



# Sociological Approach in Islamic Studies: an Interaction Between Religion and Social Society

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**Abstract:** The sociological approach in Islamic studies serves as a methodology for understanding the characteristics and stratification of social groups, especially in the context of science. Sociological studies are important in Islam because they show the close relationship between religious teachings and the social reality of society. Through this approach, social phenomena related to worship and transactions can be analyzed more comprehensively. Therefore, scientists began to study Islam using a social science perspective. The application of this approach is seen in studies such as the living Qur'an and living Hadith, which present the functional dimensions of religion in the life of society. Its contribution, the sociological approach broadens the understanding of religion, not only in the theological aspect, but also in its relationship to social dynamics, making religion more relevant and contextual in everyday life.

**Keywords:** Islamic Study; Religion; Sociology; Social society

## Intoduction

Religion and humans are two things that cannot be separated in this life. Religion has an important position in the sustainability of society. It exists in the layers and positions of society. The behavior of society in everyday life is certainly influenced by their religious concepts. Religion exists not only to be used as a sacred form but is broader than that. Religion does not only talk about faith, morals or theology. So that some tools are needed to gain an understanding of religion beyond its sacredness (Hill & Pargament, 2017).

Methods for understanding Islamic studies are very necessary in order to achieve a clear and precise understanding. Then to display the vast intellectual treasures and heritage from the past to the present, and this method is used to find out the scope of the teachings of Islamic studies themselves. There are several approaches to understanding Islamic studies. Among

them are the anthropological, sociological, philosophical, historical, socio-historical and phenomenological approaches. Each approach examines specific problems from various religious problems so that the proper study objectives can be achieved. Basically, any approach used in studying Islamic studies must have advantages and disadvantages, so there is no perfect approach.

The sociological approach method emphasizes the complex social system of society and ignores the kinship system. This is different from the anthropological approach which prioritizes a society that is closely related to kinship (Cveček, 2024). Without a sociological approach, the events that occur are difficult to understand (Fahmi, 2020). Therefore, the sociological approach is side by side with other approaches in an effort to understand Islamic studies in the social life of society.

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A sociological approach to Islamic studies is an important method for understanding the relationship between Islamic teachings and the social dynamics of society. This approach broadens the Islamic perspective by depicting the interaction between religion and social reality, resulting in a more comprehensive and contextual understanding.

A sociological approach to Islamic studies is an important method for understanding the relationship between Islamic teachings and the social dynamics of society (Malik et al., 2022; Miftahuddin, 2020; Syihabuddin et al., 2024; Ulum et al., 2023). This approach broadens the Islamic perspective by depicting the interaction between religion and social reality, resulting in a more comprehensive and contextual understanding.

## Method

The method used in this article is a qualitative method or library research where research is conducted based on published manuscripts either through books or journals related to the discussion written. The research method used is descriptive-analytical, namely by collecting various information about sociology and Islamic studies and secondary sources in the form of books, papers, journals and related literature. Then analyzing how Islamic studies through a sociological approach become an interaction between society and religion (Rusmana, 2015).

## Result and Discussion

### *About Sociological Approach*

Approach can be defined as a perspective or paradigm found in a field of science. In this context, the science in question is the science used in understanding religion (Andrean et al., 2020). Meanwhile, sociology, etymologically, the word sociology comes from Latin which consists of the word "socius" which means friend and "logos" which means science. While in terminology, sociology is a science that studies social structures and social processes including social changes.

Sociology is a science that discusses what is happening today, especially patterns of relationships in society (Adibah, 2017). Then the object of sociology itself is society as seen from the perspective of the relationship between humans and the processes that arise from social relations in society. Sociology is a social science whose object is society, which is empirical, theoretical and cumulative, and does not deal with good and bad (Bakhtiar & Marwan, 2016).

Sociology is a scientific study of human social life that seeks to find out about the nature and causes of various patterns of human thought and action that are

regular and can be repeated (Ismah, 2020). Max Weber defines sociology as a science that seeks to understand social actions (Adibah, 2017). On the other hand, Bouman defines that sociology is a science that studies human life in groups. With the interconnectedness of one human being to another in society, there are social traits and ideas that grow together that accompany it. Meanwhile, the sociology of religion according to Joachim Wach, he formulated that the study of the broad interrelation of religion and society and the forms that occur between them (Khoiruddin, 2014).

### *History of the Development of Islamic Studies*

Islamic studies in the Middle Ages were still particular patterns that did not describe comprehensive religious phenomena so that Islamic studies had not been recognized by historians in religious studies and were only seen as a study of sacredness. Then Islamic studies developed into a general pattern that describes Islamic studies in classical times using the paradigm of pluralism (Adiyono et al., 2024). This led to the expansion of the area of Islamic studies. Then, the direction of Islamic studies expanded along with the development of science and technology. Initially, Islamic studies focused on theology, revelation and conception of thought, then developed into the realm of historical studies, pluralism, values and outlook on life. During this development period, the expansion of regional studies to several countries, namely the Middle East, the Soviet Union, Southeast Asia and others (Abdullah, 2000).

Then, seen from the perspective of sociological development, since its birth, sociology has paid attention to religious studies, although it has strengthened or weakened. So from the previous explanation, it can be concluded that Islam is no longer understood as the understanding of previous people who only focused on theological areas, monotheism, guidelines for life or worship, but broader than that, namely Islam is closely related to historical-empirical issues. According to Amin Abdullah, the study of Islamic studies in the socio-religious area, there is something called sacred and profane (Abdullah, 2000). So, Islamic studies do not only rely on the sacred but are broader than that.

The scope of Islamic studies, namely religion as an object, can be seen from the side of the doctrine of God which for its adherents is final in the absolute sense and accepted as it is. Then as a cultural phenomenon, namely all that is human creation in relation to religion, including people's understanding of their religious doctrine. And finally as social interaction, namely the reality of Muslims (Bakhtiar & Marwan, 2016).

### *Sociological Approach of Religion in Islamic Studies*

In the context of Islamic studies, the sociological approach used is the sociology of religion which contains how sociology views religion. By looking at how religion relates to events or phenomena that occur in society. So, the material object of the sociology of religion is a religious society, while the formal object is the empirical sociological phenomenon of the phenomenon of religion (Miftahuddin, 2020).

Initially, the sociology of religion only studied the reciprocal relationships between religion and society. However, currently the sociology of religion studies how religion influences society or vice versa, the religion of society may influence the concept of religion (Adibah, 2017).

In sociology, there are two methods, namely qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative method consists of two methods, namely the historical method, namely analyzing events in the past and the comparative method which emphasizes comparisons between various societies and their fields to obtain similarities and differences. The two are then combined as a historical-comparative method (Rifa'i, 2018). In the sociological approach, there are several basic characteristics, namely: social stratification, such as class and ethnicity; biosocial criteria, such as sex, gender, marriage, family, childhood and age; patterns of social organization, including politics, economic production, exchange systems and bureaucracy; and social processes, such as boundary formation, intergroup relations, personal interactions, deviance and globalization (Andrean et al., 2020).

Then there are at least three forms of theory offered in the sociology of religion approach, namely as follows: functional theory, namely the theory that assumes that society as an ecological organism experiences growth. Because the greater the growth, the more complex the problems that will be faced; interactionism theory which assumes that in society there must be a relationship between society and individuals, between individuals and other individuals; and conflict theory, namely the theory that believes that every society has interests and power which are the center of all social relations.

In the sociological approach to religion, there are several theories, one of which was put forward by August Comte, namely the theory of levels. He describes the levels in the evaluation of human thought as follows: the first level is the theological level. They believe that all events experienced by humans are considered to come from a divine power or an Almighty substance; the second level is the metaphysical level. At this stage, humans have begun to realize the behavior or events around them based on abstract and invisible forces; and the third level is the positive level. At this level, humans already understand the cause of events in their environment based on practical reason. With that,

sociology can be used as an approach to religion in social cases or problems (Khoiruddin, 2014).

There are at least five themes of Islamic studies in the sociological approach, namely first, the study of the influence of religion on societal change. Second, the study of the influence of societal structure and change on the understanding of religious teachings or religious concepts. Third, the study of the level of religious experience of the community. Fourth, the study of social interaction patterns in Muslim communities, and fifth, the study of social movements that bring understandings that strengthen and weaken religious life (Miftahuddin, 2020).

#### *The Use of Sociological Approaches in Islamic Studies*

The sociological approach is important in the study of Islamic studies because Islam pays great attention to social issues as described by Jalaludin Rahmat as follows: First, the Qur'an and the Sunnah mostly concern social issues (muamalah) by comparing verses about muamalah more than verses about worship. Social issues such as being fair to everyone, protecting the weak, discussing gender equality, then about harmony and religious tolerance and about social responsibility and solidarity. Second, when matters of worship and muamalah (social) are carried out at the same time, Islamic teachings allow the implementation of worship to be shortened but not abandoned. Third, worship that has social value gets more rewards than worship carried out individually. For example, congregational prayer is more important than praying alone. Fourth, if there is worship that is not carried out perfectly or is invalid, in Islam it is recommended to atone for it by carrying out activities related to social issues. And finally, Islamic teachings stipulate that social worship (muamalah) has a greater reward than sunnah worship (Supiana, 2021).

The sociological approach in Islamic studies is used as a methodology for character and stratification in a community group, namely in the world of science. Sociological problems are very important in Islam. This is very interesting to study and study. Through a sociological approach, it can be seen that there is a great relationship between Islam and various social problems in society. The importance of a social approach in religion is because Islamic studies are closely related to social problems. Thus, it is a concern for scientists to study Islam with the social sciences. With this approach, religion can be easily understood (Andrean et al., 2020).

#### *Figures in the Sociological Approach to Islamic Studies*

The first figure to initiate and practice sociology as a new independent discipline was Ibn Khaldun. However, most scientists say that Ibn Khaldun's contribution was very small compared to other sociologists. They prefer to recognize Karl Max and

August Comte as the most meritorious in the discipline of sociology (Bakhtiar & Marwan, 2016). The first sociological figure or father of sociology can be said to be August Comte and Henri Saint-Simon. Because, they are the ones who initiated the word sociology which comes from the word *sociates* which means society and *logos* which means knowledge. They made the greatest contribution to the study of sociology (Adibah, 2017).

Another Muslim figure, Ali Sya'riati, is an Iranian Islamic figure who united ideas and practices that were embodied in the Iranian Islamic revolution. Then there is Abu Raihan Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Biruni al-Khawarizmi who has approximately 200 works. The next sociological figure who is familiar to us is Ibn Khaldun. His highly developed political thoughts and theories have influenced the works of leading political thinkers after him such as Machiavelli and Vico. He also laid the foundations of sociology and politics through his magnum opus *Al-Muqaddimah* (Ismah, 2020).

#### *Biography of Ibn Khaldun*

His full name is Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Khaldun al-Hadrawi, commonly known as Waliyudin Abu Zaid, Qadi al-Qudat. He was born in 732 in Tunis and was a Maliki. He was a Muhadith al-Hafizd, traveler, expert in ushul fiqh, historian, writer and literary figure. He holds the title of waliyudin and his favorite name is Ibn Khaldun. His ancestors came from Hadramaut who then immigrated to (Seville) Spain in the 8th century after the peninsula was controlled by Arab Muslims. Ibn Khaldun belonged to a famous and influential family who lived during the conquest of Andalusia (Enan, 2013).

Bani Khaldun lived in Seville during the Umayyad reign until the change of office by Ibn Abbad then got the position of vizier and others (Enan, 2013). In pursuing his education, Ibn Khaldun was recorded as a scientist who was diligent in writing, even when he was a teenager his writings had spread everywhere. Ibn Khaldun's writings and thoughts were born from his very deep studies, observations of people's lives and extensive knowledge. Ibn Khaldun completed his *al-Muqaddimah* in mid-779 H/1377 AD in just five months. In the rest of his life, he spent serving as a teacher in the academic and court fields (Hidayatullah, 2018).

#### *Ibn Khaldun's Thoughts*

In Islamic sociological thought, Ibn Khaldun categorizes society into 3 levels, namely the first as a primitive society where they do not yet know civilization and live nomadic and wild. Second, as a village society whose life is settled but still simple and their livelihood is as livestock breeders and farmers. Third, as an urban society where this society already

knows civilization and is knowledgeable and their livelihood is mostly traders and works in industry.

The word *al-Umran* means social or the science of society. Scientists explain that the word *al-umran* put forward by Ibn Khaldun has similarities with the social sciences, especially sociology. The method used by Ibn Khaldun is the empirical positivism method and its goal is to study social phenomena to arrive at the laws that drive social reality. All of that is very similar to sociology (Adnan, 2020).

According to Ali Abdul Wahid Wafi, each chapter of the book *Al-Muqaddimah* is an area of study that is the main concern in sociology. He also stated firmly that the claim of Durkheim and his followers who said that they were the ones who studied social science, characteristics, and social structure was incorrect because in fact Ibn Khaldun had already conducted a study on social structure five centuries earlier. Ibn Khaldun divided two fundamental social categories, namely rural communities, and urban or civilized life (Adnan, 2020).

In his work, Ibn Khaldun explained in several sub-sections of social science disciplines and divided them into six topics: about society as a whole and its types and its balance with the earth, general sociology; about nomadic society and mentioning ethnic groups, rural sociology; about the state, the caliphate and the succession of sultans, political sociology; about settled society, countries and cities, urban sociology; about crafts, income, life, industrial or economic sociology; and about knowledge, how to obtain it and teach it, educational sociology.

Although Ibn Khaldun is very objective in drawing conclusions, he still remains within the boundaries of Islamic morality, because of his background as a Muslim. Unlike most other Muslim sociological thinkers who release social values marked by capitalism, liberalism, communism and others (Arfa et al., 2015).

## **Conclusion**

The sociological approach in Islamic studies is used as a methodology for character and stratification in a community group, namely in the world of science. Sociological problems are very important in Islam. Through a sociological approach, it can be seen that the magnitude of the relationship between Islam and various social problems in society. The importance of a social approach in religion is because Islamic studies are closely related to social problems. Also understanding social phenomena related to worship and muamalat. Thus, it is the concern of scientists to study Islam with social sciences. The application of a sociological approach can be seen in the study of the living Qur'an and living hadith. The contribution of this approach is



that religion can be seen from another broad side, not only around theology. That way, religion becomes functionally familiar with various social phenomena.

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#### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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