

THE ROOTS OF MODERN POLITICAL SECULARISM AND ITS CRITIQUE

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Abstract: *Discussions about politics and human power, including discussions about the concept of the state, have been a discussion that has been going on since Greek times until the time of the growth of Islamic philosophy. The overemphasis on the power of reason led early modern Western societies to reject religion in all political discourse. At this stage, all views of man, power, the constitution, and the state eventually ceased to be associated with God. On the other hand, especially among Muslims, religion is still connected with discussions of politics and human power. This paper will reveal how secularization in political thought grew and developed through principles such as the state of nature and the social contract. Then, based on the thought of one of the influential Muslim scholars, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, the author tries to provide a critique of the views of Western thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and other philosophers, by presenting the concept of the ideal state form derived from the concept of tamaddun formulated by Al-Attas. This research is literature review research using the descriptive method. The findings of this research show that secularization is a product purely born by Western secular thinkers and not taken from any religious teachings, so Western political concepts cannot always be applied, especially in Muslim societies.*

Keywords: *Political Philosophy, Secularism, Social Contract, State of Nature, Tamaddun.*

Abstrak: Perbincangan mengenai politik dan kekuasaan manusia termasuk di dalamnya ada pembahasan tentang konsep negara menjadi perbincangan yang berlangsung sejak masa Yunani hingga masa tumbuhnya filsafat Islam. Penekanan yang lebih terhadap daya akal-budi telah menggiring masyarakat Barat di awal abad modern untuk menolak agama dalam seluruh wacana mengenai politik. Di tahap ini, seluruh pandangan tentang manusia, kekuasaan, konstitusi, dan negara akhirnya tidak lagi dikaitkan dengan Tuhan. Di sisi lain khususnya di kalangan umat Islam, agama masih dihubungkan dengan pembahasan politik dan kekuasaan manusia. Tulisan ini akan mengungkap bagaimana sekularisasi dalam pemikiran politik tumbuh dan berkembang melalui prinsip-prinsip seperti kondisi alamiah dan kontrak sosial. Kemudian, dengan berpijak pada pemikiran

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salah satu cendekiawan muslim berpengaruh, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, penulis mencoba untuk memberikan kritik terhadap pandangan dari para pemikir Barat seperti Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, dan filsuf lainnya, dengan menengahkan konsep mengenai wujud negara ideal yang diturunkan berdasarkan konsep *tamaddun* yang dirumuskan oleh Al-Attas. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kajian kepustakaan dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif. Temuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa sekularisasi merupakan produk yang murni dilahirkan oleh para pemikir sekular Barat dan bukan diambil dari ajaran agama mana pun, sehingga konsep politik Barat tidak selalu bisa diterapkan terutama pada masyarakat muslim dalam konteks politik.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Filsafat Politik, Kondisi Alamiah, Kontrak Sosial, Sekularisme, Tamaddun.*

Introduction

Secularization is an effort that, instead of bringing benefits as originally assumed by its proponents, has manifested itself as a tragedy in the current era (Iqbal 2020, 77). The serious problem brought by this effort lies mainly in its philosophical dimension that touches the field of modern science (Attas 1993, xv). Secularization has limited the scope of modern science which only makes sensible objects the only scientific object (Kartanegara 2007, 9).

The limitation of the scope of science to sensory objects may, at first, have been a division of labor between “reason” and “dogma”. But gradually this restriction has turned out to be a restriction or definition of reality itself. This limitation of science has led many Western scientists to view the sensory world as the only reality that exists, as reflected in the notions of materialism, secularism, and positivism, philosophical views that usually end with the rejection of metaphysical reality (Zarkasyi 2013, 26–27). This tendency also inspired the birth of various secularistic formulations in the political sphere.

Rolston, as quoted by Kartanegara, said that modern science has stopped searching for “meanings” in their scientific explanations because such a search for meaning is more appropriate for religion than science (Kartanegara 2007, 9). By emphasizing the capacity of the ratio and sensory observation, modern science is then built. At the same time, Seyyed Hossein Nasr states, “*All subjects studied by a secularized instrument of knowledge came out to be depleted and devoid of the quality of the sacred*” (Nasr 1989, 36). Nasr argues that the secular scientific view brought by modern Western civilization in turn leads to the emptying and elimination of aspects of sacredness in every study of modern science.

The elimination of metaphysical elements, including God and religious doctrines, has made many scientists view the natural world, including the objects in it, only as objects of scientific study and negate the value and morality of all scientific activities (Rohman et al. 2021, 60). The rapid development of science in the modern era, which gave birth to advances in technology including weapons but without involving values or morals,

as exemplified by Nasr, has led human civilization to two World Wars that have tormented humanity itself (Nasr 1993, 42). Instead of referring to its original purpose as a tool that facilitates human life, modern science slowly materializes like a double-edged sword. It provides benefits on the one hand, but also brings suffering and damage to humanity and the environment on the other.

Apart from the natural sciences, the seeds of secularization can also be seen in the development of social sciences, especially politics. An Italian political thinker, Niccolò Machiavelli, strictly separated state affairs from morality. According to him, it is important for the ruler to have a ruthless and cunning nature which Machiavelli symbolizes with the nature of a lion and a fox: *"Therefore since a prince must perfect his knowledge of how to use animal attributes, those he must select are the fox and the lion"* (Machiavelli 2008, 281).

The fierceness of the lion is essential to maintaining the loyalty of the people while keeping enemies at bay by instilling fear in them. Meanwhile, the fox's ingenuity and cunning are needed so that power can always avoid various traps and tactics that threaten sovereignty. Even the ruler's cheating, such as canceling a peace treaty, must be done especially when the ruler must defend his power from others.

What Machiavelli proposed above is one example of how political discourse divorced from the aspects of morality and religion developed in the West, and matured when the West began to enter the modern era. This paper will reveal more clearly how secularization in political thought in the West grew and developed through its various forms to this day. Then, based on the thought of one of the influential Muslim scholars, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, the author tries to criticize the views of some major political thinkers in the West, by proposing a seminal concept of the ideal state form based on the concept of *tamaddun*.

Tracing Secularistic Views in the Historiography of Western Thought

Comte, Marx, Freud, and Durkheim, as well as other early theorists, argued that religion was part of premodern culture and predicted that it would be abandoned by humans as civilization progressed. (Schnabel 2021, 1). Secularization theory built on these arguments and assumed, based on patterns of religious transition, that a large proportion of the world's population would become non-religious (Gorski and Altınordu 2008, 55).

This condition seems to be agreed upon by political scholar and historian Francis Fukuyama. For him, this trend is at least evident in the current phenomenon, marked mainly by ideology which no longer plays a particularly crucial role in various political activities of the global community. Fukuyama himself called this condition *"the end of ideology"*

(Fukuyama 1992, 64). Instead of being ideological, world politics today is driven more by pragmatic motives (Katz and Mair 1994; 1996). In philosophical terms, the collapse of all legitimacy for products of reason such as ideology, as well as religion in the sense of Western scholars, marks the era that Jean-François Lyotard calls postmodern (Lyotard 1984, 37).

Definition of Secularism and Secularization

Etymologically, both secularism and its derivative: secularization, have the same root word, *secular*, an English word derived from *saeculum*, which in Latin means “*this age*” (Cox 2013, 22). Secularism in Webster’s Dictionary is explained as *indifference to or rejection or exclusion of religion* and religious considerations especially from human consciousness. This rejection of religion more directly leads to what is referred to in the Oxford Dictionary as the separation of religion from the organization of society or the public such as social institutions, education, and the like (*the belief that religion should not be involved in the organization of society, education, etc.*). In this sense, secularism is the belief that religion should not be involved in the organization of society, education, etc. In this sense, secularism is the belief that religion should not be involved in the organization of public life.

According to Holyoake (1817–1906), “*secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on purely human considerations, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable*” (Holyoake 1896, 35). In this statement, the first formulator of secularism referred to his ideology as a system of norms that stands firmly on human considerations, which arose with the suspicion of the inability of theology and at the same time religion to offer such norms that are needed by humans, both for religious and non-religious societies. Secularism is supposed to manifest when people understand that the progress of life can only be achieved through material means, the only “controller” of human destiny is science and not magical powers or the like, and that the only value of goodness is the good deed itself, regardless of whether or not there is a divine reward afterward.

Harvey Cox, an influential Protestant theologian in the 20th century, distinguished what he defined as secularism from secularization. According to him, “*the difference between secularization as a historical movement and secularism as an ideology*” (Cox 2013, 103). While secularism is an ideology, Cox explains secularization as a *historical movement* that culminates in a *liberating process*. *Secularization* is expected to *liberate* and turn man’s attention *away* from any kind of religious inclination toward *his* present life in the world; “*secularization is the liberation of man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and towards this one*” (Cox 2013, 21). In his conclusion, Cox then considers that *closed worldview* secularism, by itself, will always

endanger the openness and freedom produced by secularization (Cox 2013, 26).

Cox's concept of secularization, which he admits developed Friedrich Gogarten's ideas, is diametrically different from the concept of secularism when it first emerged in the second half of the 19th century. Cox in his book, *The Secular City*, begins his description of secularization by referring to the teachings of the Bible, something that George Jacob Holyoake never thought of when he first came up with this ideology. As outlined above, Holyoake's emphasis on secularism was initially simply a prerequisite in the pursuit of progressive thinking (Holyoake 1896, 2). According to Cox, however, there are three Biblical teachings that underlie secularization (Cox 2013, 22). *First*, the *disenchantment of nature* associated with *Creation*. *Second*, the *desacralization of politics* related to the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. *Third*, the *deconsecration of values* associated with the *Sinai Covenant*. All three are integral components in the secularization dimension.

The first dimension of secularization is the *disenchantment of nature* or the stripping of nature from various kinds of magical attributes, and myths, including religion. About this Cox states, "*Somehow nature must be disenchanted, which means the destruction of many traditional religions*" (Cox 2013, 30). In this sense, the view of nature must first be released from the divine elements unique to each religious tradition, so that there is no longer a view that nature is a sublime and holy being. Second, the *desacralization of politics*. Cox opens his explanation of this by saying that in a secular society, no one has the right to rule others in the name of God's command (*no one rules by divine right in secular society*). This then implies a separation of roles between institutions that handle worldly affairs and *ukhrawi* affairs, the state and religion, or the constitution and the holy book. In his conclusion, Cox emphasizes that political and social change (progress) will depend on the extent to which political activity is detached from these religious symbols.

The last dimension of *secularization*, the *deconsecration of values*, is closely related to value relativism. The value system, as Cox puts it, is nothing but a product of history that is determined by the dynamics of time and place, so it is limited and partial. Cox says, "*...values have been deconsecrated, shorn of any claim to ultimate or final significance*" (Cox 2013, 37). Thus, any value system including religion and views of life that have absolute and final meaning will always be open to reinterpretation. This is what Cox suggests as the end product of the *secularization* process (*historical relativism is the end product of secularization*) (Cox 2013, 40).

Indeed, although the formulation of secularization was only born in the 20th century after Holyoake first started it a century earlier, the historiography of Western philosophy proclaims the Renaissance (17th century) and the Enlightenment (18th century) as periods for the growth

of the principles of secularism. In other words, all the dimensions of secularization began three centuries before Harvey Cox came up with his idea. The following discussion will explain the major points that the author considers to play a significant role in the development of secularization in the West, especially in the political field.

Secularization in Modern Political Thought

The discussion in this section will focus more on how secularization has had a profound influence on modern political thought. However, what needs to be emphasized here is that the three dimensions of secularization in Harvey Cox's formulation, as discussed earlier, influence each other. It is in this light that a full understanding of the political thought of modern philosophers will be gained. Two names that always appear in the discourse of modern political philosophy are Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Their philosophical views on the *state of nature* and the *social contract* have contributed greatly to the emergence of political theories, most of which are still valid today.

State of Nature and Social Contract

The discussion of the state of nature of human beings, before an institution called the state is formed, becomes very important especially when a state wants to determine its ideals. The construction of the state of nature first emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe and became an important foundation for the birth of various conceptions of the modern state (Henderson 2000, 15). This view of the *state of nature* was first formulated by the English-born philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and became a topic that was also discussed by other great thinkers, especially John Locke (1632–1704), and inspired later thinkers such as J.J. Rousseau (1712–1778) and Montesquieu (1689–1755) (Harrison 1993, 37).

Hobbes wrote down his main thoughts in a book entitled *Leviathan*. Hobbes argued that all men are equal by nature. In a state of nature, i.e., before the existence of government, everyone wants to maintain their freedom, and more explicitly leads to the desire to gain power over others; both of these desires are dictated by the drive for self-preservation (Harrison 1993, 38–39).

Humans are described by Hobbes as *homo homini lupus* (*wolves for other humans*) (Suhelmi 2001, 165–67). This situation eventually led to various kinds of conflicts between fellow humans. These conflicts lead to wars of 'all against all', which makes the natural life of human beings evil, brutal, and short (Hobbes 1991, xiii). In the natural state, there is no property or property rights, no justice or injustice; there is only war, and Hobbes even concludes that 'force' and 'fraud' are the only two virtues left, as they are prevalent in warfare situations (Russell 2005, 504–05).

Hobbes then explains how humans eventually get out of this natural situation, namely by joining into societies that are each subject to a single authority. This is represented as happening through the social contract. Hobbes presupposes that a number of people come together and agree to choose a sovereign, or sovereign body, that will exercise authority over them and put an end to universal war (Russell 2005, 505). Through this, humans or individuals surrender their rights and freedoms to the sovereign of the state or the council of the people (*common power*). The state that is formed then also has the right to determine moral values. To determine the good and bad of a norm or value system, so that the state only recognizes rights but lacks obligations. The state has absolute power. Its power cannot be divided. To create peace, the power possessed by the state must have the characteristics of Leviathan, namely strong, cruel, and feared (Suhelmi 2001, 177–78).

In contrast to Hobbes' concept that the state of nature is a state of terror and discomfort, Locke views the state of nature more positively. Locke explains that humans live together according to reason, without any party that is higher than the other, they have the authority to judge between them (Russell 2005, 569). Locke describes the natural life of human beings not as Hobbes describes it, i.e., a life of savagery, but an imaginary community of good anarchists, who do not need police or courts because they always obey the guidance of reason, which is equated with "natural law", which in turn, consists of laws of behavior that are considered to have divine origins (Locke 2003, 102). This can be seen, for example, in the natural human conviction not to kill each other, but the rules regarding this are not something that manifests naturally.

The fulfillment of human rights and a system that guarantees these rights is the core of Locke's social contract theory. These rights include the right to life, liberty, property, and health. The social contract run by a government must protect these rights (Wijaya 2016, 184). Locke also witnessed the conflict between government affairs and religion increasingly tapering off. He felt that this was the main disorder of society. He believed that a possible way to solve this problem was to return their affairs to their nature. Religion on the one hand was given the right to regulate private affairs, while for public affairs it was left to the rules obtained through a collective contract.

Lessnof quoted by Wijaya explains that the social contract is the legitimization of political authority to limit the authority of each subject and the rights of each ruler from all humans who are naturally born free and equal (Wijaya 2016, 188). For him, no one can have political power without the consent of the people. This means that essentially all the activities of the people will be determined by the consent of the people.

...when any number of men have, by the consent of every individual, made a community, they have thereby made that community one body, with a power to act

as one body, which is only by the will and determination of the majority (Locke 2003, 142).

The government then has the task of protecting the lives, freedoms, and property of the people. Mutual consent is considered the key to reducing conflict and war. The state is considered the main foundation in solving society's problems. There are differences in the concept of the ideal state between Hobbes and Locke. If Hobbes craved absolute power, Locke wanted a separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and federative branches (Wijaya 2016, 190). This separation of powers was developed by political thinkers such as J.J. Rousseau and Montesquieu, giving birth to a political system called democracy, which is now practiced by almost all countries in the world (Scholte 2014, 3).

The idea of the state of nature in the modern period challenged the established political discourse previously developed by Aristotle, who considered states and villages to arise from male-dominated hierarchical families. Hugo Grotius, a Dutch legal scholar in the seventeenth century, developed the first comprehensive theory of international law by translating Aristotle's concepts into a belief that humans are not only "reasonable" but also "social" by nature. For Grotius, the "fundamental nature of man" stemmed from reason alone, and thus he believed that it was reason that ultimately made man capable of harmonizing with others in a society.

The theory of the state of nature that describes the evolutionary development of human life, which then transforms into a civilized society through a social contract, shows how secularistic views, especially towards humans and life, have greatly colored Western political thinkers in the modern era. In Hobbes' view, humans were originally like wolves who did not recognize the rules when hunting for food. Meanwhile, in Locke's assumption, although humans are described as civilized beings, they live in the absence of common rules (Locke 2003, 102). Universal rules then appear as soon as humans make a social contract. There is nothing more noble than the values and norms that have been established through mutual agreement, even religious values and rules must be subdued to be in line with the consensus.

Thus, if elements such as the concept of man, freedom, the rules of social institutions, and religion are the foundation of modern thinkers when formulating their conception of the ideal state, then the explanation of the same elements will also be the main focus in the next section. The thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, as a representation of an influential Muslim thinker, will be the main basis in analyzing the secularistic views of Western political thinkers that have been discussed previously.

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' View on Political Secularization

Quoting the explanation of Van Peursen, a professor of philosophy at Leiden University, Al-Attas defines secularization as human liberation from all religious influences that dominate their minds and language (Attas 1993, 17). In his book, *Islam and Secularism*, Al-Attas categorically rejects any notion that secularization has its foundations in the teachings of the Bibles (Carr 2022, 32). As Al-Attas said:

The claim that secularization has its roots in biblical faith and that it is the fruit of the Gospel has no substance in historical fact. Secularization has its roots not in biblical faith, but in the interpretation of biblical faith by Western man; it is not the fruit of the Gospel, but is the fruit of the long history of philosophical and metaphysical conflict in the religious and purely rationalistic worldview of Western man (Attas 1993, 20).

Al-Attas says that secularization, as claimed by Harvey Cox, was purely born out of the 17th-century Western philosophers' interpretation of theology and metaphysics. Al-Attas calls this situation the *Westernization of Christianity* and not the other way around, which marks the birth of the spirit of secularization in Western civilization (Attas 1993, 22). Secularization is the fruit that grew in the Western human consciousness, after a long conflict involving religion, with rationality brought by philosophy, occurred during the Middle Ages. This explanation not only rejects Harvey Cox's assumptions but also rejects any claim that the separation of heavenly affairs from the world is God's will.

Furthermore, Al-Attas also explains how secularization resulting from the misuse of Greek philosophy in the interpretation of theology and religion, as done by modern Western thinkers, has led them to a new trend called the scientific revolution pioneered by Descartes in the 17th century. This situation has opened a wide door for the emergence of skepticism and has successfully helped nourish atheism and agnosticism, towards utilitarianism, dialectical materialism, evolutionism, and historicism from the 18th, and 19th centuries, to the present day (Attas 1993, 22–23).

Al-Attas adds that Christianity has tried to resist the secularization efforts and all the philosophical trends that have developed since the modern century, but it seems that it did not succeed. Instead, it was Christianity that eventually had to adapt its teachings to the will of the times. Al-Attas says that this has been the nature of Christianity since its inception in Europe (Attas 2001, 86).

The above explanation shows two things. Firstly, secularization in the political realm is not a natural state of affairs, so it is likely to go against human nature. Second, Christianity itself is inadequate to explain the proper relationship between religion on the one hand and social and political life on the other. The emergence of secularization in the

political consciousness of the West, too, cannot be separated from their bad history during the Middle Ages. In an era when the Church still had a strong dominance, including in determining various state policies, religion became the biggest factor that caused the stagnation of science and was often the cause of bloodshed. As *religio* (which later became *religion*), which in Latin means “to bind”, Western civilization developed with the effort to break away from every bond that shackled their lives (Attas 2001, 36). On the other hand, there are serious problems with various doctrines and theological concepts in Christianity. These factors led to the spirit of secularization in Western society.

The emergence of secularization in the realm of politics can be traced a little further, namely through the thoughts of an Italian philosopher named Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527). According to him, the main purpose of a government is “survival”, even if it means transcending religious values or the interests of society itself (Husaini 2005, 164). To save the country, a leader, according to Machiavelli, may abandon the value of “good and bad” and do anything to achieve the main goal. It is important for the ruler to be both fierce and cunning, which Machiavelli symbolizes with the traits of the lion and the fox: “*Therefore since a prince must perfect his knowledge of how to use animal attributes, those he must select are the fox and the lion.*” (Machiavelli 2008, 281). The fierceness of the lion is essential to maintain the loyalty of the people by giving them a sense of fear, as well as countering any threats from other countries. Meanwhile, the fox’s ingenuity and deceit are needed to keep the ruler safe from political traps. Even cheating the ruler, such as canceling a peace treaty, must be done to stay in power.

Machiavelli’s idea above, in addition to showing the symptoms of secularization in political consciousness, also shows an effort to dismantle values that are no longer considered absolute. According to Al-Attas, the West’s acceptance of humanism as a philosophy of life has been the reason why values—in this case, brought by Christianity—have lost their integrity. In line with the background of humanism, which was born out of challenges to the values of the Middle Ages. Al-Attas explains humanism as a secular worldview that emphasizes attention only on material things and humanity, because as explained:

Faham humanisme ini mementingkan hanya dasar keistimewaan kemanusiaan dan keduniaan serta kebendaan, dan tiada meletakkan agama dan ajaran-ajaran serta kepercayaan Ketuhanan sebagai yang utama dan penting selain daripada menjadi alat bagi kesejahteraan manusia dan ketenteraman masyarakat demi mencapai masalahat negara (Attas 2001, 20).

Humanism requires humans to be the sole determinants of value while making value itself relative. The value relativism that is expected to occur as in the *social contract* of Hobbes and Locke or in Machiavelli’s political theory, has never happened in the long history of the Muslim journey.

Furthermore, this is because Islam as the basis of civilization is very much in tune with the basic condition or human nature. During its heyday, seminal concepts in the Quran and Hadith were developed into natural and social sciences, which are beneficial not only for the hereafter but also for the world (Shobahussurur 2015, 92). The discussion of religion in the light of Islam, which has a direct link to the concepts of science justice, and politics, will be explained further in the next section.

Western skepticism towards religion and the reverence of human nature, which gave birth to humanism, has important significance for the emergence of ideologies, especially in the political field. According to Al-Attas, there are at least three poles in which humans view religion (Attas 2001, 27). *First*, religion is seen as a truth that must be believed and practiced, which brings prosperity and perfection to human life. *Second*, religion is seen as a falsehood, and man must free himself from its shackles if he wants to achieve a perfect life. *Thirdly*, religion is seen as a tool to achieve the welfare and peace of society at large and is useful for the ruler—as long as it is not detrimental to his position—to rule the country. Of these three views, only the second and third have become the main features, as well as those that build the identity of Western civilization to this day. Ideologies such as Capitalism and Socialism are examples Al-Attas cites that are based on the second and third views. On the relationship between humanism and these two ideologies, Al-Attas explains:

Dari segi politik, faham humanisme ini berasaskan sejarah agama dan orang Eropah, menyalurkan dirinya menerusi dua tafsiran: yang satu biasanya digelar dengan nama Kapitalisme, dan yang satu lagi dengan nama Sosialisme. Kedua-dua faham ini sesungguhnya berdasarkan kepada falsafah hidup yang sama, iaitu kepada humanisme, sedangkan cara-caranya bagi mencapai tujuan akhirnya masing-masing berlainan—malah tampak seolah-olah bertentangan keduanya itu, padahal dasar-tujuannya sama jua (Attas 2001, 20).

As a secular ideology, Capitalism does not see religious ideals as something that should be used as the foundation of all state goals, although at the same time, it does not reject it, as long as it leads to increased productivity, especially in the social sector, which affects state revenues. Socialism, its attitude towards religion can be seen from Karl Marx's statement that religion is nothing more than an opium, which encourages people to be passive and becomes an obstacle to progress (Bahari 2010, 4). As a result, if man wants to progress, the first thing he must do is to break free from any shackles of religious teachings. Like humanism at their core, both ideologies have reduced humans to mere physical beings, and life, matter, and the world are viewed in isolation from the spiritual aspect, resulting in all kinds of corruption as a result of the lack of responsibility between humans as *khalifah*, and the God who has given them the mandate (*amānah*), as can be found in the worldview

of Islam.

***Tamaddun* as a Seminal Concept of the Ideal State**

As an organization that covers an area that has a legitimate supreme power and is obeyed by its people, the understanding of the state is not so far from civilization. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, there are at least four terms used to refer to civilization. First, *ḥaḍārah* which has the original meaning of a dwelling presence, as opposed to *badāwah* or nomadic (Lane 1863, 589). In this sense, the prerequisite of religion as a factor supporting presence is not a concern, so *ḥaḍārah* can also be intended for civilizations outside Islam. Second, *thaqāfah* emphasizes activities related to and leading to skills and is sometimes associated with scholarship (Lane 1863, 342). Third, *‘umrān* which Ibn Khaldun uses to refer to a group of people who work together by organizing themselves to survive (Khaldun 2005, 271). Fourth, *tamaddun*.

Unlike the first three terms which do not emphasize the role of religion in the formation of a civilization, this last term is just the opposite, which emphasizes the role of religion as the most important factor for the birth of a civilization or state.

If the birth of civilization requires the existence of collective and continuous human behavior in a region, then it is very reasonable to say that religion or belief, including even atheism or secularism, is the fundamental basis for the formation of a civilization or state. This is because human behavior is the outward manifestation of what is contained in their thoughts and beliefs (Zarkasyi 2015, 5).

Among Western scholars, this is also agreed upon for example by Arnold Toynbee who acknowledges that spiritual (inner) power allows a person to manifest it into an *outward manifestation* which is then referred to as civilization. In the context of Islam, Sayyid Qutb emphasizes faith as the source of civilization. Faith is not only an attitude of belief but has become a combination of the principles of belief in God and humanity. Therefore, according to him, the principles of Islamic civilization are piety, belief in the oneness of God, and the supremacy of humanity over anything material; the development of human values, guarding against animal desires, respect for the family, and self-awareness as a *khalifah* on earth entrusted by God with His sharia (Zarkasyi 2015, 6).

The term *tamaddun* is a derivation of the word *dīn*, a word found in the Quran and often translated as religion (Q.S. Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 19, 85). In the *Lisān al-‘Arab* dictionary, Ibn Manẓūr gives the word *dīn* four meanings (Manẓūr, n.d., 170–71). First, it means law, power, submission, rule, and calculation. Second, it means submission, obedience, and devotion. Third, it means retribution, reckoning, and reward. And the fourth means creed. The fourth meaning is more intended as a path or sharia implemented by a person. From these meanings, it can be concluded that *dīn* does not

only mean religion, but also includes law, power, submission, regulation, calculation, self-debt, submission, devotion, obedience, retribution, calculation, and creed.

In line with that, the word *dīn* can also be interpreted as *daynun* which means debt. In other words, practicing Islam can be said to be an effort to pay a debt to Allah as the Creator. So here the title of Allah is *Al-Dayyān*, namely the Debtor. Meanwhile, the Prophet was given the nickname *Dayyān*, which means that he is the administrator of debts and credits. From the meaning of debt in the meaning of *dīn*, there is a *minhaj*, system, or rule of life-based on comprehensive and complete laws. Because indebtedness is related to the structure of power, the structure of law, and the human tendency to form a society that obeys the law and seeks a just government, it has described a civilization (Attas 1995, 43–44).

When it has been applied in a society in a region, the civilization or state in that region is called *Madīnah*. From the root words *dīn* and *madīnah*, a new root word *madana* is formed. *Madana* means to build, establish a city, advance, purify, and dignify. From the root word *madana* was born the noun *tamaddun* which means civilization which also means a city based on culture (*city-based culture*) or city culture (*culture of the city*). If traced from its roots, *tamaddun* can be interpreted as a place built based on religion. As explained above, the term *tamaddun*, which emphasizes the spiritual dimension as the basis of social life, is the correct concept of civilization and state because in *tamaddun* all human interests based on their nature will be accommodated.

Conclusion

The theory of the state of nature that describes the evolutionary development of human life, which then transforms into a civilized society through a social contract, shows how secularistic views, especially regarding humans and their lives, greatly color modern Western political thinkers. In Hobbes' view, humans were originally like wolves who did not recognize the rules when hunting for food. Meanwhile, in Locke's assumption, although humans are described as civilized beings, they live in the absence of common rules. Universal rules then appear as soon as humans make a social contract. There is nothing more noble than the values and norms that have been established through mutual agreement, even religious values and rules must be subdued to be in line with the consensus.

This is where Al-Attas draws the dividing line. According to him, the secularization trend that fills the political discourse in the West stems from the inability of Christianity, as a religion, to answer all human problems. In the history of Western civilization, theocracy in the Middle Ages, which was originally considered a form of government that represented God's ideals and was considered sacred, then changed along with the growth

of ideas about people's government, which was based on the view of the *state of nature* and *social contract*, which gave rise to various secularistic interpretations of politics. Similar conditions were never found in the long history of Islamic civilization, so secularization became unrecognizable even though Islam also rejected absolute theocracy in the political sphere.

The basic assumption to be offered here is that Islam is a religion and a civilization, because the Quran, as the holy book of Islam, does not only teach theological doctrines and religious rituals but also projects a rational worldview that is rich with various seminal concepts (especially about science) which become the basis of both individual and social life so that it develops into a civilization. That is, Islam is a *dīn* that has developed into *tamaddun* or civilization. The following is an explanation of how Islam as *dīn* developed into *tamaddun* with its intellectual and political traditions.

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