

MIZAN:
JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC LAW
P-ISSN: 2598-974X. E-ISSN: 2598-6252
Vol. 9 No. 1 (2025), pp.101-112
https://ejournal.uika-bogor.ac.id/index.php/MIZAN/article/view/20857

Gadamer's Hermeneutics And The Dynamics Of Islamic Democracy: A Study Of The Concept Of Al-Shūrā In Contemporary Contexts[1]

Muhamad Qustulani,[1]Murniasih,[2]Fahmi Irfani[3]
[1]Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Syariah Nahdlatul Ulama (STISNU) Nusantara Tangerang
[2]Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Putra Perdana, Indonesia
[3]Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, Indonesia
✉ **Corresponding Email: qustulani@gmail.com**

https://doi.org/10.32832/mizan.v13i1

Abstract:
This study explores the application of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy to the concept of Islamic democracy, emphasizing core principles such as al-shūrā (consultation), al-'adālah (justice), al-musāwāh (equality), and al-ḥurriyyah (freedom) as dynamic and evolving meanings rather than fixed doctrines. Through the fusion of horizons, these values are continuously interpreted in dialogue with contemporary social realities, enabling pluralistic societies like Indonesia to foster tolerance, moderation, and inclusive participation. Central to this discourse is the concept of shūrā in the Qur'an, understood as consultation that is foundational to collective decision-making, but not inherently identical to modern secular democracy. While critics reject equating shūrā with democracy due to conflicting views on sovereignty and law, proponents argue that it is compatible with democratic ideals rooted in Islamic values. Gadamer's approach facilitates a contextual and moderate understanding of shūrā, positioning Islamic democracy as a living process of compassionate ijtihad that reconciles tradition and modernity, prioritizing pluralism and justice for peaceful coexistence.
Keyword: Gadamer's Hermeneutics; Islamic Democracy; Al-Shūrā; Political Hermeneutics; Contemporary Islamic Thought

A. INTRODUCTION

In human life, symbols and signs are integral to communication and social interaction. As thinking beings, humans do not merely receive reality passively, but actively give meaning to every symbol that appears around them. Texts, discourses, and all forms of symbolic representation are arenas where this process of interpretation takes

[1] Manuscript received date: April 18, 2025, revised: June 5, 2025, approved for publication: June 30, 2025.

place. However, it is essential to understand that interpretation is never singular or final. It is always influenced by the historical, cultural, social, and even ideological background of the interpreter (Barthes, 1977, pp. 142-148). This condition leads to the understanding that reality is not entirely objective, but is shaped and understood through the subjective lens of each individual. Thus, perspectivism and relativism are inevitable in the world of interpretation. Therefore, the diversity of viewpoints in interpreting symbols and reality should not be seen as a threat, but rather as a gift—an opportunity to enrich understanding and broaden intellectual horizons. Through a wise approach to differences in interpretation, society is expected to foster inclusive communication and mutual respect. In this way, the study of the symbolic meaning-making process becomes highly relevant for exploring the dynamics of human interaction across various life contexts.

The phenomenon of dual or multiple meanings inherent in any object is an unavoidable reality within the field of interpretation. As such, the pursuit of absolute truth becomes increasingly complex, unless a symbol explicitly encapsulates an unequivocal meaning. However, once a text enters the symbolic domain, it becomes susceptible to open interpretation and diverse translations. The objectivity of such meaning is consequently contingent upon the degree of correspondence between the text and its contextual framework, particularly regarding the prevailing norms and value systems. In this regard, the credibility, competence, and interpretive methodology of the interpreter play a crucial role in shaping the quality and legitimacy of the derived meaning (Qustulani, 2019, pp. 1-4). This issue becomes especially pertinent in contemporary discourses on democracy, which continue to be approached from a plurality of perspectives, most notably within the Islamic intellectual and theological tradition.

Just as with the issue of the term *"democracy"* in Islamic thought, questions arise regarding its presence or absence within Islamic teachings. Generally, the concept of *democracy* in Islam is represented by the term *shūrā* as found in the Qur'an. In this context, *shūrā* functions as a symbolic term that, once it enters the public sphere, becomes detached from its original context of authorship and formation. In other words, the meaning of *shūrā* is left open to interpretation by readers or exegetes who assign significance to it through a set of ideas inseparable from their socio-historical, psychological, and cultural backgrounds, as well as from the contexts of both the author and the reader. This process often gives rise to a perceived interpretive gap between the author and the reader, resulting in meanings that appear biased or relative rather than absolute. Within such a framework, readers are granted interpretive freedom to engage with and construct meaning from the symbols present in public discourse.

This dynamic interpretative space invites a plurality of understandings, mainly when symbolic terms like *shūrā* are situated within contemporary discourses such as democratic governance. While *shūrā* may conceptually align with certain democratic principles—such as consultation, collective deliberation, and participation—it does not necessarily carry the same institutional or ideological weight as the term *democracy* in Western political thought. As a result, any attempt to equate *shūrā* with democracy must

be undertaken with critical sensitivity to both semantic differences and contextual particularities.

Furthermore, the relativism inherent in the interpretation of such terms underscores a broader epistemological issue: the instability of meaning in the absence of a fixed interpretive authority. In Islamic hermeneutics, this challenge is compounded by the diversity of interpretive traditions, ranging from classical jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to modern reformist and contextual approaches. Consequently, the interpretation of *shūrā*—and by extension, democracy—is not only shaped by theological commitments but also by the socio-political agendas of the interpreters.

Therefore, in contemporary Islamic discourse, the engagement with the concept of democracy via the symbolic lens of *shūrā* reveals both the potential and the limitations of symbolic appropriation. It demonstrates how religious terminology, once released into the public sphere, becomes subject to contested meanings, shaped by competing narratives and historical contingencies. This highlights the necessity of interpretive responsibility and critical reflection in navigating the intersection of religion, language, and politics.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) responded to this phenomenon by suggesting that it leads to the "death of the subject"—in this case, the author—and consequently renders all discourse (texts or symbols) as ownerless. That is, once produced, a text becomes open to interpretation and stands independently, detached from the author's intentions. Within this framework, meaning is not fixed by authorial intent. However, it is continually negotiated in the interplay between text and reader, shaped by historical consciousness and the fusion of horizons "*Horizontverschmelzung"* (Gadamer, 2006, pp. 194–200). According to Gadamer, the pursuit of knowledge should aim to attain objective and value-free truth. This strong emphasis on objectivity often leads to the marginalization of subjectivity. Therefore, the role of humans as interpreting subjects—or as authors—must be prioritized in the process of understanding texts within their historical contexts, which encompass culture, intellectual movements, religion, literature, and the arts (Regan, 2012, pp. 286–303). Acknowledging the subjectivity of the interpreter is essential for a deeper and more meaningful engagement with both the text and its socio-historical environment (See Cormack, 2014, 49–60).

According to Gadamer, the process of understanding and interpretation invites the reader or interpreter to engage in a dialectical dialogue with the text and the phenomena involved, including both the reader and the author (Gadamer, trans Sahidah, 2004, 10-48).. Consequently, no reader or interpreter can disregard the principle of (a) *bildung*—the formation of a way of thinking, which means that the entirety of the reader's experiences plays an integral role in interpretation. As a result, the meanings derived from a text by different interpreters will inevitably differ, influenced by their diverse backgrounds, cultures, worldviews, knowledge, insights, and educational levels. Furthermore, (b) *sensus communis*, or practical reason, refers to the shared communal perspectives that underpin social life and shape human attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, (c) *judgment* pertains to the ability to classify particular matters based on

universal principles and relates to considerations of what ought to be done. Finally, (d) *taste* denotes a subjective disposition linked to aesthetic sensibilities—a balance between sensory instincts and intellectual freedom (Sumaryono, 2002, pp. 71-77; Anda 84).

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to (1) formulate how the concept of democracy is understood within the Islamic perspective using Gadamer's approach; and (2) identify the most appropriate synonym for the term "democracy" in the Qur'an, along with its implications for interpretation. Accordingly, the objectives of this research are: (1) to explain the concept of democracy in Islam through Gadamer's hermeneutical framework, and (2) to identify the most suitable Qur'anic synonym and examine its implications for interpretive debates.

B. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative methodology to describe the discourse surrounding the concept of democracy and its equivalents in the Qur'an. Therefore, the research is library-based, employing a theoretical analytical approach grounded in Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical framework. According to Gadamer, texts or discourses are influenced by (1) *bildung*, the formation of a way of thinking shaped by historical experiences; (2) *sensus communis*, the practical reasoning that arises from community and social interactions; (3) *judgment*, which involves categorizing based on universality; and (4) *taste*, the subjective disposition of the reader or interpreter.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Concept of Democracy in Islam

In Islam, the concept of human creation with diverse backgrounds is stated in Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), which explains that Allah created men and women from different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, races, languages, and so on, so that humans may respect, know, love, and create peace with one another. Essentially, humans are one, as they are all creatures of Allah, originating from Him and ultimately destined to return to Him. This teaching embodies the concept of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," the motto of Indonesia, which means that despite differences in substance, unity forms the national identity. Therefore, Indonesia, as a nation composed of diverse ethnicities, races, languages, religions, peoples, and beliefs, demands that its citizens have tolerant and moderate attitudes to respect one another. As a result, Indonesia is a pluralistic country, although in practice, this plurality often leads to opposing views, social dynamics, ideas, attitudes, and perspectives within Indonesian society. (Sairin, 2006, p. 14).

Moreover, as a nation embracing a democratic system—specifically Pancasila democracy—Indonesia grants its citizens the freedom to express their aspirations and opinions. Consequently, respecting diversity becomes an essential obligation, reflecting the manifestation of divine mercy that must be preserved in a dynamic and continuous manner. This commitment ensures the safeguarding of local identities and the unique

cultural beliefs of the nation, fostering social, political, cultural, and economic integration at local, national, and global levels. Thus, Indonesia's concept of democracy should emphasize respect for human rights, which plays a crucial role in shaping political and legal policies. This foundation encourages the realization of values such as égalité (equality), justice, liberty, human rights, tasāmuḥ (tolerance), tawassuṭ (moderation), and others (Syam, 2009, pp. 60-64).

This attitude is expected to overcome ethnocentrism, which leads to conflict, suspicion (su'u ẓan), and a culture that reflects cultural blindness toward other entities and identities. Stereotyping, by generalizing or oversimplifying realities, can lead to prejudice that may demean and marginalize other groups or entities. Instead of addressing minority discrimination as a complex problem to solve, exclusivist attitudes become dominant in society. Furthermore, arrogance justified in the name of belief becomes an obstacle to establishing democracy in a multicultural society. Therefore, democracy should be understood as a divine blessing amid differences that fosters universal perspectives for the common good, as a compassionate ijtihad based on the principles of justice (al-'adālah) and freedom (al-ḥurriyyah).

Therefore, based on the principles contained in democracy—such as al-shūrā (consultation), al-'adālah (principle of justice), al-musāwāh (equality of rights), al-amānah (trust), al-ḥurriyyah (freedom), and al-mas'ūliyah (responsibility)—the Indonesian people are encouraged to adopt attitudes of al-taṣāmuḥ (tolerance) and al-tawassuṭ (moderation). Shūrā, or consultation, is part of the collective deliberation and shared responsibility in decision-making, as a form of respect for equality of rights. Thus, consultation is considered to embody the principles mentioned above.

Al-Musāwāh (equality before the law) forms the foundation of democracy, preventing discrimination and social, political, and majority group hegemony. In other words, all identities have equal rights and opportunities to be served and to serve. Furthermore, the concept of al-ḥurriyyah (freedom) is crucial in expressing opinions, of course, based on norms and ethics. This functions as a form of governmental control and anticipates the possibility of governance systems straying from their responsibilities. Al-amānah (trust) given by the people represents the accountability (al-mas'ūliyah) of the government before the people and God.

2. The Concept of Islamic Democracy Through Gadamer's Hermeneutic Lens

Hans-Georg Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, argues that understanding a text is not simply about accepting its surface meaning. Instead, it is an active and ongoing conversation between the reader and the text, always influenced by their historical and cultural backgrounds. Central to this is the idea of the *hermeneutic circle* and the *fusion of horizons*, where new meanings emerge as the reader's perspective and the text's original context interact.

a. Al-Shūrā and Musyawarah as a Process of Interpretive Dialogue

In Islam, the principle of *al-shūrā* (consultation) highlights collective involvement in decision-making. When applied in Indonesia's diverse society, this concept is not

understood in a fixed way. Instead, its meaning evolves as people bring their histories, cultural values, and social circumstances to their reading. Gadamer notes that our *bildung*—our education and life experiences—shapes how we interpret texts. Thus, *musyawarah* (deliberation) is not just a literal text but a living dialogue between the text's values and present social realities. For example, the ideals of justice (*al-'adālah*) and responsibility (*al-mas'ūliyah*) embedded in consultation resonate with Indonesia's Pancasila democracy, which values inclusiveness and equal participation.

b. Justice, Equality, and Freedom Within Social and Historical Contexts
Key Islamic values, such as justice (al-'adālah), equality (al-musāwāh), and freedom (al-ḥurriyyah), are reinterpreted through the lens of *sensus communis*—the shared moral compass within a community. Gadamer emphasizes that understanding comes from being part of a community, where social norms and traditions shape interpretation. In Indonesia's multicultural context, these principles are expressed through attitudes like tolerance (*al-taṣāmuḥ*) and moderation (*al-tawassuṭ*). The challenge is not only to grasp the textual meaning but to apply these principles to foster peaceful coexistence in a plural society.

c. The Role of Subjective Taste in Navigating Complex Social Realities
Gadamer also emphasizes the significance of taste—a personal yet reasoned judgment that balances emotions and intellect—in the interpretive process. For Islamic democracy, this means interpreters must adapt religious teachings thoughtfully to the complexities of modern social life without losing their essence. Tolerance and moderation emerge as crucial responses to prevent ethnic conflicts, suspicion, and discrimination, which can undermine democratic life. Through *taste*, interpreters select interpretations that promote harmony while rejecting exclusivity and fanaticism.

d. Fusion of Horizons: Bridging Traditional Texts and Contemporary Contexts
Every act of understanding, according to Gadamer, involves a *fusion of horizons*, where the reader's present viewpoint and experiences blend with the original context of the text. Democratic principles in Islam, such as consultation, justice, and freedom, are therefore dynamic, not fixed; they must be continuously reinterpreted in light of local realities, like those in Indonesia. Thus, democracy in Indonesia can be seen as an ongoing *ijtihad rahmat*—a compassionate, reasoned effort to interpret Islamic teachings in a way that balances universal justice and freedom with local diversity. This reflects a living hermeneutic dialogue between the Qur'an and the nation's socio-political realities.

In summary, applying Gadamer's approach reveals that Islamic democracy is not a static doctrine but a dynamic conversation shaped by the interplay of text, tradition, and contemporary experience. The meanings of concepts like *al-shūrā*, *al-'adālah*, and *al-musāwāh* remain open, evolving through the reader's background, shared social values, and thoughtful judgment as society changes.

3. Interpreting the Word Shūrā as a Synonym for Democracy and Its Debates

The term "democracy" in the Qur'an is often associated with the word *shūrā*, which means consultation or mutual deliberation. The concept of consultation appears

in several verses, such as QS Al-Baqarah: 233, Al-'Imran: 159, and Al-Shūrā: 38, each with different contexts and reasons for revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl), yet all within a similar semantic framework. Because of this, *al-shūrā* is frequently regarded as an idiomatic representation of democracy. However, it is important to note that democracy is not merely about consultation; it is a broader principle that upholds freedom and justice.

This perspective argues that *shūrā*—meaning consultation—cannot be equated with democracy. The Qur'anic command to consult does not imply endorsement of democracy, a Western political system, unlike Islamic governance concepts such as Khilāfah. Democracy, based on majority rule, risks overriding minority rights and is seen as a human construct, not divine guidance. Thus, equating *shūrā* with democracy is considered incorrect, as the ultimate foundation for governance should come from the Qur'an and Hadith, not human inventions.

This argument is based on the belief that the concept of democracy contradicts the sovereignty of Sharia law. According to this view, every individual is obligated to fully and perfectly implement Sharia without compromise. Therefore, practicing democracy is considered forbidden (haram) because it is seen as opposing the law of Allah.

Democracy, viewed as a Western product, is regarded as a threat to the faith and the Muslim community as a whole. This group firmly believes that there is no law except the law of Allah. Thus, the foundation for governance and societal life must be the implementation of Allah's law, not democracy.

قُلۡ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٖ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبۡتُم بِهِۦۚ مَا عِندِي مَا تَسۡتَعۡجِلُونَ بِهِۦٓۚ إِنِ ٱلۡحُكۡمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِۖ يَقُصُّ ٱلۡحَقَّۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلۡفَٰصِلِينَ

Translation: Say (O Muhammad), "I am upon clear evidence from my Lord, while you deny it. It is not for me to hasten the punishment you ask for. The decision rests only with Allah. He declares the truth, and He is the best of judges." (Qur'an, Al-'An'am:57)

وَمَن لَّمۡ يَحۡكُم بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ

Translation: Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed – then they are the disbelievers. (Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah:44)

Another reason put forward is that the entire meaning of shura (consultation) is not related to matters outside of Sharia and does not involve the divine (ilahiyah) element, but rather is a human product. For them, the consultation mentioned in the verses does not provide room for humans to make their laws arbitrarily, as is the case in the concept of democracy. Shura is understood as a means to resolve problems or disputes among people in the best way and is praised by Allah SWT; however, it is not meant as the basis for creating laws, as commonly applied by states.

Moreover, the principle of democracy, which prioritizes the majority's voice—where the will of the people must be obeyed—raises problems because the population is vast and diverse, with conflicting desires. Therefore, in a democracy, decisions based on majority votes do not always reflect divine truth that must be followed (Syawi, 1997).

Abdul Qodim Zallum firmly rejects the equation of shūrā (consultation) with democracy. He argues that democracy is unrelated to shūrā because democracy is a Western invention designed to eliminate the role of religion in human life (see Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia website titled "Shūrā Is Not Democracy" at http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2009/04/11/syuro-bukan-demokrasi or also access http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2012/01/02/giliran-khilafah, January 29, 2012).

First, democracy is a human creation, not derived from the revelation of Allah SWT. Second, democracy originates from a secular worldview that separates religion from the state, which he views as a form of cultural invasion (*al-Ghazwī al-Thaqāfi*) by the West, representing a decline in Islamic thought. Third, the freedoms inherent in democracy conflict with Islam, as Muslims are required to fully obey Sharia law in all aspects of life as a sign of faith. Freedoms such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, ownership rights, and personal conduct are in contradiction to the obligatory Sharia. Therefore, anyone who judges by laws other than those of Allah is considered an unbeliever (Zallum, 2003, pp. 1-42).

Similarly, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir explicitly asserts that democracy is a significant form of shirk (associating partners with Allah), comparable to the shirk committed by the Quraysh who worshipped idols alongside Allah. He argues that practicing democracy is tantamount to equating Allah's absolute sovereignty with that of humans. In his view, the ultimate authority to legislate belongs solely to Allah, while democracy transfers this authority to the people or their representatives in parliament. This, according to him, constitutes associating partners with Allah (shirk). Thus, in democracy, sovereignty is shared between Allah and humans, making democracy's shirk analogous to idol worship (See the interview with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir titled "Bayan Ustadz Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Tentang Demokrasi" available at http://ansharuttauhid.com/read/publikasi/402/bayan-ustadz-abu-bakar-baasyir-tentang-demokrasi/#sthash.HIHhRYje.dpuf, December 31, 2014).

In contrast to the first group, the second group interprets the term *shūra* by contextualizing the text with contemporary phenomena. As Gadamer explains, a text must be engaged in dialogue with its evolving context. This means understanding is not limited to textbooks or positivist readings but is connected to current realities. Naturally, the interpreter's background influences this process. For example, the first group's rejection of equating *shūra* with democracy is influenced by their strong aspiration to implement the Islamic *khilāfah* or Islamic state system.

The second opinion argues that the concept of *shūra* in the Qur'an bears resemblance to the meaning of democracy, which aims to determine direction and policy collectively and openly. Quraish Shihab equates *shūra* with democracy based on an analogy to the original meaning of the word *shūra* itself, which is *shurtu al-'asl* (extracting honey from a beehive). For him, something positive that emerges from deliberation is part of the democratic system. Democracy is seen as providing broad opportunities for anyone to respectfully express their opinions, even if they contradict the consensus, and grants the lower classes the right to choose and be chosen. "Quraish Shihab's explanation is closely linked to his interpretation of Surah Al-Imran [3]:159, in which the term *shūrā*

(consultation) is understood as relating to the resolution of worldly affairs. This implies that consultation or democracy is a worldly matter that human beings, as caliphs (vicegerents) on earth, are entrusted to resolve independently." (Quraish Shihab, 2011, 402)

"Al-Qasimi, in his book *Mahāsin al-Ta'wīl*, explains that the background of the revelation of Surah Āl-'Imrān [3]:159 concerns the resolution of a conflict, specifically a battle situation, which required mutual agreement among the Prophet's companions in confronting the Quraysh disbelievers of Mecca—even though mistakes or shortcomings occurred in practice. In Quraish Shihab's view, a collective decision made through mutual consultation is a rule derived through *ijtihād* and intended for the public good. This interpretation aligns with the prophetic saying, *'You are more knowledgeable about your worldly affairs' (antum a'rafu bi umūri dunyākum).* Based on this understanding, Quraish Shihab confidently equates *shūrā* with the concept of democracy" (al-Qāsimi, *2005*, 800–801).

What al-Qāsimī (1981) elaborated is essentially in agreement with the view of Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Al-Rāzī explained that the term *shūrā* in this verse (Qur'an, Āli 'Imrān: 159) refers to the context of the Battle of Uhud, which was faced by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions. The Prophet consulted his companions to decide how to respond to the advancing Meccan polytheists, who sought revenge for their defeat in the Battle of Badr. Although the Prophet personally leaned toward a defensive strategy by remaining in the city, the majority of the companions urged for an open-field confrontation. Eventually, the Prophet accepted the outcome of the consultation and chose to meet the enemy outside the city, using Mount Uhud as a defensive position. Even though this decision resulted in a military setback, the verse emphasizes the importance of mutual consultation in decision-making, including matters of political and military strategy (al-Rāzī, 1981, 60–61).

Based on Al-Rāzī's explanation, the value of consultation (shūrā) creates space for freedom of opinion, as the Prophet Muhammad allowed his companions to decide on matters jointly. Therefore, Abbas Mahmūd al-'Aqqād believes that democracy is part of Islamic teachings. He emphasizes that shūrā is the foundation of democracy in Islam because the concept of democracy aligns with three main principles in the Qur'an: equality, individual responsibility, and the enforcement of law through consultation and just rules without discrimination (al-'Aqqad in book "Membumikan al-Qur'an" Quraish Shihab, 400-401). Al-'Aqqād rejects the notion that democracy originates from the West and is forbidden to be practiced. For him, democracy is an Islamic teaching because its essence corresponds with Islamic values. This view is supported by moderate Muslim groups, who interpret shūrā as democracy, provided that its practice adheres to Islamic principles and benefits society.

This perspective is upheld by moderate Muslim groups who view the concept of being Muslim not solely based on textual elements, but as a dynamic interaction between text and context within the framework of public welfare and benefit. Hence, these groups interpret shūrā as the very embodiment of democracy, despite the fact that its practice may still have many shortcomings. Democracy is compatible with and closely

intertwined in a country's political processes. As long as the substance and teachings of democracy do not contradict the noble values of Islam, democracy can be regarded as part of Islamic teachings.

Beyond the differing views, Gadamer positions his philosophical hermeneutics as a framework for understanding the interpretive debate between shūra and democracy as a living dialogue between the text and the reader that always unfolds within the "hermeneutic circle." He emphasizes that interpretation is never neutral because every reader brings a different horizon of understanding—some rooted in classical tradition, while others open up space for modern democratic interpretation. These differences in interpretation are not failures but a natural process that produces a "fusion of horizons," where new meanings emerge from the encounter of diverse perspectives. Gadamer also asserts that interpretation is always bound by the reader's historical and social context, so the interpretation of shūra may vary depending on the political and cultural situation behind it. Since hermeneutics is dialogical and dynamic, there is no absolute final interpretation; the debate between shūra and democracy becomes a space of continuously developing understanding, inviting us to appreciate the plurality of meanings within the context of changing times.

CONCLUSION:

1. The application of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy to the concept of Islamic democracy affirms that core principles such as al-shūrā (consultation), al-'adālah (justice), al-musāwāh (equality), and al-ḥurriyyah (freedom) are not rigid or static doctrines, but dynamic meanings that evolve through ongoing dialogue between sacred texts and contemporary social realities. This process of fusion of horizons allows diverse communities, such as Indonesia's pluralistic society, to interpret these values in ways that promote tolerance, moderation, and inclusive participation, thereby building a democratic ethos rooted in both Islamic teachings and the nation's cultural and historical context. Thus, Islamic democracy from Gadamer's perspective is a living process of compassionate ijtihad capable of reconciling tradition with modernity, while prioritizing pluralism and justice as the foundation for peaceful and harmonious coexistence.
2. The concept of shūrā in the Qur'an means consultation that underlies collective decision-making, but it is not automatically identical to modern democracy. The opposing group argues that democracy is a secular human-made system that contradicts the sovereignty of Allah and Sharia, so shūrā should not be equated with democracy, which prioritizes majority rule over divine law. Conversely, the supporting group views shūrā as a principle of deliberation aligned with democracy, where decisions are made inclusively, openly, and justly, as long as they remain based on Islamic values. Through Gadamer's hermeneutic approach, the interpretation of shūrā continues to evolve in response to socio-historical contexts, thereby producing a dynamic and relevant understanding that allows shūrā to be understood as the foundation of a moderate and contextual Islamic democracy.

REFERENCES:

Books:

Zallum, Abdul Qadim. *Demokrasi Sistem Kufur Haram Mengambil, Menerapkan dan Menyerbarluaskannya*. Bogor: Pustaka Thariqul Izzah, 2003.

Indrayana, Denny. "Indonesia di bawah Soeharto: Order Otoliter Baru." Dalam *Amandemen UUD 1945: Antara Mitos dan Pembongkaran*. Jakarta: Mizan Pustaka, 2007.

Al-Razi, Fakhr. *Tafsir al-Kabir wa Mafatih al-Ghayab*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1981.

Ibn Manzur. *Lisan al-'Arab*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1998.

Qustulani, Muhamad. *Dualisme Makna: Independensi Teks Nazm*. Jakarta: YPM Ciputat, 2011.

Syawi, Muhammad Taufi. *Syuro Bukan Demokrasi: Fiqh al-Shura wa al-Istisharat*. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 1997.

al-Qasimi, Muhammad Jamal al-Din. *Mahasin al-Ta'wil*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2005.

Sobari, Mohammad. *NU dan Keindonesiaan*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2010.

Nur Syam. *Tantangan Multikulturalisme Indonesia dari Radikalisme Menuju Kebangsaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2009.

Wilson, N. G. *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Shihab, Quraish. "Memaknai Perbedaan dalam Tuntunan Ajaran Agama." *Jurnal BIMAS ISLAM DEPAG RI* 2, no. 2 (2009).

Shihab, Quraish. *Membumikan al-Qur'an*. Jilid II. Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2011.

Feener, R. Michael. *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

an-Nabhani, Taqiyuddin. *Daulah Islamiyah*, edisi Muktamadah 1423 H/2002 M. Jakarta: HTI Press, 2014.

an-Nabhani, Taqiyuddin. *Konsepsi Politik Hizbut Tahrir*. Jakarta: HTI Press, 2009.

TTN. *Mengenal Hizbut Tahrir dan Strategi Dakwah Hizbut Tahrir*. Bogor: Thariqul Izzah, 2014.

Sairin, Wienata. *Kerukunan Umat Beragama Pilar Utama Kerukunan Berbangsa*. Jakarta: PT BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006.

Piliang, Yasraf Amir. "Meminimalisir Ruang Publik, Budaya Publik di dalam Abad Informasi." Dalam *Republika Tanpa Ruang Publik* [Kumpulan Tulisan]. IRE Press dan Yayasan SET, 2005.

Internet Sources:

Wahid, Abdurrahman. "NU dan Negara Islam." Diakses 1 Januari 2014. http://gusdur.net/pemikiran/detail/?id=102/hl=id/NU_Dan_Negara_Islam_1.

Syafei, Abdullah. "Ijtihad Politik NU tentang Demokrasi (Telaah Kritis terhadap Fatwa-fatwa Lajnah Bahsul Masa'il dalam Persoalan-persoalan Demokrasi)." Diakses 1 Januari 2014, pukul 15.00 WIB. http://www.uinsgd.ac.id/front/detail/karya_ilmiah/hasil-penelitian-

dosen/ijtihad-politik-nu-tentang-demokrasi-telaah-kritis-terhadap-fatwa-fatwa-lajnah-bahsul-masail-dalam-persoalan-persoalan-demokrasi.

Ba'asyir, Abu Bakar. "Bayan Ustadz Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Tentang Demokrasi." Diakses dari http://ansharuttauhid.com/read/publikasi/402/bayan-ustadz-abu-bakar-baasyir-tentang-demokrasi/#sthash.HIHhRYje.dpuf.

"Demokrasi Pancasila sebagai Sistem Kenegaraan yang Dianut oleh Indonesia." Diakses dari http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demokrasi/pancasila.

Wajidi, Farid. "Khilafah vs Demokrasi." Situs resmi Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. Diakses dari http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2010/07/16/khilafah-vs-demokrasi-2/.

Wikipedia. "Demokrasi." Diakses dari http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demokrasi#cite_ref-1.

Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. "Syuro Bukan Demokrasi." Diakses dari http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2009/04/11/syuro-bukan-demokrasi.

Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. "Giliran Khilafah Menggantikan Demokrasi." Diakses dari http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/2012/01/02/giliran-khilafah.