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The Sociological Approach in Qur'anic Interpretation: A Comparative Study of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Social Hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science

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Abstract

Purpose – This article aims to examine the sociological approach in Qur'anic interpretation through a comparative study between Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's social hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science. This study is motivated by the development of contemporary Qur'anic interpretation that seeks to connect the Qur'anic text with the social realities of modern society in order to maintain the relevance of Qur'anic values in addressing humanitarian issues. **Methods** This research employs a library research method with a descriptive-comparative approach through the analysis of the works of Abu Zayd, Kuntowijoyo, and other relevant literature on contemporary social interpretation. **Findings** – The findings show that Abu Zayd emphasizes historical, linguistic, and social approaches through the concepts of *ma'na* and *maghza* to produce a contextual and critical understanding of the text, while Kuntowijoyo offers the paradigm of Prophetic Social Science based on humanization, liberation, and transcendence as the foundation for social transformation. In the analysis of Surah al-Ma'un, both thinkers criticize formalistic religiosity that neglects social justice, although they differ in their methodological orientation. Abu Zayd focuses more on the epistemological aspect of understanding the text, whereas Kuntowijoyo emphasizes the objectification of Qur'anic values into social praxis. **Research limitations** – This study is limited to a conceptual analysis and does not address the empirical implementation of these two approaches in society. **Originality/value** – This article contributes to contemporary Qur'anic studies by demonstrating that Abu Zayd's hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science can complement one another in constructing a critical, humanistic, and transformative model of social interpretation of the Qur'an.

Keywords: Sociological Interpretation; Social Hermeneutics; Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd; Prophetic Social Science, Kuntowijoyo.

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Introduction

The Qur'an, as the holy scripture of Muslims, not only functions as a normative guide in matters of worship, but also contains values that are closely related to social life, culture, and human civilization. Over time, the interpretation of the Qur'an has undergone significant developments, ranging from classical exegetical approaches that tended to be textual to the emergence of various contemporary approaches seeking to relate the text to social realities [1]. This indicates that the understanding of the Qur'an is not static, but continuously evolves along with changing historical contexts and societal needs. Therefore, efforts to understand the Qur'an cannot stop at a literal reading alone; rather, they require approaches capable of bridging the text with dynamic social realities. In this context, various contemporary interpretive approaches, particularly those based on sociology and hermeneutics, have emerged as academic responses aimed at maintaining the relevance of the Qur'an in addressing modern humanitarian issues [2].

Classical exegetical approaches, which tend to be textual and language-oriented, often face major challenges when confronted with the complexities of modern life [3]. Although they possess high intellectual authority, these methodologies are frequently confined to the outward meaning of the text and are therefore less capable of capturing the essence of the message behind historical events. As a result, the interpretations produced often appear rigid and difficult to apply in responding to contemporary social problems. Excessive focus on past narrations creates a gap between the sacred text and the sociological realities that continue to develop dynamically. Moreover, the limited use of modern social science perspectives causes classical exegesis to be regarded as less relevant to contemporary ethical standards and human rights issues. The dominance of medieval perspectives in classical interpretation also risks perpetuating biased views on issues such as gender equality and power structures. Consequently, absolute dependence on this textualist model is feared to render religious thought stagnant and outdated. This phenomenon has given rise to the urgency of recontextualizing exegetical methodologies so that religion may continue to function as a moral compass responsive to social change [4].

Several previous studies have discussed the contribution of sociological approaches in the development of Qur'anic and tafsir studies. One of them is the

article by Didik Harianto and Putroe Balqis entitled *The Contribution of Sociological Approaches in the Development of Qur'anic and Tafsir Studies: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives*. The study demonstrates that sociological approaches play an important role in contextualizing Qur'anic verses, developing thematic interpretations based on social issues, and responding to contemporary socio-religious problems such as social justice, gender equality, and environmental crises. In its analysis, the article employs several sociological theories, including structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism, to explain the relationship between Qur'anic texts and social realities [5]. However, the study remains general in nature because it does not specifically examine Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's social hermeneutics or Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science as models of contemporary social exegesis. On the other hand, several other studies, such as *Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Hermeneutics in the Development of Modern Tafsir Methods* by Muhammad Saekul Mujahidin [6] and *Bridging Text and Reality: An Analysis of Kuntowijoyo's Interpretation of the Concept of The Chosen People in QS. Ali Imran/3:110* by Muhammad Dirman Rasyid [7], tend to discuss the two figures separately. To date, no study has specifically compared Abu Zayd's social hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science within the framework of sociological approaches to Qur'anic interpretation. Therefore, this article seeks to fill this academic gap through a comparative analysis of the two approaches in order to identify their commonalities, methodological differences, and contributions to the development of contemporary social exegesis.

As a response to the limitations of textualist methods, contemporary exegetical trends have begun integrating sociological and hermeneutical approaches in analyzing sacred texts. These approaches no longer view the Qur'an merely as a static collection of words, but as a living text that must continuously engage in dialogue with the realities of the age [8]. Through a sociological lens, modern exegetes attempt to examine the social structures behind the revelation in order to discover the fundamental spirit or universal objectives of the verses. At the same time, hermeneutics enables the interpretive process to involve the reader, historical context, and the relationship between the text and contemporary situations in a more profound manner. This new paradigm shifts the focus from literal understanding toward substantive understanding that prioritizes public welfare and social justice. Through this

method, complex issues such as pluralism, democracy, and gender justice can be addressed with arguments that are more relevant and less anachronistic. The integration of modern disciplines ultimately aims to dismantle the barriers separating religious values from the practical needs of modern humanity. This methodological transformation demonstrates that Islamic thought possesses considerable flexibility in responding to continuously changing historical challenges.

In this context, the thoughts of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo become important subjects of study. Through his social hermeneutics, Abu Zayd emphasizes that the Qur'an must be understood as a text closely connected to cultural and historical contexts, making its meaning dynamic and open to reinterpretation according to the development of time [9]. Meanwhile, through the concept of Prophetic Social Science, Kuntowijoyo not only focuses on textual understanding but also emphasizes the importance of social transformation grounded in prophetic values, namely humanization, liberation, and transcendence [10].

These two approaches represent a new direction in contemporary tafsir studies, namely a shift from textual understanding toward more contextual and transformative approaches. Nevertheless, they differ fundamentally in orientation: Abu Zayd places greater emphasis on interpretation and the production of meaning, whereas Kuntowijoyo emphasizes praxis and social transformation. This difference, however, opens a productive space for dialogue in developing an interpretive approach that not only understands the text deeply but is also capable of making tangible contributions to social life.

Based on the above discussion, questions arise regarding how Abu Zayd's social hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science are constructed, as well as the similarities and differences between the two approaches in the context of social interpretation of the Qur'an. Accordingly, this study is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of an integrative contemporary tafsir methodology, particularly in connecting the understanding of Qur'anic texts with the transformation of social realities in a contextual and transformative manner.

Method

This study employs a library research method with a qualitative-descriptive and comparative approach. This approach is used to analyze the thoughts of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo within the context of the sociological approach to Qur'anic interpretation. The comparative analysis was conducted through three stages: (1) identifying the epistemological foundations of each approach, (2) comparing their interpretive methodologies and objectives, and (3) applying both frameworks to Surah al-Ma'un in order to examine their similarities, differences, and potential complementarity. The research data were obtained from various written sources, including books, scientific journals, articles, and other academic works related to social hermeneutics and Prophetic Social Science. The primary sources of this study consist of the works of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo that discuss the concept of social interpretation of the Qur'an, while the secondary sources include previous studies, scholarly articles, and other supporting literature relevant to the research theme. The selection of sources was based on thematic relevance, the academic authority of the authors, and their relation to sociological approaches in contemporary Qur'anic studies.

The data collection technique was conducted through documentation study by examining, identifying, classifying, and recording data related to Abu Zayd's social hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science. The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive-analytical and comparative methods. Descriptive analysis was employed to systematically explain the construction of each thinker's ideas, while comparative analysis was used to identify the similarities, differences, and methodological characteristics of both approaches in the social interpretation of the Qur'an, particularly in the interpretation of Surah Al-Ma'un. The analytical framework of this study focuses on the epistemological, methodological, and social praxis aspects of both perspectives in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the development of contemporary social Qur'anic interpretation.

Result

A. Sociological Interpretation of the Qur'an

Sociological interpretation is an interdisciplinary approach in Qur'anic studies that places social reality as an essential element in the process of interpretation. This approach seeks to connect the normative messages of the Qur'an with the conditions of society, both during the period of revelation and within contemporary life. By employing sociological perspectives, tafsir is understood not merely as a literal explanation of textual meaning, but also as an effort to comprehend the social functions, humanistic values, and ethical purposes embedded within the Qur'anic text. Therefore, sociological interpretation emphasizes the dialectical relationship between text and society so that the Qur'an may be understood more applicatively in addressing social issues such as justice, social change, gender relations, and cultural dynamics. This approach also aims to bridge religious norms with the evolving needs of society without neglecting the fundamental principles of Islamic law [11], [12].

Sociological interpretation focuses on several important pillars of social life. The first concerns social traditions and norms, where the Qur'an employs terms such as *'urf* and *ma'ruf*, referring to values recognized as good by both reason and religious principles within society. Recognition of these social traditions reflects a process of cultural accommodation in Qur'anic interpretation as long as they do not contradict the fundamental principles of Islam. The second pillar concerns social change, in which the Qur'an emphasizes the role of humans as agents of transformation through total consciousness involving mindset and self-motivation (*anfus*). In the perspective of Qur'anic sociology, social change is systemic, involving divine elements, human creativity, and objective social laws that determine the rise and decline of civilizations [13].

Throughout its development, the social approach in Qur'anic interpretation has been employed by numerous Muslim thinkers from the classical to the contemporary periods. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun, widely recognized as the pioneer of Islamic sociology, formulated the theory of *'ashabiyyah* to explain social solidarity, civilizational transformation, and societal decline in understanding the dynamics of past communities as portrayed in Qur'anic narratives[14]. In the modern period, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida developed the *adabi ijtimai* style of interpretation in Tafsir al-Manar,

emphasizing the social relevance of the Qur'an in addressing contemporary Muslim problems [15]. Subsequently, Fazlur Rahman introduced the *double movement* theory, which stresses the importance of understanding the socio-historical context of revelation before actualizing the universal values of the Qur'an within modern society [16]. Similar tendencies can also be found in the social hermeneutics of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and the concept of Prophetic Social Science proposed by Kuntowijoyo, both of which seek to position the Qur'an as the foundation for humanistic and transformative social change. The development of these social approaches demonstrates that Qur'anic interpretation has gradually shifted from a purely textual orientation toward a more historical, contextual, and transformative paradigm.

B. Hermeneutics in Qur'anic Studies

Etymologically, the term hermeneutics derives from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which means to interpret, explain, or translate. In the context of textual studies, hermeneutics is understood as a theory of understanding used to interpret texts and the issues related to the process of interpretation itself. Scholars define hermeneutics as the art and theory of interpretation, particularly concerning authoritative and sacred texts. Fundamentally, hermeneutics involves three interconnected elements, namely the author or initiator, the text, and the reader. In Islamic studies, hermeneutics is regarded as an approach that enables a deeper understanding of the Qur'an through the interaction between the interpreter and the text. This approach seeks to uncover meaning through the analysis of language, historical context, and the social relations underlying the text. Therefore, hermeneutics has become one of the important methodological foundations in the development of contemporary Qur'anic studies, particularly in responding to the challenges of modernity and globalization [17].

In its development, hermeneutics can generally be classified into several major tendencies, namely objective, subjective, and philosophical hermeneutics. Objective hermeneutics emphasizes the effort to discover the original meaning of a text through historical and linguistic analysis oriented toward the author's intention. In contrast, subjective hermeneutics places greater emphasis on the role of the reader in constructing meaning, so that interpretation is influenced by the interpreter's social background and experiences. Meanwhile, philosophical hermeneutics, popularized by Hans-Georg Gadamer, views interpretation as a

dialogical process between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the reader that continuously produces new understanding. These classifications have significantly influenced the development of contemporary Qur'anic interpretation, particularly in the effort to understand the Qur'an contextually in accordance with social changes and the development of the times [18], [19].

The primary function of hermeneutics in Qur'anic studies is as a tool for exploring the humanistic dimension of the sacred text so that the Qur'an is not understood solely within a theological framework, but also as a source of ethical and social guidance for human life. Through this approach, Qur'anic interpretation is directed toward discovering the significance of divine messages in order to remain relevant in addressing the evolving challenges of modern society. Hermeneutics is also positioned as a complement to traditional methods of tafsir and ta'wil by providing broader interpretive instruments for understanding the relationship between text, history, and social reality. In addition, hermeneutics encourages the emergence of plural interpretations resulting from the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of interpreters. Hermeneutics therefore plays an important role in maintaining the functionality of the Qur'an as guidance that can be understood in accordance with changing spatial and temporal contexts [20].

C. Social Hermeneutics of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd

The concept of social hermeneutics developed by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd is grounded in the view that the Qur'an is a text that interacts dialectically with the social, cultural, and historical context of 7th-century Arab society [21]. Therefore, the process of revelation cannot be separated from the historical realities surrounding it. Abu Zayd regards the Qur'an as a linguistic text that was formed gradually over a period of more than two decades, thus requiring an approach that considers the interrelation between linguistic structure and its socio-historical context [22]. Through this perspective, he critiques the tendency of traditional exegesis to be overly literal, offering instead a more contextual analysis using linguistic and semiotic tools [23]. This approach places Abu Zayd within the tradition of philosophical-contextual hermeneutics, which emphasizes dialogue between text, historical context, and the reader.

Within his methodological framework, Abu Zayd distinguishes two important phases: the phase of formation (*tasyakkul*), in which the text is shaped

by culture, and the phase of transformation (*tasykil*), in which the text actively contributes to shaping new social realities. The core of his hermeneutical approach lies in the dialectic between *ma'na* (historical meaning) and *maghza* (significance) [24]. *Ma'na* refers to the original meaning of the text within its historical context, while *maghza* denotes the substantive meaning that can be contextualized in contemporary situations. This dialectic serves as a primary instrument for connecting the message of the text with the social needs of modern society.

Abu Zayd's approach is influenced by modern linguistic theory, semiotics, and hermeneutics [25]. The main pillars of his methodology include language analysis as a system of communication, semiotic analysis that views the text as a system of signs, and contextual analysis encompassing historical, social, and contemporary reading contexts [26]. Through this framework, interpretation is not merely aimed at uncovering textual meaning, but also at revealing its social significance across different contexts [27].

The interpretive model resulting from this approach is contextual-historical and allows for dynamic reinterpretation. In several of his works, Abu Zayd interprets Qur'anic verses related to social issues—such as inheritance, polygamy, usury, and slavery—as responses to the socio-historical conditions at the time of revelation [28]. Therefore, the primary value derived from these verses lies not merely in their normative forms, but in the principles of social justice they embody, which can be contextualized in accordance with changing times [29]. This perspective demonstrates that textual meaning is not fixed, but remains open to reinterpretation in line with evolving social contexts.

In *Maflhum al-Nass*, Abu Zayd emphasizes that the Qur'an must be understood as a linguistic text formed within a specific historical context. Consequently, interpretation should not stop at literal meaning but should be directed toward its social significance (*maghza*). For example, in interpreting verses on polygamy, Abu Zayd views them as responses to the patriarchal social conditions of early Arab society. Historically, these verses are linked to post-war conditions that left many women without protection. However, their primary significance lies in the principles of justice and protection for vulnerable groups, particularly women, rather than in legitimizing polygamy. Thus, in the modern context, interpretation should move beyond normative forms toward substantive

values that can be realized in more equitable social relations. This approach illustrates that the meaning of the Qur'an is dynamic and open to reinterpretation in response to changing social realities [30], [31].

D. Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science

Prophetic Social Science (Ilmu Sosial Profetik/ISP) is a concept formulated by Kuntowijoyo. This concept emerged as a critique of the positivistic paradigm in social sciences, which tends to be value-free and limited to empirical description without ethical orientation or social transformation. In the context of Prophetic Social Science, the term "prophetic" refers to values derived from the prophetic mission, namely humanization, liberation, and transcendence. The approach employed is the synthetic-analytic approach. In the synthetic dimension, normative religious values are connected with human empirical experiences, while the analytic dimension aims to formulate social concepts that can be objectified within social life. For Kuntowijoyo, social science should not be value-neutral, but rather must possess a prophetic responsibility to direct social transformation [10].

Prophetic Social Science proposed by Kuntowijoyo is founded upon three principal pillars derived from QS. Ali Imran [3]:110, namely humanization, liberation, and transcendence. The pillar of humanization represents the realization of the concept of *amar ma'ruf*, which is directed toward humanizing individuals and restoring human dignity from various forms of dehumanization caused by unjust social systems. Meanwhile, liberation constitutes the concrete manifestation of *nahi munkar*, namely liberating human beings from structures of oppression, injustice, and domination that harm social life. The pillar of transcendence, rooted in the concept of *tu'minuna billah*, serves as the primary foundation directing all social activities toward divine values. These three pillars are interconnected and form an integrated paradigm in which transcendence provides the ethical basis for humanization and liberation. In the context of Qur'anic interpretation, these pillars function as an interpretive framework for reading social verses in a transformative manner, particularly verses related to social justice, advocacy for oppressed groups (*mustadh'afin*), and criticism of social inequality [2].

In Qur'anic interpretation, Prophetic Social Science contains a clear epistemological program. Kuntowijoyo encouraged a shift from normative to

theoretical thinking, from subjective to objective approaches, and from ahistorical to historical perspectives. This means that religious teachings should not merely be understood as individual moral norms, but must also be developed into theoretical frameworks capable of explaining social realities structurally. The Qur'an, therefore, is not only understood as a source of individual ethics, but also as a foundation for constructing social theories capable of explaining and transforming social realities. Within this framework, reality is no longer perceived as isolated phenomena, but rather as an interconnected system requiring multidimensional analysis. Unlike Western social science paradigms that tend to separate religion from social analysis, Prophetic Social Science positions transcendental values as the foundation for social transformation [32].

Discussion

Comparative Analysis

Although originating from different epistemological frameworks, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's Social Hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science share a common objective in positioning the Qur'an as a text that responds to social realities. Both approaches reject purely textual interpretations and emphasize the importance of contextual readings that engage with societal conditions. In addition, both frameworks attempt to highlight the social function of the Qur'an in addressing humanitarian issues, social justice, and social inequality.

Abu Zayd's approach focuses on understanding the Qur'an as a text that interacts dialectically with the socio-cultural context of seventh-century Arab society. His methodology strongly emphasizes the interpretation and production of meaning through linguistic analysis, semiotics, and the dialectic between *ma'na* (historical-original meaning) and *maghza* (contemporary significance). For Abu Zayd, the primary focus is to position the reader as an active subject who determines the direction of interpretation based on the social realities they encounter, although the orientation of his approach remains largely intellectual and hermeneutical [33].

Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science goes beyond textual interpretation alone. He criticizes social sciences that merely describe reality without any commitment to social transformation. Through its three main

pillars – humanization, liberation, and transcendence – Prophetic Social Science functions not only as an analytical framework but also as an instrument for social transformation. Kuntowijoyo encourages a shift from understanding religion merely as an individual moral norm toward constructing a theoretical framework capable of transforming social structures in practical terms [34], [35].

The fundamental difference between the two approaches lies in their ultimate orientation: Abu Zayd primarily emphasizes the reinterpretation and social production of textual meaning, whereas Kuntowijoyo directs interpretation toward more explicit social praxis and transformation. The epistemological and methodological differences between the two approaches can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Comparative Analysis of Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo's Approaches*

Comparative Aspect	Social Hermeneutics (Abu Zayd)	Prophetic Social Science (Kuntowijoyo)
View of the Qur'an	The Qur'an as a dynamic cultural text (<i>muntaj tsaqafi</i>)	The Qur'an as a source of prophetic values guiding society
Main Methodology	Linguistic analysis, semiotics, and the dialectic of <i>ma'na-maghza</i>	Synthetic-analytic approach and objectification of religious values
Main Pillars	<i>Tasyakkul</i> (formation) and <i>tasykil</i> (transformation)	Humanization, Liberation, and Transcendence
Focus of Study	Textual interpretation and the production of meaning in an objective-scientific manner	Social praxis and transformation based on prophetic values
Ultimate Goal	To discover the contemporary significance of the text	To direct social transformation and humanize society structurally
Character of the Approach	Contextual-historical and deconstructive	Critical, transformative, and morally oriented

Thus, Abu Zayd's Social Hermeneutics seeks to produce a contextual reading of the Qur'an through the reinterpretation of meaning based on socio-

historical realities, while Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science positions Qur'anic values as ethical and epistemological foundations for social transformation. These differences indicate that the two approaches operate at distinct yet complementary levels. Abu Zayd provides a more comprehensive hermeneutical framework for interpreting Qur'anic texts in relation to changing social contexts, but he does not offer an operational model for social transformation. In contrast, Kuntowijoyo proposes a clear agenda for social change through the principles of humanization, liberation, and transcendence, although his approach does not provide an interpretive framework as detailed as that of Abu Zayd. Therefore, integrating these two approaches may offer a more comprehensive model of sociological Qur'anic interpretation, in which contextual understanding of the text is combined with a transformative agenda aimed at promoting social justice and human dignity.

Applied Comparison: Social Hermeneutics of Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science in Surah Al-Ma'un

Surah Al-Ma'un represents an important foundation for the social reading of the Qur'an. In classical exegesis, commentators such as Ibn Kathir and al-Tabari generally interpret this surah as a condemnation of individuals who deny religion through neglecting orphans, refusing to feed the poor, and performing acts of worship with hypocrisy (*riya'*) [36]. This interpretation tends to emphasize the moral-individual dimension of religiosity. However, in the development of contemporary Qur'anic interpretation, the ideas of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo offer a more social and structural reading [37]. Both argue that religion cannot be reduced to ritual practice alone but must be connected to the reality of social injustice.

From Abu Zayd's perspective, as elaborated in *Maflhum al-Nass*, the Qur'an is understood as a text that interacts dialectically with the socio-historical context of seventh-century Arabian society. Within this framework, Surah Al-Ma'un not only addresses ritual piety but also defines religion through concrete social actions. Historically (*ma'na*), the verses may be understood as criticism of the Quraysh elite who neglected orphans and the poor. However, the significance (*maghza*) of these verses lies in their commitment to social justice and the protection of marginalized groups. In contemporary contexts, this message can

be interpreted as a critique of various forms of social hypocrisy that hide behind religious symbolism [1].

In contrast to Abu Zayd, whose focus lies on the epistemological dimension and the production of meaning, Kuntowijoyo's ISP emphasizes praxis and social transformation. Through the three pillars of ISP, humanization is reflected in efforts to restore the dignity of orphans and the poor, while liberation is concerned with freeing society from structures of socio-economic injustice. The pillar of transcendence is manifested in the theological foundation underlying all efforts to defend vulnerable groups. Social action is therefore not carried out solely on humanitarian grounds but is rooted in religious consciousness and accountability before God. Poverty is understood as a structural rather than merely individual problem, and religion functions as a transformative force that encourages changes in social structures [32].

When analyzed through the three pillars of Prophetic Social Science – humanization, liberation, and transcendence – Surah Al-Ma'un demonstrates strong relevance. Humanization is reflected in efforts to restore the dignity of orphans and the poor, while liberation relates to freeing individuals from structures of socio-economic injustice. In this context, the concept of *al-ma'un* is not limited to small acts of charity but extends to access to social resources that enable a decent standard of living. Thus, poverty is understood as a structural issue rather than merely an individual problem [41].

Comparatively, Abu Zayd and Kuntowijoyo share a common understanding of religion as a social force committed to humanity. Both criticize forms of religiosity that remain confined to formal rituals without social sensitivity. Nevertheless, their approaches differ in orientation. Abu Zayd operates primarily within the realm of interpretation and discourse criticism, emphasizing contextual readings of the text. Kuntowijoyo, meanwhile, focuses on practical transformation by positioning Qur'anic values as the foundation for systematic social change [42].

These differences indicate that the two approaches operate at different yet complementary levels. Abu Zayd's social hermeneutics provides a methodological framework for identifying the social meaning of the Qur'an through historical-contextual analysis and the dialectic between *ma'na* and *maghza*. In contrast, Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science offers a practical

framework for translating Qur'anic values into programs of social transformation through humanization, liberation, and transcendence. In the case of Surah Al-Ma'un, Abu Zayd's approach helps uncover the social significance of the text as a critique of injustice and the marginalization of vulnerable groups, while ISP provides normative and operational directions for realizing these values through transformative social action.

The integration of these two approaches may be achieved by positioning Abu Zayd's hermeneutics at the interpretive stage and Kuntowijoyo's PSS at the practical stage. Through Abu Zayd's framework, Surah Al-Ma'un is first understood within its socio-historical context as a critique of elite groups who neglected orphans and the poor. This interpretation yields a *maghza* centered on the obligation to defend vulnerable communities and uphold social justice. Subsequently, these values are translated into the framework of Prophetic Social Science through humanization, liberation, and transcendence, which can be observed concretely in Muhammadiyah's theology and its various social welfare initiatives. Consequently, the message of Surah Al-Ma'un does not stop at textual understanding but develops into an agenda for social transformation manifested in poverty alleviation, orphan protection, the reduction of social inequality, and various forms of social services grounded in religious values.

Conclusion

Sociological approaches to Qur'anic interpretation have developed as an effort to understand the messages of revelation in relation to social realities. Within this context, Abu Zayd's Social Hermeneutics and Kuntowijoyo's Prophetic Social Science offer two distinct yet complementary perspectives. Together, these approaches enrich the field of sociological Qur'anic exegesis. Social Hermeneutics provides interpretive tools for uncovering the social significance of Qur'anic texts, while Prophetic Social Science offers a practical framework for implementing Qur'anic values in society. The integration of both approaches enables a mode of Qur'anic interpretation that not only critically understands social realities but also promotes social transformation grounded in Islamic values. In the case of Surah Al-Ma'un, this integration demonstrates that the Qur'anic message extends beyond a moral critique of individuals who neglect orphans and the poor; it also contains a broader call for social justice. Therefore, this integrated approach remains highly relevant for addressing contemporary

issues such as poverty, social inequality, the marginalization of *mustadh'afin*, and various forms of structural injustice that continue to challenge modern societies

Author Contributions

Septi Aisyah: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration. **Hilda Husnia:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Investigation.

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Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

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