

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Abstrak

Kebangkitan agama yang menandai kondisi sejarah beberapa dasawarsa ini menyingskap cacat serius pada perspektif modernisasi tentang tempat agama dalam kehidupan publik, dan memaksa para ilmuwan sosial menemukan rute pemahaman baru. Artikel ini berfokus pada bagaimana fundamentalisme agama dalam coraknya dewasa ini perlu dipahami bukan sebagai bentuk tradisionalisme tetapi sebagai salah satu gerak-balik yang integral dalam kondisi modernitas. Terutama dibahas masalah relasi yang semakin mengganggakan antara daya fundamentalis agama dan prasyarat demokratis penataan masyarakat. Ditunjukkan sekurangnya dua faktor sentral yang menjadi lokus tegangan. Pertama, kemajemukan sebagai prasyarat niscaya demokrasi bersitegang dengan keyakinan absolutis fundamentalis. Kedua, keyakinan fundamentalis bersitegang dengan demokrasi sebagai bentuk sekularisasi kedaulatan otoritas politik. Dengan belajar dari perdebatan tentang tempat agama di ruang publik, beberapa pokok bagi prospek ko-eksistensi antara daya-agama dan daya-demokrasi dibahas.

Abstract

The growing revival of religious sentiments in the past few decades exposes serious faults in the explanatory power of the so-called modernization theories, urging social scientists to seek new avenues in understanding the phenomena. The article focuses on the way the present character of religious fundamentalism needs to be understood not as a form of traditionalism but as one of the springboard effects inseparable from hybrid modernity. In particular, it highlights the tension between religious fundamentalism and democracy as revolving around at least two points. One is the antinomy between diversity as the sine-qua-non of democracy and the absolutist tendency of fundamentalist beliefs, and the other a collision between the secular and sacral conceptions of sovereignty. By learning from the debates on the place of religion in the public sphere, the article outlines some points for the prospect of co-existence between religion and democracy.

Keywords: religious fundamentalism; democracy; hybridity; purity; secular

¹Original text in Indonesian, translated by Indra V. A. Krishnamurti.

INTRODUCTION

The late Václav Havel, a writer, leader of a democracy movement and president of Czechoslovakia, and later the Czech Republic, between 1990-2003, was not known for his religiosity. After visiting a number of countries early during his presidency, in 1995, Havel invited Elie Wiesel, a Romanian-born writer, to start what was widely known as Forum 2000.

Forum 2000 gathered Nobel laureates, leading writers, scientists and thinkers known to have shaped the world in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. What Havel and Wiesel pioneered was a programmatic dialogue on the condition and future of the world. The first meeting of Forum 2000 was held in Prague in 1997, and was later held annually in the capital of the Czech Republic. Until 2005, among the varied topics of the annual meeting, three issues became prominent: globalization, religious conflict, and the future of democracy.

In the keynote speech of the first Forum 2000 in 1997, Havel proposed the urgent principal markers of history. One of them was the following:

Along with the process of global stretching, this explosion occurs: the rise of nations and regions demanding back, often very aggressively, recognition of their way of life and unique identity, their tradition, their history, their customs, their culture, their gods. [...] Those who do not understand this condition understand nothing. [...] Could the fact that we only think as narrowly as our scope, and the inability to embrace what lies elsewhere, both temporally and spatially, are the result of the loss of the ability to evaluate our actions from the viewpoint of eternity? (Havel 2007:19).

The initial part of the quote is not new. In these last decades, many experts have mentioned the simultaneous pattern of the explosion of globalism and localism. However, the second part of the quote is rather surprising to have come from Václav Havel. Havel was not making an escape to the spirit world; neither was he demanding the listeners to stand “from the viewpoint of eternity.” Havel was signaling one of the possibilities why religions (alongside claims of ethnicity and identity politics) were rising up furiously as globalization was rolling in.

What Havel stated was as if a thunderclap, appearing for an instant, but disappearing without providing a clear enough explanation.

However, his statement was an important marker in understanding the increasingly tense relationship between religion and democracy. One point here needs clarification, as the terms 'religion' and 'democracy' are too broad. The term 'religion' refers to the relational practice referring to a superhuman power believed to control the life condition of the believers (Riesebrodt 2014:6). However, religious revival in these last few decades does not imply an inevitable conflict with democracy. As will be discussed, what is being referred to is more specific, namely the fundamentalist character of religious beliefs based on literal interpretations of texts/teachings, bringing exclusive claims of identity in the relations with other believers and the modern secular life (Ruthven 2007:5-6), or in relation to political ideology (Tibi 1998:13). This claim is difficult to reconcile with the principles of equality and diversity, which constitute prerequisites to the democratic process (Parekh 2005:338-342). While equality and diversity are not categorically identical to democracy, the term 'democracy' here refers to the prerequisites of equality and diversity in a democratic political arrangement (cf. Dahl 1998:62-68), not the electoral procedures that become the method of democracy.

Based on such a background, this article attempts to answer the following question: in which issues, and why, religious fundamentalism is at odds with the prerequisites of democracy? In responding to the question, this article proposes the importance of two explaining factors. First, the character of equality in the diversity of the democratic process is in tension with fundamentalist absolutist belief. Second, fundamentalist belief is in tension with democracy as a form of secularization of the sovereign authority.

RESEARCH METHOD

The proposal of the two factors above does not necessarily mean that they are the sole explaining factors. The causes of a phenomenon are obviously multidimensional, and the multidimensional characteristics vary between contexts, both spatial and temporal. Causal variations are unavoidable, but also imply the risk of nominalism, i.e. the tendency to observe each phenomenon as being unique in itself, resulting in the attempt of creating conceptual generations becoming a futility. Methodologically, this means the impossibility of conceptualization; yet, phenomena cannot be understood without a network of conceptual categories or an analytical framework. Such an analytical framework

could be derived from various sources, from accumulation of data, lens of analogy, cases, or theoretical insights. What is methodologically significant is whether a certain analytical framework assists in the continuous dialogue between ideas and evidence (Ragin 1994:58-62).

In such a methodological light, this article has the character of hypothesis construction, which is an important element of what is called “analysis of the current condition with practical intents” (Habermas 1988:42). As a hypothetical construction, it has an exploratory character; what is proposed “always gives emphasis on certain factors in the universe of other factors.” The criterion for the selection of the factor is the analytical relevance that helps the dialogue between the world of ideas and the world of the empirical, which drives research (cf. Hedström, Swedberg, Udéhn 1998:351-353). Thus this article operates at the conceptual exploration plane. Several trends are presented as evidence and counter evidence to what in a methodical process called a ‘possibilism’ moment to gauge the analytical strength in explaining trends (cf. Hirschman 2001:96).

Through the possibilism process, the first part of this article will discuss the tensions between hybridity and purity that can be understood as the cultural context of the tension between religious fundamentalism and the democratic prerequisite of equality in diversity. The second part will show two central explaining factors in order to understand the tension. The third part will observe the implications of the two factors to the possibility of coexistence between the powers of religion and democracy. The article will then end with a summary in conclusion.

THE TENSION BETWEEN HYBRIDITY AND PURITY

Any search for religious teaching (either as foundation or legitimacy) that explicitly agrees or supports the theory and practice of democracy is a futile attempt. Even if possible, such relation between religion and democracy can only be recognized in an obscure manner, through tracing the evolution of the theology and teachings of religion.² In theologies

²In the case of Christianity, for example, the politico-theological affinity cannot be found explicitly in the Bible. The correspondence is a result of a lengthy evolution of theological reflection that began in first century A.D. and reinterpreted continually by theologians in their dialogues with different times. For a study on the evolution of the affinity, see e.g. Siedentop (2014).

that consider the secular as the opposition of the sacred, the relation between religion and democracy will tend to be antagonistic. On the other hand, in theologies considering secularization not as an opponent of the sacred, the relation between religion and democracy is not understood as an opposition. In other words, anthropology is not the antithesis of theology, as anthropocentrism is not the opponent of theocentrism.

Through archeology of knowledge, for example, Michel Foucault found that between 1580 and 1660, a secularization process developed, rooted in the idea of incarnation, within the Christian theology. Secularization of the idea about the society occurred through the concept of the *raison d'état*, which evolved through the ideas of thinkers such as Machiavelli, while the secularization of the ideas about nature occurred through *principia naturae*, which evolved through the thinking of Galileo et al. (Foucault 2007:236). The core idea is that God reigns over the universe, not through the direct governance of the transcendent power towards the immanent world, but through laws and principles that can be understood by human reason, with logics that can be understood through mathematical measurement and methods. Similarly, God reigns over humanity in the order of society, not through a sacred category that cannot be understood by humanity, but through principles that can be understood through human causality in a space-time category (*saeculum*). Reason is a great gift from God to humanity to understand natural causality and human causality. Thus, anthropocentrism is not seen as a counter argument to theocentrism. Through this route, the attempts to uncover natural and human causalities are not efforts to oppose God, but in fact are part and parcel of the obligation and realization of faith in God. From this route as well, the idea of political sovereignty developed, which in turn gave rise to the idea of democracy (Siedentop 2014:219-221).

Thus, understanding the relations between religion and democracy is not done through finding passages in the sacred texts that allegedly support democracy. This might sound as pious; however it will not result in a significant result. Not only because not every religion has a 'holy book'; within one religious text, one can easily find passages that conflict with each other. While it is not difficult to find religious leaders who claim that the scriptures of their religion fit the values of democracy, it is not difficult either to find other clerics of the same religion who use the same scriptures to oppose democracy.

Or, is the problem located in the extent of which religious teachings have an affinity in their ethical values with democracy? While this route is much less primitive than trying to find passages that support democracy, this also finds serious difficulties. Religious values that do not oppose, maybe even support, democracy may be easily found in 'official' teachings guarded by official holders of religious authority. However, the fiction of a religious authority is not easily fulfilled. Even within a single religion, there can be serious differences on religious authority, such as between Shia and Sunni Islam, or between Protestant and Catholic Christianity. The comparison of hierarchical leadership is made even more difficult by the issue of commensurability between religious institutions: the authority of one religion is not necessarily equivalent to the authority of another religion. Furthermore, the value affinity of religious teaching and democracy is especially experienced in real life practice. Here, we meet with an issue: while various attempts of dialogue are made, in practice, the relations between religious values and democratic values are becoming more distant. This is why the relations between religion and democracy continue to simmer. Forum 2000 is one of the examples in responding to the issue.

Thus, it is necessary to take a different route. The main issue is not the affinity between religious values and democratic values, but the increasingly antagonistic relation between the power of religion and the power of democracy. Such a shift of issue will be difficult to understand without placing the issues in the historical context of globalization that has occurred in the last few decades. This is a historical period recognized as a period when "the power of religion forces itself out as a public power, marker of ethnic identity, shaping modern personality and their way of life; the face of religious awakening has become a global phenomenon" (Riesebrodt 2014:2). While much of the attention has been directed towards Islam, the fundamentalist nature of religious awakening is also apparent in other religions: Christian fundamentalism in the United States, Hindu religious nationalism in India and a Buddhist counterpart in Sri Lanka, and also Sikh religious nationalism in the whole of South Asia, Jewish fundamentalism in Israel, and also various forms of fundamentalism in small religious sects, such as Aum Shinrikyo, widely known for its poison gas attacks in the Tokyo subway network, 20 March 1995.³

³Other than the varied publications of research and analysis by The American Academy

Among policymakers, fundamentalism of religions other than Islam does not receive much attention, as these religions are considered to lack an expansionist drive to export their worldview, and thus are not considered to cause a global security issue (Kumar 2004:440). Especially the issue of religious fundamentalism is observed in relation to the impact of potential violence. In the regular global survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, for example, an increasing concern toward extremism related to Islamic fundamentalism has been identified. With an average random sample size of 1000 respondents in 21 countries interviewed, between 2011 and 2015, the level of concern in France jumped from 29 to 67 percent, in Germany from 26 to 46 percent, in Nigeria from 50 to 68 percent, in Pakistan from 39 to 48 percent, and in Lebanon from 55 to 67 percent (Pew Research Center 2015).

While this does not happen all in a sudden, this phenomenon has shocked the social science academia, which has long been lulled by a certain world view on the role of religion in the modern life, i.e. the modernization theory.⁴ While the theory is marked with internal variations, in general, the line of reasoning circulates on the variables of value with an opposition between traditionalism and modernity (Gilman 2003:86).⁵ The theory of modernization combines the descriptive and prescriptive claims of change as process how society and government change from a traditional character to a modern character, related to cultural, personal, economic, political, legal and religious values. With sociologist Talcott Parsons as the central figure, the modernization theory involves social scientists such as David McClelland,

of Arts and Sciences through The Fundamentalism Project (See note 6 below), the variety of patterns of religious revival taking the form of fundamentalism can be seen in an ever growing body of literature. See e.g. Juergensmeyer (2000); Armstrong (2000); Weinberg and Pedahzur (eds.) (2004); Berman (2010); Buruma (2010).

⁴As a sociological school of thought, the modernization theory developed rapidly after the Second World War. Its genesis was the result of the convergence of two major factors: the need for the foreign policy direction of the United States towards poor countries in its rivalry with the Soviet Union, and the academic atmosphere in the social sciences (especially sociology, political science and anthropology) orbiting around Talcott Parsons in the Department of Social Relations, Harvard University. For a study on the rise of the modernization theory, see e.g. Gilman (2003).

⁵For example, the opposition of traditional values vs. modern values includes the following oppositions: particularism vs. universalism, ascription vs. achievement, affectivity vs. affective neutrality, diffuseness vs. specificity. See Gilman (2003:86).

Alex Inkeles, Edward Shils, S. N. Eisenstadt, Neil Smelser, Marion Levy, Daniel Lerner, Clifford Geertz, Robert Bellah (Gilman 2003:74). A classic example of modernization theory is Daniel Lerner's book, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958). The book is subtitled *Modernizing the Middle East, betraying its orientation*. With a typology of three types of personalities as the conceptual network of the research (traditional, transitional and modern), Lerner points at "modernization as a psychic mobility" between worldviews: traditional to modern, rural to urban, local to cosmopolitan, illiterate to literate, passivity to activity, and piety to secularity (Lerner 1958:13;69;71).

The last binary opposition mentioned above more or less summarizes the viewpoint of the modernization theory on the power of religion (obviously with variations). As with particular ethnic sentiments, religions are viewed as an irrational and traditional syndrome of power, that sooner or latter, will fade as a process of rationalization in the modern way of life takes function. At least, religion is expected to be marginalized from the public life, and becomes part of the private. One of the examples of this latter view is Thomas Luckmann's *Invisible Religion* (1967). The key to understand the place of religion in the modern life is the discrepancy of what Luckmann called "institutional religiosity" to fulfill the need for an industrial personality marked by the autonomy of the private sphere. This discrepancy is becoming more acute, and brings the inevitability of private religiosity, not as an opponent of the institutional religion doctrine, but as the liberation of the quest for the ultimate meaning as experienced in the modern life conditions. This "hidden religion" is an "individualist socio-historical trend", and Luckmann even argued, "the possibilities that the trend can be halted are few" (Luckmann 1967:114;117). In short, invisible religion is the power of religion that disappears from the public location, and finds a haven in the private sphere.⁶

In the words of Casanova, the error lies in the tendency of "placing social scientists 'here and now' in secular modernism, while their object of study, namely religion, 'there and then', as a relic from the pre-modern era that somehow survives anachronistically."

⁶Another example is presented by Harvey Cox in *The Secular City*: "The rise of urban civilization and the collapse of traditional religion are the two main hallmarks of our era and are closely related... [T]he gods of traditional religions live on as private fetishes..., but they play no role whatever in the public life of the secular metropolis. [T]hey are disappearing forever..." (Cox 1965).

Yet, “the decline of religion does not mean the decline of awareness, [w]hich conversely could grow in line with religious revival” (Casanova 2011:32;33). It is much more satisfying to understand religion as a “seismograph of social conditions.” This means that religious practices reflect worries and hopes, issues and imagined solutions” about the issues of the day. Religion is not a matter of traditional or modern, “it is always here, only the social location differs” (Riesebrodt 2014:7). This is why when religion stirs up and comes forward publicly – with the 1979 theocratic revolution in Iran commonly agreed as the initial marker – the modernization theory fails to make sense of the phenomenon (Casanova 1994; Ruthven 2007:120-123; Riesebrodt 2014).

Since then, social sciences (especially sociology and political sciences) are made busy again with the phenomenon of religious revival. Special attention is given to religious revival in the form of fundamentalism, which occurs in all religions.⁷ Review about the power of religion is done to observe its relations with issues such as globalization, modernity and postmodernity, reason and science, human rights, democracy etc. This wave has resulted in an astonishing surge of literature. Certainly, these literature contain much research data and proposals on how to observe the issues.

One of the strongest contenders for explanation is the perspective, which if summarized, can be formulated in the following argument: revival of religion in the form of fundamentalism in these last few decades is not a form of traditionalism, but a part of the springboard effects inseparable from modernity. How does one make sense of this paradox? Within a variety of causal factors, one tends to point at the structural triggers in the form of changes in the geopolitical and geoeconomic constellations and electoral dynamics. However, the question on why on the agency level the structural factors become related to fundamentalist faith is often overlooked. This is the factor in the form of experiences

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⁷One of the responses of the academic world is the research beginning in 1987 named *The Fundamentalism Project*, initiated by The American Academy of Arts and Sciences. See, e.g., the initial publication of the research series in Martin E. Marty & R. Scott Appleby (eds.) (1991).

of chaos involved in the phenomenon of eclecticism, cultural pluralism resulting in confusion, uncertainty of identity occurring through relativization of values, and so on. This process has also give rise to an increasingly acute existential anxiety (Hood Jr. et al. 2005; Kinnvall 2006).

Yet, how does the quest for ontological security end up at religion? And why does it take the form of fundamentalism? These questions are important to ask, as not all quests for ontological security end up at religion, and not all attempts to find answers in religion end up in fundamentalism. Addullahi Ahmed An-Na'im hints that quests in religion and taking form of the "face of fundamentalism are not the inherent tendencies of religion, but are instead products and movements" that are "responses to social, politic and economic crises" within a specific historical context (An-Na'im 2004:25). According to Fawaz Gerges, for example, the genesis of the Islamic State, which embodies a certain fundamentalist Islamic thought, is difficult to interpret as an exclusively religious issue, and is more understandable as an issue of religion in the constellation of four factors: the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the political vacuum in Iraq, the civil war in Syria, and the failure of the Arab Spring movement (Gerges 2016). While important, this has not answered why the responses to the experience of crises should end up at religion, especially religious fundamentalism. Even if religiosity and fundamentalism have mere instrumental statuses, the puzzle remains unanswered: why leverage religion in its fundamentalist form?

The answer to this puzzle is a quest for social scientists. In her study, Catarina Kinnvall hints a useful signpost. In many cases, religion is not equal to other powers of identity such as ethnicity, race or even nationalism. The reason why ethnic and nationalist movements quickly invoke the power of religion is because it operates as a canopy to the other immanent powers such as ethnic or nationalist sentiment, making them directly related to what is regarded as a transcendent and absolute reality. The mix up of conflict causality, which appears in the form of 'religious canopied' conflict clearly showed up in the 1999 Maluku conflict (Tanamal and Trijono 2004:231-255). According to Catarina Kinnvall:

The power of religion envelopes the secularity of immanent powers with the image of reality that transcends time and history, [...] it provides the image of eternal truth, a cosmology through which what

are immanent and transcendent are connected as a social relation, through which the infinite transcendent reality provides guidelines for action in daily life that are immanent and limited. (Kinnvall 2006:68;69).

Thus, in that sense, the power of religion is not comparable to that of other powers such as ethnicity and nationalism.⁸ This is why the power of religion rapidly transforms into an absolutizing power that shuts the plural reality, which per definition marks the immanent world. This absolutization certainly could end up in terror and violence; however, this is not unavoidable, as absolutization could also end up in completely violence-free isolation in the form of quietism or pietism. The movement of several groups in the United States, called the “Benedict Option”, for example, is a mix of conservative theology and fundamentalism, which believes that Christian belief demands its followers to completely disengage from the secular world (Dreher 2017). Whether with or without violence, the power of religion creates an image of a struggle between good and evil – heaven and hell is a continuance of this image. This is why Mark Juergensmeyer hints that religious fundamentalism is experienced by its followers as a “cosmic war”:

I call the fight cosmic, because it is experienced as being greater than life. The imagery feels like a war in the legends of the past, which was related to the metaphysical conflict between good and evil. This cosmic war is experienced personally, but can very easily be translated into the social arena, and ultimately transcends human experience; That is why [...] is experienced not only as a tactic in a political strategy, but is perceived as a greater spiritual confrontation. (Juergensmeyer 2000:146).

Such a belief can be found, for example, in the ideas of Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of the al-Qaeda: “Jihad in the way of Allah is greater than anything and anyone, as it is a struggle between right and wrong, and the war transcends the boundaries of time” (quoted in Haleem 2012:90).

⁸From empirical study in South Asia, Catarina Kinnvall, concluded: “Here I will argue that, in response to global traumatic changes, it may actually be easier to construct identity out of essentialist and primordialist notions of nationhood and/or religion than out of other identity-signifiers, based on, for instance, language, gender, caste, class or race (only to mention a few)” (Kinnvall 2006:60).

The question is, why experience it as a “war”? What is the evil that one has to fight against? The issue is not within the religion itself, but in the wider context: cultural, political or economy. In a study between June and November 2013 on more than 600 youths recruited by Boko Haram, for example, it was found that the trigger was not religion per se, but frustration of poverty and unemployment, on top of illiteracy and weakness of the family structure. “The radical ideology provides these youths a new viewpoint with an explanation of the world: mobilization alongside presence of people sharing a similar viewpoint changes rhetoric into action” (Onuoha 2014). Similarly, Hindu fundamentalism in India becomes a political power, especially through the instrumentalization of fundamentalism by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in its electoral competition against the Indian National Congress (Swamy 2004). Similarly, while the theological embryo existed since the early 20th century, the widespread fundamentalism of Pentecostal and Evangelist Christianity in the late 1970s and early 1980s was strongly linked with the electoral ambitions of the Republican Party in the United States (Linker 2007). The transcendental reference in religion is easily utilized as a vehicle for absolutization.

However, there is a more significant cultural condition that is often targeted by the fury of fundamentalists. This condition takes the form of modernity, secularism, globalization and so on. What are the phenomena in the historical condition that rouse up the power of religion? As has been mentioned in passing, the fluidity and the runaway character that mark the climate of globalization nowadays bring the relativization of boundaries, breeding of increasingly diverse interaction and encounter, mobility and impermanence, multiplicity of sources of information, etc. At the same time, there is a process of relativization and mix-up of identities, relativization of authorities, teachings and values, broadening of life horizons resulting in uncertainties and confusion, etc. These phenomena occur in all lines of life: lack of employment guarantee, disappointment as citizens, mix-ups in the reference of cultural identities, up to disbelief to various taboos taught by religions. The experience includes a feeling of loss of certainty and existential anxiety. The fluid and runaway characteristics seem to guarantee that all of these are experienced as a tsunami of phenomena, rather than a controllable experience.⁹

While globalization might be seen as homogenization, what actually occurs is a burst of centrifugal diversity that intensively and extensively multiplies diversity and hybrid cultural environments. Despite be-

ing rooted in biological evolution, the term ‘hybrid’ refers to a mixed cultural identity with residual links to race, ethnicity and religion. Through these residual links, the term ‘hybrid’ easily encompasses religious identities – despite in religious studies the more common term being ‘syncretism’ (Kraidy 2005:1; Shaw and Stewart 2005:20). Except for the guardians of orthodoxy, there is no longer a clear distinction between Sunni and Shia, Catholic and Protestant, Lutheran and Calvinist. Hybridity does not only relativize cultural boundaries, resulting in the identities that were formerly experienced as certain being thrown into a confusion of ‘neither this nor that’. For the guardians of orthodoxy, hybridity means impurity, and impurity always means inauthentic (Salzman 2008:321). For them, the fact that in an archeological sense there is never a pure culture or religion is never considered as important.

What is considered as cultural impurity quickly transposes into religious impurity. Thus, various syndromes of mix-ups, and confusion and anxieties occurring in the process of hybridity, lead to the heart of religion:

Where pork is not available, people do not have to make a decision on whether to eat hot dogs. Where wine is the privilege of elites who drink privately in their homes, drinking alcohol is not a matter sparking controversy. In societies where women’s places are strictly separated, lesbian and gay relations (though officially banned) are rarely seen as threats to the social fabric. (Ruthven 2007:124)

However, in a society marked by plurality in various aspects: cultural, religious, lifestyle, and culinary, diversity and choices develop into a biting experience, followed by feelings of ‘us against them’, the ‘saved and the condemned’ (Ruthven 2007:124). This also means that the hybridity involved in the dynamics of intensive and extensive interactions immediately raises the awareness of the Other, the diverse, the different, the bastardized and impure. This is the cause of, although each religious group responds differently:

⁹This point summarizes what has been pointed out by many sociologists. See e.g. Giddens (1990); Giddens (1991); Robertson (1992); Featherstone et al. (eds.) (1995); Giddens (1999); Bauman (2000); Kraidy (2005); Pieterse (2009).

¹⁰Hybridity refers to the formation and patterns of identity involving a mixture of various cultural elements that are previously considered to be fixed, and the hybrid character then creating novelty with new meanings as well (Barker 2004:89).

The striking similarity that all fundamentalist movements demonstrate is the concern, even obsession, with redefining the boundaries of a group of the broader society, deliberately choosing and refining the beliefs or rules of conduct that reflect the peculiarities of their identity/group and how they wish to be perceived. (Ruthven 2007:125)

This is the cause why the phenomenon of hybridity occurs alongside the rise of the quest for purity. Here, religious fundamentalism is the modern phenomenon of searching for purity in a condition of hybridity. It is “a truly modern phenomenon: modern in the sense that the movement continuously chases a fundamental/original/pure solution for new issues” (Shupe and Hadden 1998:23). As written by Bassam Tibi, “The fundamentalists are modernists, not traditionalists; they return to tradition for a modern agenda, selectively picking elements to create a political order, whether it is a Hindu India or a global Islam” (Tibi 1998:14). This phenomenon contains a paradox of tensions between identity and difference. In simpler terms, it can be summarized: identity always presumes differences, and differences always presume identity. Determination of the ‘same’ will always give rise to the ‘different’, and conversely, the search for the ‘different’ will trigger the search of the ‘same’. In Indonesian terms, what is *bhinneka* always trigger the search of *tunggal ika*, and determination of *tunggal ika* will always result in the search of the *bhinneka*.

This quest for purity in the paradoxical relations in the condition of hybridity, in my opinion, lies at the heart of religious fundamentalism.

THE ILLUSION OF PURITY V.S. DIVERSITY OF DEMOCRACY

Where shall one look for purity and the criteria of purity? This is the question haunting all fundamentalist movements. One of the similarities marking all forms of these movements is the attempt to find absolute legitimacy in original and fundamental sacred texts (Turner 2001:137). The modes commonly used are literalism and intra-textualism. Literalism refers to the confidence that what is written in the scriptures are “literal words of God” and “what is literal contains a fullness of meaning and intent, requiring no reference to what is not mentioned (context) or data outside the text” (Ruthven 2007:40; 41). Intra-textualism refers to the “imperative that what is literally written determines the content that should be read and the absoluteness of truth” (Hood Jr. et al. 2005:22).

Sooner or later, these attempts will find a dead end. What is factually found is not a unity of text; instead, various texts that differ from each other, even oppose each other. For example, Hindu fundamentalist ideas overlap with Indian nativist-nationalism (*Hindutva*), with the doctrine of the unity of identity between the Indian nation and the Hindu religion and culture (Savarkar 2007:87-96). The homeland of the identity is India, and those not having the unity of identity are not 'us' but 'them', such as the Muslim, Sikh and Christian. *Hindutva* actively utilizes Hindu sacred scriptures, including the "Ramayana epic as a sacred text of the Hindu race" to transpose the mythical with the real on the origins and identity of the Indian nation. However, within the agenda, determining the original version of Ramayana is nigh impossible. In Sanskrit, there are 25 versions of Ramayana, not including various other versions distributed all over South Asia and Southeast Asia as far east as Bali (Udayakumar 2005:49; 52).

Similarly, this also happens with the claim of textual originality of sacred scriptures of various religions. What is considered as the singular, original text is an interpretation of a certain oral tradition, and what is written is metaphorical instead of factual, such as the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The school of historical criticism in reading ancient texts, which developed rapidly since the 19th century, dismantles the literalist and intra-textual claims. In short, the quest for the original or pure will have to collide with the fact that "there is no definitive, original text; there are only texts" (Turner 2001:137). Due to this difficulty, fundamentalists tend to perform the following jump: the main issue is no longer what the content of the text is, but how the text should be interpreted definitively (cf. Hood Jr. et al. 2005:21). This is a step of absolutization. Here, various explaining factors meet and simultaneously create a causal relationship: existential anxieties, crises occurring in a specific social content, concerns about decaying orthodoxy followed with a purification project, and the ambitions of those in quest of power interpreting all these elements into a movement. Through the convergence of these elements, what occurred is a "shutdown of the methods of textual interpretation" and "the fundamentalists enforcing their perspective on right and wrong" about the commandments of God (Turner 2001:140).

Based on the discussion above, what is done by the fundamentalists clearly appear as the resurrection of the traditional order; thus fundamentalism is easily observable as a form of traditionalism. However,

“fundamentalists do not stop at determining a more rigid form of teaching by returning to old mythical orthodoxy.” In the process of determining what is orthodox in a current context, “they are declaring a project of a new social order” (Shupe and Hadden 2005:23). Thus, “fundamentalism is orthodoxy in confrontation with modernity” (Salzman 2008:322). Or, “fundamentalism is not the return of the religious old order, but a declaration of a new one” that in a totalitarian manner intends to regulate the entire life of society based on religious doctrines (Tibi 1998:13-14). The overlap and mix-up between religious doctrines and political power pathos result in religious fundamentalism “not being about religious teachings, but socio-political issues instead... despite the expression of religious symbols” (Tibi 1998:13; Haleem 2012:135). The instrumentalization of religion in political struggles is an increasingly clear phenomenon in many cases, whether in the use of the Hindutva doctrine for BJP’s electoral strategy in India, the mobilization of Evangelist Christians in the electoral strategy of the GOP in the United States since the Ronald Reagan era, or the mobilization of religious sentiments and identity in the Jakarta gubernatorial elections of 2017.

Yet, how could fundamentalists claim what they determine as “the right, which is from God?” This final point is an epistemological riddle: how immanent causality at the human realm (social order) is related to transcendent causality at the divine realm (claims of God’s will)? Are not they categorically different? Are not human beings as the knowing subject in *stricto sensu* never capable of understanding what is claimed as the will of God (divine causality)? Are not human senses only capable of knowing the limited elements of the immanent causality of human phenomena?

As has been mentioned earlier, the similarities between all fundamentalist movements are located in the modes of literalism and intra-textualism of scriptures. How, then, the modes end up in demands about the behavior or actions of human beings in the immanent realm? The key is located in the process of how sacred texts that lay the foundations of a religious community work as a scheme and worldview that create meanings, beliefs and commitments on the ultimate value of life (cf. Emmons 1999). The capacity of religion to create meaning is felt strongest when expressed in fundamentalist idioms, and that is why it sounds absurd for outsiders. In the process:

“A person gradually experiences access not only to the self-consciousness in relation to the Divine (e.g. as a saved one) but also a clear sense

of what is going on in this world according to the category of good or evil, holy or sinful, spiritual or physical, etc. Since the highest meaning lies in the values literally outlined by the Scriptures, others who do not have a similar belief cannot participate in the same reality; Therefore he/she is an outsider and a source of difference” (Hood Jr et al. 2005:23).

It is important to note that the fundamentalist mode in experiencing meaning differs from that of non-fundamentalist mode. The non-fundamentalist mode is not only marked by an attitude of intertextuality and respect for the importance of contextual-external references, but also by a lack of reluctance of understanding the contents of scriptures as metaphor, not as factual and literalist descriptions. As mentioned above, non-fundamentalist religious persons do not consider the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as factual-historical, but as a metaphor. Thus, for non-fundamentalists, hermeneutic mediation in the form of the obligation to read texts in a non-literal, critical manner, and understanding contextual immanent causality, is not a taboo and is not the antithesis of religious belief. For fundamentalists, though, literalism of the will of God is absolute, with or without immanent causality:

Life is experienced not primarily through efficient cause-effect, but through teleological causality. This teleological causality is ‘existential’ not in the sense of a human being shaping their purpose, but teleological in the sense of conforming to God’s purpose for all humanity (and for everyone in particular). [...] Intra-textualism ensures that all the phenomena of the world are absorbed/subdivided into text; a fundamentalist is open to the way God views the world, but is not open to the ways the world sees God. (Hood Jr et al. 2005:39)

Clearly, all these sound absurd. However, what we see as loss of reason and self-control, for those embracing fundamentalism, is a total surrender to God who controls everything. Charles Taylor called the self as ‘the porous self’, unlike ‘the buffered self’ that marks the modern personality, “Per definition, for the porous self, the most important and emotionally strongest prime mover is located outside the self,” and thus “the porous self is extremely prone to spirits” and the determination of a mysterious power that is illusorily regarded as coming from the Divine (Taylor 2011:41).

As mentioned earlier, the fundamentalists experience all this not as mere fringe experience, but as a biting core experience that programmatically refers to a “cosmic war”. The absolutization process involved in the literalist and intra-textual mode of understanding in turn also lead fundamentalists in reading the phenomenon of diversity, mix-ups and uncertainty of the historical conditions as categories of “good or evil, sacred or sinful.” The belief in the absolucy meets the fact of diversity and uncertainty. Of course, the process involves a complex dynamics, without a linear direction or inevitability.

What is relevant here is that the potentially conflictual relationship between religion and democracy is one of the implications of the phenomenon. Specifically, the point of controversy is not the relations between religion and democracy in general, but what is called by Monica Mookherjee “the undemocratic moment based on religious belief” (Mookherjee 2011:1). In his study on Islamic thought, Hamid Enayat points at the main cause, i.e. “because the intrinsic elements of democracy always challenge many of those regarded as sacred by religion” (Enayat 1982:126). This signals that the issue is not democracy in itself, which is regarded as the best foundation for the legitimacy of a political order, especially for declaring what is specific to humanity, namely free will. The issue lies in the absolutist character of the fundamentalist viewpoint, which develops in these last few decades, and resulting in further questioning of the legitimacy of democracy. Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi, an Islamic thinker considered as the successor of Sayyid Qutb’s political Islam, for example, wrote explicitly, “There is no peace between Islam and democracy, not even in trivial matters, as they are diametrically opposed (quoted in Tibi 1998:187).

Other than the criticism from corporatocracy (governance by giant businesses) that is seen to disable democracy in the current pattern of globalization (Hertz 2001; Leys 2003), the sharp jump of religious fundamentalism is a strong contender to democracy. Both of these powers oppose democracy in different ways.

What is really involved in the challenge of religious fundamentalism towards democracy? All the points mentioned above can be used as a background to understand at least the two following locus of issues.

First, diversity flattens truth. In the heart of theory and practice of democracy is the fiction that the reality is plural or diverse (Berlin 1978:149). The premise of diversity does not only entail ascribed identity such as skin tone, sex or ethnicity, but also differences arising

from social processes such as religious affiliation and belief, ideological orientation, interest grouping, lifestyle, etc. The diversity in the plural reality is equal. This means that in the socio-political order managed in a democratic manner, no single religious belief and affiliation is considered 'better' or 'worse' than another, similarly with a certain ethnic affiliation is not considered to be better than affiliation with another ethnicity. The democratic principle gives equal treatment to me, a Batak, and you, a Javanese, or me, a Muslim and you, a Christian. Membership in the Javanese ethnicity is not higher or lower in status than being a Batak, and the Muslim faith is not higher or lower in status than being a Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian (cf. Parekh 2005:340).

What is the basis for equality in democracy? The fundamental reason is the idea that 'all men are born equal'. This idea is transposed in the equality of citizens when applied in the organization of society in governance (cf. Dahl 1998: Chapters 6 and 7; Dunn 2005: Chapter 4). As a principle, the justification and legitimacy of a government of a society depends on the extent of which the management is based (at least formally) in decision making through the equality of position of citizens in the reality of diversity. In this sense, democracy is a method of leveling various stratificative differences in order that political decisions are based on a veil of equality. This is realized in the principle of 'one person, one vote' in the democratic electoral process. However, this also means that there is no justifiable governing authority if it is not created from a process with a contractual character among the citizens in a condition of equality (the contractual principle).

The methodical equalization of differences of identity in plurality clashes head on with the feeling of being a 'chosen people' and the status of religious teaching as the sacred source of truth and the ultimate value (Parekh 2009:74; Mueller 2009: Chapter 13). In the overlapping of Hindu fundamentalism and Indian nationalism in the Hindutva doctrine, for example, diversity is regarded as a conspiracy to erase the essential unity between Hindu-ness and Indian-ness and the 'chosen people' status of the majority. This triggers an orientation that gives adoration to ethno-religious homogeneity that marginalizes other groups and minorities (Udayakumar 2005:151;157). Similarly, on the research on the Islamic State, Fawaz Gerges found how a "totalitarian and millenarian way of thought closes pluralism, competition and diversity of thought" resulting in the alienness of ideas of the 'other' and

criminalization of such (Gerges 2016:27). This fundamentalist principle is at odds with the principles of democracy.

The separation of religion and the state, by relegating religious issues to the private sphere, is an accommodative solution that in history is caused by reasons of convenience (Hamburger 2004; Monsma and Soper 2009). This is intended, among others, to end the continual bloody conflict between religious groups. How then religious traditions adapt and reconcile with the modernist reality to their sacred traditions, are the duties of the theologians of each religion. Only through theological self-reflexivity, the corpus of religious traditions can be considered as successful or unsuccessful in reconciling with the modernist and democratic worldview (Habermas 2005:16; Enayat 1982:135).¹¹ In this sense, a non-fundamentalist theology is considered successful, while fundamentalism is a failure. However, as we can see, this point is more complex than it seems.

Second, democracy as the secularization of authority. What is presented in the above point also implies that democracy is a method of justifying and giving legitimacy to political authority on the basis of the process of immanent causality, or at least, not immediately referring to supra-human institutions. This certainly needs a clarification of the meaning of the term 'secular', which contains many layers of meanings in its semantic evolution – this point will not be discussed here. What is relevant is that the meaning of 'secular', which is neither an adversary nor a closure of the 'sacred', gradually becomes increasingly understood as a rejection of claims made in the name of something transcendent:

Thus, the history of the term 'secular' [...] was originally a term in a pair used to distinguish two dimensions of existence based on two features of time [timeless and temporal], which are not separate from one another. However, gradually there is a separation between the immanent and the transcendent; from which a relationship of opposition develops, in which the 'secular' designates the domain of self-sufficiency, the immanent sphere confronted with the domain

¹¹An interesting example of theological criticism is presented by Ziauddin Sardar, a Pakistani thinker, "We do not understand Islam. Our scholars, our religious leaders, our intellectuals, our people do not understand Islam. By understanding Islam we do not mean the capability to explain a hadith, or outline the mechanics of certain rituals or recite the verses of the Qur'an. We understand Islam only if we can operationalize its dynamics and vibrant concepts in contemporary society" (Sardar 1987:72).

of transcendent dealing (often called 'religious'. This binary opposition then undergoes a further mutation, through the rejection of the transcendent domain, and becomes an antithesis in which the 'secular' refers to what is real, while the 'transcendent' refers to what they merely construct. Or, 'secular' also points to the institutions that are really needed to live in the world, while the 'religious' refers to the optional accessories that often disrupt the flow of life in the world. [...] With that, the immanent or secular "under" order is then understood as the correct reality order, while the transcendent "top" order is considered to be fictitious. This strict separation provides the basis for the "declaration of independence" from the immanent. (Taylor 2011:33;24)

How does the point above tie up with the problem of this article? As a principle of organizing co-existence in the state system, democracy, which is based on the ethos of citizens' equality "is essentially non-religious, even if the citizens are religious" (Calhoun 2011:77). Democracy "presupposes the formation of a pluralist condition as a culture of its own" (Tibi 1998:190-191). And democracy also cannot be separated from the idea of sovereignty. In many ways it can be said that the immanent sovereignty embedded in the democratic order is a model par excellence of the secularity of community organizing. That is, how the government is run is a dynamic based on consent, not on dictation imposed from outside the agreement of the community of citizens.

Sovereignty in the democratic state becomes a thorn for fundamentalists (Tibi 1998:187); certainly different religious teachings have different levels of rejection, even between sects in one religion.¹² That is why one of the targets the wrath of fundamentalists is the secular state. For example, in 2014, an Islamic State spokesman, Abu Muhammad

¹²In the fifth meeting of Forum 2000 in Prague in 2001, for example, an Iraqi thinker and opposition leader, Sheikh Muhammed Ali, gave an example on the difficulties related to the concept of 'state sovereignty', "To whom does political sovereignty belong? In Islam sovereignty belongs to God. He is the ultimate giver and with whom ultimate power resides. In Western political thought, especially liberal democratic political thought, sovereignty belongs to the people. [...] Therefore, governments obtain their legitimacy from the people and lose it if the people withdraw their support for a government. As I said earlier, under Islamic political doctrine, it is God, not the people, who provides legitimacy to a government and to its laws" (Sheikh Muhammed Ali in Halik 2007:130; Mohammed Ali's point from the transcript of records of the fifth meeting of Forum 2000).

al-Adnani, called on his followers to attack France, for “the French state is an atheist force at the forefront of secularism, willing to impose human rights, freedom of speech and democracy” (The Guardian, 15 July 2016). In the ‘secular’ sense that has been debased into a characteristic of anti-transcendence, and with the failure of various theologies to perform theological reconciliation with the plural and hybrid characteristics of modern life, history seems ripe for an explosion of tension between the powers of religious fundamentalism and democracy. That also explains why fundamentalists in all religions are at odds with Darwin’s theory of evolution, which can be said to be a model par excellence of the secularization of science (Mueller 2009:370).

Plurality and secularization are certainly only two of the many issues that become the points of contention in the relations between religion and democracy. But from the two problems, the far-reaching implications to other things are easily identified. Of course, what is presented here does not address what happened to the successful “theological accommodation” of theologians and non-fundamentalist religious communities—this point requires more space that will not be included here.

The conflictual relationship between democracy and fundamentalism may be readily understood. What is more difficult to understand is that the tension of both is often experienced even by people who are not fundamentalists. Perhaps this is revealed in how religiosity reasserts itself back into the public sphere, whether from fundamentalist or non-fundamentalist points of view. Is the demand that religious values be accommodated in the public life the main issue? How can the relation between the power of religion and the power of democracy be managed for co-existence (at the very least) or the common good (in the best case)?

PREREQUISITES FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

The relations between both are not new, and have become an object of study even before the rise of the phenomenon of religious revival in the last few decades. From the Islamic tradition, for example, Hamid Enayat put forward an argument for the importance of interpreting what is sacred “not as a law in general. but as the Law in the sense of divine inspiration”; “The government based its decision on the consent of the ruled citizens, [a]nd the demand is implemented through the principles of *shūrā* (consultation) and *ijmā’* (consensus)” (Enayat 1982:129). While

the thinker Bassam Tibi proposed “international morality”, which for the Islamic tradition demands religious reforms that “give space beyond what is written scripturally and doctrinally” (Tibi 1998: 182, 190). In the tradition of the Catholic Church, for example, true democracy is seen as “the value of the dignity of each person, the respect for human rights, the commitment to the common good, and the guidance of political life” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 2004, #407).

With a number of variations, generally such proposals point to the theological adjustment of religious teachings in an ever-changing stream of history. Its direction concerns the adaptation of religious teachings to the demands of democracy, not the other way around. However, is it possible that the substantive issue also lies in the mode of democratic process that needs to accommodate religious values?

This question involves deconstructing the premises of the relations between both. One of them is proposed by Jürgen Habermas (2005:10-19),¹³ which triggered a series of debates. By modifying the earlier thought on the place of religion in the public sphere, Habermas argued about the prerequisite of accommodation that demanded the inclusion of values derived from religious teachings in democratic deliberations in the public sphere. What apparently triggered Habermas to modify his reflections on religion includes “religious traditions and faith communities that bring unexpected political urgency, [...] where fundamentalist movements increasingly become part of national and ethnic conflicts” (Habermas 2005:10). He also continued the dialogue with the thoughts of the late John Rawls and the critical notion of Nicholas Wolterstorff (especially Rawls 1997; Audi and Wolterstorff 1997).

The argument of Habermas can be summed up: the conception of democratic citizenship is rooted in the “contractual tradition” which rests on the applicability of the “public argument”, and that all citizens are presumed to have equal access to the public argument. The supposition of this “public reasoning” is the epistemic basis for the justification of a secular state that no longer depends on the legitimacy of religion. However, while necessary, the secular features of the state do

¹³This idea was presented in the seminar and awarding reception of The Holberg Prize Laureate 2005 to Jürgen Habermas in Oslo, Norway, 30 November 2005. In the seminar-reception, Habermas delivered a speech titled “Religion in the Public Sphere” (Habermas 2005:10-19).

not sufficiently guarantee everyone's religious freedom. The "goodness of secular authority" is insufficient, for "conflicting parties must agree on sensitive and fragile matters" in communal life which are driven by "the duty of civilized citizens and of public reasoning" (Habermas 2005:12, 13). Exactly here lies the problem, and this presupposition also needs to be reconsidered.

First, many religious citizens see no reason to embrace the division between the 'secular' and the 'religious'. For them, basing important decisions based on religious values is not a matter of choice, whether allowed or not allowed, or private or public. Habermas sees that the problem cannot be addressed simply by correcting the way of thinking of religious people. The absolutization of religious fundamentalists is certainly an absurdity that is difficult to accept. However, many religious people who are theologically non-fundamentalist or even embrace progressive theology see the divide between the religious and the secular as artificial. For example, the dignity of human life is not a secular or religious issue, or a private or public matter. Generally most Christian sects have no problem with the separation between religion and politics. However, the removal of religious values from public life triggered a surge of Protestant fundamentalism in the United States in the 1970s (Linker 2007:17-61). Religious traditions store a wealth that inspires secular thought about human dignity. In fact, in this case "secular states have an interest in providing a voice for religious voices in the public sphere, otherwise the state does not know whether its secular society has broken itself from the most important sources of noble values," however secular the state is (Habermas 2005:15). This argument sounds alluring. But this point has also been easily manipulated by fundamentalists and political adventurers as a gateway to their agenda to form a majority dictatorship on the basis of majority religion. In Indonesia, for example, this manipulation phenomenon appears in the fundamentalists' rejection of President Joko Widodo's call for all parties to cease confusing 'religion' and 'politics'. This call has a background of the strong utilization of religious identities in the competition to elect the governor of Jakarta (April 2017), an electoral tactic considered to have torn the entire public life of the state (The Jakarta Post, 27 March 2017).

Second, the issue of "cognitive load asymmetry". Even when the principle of democratic citizenship has been relaxed to accommodate values derived from religious teachings, religious citizens are exposed to

greater burdens than secular citizens in learning the “neutral language” of democratic citizenship. For, “in the public sphere, the content of political discourses and decisions applicable and enforceable by the state must be formulated in a language that is equally accessible to all citizens and should be justified by the idiom/language” (Habermas 2005:15). In fact, the language of democratic citizenship is secular, so to enter into the “secular language”, religious citizens have a greater cognitive burden than secular citizens. Habermas writes:

In order to live the ethical demands of the principle of democratic citizenship, religious citizens must learn to put an epistemic attitude on the secular environment, while secular citizens do not have to make the epistemic adjustment. However, in fact secular citizens are not free from this cognitive load, because *secularist* consciousness is not sufficient for the demands of respect and cooperation with fellow religious citizens. (Habermas 2005:17; italics original).

This secular semantic priority brings about a serious dilemma. On the one hand, a common ground and a neutral ethical language is an inevitable imperative for the principle of democratic citizenship that ensures plurality and equality. On the other hand, the principle of democratic citizenship becomes dwarfed when it is cut off from religious values that can clearly inspire the life force of the ethos of citizenship. As already mentioned, an example is religious teachings about the sacredness of the dignity of life. Also, the value of human equality in the principle of “all human beings are born equal” underlying the “equality of citizens” in a political organization is deeply inspired by the theology of the equality of every human being as the ‘image of God’ (*imago Dei*). But this accommodation is easily decayed, making the “governmental authority an agent of the majority religion, pushing its will by undermining democratic procedures”, then continued to degenerate into “a majority government heading toward repression” (Habermas 2005:15). What are destroyed are not only cultural and religious plurality, but also the exclusion of minority groups. Democracy loses its substance and becomes undemocratic (Zakaria 1997).

With the surging wave of religious fundamentalism, this dilemma is becoming more acute. Even there is a real probability, not only of a tyranny of the majority religion, but the emergence of a tyranny of the minority by religious fundamentalists, not only against other believers,

but also against the followers of other sects in the same religion.¹⁴ Even at the principle level (not even in practice), it is not easy to break through this dilemma. Habermas hinted at two directions of accommodation, in the minimum.

First, as mentioned above, values derived from religious teachings are not by definition the opposite of the principle of democratic citizenship. The absurdity of fundamentalist theology is very clear. However, the religious values that most non-fundamentalist citizens live in are not by definition contrary to the ethos of democratic citizenship. In fact, cutting off the source of the value of religious teachings can dwarf the principle of democratic citizenship itself. In summary, claims of value sourced from religious teachings by religious citizens need to be given room for public reasoning. This step requires secular citizens to revise the “secularist way of thinking”, namely the view that “religious traditions and faith communities are the outdated heritage of pre-modern societies that insist on living in this age” and that “religious freedom is only the protection of a vulnerable species”, statements that mean that “religion has no *intrinsic* justification for survival”. If so, citizens who insist on secularist thinking will not be able to respect religious citizens, let alone reflect on it in a secular language and argument (Habermas 2005:17; italics original).

Second, this accommodation still demands that the basic prerequisites of “obligations of civilization and public reasoning” are not bargained for, for both secular and religious citizens, i.e. civilized, nonviolent, intersectional, argumentative and non-apologetic, seeking for co-existence and the common good. It also means that the idiom of religious values must still be ‘translated’ into “languages that are equally accessible to all citizens,” both religious and secular citizens. Without this basic prerequisite of “common language”, democracy and democratic citizenship become impossible. In the words of Bhikhu Parekh, this common language “cannot be ethnic” or any other such as religious, “because multicultural societies are pluralistic,” but can only be “based on commitment to a political community.” It involves “a commitment to the survival and welfare of the political community, which requires every citizen to care not to harm the public interest and wholeness” (Parekh 2005:341;342).

¹⁴For a global scale research on the issue of the relations between the vitality of democracy and the religious atmosphere of the society, see Borooah and Paldam (2007:582-604).

This precondition is a thorn in the side for the fundamentalists' absolutist characteristic (cf. Tibi 1998:190-191; Bunkhorst 2005:91-108).

Relying on the above two agendas on government legal authority is necessary but not sufficient, because in the end the citizens and conflicting parties themselves "must reach agreement on sensitive and fragile matters" in a collective life based on "obligations of civilization and public reason". At this point, Habermas proposed a self-evident solution, the so-called "complementary learning process" for both religious and secular citizens. Only through this process, "the participants themselves understand and decide whether religious polarization is caused by a lack of learning, or by the fact of pluralism itself" (Habermas 2005:17;19; Habermas 2011:26-27).

As may be immediately apparent, Habermas's proposal concerns accommodation of religious values in general but without the specification of fundamentalist or non-fundamentalist theological traits. The accommodation is promising for non-fundamentalists, but certainly not quite enough for the fundamentalist absolutist position. With its variations, what fundamentalists demand is far more extreme, namely the determination of public space and political decisions based on their theological interpretation. That is why the rise of fundamentalism becomes a unique challenge to democracy.

Although caused by a combination of factors, can the rise of religious fundamentalism today begin from, in Habermas's expression, the closure of the "secular democratic citizenship principle" to the general intake of religious values? And is religious fundamentalism the reaction to the closure? The "complementary learning process" is quite certain to involve not just imperatives for religious citizens to learn the idioms of democratic citizenship that can be derived not from any religion, but also for secular citizens to learn the values of democratic citizenship derived from religious teachings.

CONCLUSION

This article attempts to understand the phenomenon of the revival of the power of religion in relation to democracy as a form of government. In this exploration, it especially notices the increasingly tense relation between fundamentalism in religious revival and the prerequisite of pluralism in the process of democracy.

First, the revival of the power of religion in these decades suggests that the relation between the power of religion and the power of modernity is not a zero-sum relationship. As a social seismograph, the power of religion expresses anxiety and hope; it is here, only the social location is changed. The revival reveals not the religion itself, but the demands of accommodation in the public life of values derived from the teachings of religion; as such a conflictual relationship with democracy does not necessarily exist. However, religious fundamentalism that accompanies the revival appears to be increasingly in conflict with the principle of democracy.

Second, the absolute notion of fundamentalism is a central factor that collides with the principle of democracy. First, the absolutist character makes it difficult to accept plurality and equality in pluralism, both as a fact and a prerequisite of the democratic process. Second, the absolutist character rooted in the literalist mode of understanding of the “will of the supra-human institution” makes fundamentalists difficult to accept the immanent and autonomous features of the democratic process with its sovereignty. Although fundamentalism is expressed in different styles from one religion to another, the two points can be said to mark all fundamentalists. How that idea transforms into a real power that collides with democracy depends on the instrumental use of the absolutist trait by political entrepreneurs in the electoral process or in other power struggles.

Third, the antinomy between fundamentalism and the democratic principle is too obvious to be ignored. However, the issue that needs to be understood more carefully is the non-fundamentalist aspiration for accommodation into the public life the values that are sourced or inspired by religious teachings. That accommodation can be the way for peaceful co-existence, which still demands a “common language” of non-religious, non-ethnic and non-racial citizenship. This is a minimal prerequisite if a political order still intends to nurture its multicultural character.

It is at the last point where the prospect of the possibility and impossibility of peaceful co-existence lies. What is often overlooked is that something happens not simply because it is desired. *Realpolitik* rarely runs according to the “intended and realized” pattern, which is too voluntaristic as logic of action and change. What is more common in historical *realpolitik* is “intended but unrealized” or “unintended but realized” (cf. Sen 1997:ix-xix).

Such possibilities also need to be recognized in understanding the tension between religion and democracy. Although the quest to discover new vistas is a task of “analysis of current conditions with practical intent,” it is helpful to also open up the possibility to learn from history: that solutions often arise and evolve from moments of inaction/helplessness rather than voluntary will. Francis Fukuyama provides a useful example:

I think the secular state arose precisely from the helplessness of Western societies from reaching a religious consensus on political grounds. The trigger was a sectarian war that was so fierce [between Catholics and Protestants] in the 16th and 17th centuries. In fact, the Czech land upon which we are now sitting in this meeting was once the site of many bloody battles, sectarian wars between Christian sects over which religious order should govern in a particular region. Facing the horror of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), people like Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu argue the urgency of separating religion from politics, precisely because religious consensus will never be possible. In my opinion, Islam today faces a similar choice. Insisting on the unity of religion and politics not only separates Muslims from Christians, or Muslims from secular, Jewish, Hindu, and other cultural groups. It seems that in the long run it will also separate the Muslims themselves from one another (Fukuyama in Halik 2007:127-128).¹⁵

In other words, the separation of ‘religion’ and ‘politics’ as the solution of sectarian conflict in the historical trajectory of so many centuries ago was a by-product of the absurdity of continuing enduring violent disputes.

Certainly the future is the locus of uncertainty. And from the events that have happened, we cannot conclude that a similar event will happen. Thus, this article ends with the question: how to find a way out without repeating the historical solution of past religious and political conflicts that only emerged after humans could no longer bear the orgy of conflict and bloodshed.

¹⁵Fukuyama's point from the transcript of records of the fifth meeting of Forum 2000, Prague, 2001.

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