Relationship between Islam and the West: From Historical Review to Clash or Cooperation?

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Abstract

Scholars are divided into two groups in assessing the relationship between Islam and the West. Some see it as a clash, while others propose a tolerance thesis. As a result, there is an ongoing debate. However, this paper will negate both. Therefore, this paper will contextualize this relationship from a historical standpoint and assess its trajectory. This paper is a literature study that takes the sources from library data. By taking scientific cooperation and conflict, crusades and economic cooperation, imperialism against the Islamic world, and tolerance of captive colonialists as examples, this paper shows that the relationship between Islam and the West is not unidirectional but multidirectional. Competition, conflict, and cooperation served both interests simultaneously. The interests of religion, knowledge, politics, economy, and culture before, during, and after colonization made the relationship both competitive, conflicting, and cooperative. Thus, the implication of this article is to refute Huntington's theory and his critics by some scholars.

Keywords: Clash, Cooperation, History, Islam, West.

1. Introduction

Samuel P. Huntington puts forward a controversial theory called the clash of civilizations. In his view, one's cultural and religious identity - specifically, Islam versus the West - would be a fundamental cause of strife in the post-Cold War (Samuel, n.d.). He has many criticisms, as many others hold similar views (Chiara, 2016; Erdem, 2002; F, 2010; Mottahedeh, 2003; Rizvi, 2018). For example, Robert W. Hefner disagrees with Huntington's theory. He asserts that "Huntington is wrong" by using Indonesia's cultural diversity and tolerance as an example (Adiwidya, 2021). In line with Hefner, Pippa Norris

and Ronald Inglehart note that "Huntington's thesis fails to identify the most basic cultural fault line between the West and Islam" (**noorashid˙2021**). Despite this controversy, this article sees the debate as helpful in evaluating the relationship between Islam and the West.

That useful discussion is from the lens of history, which is then contextualized with the theory of interaction in sociology, especially that developed by Raymond W. Murray. For him, interaction - this paper uses the term relationship - can take the shape of competition, conflict, or cooperation (Murray, 1950), and no society in the world has solely embraced one form of interaction. For example, interactions between Islam and the West frequently overlap. Competition, conflict, and collaboration are evident in their interactions (GODDARD, 2000; Murray, 1950).

Using the above theory, this article is one step ahead of the existing studies. Studies on Islam-Western relations have attacked Huntington's theory by proposing new evidence and theories and have yet to address historical perspectives related to interaction theory. Previous researchers repute Huntington's theory by proposing cooperation and tolerance between Islam and the West (Akhavi, 2023; Esposito and Voll, 2000; Hunter, 1998; DerVeer, 2008). Edward Said puts forward the thesis of "the clash of definitions" that what clashes between Islam and the West is a matter of definition (meaning), not civilization (Said, 2003). Dominique Moïsi argues that the clash between Islam and the West is driven more by psychological factors such as fear of the West, humiliation of the Muslim world, and hopes of most Asian countries (Moïsi, n.d.). At the same time, others criticize the Huntington's definition of civilization (Norris and Ronald, 2002; Rösel, 1995).

Contrary to the above two views i.e., Huntington and his critics, by applying the theory of interaction in sociology, this paper refutes both by demonstrating shreds of evidence of cooperation and conflict between Islam and the West that existed throughout history. I give examples of scientific cooperation and conflict, crusades and economic cooperation, imperialism against the Islamic world, and tolerance of captive colonialists. Therefore, this paper discusses the relationship between Islam and the West from a historical standpoint, which is then contextualized to see that the relationship takes the form of cooperation and clash simultaneously.

This paper discusses collaboration and "clash" in science, using philosophy as an example. Furthermore, this article covers the crusade's events, how economic cooperation worked, and how it influenced the European economic rebirth. This paper also discusses imperialism against the Islamic world and how democracy is conducted with double standards. Finally, before making the concluding remark, this article provides proof of tolerance for prisoners of war.

2.   Methods

This paper departs from the debate between the two groups in assessing the relationship between Islam and the West. One group considers the relationship the clash of civilizations, and others put forward the tolerance thesis. This paper, therefore, proposes a historical perspective. To arrive at the intended, I describe as follows:

First, this article is a literature review using library data to identify the sources. All the data I use are available on the internet and in the UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

library. In comparison, the time of writing this paper is from April to June 2023.

Second, I classify all data found into two primary forms: data containing debates between Islam and Islam and historical data discussing the relationship between Islam and the West from a historical perspective. The first form of data are Chiara, 2016; Bottici and Challand, 2013; Erdem, 2002;Hoge et al., 2010; Samuel, n.d.; Mottahedeh, 2003; Norris and Ronald, 2002; Rizvi, 2018. While for the second data, I classify it into four forms: a. data on cooperation and clashes between Islam and the West in the field of science, especially in the field of philosophy such as Grant, 2007;D'Ancona et al., 2017; Sharif, 1963; Zonta, 2007; Urvoy, 2017; Watt, 1973; Rosenthal, 1958 and so on; b. data on the crusade's events and how economic cooperation worked in it, such as al-Faruque, 1988; Fancy and Green, 2021; Gilli-Elewy, 2011; Jacoby, 2017; SUDRAJAT et al., 2008; c. data on cooperation and clashes in the history of imperialism and democracy such asAkhavi, 2023; Abdillah, 2015; Fadel, 2010; Yumitro and IP, 2017; Pierce, 2014; d. data on war and tolerance during the colonialism era such as Fernandez et al., n.d.; Zeitlin, 2021; Churchill, 1867.

Third, in interpreting the above data, I apply a historical approach. In short, I examine past facts and historical data through verification, interpretation, and explanation through critical thinking of scientific research methods. The data examined here are data on the relationship between Islam and the West, which are then contextualized to assess whether the relationship is in the form of clash, cooperation, or both.

Fourth, the data obtained are selected, classified, and analyzed theoretically. The main theory used here is interaction theory in the field of sociology. Interaction can take three forms: cooperation, clash, or both. From that, the processed data will be analyzed and classified based on these three forms of interaction theory. Of these three forms of interaction theory, I limit the examples to scientific cooperation and conflict, crusades and economic cooperation, imperialism against the Islamic world, and tolerance of captive colonialists.

3.   Results and Discussion

This section consists of four discussions. First, it begins by discussing collaboration and "clash" in the field of science, using philosophy as an example. Second, it covers the crusade's events, how economic cooperation worked in it, and how the crusade influenced the European economic rebirth. Third, it discusses imperialism against the Islamic world and how democracy is conducted with double standards. Fourth, it provides proof of tolerance for prisoners of war.

3.1.   Science: between cooperation and "clash"

The discussion in this part focuses on the philosophical tradition as an example. Early interactions between Islamic and Western scientific traditions, in the form of Greek philosophy translation, can be traced back to the 9th and 10th centuries. The effort to translate Greek philosophical writings into Arabic was concentrated in Baghdad beginning in the 9th century, gaining momentum in the 10th century.

Muslim scholastic theologians consolidated their theories in the ninth century without borrowing non-Muslim books translated into Arabic. Muslim philosophers, on

the other hand, relied heavily on translations to build their ideas and arguments. They immersed themselves in Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy. As a result, an intellectual dispute on philosophy arose among Muslims.

Philosophy was a hotly debated topic among Muslims in the early centuries of Islam. It was because philosophy's starting point was rational and empirical evidence rather than revelation. This does not mean that Muslim philosophers did not accept Revelation once Greek philosophy was introduced; they did; rather, they tried to reconcile philosophy and revelation. However, the overuse of philosophy in the sense of predating philosophy rather than revelation has become a point of contention. Therefore, Muslim theologians are suspicious of Muslim philosophers (Grant, 2007).

Within the framework of scientific cooperation, not only Muslims adopted Greek philosophy, but non-Muslims also studied Islamic philosophy or Greek philosophy as processed by Muslim philosophers. An example of this can be found, for example, in the first Muslim philosopher, al-Kindi. (d. 873 AD).

Al-Kindi was knowledgeable in both Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies. He studied Greek and was successful in revising and editing several early translations of Greek thought, including the translation of Plotinus', the Enneads, by the ninth-century Christian translator Ibn Nāimah al-imṣī, which came to the Arab as one of Aristotle's writings (D'Ancona et al., 2017). He was the first Muslim philosopher introducing philosophy as part of Islamic culture (Sharif, 1963). He also brought philosophy, religion, and philosophy into harmony. Religion should be based on revelation and vice versa. The truth obtained from both was a match (ibid.).

Al-Kindi influenced Jewish philosophers such as Jacob al-Qirqisānī (Arabic: Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Isḥāq ibn Sama'wayh al Qirqisānī/d. 960) and Isaac Ben Solomon Israel (Arabic: Abū Yaqūb Isḥaq Ibn Sulaymān al-Isrāīlī/d. 932). According to Mauro Zonta, al-Kindi's influences on these two figures can be found in their works such as Book On the Lights and On the Guard Towers - Kitāb al-Anwār wa al-Marāqib and the Book of Gardens - Kitāb al-Riyāḍ by al-Qirqisani; Book of Definitions (Kitāb al-udūd by Isaac Ben Solomon Israel (Zonta, 2007).

Not only al-Kindi, but other Muslim philosophers like Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) also significantly influenced Jewish and Christian philosophers. He claimed that the Islamic revelation was a gift from God to mankind, ensuring their enlightenment and prosperity. Therefore, Muslims seemed to perform basic rituals related to this revelation as a sign of their respect and submission to Allah. But ma, he argued, also has a divinely appointed duty to seek truth. Ordinary people were able to acquire some knowledge and understanding, but especially gifted people were able to attain superior knowledge, i.e., philosophy. He believed that theologians/mutakallimūn were incapable of conducting scientific research (Urvoy, 2017;Watt, 1973).

Ibn Rushd (d. 1198 AD) strongly criticized the work of al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 AD), Tahāfut al-Falāsifah, a work aimed at criticizing Muslim philosophers, especially Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī (Al-Ghazālī, 1966). Ibn Rushd wrote Tahāfut al-Tahāfut (Rushd, 1964). In this work, he argues that al-Ghazali misunderstood the Islamic philosophical discourse and abuse their philosophical concepts to undermine their arguments. In his opinion, Muslim theologians and Sufis lack knowledge of scientific methods and discursive logic and should stop trying to control philosophical inquiry Marmura, 1959). Interestingly, in relation to Islam and the West, the works of Ibn Rushd were translated into Hebrew

and Latin and read by St Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 AD). It has even been suggested that Ibn Rushd's influence on Jewish philosophy rivals and perhaps surpasses that of the great Jewish thinker, Maimonides (d. 1204 AD) (Rosenthal, 1958).

Not only al-Kindi and Ibn Rushd, Mauro Zonta also traces other philosophers who influenced Jewish and Christian philosophers. They are Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313 H/925M), the Ikhwān al-afā group (a mysterious circle to the present of philosophers in the 10th century in Basrah, Iraq), al-Fārābī (d. 951 AD), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037 AD), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 AD), Ibn Bajjah (d. 1138 AD), and Ibn Tuffayl (d. 1185 AD) (Zonta, 2007).

What I discuss above is not intended to show that one civilization is superior to another, but in a historical context the scientific cooperation between Islam and the West continues to this day. In the modern context, some Western scientific devices or tools are used in Islamic studies. For example, hermeneutics is used by some Muslim scholars in the field of Islamic studies, however I personally believe that the interpretation of the Qur'an does not require hermeneutics, ulūm al-Qur'ān is sufficient. (on this theory, see (Swazo et al., 2011;Younes, 2002; Zainol, Majid, and Saad, 2018).

Regardless of the controversy, what I would say her is that not all Western scientific devices or tools are compatible with Islamic tradition. This indicates a "clash" of knowledge resulting from one culture and civilization (Western) against other civilizations (Islam). From that it requires adjustment. This adjustment is called by modern Muslim scholars "Islamization of knowledge", "integration of knowledge", or "trans-integration of knowledge" (Daud, 2007;Davies, 1991;Furlow, 1996; Huringiin and Azfathir, 2018; Suciati et al., 2022; Yusuf, 2015)

3.2.   Crusader: Cooperation and European Economic Revival

In 1258, the Mongols destroyed Baghdad, a center of the Islamic caliphate at that time. Meanwhile, between 1095 and 1291, the Crusaders invaded the Muslim heartlands in a series of operations to drive Muslim rulers out of the holy city of Mecca. Though they failed, their success in establishing Latin enclaves in the region depressed the Muslims (al-Faruque, 1988; Fancy and Green, 2021; Gilli-Elewy, 2011).

The Muslim forces led by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin, d 1193) defeated the Crusaders from Jerusalem, aided by internal Christian fighting who sacked Constantinople itself. At that time, Muslims saw the Crusaders as a serious challenge, but they did not believe that they were Christian power representing Europe. This was because Muslims allowed Christians (and Jews) to live together and believed that local Christian leaders effectively represented Christianity. Thus, later generations, especially after Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, regarded the Crusaders as an example of European Christian civilization's efforts to destroy Islam. Interestingly, economic relations, especially trade between Muslims and Christians still existed, even though they were at war during the Crusades (Jacoby, 2017)

In addition, the crusade also affected the rise of the European economy. Ajat Sudrajat's dissertation at UIN Sunan Kalijaga in 2008 entitled "Rekonstruksi Interaksi Islam dan Barat: Perang Salib dan Kebangkitan Kembali Ekonomi Eropa (Reconstruction of the Interaction of Islam and the West: Crusades and the Revival of the European Economy)" has proven it (SUDRAJAT et al., 2008). It studies in depth the influence of the Crusades on the rise of the European economy. For Ajat, in the early 8th century AD, trading in

Europe had been in suspended animation since the Mediterranean Sea was controlled by Muslims. Even in the 10th century, Europe was still poor, backward, and illiterate (ibid.). However, from the 8th century until the end of the Crusades, the perspective of European Christians on trading began to change. They loved trading. Even trade led to the third phase of the Crusades starting to thaw. The crusaders' journey to Jerusalem uncovered seaports and trade routes connecting East and West so they changed their mind from war to trading. This then revived European trade activity which later inspired the birth of the European Industrial Revolution as a continuation of the European economic revival phase that began after the Crusades (ibid.).

3.3.   Imperialism and Democracy

The French Revolution opened opportunities for European political thought to invade Muslim countries through colonization, the spread of communications, and the intensification of European travel to Muslim countries. Meanwhile, European powers, who pressured the Ottomans and the Mughals Empire, and others to modernize their societies and political systems, divided the Muslims into two groups. One group believed that political thought such as democracy, parliamentary government, and nation-state were contrary to sharia. Others, on the other hand, see it differently. They accepted that political thought as long as it was not against the principles of Sharia. This second group from 1880 to 1935 AD driven by a movement called pan-Islamism, opened doors to dialogue with the West (Akhavi, 2023). The leaders of this group such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897 AD), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905 AD), and his pupil, Rashid Rida (d. 1935 AD) stressed the importance of ijtihad on democratic law, presidential system, nation-state which had not been discussed by previous Muslim scholars (Abdillah, 2015; Fadel, 2010).

Today, most of the Muslim countries accept democracy. However, historical facts show that Britain and France have a double standard. They honed their colonial rule with liberal democratic rhetoric, but their policy was to refuse to implement liberal ideas and institutions to ensure that the parliamentary system and constitution imposed on Muslims did not lead to the collapse of their imperial power. Parliamentary elections were rigged so that pro-European landowners were big winners and were given parliamentary seats to pass laws that benefited the colonial powers. This subsequently provoked a cynical attitude toward Western democracy among Muslims (Akhavi, 2023). In the modern context, it is the same as America as a superpower. On the one hand, the United States so glorifies democracy and other countries must implement it. On the other hand, the United States is also a "traitor" of democracy. This was seen, for example, in the Coup in Egypt in 2013. In his speech, Barack Obama stated that the United States did not participate in the coup. But Emad Mekay in In the Name of Democracy, U.S. Works against Morsi provides data that the US spent a lot of money on Egyptian opposition groups to topple Morsi (Mekay, 2017).

Funds of $75,000 were awarded by the National Endowment for Democracy of America to Esraa Abdel Fattah, founder of the Egyptian opposition party led by Mohammad El Baradei. This is not to mention funds from the Middle East Partnership Initiative and the National Democratic Institute. These organizations then mobilized the masses to protest the Morsi government and caused many casualties in December 2013 (Yumitro and IP, 2017). This means that coups are sometimes not naturally desired, but because of

outside interests (Pierce, 2014)

Thus, if during the colonial period, the confrontation between the Islamic movement and the colonialists was carried out in the form of taking up arms, then after independence, the West's confrontation was subtly and covertly through people within a country like the case of President Mursi above. Or, as in the case of the Islamic Salvation Front (al-Jabhah al-Islāmiyah lil-Inqādh), which won the 1992 Algerian general election. However, with the support of the United States and France, its forces crushed the Islamic Salvation Front's victory. In a strong response to these developments, the Islamic Salvation Front offshoots, Islamic armed groups, carried out numerous acts of violence and atrocities, while the regime carried out its own crackdowns and atrocities (Akhavi, 2023).

3.4.   Colonialism: Between War and Tolerance

Colonialism is a view or doctrine of domination of a country over another country. Its goal is to control power in various areas such as politics, economy, population, and natural resources of a colonized country. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Western colonialism is a political-economic phenomenon in which European nations explored, conquered, occupied, and exploited large areas of the world, beginning around 1500 AD (Fernandez et al., n.d.).

In classical colonial theory, Francis Bacon argues that the regional expansion of an empire through the acquisition of peoples and territories by force, followed by conquest, is justified. For him, a successful country is an expansive country (Zeitlin, 2021). The problem is that no country wants to be colonized. For this reason, colonized countries fight colonizers. This happens in any country. Indonesia vs Holland, Malaysia vs England, Algeria vs France, and more.

Regarding the last two countries, Algeria vs France, there is an interesting study documenting how tolerance persisted even towards (hostile) colonial states. The title is The Life of Abdel Kadir: Ex-Sultan of The Arabs and Algeria, by Colonel Charles Henry Churchill (1807-1869 AD) (Churchill, 1867), a British military officer, and the original inventor of the Zionist political plan to establish Israel in Palestine. While Abdel Kadir here is al-Amir al-Sayyid Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī (1808-1883 AD), an Algerian leader who fought against French colonialism, he was also an Islamic scholar who was knowledgeable in various Islamic disciplines.

In this book, Colonel Charles Henry Churchill tells a lot about the gentleness of Abd al-Qādir his prisoners (French soldiers). For example, Abd al-Qādir freed all prisoners because the food supplies ran out. He said: "Without the food to properly feed them, Islam did not permit to keep them as captives". Another story took place on May 21, 1841 AD, at Sidi Khalifa, now in the province of Milla, Algeria. At the time there was an exchange of prisoners of war between France and the Movement led by Abd al-Qādir in Sidi Khalifa. Abd al-Qādir heard that a bishop adopted children who had lost their mothers in war. He then sent the bishop a letter stating:

"I send you a flock of goats, with their young who are still sucking. With these you will be able for some time longer to nourish the little children you have adopted, and who have lost their mothers."

What Abd al-Qādir had practiced above is the application of the ethics of war in Islam such as the prohibition against killing religious people, children, elderly people and

women, cruelly killing enemy, and treatment of captives with kindness, protection of civilian property from enemies.

4. Conclusion

From the explanation above, this paper concludes that the relationship between Islam and the West is complex and complicated. Therefore, if the thesis of the "clash of civilizations" is acceptable, or whether it is acceptable for those who reject it by proposing "tolerance", historical facts prove that competition, conflict, and cooperation exist simultaneously. This paper therefore refutes the Huntington's theory of "clash of civilizations" and his critics by proposing "tolerance" between Islam and the West by some scholars. The relationship between Islam and the West is not unidirectional, but multidirectional, according to interests. Before, during, and after colonization, the interests of religion, knowledge, politics, economy, and culture make the relationship competitive, clash, and cooperative exist simultaneously.

5. Acknowledgments

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