



# INDONESIAN EXEGETISTS AND MULTICULTURALISM: STUDY ABOUT HAMKA AND MUHAMMAD QURAISH SHIHAB'S IDEA ON MULTICULTURALISM



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## Abstract

This article aims to discuss the idea of multiculturalism from the views of two Indonesian figures, Hamka and Quraish Shihab. Dawam Rahardjo (2010) argues that the principle of multiculturalism in Indonesia has not been properly understood because it is littered with mutual suspicion and concern, especially among majority and minority groups. In real terms, the idea of multiculturalism has not been received by Muslims in general. Firmly, the MUI and Kisd (Indonesian Committee for Islamic World Solidarity) reject pluralism (2005); Multiculturalism as a pluralistic perspective is not only about recognizing and respecting the plurality of realities but also paying attention to aspects of interaction and the existence of each culture as equal entities. Based on the author's observations, the Qur'an contains many verses that can be used as a basis for building cooperation, mutual respect, tolerance and appreciation, a willingness to accept diversity, reconciliation between people, and peaceful coexistence between cultural groups, based on the principle of justice and equality, and others multiculturalism principles. The methods used in this article are the content analysis method and the comparative method. Furthermore, this research uses historical and sociological approaches.

*Artikel ini bertujuan untuk membahas tentang gagasan multikulturalisme dari pandangan dua tokoh Indonesia, yaitu Hamka dan Quraish Shihab. Dawam Rahardjo (2010), melihat bahwa prinsip multikulturalisme di Indonesia belum dipahami secara benar, karena dikotori oleh sikap saling curiga dan kekhawatiran, terutama kelompok mayoritas dan minoritas. Secara riil, gagasan tentang multikulturalisme belum mendapat penerimaan yang memadai dari umat Islam pada umumnya. Secara tegas, MUI dan Kisd (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam) menolak paham pluralisme (2005); Multikulturalisme sebagai cara pandang kemajemukan bukan hanya sekedar mengakui dan menghormati kemajemukan realitas, tapi juga memperhatikan aspek interaksi dan keberadaan setiap kebudayaan sebagai entitas yang setara dan memiliki hak yang setara pula di tengah masyarakat. Berdasarkan pengamatan penulis, Al-Qur'an banyak memuat ayat yang bisa dijadikan asas untuk membangun kerjasama, saling menghormati, toleransi dan penghargaan, kesediaan untuk menerima keragaman, rekonsolidasi antarmanusia, dan hidup berdampingan secara damai antarkelompok budaya, berdasarkan prinsip keadilan, kesetaraan, dan prinsip multikulturalisme lainnya. Metode yang akan digunakan dalam penyusunan artikel ini adalah metode analisis isi (content analysis) dan metode komparatif. Lebih lanjut, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis dan sosiologis.*

## Background

In general, multiculturalism is understood as a perspective on diversity that recognizes and accepts diversity as equals, both individually and culturally, whether ethnic, cultural, gender, linguistic and so on intending to increase human dignity and



worth.<sup>1</sup> Multiculturalism is also understood as an understanding and perspective that emphasizes the existence of cultural differences as an entity that has equal rights. From this concept of multiculturalism, normative ideas emerged regarding harmony, tolerance, mutual respect for differences, and cultural rights.<sup>2</sup> In Indonesia, multiculturalism's value is explicitly written in Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution, which states that "national culture is a culture that emerged as a cultural endeavor of the entire Indonesian people."<sup>3</sup>

The pluralism of Indonesian society necessitates the realization of a situation where elements of society are tolerant, respect for cultural differences equally. If not, then the pluralism of Indonesian society will not move away from the pluralistic nature of society. J.S. Furnivall<sup>4</sup> stated that as a plural society, with parts of the community living side by side, and separated around the similar political unit potentially trigger social conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a tolerant religious understanding. Tolerance could encourage society to mutually recognize the existence of other religions, faith and different identities. With this condition, society could create an atmosphere of mutual respect for one another within the framework of a harmonious life. The concept of multiculturalism, substantively, do not contradict the basics of Islamic teachings because the basic of Islamic teachings lead to universal human values, such as justice, equality, and freedom.<sup>5</sup> According to Budy Munawar Rachman, Islam is the same and congruent with universal human values. Therefore, pluralism or multiculturalism has a legitimate place in the Islamic religion.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the author's observations, the Qur'an contains messages calling for building cooperation, mutual respect, tolerance and appreciation, a willingness to accept diversity, reconciliation between people, and peaceful coexistence between cultural groups, based on the principles of justice, equality, and the other principles of multiculturalism. The Qur'an explicitly states that "humans were created from men and women in tribes and nations to know or respect each other, they are equal before God, except for the most devout."<sup>7</sup> In another verse, it is also explained that Allah glorified the children of Adam (without exception). They were placed on land and in the sea, given good provisions, and given priority over other creatures.<sup>8</sup> Allah also emphasized that "if Allah had willed, he would have made humans as a one kind of people, (but Allah does not desire that) Allah will examine you based on whatever is bestowed on you, and then compete in terms of virtue."<sup>9</sup>

From these excerpts from several verses, it seems that an initial conclusion can be drawn that the Qur'an contains basic teachings about multiculturalism, namely by explaining that diversity among human beings is *sunnatullah* (God's will), which cannot be contested. Clearly, the verses above also show that there is no hierarchy of identity in

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<sup>1</sup> Parsudi Suparlan, "Menuju Masyarakat Indonesia Yang Multikultural," *Simposium Internasional Bali Ke-3*, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Imam Bukhori, "Membumikan Multikulturalisme"Humanistika", *Jurnal Keislaman* 5, no. 1 (2019): 13–40, <https://doi.org/10.36835/humanistika.v5i1.40>.

<sup>3</sup> A Laso and S Rahayu, "Peranan Multikulturalisme Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Sosial* 1, no. 3 (2022).

<sup>4</sup> Fedyani and Ahmad Syaefuddin, "Membumikan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia," *Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Budaya* 2, no. 1 (2006): hlm 4.

<sup>5</sup> These universal human values can be seen from the meaning of the following verses of the al-Qur'an: Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49: 13; Q.S. Al-Maidah/5: 8; Q.S. Al-Nisab/4: 75.

<sup>6</sup> hlm. 42 Munawar Rachman, *Argumen Islam Untuk Pluralisme*, (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2010), *Argumen Islam Untuk Pluralisme*, (Jakarta: Grasindo, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Q.S. al-Hujurat/ 49: 13.

<sup>8</sup> Q.S. Al-Isyrah/17: 70.

<sup>9</sup> Q.S. Al-Maidah/5: 48.

this diversity; they are still seen as the same and equal, and they are glorified regardless of who, from which identity, and from what tribe they are. Thus, Islam calls on all human beings towards the common goal of unity without distinction of race, skin color, ethnicity, culture, and religion. It means that racial domination and discrimination contradict with monotheism and are therefore such problems perceived as crimes against humanity.

However, we also cannot deny other points of view regarding the understanding of verses relating to multiculturalism. Apart from the verses of the Qur'an, which contain the basic teachings of multiculturalism, the Qur'an also contains verses that do not seem to support the principles of multiculturalism. In other words, the Qur'an also contains certain verses which are often used as a basis for certain Islamic groups to reject pluralism or multiculturalism. As what is written in the Qur'an "Do not make infidels (disbelievers) as allies instead of believers".<sup>10</sup> In another verse, it is also stated "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are firm with the disbelievers and compassionate with one another."<sup>11</sup> From these short excerpts of Qur'anic verses, it can also be concluded that the Qur'an contains some verses that do not seem to be in line with multiculturalism.

To understand the instructions of the Qur'an above, traditional Muslims always refer to books of interpretation of the Qur'an written by exegetist in both the classical and modern periods, whether written in Arabic, Indonesian, and other languages. According to Muchlis Hanafi,<sup>12</sup> Head of the Qur'an Study Division of *Lajnah Pentashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an*, Because of most Indonesian do not understand Arabic, they rely more on Indonesian language interpretations to understand the content of the holy book, such as *Tafsir Al-Qur'an* published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Republic of Indonesia, and some Qur'anic exegetics written in Indonesian language of .

Thus, the role of interpretation of the Qur'an<sup>13</sup> is very central and strategic in constructing Islamic thinking and understanding of Indonesian Muslims. "Understanding" which represents the meaning of the holy verses presented in articulating interpretation will significantly influence people's understanding patterns. Tafsir of the Qur'an, which presents an "open" understanding and is filled with messages of tolerance, will relatively have an influence on understanding and a tolerant attitude for its readers. On the contrary, interpretations that tend to present a "closed" and intolerant understanding will relatively bring their readers an intolerant understanding and attitude.<sup>14</sup> On this condition, it is neither wrong nor true when accusations emerge from the chairman of the *Lajnah Tanfidziyah Majelis Mujahidin*, Sofwan Awwas, that the Department of Religion's (Now the Ministry of Religious Affairs) interpretation of the Qur'an contributed to triggering the emergence of violent ideologies in Indonesia such

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10 Q.S. Al – Nisb' /4: 144:

11 Q.S. Al – Fath/48: 29

12 www. Kemenag.co.id

13 R. Cecep Lukman Yasin and Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, "Atas Nama Tuhan: Dari Fikih Otoriter Ke Fikih Otoritatif," in Terj. R. Cecep Lukman Yasin (Jakarta, 2004), hlm 138 – 139.

14 In Michel Foucault's view, in discourse or text there is "power" and "will" which have hegemonic potential. Every text reader has the potential to be affected by hegemony over the content of the text they read. For example, if someone reads Nurcholish Madjid's written work, there is a big possibility that the reader will be impressed by Nurcholish Madjid's thoughts presented in his writing. To avoid this hegemony, he encourages every reader to be suspicious of the content of the text, which he terms the hermeneutic of suspicion. With this attitude, a person will be expected to be able to avoid the hegemony of the text, and make a critical analysis of the meaning contained in the text. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discour on Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

as cases of religious terrorism in Indonesia. According to Sofwan Awas, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' interpretation of the Qur'an presents an exclusive interpretations. This Quranic translation lacks of messages towards tolerance.<sup>15</sup> Muchlis Hanafi, as Head of the Al-Qur'an Study Division, *Lajnah pentashih Mushhaf Al-Qur'an*, had denied this argument.

Thus, religious views that tend to be tolerant or intolerant, exclusive or inclusive, cannot be separated from the influence of the religious sacred text understanding through the exegecies works. Thus, the book of tafsir has a significant influence on people's understanding of the content of the holy Qur'an. People have been trying to find answers to various problems that arise in society relating to social, religious, and other issues such as pluralism and multiculturalism. For this reason, it is necessary to study and analyze the idea of multiculturalism based on the primary source of Islamic teachings, namely the Qur'an, with an authoritative teaching and to the proper figures, especially who live in Indonesia. This is intended to see how the concept of multiculturalism appears in interpretive works produced by ulama living in a multicultural society like Indonesia. The author assumes that Indonesia's social setting influences the resulting interpretation products, which are different from other interpretation products, such as Middle Eastern interpretations written by interpreters who live in an Arab social setting that is different from Indonesia.

In my opinion, there are two Indonesian intellectual figures who deserve to be studied for their ideas about multiculturalism as expressed in their written works, especially in their tafsir books. Those figures are Hamka, with his tafsir work Tafsir Al-Azhar, and M. Quraish Shihab<sup>16</sup>, with his several works such as Al-Mishbah, Grounding the Al-Qur'an and Insights into the Al-Qur'an. There are several reasons why the author chose these two *mufassir* (Qur'anic exegetist) with their interpretive works as the objects of this research. First, both have an Indonesian background,<sup>17</sup> where the Indonesian social setting is thought to have influenced the interpreter's mindset and his interpretive work. Second, both of them have works which Howard M. Federspiel considers<sup>18</sup> as tafsir that tries to understand the contents of the Qur'an comprehensively, meaning that in quality it surpasses other tafsirs from Indonesian tafsir products. Thus, it can be a representation of other existing interpretations. Third, both of them are productive authoritative figures with many works in the Islamic field. With their works being authoritative references in Islamic studies, they are thought to have strongly influenced the configuration of academic religious thinking in Indonesian society. Fourth, the two figures have works, especially their *tafsir* works, which are still used as references by Muslims to understand the holy verses of the Koran related to the life problems they face. Fifth, Hamka and Quraish can be classified as people who are

<sup>15</sup> www.vao – islam.com 1/11 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Name M. Quraish Shihab, and written afterward as Quraish Shihab, by the author.

<sup>17</sup> The author assumes that the Indonesian social setting with its multicultural characteristics has a significant influence on the resulting interpretive products which are different from other interpretive products. As stated by Anton Baker, thinking is influenced by two factors, internal and external. Internal factors relating to family and upbringing, the influence he received and relationships with contemporary philosophers; while external factors relate to social, economic, political, cultural. See, Anton Baker, *Philosophical Research Methodology* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1989). Bikhu Parekh stated the same thing that culture influences how religion is interpreted. The divine will cannot acquire fixed human meaning without cultural mediation Bikhu Parekh, "Rethinking Multiculturalism," in *Terj. Bambang Kukuh Adi* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008). Lihat juga, Berger, *The Sacred Canopy Element of Sociological Theory of Religion*, hlm. 4 – 5.

<sup>18</sup> Howard M. Federspiel, *Kajian Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia*, (Bandung: Bandung, 1996).

tolerant and, in their thinking, respect other religious communities. Syafi'i Maarif stated<sup>19</sup> that Hamka has a more acceptable view of dealing with the various conflict situations that occur in Indonesia, one of the triggers of which is religious sentiment. This argument is based on his analysis of Hamka's view of not seeing the Qur'an, Ali Imran's letter, verse 85: "And whoever seeks something other than Islam as a religion, it will never be accepted from him" as an erasure (*nbsikh*) for verse 62 of Surah Al-Baqarah: "Indeed, those who believe, and the Jews and (as well as) the Shabi'un and Nashara people, whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter, and he also does righteous deeds. So there is no fear for them, and they will not grieve."<sup>20</sup>

Related to the Hamka figure, Karel Steenbrink argued that Hamka is a very important figure in the Indonesian Islamic phenomenon. From a religious perspective, Hamka is more eclectic and compromises various tendencies.<sup>21</sup> Hamka showed respect for traditional Indonesian Islamic customs. In Hamka's multi-volume exegesis of the Qur'an, he tried to speak to readers in people's everyday vernacular style.<sup>22</sup> According to Syafi'i Maarif,<sup>23</sup> Hamka's attitude in refusing verse 62 of Al-Baqarah had been abolished (*mansukh*) by verse 85 of Surah Ali-Imran, was the courage of an exegetist who longed to see this world safe for anyone to live in. If the verse referred to in verse 85 of Surah Ali-Imran is understood as the complementary of other verses, it has broad implications, namely the growth of an attitude of respect for groups from other religions, tolerance, and avoid of extreme fanaticism.

If Hamka doesn't see Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 85 as *nbsikh* for Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 62, then Quraish Shihab did not explain the relationship between the two letters. In explaining Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2] 62, Quraish Shihab emphasized that the religions mentioned in this verse cannot be equated because they differ in their creeds and shari'ah. However, Quraish Shihab is of the view that living in harmony and peace among religious adherents is an absolute and religious guidance. Muslim people should submit to Allah about the religious truth, then leave it up to His decision about who will be granted in the hereafter.<sup>24</sup> Even though there are differences between the two interpretive figures, in the author's opinion, these two figures can be classified as pluralists or multiculturalists. However, this initial conclusion needs to be supported by a comprehensive analysis of their ideas, expressed sporadically in their works, especially in their Tafsir books.

Referring to the background of the problem above, researchers can identify that: first, multiculturalism is a concept<sup>25</sup> that is still debated and has become a polemic for Muslims, between those who accept it and those who reject it. Second, in the Qur'an

<sup>19</sup> Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif, "Dalam Resonansi, Harian Republik," November 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Pandangan Hamka tersebut berlawanan dengan pandangan beberapa mufasir yang mendasarkan pemahamannya atas keterangan yang diriwayatkan oleh Ibnu Jarir dari Abi hatim dari Ibnu Abbas, bahwa Q.S. Al-M'idadah: 69 tersebut telah dimansukh oleh Q.S. Ali Imran: 85. Lihat, Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Vol. XXVI (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Panjimas, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Karel Steenbrink, "Hamka (1908–1981) and the Integration of the Islamic Ummah of Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 1, no. 3 (1994): 119–47, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v1i3.851>.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Gelman Taylor, "Hamka's Great Story: A Master Writer's Vision of Islam for Modern Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 41, no. 4 (2017): 687–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2017.1317616>.

<sup>23</sup> Syafi'i Ma'arif, *Hamka Tentang Ayat 62 Al-Baqarah Dan Ayat 69 Al-M'idadah* (Republika, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> In the context of this discussion, what is meant by the term concept is something that enables the human mind to distinguish one object from another. See, Loren Bagus, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2000).

there are some verses that are interpreted as a support for the concept of multiculturalism, and some verses that considered could reject of the concept of multiculturalism. Therefore, acceptance and rejection of the concept of multiculturalism, in general, is based on supporting and rejecting verses. Third, Hamka and Quraish Shihab are two authoritative figures in the field of Al-Qur'an interpretation from Indonesia who are worthy of studying their interpretation of verses related to the concept of multiculturalism above. It is strongly suspected that the interpretive works of these two interpretive figures have implications for the religious life of Indonesian society, both academically and practically.

The data needed in this research is qualitative data in the form of thoughts and ideas expressed by two authoritative figures regarding multiculturalism, as stated in their works. The primary data source needed in this research is the work of these two figures, which directly discuss matters relating to multiculturalism. There are two methods used in this article, content analysis and comparative methods. Besides that two method of studies, this study uses exegesis thematic approach, historical and sociological approaches. The exegesis thematic approach is used to categorize keywords in one theme, and not used to analyze texts of the Qur'an. Sociological approach used to identify and explain the idea of the two exegetist in the context of their socio-cultural life. In the same time, a historical approach is used to analyze the historical context of their life and its relationship with their idea of multiculturalism. To conclude this research, deductive and inductive types of reasoning were used.

## Definition and Goals of Multiculturalism

Etymologically, multiculturalism comes from the word "multi" which means plural or plural, "cultural" means culture or culture, and "ism" which means understanding or sect. Culture, according to Taylor, is a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, traditions, and various capabilities and habits that a person acquires as a member of society.<sup>26</sup> So etymologically, multiculturalism means understanding cultural diversity, which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, traditions, patterns of meaning, and various capabilities and habits that a person acquires as a member of society. In a more profound understanding, multiculturalism is not just a recognition of diverse cultures, but a recognition with political, social, economic, and other implications.

In terms of terms, multiculturalism, as stated by Azyumardi Azra, is a worldview that is then translated into various cultural policies that emphasize acceptance of the realities of religion, plurality, and multiculturalism that exist in people's lives. Multiculturalism can also be understood as a worldview that manifests in political consciousness.<sup>27</sup> Thomas M. Steinfatt defines multiculturalism as the recognition and consciousness that several different cultures can exist in the same environment and benefit each other.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, according to Parsudi Suparlan's view, multiculturalism

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<sup>26</sup> Culture, according to Taylor: a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, traditions and various capabilities and habits that a person acquires as a member of society. E.B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches in the Development of Mythology, Religion, Art and Custom*, Gloucester, MA. Lihat juga, Adam Kuper and Jessica, *Ensiklopedi Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Azra Azyumardi, "Identitas Dan Krisis Budaya, Membangun Multikulturalisme," 2007.

<sup>28</sup> M. Rongers, Everett, and Thomas M, *Steinfatt, Intercultural Communication* (Illinois: Waveland Press, 1999).

is an ideology that recognizes and glorifies differences in equality both individually and culturally.<sup>29</sup> Caleb Rosado defines multiculturalism as follows:

Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context, empowering all within the organization or society.<sup>30</sup> According to Rosado, there are at least four things that are at the core of multiculturalism first, trust and behavior, namely regarding trust in other parties and how this is articulated in their behavior towards these others. Second, acceptance and respect for other parties. Third, recognition and appreciation for others. Fourth, support and provide opportunities for others.

For Bikhu Parekh, the term multiculturalism contains three components: first, this concept is related to culture; second, this concept refers to cultural plurality; and third, this concept contains a certain way of responding to that plurality. Therefore, according to him, multiculturalism is not a pragmatic political doctrine but a perspective or ideology in human life. Multiculturalism is not only about differences and identities but also about diversity or differences that are culturally situated. Thus, it is a set of beliefs and practices carried out by a group of people to understand themselves and organize their individual and collective lives.<sup>31</sup>

In Daniel Sparingga's arguments, multiculturalism at the local, national, and global levels generally prioritizes the principles of justice and equality. To realize the principle of multiculturalism, what is needed now is not monoculturalism, not assimilation but renewal, not coexistence but pro-existence, not exclusion but inclusion, and not separation but interaction.<sup>32</sup> In line with Sparingga, Will Kymlicka, a Canadian political philosopher, emphasized that multiculturalism is a special state policy that provides special recognition and attention to minority groups to accommodate their cultural needs.<sup>33</sup> According to Kymlicka, the most important thing in the political application of multiculturalism is that all identities that develop in a plural society must be given the freedom to apply their cultural practices.<sup>34</sup>

From the explanation above, it can be said that the definition of multiculturalism is plural. Its definition is diverse and ranges from simply respecting and protecting cultural diversity within the framework of peaceful living together (coexistence), to a view that sees multiculturalism as not just accepting, respecting and protecting cultural diversity, but also an attitude of mutual support and assistance (pro-existence) within the framework of cultural diversity, in order to create a harmonious life together. In the context of the Western World, especially in the United States, the concept of multiculturalism is actually a revision and, at the same time a continuation of the melting pot concept from the ideas of J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur (1735 – 1813).<sup>35</sup> Hector's multiculturalism concept is considered irrelevant and racist, because the concept of

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<sup>29</sup> By using the term "ideology", Suparlan seems to want to describe how urgent it is to create an atmosphere of life that respects differences and equality in those differences and views every diversity as normal within the framework of harmony and peace. Suparlan, "Menuju Masyarakat Indonesia Yang Multikultural."

<sup>30</sup> Caleb Rosado, "Toward a Definition of Multiculturalism," n.d.

<sup>31</sup> Bikhu Parekh, "Rethinking Multiculturalism," in *Terj. Bambang Kukuh Adi* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Sparingga, "Multikulturalisme Dalam Multi Perspektif Di Indonesia," in *Forum Rektor Simpul Jatin, Hidup Berbangsa Etika Multikultural*, 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Yogyakarta: LP3ES, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> Kymlicka.

<sup>35</sup> Sandy Darity, "International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences," 2008.

merging cultures into one American culture, would end up with the strong intention of the White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture as a culture of white immigrants from Europe. Moreover, with the increasingly diverse ethnic and cultural composition in America and demands for improving the fate of minority groups that are becoming stronger, the melting pot concept has been criticized and is considered no longer relevant. Then came the concept of cultural pluralism put forward by Horace Kallen,<sup>36</sup> also known as mixed – identities of culture.<sup>37</sup> The term cultural pluralism or hodgepodge culture has become known as the concept of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism has become a new understanding that provides space for minority groups. Multiculturalism, therefore, is not only an understanding that can protect minority rights but also a resistance to injustice committed by the government, especially against minority groups. Thus, the goal of multiculturalism is none other than how the concept of multiculturalism is embodied in a policy – oriented toward achieving the above aims.

Jerzy Zubrzycki formulated three goals of multiculturalism, which were later quoted in the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council's 1977, entitled *Australia as a Multicultural Society*. The three formulations of the goals of multiculturalism are, first, relating to ethnic cultural identity Second, relating to social and state harmony or cohesiveness (a more socially cohesive nation). Third, equal or equal access to social resources. (equal access to social resources).<sup>38</sup> This concept was later reaffirmed by Menadue J.L, secretary of the Department of Immigration and Ethnicity, Australia, who stated these three principles: cultural identity, social cohesion, and equal opportunity.<sup>39</sup> These three principles have become generally accepted as prerequisites for a multicultural society.

Mark Lopez provides more details on the goals of multiculturalism. According to him, there are at least four goals of multiculturalism. First, as a social glue, which aims to enable various community groups to interact in various ways to achieve common needs; second, the realization of guarantees for freedom of cultural expression, namely guarantees for the rights of people related to their respective cultural identities to inherit and express them freely, including language and religion; third, equality of opportunity and access (equality and access) where people are given equal opportunities and access in various aspects of economic life and work; fourth, equal responsibility, commitment and participation which requires minority groups to be loyal to the state through a sense of responsibility and involvement in community activities and adhering firmly to multicultural ideology.<sup>40</sup>

In line with the views above, Hilda Hernandez, in *Multiculturalism in Educations: A Teacher Guide to Linking Context, Process, and Content* (2003), explains that multiculturalism aims at cooperation, equality, and appreciation in a world that is increasingly complex and no longer monocultural.<sup>41</sup> In line with the explanation above, the aim of multiculturalism, as stated by Suparlan, can be understood from the definition of multiculturalism that he put forward. According to him, multiculturalism is an

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<sup>36</sup> Alo Liliweri, *Prasangka Dan Konflik* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> George Pozzetta, *Assimilation, Acculturation, and Social Mobility*, 1991.

<sup>38</sup> Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, *Australia as a Multicultural Society*, Warneke, Ross. "Do We Really Want a Multi-Culture?", *The Age*, 1981.

<sup>39</sup> J.L Menadue, *Towards Multicultural Australia* (German Times, 1981).

<sup>40</sup> Mark Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics*, n.d.

<sup>41</sup> Hilda Hernandez, *Multiculturalism in Educations: A Teacher Guide To Linking Context, Process And Content* (New Jersey & Ohio: Prentice Hall, 2003).



ideology<sup>42</sup> that glorifies differences in equality both individually and culturally without taking into account differences in identity, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, and so on. The aim of this ideology is to elevate the dignity of humans and their humanity.<sup>43</sup>

From the description above, it can be concluded that the goal of multiculturalism is the realization of guaranteed cultural expression so that society can inherit and express it freely, including language and religion. Second, equality of opportunity and access (equality and access), where people are given the same opportunities and access in various aspects of economic life and work. Third, the realization of equality and social harmony in establishing cooperation to meet common needs.

## Hamka and Quraish Shihab's views on Multiculturalism

### *Views on the Equality of Men and Women*

The term equality of men and women – for experts and activists – has its own operational definition known as gender. Gender is a term from English which literally means sex. However, what is meant is not biological sex but social, cultural, political, and religious differences based on the physical appearance of women and men.<sup>44</sup> Men and women, according to the Islamic perspective, in particular, and the religious community in general, is not only different because they have genitals different but also different in essence because each has its own characteristics, tendencies and different abilities. Some natural differences is what commonly called *fitrah*. The concept of gender equality, therefore, indirectly excludes and rejects the existence of different natures between men and women.<sup>45</sup> However, according to Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988), in his book *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, he said that men and women are equal. Husbands are not more powerful than their wife.<sup>46</sup>

In Quraish Shihab's view, men and women are equal. Equality between men and women is not only in creation but also in acquiring rights. Even though there are different roles and functions related to men's and women's rights, this does not make one party superior or superior to the other. If there are differences, it is only as a result of differences in the main functions and tasks according to those given to each of them by Allah.<sup>47</sup> Regarding political rights for women, Quraish Shihab said there was no implicit postulate from the sacred text of Islam to prohibit women from becoming leaders or taking part in politics. On the contrary, many religious arguments have been found that can be used as a basis for supporting women's rights in the political field.<sup>48</sup> Regarding women's right to choose a particular job, Islam, according to him, justifies women being active in various activities or working in various fields inside or outside the home independently, with other people, or with any institution, as long as the work is carried

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<sup>42</sup>Dalam arti melioratif, ideologi berarti setiap sistem gagasan yang mempelajari keyakinan – keyakinan dan hal – hal ideal filosofis, ekonomis, politis, dan sosial. Karl Mannheim menggunakan istilah ini untuk menunjuk kepada seperangkat kepercayaan, di mana terdapat perbedaan antara motif – motif yang terungkap dan mendasarinya. Lihat, Bagus, *Dictionary of Philosophy*.

<sup>43</sup> Suparlan, "Menuju Masyarakat Indonesia Yang Multikultural."

<sup>44</sup> Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Khalif Muammar A. Harris and Adibah Muhtar, "The Concept of Gender Equality in Islam and the West," *Afkar* 21, no. 2 (2019): 33 – 74, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol21no2.2>.

<sup>46</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980).

<sup>47</sup> 2013, [www.tempo.co](http://www.tempo.co).

<sup>48</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an, Bandung: Mizan, 1996* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

out within an atmosphere of honor, politeness and being able to maintain one's religion.<sup>49</sup>

Quraish Shihab also equalizes men and women regarding the right to obtain knowledge or the right to learn. The Qur'an praises *ûlû al-albâb*, which is not limited to men or women. The Prophet, according to him, did not limit the obligation to study only to free women but also to enslaved people, and those of low social status.<sup>50</sup> In line with Quraish Shihab's views above, Hamka also sees equality between women and men not only in terms of their creation but also in terms of the rights they have. According to Hamka, women should also have political rights like men. They can appear to be leaders as long as they are capable. According to him, based on Qur'anic verse. al-Taubah (9): 71, male and female believers unite to lead each other in one belief, namely belief in Allah SWT. In other words, women take part together with men in building a community of Islamic believers.<sup>51</sup>

Hamka also allows women to choose work according to their wishes and obtain property from the results of their efforts. However, Hamka sees the appropriate side of the work taken by women. This means that not all work that women can do is appropriate for women because perhaps that work is more appropriate for men to do. Like a truck driver, for example, it is more appropriate for men than women, even if she is capable of doing it.<sup>52</sup> Regarding the right to education, Hamka does not differentiate between men's and women's rights. Each has the same opportunity to gain knowledge.<sup>53</sup> From this explanation, it can be concluded that Hamka's views are not much different from Quraish Shihab's views regarding the equality of men and women. The equality of men and women, in Hamka's view, is not only at the level of creation but also at the level of their rights. Even though there are differences in the levels of manifestation, that does not make one superior to the other.

### ***Equality of Ethnicity and Nationality***

As emphasized earlier, multiculturalism starts from the belief that diversity and differences are inevitable. Some identities, ethnicities, cultural and gender differences are equal instead of hierarchical. No identity or ethnicity is superior to another identity.<sup>54</sup> In the Islamic view, all humans are seen as equal. Differences in skin color, ethnicity, nation, and so on are not seen as identities that symbolize levels of superiority or inferiority. No tribe or nation is considered more respectable than others, except for those with the highest quality level of morality before Allah.<sup>55</sup>

In the view of Hamka and Quraish Shihab, based on Qs. al-Hujurat (49): 13,<sup>56</sup> and QS. al-A'raf (7): 70, all humans are seen as equal.<sup>57</sup> Differences in skin color, ethnicity, nation and so on are not seen as identities that symbolize levels of superiority or inferiority. No tribe or nation is considered more respectable than others, except for those with the highest quality level of morality before Allah. Shihab explained that human equality is natural.<sup>58</sup> In Hamka's view, humans are essentially from one

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<sup>49</sup> Shihab.

<sup>50</sup> Shihab.

<sup>51</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Hamka.

<sup>53</sup> Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Fedyani and Syaefuddin, "Membumikan Multikulturalisme Di Indonesia."

<sup>55</sup> This is confirmed in QS. Al-Hujurat (49): 13

<sup>56</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al Misbah*, Jld, VII, n.d.

<sup>58</sup> Shihab.

descendant. Even though they are far apart, their origins are one, and therefore they are equal.<sup>59</sup>

From this description, it can be stated that the two commentators do not have a different understanding of the diversity of human identities related to their origins, ethnicities, and nationalities. According to them, the equality of human identity with regard to ethnicity and nationality is an issue that has been clearly explained in the Qur'an and hadith. Both of them more normatively affirm the explanation of the Qur'anic verses regarding this matter.

### ***Cultural Equality***

According to E.B Taylor, culture is a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, science, law, customs, and other abilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society.<sup>60</sup> On that basis of that view, every culture deserves respect, even though the level of respect is not the same, because there may be different levels of cultural superiority. Logically, when an advanced culture provides many benefits to the wider community, it will gain respect from the wider community as well. Likewise, cultures that are considered less advanced and less beneficial to the wider community will receive less respect from the wider community. However, in the author's opinion, this does not reflect the existence of hierarchy in cultures. No one, actually, could consider whether one culture is higher than the other cultures. The high cultural values of certain cultural communities do not necessarily have high values and functions for other communities. Likewise, the low cultural value of a certain community according to others may be very meaningful for the cultural adherents.

This argument is in line with Herder's view, which states that all cultures are the same, not because they are equally good, but because they are significant to their people and best suited to their needs.<sup>61</sup> On the basis of this view, according to him, people needs to respect other cultures, not because of legal requirements or moral principles, but because that culture means a lot to that cultural community.<sup>62</sup> In line with this view, according to Shihab, culture, such as crafts that produce statues created for the sole purpose of beauty or other righteous purposes, not as objects of worship, can be justified by religion. Religious prohibitions lie in attitudes towards statues, not in the statues themselves.<sup>63</sup> Shihab's view is in line with Hamka's view that works of art, such as statues, whether statues of animals, humans, and any statues, are not prohibited by religion, as long as they are for the purpose of beauty or benefit for humans, and not for worship.<sup>64</sup>

In the view of Hamka and Quraish Shihab, human culture, which involves elements of art, knowledge, language, and religion, is equal. There is no single element that is considered superior to the others.

### ***Equality of Religious People***

Human diversity is an indisputable fact, including the diversity of belief systems they adhere to (religions). The diversity of belief systems or religions seems to be not

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<sup>59</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 2005.

<sup>60</sup> Laode Monto Bauto, "Perspektif Agama Dan Kebudayaan Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Indonesia (Suatu Tinjauan Sosiologi Agama)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Sosial* 23, no. 2 (2014): 11 – 25.

<sup>61</sup> Parekh, "Rethinking Multiculturalism."

<sup>62</sup> Parekh.

<sup>63</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

<sup>64</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Vol.IV, n.d.

only the will of nature (*sunnatullah*) but also the will of God. The inevitability of religious diversity can be seen in various assertions in the Koran regarding the existence of religions that must be respected, even though these religions do not receive any guarantee from Allah. One of Allah's words related to this is the confirmation of the QS. Yunus (10): 99 as follows:<sup>65</sup> "And if your Lord had willed, all people on earth would have believed, every single of them. So would you force people to become believers? Another verse that tends to explain this issue is the word of Allah in QS al – Baqarah (2): 148: which means: "And for each community there is its (own) Qibla which it faces. So compete (in making) good. Wherever you are, Allah will surely gather you all (on the Day of Judgment). Indeed, Allah has power over all things."<sup>66</sup>

The verses above clearly emphasize the basic human tendency to adhere to a belief system based on their own choices and tendencies without being disturbed or forced in any way. This Qur'anic verse emphasizes also that religious appreciation is a matter of deep intellectual tendencies and is very personal in nature. Thus, the belief systems held by humans are very diverse, proportional to the level of diversity of humans themselves. From this explanation, it can be concluded that Shihab seems to see equality between human belief systems, which is also equality between religious communities, without the tendency to denigrate one another, at the risk he bears himself before God's justice because only God is will judge or will judge them in the future.<sup>67</sup> Even though it is not as straightforward as Shihab's explanation, Hamka's statement regarding the diversity of human sharia is based on *ijtihad* and individual choices and competing in goodness, with the risks that will be borne in the future before God's court. This argument also implies equality between these religious groups.

### ***Coexistence of Cultural Diversity***

Islam was revealed to the world in order to create peace for humans and spread mercy to all people and the universe (*rahmatan li al-'blamon*).<sup>68</sup> Observing this obvious vision of Islam, it is inevitable that the coexistence of diverse human cultural groups is a fundamental message of Islam as well. Hamka explicitly stated that there are messages in the Qur'an that convey messages of peace and harmonious and peaceful coexistence between religious groups (coexistence of cultural diversity).<sup>69</sup> He said more firmly that the closest people to God are the people who are able to maintain ties of connection with fellow humans and maintain their relationship with God's power.<sup>70</sup>

According to Quraish Shihab, a Muslim should not be angry if there are non – Muslims who judge the teachings of Islam to be contrary to their teachings, do not be angry if they judge Islam as a wrong teaching to them. On the other hand, followers of other religions and beliefs do not need to be angry if Muslims judge outside Islamic religion as as wrong teachings. The important thing is, in social life, we are not blame each other, even though each of them is fully convinced from the bottom of their hearts that their respective religions are the ones approved by God.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> QS. Yunus (10): 99

<sup>66</sup> QS. al – Baqarah (2): 148:

<sup>67</sup> Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2003).

<sup>68</sup> QS. Al – Anbiya' (21): 107:

<sup>69</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, vol. 1, n.d.

<sup>70</sup> Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup*.

<sup>71</sup> Ahmad Deni Rustandi et al., "Konteks Lokal Dalam Penafsiran Ayat – Ayat Toleransi Dalam Kitab Tafsir Al – Mishbah Karya M. Quraish Shihab," *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 6, no. 1 (2022): 319, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i1.3321>.

Hamka and Quraish Shihab argued that living together between cultural or religious groups (coexistence of cultural diversity) would receive strong legitimacy from Islamic teachings.<sup>72</sup> This argument is also demonstrated by the Qur'an's affirmation of the principle of Islamic tolerance towards other religious groups and the principle of cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the prohibition on disturbing or insulting each other.

## Similarities and Differences between Hamka and Quraish Shihab's views on Multiculturalism

The previous explanation of Hamka and Quraish Shihab's views on multiculturalism can briefly be described as follows:

Hamka tends to use a deductive approach to understand general religious teachings and those relating to legal-formal rules and an inductive approach to understand religious teachings related to moral ethics. According to Hamka, some verses relating to multiculturalism and the elements that support it are relatively more normative-theological. Muslim people should look multiculturalism more as a principle of coexistence that emphasizes acceptance and respect for cultural diversity, with the principle of mutual respect in togetherness side by side, in harmony and peace. The elements of cooperation and mutual assistance in this coexistence framework are only limited to worldly matters that benefit all parties, not religious matters.

This is slightly different from Quraish Shihab, who tends to use a deductive approach to understand general religious teachings and tends to use an inductive approach to understand religious teachings related to moral ethics and formal legal rules. Quraish Shihab interprets verses related to multiculturalism more with a comprehensive approach, namely a combination of normative-theological methods with historical methods. He also understands multiculturalism as a pro-existence principle that emphasizes acceptance and respect for cultural diversity, with the principle of mutual respect.<sup>73</sup> Further, people should also make efforts to help and support each other in the context of living together side by side, harmony and peace.

## Conclusion

Based on the research descriptions above, the author can conclude that multiculturalism is understood as a perspective on diversity that recognizes and accepts diversity as equals, both individually and culturally, whether ethnic, cultural, gender, linguistic and so on, with the aim of increasing human dignity and dignity. In the idea of Hamka and Quraish Shihab, the diversity of human identities, regardless of their form, be it culture, ethnicity, nationality, or gender, is equal or equal. No one identity is considered superior to another. Hamka and Quraish Shihab view that the principles of democracy, such as justice, equity, equality, deliberation, and the upholding of human rights and social justice, are compatible with the principles of Islamic teachings themselves. The similarities between Hamka's and Quraish Shihab's interpretations lie in their tolerant, open, and multiculturalist views. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Hamka and Quraish Shihab have different views about living together between cultural or religious groups (coexistence of cultural diversity). Hamka views multiculturalism more as a principle of coexistence that emphasizes acceptance and respect for cultural

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<sup>72</sup> Quraish Shihab, "Pluralisme Gusdur Masih Relevan," n.d.

<sup>73</sup> Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup*.

diversity Shihab looks multiculturalism as a principle of pro–existence that emphasizes acceptance and respect for cultural diversity, with the principle of mutual respect.

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