How the People of Aceh Perceive Western and Islamic Democracy (A Study Based on Political Marketing Approach)

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to analyze the comparison of Acehnese perceptions towards the application of western democracy and Islamic democratic system or democracy containing Islamic values in Aceh based on political marketing approach. The study was done by the end of 2016 in Aceh Province (Indonesia) by using a qualitative approach. Samples were chosen based on purposive sampling as many as 22 people who understood democracy either theoretically or practically, then interviewed in depth at a separate place. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively by using the approach of political marketing theory. The study found some interesting findings, among others, first: the western democratic system was initially accepted by the people of Aceh but they were not satisfied with the performance of elected leaders through the western democratic system. Second, Islam has its own system of democracy applied through *Ahlul Halli wal 'Aqdi*. Third, the people of Aceh perceived positively to the democracy of Islam or democracy containing Islamic values because through such a democratic system was expected to be elected leader who truly represented the people of Aceh, a trustful leader, a leader who thought for all the people of Aceh instead of thinking only his party, a leader who executed sharia law in all aspects of Islam *(kaffah)*, a leader who was really serious about eradicating corruption, and restoring Aceh to its prime-time glory. This type of leader will not be obtained through the application of western democratic system.

Keywords: political marketing, Western democracy, Islamic democracy, perception.

Introduction

Various definitions have been given by experts on understanding political marketing. But in general political marketing includes the marketing of policies, ideas, concepts and opinions relating to political issues, or concerning the issues of the prospective leaders themselves. Viewed from the side of political marketing, leaders who have been elected through democratic elections mean they have been able to market political products such as themselves, their ideas and their concepts about something so that people are confident that the elected leaders and their ideas are expected to bring improvements to the areas they lead to both physical improvements (hard facilities) as well as improvements in various areas of non-physical life such as improvements in social conditions, economic prosperities, cultures and other non-physical advances.

The governors of Aceh elected directly through democratic elections are three times, namely in 2007, in 2012, and in 2017, while the members of the DPRA elected by direct elections only two times, namely the elections in 2008 and in 2013, but Aceh is also not so advanced from the economic and cultural side. For example local media such as Serambi Indonesia daily newspaper (2016) often reviews Aceh's low economic growth that is always around 4.2% per year, unemployment in Aceh is still above the national average, the quality of education in Aceh is still ranked 30 out of 33 provinces in Indonesia and diverse cases of corruptions in Aceh, whereas Aceh's development budget is one of the regions with the largest budget in Indonesia because of special autonomy funds. Next, the study of Zulkifli (2017) only talked about the Acehnese who hated western-style democracy, but practiced more brutal democracy than westerners, while Jamil (2014) revealed that the practice of democracy in Aceh is quite expensive. Furthermore, Abukar (2017) observed that democracy in Aceh is considered incapable of impacting the welfare of the people. All these studies do not analyze alternative democracies that can be possibility of applied in Aceh. On the contrary, according to Natsir (1987:38), Suny (1987: 7) and Abdoerraoef (1991:205) that Islamic democracy has its own unique pattern because sovereignty is not in the people but sovereignty is in God. The pattern of Islamic democracy is actually more suitable for the state of Indonesia.

On the basis of some literatures studied, there has been no study of how the Acehnese people's perception of liberal democracy used in the governance system in Aceh, and how the perception of the Acehnese people if Aceh uses the system of Islamic democratic government. Therefore, based on political marketing approach this study tries to analyze the research gap qualitatively regarding the perception of the people of Aceh about the use of western democracy and possible prospects of use Islamic democracy in Aceh.

Theoretical Background
Western Democracy
The most common definition of democracy used by social scientists is the definition proposed by Joseph Schumpeter in his book Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy. According to him democracy is an institutional arrangement to achieve political decisions whereby individuals gain power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the voice of the people (Schumpeter, 1943:263).

Western democracy that often also called liberal democracy is the western political ideology and form of a government where the government is based on the system of indirect democracy or representative democracy. The western democratic system has several characteristics, such as: fair, free, and competitive elections among various political parties (multiple distinct political parties), separation of powers into various smaller powers (separation of powers into different branches of government), life and the daily activities of citizens are open and based on the rule of law, equal protection of human rights, civil rights and freedom in matters of civil liberties and political freedoms for all citizens. Practically, to further describe the western democracy is enacted in the form of a constitution (often drawn upon a constitution), either formally or uncodified, as well as strengthening social contracts.

Some countries based on the western democracy apply federalism-this system is also known as vertical separation of powers - in order to prevent the abuse of power, and to prevent increasing public input through power sharing between municipal, provincial and national government. In practice, a western democracy may exist in various forms such as a constitutional monarchy (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Japan, Norway, Spain and United Kingdom) or a republic (France, India, Ireland, and United States). It may have a parliamentary system (Australia, India, Ireland, the United Kingdom), a presidential system (Indonesia, the United States),

or a semi-presidential system (France). Due to the various advantages of the western democratic system then the western democratic system has survived for the full 20th century, nowadays the western democracy system becomes the predominant political system in the world (2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/western_democracy).

Islamic Democracy

Qur'an gives direction on how to democratize in Islam. In *surah* (chapter) Ali Imran verse 159 Allah says which means *"And consult with them (the people) in the matters of the state"*. Next, in *surah* (chapter) Asy Syuura verse 38 Allah says which means "…*who runs the government by deliberation among them ..."*. The both of verses command Muslims to deliberate on society *(muamalah)* issues so that the verses can be the basic principles of Islamic democracy. With regard to the basic democracy, according to Abdoerraoef (1971:227) the Islamic political system is a system we now call a democratic system. He defines democracy as a system that includes self-government, the political participation of its members, spiritual freedom and equality before the law.

With regard to the election of leaders in a democratic manner, Al-Mawardi argues that the caliphate is carried out by two institutions: first, the institution of *ahlul ikhtiyar* until the institution is able to elect a priest (a leader) for the people. The fiqh scholars named the institution as *"ahlul halli wal 'aqdi"* while Al Mawardi and some other scholars call it *"ahlul ikhtiyar"* (qualified persons to select a leader). This is because the members of the institution are people who have special qualifications, they are the real representatives of the people and the persons who are given the mandate to choose the caliph. Therefore, *ahlul hilli wal aqdi* is the representative body of the people whose main task is to choose the caliph among themselves then approved by all the people.

Associated with the form of democracy, Natsir (1987:38), Suny (1987:7) and Abdoerraoef (1991:205) argues that sovereignty is in God. Furthermore, Suny (1987:7) argues that ultimate sovereignty exists in God, while the power of the people is a sacred trust that must be within the limits of God's will.

The Practice of Islamic Democracy

Based on Islamic history, the model of democracy in Islam has some alternative patterns. *The first model*, the democracy exemplified directly by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In the first model, Prophet Muhammad SAW as sole leader in all aspects of life both state life as well as social life. This is because the Prophet is given perfection in all matters (e.g., executive, legislative, and judicative, literary, social, cultural and religious matters). In the first period, Prophet Muhammad SAW laid the foundations and exemplified how the state was governed democratically. *The second model* of democracy can be known when Abubakar was chosen to be the caliph through the process of Islamic democracy. Deliberation in Saqifah which was attended by at least two big groups namely Anshar and Mahjirin was aimed to choose who was the most appropriate leader (caliph) to replace Muhammad SAW. According to Rais (2001:129) there was no conflict of opinion between the various reports that the Saqifah meeting ended with the election of Abu Bakr R.A. as the first caliph. *The third model* of democracy appeared when Abu Bakr R.A. felt the death of his death was near enough, while the Islamic liberation war *(futuhat islamiyah)* began to spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula by fighting in two different areas against the Persians and Romans. In such a precarious condition, Abu Bakr R.A. was very worried about the unity of Muslims will be fragmented. According to Rais (2001:134), on the basis of such conditions, he initiated to appoint a successor directly among his companions, so that the split of Muslims that ever happened in Saqifah after the death of Rasulullah SAW did not happen again. So, he chose one of

the strongest and most capable friends in the situation, Umar R.A., after deliberating first with the friends who had the qualification of consulates *(Ahlul Halli wal 'Aqdi)*. *The fourth model of democracy.* In the process of death, Umar r.a. appointed six main friends, namely: Abdurrahman bin Auf, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqash, Utsman bin Affan, Ali bin Abu Talib, Az-Zubair bin Awwam, and Thalhah bin Ubaidillah to deliberate and choose one of them as a leader *(khalifah)*, after asking the crowd (Rais, 2001:134). Now, the six members are often referred to or named as *majelis shura* (consultative council) are the best choice people at the time. Umar said, "I did not see anyone who was more worthy to be a caliph than them. Umar added that when will die, Rasulullah SAW very pleased with them. So, whoever was elected, he was the caliph after me.

After Umar R.A. died, the problem of who was favored by the people among the six men of the *shura* then the *shura assemblies* handed over the investigation and deliberation with the people to one of them, namely Abdurrahman bin Auf. After continuous deliberations with the community for three days, he found that most of the people preferred Utsman bin Affan as the successor of Umar's caliphate.

Perception
Perception is a process by which individuals arrange and infer their sensory impressions so as to give meaning to their environment (Robin and Judge, 2006:130).The scholars of psychology deeply request why do individuals perceive the same stimulus diversely ?. In political marketing, we can ask how people (voters) respond to the same political issue in diverse ways ?. Very diverse factors that play a role to shape people's perceptions. According to Robin and Judge (2006:130) there are three factors that influence perception, namely: perceiver, target being perceived, and situation. Another scholar, Kotler (2006:186) argues that perception depends on how one understands the object of the stimulus that enters the sensation which flows through our five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

In political marketing, attribution theory is a theory that can be used to build up explanations of the manners in which people perceive political issues. Mainly, the theory suggests that when scholar or expert observes the people's behavior he attempts to find out whether it is internally or externally caused. The factors are then grouped into three main groups, namely: distinctiveness, consensus and consistency. An exciting finding from the attribution theory is that there are many errors or biases which deviate from true perception. For example, there is a substantial indication that when people make conclusion about the issue, they have a predisposition to undervalue the influence of external things and overvalue the influence of internal or personal things. Such deviation is called the *fundamental attribution error* and by using the deviation the experts can explain why people are prone to attribute the bad perception of a positive issue. Another theory that can be used to explain the people's perception is contrast effect theory. Based on the contrast effect theory, people do not evaluate an object in isolation. Their reactions to an object are influenced by other objects that they have recently seen. So, the people evaluations of an object are affected by comparisons with other objects they currently have seen.

Research Method
The research was done by the end of 2016 in Aceh Province (Indonesia). The study population is the communities of Aceh who have graduated at least a bachelor's degree and/or understands democracy both practically and theoretically. Based on two criteria then 22 samples selected by using purposive sampling. 9 samples from eastern Aceh, 9 samples from western part of Aceh and 4 more samples from central Aceh. All samples interviewed consisting of 11 samples having a religious

background and another 11 samples having general science background. Data were collected through direct, structured and in-depth discussions with each sample in a separate place. Then the samples or respondents were asked to which degree they agree with the statements, using a scale of a three-point scale (ranging from 1 to 3). 1 = favorable, 2 = neutral and 3 unfavorable. The data has gathered was analyzed by qualitative based on political marketing approach.

Results and Discussions

The Performance of Western Democratic System

Historically, there have been three times the Aceh Governors elected directly through democratic elections in 2007, 2012 and 2017 while members of Aceh's House of Representatives (DPRA) elected directly through the general election were twice, in 2008 and 2013. Viewed from the side of political marketing, governors and their success team, for example, have done political marketing promotion through the visions, missions, goals and objectives delivered during the campaign. In the visions, missions, goals and targets described what will be achieved for the next five years. The messages conveyed are ideas and promises that are beneficial to the people or voters so that people will choose them. This finding is quite in line with the results of studies conducted by Norris and Holz-Bacha (2001), McGraw (2003), and De Landtsheer et al (2010) and showing that the figure of an attractive candidate and various ways used during the campaign influence the will of the electorate to elect him.

On average, according to the respondents only 43.67% of the leader's performance can be met. In other words, the elected leaders have failed to provide benefits to the people in accordance with the promotions or promises they have made during the campaign. This finding does not fit with the opinion of O'Shaughnessy (2002). According to him political marketing is a concept that offers how a political party or a candidate for leader can create a program that deals with actual problems. The following table shows the public response to the performance of elected political leaders through the western democratic system in Aceh province.

Table 1. Public perceptions of leaders performance elected through the Western Democratic System

No	Descriptions	Achievement of Performance (%)
1	Economic growth	39
2	Social justice	31
3	People's welfare	48
4	The practice of religion	39
5	Advances in education	43
	Total	43,67 %

Source: Interview results, November and December, 2016

The Perception of Society toward Islamic Democracy

65.66% of respondents agree that Islamic democracy or democracy containing Islamic values is the choice of the political system in Aceh to build a glorious Aceh again. They believe that Islam has its own system of democracy implemented through *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi* system. Through this system the elected persons who are members of the *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi* institution are not party representatives, not regional representatives or representatives of anyone but they are the best choice people or the best people selected who have the nature of trust or trustworthy persons. After the institution of *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi* is formed then they choose the executive leader among them, and then verified by the people as a whole. Based on the method, it is probable that the elected leader is just guardian of justice, does not represent anyone except work for the whole people and is solely responsible to the

Divine. As many as 23.74% say they disagreed about Islam having its own democratic system. This is because they interpret the religion of Islam is too narrow from the perspective of primary worship alone, while political issues are not a matter of religion. Furthermore, 10.60% of them do not give any opinion because they lack understanding of religion in political conception and *muamalah* (community affairs). The following table is the public perception of Islamic democracy in Aceh Province.

Table 2. The perception of society toward Islamic democracy in Aceh Province.

No.	Descriptions	Favorable (%)	Neutral (%)	Unfavorable (%)
1	Islam has its own concept of democracy	59.00%	22.72%	18.18%
2	Islam has its own system of government	68.18%	4.55%	27.27%
3	There is no party in the Islamic democratic system	40.91	9.09%	50.00%
4	Leaders are elected not directly by the people, but through the system of *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi*	63.64%	13.64%	22.72%
5	Nonpolitical officials or career officials are appointed directly by the leader (caliph)	59.00%	9.09%	31.82%
6	In an Islamic democracy, governor, the regent/mayor is appointed by the caliph *(khalifah)*, not elected by the people	50.00%	13.64%	36.36%
7	In deciding on a worldly matter the caliph deliberated with the *rakyi team* (the clever people or scholars)	72.73%	4.55%	22.72%
8	Officials of both political and career officials if guilty are dismissed	100.0%	00.00%	00.00%
9	The budget allocation is based on agreement between the caliph and *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi or rakyi team*	77.27%	18.18%	4.55%
	Average (%)	65.66%	10.60%	23.74%

Source: Interview results, November and December, 2016

Desirable Leaders, Islamic and Western Democratic System

Through Islamic democracy or democracy containing Islamic values, it is expected to be elected leaders of trust, fair and honest so that the leaders really work for the benefit of the people to achieve prosperity not only in the worldly context but also far ahead of happiness in the afterlife. 86.36% of respondents believe that the Islamic democracy system or democracy containing Islamic values will prevent the election of pagan leaders (non-Muslim leaders) or temporary kufr (unbelief), while only 36.36% of respondents believe that the western democratic system can prevent the election of pagan leaders or leaders from the infidels. Furthermore, on average, 81.31% of respondents also believe that the Islamic democracy system is a means for the election of leaders who are trustworthy, honest, competent and able to restore the glory of Aceh as it once was. On the contrary, only 44.95% of Acehnese believe that by applying the western democratic system it will also be elected trustworthy, honest and competent leaders. Therefore, based on political marketing perspective I should suggest to related institutions such as the Aceh Representative Council (DRPA) to promote and convince the people of Aceh to consider that the western democratic system is replaced by the Islamic democratic system or democracy containing Islamic values. The following table shows the

public's perception of the elected leader as expected through the political system of Islamic and western democracies.

Table 3. The perception of society towards the election of desirable leaders through the Islamic and Western Democratic Systems.

No	Descriptions	Islamic Democracy	Western Democracy
1	To prevent the election of leaders from the infidels (Ali Imran, verse 28; An-Nisa ', verse 144; Al-Maidah, verse 51 and 57)	86.36%	36.36%
2	To avoid the election of leaders who taunt and mock Islam (Al-Maidah, verse 57)	81.82%	31.82%
3	To prevent the election of leaders who are hostile to Islam and Allah (Al Mumtahanah, verse 1)	72.73%	27.27%
4	To avoid the election of a leader who is more inclined to kufr (unbelief) than faith (At-Taubah, verse 23).	77.27%	36.36%
5	Can be elected obedient, trustful, honest and committed leader	86.36%	40.91%
6	To filter the competent leaders	68.18%	45.45%
7	To filter a leader who not only pay attention to his group (his party)	81.81%	72.72%
8	To filter and to get the leaders who are able to apply Islamic law in a kaffah (implement the teachings of Islam in totality)	90.91%	50.00%
9	To filter and to get the leaders who can restore the glory of Aceh as before	86.36%	63.63%
	Total	81.31%	44.95%

Source: Interview results, November and December, 2016

Managerial Implications

From the analysis of this study, there are several implications of research, among others, are as follows: *first*, in the context of political marketing perspectives, elected Aceh leaders through election conducted on the basis of western democracy have failed to provide satisfaction to the people of Aceh or its consumers. Therefore, candidates for leaders in Aceh should be through campaigns or other campaigns trying to be able to convince the majority of the people of Aceh if Aceh implements democratic Islamic system or western democracy but contains Islamic norms it will be more likely development in Aceh be faster because through a democratic system containing various Islamic values will be elected trustful and honest leaders who build Aceh seriously. *Second*, viewed from the perspective of political marketing, the candidate for leaders (governors, mayors and regents) should apply various political marketing strategies in order to convince voters to accept their concepts or ideas, and then they try to convince voters again to elect them later in the election. One of the political marketing strategies they can use is to instill the confidence of the voters that if they are elected they will apply the Islamic democratic system or democracy containing Islamic values to elect the leaders, and through such an electoral system will be able to give prosperity to all the people of Aceh in the future.

Conclusions

Based on the above descriptions regarding the perception of the people of Aceh to the Islamic and western democracy, it can be drawn some conclusions and suggestions as follows:

1. Viewed from the perspective of political marketing, the concept of Islamic democracy, the candidates for leaders such as governors, mayors and regents are political products that can be offered to the political market (voters or people living in a country). Therefore, when a candidate for leader is able to convince voters to vote for him, to accept his campaigned ideas we can say he has been able to market himself and his ideas to his voters in the political markets he has targeted before.

2. In the context of political marketing perspective, Aceh's elected leaders through elections based on the western democracy have failed to provide satisfaction to the people of Aceh or its consumers (the political markets). This is based on the fact that on average only 43.67% of the leader's performance is able to be realized, when compared with promotions or promises that they conveyed during the campaigns.

3. 86.36% of respondents agree that Islamic democracy is the right choice of democratic model in Aceh in order to build a glorious Aceh again. They believe that Islam has its own system of democracy implemented through *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi* system. Through this system people sitting in *Ahlu Hilli wal Aqdi* institution are not party representatives, not regional representatives or representatives of anybody but they are individuals chosen because they have been proven to have the nature of trust, fair and honest.

4. On average, as many as 86.36% of respondents perceive that the Islamic democracy system will be able to prevent the election of leaders from infidels, unruly, dishonest, incompetent and unable leaders to restore the glory of Aceh as it once was. On the basis of it, attributed to the rate of development of Aceh province in the future respondents feel very optimistic if the democratic system of Islam or democracy containing Islamic values applied in Aceh and vice versa they feel quite pessimistic if the western democratic system is still applied in Aceh.

5. Based on the Islamic democratic system the elected leaders are accountable to God. That is, how far they have done based on *syar'i* (in accordance with the teachings of Islam) both the method and the substance that are ordered by religion to be implemented by the leaders.

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