



Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an dan Tafsir

ISSN 1907-7246 E-ISSN 2502-6402

Tersedia online di <https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/Hermeneutik/index>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/hermeneutik.v20i1.35872>

Reformist-Modernist Ideology in Indonesian Qur'anic Exegesis: A Sociology of Knowledge Analysis of Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy's Tafsir an-Nuur

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Abstract

This study examines the reformist-modernist Islamic ideology embedded in Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid an-Nuur by Teungku Muhammad Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy (1904–1975), one of the most influential Indonesian mufassir of the twentieth century. The study departs from the argument that Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia has long been shaped by ideological contestation between reformist-modernist and traditionalist Muslim orientations, yet the ideological structure of individual tafsir works remains insufficiently explored. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical method and Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge as the theoretical framework, this research analyzes Tafsir an-Nuur as the primary source alongside biographical, historical, and socio-political data related to Hasbi's intellectual life. The findings reveal three major points. First, Hasbi's reformist-modernist ideology is reflected in his consistent call to return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and in his efforts to purify Islamic teachings through criticism of taqlid, bid'ah, khurāfāt, and tawassul practices considered inconsistent with authentic Islam. Second, his tafsir was shaped by several socio-historical factors, including the dominance of traditionalist Muslim

communities in Indonesia, his political involvement in the reformist-oriented Masyumi Party, and the persistence of syncretic cultural traditions rooted in pre-Islamic beliefs. Third, Tafsir an-Nuur significantly influenced reformist Muslim communities, particularly Muhammadiyah, while also contributing to the development of contextual and socially engaged Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia. This study contributes to Indonesian tafsir studies by demonstrating the dialectical relationship between ideology, socio-political context, and Qur'anic interpretation, while also extending Mannheim's sociology of knowledge into the study of modern Indonesian tafsir.

Keywords: Indonesian Qur'anic Exegesis; Reformist-Modernist Islam; Sociology of Knowledge; Tafsir an-Nuur.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji ideologi Islam reformis-modernis yang terkandung dalam *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid an-Nuur* karya Teungku Muhammad Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy (1904–1975), salah satu mufassir Indonesia paling berpengaruh pada abad ke-20. Penelitian ini berangkat dari argumen bahwa tafsir Al-Qur'an di Indonesia sejak lama dibentuk oleh kontestasi ideologis antara orientasi Islam reformis-modernis dan tradisionalis, namun struktur ideologis dari karya tafsir individual masih jarang dikaji secara mendalam. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif-analitis dan kerangka sosiologi pengetahuan Karl Mannheim, penelitian ini menganalisis *Tafsir an-Nuur* sebagai sumber utama yang dipadukan dengan data biografis, historis, dan sosial-politik terkait kehidupan intelektual Hasbi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga temuan utama. Pertama, ideologi reformis-modernis Hasbi tercermin dalam seruannya untuk kembali kepada Al-Qur'an dan Sunnah serta upayanya memurnikan ajaran Islam melalui kritik terhadap taqlid, bid'ah, khurāfāt, dan praktik tawassul yang dianggap tidak sesuai dengan Islam autentik. Kedua, tafsir Hasbi dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor sosio-historis, antara lain dominasi masyarakat Muslim tradisionalis di Indonesia, keterlibatannya dalam Partai Masyumi yang berorientasi reformis, serta kuatnya tradisi sinkretik yang berakar pada kepercayaan pra-Islam. Ketiga, *Tafsir an-Nuur* memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap komunitas Muslim reformis, khususnya Muhammadiyah, sekaligus berkontribusi pada perkembangan tafsir Al-Qur'an yang kontekstual dan responsif terhadap realitas sosial di Indonesia. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada studi tafsir Indonesia dengan menunjukkan hubungan dialektis antara ideologi, konteks sosial-politik, dan interpretasi Al-Qur'an, sekaligus memperluas penerapan sosiologi pengetahuan Karl Mannheim dalam kajian tafsir modern Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Tafsir al-Qur'an Indonesia; Islam Reformist-Modernist; Sosiologi Pengetahuan; Tafsir an-Nuur.

Introduction

The development of Muslim society in Indonesia has long been characterized by

ideological tensions, particularly between reformist-modernist and traditionalist currents. These tensions have shaped not only patterns of religious authority and socio-religious practices, but also the production of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*), in which interpretation often serves broader intellectual, theological, and socio-religious agendas. In this context, Teungku Muhammad Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy (Hasbi) emerged as one of the prominent twentieth-century Indonesian exegetes whose *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid an-Nuur* (called by *Tafsir an-Nuur*) occupies an important position in the history of Indonesian *tafsir* and continues to be widely referenced in scholarly discussions.

Hasbi is widely recognized as a Muslim thinker associated with reformist-modernist ideals that emphasize the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary foundations of religious authority while criticizing religious practices considered to lack clear textual basis. In *Tafsir an-Nuur*, this orientation is reflected in his persistent critique of *taqlid* and his argument that Muslim religious life should be guided by scriptural teachings rather than inherited traditions or customary practices. Such tendencies can be observed in several of his interpretations, including his commentary on Surah al-Baqarah (2:170). In explaining this verse, which describes the refusal of the Meccan polytheists to follow the divine guidance brought by the Prophet Muhammad P.b.u.h., Hasbi interprets the passage as a critique of blind imitation among Muslims who adhere unquestioningly to inherited traditions (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965).

A similar tendency appears in his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:177), a verse discussing faith, social relations, charity, and righteous conduct. In this context, Hasbi criticizes certain religious practices commonly found in Indonesian Muslim society that he categorizes as *bid'ah*, such as the recitation of *dala'il al-khayrat* for the purpose of seeking the Prophet's intercession. According to Hasbi, many Muslims engage in such devotional practices while neglecting the actual implementation of the Prophet's Sunnah in everyday life. He argues that these practices are unsupported by Islamic legal sources and therefore should be avoided because they constitute forms of religious innovation (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. 278).

These interpretations demonstrate that Hasbi's *tafsir* reflects a reformist-modernist Islamic outlook characterized by the rejection of *taqlid*, the prioritization of reasoned understanding, and the insistence that religious practices must remain firmly grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. His criticism of practices perceived as deviating

from scriptural guidance is consistent with the broader agenda of reformist-modernist Islamic movements, which seek to eliminate *takhayyul*, *bid'ah*, and *khurafat* (superstition, religious innovation, and unfounded beliefs) from Muslim religious life (Farah, 2016, p. 10). Based on this background, this study seeks to examine the reformist-modernist tendencies manifested in Hasbi's *Tafsir an-Nuur*.

This study argues that *Tafsir an-Nuur* provides a particularly important object for an ideology-oriented reading because Hasbi consistently incorporates socio-communal explanations (*adab al-ijtimā'i*) and relates Qur'anic verses to the socio-religious realities surrounding Indonesian Muslim society during the period in which the tafsir was composed. This characteristic places *Tafsir an-Nuur* within the broader framework of what is often described as contextual tafsir, namely an interpretive approach that seeks to maintain the relevance of the Qur'an by engaging concrete social conditions and contemporary religious problems faced by Muslim communities (Kholifati, 2025). Nevertheless, contextual interpretation alone is insufficient to explain why certain religious practices are criticized, why specific textual authorities are privileged, or how interpretive arguments are shaped by the exegete's intellectual and socio-political position. Consequently, a more comprehensive analytical framework is required to connect interpretive products with the social conditions that produce them.

Previous studies on *Tafsir an-Nuur* and reformist-modernist Islam have examined Hasbi from various perspectives. Some scholars focus on his intellectual biography and his contributions to the development of Indonesian tafsir studies (Faisal, 2020; Firmansyah et al., 2024). Other studies discuss specific themes in *Tafsir an-Nuur*, including certain Qur'anic narratives and contemporary religious issues, without systematically analyzing the reformist-modernist ideology underlying his interpretive framework (Safitri, 2024; Zahra, 2024). Meanwhile, several works address the broader issue of ideology in tafsir or explore ideological tendencies in other local-language exegetical traditions, yet they do not specifically examine *Tafsir an-Nuur* as a primary object of ideological analysis. Studies concerning Hasbi's intellectual thought also tend to discuss his ideas in general terms without clearly identifying and tracing the reformist-modernist ideological structure embedded throughout his exegetical patterns and socio-historical context (Abror, 2021; Federspiel, 1991; Ibrahim, 2018; Ichwan, 2002; Ilyas, 2024; Imanuddin & Mursalim, 2024). Therefore, an important research gap remains,

namely the absence of a comprehensive study that maps the reformist-modernist ideological construction within *Tafsir an-Nuur* while simultaneously explaining the social, political, and cultural factors that shaped its production and influence within Indonesian Islam.

To address this gap, this study examines the reformist-modernist Islamic ideology reflected in *Tafsir an-Nuur* through the perspective of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. Mannheim's framework is employed to analyze the social situatedness of ideas and interpretive claims, as well as the dialectical relationship between intellectual production and the socio-historical environment in which it emerges. Based on this framework, the study aims to achieve three objectives: first, to identify the main indicators of reformist-modernist ideology articulated in Hasbi's tafsir; second, to explain the social, political, and cultural contexts that shaped Hasbi's interpretive orientation; and third, to analyze the influence of this ideological tafsir on Indonesian Muslim society and the broader development of Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis. Through this approach, the study contributes to the scholarship of Indonesian tafsir by demonstrating how ideological commitments are embedded within Qur'anic interpretation and how such interpretations both shape and respond to the contested religious realities of Indonesian Islam.

Theoretical Framework

The author employs the theory of 'sociology of knowledge' proposed by Karl Mannheim, which posits that human knowledge cannot be separated from the subjectivity and psychological state of the individual who possesses it. This perspective challenges the notion of objective, absolute knowledge, suggesting instead that all knowledge is socially constructed and context-dependent. Mannheim's work is significant in understanding how ideas and ideologies are shaped by their environments, and it provides a critical framework for analyzing the development of knowledge across different social settings. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge remains relevant for contemporary social and political theory. It provides a framework for understanding how social conditions influence thought processes and the development of knowledge, making it a valuable tool for critiquing modern scientific and philosophical endeavors (Mannheim, 1979).

Three Mannheimian concepts are particularly relevant for the analysis of ideological tafsir. *First*, the distinction between particular and total conceptions of ideology. The particular conception treats ideology as conscious or unconscious distortion attached to a single statement, while the total conception treats ideology as the entire structure of thought characterizing a social group or epoch (Mannheim, 1979). The latter is adopted in this study, since reformist-modernist tafsir cannot be reduced to isolated propositions; it operates as an integrated worldview that shapes interpretive choices across many verses. *Second*, the distinction between ideology and utopia. Ideology defends the prevailing order, while utopia projects a transformative one. This distinction will be useful in showing that Hasbi's tafsir is not purely defensive: it actively imagines a renewed Indonesian Islam purified of *taqlid*, *bid'ah*, and *khurafat*. *Third*, relationism, which allows the analyst to take the social conditioning of thought seriously without collapsing into pure relativism.

The framework is operationalized at three analytic levels that correspond to the study's research objectives; a) At the textual level, ideological markers are identified within *Tafsir an-Nuur*, focusing on Hasbi's recurrent appeals to "the Qur'an and the Sunnah" and his rejection of *taqlid*, *bid'ah*, *khurafat*, and *tawassul*. b) At the contextual level, three conditioning factors—social, political, and cultural—are reconstructed from biographical and historical sources to clarify the social location from which Hasbi interprets. c) At the consequential level, the study examines how Hasbi's tafsir reinforced the ideological identity of reformist-modernist communities in Indonesia, particularly Muhammadiyah, and how it contributed to the broader trajectory of Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis. This three-level operationalization preserves the dialectical character of Mannheim's framework, in which textual product, social location, and social effect are reciprocally constituted.

According to Mannheim, this theory can be employed as a critical analysis tool for studying a figure (Hamka, 2020, p. 76-84). Using this theory will make it easier for the author to study Hasbi's thoughts in his commentary. With this sociological theory of knowledge, the author can understand the causes of Hasbi's interpretation, thereby gaining insight into the social context surrounding Hasbi and the impact or influence it will have.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The primary source is *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid an-Nuur* by Teungku Muhammad Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, which is examined through close textual reading and contextual analysis. The study uses Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge as its theoretical framework to analyze the relationship between tafsir, ideology, and socio-historical context.

Data sources consist of primary and secondary materials. The primary source is *Tafsir an-Nuur*, particularly passages related to the authority of the Qur'an and Sunnah, critiques of *taqlid*, *bid'ah*, *khurāfāt*, and *tawassul*, as well as socio-community (*adab al-ijtimā'i*) interpretations. Secondary sources include scholarly books, journal articles, biographies, and historical studies concerning Hasbi, Indonesian tafsir, reformist-modernist Islam, and Mannheim's theory.

Data collection was conducted through systematic reading, classification, and documentation of relevant passages in *Tafsir an-Nuur*. The analysis focuses on identifying reformist-modernist ideological markers, relating them to Hasbi's social, political, and cultural background, and examining the influence of his tafsir on Indonesian Muslim society and the development of Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis. Using Mannheim's perspective, the study analyzes the dialectical relationship between text, social context, and ideological production.

Results

Reformist-Modernist Islam

Reformist-modernist Islam emerged as an intellectual and socio-religious movement aimed at renewing Islamic thought and reconstructing Muslim ways of life in response to the challenges of modern civilization (Muhsin, 2014, p. 3). The movement emphasizes the importance of returning to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, encouraging Muslims to engage critically with religious texts through *ijtihad* so that Islam remains relevant to changing social realities. As modernization and global transformation accelerated, Muslim scholars increasingly viewed religious renewal as a necessity in order to maintain the dynamism and adaptability of Islamic teachings in contemporary life.

In the Indonesian context, reformist-modernist Islam developed prominently during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The movement arose partly as a response to the advancement of Western modernity and the perceived stagnation of Muslim societies. Although Islamic reform movements had already appeared in various parts of the Muslim world since the eighteenth century, their influence became more institutionalized in Indonesia through socio-religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah and al-Irsyad. These organizations promoted religious purification, rational inquiry, educational reform, and the eradication of practices regarded as *taqlid*, *takhayyul*, *bid'ah*, and *khurāfāt*. Nevertheless, as noted by Subandi, the distinction between traditionalist and modernist Muslims did not always result in open conflict, since both groups shared a common concern for strengthening Islamic life and responding to changing social conditions. Differences between them often appeared in *furū'iyah* (secondary religious matters), which simultaneously created space for intellectual debate and the development of Islamic thought through *ijtihad* (Imam, 2024).

Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy and Tafsir an-Nuur

One of the important Muslim intellectuals shaped by this reformist-modernist environment was Teungku Muhammad Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy (1904–1975) (Abidin & Aziz, 2023, p. 127). Born in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Hasbi came from a respected religious family and received his earliest Islamic education from his father before continuing his studies in various pesantren across Aceh (Khairudin & Syafril, 2015, p. 85-86). His intellectual development was significantly influenced by Muhammad ibn Salim al-Kalali (Supian, 2014, p. 276), a Sudanese reformist scholar who introduced him to modern Islamic reformist ideas and encouraged him to pursue further studies at al-Irsyad in Surabaya under the influence of Ahmad Surkati (A.M. Ismatulloh, 2014, p. 142). After returning to Aceh in 1928, Hasbi became actively involved in teaching, pesantren development, writing, and Islamic intellectual activities.

Hasbi later emerged as one of Indonesia's most productive Muslim scholars, contributing extensively to the fields of *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, hadith, theology, Qur'anic studies, and tafsir (Hamdani, 2016, h. 18; Jamal et al., 2020, p. 382). His intellectual dedication was further reflected in his academic career and participation in socio-political activities, including his involvement with the Masyumi Party. Among his many works,

Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Majid an-Nuur stands out as his most monumental contribution to Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis. Hasbi explained that the tafsir was written to meet the growing academic interest in Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia, to provide access to tafsir for readers unable to understand Arabic sources, and to enrich the tradition of Qur'anic scholarship in the Indonesian archipelago (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. ix).

Tafsir an-Nuur was composed over approximately nine years, from 1952 to 1961 (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965), despite Hasbi's extensive commitments as an educator, politician, and academic administrator. Covering all thirty juz' of the Qur'an (Miswar, 2015, p. 85), the tafsir employs a *tahlili* method, predominantly within the *bi al-ra'yi* and *fiqhi* traditions, while also incorporating *adab al-ijtimā'i* (socio-community) elements. These characteristics demonstrate not only Hasbi's concern with textual interpretation, but also his effort to relate Qur'anic teachings to the socio-religious realities of Indonesian Muslim society.

Discussion

The portrait of reformist-modernist Islamic ideology in Tafsir an-Nuur is reflected in the characteristics of reformist-modernist ideology and its influence on the Indonesian Muslim community. Furthermore, the authors also examine in greater depth the factors that influenced Hasbi's tafsir of reformist-modernist ideology in this work.

The Character of Reformist-Modernist Islamic Ideology

The ideology of reformist-modernist Islam generally advocates a "return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah" and the purification of religion. These characteristics in Tafsir an-Nuur are as follows: first, a return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Hasbi, as a reformist-modernist, clearly seeks to direct his tafsir of Qur'anic verses in this direction. This is evident in how Hasbi bases his tafsir on two primary sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Ash-Shiddieqy, 2000, p. xiii).

1. Return to the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Hasbi's reformist-modernist ideology is reflected in his emphasis on returning to the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic teaching. In *Tafsir an-Nuur*, he frequently interprets Qur'anic verses through other related verses, following the

principle that “the Qur’an explains itself” (*al-Qur’an yufassiru ba’duhu ba’dan*). Through this approach, Hasbi sought to restore the Qur’an as *hudan li al-nas* (guidance for humankind). In his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:2), for example, he criticizes those who neglect the Qur’an, comparing them to blind people who cannot benefit from sunlight despite its presence (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. 33). This interpretive orientation reflects the influence of reformist thinkers such as Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida, who promoted a return to scriptural authority.

Hasbi also emphasized the use of *sahih* hadiths as authoritative explanations of Qur’anic verses. He rejected weak or *ahad* hadiths in matters of faith, arguing that only *sahih* and *mutawatir* hadiths could serve as valid evidence in theological issues. This is evident in his interpretation of Surah Āli ‘Imrān (3:55), where he questioned narrations regarding the physical descent of Prophet ‘Īsā near the end of time because they were based on *ahad* reports (Ash-Shiddiqy, vol. I, pg. 599). According to Nurcholish Madjid, Hasbi’s approach represents a form of metaphorical tafsir (*ta’wīl*), emphasizing the deeper meaning of scriptural texts rather than their purely literal sense (Madjid, n.d., h. 1).

2. *Purification of Religion*

One of the central agendas of reformist-modernist Muslim movements is the purification of religion. The term purification derives from the English word purification and the Arabic term *tanqīh*, both referring to the effort to restore something to its original and uncontaminated state. In the context of Islam, religious purification refers to the attempt to cleanse Islamic teachings from practices considered inconsistent with the Qur’an and the Sunnah, particularly local traditions, superstitions, and forms of worship viewed as lacking scriptural foundation. The goal of this movement is to restore Islamic faith and religious practice to their authentic sources as prescribed by the sharia.

Historically, the idea of religious purification can be traced to early Islamic reformist tendencies, including the Ḥanbalī movement led by Abu Muhammad al-Barbahārī, and later to the movement of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1787), who strongly criticized practices such as saint veneration, grave visitation rituals, and mystical traditions that he considered contrary to pure monotheism (H. Nasution, 1991, p. 24-25; M. A. Nasution, 2024, p. 41). In the modern period, the purification movement was further developed by reformist thinkers such as Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad

‘Abduh, and Rashid Rida, whose ideas were themselves influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah. These reformist ideas later spread to Indonesia through returning pilgrims and students from the Middle East during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In Indonesia, reformist-modernist Islam developed through movements such as the Padri movement in Minangkabau led by Haji Miskin and later continued by scholars including Sheikh Muhammad Jamil Jambek, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, Haji Abdullah Ahmad, and Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim Musa Parabek (Srijudin, 2025, p. 14). Through these intellectual networks, the discourse of religious purification became increasingly influential and eventually shaped the thought of Teungku Muhammad Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy. In *Tafsir an-Nuur*, Hasbi’s reformist-modernist orientation is reflected in his emphasis on returning to the Qur’an and the Sunnah and in his criticism of *taqlid*, *bid‘ah*, *khurāfāt*, and other religious practices considered inconsistent with authentic Islamic teachings.

3. *Rejecting Taqlid* (Imitation)s

It is in this context that Hasbi criticizes Muslims themselves, many of whom still engage in *taqlid*. According to Hasbi, those who read religious texts without comprehending or reflecting upon their meanings will not attain any benefit for their faith, as they fail to understand the guidance and lessons that Allah has provided. Ash-Shiddiqy, *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Majid An-Nuur*, pg. 198. Similarly, in his tafsir of Surah al-Baqarah (2:170), Hasbi criticizes those who practice *taqlid*. (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, h. 266-267) He firmly forbids anyone from engaging in *taqlid*, especially those who have the capacity to perform *ijtihad*; for them, practicing *taqlid* is considered *ḥarām*. Hasbi distinguishes between *taqlid* and *ittiba’*. *Taqlid* refers to following someone without discerning whether that person is right or wrong, while *ittiba’* means following someone who is certainly right, such as the prophets and messengers.

This rejection of *taqlid* represents one of the principal efforts made by reformist-modernist groups to reopen the gate of *ijtihad* for the Muslim community. According to this group, *taqlid* constitutes a primary factor behind the decline of Muslims in the

modern and contemporary era. By rejecting *taqlid*, Muslims are encouraged to pursue *ijtihad* across every aspect of religious life. Hasbi's interpretation above can thus be read as a manifestation of the reformist-modernist Islamic movement that emerged at the beginning of the modern era. As noted earlier, the defining characteristics of

reformist-modernist Islamic ideology include reopening the gate of *ijtihād*, dismantling fatalistic attitudes, employing rational reasoning to its highest capacity, and renewing existing social institutions. The interpretation above clearly indicates that Hasbi sought to disseminate these values.

Etymologically, the term *taqlid* derives from the Arabic *qallada–yuqallidu–taqlīdan*, which means to imitate, follow, or submit to another’s opinion without understanding its underlying argument (Karimuddin, 2019, p. 56). The Qur’an addresses the issue of *taqlid* in several verses, including Surah an-Naḥl (16:43), al-Isrā’ (17:36), al-Baqarah (2:170), al-A’rāf (7:3), and Āli ‘Imrān (3:32). Based on these verses, Muslim scholars generally distinguish between two forms of *taqlid*: permissible *taqlid* toward qualified scholars, as implied in Surah an-Naḥl (16:43), and prohibited blind *taqlid* that lacks rational and textual foundation.

In *Tafsir an-Nuur*, Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy consistently criticizes blind *taqlid* and associates it with intellectual stagnation and religious deviation. In his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:121), Hasbi explains that some among the *Ahl al-Kitab* rejected the Prophet Muhammad because they merely followed their priests and religious authorities without independent reflection, despite understanding the truth contained in the Torah. According to Hasbi, their refusal stemmed from blind imitation and worldly interests rather than sincere pursuit of truth. He extends this criticism to Muslims who read religious texts without understanding or contemplating their meanings, arguing that such people cannot benefit from divine guidance because they fail to grasp the lessons contained within revelation.

A similar tendency appears in his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:170), where Hasbi strongly condemns *taqlid*, particularly among those capable of performing *ijtihād*. He distinguishes between *taqlid* and *ittiba’*: *taqlid* means following others without knowing whether they are correct, whereas *ittiba’* refers to following the prophets and divine revelation that are unquestionably true. Following them means adhering to everything revealed by Allah SWT. From this interpretation, it is clear that Hasbi firmly rejects *taqlid*. Hal The same stance appears in his tafsir of Surah Luqman (31:21), where Hasbi asserts that those who practice *taqlid* are driven by Satanic desires (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, h. 3213). Therefore, according to Hasbi, those who imitate others blindly will be condemned to Hell. This corresponds to his tafsir of Surah as-Ṣaffāt (37:69–70) (Ash-

Shiddiqy, 1965, h. 3425). From these various tafsir works, Hasbi emphasizes the necessity for individuals to engage in *ijtihad* and to employ reason in religious understanding.

Through these interpretations, Hasbi emphasizes the necessity of reason, critical thinking, and *ijtihad* in religious understanding. This position reflects the broader reformist-modernist Islamic ideology, which viewed *taqlid* as one of the primary causes of Muslim decline in intellectual, social, and religious life. Consequently, the rejection of *taqlid* became an important effort among reformist-modernist groups to reopen the gate of *ijtihad*, encourage rational inquiry, and promote the renewal of Islamic thought in the modern era.

4. *Criticizing the Practitioners of Bid'ah*

Etymologically, the term *bid'ah* in Arabic refers to innovation or the introduction of something new in religious matters. In Islamic discourse, *bid'ah* generally denotes practices that were not exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad Pbuḥ. Several Qur'anic verses are often associated with this concept, including Surah al-Aḥqāf (46:9), al-Baqarah (2:117), and al-Ḥadīd (57:27). Reformist-modernist Muslim groups also base their rejection of *bid'ah* on ṣaḥīḥ hadiths, such as: “Whoever introduces into this matter of ours something that does not belong to it, it is rejected” (HR. Bukhari no. 2697; Muslim no. 1718), and “Whoever performs a deed that is not in accordance with our affair, it is rejected” (HR. Muslim no. 1718). Based on these textual foundations, reformist-modernist thinkers regard *bid'ah* as a prohibited religious innovation that must be removed from Muslim religious life.

This perspective is strongly reflected in *Tafsir an-Nuur*. In his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:177), Hasbi criticizes certain devotional practices commonly found in Indonesian Muslim society, such as the recitation of *dalā'il al-khayrāt* (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. 278). According to Hasbi, many practitioners focus excessively on ritual recitations while neglecting the moral teachings and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. He considers such practices forms of *bid'ah* because they lack clear scriptural basis and divert Muslims from authentic Islamic guidance. Similarly, in his interpretation of Surah al-An'ām (6:159), Hasbi argues that *bid'ah* contributes to division within the Muslim community because each group tends to defend its own traditions and religious practices fanatically (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. 1344-1345). In this regard, Hasbi's interpretation

reflects the broader reformist-modernist Islamic agenda that seeks to purify religion from practices considered inconsistent with the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Iskandar & Firdaus, 2020, p. 25).

Nevertheless, Hasbi's strict understanding of *bid'ah* remains open to debate. Although certain practices criticized by Hasbi may lack explicit textual foundations in the Qur'an and hadith, they are not always directly prohibited. In classical Islamic thought, scholars such as Imam al-Shāfi'ī distinguished between *bid'ah ḥasanah* (commendable innovation) and *bid'ah ḍalālah* (misguided innovation), suggesting that not all religious innovations are necessarily condemned. This debate illustrates the continuing contestation between reformist-modernist and traditionalist approaches in understanding religious practice within Islam.

5. *Regarding Khurāfāt (False Belief)*

Linguistically, *khurāfāt* refers to myths, fabrications, legends, or irrational beliefs. In Islamic discourse, the term generally denotes false beliefs, customs, or superstitions that deviate from Islamic teachings (Zahri, 2019, p. 74). Practices such as offerings, belief in occult powers, shamans, and paranormal forces are viewed by reformist-modernist Muslim groups as forms of superstition that must be eliminated so that Muslims may return to authentic Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

This reformist-modernist perspective is evident in Hasbi ash-Shiddiqy's *Tafsir an-Nuur*. In his interpretation of Surah Āli 'Imrān (3:55), Hasbi discusses popular Muslim beliefs concerning the return of Prophet 'Īsā to earth and the appearance of the Dajjal as a monstrous creature (Saritoprak, 2003, p. 291). Hasbi rejects such literal and mythical understandings, arguing instead that the Dajjal symbolizes *khurāfāt*, immorality, and moral corruption that spread within society (Ash-Shiddiqy, Vol. I, p. 599). For Hasbi, the Dajjal should not be understood merely as a supernatural being, but rather as a metaphor for destructive social and moral behavior.

A similar tendency appears in his interpretation of Surah al-Nisā' (4:51), where Hasbi interprets the term *jibt* as referring to *takhayyul* or superstition. According to him, those who continue to believe in irrational and misleading practices distance themselves from Allah's guidance and mercy. Through these interpretations, Hasbi sought to encourage Muslims to abandon superstitious beliefs and adopt a more rational and

scripturally grounded understanding of religion. This interpretive orientation reflects the broader reformist-modernist spirit inherited from figures such as K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, founder of Muhammadiyah, who strongly promoted the purification of Islam from *takhayyul*, *bid'ah*, and *khurāfāt* within Indonesian Muslim society.

6. *Criticizing Tawassul*

Linguistically, *tawassul* derives from the Arabic word *al-wasīlah*, which refers to a means, intermediary, or a way of seeking closeness to Allah (Mandzur, n.d., p. 724-725). In Islamic tradition, *tawassul* is generally understood as using a medium or intermediary in supplication to approach Allah SWT. The concept is mentioned in the Qur'an, particularly in Surah al-Mā'idah (5:35) and Surah al-Nisā' (4:64). Quraish Shihab explains that *wasīlah* signifies something that connects one thing to another and reflects the desire to attain closeness to Allah. He further notes that many Muslim scholars permit *tawassul* through the Prophets, saints, and pious individuals, although its permissibility depends on how the practice is understood and implemented (Nur, 2011, p. 268).

Nevertheless, *tawassul* remains a contested issue among Muslims. Some Muslims practice *tawassul* by invoking the names or spiritual status of prophets, saints, and religious scholars, including traditions of visiting the graves of the *Wali Songo* and other respected figures in Indonesia. In contrast, reformist-modernist groups reject *tawassul* directed toward deceased persons, considering it a practice that may lead to shirk (associating partners with Allah). This critical perspective is clearly reflected in Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy's *Tafsir an-Nuur*.

In his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:165), Hasbi discusses the prohibition of associating partners with Allah and criticizes those who place excessive devotion toward religious leaders or intermediaries. According to him, some Muslims love and obey certain figures in ways that resemble devotion to Allah Himself, particularly when they rely on intermediaries instead of praying directly to Allah. Hasbi therefore categorizes such forms of *tawassul* as acts that potentially lead to shirk (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. 261). He further criticizes practices such as grave visitation accompanied by supplication to the deceased, which he regards as inconsistent with pure monotheism. A similar criticism appears in his interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah (2:169), where he

rejects tawassul performed at sacred graves and argues that no creature possesses independent power to bring benefit or harm apart from Allah (Ash-Shiddiqy, 1965, p. 265).

Hasbi's interpretation reflects the reformist-modernist agenda of purifying Islamic belief and worship from practices considered incompatible with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. However, this interpretation has been challenged by traditionalist scholars such as Romli and Bisri Musthofa, who argue that tawassul through prophets, saints, and pious individuals differs fundamentally from the polytheistic practices of the Quraysh. According to them, tawassul does not constitute worship of intermediaries, but merely serves as a spiritual means of drawing closer to Allah without compromising Islamic monotheism (Ilyas, 2024).

Factors Influencing Tafsir

Every Qur'anic exegesis produced by an exegete is inseparable from the surrounding social, political, and cultural context, as well as from their scholarly background and ideology. This means that it does not exist in a social vacuum. Therefore, exegetes are always in dialogue with the social circumstances surrounding them when composing their tafsir. Hasbi was no exception. His tafsir was also influenced by several factors during the writing of *Tafsir an-Nuur*, including his reformist-modernist ideology. Using the sociology of knowledge theory proposed by Karl Mannheim, the authors identify at least three of the most influential factors: social, cultural, and political.

First, social factors. Islam is a universal religion, not bound by a particular era or location. True Islam lies in its universal values, such as monotheism and ultimate devotion. With this understanding, Islam can be accepted by Indonesian society, which has diverse cultural patterns. It can be said that Islam is a religion that is flexible and accommodating to local cultures, enabling it to remain relevant throughout the age (Muamara & Ajmain, 2020, p. 255). Before Islam arrived in Indonesia, Indonesian society already possessed deeply rooted cultural traditions influenced by animism, dynamism, and Hindu-Buddhist teachings. Thanks to the efforts of early Islamic missionaries, Islamic scholars were able to integrate existing traditions with new ones that differed from those found in other regions (Sumbulah, 2012, h. 251). Cultural expressions resulting

from the acculturation of Islam and local culture are, for example, reflected in the slametan tradition, which includes several life-cycle rituals such as death and birth ceremonies, *sedekah bumi* (earth almsgiving), *nyadran*, and other ritual practices. These religious expressions remained deeply embedded even when Hasbi composed his tafsir. Thus, it was this social situation that influenced Hasbi's tafsir. It was within this social reality that Hasbi lived and interacted directly when writing *Tafsir an-Nuur*. Therefore, his tafsir was inseparable from his dialectic with traditionalist Muslim groups, who were clearly at odds with his ideology of modernist-reformist Islam.

Second, political factors. It is undeniable that politics in a country has a significant influence on a person's way of thinking, especially when they are directly involved in the political arena, not merely as passive observers, but as active participants. This means that an individual takes part in the political community and contributes to the party they support. Hasbi's involvement in practical politics in Indonesia was one of the important factors influencing his tafsir of the Qur'an. In his biography, he is noted to have been involved in practical politics as a member of the Masyumi Party (Anwar, 2020, p. 539). This party served as a gathering place for Indonesian Muslim organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Persis, and others. The party's founding purpose stemmed from its founders' strong determination to disseminate Islamic teachings in Indonesia (Noor, 2016, p. 274-275). Political issues have been among the most influential factors shaping Qur'anic exegesis. This applies not only to Hasbi, as mentioned above, but also to other exegetes, such as those whose tafsir works were produced during the New Order regime in Indonesia, as studied by Gusmian (Gusmian, 2019, p. 254).

Third, cultural factors. A person's thinking is also inseparable from cultural factors. Indeed, it cannot be denied that human beings, endowed with the capacities of power, creativity, feeling, and will, are cultural beings. The cultures surrounding a person inevitably influence the intellectual products they produce. Similarly, the majority of contemporary exegetes interpret the Qur'an not solely in matters of faith and law, but also in response to contemporary modern issues such as democracy, gender, and others (Mubhar et al., 2025, p. 24).

The cultural environment surrounding Hasbi was largely antithetical to his ideology. *Slametan* (communal ritual meals), pilgrimages to sacred tombs, and various

ritual practices of Indonesian Muslims closely connected to animist-dynamist beliefs and Hindu-Buddhist traditions were still prevalent (Lestari & Yunita, 2025, p. 94). Due to this cultural reality, Hasbi developed a different perspective. These cultural practices were incompatible with reformist-modernist Islamic ideology. He regarded them as *takhayyul*, *bid'ah*, and *khurāfāt* that must be eradicated from Islam. Therefore, in addressing these cultural practices, the majority of his tafsir rejects such long-established traditions.

The Influence of Reformist-Modernist Islamic Ideological Tafsir in Indonesia

A written work produced by an author certainly has a specific purpose and intent. Therefore, those who are literate use writing as a “mouthpiece” to disseminate ideas and even to establish the influence of their ideology. In this regard, the reformist-modernist Islamic community was highly aware of this function. They used written media as a means to spread their ideology, such as through magazines, newspapers, and even tafsir. Throughout its history, during the early period of its development in Indonesia, they produced several magazines and newspapers, including *al-Moenir* founded by H. Abdullah Ahmad in Padang (1911), *al-Itqan* published in the early 20th century, and *al-Munawwarah* published in the 1930s, among others. This spirit of literacy was also embodied by Hasbi. He became one of the figures who actively voiced this ideology through his *Tafsir an-Nuur*. Here, the authors explain the influence that arose from Hasbi's tafsir in propagating reformist-modernist Islamic ideology in particular and the broader influence of his tafsir in Indonesia in general, which can be observed from several aspects:

First, for the Indonesian Muslim community. Specifically, Hasbi's tafsir influenced the reformist-modernist Muslim group that followed him. As a respected religious scholar, both in his own region and within the Indonesian Muslim community as a whole, he undoubtedly exerted significant influence. Hasbi was known as a Muslim scholar of unquestionable integrity and scholarly capacity. He was once entrusted with the leadership of the Aceh branch of Muhammadiyah, which was certainly an honor for him. His election as branch leader reflected his ability to carry out the missions initiated by the organization. As is well known, Muhammadiyah is the second-largest Islamic

organization in Indonesia (after Nahdlatul Ulama). This clearly illustrates Hasbi's significant role within the organization, including the influence of his tafsir.

Hasbi's tafsir can serve as a guide for living within the pluralistic reality of Indonesian society. Furthermore, Hasbi's tafsir can strengthen their ideology, preventing them from wavering in the face of the religious realities they encounter. This is certainly a positive development for them. Their ideology will be fortified by Hasbi's tafsir, which is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, in accordance with their slogan. Strengthening this ideology becomes an important path for the development of their community. Ideology serves as a means to unify perceptions and outline a roadmap for the community's development. It functions as a guideline for life, a vision for future societal planning, and a strategy for realizing collective ideals within the community (Subando et al., 2023, p. 2).

The ideology disseminated by Hasbi is accentuated through the Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, where he serves. Within this organization, Hasbi devotes his thoughts to developing, advancing, and maintaining its ideology for the benefit of the Indonesian people and nation. This ideology is enshrined in the preamble to the Muhammadiyah Articles of Association, Muhammadiyah's Beliefs and Ideals, Muhammadiyah Guidelines, the Twelve Steps of Muhammadiyah, Islamic Guidelines for Muhammadiyah Members, and the Outline of Muhammadiyah Struggle (Khittah Muhammadiyah). One of the key characteristics of this ideology is that the human outlook on life must be based on monotheism. Therefore, the organization rejects values that contradict monotheistic principles, such as the practices of takhayyul, bid'ah, and khurāfāt (superstition, religious innovation, and false beliefs), as these are considered obstacles to the nation's progress (Subando et al., 2023, p. 5). This is what Hasbi continues to emphasize in his tafsir, further strengthening the community's ideology, both among contemporary followers and future generations.

Second, regarding the development of the Indonesian exegetical tradition, Hasbi's tafsir has made a notable contribution. Through this interpretive model, Hasbi establishes a dialogue between the Qur'an, essentially a limited text and an unlimited context. This interpretive model is one of the hallmarks of modern exegetical thought. Hasbi's tafsir differs from the classical exegetical model, which confines itself to narrations without addressing contextual realities. For instance, in the *tafsir of al-Ṭabarī*, the exegete, when

explaining various verses, cites multiple narrations that are not directly relevant to his contemporary context, thereby failing to address the social issues of the time (Al-Thabari, 2000). Similarly, in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm* by Ibn Kathīr, the exegete presents extensive historical ḥadīth data and scholarly opinions when interpreting verses, yet these discussions do not engage with the social context of the exegete’s era (Katsir, 1999).

Hasbi’s tafsir addressed social issues of his time. For example, his criticisms of the surrounding community concerning *takhayyul*, *bid’ah*, and *khurāfāt* were an attempt to establish a dialogue between the text of the Qur’an and the social context of his era. He incorporated these realities into his tafsir of the Qur’an. This model of tafsir is not monotonous; rather, it involves a dialectic between the exegete and the social context of the time. As a result, the Qur’an truly serves as guidance for him personally and for Indonesian Muslims in general. This statement aligns with the purpose of the Qur’an’s revelation to the world as *hudan li al-muttaqin* (guidance for the righteous/pious) and *hudan li al-nas* (guidance for humankind).

The idea of this exegetical model was promoted by Muḥammad ‘Abduh, an exegete from Egypt, through his *tafsir al-Manār*, written around the nineteenth century. In writing his tafsir, ‘Abduh sought to make the verses of the Qur’an as *hudan li al-nas* (guidance for humankind) and emphasized the use of reason in understanding the (Kharlie, 2018, p. 130). This intellectual spirit was then continued by his student, Rasyid Ridha. This intellectual spirit was then continued by his student, Rasyid Ridha, who expressed his teacher’s ideas in eloquent language that captivated readers. Their exegetical ideas quickly spread among Muslims worldwide, rekindling the spirit of reviving the Qur’an as a source of guidance. From there, subsequent exegetes emerged who shared tendencies that arguably resembled the ideas of ‘Abduh and Ridha. Tracing the exegetical model used by Hasbi in his *Tafsir an-Nuur* reveals its intellectual roots in these two exegetes. Hasbi’s model of tafsir has influenced the development of exegetical works in Indonesia. Through this model, Indonesian tafsir has become increasingly diverse, reflecting the ideological orientations of each exegete. For instance, Hasbi embedded his reformist-modernist Islamic ideology into his *Tafsir an-Nuur*.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that Qur'anic exegesis is closely connected to the socio-political and cultural context of the exegete. In *Tafsir an-Nuur*, Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy's reformist-modernist ideology is reflected through his emphasis on returning to the Qur'an and the Sunnah as the primary sources of Islamic authority, as well as through his efforts to purify religion by criticizing *taqlid*, *bid'ah*, *khurāfāt*, and *tawassul* practices considered inconsistent with authentic Islamic teachings. These interpretive tendencies were shaped by several factors, including his social environment within a predominantly traditionalist Muslim society, his political involvement in the reformist-oriented Masyumi Party, and the persistence of pre-Islamic cultural traditions in Indonesian society. The study further reveals that *Tafsir an-Nuur* significantly influenced reformist Muslim communities, particularly Muhammadiyah, and contributed to the broader development of modern Indonesian tafsir.

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