

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC REASON IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND THE CRITICISM OF RAWLS'S CONCEPT OF UNREASONABLENESS

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Abstract: *People everywhere always live in diversity. Sometimes, people express their values in ways incompatible with the principle of reciprocity or reasonableness. In John Rawls's view, they are categorized as unreasonable because their expression does not align with public reason. In this article, we need to ask, are they really unreasonable and a threat to democracy? Here, we state that public reason is essential to democracy. However, we also need to build a fairer public life and broader public reasoning that engages people from wider background cultures. Thus, Rawls' understanding of unreasonableness is challenging. We cannot exclude people who have not applied public reason from public life. We neither categorize them as unreasonable because they do not necessarily attack public reason. We can identify them as "in-between" reasonable and unreasonable people, and they are not really a threat to democracy. We need to engage and endorse them to explore a just public life. In order to build a fairer public life, we need to engage people widely and make public reasoning a place for learning the meaning of justice.*

Keywords: *Public Reason; Public Reasoning; Comprehensive Doctrine; Reasonable-Unreasonable; Democracy.*

Abstrak: Masyarakat di manapun selalu hidup dalam kemajemukan. Terkadang, sebagian masyarakat mengekspresikan nilai yang mereka miliki dalam cara yang tidak sejalan dengan kewarasan publik (*reasonableness*). Menurut John Rawls, kelompok semacam ini akan dikategorikan sebagai tidak waras karena apa yang mereka ekspresikan tidak sejalan dengan nalar publik. Melalui artikel ini, kami ingin mengeksplorasi lebih jauh, apakah kelompok semacam ini betul-betul “tidak waras” dan merupakan ancaman bagi demokrasi? Kami berpendapat bahwa pada dasarnya nalar publik merupakan hal yang fundamental bagi demokrasi. Namun pada saat yang sama kita juga perlu membangun kehidupan publik yang lebih fair dan penalaran publik yang lebih luas yang merangkul masyarakat dari berbagai budaya latar. Karenanya, pemahaman Rawls mengenai “ketidakawaran publik” perlu diuji lebih jauh. Kita tidak dapat mengeksklusi begitu saja orang yang belum mengaplikasikan nalar publik. Kita juga tidak bisa begitu saja mengkategorikan mereka sebagai tidak waras karena pada dasarnya mereka belum tentu menyerang nalar publik. Kita barangkali bisa mengidentifikasi mereka sebagai kelompok “antara”, dan dalam hal ini mereka tidak betul-betul menjadi ancaman bagi demokrasi. Kita perlu merangkul dan mendorong mereka mengembangkan kehidupan publik yang fair. Untuk membangun kehidupan publik yang lebih fair, kita perlu merangkul masyarakat secara luas dan menjadikan penalaran publik sebagai tempat belajar memahami makna keadilan.

Kata kunci: Nalar Publik; Penalaran Publik; Doktrin Komprehensif; Waras-Tidak Waras Secara Publik; Demokrasi.

Introduction

Public life everywhere is always colored by the diversity of values held by various groups and individuals. The protection of diversity is fundamental for democratic public life. The essential question to this reality is how these diverse groups live together when they have to build social unity simultaneously. Rawls says that diverse groups and individuals should discuss one another reasonably and hopefully come to a common ground. He is one of the foremost contemporary thinkers who offers a way for diverse groups to arrive at an overlapping consensus.¹ All people must use their public reason to make an overlapping consensus. A consensus that guarantees justice can only happen if people use public reason. People who do not use public reason will find it challenging to reach an overlapping consensus.

Rawls defines overlapping consensus as a just agreement made by free and equal citizens. The consensus is not made for temporary time, as happens in *modus vivendi*. According to him, it is agreed upon over time because, as an agreement, it has guaranteed the principles of justice. Hence, the achievement of making overlapping consensus will create social unity among different groups of society over time.² The fundamental capacity that makes the consensus possible is public reason. With public

reason, people stand on the principle of equal liberty for all, and through this principle, they offer an order that will be accepted reciprocally.³ The ignorance of public reason in public life will threaten justice and democracy. Thus, its role is highly significant in making a just and democratic society.

Rawls's idea of public reason is ideal and normative. However, in social and political reality, parts of society cannot always apply public reason. Then, if they are not able to apply public reason, should they be excluded from public life since they are considered a threat to democracy? A more fundamental question is whether groups that cannot use public reason are considered unreasonable. These two questions will be exercised in this article. We want to state that public reason is essential in building a just society. However, we have to highlight that the reality of social life is not always in line with reasonable values. The concept of reasonableness has a tight relation with the concept of fairness.⁴ Some people may still be unable to apply or even do not accept public reason since the conviction of their comprehensive doctrines. Thus, we do not need to exclude and evacuate them from public life immediately. Rawls understands comprehensive doctrines as all that have a "whole truth" in understanding reality. They may come from religious or non-religious groups.⁵

There are many critics of Rawls's concept of reasonableness. They see that the concept tends to exclude groups considered unreasonable in the public sphere. Charles Taylor considers Rawls's liberalism to fall to difference-blind liberalism.⁶ Chantal Mouffe assesses that Rawls had evacuated the political from public life.⁷ Michael Sandel challenges Rawls's concept of neutrality as absurd.⁸ Troy Dostert assesses the tendency to exclude unreasonable groups as a politics of evasion instead of a politics of engagement.⁹ Jürgen Habermas and Amartya Sen also provide important notes on Rawls. Habermas emphasizes the importance of the rational discourse process,¹⁰ and Sen encourages a model of open impartiality in public reasoning.¹¹ These criticisms are significant to be considered even though the idea of public reason must be maintained as a guide in realizing a more just society. The use of public reason becomes a prerequisite to building a well-ordered society and arriving at an overlapping consensus. So, how do we respond to the diversity of people that are not always in line with public reason?

To answer these questions, we must first formulate a model of fair public reasoning. In fair public reasoning, people should have the basic right to contest their views in the public sphere. The most fundamental criterion in public reasoning is that people have the right to contest their views insofar as they recognize and accept the principle of equal liberty

for all. Of course, neither people can reject this criterion. If one rejects the principle, his or her right to contest will automatically be denied. In fair public reasoning, various views from diverse background cultures are entitled to be contested. Then, we also need to see public reasoning as a learning process to understand the meaning of justice in public life. Some people may have less capacity to use public reason. Instead of excluding them from public life, it is better if they are engaged in public reasoning and are endorsed to use public reason.

Rawls's Idea of Public Reason

According to Rawls, a well-ordered and constitutional democratic society presupposes the use of public reason.¹² The idea of public reason is related to the fundamental status of citizens. As citizens, what status are they positioned? Are they positioned by caste order or in an equal position? Through public reason, Rawls emphasizes the political values or the principle of reciprocity to regulate the relationship between government and its citizens and the relationship among citizens. In short, the idea of public reason is concerned with how we understand political relations. Following public reason, political relations require equality among citizens or the principle of reciprocity. The rejection of the principle of equality and reciprocity is the denial of the idea of public reason¹³. The use of public reason will significantly affect the ability of society to produce fair political governance.

Rawls says,¹⁴ "A citizen engages in public reason, then, when he or she deliberates within a framework of what he or she sincerely regards as the most reasonable political conception of justice, a conception that expresses political values that others, as free and equal citizens might also reasonably be expected reasonably to endorse." He identifies the significance and relevance of public reason in five aspects. The first is on topics that must be discussed with public reason. According to him, we must use public reason when we deliberate the fundamental matters in politics. To these matters, public reason must function effectively. The second is on the persons who should apply public reason. According to Rawls, people who are obliged to apply public reason are public officials and the candidates of public officials. The third is on the content of public reason. It is formulated in a political conception of justice. This content is very fundamental to guiding the basic structure of society. The fourth is the laws and regulations produced by society. We need to guide the law-making process through the political conception of justice. The fifth is on the mechanism of review or examination. Citizens need to check whether the laws and regulations

that are made meet the criterion of reciprocity.¹⁵

The second aspect of the explanation above shows that public reason does not target ordinary citizens. It is primarily mandatory for persons in three main public political forums. First, the judges in the courts when considering decisions, specifically at the highest court level. Second, public officials, especially executive leaders in government and legislators in parliament. Third, candidates for public office and their campaign managers, especially when delivering public speeches, party platforms, and political statements. According to Rawls, the first forum, namely the judges' forum, is the most important and the most required to apply public reason.¹⁶ The judges' considerations must follow public reason.

What is about ordinary citizens who are not judges, public officials, and candidates for public office? Rawls says that ordinary people are recommended to be able to act as "public persons" who apply public reason. In simple terms, they can be said to have applied public reason when their views meet the principle of reciprocity. Through this capacity, they can determine the most reasonable considerations. When the capacity has become the character of public life, democracy will be established. This virtue will make citizens fulfill their duty of civility and realize the idea of public reason. Implementing this task is a moral duty for ordinary people, not a legal one. According to Rawls, if it is classified as a legal duty, it is not in line with the principle of freedom of speech and belief.¹⁷

The idea of public reason is sometimes misperceived as mere agreement. The example is a collective agreement in a theocratic state to make a religion of the majority a state basis. Samuel Freeman says this kind of agreement does not express public reason. Public reason is related to a democratic society that recognizes equality and freedom.¹⁸ To Rawls, not all agreements made by people can be called an expression of public reason. He defines public reason as a characteristic of a democratic society where all citizens have equal citizenship status without discrimination and stratification.¹⁹ Public reason guarantees the equal status of all citizens. So, it is not only a collective agreement but rather an agreement based on reasonableness. Specifically, Rawls explains that a reason could be called public if it fulfills three things. First, it is conveyed by reason of free and equal citizens. Second, the subject discussed is about the public good, which pays attention to the questions of political justice. The questions cover two issues, namely constitutional and fundamental justice issues. Third, the nature and the content are public and expressed in public reasoning within the framework of a reasonable conception of political justice that meets the criteria of reciprocity.²⁰ He then adds:

... those who believe that fundamental political questions should be decided by what they regard as the best reasons according to their own idea of the whole truth—including their religious or secular comprehensive doctrine—and not by reasons that might be shared by all citizens as free and equal, will, of course, reject the idea of public reason.²¹

Thus, citizens are involved in public reason when they deliberate with the most reasonable political conception of justice. Rawls understands this political conception of justice as a conception that expresses the political values that all free and equal citizens will support reciprocally.²² He underlines that public reason is not the same as the secular reason. He identifies secular reason as a kind of comprehensive doctrine in terms of non-religious.²³ In other words, the comprehensive doctrines that Rawls always mentions refer to religious views and secular views. So, a secular view does not automatically reflect political values. He substantively identifies reasonable people as those who comply with the political values or principle of reciprocity.²⁴

Rawls provides a more detailed explanation of the involvement of comprehensive doctrines in the political public sphere. In *Political Liberalism*, he seems to limit comprehensive doctrines strictly to involve in the political public sphere. Nevertheless, in “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” he seems to make it thinner, although there are still requirements. According to him, when discussing the fundamental questions of the political, citizens can include their comprehensive doctrines, whether religious or non-religious, as long as they provide the right public reason to support their views.²⁵ He is known as a philosopher who is quite strict in limiting the involvement of comprehensive doctrines in the political public sphere. However, the limitations that he put forward do not mean rejecting comprehensive doctrines’ involvement. The total separation between comprehensive doctrine and the political public sphere is almost impossible, but the unification will make a fair public life more difficult. Therefore, he proposes the possibility of comprehensive doctrines to engage in the political public sphere as the ideas proposed also follow public reason.

Samuel Freeman further explains the involvement of comprehensive doctrines in the political public sphere. According to him, in a society that is based on constitutional democracy, the public officials, of course, have values of comprehensive doctrines. However, although they have the values of comprehensive doctrines, they must be reasonable in public political forums. They must do reasonably by using arguments that are not derived

from their comprehensive doctrines, which are not accepted reciprocally. In Freeman's view, the provision also applies to ordinary citizens who are active in the political public sphere. He takes Martin Luther King as an example when he delivered the idea of civil and political rights inspired by his religious beliefs. Although his religious beliefs inspire his views, he conveys them in arguments that align with political values and are accepted reciprocally by other equal and free citizens.²⁶

Here, we see the importance of public reason in a democratic and well-ordered society. In particular, public reason only requires the implementation of three main groups representing the nature of the public. They are judges, public officials (executive, legislative, and bureaucrats), and candidates for public office. However, to make democracy and a well-ordered society more established, ordinary citizens are also expected to apply public reason. The obligation of ordinary citizens to apply public reason is a dilemma. On the one hand, the obligation can have implications for violating the freedom of belief because they are forced to believe what they do not. On the other hand, the non-obligation will create the risk of increasing views incompatible with public reason in public life. If it occurs, democracy and a well-ordered society will be under threat.

So, how should we place the idea of public reason in public reasoning among diverse people? Here, we state the importance of public reason in a democratic society by providing more flexibility and engagement to those who have not applied public reason. Aaron Ancell shows in responding to Rawls's fact of reasonable pluralism that we must be realistic to accept the fact of unreasonable people in public life. Based on empirical life, he argues that human reasoning is beset with obstacles that make people inclined to be unreasonable in moral and political matters.²⁷ However, when we engage in public deliberation, we must accept the importance of public reason, as Rawls shows. It helps people to understand the meaning of fairness. Indeed, the use of public reason must be realized more flexibly. We need to understand public reasoning as a space open to all people as long as they use critical reasoning. People have the right to engage in public reasoning as they recognize the principle of equal liberty for all. The rejection of this principle is absurd because it invalidates those who reject it. So, criticism of this principle is possible only if they accept it. Through this public reasoning, people will be more engaged in exercising their views in public discussion. The spirit that wants to be encouraged here is how to build fairer public reasoning to create a better and more just society.

In Search of a Fairer Public Life

Rawls's view on reasonableness is critical to be explored to understand the role of comprehensive doctrines, especially the religious-based, in public life. His view often becomes the moral basis for restricting the diverse views of comprehensive doctrines.²⁸ We say that the aspirations of religious groups cannot be ignored, nor can they be viewed arbitrarily as groups that should be excluded from the political public sphere. Instead of being trapped in a kind of secularism that discredits religion, it is better to enter the substantive views of religious views that do not always contradict the principles of justice. Indeed, religious adherents always see the socio-political reality from their comprehensive doctrines. Some may have an unreasonable and invasive view, but others are open-minded. Then, we need to find a model of genuinely fair public reasoning.

If we read Rawls's idea of public reason, one topic that arises is religion's role in public life. Religion has become one of the disputed comprehensive doctrines used to engage in public life. Some religious views are considered unreasonable. Western society's experience heavily influences Rawls's view, mainly Europeans in the Middle Ages and early modern times. At that time, religion had contributed to social and political conflicts. The claims of truth and salvation had killed heretics and different religious adherents. Religion was considered the most responsible institution for conflicts and wars. Europe once had become the center of conflict caused by different religious interpretations.²⁹ The way to end this dark age is by separating religion from the political public sphere. We call the separation the secularism phase in Western history, and it is considered the panacea to end conflicts. The European societies then entered a modern age and became well-ordered. To some extent, Rawls continues this idea through criticisms, modification, and refinement.

Rawls's idea of public reason attempts to make a fair public life among comprehensive doctrines. He does not want to exclude comprehensive doctrines from the public sphere with this idea. If they use public reason, they can participate in public life. However, Rawls's view is considered too strict. Some criticisms were delivered to Rawls. Charles Taylor identifies Rawls's view as "difference blind liberalism," in which his liberalism does not recognize diverse communities.³⁰ Troy Dostert, in *Beyond Political Liberalism*, assesses Rawls's political concept as politics of evasion, not politics of engagement.³¹ Chantal Mouffe, who represents the post-Marxist, considers Rawls's political conception a denial of the political.³² According to her, the political must be realized as accepting the differences, even to the most radical. Amartya Sen also criticizes Rawls's model of impartiality,

which falls into closed impartiality.³³ If we return to Rawls's idea, he wants to guarantee the principle of equal liberty for all, which is the essence of political values. Anyone can be involved in public political life if they accept the principle.

The guarantee of equal liberty for all is fundamental to the idea of public reason. By using public reason, all people reciprocally recognize others in the framework of equal liberty. Rawls perceives that the fact of plurality must be accepted. The relationship among plural citizens must be guaranteed to be equal. None of them have the right to subordinate others. He is very strict with comprehensive doctrine groups because of the whole truth claims inside them. A comprehensive doctrine with a heavy burden of metaphysical truth will be hard to reconcile with political values. Therefore, ethics and rules in public life are needed to avoid conflict among metaphysical claims. Through political liberalism, he emphasizes comprehensive doctrines to translate their views to be compatible with political values.

We also need to clarify that Rawls's idea of public reason is different from secular. He does not provide a special space for the seculars. The secular view is also comprehensive, namely the non-religious comprehensive doctrine. So, religious and secular doctrines must communicate and translate their ideas within political values. In a discussion with Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Jürgen Habermas conveyed that secular persons must understand the views of religious persons.³⁴ The exclusion of religious people from public life is unfair because not all religious views attack political values. Some religious views are crucial to justice, poverty eradication, and humanity. Habermas shares the same view as Rawls in that all people can participate in the public sphere if they accept the principle of public discourse.³⁵

Rawls's idea of public reason presupposes the concept of autonomy in persons who can know the conception of justice by themselves.³⁶ Michael Sandel criticizes that the idea behind this understanding is Immanuel Kant's autonomous subject.³⁷ According to Kant, the autonomous subject can make universal rules himself.³⁸ The problem is whether a truly autonomous subject is possible while individuals are always influenced by their community. In the communitarian perspective, individuals are conditioned by their community, so community values will be embedded in individuals. Based on this argument, the truly autonomous person is absurd.

However, we cannot conclude that individuals cannot think critically. The values of the community, of course, influence individuals, but at the same time, they can think critically in public reasoning.³⁹ People can

critically make decisions, although the values of the community influence them. Being capable of making a decision critically is fundamental. The individuals are indeed in the tension between the influence of community and critical subject. Although community values influence individuals, they can reduce the truth claims in their comprehensive doctrines when they deliberate in a public discussion. Public reasoning can be a place of values exchange, and people can critically seek the most reasonable options for their lives.

Amartya Sen is one of those who encourage public reasoning to be open. He formulates the concept of “open impartiality.” Through this concept, we must make public discussion not limited to the citizenship framework. He criticizes Rawls’s model of impartiality as public reasoning limited only to those who are tied by citizenship contracts. This model of impartiality is categorized as “closed impartiality.” According to Sen, this kind of impartiality is no longer adequate in accommodating a broad perspective of society. If we seek justice, our considerations should not be limited only to those called citizens. For him, this process is fundamental to the idea of justice. If we accept the principle of humanity as a postulate, then fair consideration should go beyond the formalistic boundaries of citizenship. The concept of closed impartiality is considered inadequate because this concept only accepts considerations from those who are part of citizenship.⁴⁰

Sen solves this problem through the concept of open impartiality. He gives three reasons why open impartiality is relevant to make a fairer public reasoning. First, Rawls’s theory of impartiality is limited to those who are bound by social contract. In other words, Rawls’s impartial consideration only comes from those referred to as citizens. For Sen, impartial consideration should go beyond the social contract or the limit of citizenship. Second, a decision from a particular country will also influence the community outside the country. He gives the example of the United States occupation of Iraq in 2003, which was based only on an impartial consideration of the community of a particular country, while the decision has profound implications for those outside the United States of America. Third, the considerations and inputs of people outside the boundaries of citizenship are significant to enrich the perspective in overcoming a problem and understanding justice.⁴¹

In the context of making a fair public life, Sandel advocates justice that emphasizes the virtues of living together in diversity. He said, “To achieve a just society we have to reason together about the meaning of the good life, and to create a public culture hospitable to the disagreements that

will inevitably arise.”⁴² He tries to translate virtue ethics in responding to diversity appropriately. Virtue ethics is not a black-and-white perspective in judging a problem. The principle of justice based on virtue emphasizes the process of going back and forth between the decisions to be made and the principles that are held to arrive at a truly right decision, “the right thing to do,” and “the right way to value.” The decision reached is not only a solitary achievement but also the result of the public process. According to him, to make a decision, we need an interlocutor who can provide notes and considerations.⁴³ The interlocutor should not be real. It can also be in an imaginary form. His view inspires the demand to build a public life to be more open.

The Reasonable and Unreasonable People

We must develop public reasoning to be a fair space for public discussion. Fair public life is crucial to building a more just society. Here, we need to evaluate Rawls’s concept of unreasonableness specifically. He categorizes comprehensive doctrines applying public reason as reasonable. However, in every society, there are always groups who cannot apply public reason. Rawls calls such a group unreasonable. Thus, he divides comprehensive doctrine into these two categories: reasonable and unreasonable. The category of unreasonable is too broad. All groups that do not apply public reason are categorized as unreasonable. Rawls identifies the group as a serious threat to democracy.

Labeling those who do not apply political values as unreasonable is problematic because it seems arbitrary. In *Beyond Political Liberalism*, Troy Dostert criticizes this view by pointing out a model of religious views represented by conservative theologian John Howard Yoder. His religious model concentrates a lot on the faith he believes in as a Christian rather than translating his view to be compatible with political values. Yoder has always seen public issues within the framework of his faith.⁴⁴ According to Dostert, Rawls would include Yoder’s views in the category of unreasonable comprehensive doctrine. If we accept this view, we make democracy not really to be translated to explore the various views held in society. In other words, Rawls’s understanding does not give a true model of a democratic society. Thus, Dostert sees a severe problem with Rawls’s model. It is considered less accommodating to diverse views, but it also closes the possibility of finding a fairer public life.

If we go back to Rawls’s basic idea, he cares about protecting political values or the principle of reciprocity in public life. The question then is whether Yoder and other people who understand the reality in the

frame of their faith attack and violate political values. Here, we see the incompatibility instead of the violation. In incompatibility, they do not intend to attack and violate political values. Hence, as long as Yoder's view does not violate political values, we think his religious expressions need not be categorized as unreasonable, even though he always reads public problems within the framework of his faith. We only consider a view a severe threat to democracy when the view has violated political values in the public sphere. Roberta Sala proposes an alternative to include the people categorized as unreasonable in public life. He defends the model of stable *modus vivendi* as a place that includes the "non-reasonable" people, but he emphasizes that the people must support the liberal institutions.⁴⁵ The *modus vivendi* is an agreement among conflicting parties in which the parties can reach a mutual agreement temporarily. Here, we can accept the existence of non-reasonable people as long as they do not violate political values. Thus, the comprehensive doctrines threatening democracy are only those who intend to violate political values in public life. Religious or non-religious people can be this kind of comprehensive doctrine. Gabriele Badano and Alasia Nuti show that the rise of right-wing populism can be identified as a threat to Rawls's political liberalism.⁴⁶ Secular groups that support the supremacy of the whites are a denial of the equality of all citizens. They, of course, can severely threaten public life and democracy.

Religious people only view the world from the perspective of their faith, and they do not intend to violate political values. This act is not a severe threat to public life and democracy. This religious model is less than ideal in the framework of a democratic society. In order to build an established democracy, we need comprehensive doctrines that firmly commit to political values. However, we need to note that so many and even almost comprehensive religious doctrines understand the world in the frame of their faith. It is normal as long as, at the same time, they also have an open-mindedness to different views in public life. If we refer to Clifford Geertz, he understands the function of culture as the way people see the world.⁴⁷ Thus, it is normal for religious persons to see the world through their faith. However, although cultural values profoundly influence people's views, they do not automatically violate political values. They indeed do not use public reason, but they will not necessarily attack it. Thus, we need to underline that not all comprehensive doctrines that do not use public reason will automatically violate political values.

Based on this argument, we need to classify the categories of comprehensive doctrine in more detail. There is indeed a comprehensive doctrine that is genuinely unreasonable and threatens political values.

Such groups can be identified as a severe threat to democracy. On the other hand, some comprehensive doctrines always see social and political problems through their faith, but they do not automatically violate political values. We can call this kind of comprehensive doctrine “in-between,” that is, between reasonable and unreasonable. The category is probably quite large, but their position in a democratic society cannot be judged as a serious threat. They may come from religious groups, ethnicities, and ideological groups. Although they are not a severe threat to democracy, their position is inherently fragile. They can slip into the category of unreasonable comprehensive doctrine, and at the same time, they can also be easily drawn to political values. Like many comprehensive doctrines, the most important thing for them is the space to live under their cultural values. They can accept public policies or laws as long as their cultural values are not demeaned. However, when their cultural values are demeaned in the name of the “public,” they will respond to the policies inappropriately or even fall into anti-political values. Thus, we need to pay attention to this comprehensive doctrine by providing appropriate and measured treatments. As long as they are treated appropriately, they are not a severe threat to public life and democracy.

Indeed, it is crucial to make such groups more compatible with political values. Nevertheless, the process must be carried out engagingly. Here, we also need to understand public reasoning as a learning process to seek the meaning of justice in public life. We need to perceive the importance of public reasoning as an open and critical search in the public sphere. In order to make public life more reasonable, we need to encourage reasonable groups to play a more active role in public life. The quality of democracy depends on how far reasonable groups enlarge and promote public reason in public life. They also need to actively persuade the “comprehensive doctrines in-between” and even the unreasonable comprehensive doctrines to use public reason. On the other hand, internally comprehensive doctrine in-between or even the unreasonable also needs to develop views to be more compatible with political values. A more participatory democracy does require a longer time. Here, public reasoning and democracy are understood in engaging and educating processes to build a fair public life.

As Habermas emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding among religious and secular persons, many universal values can come from religious convictions. There are virtues that may be universal in some communities. The virtues like tolerance, charity, moderation, and benevolence are community characteristics that can be used as essential social capital to live on a broader scale.⁴⁸ The characters can be seen as

the derivation of the reciprocity principle, which is the main idea of reasonableness. Nevertheless, the importance of these characters is viewed in the framework of community values. People always see the world through their cultural perspective. Insofar as people act following virtues that are accepted by others, their actions are publicly acceptable.

In public life, in addition to the reality of diverse views, we must underline people's diverse abilities and ways of communication. All people certainly want to present their views in public life. At the same time, they have different abilities and ways of communicating their views. They can engage in public discussions as long as they accept the principle of equal freedom for all. In this kind of public reasoning, all parties must learn, acknowledge, and accept each other's diversity to seek a better life. Thus, there is a function of education and learning in the public sphere. Fuat Gursozlu has proposed an interpretation of Rawls's political liberalism to be more educative and active in transforming the unreasonable groups in public life.⁴⁹ Instead of being too strict on comprehensive doctrines that have not been able to apply public reason, it would be better to embrace and educate the "in-between" groups to learn the meaning of political values and fair relations in public life.

We can show the relevance of this approach in the case of religious groups in Indonesia. We have many religious organizations that are compatible with political values. Their contribution to building a better and fairer life is constructive and positive. Islamic religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, as well as non-Islamic religious organizations, have made many contributions to strengthening justice and democracy, alleviating poverty, and strengthening education.⁵⁰ We have to highlight that what they provide is based on the religious values and faith they believe in but can be accepted by many other groups outside them. Although faith becomes the basis, it is not always particular, but it also can be a universal value that other parties can accept. Their role in public space is crucial, and hopefully, they can persuade the in-between groups to be more reasonable.

Thus, it would be inappropriate if the role of such groups were ignored in our collective lives. We need to continue encouraging them to contribute positively to public life based on their faith values. However, we need to underline the people who, from the beginning, are offensive to political values and do not open themselves to learning how to build a more just public life. Here, we can state that they are a threat to democracy and justice. They do not always come from religious groups. They can also come from groups that are not based on religion. They are a group

that rejects the existence of other groups and sees themselves as the social foundation. The movement space of such groups must be limited in public life. Democracy and public reasoning are spaces for all parties who want to build a better public life by providing a broad space for participation. However, we must firmly discipline those who attack political values and limit their movement. They are a severe threat to democracy and justice, so they must be limited; otherwise, they will damage democracy and justice.

Conclusion

The capacity of people to use public reason is essential to build a democratic and just society. However, in building fairer public reasoning, we need to pay attention to two things. First, the public reasoning process must be made broader and open to everyone who wants to create a better public life. All people have the right to contest their views as long as they are open to criticism and listen to others. This criterion derives from the principle that all people have equal liberty. One group is not higher than the other. Second, it is related to the concept of unreasonableness. In Rawls's view, people who do not use public reason are categorized as unreasonable. Of course, as we state here, public reason is essential to build an established democracy and justice. However, we need to look in more detail that not all people who do not use public reason are categorized as unreasonable. The measure is not the capacity to use public reason. The essential measure is whether the group attacks political values or not. One group may not use public reason, but at the same time, they do not attack political values. This group still has a chance to participate in public life. Thus, we can make democracy and public reasoning more engaging and fairer by paying attention to these two things.

Endnotes

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