Islamic View on Secularism Through the Methodology of Maudhu'i Interpretation

Risma Ayu Nursyahidah¹, Rofi Nugraha² Asep Abdul Muhyi³

Abstract

This study investigates the genesis of secularism stemming from discontent with divine principles. It aims to delve into the Qur’anic perspective on secularism, employing a Tafsir Maudhu’i approach. The qualitative methodology, utilizing descriptive techniques and library research, focuses on verses pertinent to secularism. Analysis reveals the Qur’an’s implicit disapproval of secularism, evident in Surah Al-Hajj, verse 11, highlighting the consequences of separating worldly matters from religion. The findings underscore the inseparability of religious and worldly affairs, constituting an integral unity. This study emphasizes the interdependence between these realms, emphasizing that their detachment is untenable. It prompts reflection on the implications of secularization on religious beliefs and societal structures, challenging prevailing discourses on the division between religion and state. Ultimately, it contributes to a nuanced understanding of the intersection between religious teachings and contemporary governance paradigms. Furthermore, the study aims to contextualize its findings within the broader discourse on the relationship between religion and state in contemporary societies. By examining the implications of secularization on religious beliefs and societal structures, it seeks to shed light on the complexities of governance in pluralistic contexts. Through this nuanced exploration, the study not only challenges prevailing discourses but also offers insights into navigating the intersection between religious teachings and modern governance paradigms. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of fostering dialogue and understanding between religious and secular perspectives to promote social cohesion and inclusive governance frameworks. Thus, this study contributes to the ongoing conversation on the role of religion in shaping public life and informs efforts to create more equitable and harmonious societies.

Keywords: religion; al-qur'an; world; islam; secularism.

¹ UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia, Email: rismaayunursyahidah17@gmail.com
² UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia, Email: rofinugraha2003@gmail.com
³ UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia, Email: asepabdulmuhyi@uinsgd.ac.id
Introduction

The dynamics of life evolve in every aspect of existence, driven by humanity's desire for change. New ideas and discoveries emerge alongside the advancement of knowledge as responses to contemporary issues[1]. The French Revolution serves as evidence of human life's dynamism[2]. French society's dissatisfaction with the government at that time, particularly the king's unjust actions, prompted the French populace to revolt, particularly in the political sphere, resulting in the ousting of the French king at that time[3]. The French Revolution propelled democratic principles in politics, affirming the importance of popular sovereignty by ending monarchy based on divine principles[4]. The Declaration of Human Rights, principles of freedom, equality, and fraternity, cement humanity's significant role in history[5].

The aftermath of these events gave rise to various new ideologies as manifestations of human dynamism. Secularism is one of them, a political ideology asserting that worldly affairs need not be entwined with religious matters, and vice versa[6]. Islam comes as good news for the righteous[7]. In the Quran itself, Islam has a role as a bestower of mercy upon the entire universe. Allah's decree states: (QS. Al-Anbiya: 107),

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	ext{وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَّا رَحْمَةٗ لِّلْعَالَمِيَ}
\]

107. We have not sent you (Prophet Muhammad) except as a mercy to the whole universe. This verse emphasizes that life in this world cannot be separated from religious matters. Considering that "the whole universe" in the verse is general and comprehensive.

Based on the background above, the author formulates the focus of this research study on the dynamics and history of the emergence of secularism, as well as Islam's perspective on secularism, with the aim of understanding the dynamics and history of the emergence of secularism and knowing Islam's view on the concept of secularism.

Method

The research methodology employed by the author is qualitative approach through library research[8]. Qualitative research method is a deep and focused approach to understanding and revealing a phenomenon. The first stage involves selecting appropriate research methods, such as case studies or phenomenology[9]. After that, the research involves data collection through techniques such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. In this case, the author employs an analytical approach[10]. Qualitative data analysis requires an inductive approach, where the researcher gradually constructs meaning from
the data. In the initial stage, the data is scrutinized to identify patterns and main themes[11]. Subsequently, the author provides detailed analysis regarding the discussed themes, utilizing abstract concepts to describe the relationships and meanings that emerge from the data[12]. The validity of qualitative research is reinforced through the integration of data from various sources[13].

Maudhu'i interpretation derived from the Qur'an as the primary source and related books on the theme, along with hadiths as secondary sources with data analysis techniques[14]. The Maudhu'i interpretation method is an approach where verses related to the chosen theme are gathered and described through the perspectives of both classical and contemporary commentators[15]. These collected verses are then correlated, and their reasons for revelation (sabab annuzul) are also sought to support them, enabling conclusions to be drawn regarding the topic from the standpoint of Maudhu'i interpretation[16].

Result and Discussion

Definition of Secularism

Linguistically, secularism originates from the Latin word "saeculum," which has two connotations: time and place. Time refers to the notion of "now" or "present," while place refers to the concept of "worldly" or "of this world"[17]. Secularism also carries the meaning of fashluddin anil haya, which means separating the role of religion from life[18]. In simpler terms, religion only intervenes in managing the relationship between the individual and the Creator, without interfering in human life affairs, which tend to be social in nature[19]. Thus, linguistically, secularism is interpreted as an ideology that solely focuses on worldly life, without any contribution to matters that are spiritual and divine[20].

Terminologically, secularism is defined as a concept that separates the state (politics) and religion (state and religion)[21].Secularists argue that the state is an institution that deals with worldly affairs and has no connection with anything related to the hereafter and the divine[22], while religion is an institution that only regulates the vertical relationship between humans and metaphysical and spiritual matters, such as the relationship between humans and God[23]. Therefore, according to secularists, the state and religion are considered separate entities that cannot be unified; each must remain on its own path[24].
History and Development of Secularism

The emergence of secularism originated from the secularization resulting from the deviation of the teachings of Prophet Jesus, which at that time were still authentic with its monotheistic teachings[25]. Due to these teachings, most people at that time did not like it, so those who followed the teachings of Prophet Jesus lived in terror and pressure for about two centuries[26].

During that period, the teachings of Prophet Jesus experienced various blows resulting in the emergence of deviations in teachings. During the reign of Emperor Constantine, stemming from the conflict between two groups of followers of Prophet Jesus who rejected the concept of the Trinity[27], they were known as the followers of Arius[28]. This contrasted with the followers of Athanasius, who supported the concept of the Trinity[29]. Therefore, the solution taken to resolve the issue was through the effort of the Council known as the Council of Nicaea in the year 325 CE. However, the council ended with a vote, and the followers of Arius were declared defeated in the vote[30]. Thus, this marked the beginning of the deviation in teachings, as the authenticity of the teachings began to be infiltrated by Greek mythologies far from their intended teachings[31]. And during that period, there were no efforts towards secularism[32].

The term secularism and its ideology emerged after the events of repression by the church, which attempted to separate scientific thought and discoveries[33]. Consequently, the European church authorities punished several scientists such as Copernicus, Gradano, Galileo, etc[34]. These were scientists who contributed to scientific discoveries and were considered to have made discoveries that contradicted church teachings[35]. The emergence of secularism was also caused by deviations from the church itself; they engaged in practices far from their teachings, such as selling religion in the form of selling letters of indulgence for large sums of money and guaranteeing paradise even for those who committed crimes in the world[36].

Furthermore, efforts towards secularization arose due to the rejection by the church of its dogmas, which tended to be hostile towards rationality and science[37]. Rationalists were eradicated by the church through the suppression of innovations, which resulted in significant changes in medieval society[38]. Deviations from church dogmas triggered attempts to secularize against the exploitative dominance of the church. It was this dissatisfaction that led to the emergence of secularism. [36]

During the medieval period, the church had extremely strong dominance over the dynamics of society at that time, playing a crucial role with significant
influence. The church controlled all aspects of European society, known as "church law" or ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Anything not in line with the Gospel was deemed as error and deviation[39]. Philosophy, the parent of science with broad scope, was narrowed down by them and focused solely on reinforcing their belief in the Trinity doctrine[40]. This rendered philosophy dysfunctional as it was only used to rationalize the Trinity doctrine, making it appear more rational[41].

These were based on the fact that around the 11th century, only church officials had cultural education and other freedoms, while those under them and the congregation did not have such privileges and did not have access to move up the social ladder[42]. In other words, individuals other than church officials could not make vertical changes[43]. They were merely marginalized members of society. On the other hand, the relationship between the church and the nobility was reciprocal and overlapping[44].

In such circumstances, a new awareness emerged within society to change the situation[45]. This phenomenon continued and escalated, marked by numerous protests and social resistance against the dominant exploitation by the church, which involved itself in feudalistic relations with the nobility[46]. The behavior of the church reflected its thirst for power and their attitudes of condescension towards the common people[47].

Then, after the social processes, there emerged internal protests from the monasteries, starting with the Benedictine monastery in the Cluny region, now famous for the term "Cluniac Reform." This movement involved opposition to deviations in the practices of the clergy, moral deviations, and their arrogance in the monasteries[48]. Then, in 1073, the "Hildebrandine Renewal" occurred. This movement was also a resistance against the exploitation and arbitrariness of the church, eventually giving rise to a process of reform and secularization by separating the church from the government[49].

That movement is also what ultimately sparked the spirit of secularization in the Western world. Since this event, they have believed that religion must be separated from matters of power and the state, and even from the lives of the people[50]. Thus, the pivotal historical event marking the emergence and success of the secularization movement is the French Revolution (1789 CE). The background of the French Revolution stems from the grievances of the lower to middle classes against the policies of King Louis XVI, who was deemed incompetent as a leader, and his governance methods were disliked by the populace[51]. This discontent was also fueled by France's dire financial crisis at the time[52].

The French government owed a debt to Samuel Bernard, who was a Jew. Therefore, the burden of this debt was entrusted to the king. It was known that the borrowed funds were for the purpose of waging war against the United States.
to gain independence[53]. To repay this debt, King Louis XVI decided to impose
taxes, but this effort was seen as biased because the heaviest burden fell on the
lower class of society, namely the laborers and farmers[54].

The French society at that time was divided into three classes, where the
first class consisted of nobles and officials, while the second class comprised
religious leaders, landlords, and individuals with middle-class economics, many
of whom were already reluctant to pay taxes[55]. Meanwhile, almost the entire
population of France belonged to the third class, namely the laborers and
farmers[56].

In addition to the excessively high taxes, what became a problem for the
French people was the extreme weather, which hindered their economy derived
from agriculture. Instead of receiving relief, the farmers were burdened further
with the increase in taxes[57]. This resulted in inflation, causing the prices of basic
commodities to rise, such as flour, which is often used to make bread[58]. The
production and consumption of bread were hindered due to limited raw
materials and high prices[59].

The incident triggered the anger of the French citizens at that time towards
the King's policies. The people began to express their protests by holding several
meetings and making declarations, one of which was the Estates-General
meeting in May 1789[60]. This event marked the beginning of the French
Revolution[61]. The French Revolution was also influenced by the strong desire
of the third estate, who sought to break free from the shackles of the king's
oppression and his biased policies. This culminated when the people went to the
palace to protest. They demonstrated and sought to meet the king and queen. At
that moment, the people came with various demands, one of which was to
remove the king and queen from the palace[62]. They protested and demanded
to meet the king and queen, with one of their demands being the removal of the
king and queen from the palace[63].

Not only were the king's policies an issue, but the French people at that
time were also frustrated with the king's failure to manage finances due to the
monarchy system of governance[64]. He was seen as unable to address the
economic difficulties that plagued France at the time[65]. In addition to the severe
crisis, the French king married a girl named Marie Antoinette from Austria,
known as the beautiful queen[66]. Her extravagant and lavish lifestyle starkly
contrasted with the situation of the French people experiencing financial crisis.
She wore luxurious clothing and jewelry and indulged in delicious food while
her people suffered from hunger[67].

In 1783, Marie desired a change in the palace gardens, which she deemed
too extravagant. She transformed it into a rural concept titled "Queen's Hamlet."
Unfortunately, Marie's intentions were seen as mockery by the struggling
farmers and laborers. This further fueled the people's anger. Eventually, King
Louis XVI and Queen Marie decided to flee, but they were eventually captured by the French people themselves. It was then that the monarchy system was officially abolished. Therefore, the form of government became a republic entirely[68].

King Louis XVI was sentenced to execution in front of the general public. He was executed by a sharp device called the guillotine. Meanwhile, Marie remained a prisoner with her children. Marie was found guilty of misappropriating state funds and was sentenced to execution two days later. The revolution gave rise to secularist ideologies as a result of the abuses of the monarchy system based on divine principles, where the church was responsible for legitimizing the king's power.

The religious deviations had a traumatic impact on the French society at that time, leading to the emergence of efforts to secularize the separation between religion and other aspects of life because religion was considered detrimental. Since then, secularist intellectuals began to proliferate, along with their ideas that overturned religious values. Figures such as Spinoza, Darwin, Nietzsche, Durkheim, Freud, and Marx exemplify this trend. Subsequently, there arose popular revolutions in Europe opposing religion and the church, led by figures like Martin Luther, Rousseau, and Spinoza. Thus, in 1789, France became the first country with a political system free from religious intervention. This revolution continued to evolve in European countries over time, giving rise to thinkers and scientists who expressed theories opposing religion based on rationality. For instance, the emergence of Darwinism, Freudianism, Existentialism, and Nietzsche's atheistic ideas, where he proclaimed the "death of God" and advocated for human freedom in exploitation[69].

As a result, religion was marginalized and became a very small domain, separated from political, social, and scientific affairs. For those who rejected the religious system, they spurred rapid progress in science and technology with the onset of the Renaissance era, marked by rapid industrial and technological growth in Europe. In its course, this secularist ideology continued to spread and began to enter the world of Islam in the early 20th century. Turkey, under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk at that time, became the first country to implement this ideology. Following this, other Islamic countries adopted this ideology, such as Egypt through French-influenced governments, and Indonesia and Malaysia, each under Dutch and British rule, respectively[70].

This can be seen in the duality between the worldly and religious aspects, where religious teachings are kept separate from scientific and worldly matters, and vice versa. One concrete example can be observed in one of the principles of secular states, as stated in the Dutch Constitution of 1855, article 119, which declares that the government remains neutral towards religion, meaning it will not favor any religion or interfere in any religious affairs.
Secularism in The View of The Quran

Secular is based on the root word "secular" which means "time, period, era, etc.", and the suffix -me indicates an ideology. According to the dictionary "secular" means "naturalyyun" "zamaniy" and "dunyawi". Time in the Qur'an has several word forms, including "ashrun" "dahrun" and "zamanun"[71].

In terms of terminology, secularism is not compatible with the words "ashrun" "dahrun" and "zamanun" because they only fulfill the linguistic meaning. Therefore, secularism is interpreted as "dunya" with the addition of "duniawiyah" which indicates the adherents of an ideology that focuses on the life of the world alone by also denying religion[72].

QS. Al-Hajj: 11,

وَمِنْ آلَّاَٰمُحَمَّدَ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ خُزُّٰۡ ۡ فَإِنَّ أُصَابَّهُ هَٰذَا أُعۡجِزُ ۡ عَلَٰ جَهَّهُ ۚ خَسَرَ الْدُّنۡيَا وَالۡأَخۡرَىَّ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلۡخَسٓرُ ۡ إِلَٰٓ لَٰٓهَۡ

11. Some people worship Allah only on the margins (not with full conviction). If he receives good, he is at ease. However, if a trial befalls him, he turns back (returns to kufr). He loses in this world and the next. That is the real loss.

The verse was revealed regarding a man who came to Madinah to convert to Islam. When his wife gave birth to a son and his horse bred, then he said, "This (Islam) is a good religion." When his wife did not bear a son and his horse did not breed, then he said, "This is a bad religion." So, Allah revealed the verse, "And among the people there are those who worship Allah by being on the edge."

Then in another statement is that there was a Jewish man who converted to Islam. After that his eyesight was lost, as well as his wealth and children. He considered Islam to be bad luck and said, "I have found no good in this religion. My sight is gone, my wealth is gone, and my son is dead." Then the verse was revealed, "And among the people there are those who worship Allah while being on the edge[73].

The other related verses are QS. Al-Baqarah: 85-86,

فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَن يَفۡعَلُ ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمۡ إِلَّا خِزۡيٞ فِِ ٱلَۡۡيَوَٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ وَيَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيََٰمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلََٰٓ ٱلۡعَذَابِِۗ وَمَا َوْلََٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّاِينَ ٱشۡتََ ٱللَّاُ بِغََٰفِلٍ عَماا تَعۡمَلُونَ أَوْلِٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشۡرَتُوا أَحۡوَآلَ ٱلۡدُّنۡيَا بِٱلۡأَخۡرَىَّ ۚ فَلَا يَكۡفُفُ عَنۡهُمۡ ٱلۡعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمۡ يَضۡرِبُونَ
85. Then, you (Bani Israel) killed yourselves (your neighbors) and expelled a group of you from their homes. You helped each other in evil and enmity. If they come to you as captives, you ransom them, even though you were forbidden to expel them. Do you believe in some of the Book (Torah) and disbelieve in others? So, there is no (proper) recompense for those who do so among you, except disgrace in the life of this world and on the Day of Resurrection they will be returned to the severest punishment. Allah is not unmindful of what you do.

86. They are the ones who buy the life of this world with the life of the Hereafter. So, their punishment will not be alleviated and they will not be helped.

QS. Al-Hadid: 20,

20. Know that the life of this world is but play, and carelessness, and adornment, and boasting among yourselves, and vying for wealth and children. (It is like the rain whose crops amaze the farmers, then they dry up and you see them turn yellow, then they are destroyed. In the Hereafter there is a severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and His pleasure. The life of the world (for those who are careless) is but a deceptive pleasure.

In Tafsir Al-Misbah, Surah Al-Hajj: 11 alludes to someone who is hypocritical, they are on the edge and never feel calm in life. When his family gains worldly benefits then he feels calm, but when the test comes to him and does not benefit his worldly life then he falls down because of the accident due to his actions. He loses in this world because he doesn't get what he wants, and he loses in the Hereafter because he doesn't get the blessings of Allah[74].

The word harf means the edge or end of something, whether it is on a peak or on a level place. The word khair is confronted with the word fitnah when the opposite of khair goodness is syarr which is badness. The word fitnah is taken to imply that the trials that come to man are not always evil. It seems that the verse chooses the word fitnah to imply that the trials and tribulations faced by humans are not always evil and not always bad. However, people with weak faith will always consider them as bad[75].

Understanding the phrase Inqalaba wajhihi which means upside down or falling on one's face is related to the lafadz harf or edge. Islam is described as a high and wide road, which the person concerned is reluctant to be in the middle and chooses to be on the edge so that when he falls or is given trials, he will lose his balance and then fall down in the sense of experiencing loss[76].
According to Sayyid Quthb in his tafsir, people who when given pleasure he believes then when given a disaster he disbelieves are people who lose, he loses in the world because of the disaster that befalls him then he also loses in the hereafter because of his disbelief in the world when given a disaster. They consider the affairs of faith to be like buying and selling which is bound by profit and loss, why there is in fact pleasure in the world is an addition or a gift that Allah gives for his obedience. And matters of faith cannot be measured by gains and losses because in the realm of aqidah is about the totality of beliefs that cannot be contested[77].

Then in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 85, similarly deals with the disbelief of a group where they only carry out some commands and leave others. So that people who behave like this, Allah gives punishment. Then in the next verse these people are named as those who exchange the life of the world for the pleasures of the life hereafter. They only try to pursue the life of the world by justifying all means and ignoring the commands of Allah. So later for him punishment in hell.

Then in QS. Al-Hadid verse 20, it is confirmed that the life of the world is only an adornment which is very tempting and nothing but a game or activity that is less useful because what is produced is only looking for temporary pleasures that take up a lot of time and lead to negligence. Competition and offspring are only temporary and impermanent. Allah likens it to a plant that is watered by water, it becomes ripe then soon becomes yellow and destroyed, the verse explains how short life is. So those who only pursue worldly life and forget about the hereafter, they are the ones who are deceived by worldly pleasures[78].

Secularism is an understanding in which the belief is that religion should not be mixed into political affairs and other public institutions. As for its characteristics, it states that religious affairs must be distinguished from the values of world life in all its aspects. For Islam itself, secularism is an understanding that is considered misleading because religion cannot interfere with worldly affairs, even though in Islam itself all aspects of life guidelines have been listed in it. Even in a secular government, the government cannot interfere in religious affairs.

The implementation of the secularism system in Europe made people free from the restraints of dogmas that at that time were very dominating. One form of secularism at that time was not concerned with religious affairs. They were indifferent to religious matters on the grounds of human rights and the ideology of scientism. Even at that time secularism became a trend for young people who tried to keep up with the times. Secularism has a bad impact on Muslims themselves, for example, there are many cases in the field where their young
people do an act that is clearly wrong but they justify it under the pretext of human rights[79].

Secularism arises because of individual or group disappointment or dissatisfaction with religious dogma. Because they feel disadvantaged, these people try to separate the life of the world and religion. Even in the MUI (Indonesian Fatwa Council) fatwa that secularism is an understanding that establishes religion only to relate to God. As for dealing with humans, they use only social agreements and are not bound by sharia laws[80].

People who embrace secularism have been mentioned in the Qur'an that they are just people who when they get something they want, they believe and when something happens outside of their wishes, they disbelieve. They feel disadvantaged when holding on to Shari'ah law and eventually secularization is born. The verses that have been mentioned allude to someone who only believes by carrying out some of the commands listed in the book and denies others by abandoning them. Then he disbelieves in the worldly blessings that Allah has given him; he is grateful when he gets what he wants, but he disbelieves again just because what he gets does not match what he wants[81].

Belief is a matter of faith, so when there are many trials in the matter of faith, what needs to be done is to be patient in living it and not to ignore it through secularization. Secularism begins with a person's traumatic experience of religious perversion when religion, so when he is unable to deal with it, he turns away by secularizing which leads to secularism. Religion, however, is a whole, and cannot be broken down into "religious affairs" and "world affairs".

Conclusion

Human life in the world cannot be separated from the scope of religion, and Islam is a religion that includes rahmatan lil'alamin, which is a mercy for all nature, including all aspects of human life. Life is worldly, so the mercy in life is also a mercy for all humans, without exception. Earthly life has a causal relationship with the afterlife, where everything that humans do while living in the world is a causal law in the hereafter depending on what has been done while humans live in the world. In the preparation of this writing, the author realizes that this writing is far from perfect. Therefore, the author hopes that constructive suggestions and criticism can be input in making further writing. And it is hoped that the next writers who both study this matter, hopefully can be more detailed and detailed in discussing this matter.
Author Contributions

Risma Ayu Nursyahidah: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. Rofi Nugraha: Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. Asep Abdul Muhyi: Investigation.

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