

# Development of Islamic Thought in Reading Islamic Texts: A Conceptual Study of Literacy Textual-Normative and Contextual-Historical

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## **Abstract**

*This article aims to describe how the conceptual view of Islamic thought is in reading Islamic texts, especially reading the Qur'an. This is because there are various terms that are introduced but basically it boils down to two approaches in reading Islamic texts. This article was written using a qualitative descriptive approach using the literature study method. From the results of the discussion it is known that various terms of approach in reading Islamic texts actually lead to textual-normative and contextual-historical approaches. The textual-normative approach necessitates a literal reading of the text. This textual-normative approach is then considered unable to answer some human problems in accordance with the times so that the contextual-historical approach appears as an answer to this inability.*

**Keywords:** Text reading, Textual-Normative, Contextual-Historical

## **Abstrak**

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana pandangan konseptual pemikiran Islam dalam membaca teks-teks Islam, utamanya pembacaan terhadap Al-Qur'an. Hal ini karena ada beragam istilah yang diperkenalkan namun pada dasarnya bermuara pada dua pendekatan dalam membaca teks Islam. Artikel ini ditulis dengan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode studi pustaka. Dari hasil pembahasan diketahui bahwa beragam istilah pendekatan dalam pembacaan teks Islam sejatinya bermuara pada pendekatan tekstual-normatif serta kontekstual-historis. Pendekatan tekstual-normatif meniscayakan pembacaan teks secara literal. Pendekatan tekstual-normatif ini kemudian dianggap tidak dapat menjawab beberapa permasalahan manusia sesuai dengan perkembangan zaman sehingga pendekatan kontekstual-historis muncul sebagai jawaban atas ketidakmampuan tersebut.

**Kata Kunci:** Pembacaan teks, Tekstual-Normatif, Kontekstual-Historis

## **INTRODUCTION**

Science, until now continues to experience various discourses. Especially related to how these sciences are approached. In this case, two main poles developed in science, namely the poles of natural science and humanities (Humanities/Social) (Prayogi, 2021). Islam in the context of science can be included within the scope of humanitarian disciplines (in this case it becomes part of the humanities), given the broad dimensions that make humans both subjects and objects of study (anthropo-centric). Not only talking about texts, Islam as a study (science) has developed more broadly by taking various approaches, starting from contextual, hermeneutical, historical approaches, as well as various other approaches (Abdullah, 1997: 43). By becoming a scientific study, Islam builds and develops its basic ideas with various points of view or certain paradigms as previously stated. Based on this, various perspectives/paradigms/approaches of Islamic thought stand. Normatively, Islam (objectively-

religion) is a revelation and a guide for all human beings. Islamic thought emerged and developed not as an attempt to interfere with the revealed texts which normatively have been determined to be unalterable. Therefore, Islamic thought then developed as an effort to explore and study various problems that exist in the reality of humans (Muslims) that exist throughout space and time. However, it needs to be emphasized that Islamic thought does not appear in a vacuum. It can be intervened with various interests, especially based on human interests (Mugiyono, 2015).

The development of Islamic thought in the early stages of Islam was revealed not to be a debatable matter. This is because there is still a figure of Muhammad as a prophet and messenger who is the main source of explanation for various dynamics of Islamic thought (repertoire). However, after the death of Muhammad as a prophet and apostle, there are still problems, especially related to the understanding of the revealed texts which are faced with the current developments. This then makes Islamic thought (must) develop as an effort to answer rationally when dealing with problems that existed at one time (Shabry, 2011). Currently, there are various shades of Islamic thought among Muslims. These various patterns emerge as a logical consequence of the process of understanding – especially texts in the sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and Hadith (Ismail, 2009: 3). In general, there are two ways of understanding the texts in this source of Islamic law, namely returning them in a textual-normative way and understanding texts in a contextual-historical way. The simple textual-normative meaning can be interpreted as an effort to understand the text in a rigid-literal manner by returning meaning to the text itself. Meanwhile, contextual-historical meaning means understanding the text not only limited to the text, but needs to look at various aspects outside the text itself (both cultural, social, and others) contextually. Efforts to understand texts - both textual and contextual - are in the area of study of religious thought studies, bearing in mind that Islam as a religion provides space to be studied with various scientific disciplinary approaches outside of religious scholarship itself.

There have been many reviews of Islamic thought both textually and contextually. Many of these writings describe Islamic thought in one context and separate it from other contexts, such as in the writings of Ismail (2009), Shabry (2011), Adinugraha & Ulama'i (2020), and similar writings. However, this paper has a fundamental difference with similar writings. This can be seen from the elaborative description in this article which emphasizes that the textual and conceptual approaches actually have a close relationship with the normative and historical approaches. On this basis, this paper seeks to describe how the development of Islamic thought, especially how conceptually the textual-normative approach emerged as a form of Islamic thought itself which was then responded to by the emergence of a contextual-historical approach as an answer to its "deficiencies".

## **METHOD**

The writing of this article uses an analytical descriptive method based on extracting data through the method of literature study/literature study from several sources of literature (written). Writing is done through a process of extracting data from various reference sources which discuss various articles/writings related to various literature on reading texts in Islamic thought, especially those related to textual-normative and contextual-historical readings. These various sources are published in public media, so that they can be accessed openly through various places (libraries) and internet media. This paper can be an elaboration of various related articles and writings. Likewise, this article is more of a synthesis of existing writings, to be seen later in relation to what can be done in the current context (Prayogi, 2022).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Textual-Normative Readings in Islamic Thought**

Efforts to understand a religion can be done with various approaches. The approach here means a point of view and a paradigm which later emerges as a form of religious thought. The various paradigms used will guide people to understand religion. Thus it can be said that the understanding of a religion/religious thinking is not only the prerogative of religious people. This is because religion itself is a "gift" given by God to humans (Abdullah & Karim, 1990: 92).

In the discourse of Islamic thought, texts can be termed texts. The use of the term *nash* – which etymologically means lifting or ending something, is mainly used in discourses of thought in the field of Islamic Law (Shabry, 2011). Among Islamic scholars, the term *nash* is defined as a pronunciation that has a meaning according to what is desired without any other meaning (Dahlan, et al, 1996: 1303). Another thing, that the texts do not have agreed boundaries. Especially related to the meaning of the text itself which can be interpreted explicitly or implied within certain limits (Nasution, 1993: 835-836).

In (many) other terms, conceptually the contextual approach can be aligned – and also congruent with normative terms. The term normative etymologically means reference, teaching, related to things that may and may not be done. In this case, norms also become "basic rules" of religion which are believed to be the truth and must be implemented (Nata, 2001: 18). Thus the textual-normative approach means an approach that looks at religion from the point of view of the core of the main teachings that

are original from God without any aspects of human thought in it. From here then, the reading of the text must be textual in nature and not provide space options for contextualization of the text. In the case of Islamic texts, the normative approach must be understood as Islam which comes to contain a set of pure rules from Allah without any human interference. In later developments this normative Islamic tradition produced various (text-based) traditions of thought such as interpretation, theology, jurisprudence, and tasawuf (Abdullah, 2006: 222).

In its development, the reading of Islamic texts in a textual-normative way can be traced to the phenomenon of the meeting of Al-Qur'anic texts with human ratios where ratio actually gives way to text interpretation. Human understanding of a text is different from the text itself, and this can cause an understanding of this text to be less or more than the desired meaning of the text. These things cannot be separated from the understanding of Islamic texts, where Islamic texts themselves can be divided into two, namely definite texts (*nash qath'iy*) and relative/relative texts (*nash zhanniy*). The exact text itself can be divided into two areas, namely the definite text that comes from Allah and has become a common agreement among Muslims regarding its meaning (*nash qath'iy al-subut*) and the text which clearly shows its meaning (*nash qath'iy al-dalalah*). Definite text is basically the text itself which does not contain possibilities/opportunities to be interpreted other than what is stated in the text. Meanwhile, relative text means that it is possible to interpret the text by producing other meanings which may be less or more than the desired meaning of the text itself (Shadry, 2011). The phenomenon of textual-normative interpretation of text reading itself can be proven from the various understandings of the companions of the prophet Muhammad after the death of the prophet which can be categorized as strict or loose text interpretation (Shihab, 2004: 19).

However, reading Islamic texts in a textual-normative manner requires more rigidity in its implementation. Interpretation in a textual-normative approach – by denying the distinction between Islamic texts, is done with certainty. This means that in practice, the reading of Islamic texts through a textual-normative approach requires that the text is the word of God which contains absolute truth without the intervention of human thought. In this case, absolute truth is measured based on texts that are certain (*nash qath'iy*) alone (Nata, 2001: 18-19). The textual-normative approach finally contains an absolute value system that is built through a doctrinal-theological process by departing from written texts. Texts are understood through linguistic understanding regardless of socio-cultural background, locus, and the time in which the text exists. This means that there will be rigidity or rigidity (*abdolutism*) in understanding Islamic teachings which are represented only at two poles, namely halal or haram. Reading Islamic texts in a textual-normative manner then means oriented self-understanding to the text itself (Gusminan, 2003). Meanwhile, interpretation efforts are made by understanding the external

editorial text of the Al-Qur'an and hadith, where revelation is understood through a language approach, without looking further at the socio-cultural-historical background regarding when these texts were revealed (Umar, 2008: 21).

The reading of Islamic texts in a textual-normative manner seems to be able to refer to the reasoning and traditions of the Arab people - who borrowed the term al-Jabiri known as reason bayani. This reasoning characterizes the strong rationality of Arabic – as the place where Islam was originally sent down, and produces intellectual products of linguistics. Bayani reason places the text in such a central position that all activities of "reading" the text remain and are oriented towards the reproduction of the text itself. The position of the text is an important concern because it is through the transmission of knowledge that can be done. In this case then Arabic becomes the epistemological determinant of Islamic (Arabic) reason (Muhammadun, 2019).

In previous practices, the textual-normative approach can be described in the event of political contestation, between the conservatism of the Ali bin Abi Talib group and the pragmatism of the Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan group. This contest eventually gave birth to a group known as the khawarij. The khawarij group can ultimately be identified as a group that develops a textual-normative approach – rigidly in reading religious texts. This is evident from their slogan, namely “La Hukma Illallah” which refers to the moment when Ali bin Abi Talib decided to take the path of arbitration (tahkim) in resolving conflicts with the Muawiyah group (Adinugraha & Ulama'i, 2020). In the view of the khawarij, this tahkim decision was a misguided decision because there was no textual basis in religious texts (the Koran). Thus, in the view of the khawarij, Ali was a misguided person who could be punished as an infidel (Setiady, 2015). The textual-normative approach taken by the Khawarij group in reading religious texts is basically influenced by literal reasoning (saklek). As in the case where the reading of the text in Q.S: Ali Imran: 97 which is read as legitimacy for absolute disbelief – it is not enough at the sinful stage, anyone who abandons the obligation of pilgrimage.

The textual-normative thinking model that was (initially) initiated by the Khawarij group then developed further. In its development there were several groups of Islamic thinkers who helped develop Islamic thought in a textual-normative way. The main one is of course Dawud az-Zhahiri (d. 883M) who developed the Dzahir (textual) school. The practice of reading texts in a textual-normative manner is thought to have existed in the Iraqi region in the 9th century AD which then spread to the Persian and North African regions and even to the Andalusian region. Apart from Dawud az-Zhahiri, this approach was also used by Ibn Hazm al Andalusí (d. 1064 AD) (Britannica, 2005). In the view of the adherents of the Zahiri school, the main Islamic texts basically cover the entire sharia law. If money is not listed in the text,

it means that Allah (God) does not set the law. That is, all things that are not written textually in the Qur'an and Hadith, then humans (Muslims) do not need to bother looking for the law (Shabry, 2011).

Imam Shafi'i (d. 820 M) –within certain limits it may also be called a thinker (Imam of the Islamic School) who more or less uses a textual-normative approach in reading Islamic texts. This can be seen in the Qiyas method he introduced. But before that, it needs to be understood that the textual-normative approach, even though it emphasizes the authority of the text, does not make reason free to determine its meaning. He still has to rely on the text without being able to break away from it. In order to gain knowledge in the text, two ways are taken, namely first, adhering to the text editor using Arabic and second, adhering to the meaning of the text by using ratio as an analytical tool (Kusuma, 2018).

In this second context, Imam as-Shafi'i said that the text in general aims to provide accuracy and limitation, especially related to the meaning contained in it. So understanding the text must depart from *ushul* and *furu'*, where to be able to understand these *ushul* and *furu'* matters one must master Arabic. If there is ambiguity, it is certain that he does not understand Arabic. In the case of Imam as-Shafi'i putting forward his Qiyas idea -which tends to be textual-normative, on the basis of two things. First, if Allah and His Messenger have forbidden something or made something expressly lawful, and for certain reasons then a problem or case arises that is not found in the Al-Qur'an and/or hadith, then a *haraam* or *halal* law can be given based on the fact that it has the same essence as the one whose legal status has been determined in the Al-Qur'an and/or hadith. Second, if there are two cases that are almost the same, then Qiyas (analogy) must be based on the most complete resemblance, especially from an outward point of view (Muhammadun, 2019).

Continuing what had been initiated before, Ibn Taimiyah (d. 1328 AD) later emerged as an Islamic thinker who could be categorized as a textualist. The views of Ibn Taimiyah (later) became the mainstay for the views of other popular groups with the doctrine of "returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah". These groups are known today as Wahhabi groups and others like them (Amin, 1999: 229). These normative-textualist groups themselves have reasons why they use a normative-textualist approach in understanding religion. This was because they saw that there had been many deviations (in the form of heresy and superstition) in Islamic teachings, especially in Egypt and Saudi Arabia at that time. For this reason, as a solution, the understanding of Islamic religion needs to be returned according to the existing texts in Islam itself.

As a result, the reading of Islamic texts through a textual-normative approach today is faced with various stereotypes. The most popular (perhaps) is the emergence of various equivalents such as arabization, scriptualist, puritan, literal, egalitarian, cold, anti-ecstasy, (Mahasin, 1995: xi) and various other equivalents which all lead to pejorative meanings. Such a view cannot be separated conceptually, considering that

the textual-normative approach idealizes an ideal and true understanding of Islam which is exemplified by the salaf (textually). Because of this, the uniqueness of the expressions of Islamic society which are diverse and not close to the character of Islam-Arab (often) is seen as a form of "misguidance" which is far from true, authentic and genuine Islam.

In general, this condition then changes the religious mindset from local-eclectic Islam to universalist-authentic-puritanist-Arabic Islam in its teaching practice, which has been growing massively lately. On the one hand, this has re-popularized the labels of ignorance, polytheists, bid'ah and various other (pejorative) expressions for people or communities that are not the same as the ideology and symbols attached to them. Furthermore, the growth of religious thought which is too reliant on textual-normative (authenticity) has cut off Islamic treasures from other Islamic intellectual traditions and treasures which are so rich. There are many dimensions of classical Islamic civilization and cultural heritage as well as the culture of society which, if addressed in a textual-normative (rigid) manner, become something that is – at least – un-Islamic (Susanto, 2009).

### **Contextual-Historical Readings in Islamic Thought**

Humans are cultural creatures. As cultural beings, humans always experience changes and developments that adapt to the times. Religion –as part of the elements of culture, is expected to be (one of) human foundations in dealing with the complexities of changing times that they face in their life on earth.

As the basis of religion for adherents of Islam, the Qur'an is a theoretical and practical foundation that functions not only as a reading but must always be endeavored to be able to think deeply about its meanings. This is so that the Qur'an is not only a "book of heaven" but can also be understood in a down-to-earth way, bearing in mind that the Qur'an is a guide to life itself. However, the Qur'an itself exists in a normative text (Adinugraha & Ulama'i, 2020).

With its form as a text, it is not surprising that the first understanding that emerges is an understanding based on textual-normative reading. However, the changing times require religious texts (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) to be interpreted dynamically so as not to create gaps. The emergence of a gap between the text and the problems of the times can be interpreted as the inability of Muslims to relate the spirit of their religious teachings to the issues of the times which have various forms and meanings. From this, efforts are then needed to be able to dialogue these texts with dynamic social realities. Finally, this is where the method of reading texts contextually emerges as an effort to renew Islamic thought (which was originally text-based) so that it is in accordance with cultural developments to human civilization. Contextual reading of texts is also needed as an effort to reform in understanding religious

texts so that there is no impression that exalts the thoughts of various classical scholars (textually based) to reach an understanding that these thoughts are not worthy of being changed both methodologically and substantively.

Context, in general can be interpreted as a situation related to an event. In relation to the texts of Islamic thought (especially the Qur'an) this context can be interpreted in two ways. First, the context of the text. This means that a context will be closely related to the texts of the Qur'an, which in this case is the socio-historical and anthropological context of the people who acted as objects when the Qur'an was revealed. Second, the context of the interpreter. This means a context that existed at that time encompassed the current audience/object. This means that humans/ummah today are no longer intended to be the first object of the emergence of texts, but have been actively carrying out the process of interpretation which is outside the field of audiences with a period that is far from the emergence of texts. In short, an understanding of these two contexts will later be known as the theory of the double movement which is meaningful to be able to formulate the vision of the Qur'an as a whole to be applied in the present (Shabry, 2011). The contextual paradigm ultimately necessitates several other approaches within it, especially the socio-historical approach. So, if in textual reading it can be compared with a normative approach, then in a contextual approach it can be compared with a historical approach.

The historical approach in reading Islamic texts, in particular, has the aim of reconstructing the past in an objective systematic way by means of historical efforts (heuristics, criticism, and multidisciplinary interpretation) to obtain facts and strong conclusions. The historical approach can be used to approach the text –or even the religion (Islam) itself. From this, it can be interpreted that religion is not the exclusive right of the clergy (normatives) alone. Religion can then be understood by humans because it has a historical setting where every human being has his or her own past experience. Therefore, an understanding of history is important so that an understanding of a text is not distorted or becomes a (simple) justification of a problem. The historical approach is needed because with it it can help humans to see a chain of events with other events and become a measuring tool in sorting and choosing an issue. The historical approach in reading Islamic texts is important because with it one can see the context of space and time – as the main elements of history, to see the chain and chronology of one event with another. This is important so that there is no bias and distortion in assessing an event. In addition, the historical approach is also important because it can also be a measuring tool in sorting and choosing a problem.

The main idea of contextual-historical reading can be read from the position of the main sources of Islamic texts (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) which are built from a particular and historical tradition. Such a view is understood that Islam is a religion that is undergoing a process (development) or it can be



understood that Islam was not born from an empty space. Al-Qur'an, even though it is understood as a text in the form of God's words, in fact it enters the human area historically which occupies a certain time and space. Because these Islamic texts are included in the human realm, a dialectical relationship is built between these texts and cultural reality. Thus, Islamic texts - especially the Qur'an are "believed" as cultural products (*al-muntâj al-tsaqaffi*). This means that textual understanding cannot apply to all times and places because it has taken a particular historical element. So, in this case it can be understood that the understanding of religious texts -in real terms can change according to the context in which the human is located (Susanto, 2009).

In previous practices, the contextual-historical paradigm can be described in some of Umar bin Khattab's behavior. Although previously there had been several practices of reading contextually at the time of the prophet (the case of the Bani Quraizhah), as one of the prophet's main companions, Umar on several occasions prioritized the historical-contextual paradigm in reading an event. For example in the case where Umar took a policy to postpone the law of cutting off the hands of a thief. This event then led to protests from other friends because Umar was considered to have violated the text of the Al-Qur'an letter Al-Maidah verse 38. However, Umar still adhered to his views which were based on the conditions in which the event occurred during a famine, so that the application of punishment Textual content is considered unable to fulfill a sense of justice.

Other things that Umar did were when he decided not to distribute *ghanimah* or spoils of war anymore as stated in Al-Qur'an Al-Anfal verses 41 and 69. This incident fragment was later remembered because it caused scathing criticism of Umar's decision. However, Umar answered this criticism contextually. Umar saw that in the past during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, all those who joined the war would get a share because he left with capital independently. This is no longer appropriate considering that the wars that occurred during Umar's time were carried out with capital fully supported by the Baitul Mal (State Treasury). Umar's contextual understanding is motivated by the condition of the administrative structure that has been well organized and the social conditions of the community that have been stable compared to conditions in the past (Shabry, 2011).

In subsequent developments, contextual-historical ideas actually also developed in line with the development of schools of thought in religion. It is the Mu'tazilah school of thought that can be categorized as the bearer of the idea (theology) of contextual-historical text reading. This is because the founder of this school, namely Wasil bin Atha' (W. 748) prioritized ratio/philosophical reason in reading religious texts. Such readings make the Mu'tazilah think rationally where they adjust their reasoning opinion to the text of the Qur'an. That is, the pronunciation (textual) of the Qur'an is left behind to take its metaphorical meaning (Rohidin, 2018).

Although it does not clearly claim to be a contextual-historical school, the existence of the Mu'tazilah school encourages the birth of an understanding of groups that are understood as groups that consistently develop a literal contextual-historical paradigm. Especially regarding the use of the full potential of ratios so that textual readings are no longer an option in understanding religious texts. It is the Liberal Islam Network (JIL), a group in Indonesia that can be categorized as a group that reads religious texts in a contextual-historical manner. This group dedicates itself to the full effort of rational reasoning – an effort initiated by the Mu'tazilah in reading religious (Islamic) texts. This rational reading practically means reading contextually, where the emphasis point on the interpretation of this group is not on the literal meaning of a text (Shabry, 2011).

Contextual reading – or according to this group termed rationally – needs to be done as an effort to revive religion (Islam). This rational reading itself can be traced from the postulates that were born by this group which consists of three things, first, *Al-'Ibrah bi al-maqâshid lâ bi al-alfâzh* (what becomes the foundation of law is the intention/objective of shari'a, not its expression in the text). Second, *Jawâz naskh nushûsh bi al-mashlahah* (religious texts can be deleted with maslahat). Third, *Tanqîh nushûsh bi 'aql al-mujtama'* (religious texts can be corrected by reason or public opinion) (Mustofa, 2006). Such a view in practice has led to a prolonged debate which can be seen from the absence of views put forward by the JIL group that have not received any objections from other groups, which are not even textual-normative but also historical contextual. However, it needs to be underlined that true rationalization efforts are still needed so that religion can become more modern/follow modernization with the aim that Islam can develop its ability to compete with Western civilization, while still paying attention to the noble characteristics of Islamic teachings themselves.

Despite the dynamics, the idea of reading Islamic texts in a contextual-historical way cannot be separated from one of the important figures, namely Fazlur Rahman. Even though he continued what had been done by Abu Sulayman (d. 2021 M) –as well as several other figures such as Muhammad Syahrour, and Arkoun in reforming ushul fiqh, Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988 M) is more widely known as a figure who is synonymous with a contextual approach -historical. This is because Fazlur based on the theory of double movement (two-way interpretation), namely a theory that provides the formulation of the complete vision of the Qur'an and then applies a general principle in the current situation. Fazlur's idea, like the general view of the contextual-historical paradigm, can be understood with the view that religious texts (the Qur'an) must be understood according to the historical background of the Prophet and the people of the Arabian peninsula at the time of the revelation of the Koran.

Fazlur's view is further offered through several methodological principles, including first, a historical approach needs to be carried out carefully and seriously to be able to find the meaning of the

Qur'anic text. For this reason, a chronological understanding of the verses that were revealed at the beginning to the last verse was needed. In this way, interpreters need to be able to follow the context of the meaning of the Qur'an itself. Second, it provides a distinction between legal provisions in the Qur'an with various goals and objectives. Third, the various objectives of the Qur'an must be understood and determined by paying full attention to the socio-cultural setting, namely the situation in which the Prophet lived and did his activities (Shabry, 2011).

Even so, Fazlur Rahman's ideas have in practice been carried out by previous Muslim intellectuals, especially through the *asbabun nuzul* method. However, Fazlur Rahman does not seem to be content with this method alone. Fazlur wanted that the historical background, as well as the socio-cultural background of the Prophet's time and the Arab community in general could be studied more deeply and further. Not enough to stop there, Fazlur also wants the reading and interpretation of Islamic texts not to be limited to specific legal matters, but also to break through to an understanding of the goals and ideals of further Islamic texts. The method offered by Fazlur Rahman can also be interpreted as an inductive-integrative method which emphasizes the importance of a historical approach in understanding the context of verses. And conceptually, this can be justified because understanding the historical context of the Qur'an is indeed one of the important elements to know considering that in many cases, religious (Islamic) texts cannot be fully understood without understanding the context (Nawas, 2019).

So, even before Fazlur Rahman, this perspective was introduced by another figure, namely Muhammad Abduh. Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905 AD) also offered the importance of a contextual-historical approach in reading Islamic texts. Abduh gives the view that the contextual approach aims to free the mind from the shackles of *taqlid*. In this case Abduh recited his method through an effort to emphasize the explanation of Islamic texts (verses of the Qur'an) on the aspect of the accuracy of the editorial, to then arrange the contents of the verses in an editorial which highlights the main purpose of the verse's revelation to be arranged (beautifully) ) the definition of the verse with the rules that apply in society and the world (Shihab, 1994: 11).

As a result, basically a historical-contextual reading in Islamic thought "only" aims to dialecticize the core teachings of Islam in the situation and locus where the human being is. This makes contextual-historical reading able to provide considerations as well as solutions to various human needs (local/local) by providing answers in the form of religious laws without changing the substance of religious teachings (*al-maqasid al-shari'ah*). Furthermore, a contextual-historical reading provides an appreciation of local traditions (*'urf*) without having to vis a vis one another.

## CONCLUSION

Islamic texts, both the Qur'an and hadith are the absolute sacred texts of religion, which in order to understand them requires an interpretation which is also absolute/single for all ages. However, it must be understood that since their inception, these texts have experienced contact with the social reality that surrounds them. With the dynamic development of the times, this absolute understanding will give birth to a gap. It is feared that this gap will actually make Islam unable to provide solutions to various problems of the progress of the times which also continue to be dynamic. At this point, efforts are needed to dialogue Islamic texts with social reality.

For this reason, the reading of Islamic texts does not just stop at one interpretation, bearing in mind that Islamic texts, especially the Qur'an, are not just dead texts. Al-Qur'an is not only limited to textual reading, but also contains meanings that need to be understood which serve as a guide for life. From this it is necessary to read Islamic texts with other readings.

However, this does not mean that textual-normative reading must be abandoned or even marginalized. It doesn't mean that you have to give priority to contextual-historical readings. Both, in the history of Islamic thought, have undergone a dialectical process with each other as a tool for understanding Islamic texts. This means that, although each has its own point of view, the ideal point in reading Islamic texts is still to be sought collaboratively to produce readings which give rise to holistic, factual and actual understanding in accordance with the spirit of rahmatan lil 'alamin.

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