



The Political Role of Religion in Liberal Democracy and Pancasila Democracy (A Comparative Analysis)

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Abstract

This research is a comparative analysis of the political role of religion in liberal democracy and Pancasila democracy. This research uses a qualitative method of literature study. The research found that in liberal democracy, the role of religion is limited by the doctrine of religious restraint. However, in Pancasila democracy, the role of religion is accommodated as stated in the first principle of Pancasila, namely "Belief in One God." Accommodation of the role of religion as one of the values in Pancasila democracy has the consequence that using religious reasons as the basis for establishing coercive regulations is permitted. However, because the precepts in Pancasila are complementary and mutually restrictive to each other, using religious reasons as the basis of a coercive regulation must not contradict the other precepts of Pancasila, namely humanity, unity, deliberation, and justice.

Keywords: *Agama; Liberal Democracy; Pancasila Democracy*

Introduction

During the Middle Ages, in Europe, Christianity determined the position of the State and the Church. Religion gave legitimacy to state authority and power, and the government protected the Christian faith. Today, religion is no longer fundamental; the starting point is democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, religious freedom and the principle of equality play an essential role. This development indicates the secularization of the state. In some modern countries with liberal democracies, the general discourse of the Constitution no longer has a religious basis (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:153).

In contrast to Western countries that embrace liberal democracy, whose constitutional discourse is based on public reason, Indonesia embraces democracy based on Pancasila (five principles), whose first principle is Belief in One God. It means that in Pancasila democracy, the political role of religion is accommodated. It certainly has different implications from liberal democracy, which limits the political role of religion.

This research will analyze the difference between the political role of religion in liberal democracy and Pancasila democracy.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is library research. Library research is a research activity carried out by collecting information and data with the help of various kinds of materials in the library, such as reference books, similar previous research results, articles, notes, and various journals related to the research problem to be solved. Activities are carried out systematically to collect, process, and conclude data using specific techniques to find answers to problems that are the research focus (Sari 2020: 43). Various data from the literature are analyzed and compared to get a valid conclusion.

Results and Discussion

The Political Role of Religion in Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy is defined by a commitment to three core principles: democracy, individual rights, and the rule of law. Liberal democracy can be understood as a political system defined by democratic political participation and individual rights. In a liberal democracy, an impartial judicial system limits the state's power (government). According to C. J. Eberle (C. Eberle and Cuneo 2017), the standard view among political theorists is that religious reason can only play a limited role in justifying coercive laws because coercive laws that require a religious basis lack moral legitimacy. Citizens should not support coercive laws for which they believe no plausible secular reason exists. Citizens in pluralistic liberal democracies should refrain from using their political influence to pass coercive laws that, to their knowledge, have no plausible secular reason other than on religious grounds alone. The doctrine of religious restraint is a political doctrine that in a pluralistic, liberal society, religious beliefs should not be used as the primary basis for public policy decisions (Flannagan, 2009: 1–2)

Every reasonable citizen has his or her view of God and life, right and wrong, good and bad. Each has what Rawls calls his or her comprehensive doctrine. However, because reasonable citizens are rational citizens, they are unwilling to impose their comprehensive doctrines on others; instead, they are willing to seek rules that can be mutually agreed upon. Although each citizen may believe that he knows the truth about the best way to live, no one wants to force others to live according to his beliefs, even if he is part of a majority group that has the power to impose those beliefs on others (John Rawl, 1999: 37).

Rawls expects that the religious, moral, and philosophical doctrines accepted by citizens will automatically support tolerance and accept the essentials of a democratic regime. In religion, for example, reasonable pluralism might contain reasonable Catholicism, reasonable interpretations of Islam, and reasonable atheism. Because it is reasonable, none of these doctrines advocate the use of coercive political force to impose one's religious beliefs on citizens of different religions (John Rawl 1999)

Nevertheless, the doctrine of religious restraint (DRR) allows religious considerations to play a role in political discussions: citizens can choose their preferred coercive policies exclusively and publicly advocate those policies on religious grounds. However, the religious restraints doctrine requires citizens to reasonably believe they have plausible secular reasons for any coercive laws they support, which they are prepared to offer in political discussions. As quoted by Wenar (2021), Rawls argues that imposing uniform laws on diverse societies poses two fundamental challenges. The first is the challenge of legitimacy: the legitimate use of coercive political power. How can it be legitimate to force all citizens to follow only one law, given that citizens will inevitably have different worldviews? The second is the stability challenge, which looks at political power from the recipient's perspective. Why would a citizen

willingly obey a law imposed on him by a collective body whose members have very different beliefs and values from his own?

Therefore, in a secular state that implements liberal democracy, political decisions that are considered valid and justifiable must have reasons (public reasons) that are generally acceptable to religious and non-religious citizens or citizens of different religions. Religious reasons are unsuitable for public deliberation because they are not believed by those who are not religious (or differently religious). Those who reject faith-based reasons cannot be forced to accept them. Secular reasons (public reasons) include non-religious comprehensive doctrines, such as moral theories or conceptions of the human good, so Audi's conception of public deliberation allows some views to play a role that restrictive comprehensive doctrinal conceptions cannot play (R. and Audi & Wolterstorff, 1997, p. 25).

The principle of separation of state and church (religion) obliges politicians and officials within political institutions to formulate laws, court rulings, and actions only in language that is equally accessible to all citizens (Habermas 1999). Robert Audi encapsulates that duty in a particular "principle of secular justification." He writes, "One has a prima facie duty not to advocate or support any law or public policy ... unless he has adequate secular reasons for one's advocacy or support" (Robert Audi 2000).

As cited by T. C. Eberle (2017), Rawls writes that the first is that any comprehensive doctrine may be introduced into the public political discussion, provided that at the time of the decision, there are proper and rational political reasons - not merely based on the comprehensive doctrine of religion." The second, a citizen of liberal democracy, may support the implementation of a coercive law L only if he reasonably believes himself to have a plausible secular justification for L, which he is prepared to offer in political discussion.

Three Arguments for the Doctrine of Religious Restraint (DRR)

The Religious Conflict Argument

According to Robert Audi (2000), if secular considerations do not balance religious considerations in matters of a coercive law, there will be a clash between religions competing for social control. Such uncompromising absolutes easily lead to conflict and destruction". This concern is based on the consideration that citizens who impose coercion on their compatriots for religious reasons will use their political power to advance their sectarian agenda by using state power to persecute heretics, impose orthodoxy, and enforce strict moral laws. As such, it will continue to fuel civil resistance and conflict. Such a state of affairs threatens the survival of liberal democracy and should, therefore, be avoided at all costs.

The Citizens' Divisiveness Argument

Although liberal critics claim there is no realistic prospect of a religious war breaking out in a stable liberal democracy like the United States. However, other issues may justify the Doctrine of Religious Restriction. For example, it is reasonable to assume the enactment of coercive laws that are justified on religious grounds will generate a great deal of anger and frustration on the part of those being coerced: "When laws are expressly based on religious arguments, they take on a religious character, frustrating those who lack the relevant beliefs and therefore have no access to the normative predicates behind the law" (Greene 2016). It will lead to anger, distrust, and divisions among citizens.

The Basic Human Worth Argument

The most prominent argument of the Doctrine of Religious Restraint is that we must treat everyone as a person of fundamental worth: citizens and officials must abide by the Doctrine of Religious

Restraint because they must respect their compatriots as persons of equal moral standing (C.J. Eberle, 2009)

However, Michael Perry argues "that the fundamental moral commitment of liberal democracy is the true and full humanity of every person, regardless of race, sex, religion. This commitment, Perry continues, is "the basis of liberal democracy's further commitment to basic human freedoms protected by law. Therefore, citizens can support the laws they believe in, even if those laws lack a plausible secular rationale, as long as they are firmly committed to basic liberal rights." Thus, Perry argues that it does not matter what reasons one has for supporting coercive legislation as long as it does not conflict with the fundamental rights of liberal democracy (Perry, 2009:105-126). There is at least one small virtue of the non-establishment understanding of the norm that Perry defends here, a less restrictive understanding, namely, that having 'under God' in the Pledge or 'In God We Trust' as the national motto, or beginning a court session with 'God save the United States and this Honorable Court,' violates the constitutional imperative that the government does not establish a religion which most United States citizens would welcome as something very extreme. It is true that the words 'under God' in the Pledge and 'In God We Trust' as the national motto offend some American citizens. However, as long as the government fully respects one's right to free exercise of religion, the government's affirmation of one or more religious premises does not violate anyone's human rights (Perry 2009)

As referenced by Flanagan (2009: 34), Stephen Carter, in *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Undermine Religious Devotion*, stated that what is needed is not a requirement that the religiously observant should choose the form of dialog that liberalism accepts, but that liberalism should develop a politics that accepts whatever form of dialog is offered by members of society. Like any other, epistemic diversity must be respected, not ignored, and not written off. What is needed is a willingness to listen, not because the speaker has the right voice but because the speaker has the right to speak.

The Political Role of Religion in Pancasila Democracy

Democracy is generally understood as a system of government in which sovereignty is in the hands of the people. It is a government of, by, and for the people. As a nation-state entity, the noble agreement contained in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution has established Indonesia as a nation-state based on four main pillars, namely: Pancasila as the foundation of the state, the ideology of the nation, the view of the life of all Indonesians, the 1945 Constitution as the constitutional foundation, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) as the form of state, and Unity in Diversity as the factual conditions and situations of Indonesia's multicultural diversity. This entire agreement provides shelter for the form and system of the Indonesian government based on Pancasila democracy.

Unlike secular countries that embrace liberal democracy, Indonesia's democratic system is based on the values of Pancasila (five principles), called Pancasila democracy. According to Wisnumurti (2017: 15), Pancasila democracy is based on the Indonesian nation's personality and philosophy of life. As a nation-state entity, the noble agreement contained in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution has established Indonesia as a nation-state based on four main pillars, namely: Pancasila as the foundation of the state, the ideology of the nation, the view of the life of all Indonesian people; the 1945 Constitution as a constitutional foundation; the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as a form of state; and unity in diversity as a factual condition and situation of Indonesia's multicultural diversity. This fundamental agreement provides a foundation for the form and system of the Indonesian government based on Pancasila democracy.

Pancasila democracy is based on the values of Pancasila, namely, democracy led by wisdom in deliberation representation, has the concept of divinity Almighty, upholds fair and civilized humanity, and

unites Indonesia to realize social justice for all Indonesian people. In summary, Pancasila democracy is a democratic system that prioritizes deliberation based on divinity, humanity, unity, and justice.

Juridically, the legal basis for the implementation of Pancasila democracy, among others: (1) The fourth principle of Pancasila, "Democracy led by wisdom in deliberation/representation." (2) fourth paragraph of Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, "... therefore, the Independence of the Indonesian Nationality is compiled in a Constitution of the State of Indonesia, which is formed in a State structure the Republic of Indonesia with the sovereignty of the people..." (3) Article 1 Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, "Sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is exercised according to the Constitution." (4) Article 2 Paragraph (1), "The People's Consultative Assembly consists of members of the House of Representatives and members of the House of Regional Representatives elected through general elections and further regulated in the Constitution." (Wisnumurti 2017)

The basic principles of Pancasila Democracy include: (1) elections that are free from pressure, honest, and fair will ensure that the democratic system runs well; (2) the state fully guarantees the human rights of every citizen; (3) every citizen has equal standing in the law. The judiciary is impartial and independent of government intervention or anyone else; (4) freedom of association/organization and expression, the government must guarantee these rights as a form of democratic government; (5) freedom of the Press/Mass Media through freedom of the press, people can voice their hearts and minds to the public through the mass media (Wisnumurti 2017).

As previously explained, Pancasila democracy is a democratic system based on Pancasila; Pancasila democracy is the right choice of the Indonesian founding fathers, considering that Indonesia has a diversity of cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, and even ideologies. However, implementing Pancasila democracy is not as easy as turning a hand; history records that in the course of the history of democracy in Indonesia, several times trapped in several democratic systems, such as guided democracy, parliamentary, and authoritarian. After the fall of Soeharto's military regime in 1998, Indonesia entered the reform era, a transition period from an authoritarian state to a democratic state. One of the signs was the direct election of the president and regional heads.

Pancasila democracy is a choice that shows that Indonesia is neither a secular nor a religious state. Pancasila's existence reflects Indonesia's characteristics as a multicultural nation-state that must absorb and transform all elements of the nation into a stable foundation and a dynamic guiding star. The five principles are seen as the crystallization of the central values and ideals of the Indonesian nation as idealized by the existing "ideological trilogy": religious ideology, nationalist ideology, and socialist ideology. The three ideological families undergo a synthesis process to find common ground for fighting for the common good in the nation's life (Latif, 2018: 208).

The political role of religion in Pancasila democracy is accommodated because the first precept of Pancasila is divinity. Therefore, it has different implications from liberal democracy concerning the political role of religion. The first principle of "Belief in One God" in Pancasila shows that the political role of religion is accommodated in Pancasila's democracy. Religion has become one of the values of Pancasila as the foundation of the Indonesian state. Unlike liberal democracy, which has the doctrine of religious restraint that limits the political role of religion, in Pancasila democracy, religious values become one of the agreements of the founding fathers. Thus, the founding fathers recognized the political role of religion since the beginning of independence. The question is no longer may or may not, but to what extent can the political role of religion be accommodated in the modern political landscape in Indonesia? Is there a limit? Can state institutions or public officials decide on a coercive policy solely based on comprehensive religious doctrine?

Soekarno declared Pancasila as *filosofische grondslag*, the philosophical foundation, the most profound thought, the soul, and the deepest desire to build an eternal and everlasting Indonesia (Soekarno,

1964: 9). Therefore, Pancasila has a function: (1) as a guide and guidance for daily life in family, society, nation, and state; (2) Pancasila is the basis of the state so that it is an obligation that in all state government in the law, political, economic, and social fields, it must be based on and aim at Pancasila (Umbara 2020).

Pancasila, in its position as all sources of law or as a source of fundamental national law, is above the Constitution, meaning that Pancasila is above the 1945 Constitution. If the 1945 Constitution is the state constitution, Pancasila is the Fundamental State Principal Rule. The fundamental principle has a nature and position that is fixed, solid, and unchanged for the country. Pancasila cannot be changed and eliminated because it is a fundamental principle, the most profound thought founded on building an eternal independent Indonesia." As a fundamental principle, Pancasila should be the basis of all Indonesian citizens' legal, political, social, economic, and daily lives, including their religious lives (Usman 2010)

Pancasila, as the basis and ideology of the state, is the result of the agreement of the founding fathers containing noble values that live in the archipelago. Pancasila was born from values that have grown and developed in Indonesian society. Pancasila contains concepts that contain ideas, ideals, and basic values that are round, intact, and fundamental regarding human existence and human relations with the environment so that it can be used as a foundation for living in society, nation, and nation-state. Pancasila has universal values such as religiosity, humanity, nationalism, sovereignty, and sociality. The universal values contained in Pancasila are bound together into complete and systemic unity, thus forming a particular or original and authentic characteristic, which is one of the requirements that a state ideology must meet. The value of religiosity is one of the principles contained in the precepts of Pancasila. It means that the political role of religion in Pancasila democracy is accommodated, as recognized in the first precept, "Belief in One God." Then, to what extent does religion play a role in politics in Indonesia?

Pancasila is the main foundation of the state or the basis of the Indonesian state; the precepts in Pancasila should not be understood as separate. The precepts of Pancasila relate reciprocally to each other and aim to achieve a balanced arrangement. The five principles in Pancasila complement and limit each other. It shows that no restrictions limit the political role of religion as long as it does not conflict with other principles in Pancasila. In other words, the political role of religion in Pancasila democracy must also be suitable for the other precepts in Pancasila, namely just and civilized humanity, Indonesian unity, democracy led by wisdom in deliberation and representation, and social justice (Putra 2017).

In Pancasila democracy, the political role of religion is accommodated as stated in the precepts of the Almighty God. Furthermore, because the values contained in Pancasila are a unified whole, protecting and complementing each other, the political role of religion must be carried out while still considering the other four values of Pancasila: humanity, unity, deliberation, and justice. The political role of religion must also be based on human values, prioritizing unity, equality, and justice for all Indonesian citizens with religious, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity. That is the uniqueness of Pancasila, which does not lie in its separately analyzed precepts but rather in the interconnectedness between its precepts and how the five precepts are interrelated; Pancasila becomes something "unique."

The next question is, can state institutions or public officials decide on coercive policies, laws, and regulations based solely on religious doctrine?

In liberal democracies, the religious restraint doctrine more or less states that citizens and legislators should refrain from making political decisions solely on religious grounds. The doctrine is usually interpreted as a general constraint on religious arguments: exclusive religious reasoning is an inappropriate basis for political decisions, especially coercive ones. In a pluralistic, liberal society, religious beliefs should not be used as the sole basis for public policy. Public decisions and policies in a

liberal democracy should not be based solely on reasons of religious doctrine but should be based on "public reason."

In contrast to liberal democracy, in Pancasila democracy, religion's political role is constitutional and legitimate because it is part of the first principle of the Indonesian state foundation, Pancasila. The issue is how religious reasons can be used as the basis for coercive policies. According to Soekarno, Pancasila is the Staat's fundamental norm, so all coercive policies and regulations made based on religion must refer to the values of Pancasila, which must also be based on fair and civilized human values, prioritize unity, be decided by deliberation and consensus (deliberative), and for the sake of justice, without distinguishing ethnic and religious backgrounds. It means coercive regulations and policies should not discriminate against citizens of different ethnicities and religions.

Conclusion

In liberal democracies, the role of religion is often limited by the doctrine of religious restraint, where the standard view prohibits the use of comprehensive religious doctrines as an excuse for coercive policies and regulations. The aim is to prevent majority religions from using coercive regulation as a tool to discriminate against religious minorities. Meanwhile, in Pancasila democracy, the role of religion is accommodated as one of the values of the Pancasila state foundation, namely "Belief in One God." It has consequences and implications different from liberal democracy, which prohibits using comprehensive religious doctrines as the basis for coercive policies. The recognition of the role of religion as one of the values in Pancasila democracy brings the consequence of using the comprehensive doctrine of religion to be the basis of coercive policies/regulations, which is a necessity. What needs to be considered is that any coercive policy considers the values of Pancasila as a whole because the precepts of Pancasila are a unity. Therefore, coercive policies/regulations based on comprehensive religious doctrines must prioritize humanity, unity, equality, and justice. Thus, the policy/regulation does not become a tool to discriminate against religious minorities.

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