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Social Conflict as a Perspective in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies

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Abstract

Interdisciplinary studies demand an multiple disciplines understanding across multiple disciplines. In the social sciences discipline, the results of sociology research are proliferating and have led to the formulation of new theories that can be utilized in interdisciplinary studies. Among these is the theory of social conflict. The perspective of social conflict departs from the assumption that inequality exists in all societies. Social conflict theory focuses on various aspects of power and status in social positions. Individual identification characteristics are viewed from ethnic perspectives, including gender, age, religion, expertise, and social status. This social conflict theory can be applied as a perspective in interdisciplinary Islamic studies. Islamic studies aim to describe the relationship between Islam and various aspects of human life, explaining the spirit (ethos) of Islam in the form of morals and values within Islamic teaching. Thus, approaching Islam through the lens of social conflict theory within Islamic studies gained relevance as Islamic teaching responses to various new paradigms as a result of advances in science and technology, and the emergence of new philosophies and ideologies as well as the relationship between Islam and the vision, mission, and goals of Islamic teachings.

Introduction

The development of science is currently experiencing a very dynamic and complex development. Starting at the end of the century, modern science developed rapidly and was characterized by its respective disciplines. Subsequently, scientific studies known as multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies emerged. This development has implications for the practical application of science by integrating new methods. This interrelationship between sciences is then referred to as multidisciplinary science. These interdisciplinary sciences have become disciplines in their own right, each with its own methods.

In the development of science, interdisciplinary research became a popular approach in the social sciences around the turn of the 20th century to the 21st century (Gertrude 2008). A multidisciplinary approach to social problems can be taken from various kinds of science, both socio—religious and technological. The interdisciplinary approach is also called the integrated approach or "correlation" for the inter—scientific approach, while integration is used in the integrated model approach (Klein 1990). In an interdisciplinary approach, core development is based on an integrated concept from various social sciences or fields of study, unified as a whole to align the material with the interests. Moreover, they no longer follow the order of the concepts of each science or field of study.

Scientists emphasize the importance of this interdisciplinary approach due to the limitations of research results from a single—disciplinary approach. For example, in studying religious texts, such as the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, more is needed to use textual, historical, sociological, and similar approaches. Islamic studies aim to describe the relationship between Islam and various aspects of human life, explaining the spirit (ethos) of Islam through the morals and values within Islamic teaching. Thus, approaching Islam through the lens of social conflict theory within Islamic studies gained relevance as Islamic teaching responses to various new paradigms

as a result of advances in science and technology, and the emergence of new philosophies and ideologies, as well as the relationship between Islam and the vision, mission, and goals of Islamic teachings (Nata 2011). In this context, this article attempts to highlight the "theory of social conflict," a sociological theory that can be applied in the interdisciplinary study of Islam. This paper attempts to discuss some key concepts in social conflict theory, with conflict being the basis of the theory. It will then review conflict theory and its relevance in interdisciplinary studies.

Research Method

This research is a literature study that employs qualitative methods and techniques. Research materials are based on data collected from various library sources and archives (Benzecry 2020), which discuss the concept and theory of social conflict, with a notable focus on Karl Marx's theory. Furthermore, data related to social conflict theory and Islamic studies are processed using a reflective method, complemented by the 'verstehen' method. The components of the reflective method in this research include describing, understanding, and analyzing existing Islamic studies, as well as exploring further models for applying the social conflict approach in Islamic studies. This paper is expected to explain the position and relevance of conflict theory in interdisciplinary studies.

Defining Social Conflict

Etymologically, "conflict" means quarrel, dispute, or opposition. The term "conflict" refers to some form, idea, or habit that arises within a group, beliefs, or actions of one or more group members opposed by or unacceptable to one or more other group members. At the same time, social conflict is the struggle for agency or power in society. Social conflict or group conflict occurs when two or more actors contradict each other in social interaction, reciprocating social forces to achieve a limited or incompatible goal and preventing the opponent from achieving it (Soekanto 1993). This social conflict occurs in social relations where the action is deliberately oriented to carry out the will of the actor against resistance from certain parties.

Basic Conflict Theory

An essential point in conflict theory is that interests, not norms and values, give rise to conflict. Efforts to achieve specific interests result in different types of conflicts. Thus, conflict is seen as a regular aspect of social life rather than an abnormal occurrence. Competition for resources is often a cause of conflict. The three principles of this theory are as follows: first, Society comprises different groups and competes for resources. Second, while society may describe a sense of cooperation, power struggles are ongoing between social groups in pursuit of their interests. In society, certain groups master specific resources and means of production. Third, Certain social groups will use the resources obtained for the benefit of the group to achieve goals.

This means that those who have no control over resources will be exploited. As a result, many dominant groups will struggle with other groups to gain control. Most of the time, the group with the most resources will gain or maintain power (because they can support their power with resources). The spirit that those in control remain in control is known as "The Matthew Effect" (Merton 2010). One branch of conflict theory is critical criminology. The birth of this term is based on the view that the fundamental causes of crime are born of social and economic forces operating in a particular society. This perspective came from the German Karl Marx, who believed that the judicial and legal systems sided with the rich and powerful in a society and that bad people were punished much more severely for much lesser crimes.

Karl H. Marx's Theory of Social Conflict: Background of Thought

Karl Marx is the founder of the theory of social conflict. Karl Marx's real name was Karl Heinrich Marx. Marx was born in Trier, Germany, in 1818. He was born into a family of Jewish clergy. Marx's father, Herschel, was a lawyer by profession. In 1841, Karl Marx completed his studies in Berlin with a dissertation entitled "On the Differences in the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus." Marx blended into the radical community, giving up his dream of becoming a lecturer at the University and opting instead to go into politics. In his intellectual career, he is better known as an economist, philosopher, and activist who developed the sociological theory of Marxism.

Regarding the history of humankind, Marx stated that human history is a class struggle, that is, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx further noted that at that moment, the proletariat was aware of its group's interests, united, and fought against the bourgeois group, which he called class struggle. Ultimately, the proletariat will form a classless or equal society, eliminating both superiority and subordination. Marx's ideas on stratification and social conflict have significantly influenced sociological scientists' thinking (Campbell 1994).

Marx on Community Structure

For Karl Marx, society is a construction of human agreement. From this, it can be understood that man can change it. Marx explicitly stated, "They only interpret the world differently, which only needs to change it" (Wallace 1995). With this understanding, society is seen as not undergoing evolution naturally but because there is a human role in it. Marx's view of society differed from that of Auguste Comte. Comte declared that society was an independent entity. Indeed, society comprises individuals, but society cannot be seen as just a collection of individuals. Society is a separate entity that has its own laws as well. In his writing, "German Ideology," Marx formulated the fundamental premise that economics determines human thought. According to Marx, he sought to be consistent with his postulates about dialectical matter. For Marx, the primary material was economics. It is these economic conditions that shape a person's consciousness. A person's worldview is determined by his financial status (class position). Someone in a good class certainly has different views and insights from those in the lower class. These differences then lead to conflicts.

In Marx's view, the world consists of interclasses: the lower class (workers) and the upper class (owners of capital). Marx believes the proletariat lacks a complete, objective view of the world and their consciousness. The consciousness of the workers, poor, proletariat, consciousness of the oppressed is false. This false awareness arises because the owners of capital ostracize them with various ideologies. For that, we need a revolution—a revolution marked by trade unions. Revolution means conflict. For this reason, from Marx's perspective, conflict is inevitable and expected.

Marx Historical Materialism

In Marx's view, the history of all societies from time immemorial to the present with the history of struggle, free people and enslaved people, nobles and commoners, enslavers and enslaved people, enslavers and workers, was translated by Marx as oppressor and oppressed, constant with each other, constantly hidden, hidden, or exposed, either in the revolutionary reconstitution of society in general or in the mutual destruction of competing classes (Hobsbawm 1998). According to Marx, throughout the course of human history, matter has been the main determining factor (Turner 1997). Whoever can master material (means of production or material economics) can fulfill all his desires. The implication of this view is that existence determines consciousness, not

that consciousness determines existence. Man is aware of his ideas and thoughts; he is a function of existence in the social structure.

Social Class

Marx always defined his class flexibly (Suseno 2016). Marx's discussion of social class begins with an explanation of the ownership of the means of production, which then became the basis for dividing society into classes. So, every society has a ruling class and a controlled class. In his explanation, Marx referred to two influential classes: the capitalist class and landowners (bourgeoisie) and the working class (proletariat) or those who live by selling their labor. In some of his writings, Marx also mentioned that capitalist society consists of three classes: workers (who live on wages), capitalists (who live on profits), and landlords (who live on rent). In his explanation, landlords in the era of capitalism will be the same as owners of capital. Because of this theory, the state is essentially nothing but a class state; The state is ruled by classes that control the economy. Even if the state acts socially, it aims for people's development and focuses on more fundamental changes (Suseno 2016).

Marx held the view that man can change his destiny. The forces that hinder human freedom must be destroyed through radical proletarian revolution by seizing power. According to Marx, this proletarian revolution can be realized if the proletariat takes over the means of production (factories, fields, machines) and the production process. Marx stated that the revolution did not use an "anarchist" method but a "dialectical" pattern. A dialectical revolution will not destroy either of the two opposing groups of society (proletariat vs. capital), so it is hoped that the result of the revolution will be integration into what Marx called communist society. In a communist society, everyone has equal rights to the means of production and all the wealth produced by the revolution. So, the ultimate goal of the revolution is to create a classless, free society based on true humanity (a communist or socialist society).

Marx's Concept of Alienation

Alienation means a state of feeling alienated (isolated). Marx used the term alienation to describe the abuse of the relationship between workers and their fundamental human nature, which is alienated by the capitalist system. In the capitalist system, people no longer see labor as an expression of human purpose. The work initially done to meet human needs became a system that enslaved humans with working hours, which was not an expression of human self but a means to achieve another goal: earning money. So, a person who works in a capitalist industry becomes alienated from himself as a human being.

Alienation, according to Marx, consists of four elements, namely: first, alienation from production activities. The worker does not work according to his creative ideas; instead, he works at the whim and interests of the capitalist who pays him wages. Since the production activity belongs to the capitalists, the capitalists decide what the workers should do. As a result, workers are increasingly alienated from certain production activities and jobs without understanding their importance. Second, alienation from the products it produces. The labor produced by workers does not belong to them but to the capitalist. The capitalists will use their property rights to sell products for huge profits. If workers want the fruits of their labor, they must buy them like any other consumer. They cannot meet the daily needs of their labor and may die if they cannot meet their actual needs in the production process. Third, alienation from fellow workers. Human nature is to work together to get what they command from nature. In a capitalist system, the nature of cooperatives is undermined by the system, specialization, and work purpose.

Capitalization creates a system of competition among workers to maximize productivity and hinder the development of cooperative relations. This is done to see workers who are productive, faster, and more pleasing to their bosses. Successful workers are rewarded, while losers are eliminated. Mutual competition is common among workers working under capitalists. This competition eventually causes alienation between one worker and another. The production system generates legal demand and supply, which keeps employment low because labor supply exceeds the demand for their services. The more productive workers are in producing goods, the more they will feel alienated from themselves (inability to control their life activities)—the fourth alienation from the side of humanity. Work for workers is no longer fulfilling human needs; instead, it is changing functions and eliminating human nature. Man becomes a production machine that must work indefinitely. As a result, workers cannot express their best potential and abilities (Hendrawan 2016).

In addition to the workers, alienation occurs among the bourgeoisie due to dependence on capital, the need for raw goods, and the fear of bankruptcy from intense competition with other members of the bourgeoisie. This hit the owners of capital during the British Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. They depend on raw goods, capital, and workers for their livelihoods. Thus, capital, raw goods, competition, and the need for money have dominated his existence as a human being (bourgeoisie).

Karl Marx's Theory of Social Conflict

The primary view of Marx's conflict theory is that conflict occurs between two poles of social class in the capitalist system: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Each class consists of individuals employed by common interests and the means of production. The bourgeoisie is a group of people who represent members of society as holders of most of the wealth and means of production. At the same time, the proletariat is a group of people who have only energy and lack the means of production. The proletariat group includes the working, working, or poor classes (Campbell 1994).

Conflict theory focuses on "modes of production". The mode of production refers to specific economic production institutions in society. The mode of production includes the means of production used by the community, such as factories, machines, and materials. *The mode of production* also includes labor and the labor force. The term production relations refers to the pattern of relations between the groups that control the means of production (capitalists or bourgeoisie) and the workers (workers or the proletariat). According to Marx, the history of society develops through the interaction between the means of production and *the modes of production*. The way of production continues to evolve towards the full realization of production capacity. This kind of evolution creates antagonisms between human classes determined by the relations of production, owners, and workers (Syam 2022).

The capitalist system is a mode of production based on individual ownership of the means of production. People produce commodities to exchange in competitive markets. Therefore, capitalism can extract as much labor as possible from the workers at the lowest possible cost. The economic interest of the capitalists is to provide workers with the lowest wages that are enough to survive and produce. The workers know it is in their financial interest to prevent the capitalists from exploiting their labor.

The pattern of social relations in production is inherently antagonistic, leading to a class struggle that Marx believed would result in the proletariat's attempt to overthrow the capitalists. The proletariat would then replace the capitalist pattern of production with one based on common ownership of the means of production, eventually giving rise to the system of communism.

The bourgeoisie controls the means of production; this ownership leads to exploitation with the sole motive of profit. In this system, the proletariat relies solely on its sale of energy without owning or controlling capital. Such conditions give rise to false consciousness. Marx used the term false consciousness to describe the inability of the proletariat to understand its proper position in the class system. This constructive constraint in social life prevents workers from joining the class consciousness or shared group identity of the exploited proletariat.

With this system of capitalism, the bourgeoisie uses its influence and power to oppress the proletariat (the majority of the class). This mindset is linked to community—based conflict theory. This perspective on belief within the pyramid model concerns how goods and services are distributed in society. At its peak, a minority elite group dictates the terms and conditions for the majority of society because they have significant control over resources and power. In the class pyramid, a handful of capitalists (bourgeoisie) occupy the top and can arrange the structure underneath. The power is controlled by the capitalists, who have the authority to make regulations and laws that benefit the capitalists. Similarly, the judiciary is an institution with the authority to bring about justice for the benefit of the capitalists. Also, the military institutions have the authority to maintain the security and defense of the capitalist means of production. The owners of capital from the rich are the social classes that enjoy the labor of the proletariat or working class. This is what supports the survival of the capitalist economy. At the bottom layer are the workers (proletariat) who work and feed all the layers above them.

The unequal distribution in a capitalistic society is maintained through ideology: the bourgeoisie without conditions for the proletariat. Conflict theory assumes that elites are pressured to build legal, cultural, and other social systems to support self—domination while preventing others from joining their ranks. Marx's theory states that when the working class and the poor experience poor conditions, their collective consciousness raises awareness of both the impossibility and the possibility of resistance.

Some Assumptions of Karl Marx's Conflict Theory

According to Marx's observations, the history of man's journey towards matter is the primary determining factor. The group that can master material resources (means of production or material economics) (Charles 2018). can obtain everything they want. According to Marx, *existence* determines *consciousness*, and not vice versa. Consciousness determines existence. In Marx's conception, man does not express his ideas, but he performs his functions in the social structure to obtain everything he wants. According to Marx, existence determines *consciousness*, and not vice versa; consciousness determines existence. In Marx's conception, man does not express his ideas but performs the function of his existence materially in the social structure (Goodman 2011).

Karl Marx explained the process of social conflict by analyzing how it arises from the injustice of access to and distribution of scarce material resources in society. If access and distribution of scarce resources become increasingly unfair, it will further trigger conflicts of interest between the dominant group (superstructure) and the sub—structure group. Marx explained that the more sub—structure groups understand their *genuine collective interests*, the more they will realize and question the legitimacy of the pattern of access and distribution of scarce resources considered unfair (Wahyudi 2021).

In this case, the sub-structure group will be able to determine *its genuine* collective interest under several conditions: First, changes made by the superstructure group that damage or disrupt well-established relations between members of the sub-structure. Second, actions carried out by the superstructure group cause alienation to

members of the sub-structure group. *Third*, members of the sub-structure can communicate with each other about the fundamental problems they experience. This condition is possible if the members of the sub-structure are in the same environment and have the opportunity to improve their education. *Fourth*, sub-structure groups can build ideologies that unite their minds. This condition can be carried out if the sub-structure group recruits and appoints experts who can gather ideology for their group, especially in the event of the superstructure group's failure to control the socialization process and communication patterns of the substructure group (Erlangga 2022).

The Relevance of Social Conflict Theory in Interdisciplinary Studies

Conflict is a significant problem in every human society and is often unavoidable. Within societies, conflict frequently results from an interplay of political, economic, and social instability, usually stemming from poor governance, failed economic policies, and inappropriate development programs due to exacerbated ethnic or religious differences. Fundamental problems in conflict are religious and ethnic beliefs and practices, boundary disputes, land ownership and resource competition, poverty, marginalization, unemployment, and underdevelopment (Coser 1956). In the social sciences, many studies using various approaches either refuse to consider or minimize the importance of conflict in society, or they replace it with a vision of social struggle.

Between these two extremes, there is room for researchers and observers to view conflict as a pattern of relationships; this perspective can distinguish between social conflict and conflict modes involving war and division. Sociology suggests different ways to indicate various modes of social conflict. The question that can be asked is both theoretical and empirical: Are we not moving from an industrial age dominated by structural social conflicts, where working—class movements confront working lords, to a new era characterized by other types of conflicts with a more apparent cultural orientation? Whatever the type of analysis, conflict is different from crisis, although materially, both arise in social reality (Sanderson 2007).

Marxist Approach in Islamic Studies: Hasan Hanafi's Thought as a Model

The Marxist social approach to Islamic studies appears in the thought of Hasan Hanafi, a liberal modernist Muslim thinker from Egypt (Shimogaki 2003). Hasan Hanafi adopted the Marxist method critically in his efforts to reconstruct theology. Issa J Boulatta, in the book "Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought," observes Hasan Hanafi's thought using three principal foundations: (1) Islamic History and Tradition, (2) Phenomenology, and (3) Marxist social analysis (Boulatta 1990). This reconstruction of Hasan Hanafi's theology was formulated while remaining grounded in the historical roots of the Islamic tradition. Formulating a new theology employs dialectical logic that ultimately leads to real action. The basic assumption of this theology is that Islam is a religion of protest, opposition, and revolution. Islam in Hasan Hanafi's thought contains two meanings: Islam as an attitude of obedience to the upper class and Islam as a revolution fought by minorities and poor groups. In this context, the ruling political regime emphasizes interpreting Islam as obedience and submission to maintain the status quo, whereas in situations requiring socio—political change, Islam signifies revolution (Hanafi 1983 and Soetomo 2016).

In the book "Min al-Aqidah ila Al-Tsawrah" (From Akidah to Revolution), Hasan Hanafi explains that revolution is neither a mass movement nor a coup nor a military conflict; rather, it is a revolution of thought and culture that can mobilize the mind and actualize ideology. This revolution focuses on transforming the passive and static understanding of monotheism into a progressive form. In his book, Hasan Hanafi quotes Muhammad Igbal, a Pakistani Islamic thinker, who states that tawhid is a dynamic revolutionary force. However, the classical understanding of tawhid focuses more on a static perspective, limited to understanding nature, asma' (God Names), and af'alullah only. For this reason, using a Marxist approach, Hasan Hanafi emphasized the concept of humanism based on faith and monotheism, as well as belief in the Prophet and the Last Day. For Hasan Hanafi, faith can transform the human mind and soul with the spirit of Islamic humanism (Hanafi 2001 and Soetomo 2016). From the description of Hanafi's thought above, it shows that he made an intellectual jihad through a social approach to formulate a new theological paradigm, changing the way of doing theology 'from above' to theology 'from below' (that is, theology from the reality and conditions of real society and humans).

Conclusion

Karl Marx popularized a social thought that focuses on social conflict. Social conflict theory, initiated by Karl Marx as a method of social analysis, can be used as a frame in interdisciplinary studies. Marx's conflict theory focuses on the conflict between two main classes in capitalist society: the ruling capitalist (or bourgeoisie) class, which owns the means of production, and the working class (or proletariat), whose labor is exploited by the bourgeoisie to generate profit. If strikes and protests challenge the ruling class's power, it can use the law to criminalize those who threaten. Media coverage will be manipulated to give the impression that the interests of the ruling class are the interests of the whole nation. For Marxists, the emergence of consensus is an illusion; It hides the reality of one class imposing its will on another.

The social conflict approach to religion highlights how, as a phenomenon of human behavior, religion maintains social inequality by advancing a worldview that justifies oppression. Marx's critical approach demands that action be taken to resolve social disparities. Marx viewed religion as social control used to maintain the status quo in a particular society. This paper demonstrates that the theory of social conflict initiated by Marx can serve as a framework in interdisciplinary studies of Islam, particularly in the concept of Islamic humanism introduced by Hasan Hanafi. The actual form is a transformation from passive monotheism to progressive monotheism. Thus, Hanafi's thought is interesting because it demonstrates that humans can transform ideal and conceptual doctrines into real action within social reality.

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