

Islam and Multiculturalism in The Charter of Medina (Socio-Historical Studies)

Durotun Nafisah¹, Khalid Mawardi², Nasrudin³

UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia

E-mail: durotunnafisah@uinsaizu.ac.id¹, kholidmawardi23@gmail.com²,
nsr.udin014@gmail.com³

Abstract

Multiculturalism becomes an interesting study material when related to the issue of pluralism in the various social life of Muslims. This paper will examine the relationship between Islam and multiculturalism with the consideration that Islam as a doctrinal system derived from God's revelation, sometimes clashes with the development of the socio-cultural context of its adherents. The main problem of this study is how the multiculturalism of the Muslim community in the Prophet is reflected in the Medina Charter. This study aims to map the pattern of multiculturalism in communities in Yathrib city of Medina. The study was conducted with historical methods and socio-cultural approaches. This study found the following patterns of multiculturalism: First, the Muslim community in the period of the Prophet in Medina based on Arab culture, grew up with patterns that were accommodating to forms of racial, religious, and 'ashabiyyah qabailiyyah diversity. Second, the pattern of the Muslim community that developed during the Medina period encouraged the growth of Muslim acculturation of non-Muslim communities to strengthen the integrity and integrity of Madinah society. Third, the pattern of multiculturalism is more evident as the reality of pluralism in Muslim societies is shown by the role of interfaith and racial communities.

Keywords Islam, Multiculturalism, Charter Medina, Muslim Community

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism as an understanding means views on cultural and behavioral diversity caused by differences in race, religion, and social structure. This view is now the subject of study and discussion in looking at various social orders, including the social order of Islamic society at the beginning of its development. The relationship between Islam and multiculturalism is interesting to study because Islam as a doctrinal system based on the authority of revelation is also always evolving in the context of the diversity of its adherents. It's just that the meeting between the doctrinal side and social reality is indisputable that there is a contradiction in the views of its adherents. Therefore, it is important to look back at Islam in the era of the Prophet as an example, of how to understand the diversity and even differences in socio-cultural understanding and behavior of the Arab community or nation.

The development of Islam during the time of the Prophet Muhammad cannot be separated from multiculturalism. Islam at the time of the Prophet Muhammad was faced with the cultural diversity of Arab society, so many ways were done in spreading the teachings of tawhid and accommodating the cultural system of the community. (Ismail, 2014) In the following era, the process of multiculturalism continued to grow and develop until the golden age of Islam. Thus, it is necessary to examine the historical symptoms of Islam in the era of the Prophet in Medina because it can be a more fundamental initial phenomenon for understanding Islam and multiculturalism.



The Medina period in Islamic history is said to be a period of growth of the Muslim community system and society. The community referred to in this case is the same as the "ummah", namely followers of Islam who in the social order show an identity for the similarity of beliefs, views, and behaviors of society based on the Islamic teaching system (Yogyakarta, 2012). The Muslim community at the time of the Prophet Muhammad was originally formed from a small group of the first adherents of Islam who came from the family of the Prophet and some community members from various ethnic backgrounds (qabilah) in the Arab community in Mecca. For 13 years in Makkah the Muslim community has shown cultural diversity, through the acculturation of Islamic teachings with the culture of the community of its adherents. In the next 10 years of the Prophet's preaching in Medina, the Muslim community system was increasingly formed in a wide cultural diversity, so the development of Islamic teachings increasingly coincided with community arrangements that accommodated several different groups, ethnicities, and religions. The accommodation of this order is accommodated in the treaty or charter of Medina.

Starting from Medina, the growth of the Muslim community after the Prophet Muhammad continued and experienced developments ranging from the development of Muslim communities in ethnic areas in the Arabian Peninsula and its surroundings to those outside the Arabian Peninsula. During the time of the Umayyad State in Damascus (661-750) and the Umayyad State in Andalusia (750-1031) there was a growth of religious and Muslim communities in diverse ethnic and cultural areas (Abdurahman, 2016). At this time the growth of multiculturalism emerged within the Muslim community itself, both occurring in the diversity of religious traditions and occurring in the diversity of the Arab ethnic base so that the tendency of multiculturalism was still endogenous.

Multiculturalism in Muslim communities only reached its exogenous form during the Abbasid State (750-1258). In this period, multiculturalism transcended the boundaries of Arab-Muslim internal diversity, i.e., Islamic culture struggled in relations between Arab culture and Persian, Roman, and Indian cultures. Non-Arab cultures began to come to the attention of Muslim communities through the translation and development of knowledge derived from major civilizations (Abdurahman, 2016). Therefore, this study will focus on the discussion of the Muslim community system and the life of multiculturalism that grew and developed in the period of the establishment of society (ummah) in Medina, especially with the agreement of the Medina charter as the principle.

This paper focuses on the study of multiculturalism in the Muslim community system in the Medina period with the target of knowing the forms and development of Muslim communities, patterns of multiculturalism in Muslim community systems, and factors accompanying the dynamics of multiculturalism in each Muslim community system. This study is expected to contribute to the completeness of Islamic historiography in general, and especially as a reference to the formation of Muslims in social and cultural diversity.

METHOD

This study uses a historical perspective to explore all problems and facts of past events, namely during the time of the Prophet of the Madinah period. However, in synchrony,

problem tracing emphasizes socio-cultural phenomena, so that in its study sociological and cultural perspectives are used. The data in this study were obtained through literature studies and processed using the critical analysis description method. There are two dimensions to which it is headed. *First*, in the dimension of history and change, namely the effort to pay attention to the formation of Islamic society and its changes in the Madinah period. *Second*, with an analytical dimension in understanding the emergence of cultural diversity in the Muslim community system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Cultural City of Medina

In general, the people who inhabit the Arabian Peninsula, especially the Hijaz region, are Arabs who are descendants of the prophet Isma'il and Jews who are descendants of the prophet Ishaq from the prophet Abraham. In the following period, they then branched out into many descendants, clans, and tribes. The state of faith held by the Arabs before the arrival of Islam is also very diverse. Some of them believe in God and obey him. Others worship idols in the belief that they draw them closer to God. Among them were Jews, Christians, and Magi. Some of them do not determine attitudes and therefore do not believe in anything. Others believe that God's law only applies to earthly life and there is no afterlife.

Economically, Jews were the economic powerhouse, of trade, and finance, while Arabs were the lower class. In terms of social life, pre-Islamic Arab society was a society based on the *qabilah* system. Such a system can be found in Arab societies including in Medina, a city with historical links to the birth of Islam. Medina (Yathrib) was originally a diverse or plural population. At first, there were three groups, the first being the Amalekites. These people are descendants of Amaliq bin Laud bin Shem bin Noah. They belonged to the Babylonia area in the Arabi desert. Second, the Jews were immigrants from Palestine and Rome because of the murder, murder, and expulsion of the Jews. Third, Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj, are descendants of Qathan from Yemen who moved to Yathrib after the destruction of the Ma'arib dam. (Burhanuddin, 2019)

By the advent of Islam, there was no unified political unit or social group between *qabilah* in the city. However, the relationship between them is very close, although each is very maintaining its own hereditary culture and can merge and blend into the environment. Even Watt said "*In either case, there had been much intermarriage between Jews and Arabs*," (Watt, 1981) so there are many Jewish-Arabs such as Banu Qoinuqa', Banu Tsa'labah and Bani Hadh. Kabilah or tribe is an identity that is always maintained. Tribes are the source of the creation of an order of societal values in Arab society. Every individual feels a friendly relationship, not because of his family alone, but because of the tribe. It is this feeling that drives their defense when attacked. But tribal settlement can also be a problem if their identity is compromised. Therefore, inter-tribal agreements will reduce conflicts between them. In the Arab tradition, there is called *as-Sadah* (great leader) is a peacemaker in disputes between families, citizens, or between tribes (Karim, 2002).

Through the *qabilah* Muhammad also used it as a means of spreading the teachings of Islam to his family and closest relatives. Prophet Muhammad used Banu Hashim as a *qabilah*



in the Quraysh Tribe. Muhammad was born to a respectable family where Abdul Muttalib as his grandfather was a great influential chief of the Quraysh tribe. At the beginning of his apostolate, he received a welcome from the lower layers of society, especially slaves, and still a few from the upper layers of society especially only came from the Prophet's wife, family, and close relatives. Entering three years after his apostolate, many Quraysh leaders were unwilling to welcome him, even the Quraysh leaders began to try to hinder the Prophet's proselytizing. The salvation of the Prophet Muhammad in carrying out the initial apostolic task while in Mecca was greatly helped by the tradition of *al'ashabiyyah al-qabaliyyah*. The families of Bani Hashim and Bani Al-Muttalib were used as a guarantee of his safety. Under the protection of prominent members of the Quraish such as Abu Talib or Khadija, the prophet Muhammad was safe from the attempts of physical violence from the *Quraysh qabilah*. Under the auspices of the tradition of *qabilah*, only members of the tribe of Quraysh dared to oppose, while *other qabilah* could not have done so because it could lead to acts of revenge.

The city of Medina, since the arrival of the prophet Muhammad, became a safe place. He was able to unite the forces of the Quraysh elements with the leading Arab elements in the city that were always involved in hostilities, namely al-Aus and al-Khazraj. H. A. R. Gibb, mentions Prophet Muhammad as an *arbitrator* and *peacemaker* in Medina (Gibb, 1978). The position of the prophet Muhammad as a *peacemaker* cannot be separated from the position and family line that supports it. Prophet Muhammad had Yathrib's lineage from the family of Mother and Abdul Muttalib who had strong power in the family of Quraysh. (Sirry, 2013)

Apart from being a holy city, Medina is a place where the process of social transformation is not simple. After renaming Yathrib Medina, the prophet then conducted a mapping and population census. This is probably the first population census in the world. In the census, it was found that Medina was a multicultural city. The heterogeneity of the people of the city of Medina can be seen from the results of population counting carried out at the behest of the prophet Muhammad, namely from 10,000 inhabitants of Medina at that time Muslims were a minority of 1500 people (15%). The majority were Arab polytheists 4,500 (45%) and Jews 4,000 (40%). (Bulac, 1998)

The heterogeneity of Medina society is even more complex when viewed from each group of Muslims, Arab Muslims, and Jews which consists of various *qabilah* or sub-groups. Muslims themselves consist of at least two major groups, namely Muhajirin (migrants) and Anshor (non-migrants). The two groups each consist of various *qabilah* which are very potential for hostility because of the strong roots of tribalism in Arab society. Nevertheless, life in Medina was able to take place peacefully, so it is not surprising that Medina became a developed city at that time.

Quantitatively, the difference between Arabs and Jews is vast. The Arabs at that time consisted of 8 tribes including the Aus and Khazraj tribes, while the Jews reached more than 20 tribes. Banu Quraizhat and Banu Nazhir are famous as the original Jews from their ancestors who were priests (Pulungan, 1994). The Jews in Medina were previously only immigrants from Palestine but later became the majority and dominated much of Medina.

They are encouraged to learn a lot about science. Therefore, in science, the Jews were far more advanced in agriculture, irrigation, and industry. That way, they could control the economic sector in Medina and access political power. Watt said: "*In their general manner of life, the Jewish clans were hardly distinguishable from the Arabs. At one time the Jews had had political control of Medina, and the remnant of the previous Arab settlers had become dependent on them.*" (Watt, 1981) As a result, in later times, the role of the Arabs gradually shifted.

Medina Charter: The Constitution and Social Contract of the People of Medina

As mentioned above, Medina society is a multicultural society. Naturally, a pluralistic society can achieve harmony. Instinctively, a group of humans who want to live side by side with other groups needs rules so that their rights are guaranteed. Mentions Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing (Mill, n.d.) Therefore, social agreement is an important point to create a safe social life order. Agreement between individuals and groups becomes a pillar of peace between them. Internal peace will then be able to fulfill daily activities that are fair and guard against external disturbances that disturb the peace inside. In this regard, the author tries to explore Islamic values and multiculturalism in the Medina Charter. Although there is not little debate about when the Charter appeared, it is alleged that the event occurred between 622 to 624 AH (Shiddiqi, 1996)

The Medina Charter which is a reference in many issues is often referred to as the State Law, Treaty, or Constitution (Pulungan, 1994). Ibn Ishaq (d.151) and Ibn Hisham (d.213) are the earliest authors of this *sahifah*. But Muhammad Hamidullah wrote in more detail. In *Majmū'ah al-Watsā iq al-Siyāsiyah lil 'ahdi al-Nabawī wa al-Khilā fah al-Rashīdah*, (cet. III, 1969), Hamidullah contained 373 correspondence letters, consisting of 287 letters made by the Prophet and others during the time of *Khulafā al-Rāshidīn*. 7 letters of the Prophet are not widely known in general (Pulungan, 1994) Dr. A.J. Wensinck, in his dissertation "*Mohammad en de Joden te Medina*" (1927), prosecuted it into 47 articles and became a reference to Montgomery Watt and possibly inspired Hamidullah himself.

In this context the charter of Medina, which Watt referred to as the Constitution of Medina was a "social contract" agreed upon by the entire community within the scope of the state of Medina in which the prophet Muhammad was the main figure. The figure of Muhammad who in Islam became the last Prophet (*khōtim al-anbiyā'*) is recognized by the whole world in socializing. Watt wrote, "*On the religious side it meant the acceptance of Muhammad as a prophet and on the political side the acceptance of him as arbitrator between the opposing factions in Medina.*" (Watt, 1981). The Constitution of Medina can be matched with the *British Magna Carta* or the *Bill of Rights* of the United States which is very old and inspired many figures after him.

The Principle of Multiculturalism in the Medina Charter

The presence of the prophet Muhammad in Medina should be used as an example of instilling the values of multiculturalism. The Prophet Muhammad faced the very complex



problem of resolving the external relations of the two major communities. *First*, the Qurasiy tribe was hostile to Muhammad and his followers. Qurasiy became a serious threat because, within a certain period, he would attack Medina. *Second*, the other communities in Medina were Jews and Arabs who had not embraced Islam. Suyuti Pulung further said there have been six residential communities in Medina since Prophet Muhammad was in Madainah. First, the Anshor were residents of Medina who had embraced Islam. Second, the Muhajireen, i.e. the Islamic inhabitants of Quraysh. Third, the Arabs of Medina were Pagans. Four, hypocrites. Fifth, Jews are either Jews or Arabs who become Jews. And the six adherents of minority Christianity (Pulungan, 1994).

The Prophet Muhammad sought to unite all existing communities on a clear foundation. With this foundation, the existing communities live by the agreed atmosphere. All communities, both internally and externally, are responsible to each other, help each other in kindness, bear each other, and tolerate each other. This can be realized because the prophet Muhammad began to lead various communities with different religious, ethnic, and political backgrounds united in one frame of religious leadership as the main legal umbrella above the social order based on a certain *qabilah*. Prophet Muhammad succeeded in becoming the leader of all components of society. In Medina, various cultures, religions, and political currents could be united so that the life of Medina at that time could be peaceful. The Prophet Muhammad led a large Jewish community that controlled many economic, political, and cultural aspects of Medina.

Thus, the Prophet Muhammad was able to create peace among multicultural societies because he succeeded in laying the foundation of good friendly relations with other parties of different religions. For the stability of society to be realized, the Prophet Muhammad guaranteed the religious freedom of the people of Medina as a community. Every class of society has equal rights in political and religious matters. Religious freedom is guaranteed, and all members of society are obliged to defend the security of the country from external attacks. In the agreement, it is clearly stated that the Prophet Muhammad became the head of government because as far as general rules and order were concerned, absolute authority was given to him. In the social field, he also laid the foundation of equality among others. (Yatim, 2017)

About the agreement, Montgomery Watt made several important points, including; (1) They believe in and are responsible in a single community (umma), (2) Each clan and subdivision of each community is responsible for the blood and ransom of each member (art. 2-11), (3) Every member of every community shows full solidarity against crime, does not support crime even with close relatives, where evil is used against members of other communities (article 13, 21), (4) Every Member of the community shows full solidarity to fight against infidels in peace and war (Article, 14, 17, 19, 44), and also solidarity in the protection of the living environment (Article. 15), (5) Jews are part of the community, and to defend their religion; they and Muslims will help (assist in the military) each other when necessary (v. 24-35, 37, 38, 46). (Watt, 1968). While Munawar Sjadzali in (Situmorang, 2012), argues that the Medina Charter is the basis of community life in Medina which contains two main things: (1) All followers of Islam, although come from various tribes, are

one community, (2) Relations between Muslim communities and other communities are based on the principle of good neighborliness, helping each other in facing common enemies, defend the persecuted, advise one another and respect religious freedom.

By placing all human beings on equal footing, Islam wants to give equal space and opportunity to all human beings. All humans have the right to exist with the diversity of their respective cultures, customs, and beliefs. Democratic nuances in life, nation, and state become teachings that are very inherent in Islam. Prophet Muhammad and his companions built the democratic State of Medina. In the articles of the Medina Charter, for example, the spirit of democracy thickens down.

The multicultural reflections contained in the Medina Charter experienced mixed turmoil. Clarity of the rights and duties of Muslims and non-Muslims began to be portrayed according to their needs and interests in Islamic da'wah. During the war, the aim of the militia movement was not only to fight the Quraysh of Mecca who opposed Islam but also as a form of expansion of Islamic power both geographically and as an expansion of the area of da'wah. Therefore, not only the inhabitants of Mecca but all Arab (non-Muslim) tribes were involved in hostilities with Medina either directly or because they were bound by the treaty

CONCLUSION

The fact of multiculturalism in classical Islamic history shows its diverse features in the three developments of the Muslim community. *First, in the* early period of Islam when the prophet Muhammad was in Medina, the Muslim community was based on Arab culture or the Muslim community rooted in the tradition of *al'ashabiyyah al-qabaliyyah*. This tradition played an important role in pioneering the formation of the Muslim community system, both for the growth of social structure and cultural development. The socio-cultural potential of Arabs is not only objectively subjected to the unification of the identity of Muslim communities, but is also accommodated in their life processes, as reflected in the Treaty of Medina. The Treaty of Medina was very important and was a historic pact not only for the Muslim world but also for the whole world. This covenant from history restores every characteristic of life in Medina consisting of religious, civil, social, along with political attributes. The phenomenal success of this treaty was its contribution to associating together each hostile clan to form a society with the establishment of harmony and peace among the inhabitants of this society with the establishment of harmony and peace among the residents of this society.

The peace agreement contained in the charter of Medina during the time of the prophet Muhammad in Medina became the path to the creation of the existence and significance of the role of Arab communities in the context of building Islamic culture and civilization based on multiculturalism. The Medina Charter was able to unite different tribes or tribes that were often in conflict and had rules that held tribal trades merged into one in the form of a peace charter across tribes, tribes, and religions.



REFERENCES

- Abdurahman, D. (2016). Fenomena Multikulturalisme Dalam Sejarah Islam Klasik. *Thaqafiyat*, 17(1), 36–53. <http://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/adab/thaqafiyat/article/view/1079/748>
- Bulac, A. (1998). *“The Madina Document”*, Charles Kurzman (ed) *Liberal Islam a Sourcebook*. Oxford University Press.
- Burhanuddin, M. (2019). Conflict Mapping Piagam Madinah (Analisa Latar Belakang Sosiokultural Piagam Madinah). *Jurnal Al-Ijtimaayah*, 5(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtimaayah.v5i2.5233>
- Gibb, H. A. R. (1978). *Islam A Historical Survey*. Oxford University Press.
- Ismail, F. (2014). *Dinamika Kerukunan Antarumat Beragama*. Rosdakarya.
- Karim, K. A. (2002). *Hegemony Qurasiy; Agama, Budaya, Kekuasan*, terjh. M. Faisol Fatawi. LkiS.
- Mill, J. S. (n.d.). *On Liberty*. John W. Parker and Son.
- Pulungan, J. S. (1994). *Prinsip-prinsip Pemerintahan dalam Piagam Madinah Ditinjau dari Pandangan Al-Qur'an*, cet. I. PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Shiddiqi, N. (1996). *Jeram-jeram peradaban Muslim*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Sirry, M. (2013). *Kontroversi Islam Awal: Antara Mazhab Tradisionalis dan Revisionali*. Mizan.
- Situmorang, J. (2012). *Politik Ketatanegaraan dalam Islam*. Pustaka Setia.
- Watt, W. M. (1968). *Islamic Political Thought*. Edingburgh University Press.
- Watt, W. M. (1981). *Muhammad at Medina*. Oxford University Press.
- Yatim, B. (2017). *Sejarah Peradaban Islam*. RajaGrafindo Persada.
- Yogyakarta, S. K. (2012). *Konsep Ummah*. 2(1).