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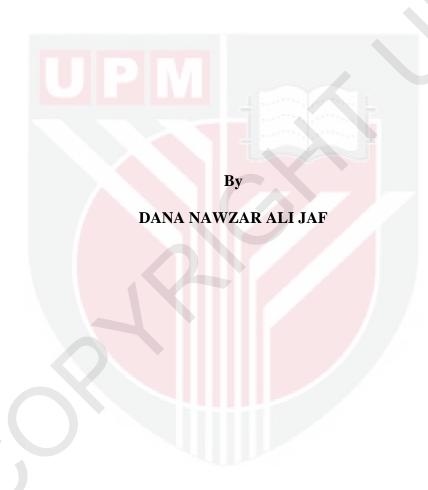
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD'S THOUGHT

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By

DANA NAWZAR ALI JAF

Thesis Submitted to School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements of for the Degree of Master of Science

November 2014

DEDICATION

To my late brother Zaid. I was five and he was 14 years old when he left this world. I inherited a small library and love of knowledge from him.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY IN
DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD'S THOUGHT

By

DANA NAWZAR ALI JAF

November 2014

Chairman: Professor Zaid Ahmad , PhD

Faculty: Faculty of Human Ecology

The purpose of this thesis is to determine, analyze and evaluate Dr. Mahathir
Mohamad's worldview on Islam, Islam's role in public life and Islam's relationship
with democracy. This study has adopted a qualitative research design. Content
analysis and interview are used as the main data collection methods. The study has
academic significance as a contribution to the knowledge in the field of Islam and
democracy debate. It also has practical significance for policy makers by presenting
ideas of a Muslim statesman on matters related to religion and governance. This
study has identified a scheme, good governance, in which Dr. Mahathir brings Islam
and democracy together. Democracy defined as the process of choosing leaders
through elections is a tool by which good citizens elect good governors, and Islam
provides the systems of values which guarantees emergence of good citizens,
governors and regulations.

HUBUNGAN ANTARA ISLAM DAN DEMOKRASI DALAM PEMIKIRAN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

Oleh

DANA NAWZAR ALI JAF

November 2014

Pengerusi: Professor Zaid Ahmad, PhD

Fakulti: Ekologi Manusia

Tesis ini menggambarkan perspektif yang besar oleh Dr.Mahathir terhadap Islam dan demokrasi melalui kualitatif kandungan analisis dalam ucapan dan penulisannya. Hasil dalam kandungan analisis dan wawancara digunakan sebagai pengumpul data utama. Para sarjana dan pengubal dasar akan melihat dengan lebih jauh mengenai model Dr.Mahathir mengintegrasikan demokrasi dengan Islam. Kajian ini telah mendapati satu bentuk pentadbiran yang baik di mana Dr.Mahathir telah membawa Islam dan demokrasi bersama. Dari sudut ini, Islam dan demokrasi sahaja serasi malahan mereka saling melengkapi antara satu sama lain. Oleh yang demikian, demokrasi adalah proses dalam pemilihan pemimpin melalui pilihan raya iaitu kaedah di mana warganegara yang baik memilih pemimpin-pemimpin yang baik, dan Islam menyediakan sebuah sistem nilai yang menjamin kemunculan warganegara, pemimpin dan peraturan-peraturan yang baik

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It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the support of my supervisor, professors, family and friends in finishing this important chapter of my educational life.

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I am also grateful for my family, especially my mother and father, who bear the agony of being away from their son for two years supporting me with their prayers and pocket. I thank my brother and my two sisters who have always supported me in every way possible.

During my two years stay in Malaysia, I met many people and made a lot of friends. They shared with me their moments of joy and supported me by being there for me. I am especially thankful for my dear friend, Zana, who received me the first day I arrived in Malaysia, welcomed me in his home and continues to be a great friend. Finally, I cannot find enough words to express my gratitude to my best friend Soran and his wife, Shara. Their generosity, friendship and guidance made life in Malaysia a much more beautiful one.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date:

v

Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABIM	Angakatan Belia Islam Malaysia
BN	Barisan Nasional
DAP	Democratic Action Party
PAS	Parti Islam Se-Malaysia
PR	Pakatan Rakyat
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Opening Remarks

Jacques Derrida, the famous French postmodernist philosopher, predicted that the issue of Islam and democracy will be 'one of the greatest if not the only' political issue in the future. Derrida called for a thorough historical and theoretical investigation into the issue, but he claimed that he did not have the needed time and expertise to research the topic (Derrida, 2005).

With the 'third wave' of democratization, fall of the soviet block and consequently the triumph of the capitalism at the end of the last century, many scholars glorified democracy as the last best hope of humanity. Some went even further to claim 'the end of history' declaring West's liberal democracy as the last product of human political thought's evolution (al-Braizat, 2002; Fukuyama, 2006; Milton-Edwards, 2004). With the resistance shown towards democracy in many parts of the Muslim world (Waterbury, 1996), scholars as well as politicians and policy makers began to ask the question which Derrida had predicted to be *the question* of the future: Is Islam compatible with democracy?

The relationship between Islam and democracy has become one of the major topics of scholarly fascination. It gained even more attention with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and several Islamist parties' winning elections in different parts of the Muslim world (Stepan & Linz, 2013). Jacques Derrida's depiction of Islam and democracy question as the topic of the future seems to be valid. The social and political developments on ground in the Muslim world have reminded everyone of the need for answering some core questions and have posed new questions as well. This thesis is a modest step on the way to answering these questions.

1.2 Research Problem

The rise of Islamic resurgence as a sociopolitical force in Malaysia, a country with a noticeable percentage of non-Muslims, in the 1970s and the initiation of the state-sponsored Islamization policies in the 1980s made the question of the relationship between Islam and democracy an attractive for scholars of Malaysian politics, Islam and democratization. This scholarly fascination grew even more when the contrasting views on Islam and Islamic state put forward by UMNO and Pan-Islamic Malaysian Party (PAS), the two main Muslim parties in Malaysia, became electoral issues used for gaining the Malays votes (Liow, 2004a).

Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, as the longest ruling president of UMNO and Prime Minister of Malaysia has enjoyed a special position in the existing scholarship on

democracy and Islam in the Malaysian context. He is seen as the UMNO leader who Islamized UMNO and later the state. He is considered the initiator of Islamization policies run by the Malaysian government. These Islamization programs, as argued by many scholars, have led to a stronger presence of Islam both on public and private levels(Hamayotsu, 2010a; Hamid, 2009; Haneef, 2005; Mutalib, 1993) . He has been recognized by a number of the famous religious leaders of other Muslim countries as a Muslim leader who has contributed to 'Islamic resurgence' and has supported Islamic causes worldwide (Adshead, 1989; Hamzah, 2004). Moreover, he has been recognized as one of the most outspoken voices from the Muslim world. Many of his views on different matters, especially his critical views of the Western powers, have had great resonance in the international media (Rajendran, 1993; Teik, 1995). All of these qualify Dr. Mahathir Mohamed to be a name whose views on Islam and democracy question are worth studying.

Before, during and after his time in office as the prime minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed has spoken extensively on many matters related to Islam, Islam's role in public life, governance, democracy and the relationship between Islam and democracy. These views are scattered all around his writings, speeches, and interviews. This study is an attempt to understand Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's constructed worldview on Islam and democracy. This thesis wants to understand Dr. Mahathir Mohamed based on what he has revealed on the relationship between Islam and democracy through his speeches, writings and interviews.

While Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has become famous as a Muslim political leader of a country with a Muslim majority and strong presence of Muslims in politics, his views on issues related to Islam and politics are either been discussed in the intra-Malay political context, or they have been underestimated as ineffective. While few scholars have given him credit as a Muslim leader with original thoughts on Islam and governance, many works on him have not given enough attention to the scholarly value of his views. This study aims to go a step further to add to the few works that have tried to understand Dr. Mahathir's worldview from his own mouth. It looks out for a scheme that bring his ideas on Islam and democracy together.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to identify Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's perspective on the relationship between Islam and democracy. However, the thesis has three specific objectives that are:

1- Identifying Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's constructed worldview on governance, political systems and democracy.
2- Determining Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's understanding of Islam and Islam's role in the society and politics.
3- Evaluating Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's sperception of the individual liberties especially in a democratic Muslim community.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has three main significances. Academically, the study of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's views on the question of relationship between Islam and democracy

contributes to the existing knowledge on the question. This study takes the views of Dr. Mahathir on the relationship between Islam and democracy seriously trying to come up with an understanding of Dr. Mahathir's constructed worldview on Islam, Islam's role in society and the relationship between Islam and democracy. The results of systematic analysis of his ideas will be of relevance for scholars.

Practically, what Dr. Mahathir Mohamed has to say on the question will be beneficial for those politicians, policy makers and leaders who are also entangled with the questions related to Islam and its role in public life. Dr. Mahathir, as someone who has ruled a country with a Muslim majority and Islam as its official religion, has said much about the question under research. Islamic parties coming to power through elections and other parties, who are running countries with significant Muslim majorities and strong presence of Islam, may find Dr. Mahathir's answers for questions related to governance, Islam's role in public and democracy beneficial.

Finally, in addition to Dr. Mahathir's thoughts on Islam and democracy, this study serves as a useful synthesis of ideas, theories, and arguments existing on the relationship between Islam and democracy. The theoretical framework section of the thesis is a beneficial summary of the existing theoretical debate on the topic. After reading the thesis, in addition to a detailed account of Dr. Mahathir's constructed worldview on Islam and democracy, the big picture of Islam and democracy debate will be seen clearly.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

In terms of time, the study is not confined to the 22 years Dr. Mahathir spent in office as the prime minister of Malaysia. Although most of his ideas and policies were best expressed during his 22 year-time in office, his contributions in the form of books, speeches, and interviews both before and after being prime minister are of relevance to this research. This will help to see the flow of his ideas and the way he has constructed his perspective on the topic.

While this study has its points of strength in terms of being a holistic attempt to understand Mahathir Mohamed's construction of meaning in relation to Islam and democracy, it has its own limitations as well. One major limitation is the linguistic limitation. English sources are the main sources for the literature review and collection of data. The formal language of Malaysia is Bahasa Malaysia or Malay language. There are certainly studies on the topic that are written in Malay and I haven't been able to track them down because of the linguistic limitation. However, there are few reasons which make the situation less scary in terms of the scholarly value of this work. Firstly, the literature on Malaysian politics, UMNO and Mahathir Mohamed in particular, in English is very rich. There are scholars who have written extensively on UMNO and Mahathir Mohamed using only English. Similarly, some of the well-known Malaysian scholars, whether Malay, Chinese or Indian have written on the topic in English. Moreover, almost all of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's speeches, interviews and books which are the main sources for data collection are available in English language. More importantly, I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Mahathir Mohamed in English which helped to get answers for most of the questions related to my research. Thus, while the linguistic limitation is still a weak

point of the study, its negative impact has been controlled through the different mechanisms mentioned above.

1.6 Theoretical Background

The relationship between religion and democracy seems to be the scholarly debate that never goes out of stem. In the West, the oasis of Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modernization, Democracy and finally Liberal Democracy, for a long period of time it was believed that religion has said farewell to public life and politics. But only now new forms of religious influence on politics and new manifestations of religion in public life are becoming controversial issues in the academic circles (Casanova, 2007). If the coming back of religion has become an issue of scholarly debate in the secularized West, the debate over Islam and politics, Islam and state, and Islam and democracy has never stopped since it was first started a century ago (Tamimi, 1997).

The theories and arguments put forward to explain the relationship between Islam and state alongside the arguments presented on the Islam and democracy question are numerous. In this section of the thesis, the most important theories and arguments which have shaped the debate on Islam and democracy, are discussed. As a first step, the ongoing debate on religion's being a public or private matter has been discussed in order to give the big picture of the scholarly division on the matter. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the theories that have been put forward arguing for compatibility or incompatibility of Islam and democracy. Later, definitions of democracy and the relationship between democracy and liberalism as well as the relationship between Islam and liberal democracy are presented.

This section does not aim at generating a solid hypothesis or adopt a particular theory. The theoretical discussions put forward is to pave the way for understanding Dr. Mahathir's constructed worldview on Islam and democracy through drawing the big picture of the ongoing debate. This framework is helpful to put Dr. Mahathir's ideas in context.

1.6.1   Religion and state

For a long period, scholars, mostly in the West, had taken for granted religion's being a private matter having no role in public life. Privatization of religion and excluding it from public life has been seen as a main condition for the success of democracy. Jacques Derrida is among philosophers who have spoken extensively on privatization of religion. For him, a democratic society is impossible without the total exclusion of religion from public space. According to Derrida, the right place for religion is private life and not public space. He is very suspicious of Islam's being compatible with democracy because, according to Derrida, Islam has elements in it which makes it defiant to go private and leave the public (Andresen, 2012; Derrida, 2005). John Rawls put a similar argument forward. Rawls argues that religion is a comprehensive doctrine which is as at odds with liberal society and asked for 'high wall of separation' between religion and state, and clear distinction between public and private space (Minkenberg, 2007).

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While the 'privatization' argument remained unchallenged over a long period, there has been recently a growing number of scholarly works that have put the assumption of privatization under scrutiny. Jose Casanova (2007) directs strong criticism towards the idea of the privatization of religion. Casanova says that for a long time, the privatization of religion had been taken for granted and dealt with as an empirical fact. However, he thinks, religion is coming back. Although he admits that it would be exaggerating to speak about a post-secular Europe, he asserts that the question is no longer the privatization of religion but managing the strong wave of de-privatization (2007). Casanova argues that it is impossible to keep religion out of public space in a democratic society. A similar argument has been put forward by Abdolkarim Soroush. He asserts that a government in a religious society cannot be democratic if not religious (2000). Soroush defined democracy as:

> Method of harnessing the power of the rulers, rationalizing their policies, protecting the rights of the subjects, and attaining the public good. This method consists of peaceful transfer of power, legal impeachments of rulers, separation of powers, freedom and plurality of political parties, powerful and autonomous press and media, public elections, consultative assemblies on every level of decision making, (2000, p. 148).

Soroush argues that a religious democratic government not only can be democratic but it cannot be otherwise. He believes that a purely secular government in a religious society cannot be democratic. Therefore, a democratic religious government is the best option for the religious societies.

1.6.2 Relationship between Islam and democracy

i. Incompatibility arguments: The arguments put forward to support the idea of incompatibility of Islam and democracy are various. While they differ in motivations, assumptions and justifications, they all agree on the main thesis that Islam is incompatible with democracy.

Islam's being 'too political' and having a rigid political structure has been shown among the first reasons by those arguing for the incompatibility of Islam and democracy. Alexis de Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America* (2002) argues that Islam's being a 'too political' religion has made it impossible for it to survive in the democratic age. According to him, Quran is not a religious book with spiritual guidance only, but a book of laws and doctrines as well. He argues that religion should provide the mores that constitute the bases for the civic action in the society and not set rigid laws. Thus, Tocqueville argues Islam cannot be compatible with the changing nature of the democracies.

Modernization theory, on the other hand, is another famous argument for the incompatibility of religion and democracy. Modernization theory states that as societies modernize, they become more secular:

> Modernization and secularization theory predict that as countries modernize they will become more secular because factors inherent in modernization will lead directly to the demise of religion. These factors include mass literacy and

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education, urbanization and the rise of science and rationalism as a basis for organizing society, solving problems and explaining the world, (Fox, 2007).

Western culturalists such as Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis have argued that Islam and democracy are incompatible for 'cultural reasons'. Huntington (1996) asserts to believe that modernization will lead to westernization is misguided. Huntington leaves no room for Islam and democracy to meet as he sees democracy a unique product of a unique culture which has grown in a unique historical context in a unique land: the West. For Huntington, democracy is not universal, but Western. He also emphasizes Western Christianity as the only cultural stronghold which allows for the growth of liberal democracy(Huntington, 1984, 1996). Huntington argues that Islam has a different set of values from the Christian Europe. His concern is to keep West 'Western' and leave the other parts of the world choose their path (Perry, 2002)

Bernard Lewis (1993) thinks that modernization doesn't necessarily lead to democracy. For him, modernization was a tool to reinforce the traditional obstacles to democracy through the usage of new technology by the rulers to impose their sovereignty. Although Lewis alludes to some democratic elements in the Islamic heritage such as *shura* and *baya'a*, he is skeptical about the possibility of the emergence of a mature democracy in the Muslim world. He says:

> Liberal democracy...is in its origins a product of the West, shaped by a thousand years of European history, and beyond that by Europe's double heritage: Judeo-Christian religion and ethics, Greco-Roman statecraft and law. No such system has originated in any other cultural tradition. It remains to be seen whether such a system transplanted and adapted in another culture, can long survive, (Lewis, 1993).

The strongest support for Huntington's culture-based rejection of Islam and democracy compatibility has come from some of the Muslim scholars.. Sayyid Qutb, the famous Egyptian scholar, believes that democracy is hostile to Islam because it is a system that gives sovereignty to people and not to God (Choueiri, 1997). Abul A'la Mawdudi is among the strongest outcries against democracy among the Muslim scholars of the 20th century. He finds those who try to prove Islam compatible with democracy to be suffering from an inferiority complex (Mawdudi, 1980). Mawdudi argues that Islam is the very antithesis of Western secular democracy. He calls the system which Islam aspires as a "theo-democracy" which is a divine democratic government "where Muslims have been given a limited popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God," (Mawdudi, 1980). Both Mawdudi and Qutb are not concerned with the procedural details of democratic institutions such as elections but they are concerned with the philosophical origins of Western democracy (Choueiri, 1997; Mawdudi, 1978)

Ayatollah Khumayni, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was clearly influenced by the ideas of 'God's sovereignty' versus 'popular sovereignty' in the Islam and democracy debate. He, like Mawdudi, rejected Western democracy as it allowed people to legislate while, as he argued, the only legislation powers are confined to God (Khumayni, 1982).

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Mohamed Talbi is another Muslim scholar whose arguments find resonance in Huntington's cultural approach towards democracy. He rejects the attempts to show Islam and democracy compatible. He believes that the main principle of Islamic political system is *shura*. *Shura*, according to Talbi, is different from democracy, because they have grown in two different historical contexts. He believes that there is no notion of rule by many in the Islamic political thought since *shura* is consultative. Again, like Qutb and Mawdudi, Talbi is not much concerned with the operational meanings of democracy such as elections (Nettler, 1998).

ii. Compatibility arguments: The arguments made for the compatibility of Islam and democracy are numerous. While the general theme they all agree upon is that Islam and democracy can exist together, their motivations, philosophical assumptions and justifications differ sharply.

Opposite to Tocqueville who believes that Islam's having a concrete political system makes it hostile to democracy, some scholars have argued that Islam does not have any political mandate. Ali Abd Al-Raziq is among the leading scholars who have taken this approach as early as the 1920s. In his controversial book, *Islam and the Bases of Power,* Al-Raziq argues that Prophet Muhammed's mission was entirely religious, and he did not set up a political mandate for governance. He criticizes the portrayal of Prophet Muhammed as a political sovereign. For him, to believe that Prophet Muhammed was a political sovereign is a misunderstanding of his mission. He asserts that Prophet Muhammed's authority over Muslims was purely a religious one and in no way a political and temporal (Al-Raziq, 1982).Thus, the issue of governance and the selection of a political system by the Muslims is completely secular matter which is left for the judgment of the people. Al-Raziq (1982) says:

> Religion neither admits nor denies them. It neither order nor forbids them. It simply leaves them to our free choice so that we will have recourse to national judgment in their regard and base our judgment on the experience of the nations and the rules of politics, (p. 36).

Some other scholars have put forward a similar argument to the one demonstrated by Ali Abd Al-Raziq, however, they do not separate Islam from politics totally. They think that Islam does not have a concrete political system but it has general principles to guide the political system. Thus, democracy, as a political system which can be used to bring those principles and guidelines into life, is compatible with Islam. Malek Bennabi argues that democracy is not only a process of putting ballots in the box to elect some officials, but it is a spirit, which exemplifies political order and social justice. Bennabi argues that Islam's political system reflects this spirit in the best way(Bennabi, 1991; Zoubir, 1998). Rached Al-Ghanouchi, the Tunisian Islamic leader, is among those thinkers who have been influenced profoundly by Bennabi's thoughts (Tamimi, 2007). Ghannouchi argues that Islam has no problem with democracy as a system which guarantees free speech and free election of rulers by the people. however, both Bennabi and Ghanouchi have problems with the materialist foundations of democracy (Tamimi, 2007; Zoubir, 1998). Ghannouchi believes that putting the concept of *shura* in a more tangible form through establishing institutions will sort out the problems that are originated from the materialist foundations of democracy (Tamimi, 2007). Fazlur Rahman (1982) asserts that Islam has not come up with a concrete political system and Quran is not a book

of laws but rather a book of guidance. He believes that state organization in Islam is an issue of public concern and only people can decide it based on their free will. Thus, for Fazlur Rahman, Islam is inherently democratic. He also thinks that the application of Islam's democratic spirit and the forms that may take are left out for the people to decide. They change from a society to another.

Mohamed Abed Jabri believes that democracy and *shura* are two different concepts with two different social and historical contexts. Jabri asserts that there is no need to translate democracy into *shura*, as they are different concepts with different historical roots. But he argues that *shura* implies the idea of a just despot who acts ethically with his people, while democracy is different. However, he suggests if Muslims looked upon democracy as a virtue, then it is not impossible to find texts from the scripture to support the application of that virtue. He argues that the Quranic text could serve as basis for democratic mores in the Islamic societies, while the power can be secular (Filali-Ansari, 1998).

Some scholars have emphasized the practical possibility of the compatibility between Islam and democracy more than its theoretical foundations. There is growing number of scholars who adhere to this point of view. They search for the possible common grounds between the Islamic political thought and democracy, and they are concerned with the facts on ground. Daniel Brumberg (2010) and William Zartman (1992) argue that the direct involvement of the Islamic political parties in the political process and the democratic institutions results in more democratization of those Islamic parties. Bahgat Korany (1994) thinks that Islamic parties can adapt themselves to democracy and undergo changes that can make them more compatible with democracy. Dale F. Eickleman (2010) is hopeful that the growth of the new Islamic movement such as those in Malaysia and Turkey will lead to more changes in the Islamic political thought which will finally result in a more compatible version of Islam with democracy. Stepan (2005) gives the examples of Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh where the continuous process of elections has led to the victory of the more moderate voices marginalizing the extremist Islamic groups.

Other scholars have strongly rebutted the 'democracy is Western' argument put forward by Huntington and the others. They think that there is no inherent incompatibility between Islam and democracy merely because of the cultural differences between Islam and the West (John Esposito & Voll, 2000; Piscatori & Esposito, 1991). They argue that it is a big mistake to look upon Islam and the Muslim world as a univocal body which thinks the same way and believes in the same things. They draw a line between those who reject democracy and use religious scripture to justify their stand and those who accept democracy and use religion to support their position. Esposito and Voll (2000) reject the cultural notion of democracy and say that the debate of the compatibility of religion and democracy is not a new one. They argue that most of world's major religions have undergone the same debate, and for times, Christianity was seen as number one enemy for democracy in the west. not only that, Esposito and Voll (1994)argue that Islamic heritage contains elements that makes it more compatible with democracy than the other religions. Thus, they argue that the possibility of the emergence of a Muslim democracy is crucial for the future of the debate.

Some scholars have suggested that the lack of democracy in the Muslim countries cannot be attributed to Islam altogether. They reject the notion of 'Muslim exceptionalism'. Fareed Zakaria (2004) says that the big part of the image we have about Islam is an image of the Middle East and not Islam. He argues that while Middle East and the Arab world are essential part of the Muslim world, it would be misleading to equate them with Islam. Ellen Lust (2011) asserts that the problems related to Islam and democracy are in essence problems related to Middle East and North Africa region. He even goes further to say that even MENA region is not homogenous and it is an 'Arab problem' not a 'Muslim problem'. Salame (1996) states that those who speak about an 'Arab exceptionalism' related to democracy are the culturalists who believe in the uniqueness of the Western culture.

Other scholars while not speaking an Arab or regional exceptionalism, they have alluded to the importance of the other economic, political, and social factors that contribute to the lack of democracy in the Muslim world, and especially in the Middle East(Brumberg, 2010; Ciftci, 2010; John Esposito & Mogahed, 2008; Hofmann, 2004; Şahin, 2006; Stepan & Linz, 2013).

1.6.3 Procedural Democracy vs. Liberal Democracy

Joseph A. Schumpeter defines democracy as the, ''…institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power to decide by means of competitive struggle for people's vote," (Schumpeter, 2003, p268). This definition is seen as a minimalist definition which defines any system based on 'competitive struggle for vote' as democratic (Diamond, 2009; Eklit & Svensson, 2009; Schmitter & Karl, 2009).

Robert H. Dahl in his *Polyarchy* put eight essential conditions that need to exist in a system in order to be called democratic. They are,

> 1) freedom to form and to join organizations; 2) freedom of expression; 3) the right to vote; 4) eligibility for public office; 5) the right of political leaders to compete for support and votes; 6) alternative sources of information; 7) free and fair elections; and 8) institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference, (Stepan, 2005, p. 5).

Lijphart, who believes that there should be a minimum threshold below which a country shouldn't be called democratic says that the first seven of Dahl's eight conditions are more about the institutional aspect of democracy, while the last one goes beyond that and requires governments to be responsive to their citizens (2011). Stepan argues that in addition to the eight conditions put forward by Dahl, there is a need for a democratic constitution which guarantees the individual liberties and the rights of the minorities (Stepan, 2005).

Many of the Muslim scholars, even some of the most fundamentalist among them, democracy do not have difficulty accepting Schumpeter's minimalist definition of democracy (Al-Banna, 1982; El-Affendi, 2004; Mawdudi, 1980; Rahman, 1982).

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Khurshid Ahmad (2000) believes that democracy at the operational level is compatible with Islam, but it is the secular Western theoretical principles of democracy that is incompatible with Islam. Martin Kramer thinks that the Islamic parties are not championing the principles of democracy but the mechanisms of democracy, (Milton-Edwards, 2004).

Fareed Zakaria (2004) argues that elections shouldn't be the only indicator of democracy in the Muslim world. He believes that the efforts should focus on cultivating liberal democracy and not democracy. Zakaria believes that this tension between liberalism and democracy is not specific only to the Middle East, but a global phenomenon.

Marc F. Plattner (2009) by alluding to Zakaria's depiction of the rise of' illiberal democracy' argues that governments can protect the individual liberties but they can also threaten them. Thus, there is a need for a constitution which limits government action and protects individual liberties. Russel Bova (2009) believes that the relation between liberty and democracy had been taken for granted for a long time. However, he says, the increasing number of democracies and the deterioration of the freedoms put this assumption into question. Bova says that the relationship between liberty and democracy is a complex one. While at time liberty is seen as a result of democracy, other times it is seen as a precondition for democracy. He summarizes the difference between liberty and democracy by saying,

> While democracy has to do with the selection of rulers or policies, liberty refers to the freedom to engage in certain behaviors or to hold and express views without governmental interference. For example, the freedom to travel, to practice one's religious faith, to look at pornography, and to buy and own property are measures of liberty rather than democracy, (p. 322).

Lijphart (2001) argues that it is not electoral democracy that should be spread but liberal democracy. He is not happy about the electoral democracies with elections that lack the basic civil liberties.

1.6.4 Islam and Liberal Democracy

Some scholars argue that the question is no longer the compatibility between Islam and democracy, but between Islam and liberal democracy. Collins (1992) argues that compared to other religions, Islam could be regarded as more democratic in nature as it always have been a religion without a centralized authority and organized priesthood. He says, this structural democracy of Islam could be viewed as a liberal aspect by many. However, Islam's conservative positions when it comes to the individual liberties are the question. Roy (2013) says that Islam represents the main challenge to the Western secularism as it is seen by many not only as a religion, but also as a culture and a political system which is incompatible with the modern and secular values of the West. Evans (2010) argues that the fear from Islam in the West is not merely a fear of violence, but also a fear of the value system which Islam brings with itself.

Seymour Martin Lipset argues that Islam is not compatible with democracy as it cannot maintain the social prerequisites of a democracy. He believes that Islam is alien to the notion of democracy and free speech. Thus, according to Lipset, even the modernized Muslim countries will not become democratic (Lipset, 1994). Elie Kedourie also finds Islam and its set of values alien to the democratic values and regards any attempt to implant democracy in the Muslim world a failure (Milton-Edwards, 2004). So for them Islam could be compatible with the operational means of democracy such as elections, however, they find Islam 'hostile' towards the social requisites of a democracy such as the individual liberties.

Jean Bethke Elshtain (2009) speaks about two levels of democracy, 'thin democracy' and 'thick democracy'. In the thin democracy there are elections but some of the basic liberties are absent and the civil society has not grown. He hopes that one day, Islam comes to terms with the requirements of the thick democracy. Leca (1996) speaks about the divide that exists in the Muslim world between the 'democrats' and the 'Constitutionalists'. He believes that the Islamic parties are democratic populists while their opponents are constitutionalists who fear the results of democracy. Al-Azmeh (1996) believes that the Islamic discourse is a populist discourse which wants to define democracy only in terms of elections neglecting the liberal principles. Gurdun Kramer (1996) argues that the Islamic discourse has accepted pluralism but not liberalism. He says that the Islamic discourse is blurry about the individual liberties, equality between men and women and the equality between adherents of the different religions.

Muslims thinkers are as divided as any other group of thinkers on the question of democracy, liberal democracy and Islam's compatibility with the liberal notion of democracy. As Stepan (2005) has pointed out, it would be misleading to believe that a great religion with so many adherents is univocal. Derrida believes that the moderate interpretations of Koran and Islamic scriptures should be encouraged. He finds the fight for moderate and liberal interpretations of Koran as important as secularization. He is hopeful that the internal reformation and reinterpretation will come out with new readings for Koranic heritage that were not apparent at the first glance (Andresen, 2012). Casanova thinks that the religions are no longer bounded to territorial boundaries and the migrations of many Muslims to the West and this has affected their worldviews and their civilizations back home (2007).

There is a growing number of Muslim intellectuals who try to go beyond the minimalist definitions of democracy asking for a more inclusive understanding of democracy to include the civic rights and liberties. Al-Turabi, Amara and Al-Awwa are among those scholars who want to go beyond simple majoritarianism asking for consociational democracy (Al-Azmeh, 1996).

One of the most recent arguments put forward to explain the relationship between Islam and liberal democracy is Mustafa Akyol's 'freedom to sin' argument. Akyol argues that not only Islam is compatible with liberalism but it has a liberating mandate in the first place. He argues that the sense of community in Islam not only is not against the individual liberties but it is a social requirement to guarantee and protect those liberties.

Akyol, in his *Islam without Extremes: a Muslim case for liberty* (2011) argues that in Islam, there is a huge difference between sin and crime. He expresses this by saying,

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We understand that sin and crime are two different things. The former is about the violation of the individual's responsibility towards God. The latter is about the violation of his responsibility to other individuals. Most crimes, such as murder, theft, and fraud, are also sins according to most religions, including Islam, but this overlap shouldn't blur the basic difference between the two categories, (p. 269).

Akyol also argues that Islam has not decided upon any punishment for sins. He states:

The Quran bans gambling, usury, and intoxicants and forbids eating carrion, blood, pork, and animals sacrificed to idols. It also orders Muslims to perform certain duties, such as daily prayers, fasting during the months of Ramadan, a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime, and giving alms (zakat) to the poor. Violating any of these bans, or failing to perform any of the duties without good reason, would be a sin - which is serious because it may bring punishment in the world to come. But in this world, the Qur'an prescribes no punishment at all for the sins mentioned above, (p. 270).

For Akyol, Qur'an has emphasized the principle of free choice when it comes to belief and faith. The punishment for apostasy, Akyol argues, is not in Qur'an but in the books of the jurisprudents that came later. Thus, freedom to sin and freedom to belief constitute the basic Islamic notion for liberty.

1.6.5 The 'twin-tolerations'

Alfred Stepan (2005) finds the argument of keeping religion out of public sphere an invalid one. He questions John Rawls' call for 'taking religion off the political agenda'. He also warns against accepting the existence of separation between church and state as an empirical fact. Stepan's alternative theory for 'privatization of religion' is his 'twin tolerations' model. Stepan (2005) summarizes his 'Twin Tolerations' model as follows:

Democratic institutions must be free, within the bounds of the constitution and human rights, to generate policies. Religious institutions should not have constitutionally privileged prerogatives that allow them to mandate public policy to democratically elected governments. At the same time, individuals and religious communities, consistent with our institutional definition of democracy, must have complete freedom to worship privately. In addition, as individuals and groups, they must be able to advance their values publicly in civil society and to sponsor organizations and movements in political society, as long as their actions do not impinge negatively on the liberties of other citizens or violate, (p.6)

Stepan's 'twin tolerations' model specifies three important characteristics that need to exist in a healthy relationship between religion and state in order for the regime to be democratic. First, religions and religious institutions must be provided complete

freedom of worship and engagement in public life. Second, religious institutions should not be able to give orders to democratically elected officials. And finally, their engagement in public life should be in the framework of human rights and should not violate the individual liberties of the others.

1.7 Conclusion and Thesis Layout

In the first chapter of the thesis, the background and context of the study, the research problem as well as the research objectives are explained. The significance of the study in addition to its limitations are presented. This was followed by a theoretical discussion of the relationship between Islam and democracy demonstrating a number of theories and arguments.

The second chapter is a review of relevant literature existing on democracy in Malaysia, UMNO's identity, UMNO's Islamization programs, and Dr. Mahathir's ideas on democracy and Islam. While most of the works on these topics have been included and categorized according to their topics, the most relevant works have been distinguished and reviewed in more details. The gaps in the literature have been pointed out and the way this study attempts to fill them is presented.

In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study is discussed. The rational for the methodological decisions made by the researcher are explained. The data collection methods and sources of data used for the study are demonstrated. The methodological concerns with the study and the ways they have been overcome are also presented.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 report the results of the research. The results, which are all taken from books, speeches, and interviews of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, have been reported correspondingly to the research objectives. Firstly, Dr. Mahathir's ideas on democracy have been presented followed by his ideas on Islam, Islam and state, and the relationship between Islam and democracy.

In the Chapter6, the results reported in chapter 4 have been analyzed integrating the ideas put forward by Dr. Mahathir. Here, relevant literature and theories have also been used to put Dr. Mahathir's ideas on Islam and democracy in context. This chapter presents what can be called Dr. Mahathir's model of understanding the relationship between Islam and democracy. It is also the concluding chapter referring to the limitations of the research and suggests what may come next in the future.

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