



Asy-Syura in Islam: Ethical-Political Foundations and Democratic Relevance in Tafsir al-Munir

Mirna Putri¹, Nikmatul Khairiyah¹, Zulfi Akmal², Ahmad Suryadi³, M. Hidayat Ediz⁴

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia

²STAI Pengembangan Ilmu Al-Quran Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

³International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

⁴STAI Solok Nan Indah, Indonesia

✉ mirnaputri567@gmail.com*

Abstract

This study examines the concept of Asy-Syura (consultation) in Islam and its relevance to democratic values, with reference to Wahbah al-Zuhaili's interpretation in Tafsir al-Munir. The research is motivated by the significance of consultation as a principle in building an Islamic civilization that is just, participatory, and respectful of human dignity as social beings. Employing a qualitative approach through library research, Tafsir al-Munir serves as the primary source, supported by secondary literature on Quranic exegesis, Islamic political thought, and democracy. The findings reveal that al-Zuhaili interprets Asy-Syura as a fundamental principle in Islamic law, functioning to regulate decision-making and prevent authoritarianism in governance. In his perspective, consultation embodies not only spiritual and social dimensions but also political implications that encourage participation and justice in societal management. Consequently, Asy-Syura can be understood as an ethical-political foundation that aligns with democratic values within the framework of Islamic governance.

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INTRODUCTION

Among Muslim intellectuals, democracy has become a hotly debated topic. This controversy is considered natural because democracy is viewed as a concept originating outside the Islamic tradition specifically from the West (Usri, 2021). The historical background and worldview of the West, which differ from those of Islam, are among the causes. Some even argue that the fundamental principles of democracy differ from the teachings of Islam. While Islam is based on the Quran and Sunnah, democracy is a product of human thought. However, in Islam, the Quran and Sunnah serve as guidelines for life. Sound decisions must be reached through deliberation grounded in the Quran and Sunnah (Setia, 2021).

An Islamic way of life guided by the Quran and the Sunnah. The Quran contains the word “*shura*,” which means consultation; it is mentioned specifically in Surah Al-Imran, verse 159, and Surah Ash-Shura, verse 38. Many Muslim scholars interpret these two verses as the foundation for developing the concept of Islamic

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governance. Therefore, discussions regarding these verses are not new in Islamic studies (Mabrur & Abas, 2023).

Consultation holds a profound place in Islamic life; it is not merely a political system of governance but constitutes the fundamental character of all societal issues (Hakim & Darajat, 2023). Al-Qurtubhi interprets the term “*shura*” as deliberation or consultation to reach a mutual agreement, involving all parties concerned with an issue until the best solution is ultimately found through the input of various stakeholders. Meanwhile, according to Quraish Shihab in his exegesis *al-Misbah*, *shura* means consultation, implying that consultation is an effort to attain “honey” that is, the best opinion (Innayati & Husain, 2023).

Quraish Shihab links Shura to democracy, because the essence of democracy is deliberation. According to him, democracy in Islam is not limited to the level of government or the state, but is also taught within the smallest units of society. Meanwhile, according to Wahbah az-Zuhaili, Shura is a collective decision-making process involving the exchange of opinions, carried out by a group of people to reach the best decision based on the principles of justice, equal rights, and solidarity. According to az-Zuhaili, the complexities of modern society demand a comprehensive and representative collective *ijtihad* that can be accommodated through the principles of Shura, which align with the spirit of participation in democracy. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the relationship between Shura and democracy based on the foundations laid out in the exegetical works of the *mufasssirun*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The topics of shura and democracy have been studied by researchers with various focuses and approaches. A study conducted by 'Afifah, (2020) examines democracy from the perspective of the Quran and its implementation in Indonesia's constitutional system, discussing the development of democracy in Indonesia, the views of Islamic scholars on democracy, and the democratic principles contained in the Quran. The findings of this study indicate that democracy is the system most closely aligned with Islamic values when implemented based on Quranic principles such as justice, equality, consultation, and respect for the rights of the people. Meanwhile, the study by Taufik & Abu, (2020) focuses on the relationship between shura and democracy, as well as their contributions to the political aspects of Islam and democracy. Meanwhile, Nurfazri & Agustin, (2024) focus on examining the relationship between Islam and democracy by analyzing the norms of the Quran that serve as the ethical foundation for the democratic system, particularly through the principles of *asy-syura*, *al-Musyawarah*, and *al-Adalah*. This study examines the views that have emerged among Muslim intellectuals regarding the relationship between Islam and democracy.

A study that emphasizes legal and democratic issues in Islam (Rusyda, 2023); this study focuses on the law of democracy from the perspective of the Quran, specifically through a thematic analysis of Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah Al-Maidah, verse 44, which serve as the basis for debates regarding the validity of democracy in Islam. Research specifically examining the concept of consultation (*musyawarah*) in the Quran was conducted by Harahap et al., (2025); Muttaqin & Apriadi, (2020); Sutriawal et al., (2025). This article focuses on a thematic study of Quranic verses regarding *musyawarah* to explain the concept, functions, and ethical values contained therein as they relate to decision-making and the fostering of social harmony.

explains Shura or consultation from an Islamic perspective.

Previous research has focused on different sources and perspectives. [Taufik & Kholidi, \(2024\)](#) focus in this article on the concept of Shura in the hadith and its application in modern democratic systems. [Alfiyah, \(2023\)](#) focuses in this article on the analysis of communication as the primary factor determining the success of deliberation in reaching collective decisions based on Quranic values. [Sari & Saputra, \(2024\)](#), meanwhile, focus in this article on examining the relationship and harmony between the concept of shura in Islam and the democratic system by analyzing the democratic principles contained in the Quran. Numerous studies on exegesis have also been conducted with diverse focuses, one of which examines the challenges of teaching exegetical texts in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools ([Namira et al., 2023](#)). Furthermore, the article by [Faruqi & Fitri, \(2019\)](#) focuses on M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of the verses on consultation in the Quran, specifically Surah al-Baqarah: 233, Surah Ali Imran: 159, and Surah Ash-Shura 38, with the aim of understanding the concept of consultation from the perspective of Quraish Shihab's exegesis.

Based on a review of previous research, it can be seen that studies on shura and democracy generally focus on the conceptual relationship between Islam and democracy, thematic analyses of verses on consultation, the legal framework of democracy in Islam, and the interpretations of specific figures such as M. Quraish Shihab. However, no study has yet been found that specifically examines Wahbah az-Zuhaili's interpretation in Tafsir al-Munir regarding the verses on *shura* particularly Surah Ash-Shura, verse 38, and Surah Al-Imran, verse 159 and analyzes their wisdom and relevance to modern democracy. Therefore, this study aims to determine how Wahbah az-Zuhaili interprets *al-Shura*. What are the wisdom and connection between *al-Shura* and democracy according to the Tafsir al-Munir these are some of the core questions that serve as the starting point and focus of this article. Thus, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge in the fields of exegesis and Islamic political thought, particularly regarding the relationship between Shura and democracy.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a thematic analysis method to examine the concept of Asy-Syura in Islam and its democratic relevance as interpreted by Wahbah az-Zuhaili in Tafsir al-Munir. The research relies on two types of data sources: primary data and secondary data. The primary source is Tafsir al-Munir itself, which serves as the central reference for understanding Az-Zuhaili's interpretation of Asy-Syura. Secondary sources include scholarly works on Quranic exegesis, Islamic political thought, democracy, and other relevant literature that provide contextual and comparative insights ([Arham et al., 2020](#); [Rokim & Triana, 2021](#)).

Data collection is conducted through the thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu'i*) method, which involves interpreting the Quran by focusing on a specific theme. In this case, the selected theme is Asy-Syura, with particular attention to the verses and discussions presented in Tafsir al-Munir. The collected data are then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which encompass identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring themes and patterns within the text. This process enables the researcher to uncover Az-Zuhaili's ethical-political perspectives on Asy-Syura and to evaluate their alignment with democratic principles.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study applies source triangulation by comparing the interpretations derived from Tafsir al-Munir with secondary literature on contemporary tafsir, Islamic political theory, and democratic thought. Furthermore, the analysis considers the historical and socio-political context underlying Az-Zuhaili's interpretations, thereby producing results that are not only textual but also contextual. Through this methodological framework, the research aims to generate a comprehensive synthesis of Asy-Syura as an ethical-political foundation in Islam and its relevance to modern democratic discourse (Adel et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2025, 2026; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Wahbah Az-Zuhaili

Wahbah bin Sheikh Mustafa az-Zuhaili, better known as Wahbah az-Zuhaili, was born in the Dair 'Athiyah region of Syria on March 6, 1932 CE/1353 AH. His father's name was H. Mustafa Zuhaili, and his mother's name was Fatimah bint Mustafa Sa'adah. His father, a farmer, played a significant role in shaping Wahbah az-Zuhaili into a scholar. Although he was merely a farmer, his father was known as a learned man with a strong commitment to practicing religious teachings, earning him respect as a scholar and intellectual in the Levant region. His father was also a hafiz of the Quran. Wahbah az-Zuhaili began his education by studying the Quran and completing his elementary education in his hometown in 1946 CE. By 1952, az-Zuhaili had completed his studies in Damascus. In 1956 CE, az-Zuhaili earned his bachelor's degree from Al-Azhar University. Wahbah az-Zuhaili continued his education in 1957 CE, earning an Lc degree; in 1963 CE, he earned his doctorate with summa cum laude honors; and in 1975 CE, az-Zuhaili became a professor.

Az-Zuhaili is known as a highly prolific author in the field of Islamic scholarship. According to al-Lahham's records, Zuhaili has authored more than 199 works (Halimah, 2020). One of Az-Zuhaili's most popular works is the Tafsir al-Munir. Al-Munir means "the illuminating one" or "the shining one." This work consists of 16 volumes totaling approximately 9,000 pages. Each volume covers two juz of the Quran. The first edition was officially published in 1991 CE/1411 AH. In this exegesis, Az-Zuhaili provides explanations regarding the sciences of qira'at and balaghah. The discussion on the proofs of the Quran is accompanied by an explanation of its miracles. At the end of his exegesis, he explains the fiqh of life that can be applied in daily life.

The focus of this book is on *adabi ijtimai'i* (literature, culture, and society) and *balaghah* (rhetoric), using an analytical method. In writing this book, Wahbah az-Zuhaili had a specific goal: to build a strong scholarly bond between a Muslim and the Book of Allah, as the Quran serves as the primary guide for the Muslim community, both in general and specific aspects (Shohib, 2024).

Interpretation of the Term "Ash-Shura" in Wahbah Az-Zuhaili's Tafsir Al-Munir

The term "ash-Shura" (الشورى) is derived from the root verb شاور - يشاور - مشاور، which means to exchange opinions or consult one another in order to determine the correct opinion. The word asy-Syura (الشورى) is a mashdar, similar to the word المُتَبَا، which means التَّشَاوُر (consultation) (Az-Zuhaili, 2016). Terminologically, the term *asy-Syura* refers to a collective decision-making method

involving the exchange of opinions, carried out by a group of people to reach the best decision based on the principles of justice, equality of rights, and solidarity (Aprilya & Tohawi, 2024). In the context of Islam, consultation is not merely a social custom but a principle of Sharia that serves as a vital pillar in the life of society and government (Sukamsi et al., 2025).

The principle of asy-Syura is affirmed in the Quran in Surah Asy-Syura, verse 38:

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ

Meaning: "...And their affairs are settled through consultation among themselves..." (QS. Asy-Syura: 38)

Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, in his exegesis al-Munir, provides an in-depth interpretation of this verse, emphasizing the importance of shura in the life of the state and society. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili identifies the verse above as one of the defining characteristics of the believers, as they do not make decisions unilaterally but rather involve their peers in the process (Az-Zuhaili, 2016). Az-Zuhaili emphasizes that shura is a fundamental principle in the Islamic system of governance that serves to ensure wise decision-making and prevent injustice and arbitrariness. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili views asy-Syura not merely as a method but also as a form of respect for the values of justice, public participation, and transparency in governance. Az-Zuhaili further asserts in his exegesis al-Munir that asy-Syura holds great social value because it fosters a balance between a leader and the people. Thus, in his exegesis al-Munir, Wahbah Az-Zuhaili positions the concept of ash-Shura as a vital tool within Islamic teachings for creating a just, open society that respects human values and a sense of community.

The principle of ash-Shura is also affirmed in the Quran in Surah Al-Imran, verse 159:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

Meaning: "...And consult with them in all (important) matters..." (QS. Asy-Syura: 159)

Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, in his exegesis al-Munir, provides an in-depth interpretation of this verse, particularly regarding consultation. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili cites the above verse as evidence affirming the obligation of consultation in matters concerning the Muslim community. Az-Zuhaili states that Shura is the foundation of the Islamic system of governance and the most sound method for reaching correct decisions, as it involves collective reason and the participation of the community (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). Thus, it can be understood that consultation is not merely a formality, but an integral part of a decision-making system in accordance with Sharia. Az-Zuhaili emphasizes that although the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, did not need the opinions of others (since he received revelation directly from Allah), Allah nevertheless commanded him to engage in shura or consultation. The Prophet practiced consultation not only because of Allah's command but also to honor and respect his companions, thereby strengthening the spirit of unity and loyalty, and to serve as an example for Muslims to adopt consultation as a method of decision-making (Kurniawan, 2019).

According to Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, the matters (*al-'Amr*) that should be discussed in consultation, as mentioned in Surah Al-Imran, verse 159, include military affairs and war strategies, matters of governance and leadership, and other social issues concerning the interests of the community (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). Shura in matters of governance and leadership is essential to avoid oppressive behavior

such as authoritarianism. Shura is closely linked to the firmness of a decision particularly on the part of a leader after consultation has taken place, as indicated in the subsequent verse: *فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ* “When you have made up your mind, then put your trust in Allah.” This indicates that consultation does not negate the authority of leadership; rather, it strengthens decisions because they have been discussed. A leader retains the final authority to make a decision, but with moral and social support derived from the consultation (Az-Zuhaili, 2013).

From Wahbah Az-Zuhaili’s explanation in his exegesis al-Munir regarding the term Ash-Shura, it can be concluded that consultation is the primary foundation or principle that must be upheld in the Islamic system of leadership. In his exegesis of Surah Asy-Syura, verse 38, Az-Zuhaili explains that shura is a principle of Islamic law in governing the affairs of the Muslim community and the government, while also serving as a defining characteristic of the believers who uphold solidarity and justice. And in his commentary on Surah Ali-’Imran, verse 159, Az-Zuhaili emphasizes the value of participation, respect for opinions, and the importance of inclusive and collective leadership even though the final decision ultimately rests with a leader who is responsible and places his trust in Allah.

The Wisdom and Connection Between Ash-Shura and Democracy: The Perspective of Wahbah Az-Zuhaili

According to Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, ash-Shura (consultation) is the exchange of ideas to determine the correct opinion (Muzayyin et al., 2024). Through consultation, the resulting decisions will be characterized by accuracy.

Given the accuracy of the decisions resulting from such consultation, the wisdom embodied in the term as-Syura, according to Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, is as follows: First, consultation is a fundamental principle in Islamic governance and decision-making. Az-Zuhaili explains that the term “asy-Syura” or “consultation” is an inherent trait of the believers, meaning that consultation is a defining characteristic of a community of believers (Rido, 2023). In Islam, consultation is prioritized in seeking and making decisions, whether in personal or state affairs; it is not authoritarian or one-sided. Rather, it must be based on collective wisdom (Sukatin et al., 2022).

Second, deliberation reflects fairness and respect for others’ opinions. Believers view deliberation as a means to uphold the values of justice, honesty, and respect for others (Martoyo & Pambudi, 2025). Third, deliberation fosters brotherhood and a spirit of collectivity. Through consultation, every member of the community is involved and feels included (Nurdin, 2020). This makes people feel valued and acknowledged, ultimately strengthening solidarity and fostering *ukhuwah* among them (Hartanto, 2023). Fourth, deliberation prevents injustice and arbitrariness. Wahbah az-Zuhaili emphasizes that through deliberation, decisions do not belong solely to the elite or those in power, but are the result of a collective agreement that represents the public interest (Heriyanto, 2022). In this way, the emergence of injustice and arbitrariness is prevented. Fifth, consultation serves as a way to emulate the Sunnah of the Prophet. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was the one who consulted most frequently with his companions, and this practice was subsequently emulated by the companions regarding major and crucial matters (Fikriana & Rezki, 2024). In fact, even when the Prophet himself received revelation, he still consulted with his companions. Thus, this serves as a worthy example and demonstrates that asy-Syura is not merely a rational method, but also an act of worship and a model of exemplary conduct.

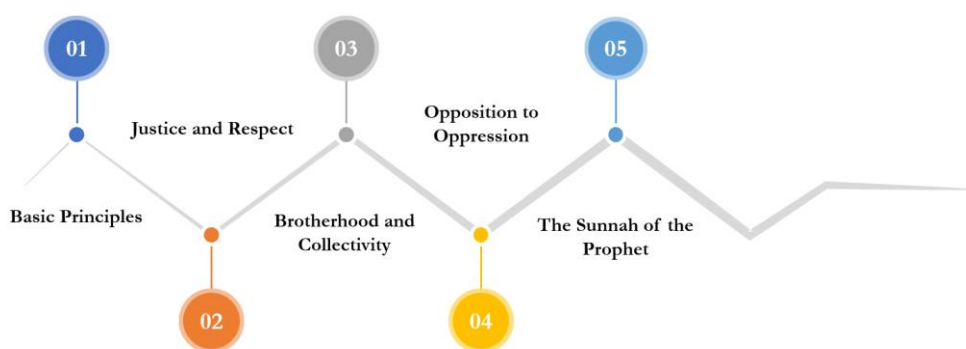


Fig 1. The Wisdom of Ash-Shura According to Wahbah az-Zuhaili

From the insights presented above regarding the term ash-Shura according to Wahbah az-Zuhaili, it can be concluded and understood that consultation is not merely a method, but also a social ethic and a principle of Islamic Sharia. In accordance with the words of Ibn ‘Arabi, consultation is a tool that unites the community, a means to delve into and explore reason, and a path toward accuracy (Sutriawal et al., 2025).

The term asy-Syura, according to Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, means consultation. Consultation is closely related to democracy, as it is one of the principles of democracy (Irawan & Hermawan, 2019). Democracy generally refers to a form of government in which the highest authority lies with the people. In this context, citizens have the right to participate in decision-making. Consultation plays a vital role in enabling the public to express their opinions and aspirations (Pulungan et al., 2024).

It is evident that the connection between as-Syura (consultation) and democracy lies, first, in collective decision-making. This is because a decision is considered the result of a mutual agreement rather than merely the will of the majority (Al Fikri & Arqam, 2022). Second, deliberation serves as a platform for participation, as it provides a forum for citizens to express their opinions, engage in discussion, and seek joint solutions to public issues. Thus, through deliberation, the people can actively participate in the decision-making process (Darin et al., 2024). Third, deliberation in a democracy can lead to consensus. In a democratic context, the consensus reached through deliberation reflects the agreement of various stakeholders (Tanaem & Saingo, 2025). Fourth, democracy acknowledges and values the diversity of opinions; thus, deliberation serves as a mechanism to accommodate differing viewpoints. Through constructive dialogue and argumentation, these differences can be bridged to reach the best possible solution for all parties.

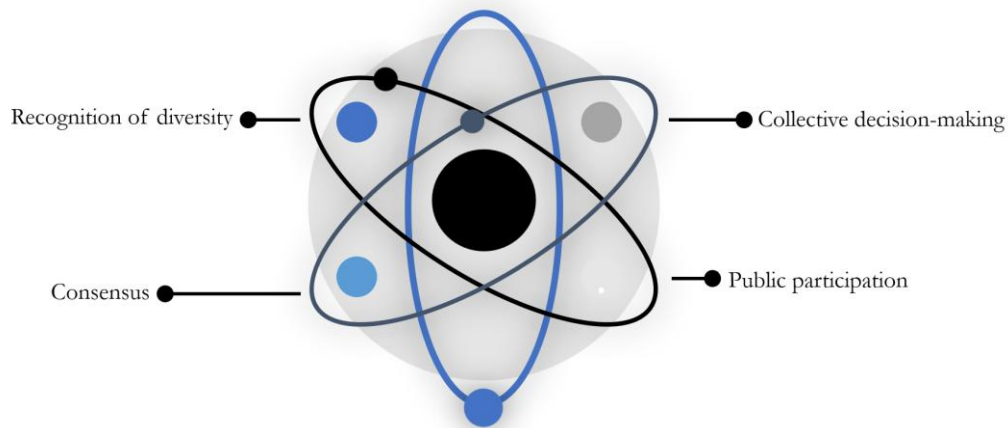


Fig 2. The Relationship Between Ash-Shura and Democracy

From the discussion above, it can be understood that democracy is closely related to consultation, because democracy results in a decision regarding the selection of a particular party, whereas consultation leads to a decision or a solution that is beneficial to all parties.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Ash-Shura, as interpreted in Tafsir al-Munir, is understood as a fundamental principle in Islam that emphasizes participation, justice, and respect for opinions and collective responsibility in decision-making. According to Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, consultation is not merely a method of problem-solving but a Sharia value that serves to prevent injustice, strengthen brotherhood, and foster inclusive leadership. The values of Asy-syura have strong relevance to democratic principles, such as public participation, transparency, equality of rights, and collective decision-making, while remaining grounded in the values of Tawhid and Islamic ethics. Therefore, the concept of Asy-Syura from Wahbah Az-Zuhaili's perspective can serve as a normative and ethical foundation for building more just, participatory, and public-interest-oriented governance in organizations, society, and government, as well as a reference for further research on the relationship between Islamic political thought and contemporary democracy.

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Author Contribution

Mirna Putri: writing-preparation of original manuscript, **Nikmatul Khairiyah:** conceptualization, visualization, investigation, **Zulfi Akmal & Ahmad Suryadi:** methodology, improve language, **M. Hidayat Ediz:** improve content, data accuracy.

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The authors declare that this research was conducted without any conflict of interest in the research.

Ethical Clearance

The place or location studied has agreed to conduct research and is willing if the results of this study are published.

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