

FORMULATING THEORIES OF DAKWAH STUDIES A Sociological Contribution

Nur Syam

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia
nursyamtuban2018@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the contribution of sociology to the making of Dakwah studies. From epistemological point of view, dakwah studies develops through five elements: factors, systems, interpretative, developmentalism and participatory. These five elements can be developed based on sociological theories. Through a sociological approach, dakwah studies will be able to contribute to general discussion on the sociology of Muslim societies. The article further argues the inclusion of social science is a pattern of knowledge development based on the integration of science, namely the phenomenon of dakwah as an object of study, while utilizing other social science as approaches.

[Artikel ini mengkaji kontribusi sosiologi dalam ilmu dakwah. Dalam konteks epistemologi, ilmu dakwah berpeluang untuk berkembang dengan berpedoman pada lima aspek: faktor, sistem, interpretatif, developmentalisme dan partisipatoris. Dari lima prinsip tersebut kemudian dapat dikembangkan dengan berbasis pada teori-teori sosiologi. Melalui pendekatan sosiologis terhadap fakta atau realitas dakwah tersebut, ilmu dakwah akan dapat berkembang. Dalam pengembangan lanjut, dapat dikatakan bahwa dimasukannya ilmu sosial adalah suatu bentuk pola pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan berbasis pada integrasi ilmu, yaitu dakwah sebagai obyek kajian dan memanfaatkan ilmu lain sebagai pendekatan.]

Keyword: *Dakwah, Sociological Theories, Da'i*

Introduction

Every science has a basis, perspective, or school (*madhab*) that dwell on the fundamental views of experts regarding the objectives of scientific studies. Although there are slight differences, the essential is about the classification of scientific objects.¹ Social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, politics, communication, and law also have their respective foundations. Regardless of how experts say about them, but the classification is always there.² Religious knowledge, such as *fiqh*, theology, *tafsir*, *hadith*, and *tarbiyah* also has its own foundation.³ Islamic proselytization (*dakwah*) bases itself on some fundamental views of experts in deriving some theoretical principles that can be used as a foothold to develop a 'prophetic science'. *Dakwah* studies is not only explaining natural or social phenomena based on measurement and computation, nor is it an idiographic science that depicts social reality as it is without justification, but a prophetic science which contains dimensions of change that target Muslim morality, community life and ideal social relations based on religious values.

A theoretical principle underlying *dakwah* is set out in QS. an-Nahl:125 with three fundamental steps: *bi 'l-hikmah* (with wisdom), *ma'u'id a haasana* (good advice), and *mujādala* (argument) in a way that is best.⁴ These are the concepts that underlie the whole theoretical building of *dakwah*. *Dakwah* may use rhetoric, journalism, community development, and guidance that all must based on the above three fundamental steps. *Dakwah* with journalism ideally uses peace, not violent and provocative

¹ George Ritzer, *Sosiologi Ilmu Pengetahuan Berparadigma Ganda* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1995), p. 4.

² B. Aubrey Fisher, *Teori-Teori Komunikasi* (Jakarta: Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 1999).

³ Nur Syam, "Metodologi Kajian Ilmu Dakwah: Analisis Karya Ilmiah pada Fakultas Dakwah dan Komunikasi 1985-2015" *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2019, pp. 21-35.

⁴ Abdullah, *Ilmu Dakwah, Kajian Ontologi, Epistemologi, Aksiologi dan Aplikasi Dakwah* (Bandung: Cita Pustaka Media, 2015), p. 133.

ways, which tend to be reckless or lack ethics. All are based on religious values that are believed to be true and have a general scope as truth. Religious values are based on interpretations that respect the meanings of humanizt. Journalism promotes justice, equality, truth, politeness, common good, prosperity, and happiness.⁵ *Dakwah* by rhetoric also has the same scope, namely promoting modesty, togetherness, anti-violence, loving brotherhood, anti-corruption, and anti-hoax. It must be built on three pillars of *dakwah* by prioritizing policies, counseling based on emotional, social and spiritual intelligent approaches. Likewise, guidance must also be based on all principles of goodness. Even when there must be a debate with the use of logic or reason, it must also be done in ways that make sense and logical. There must be *adab al-bahth wa al-munaẓẓara* (ethics of inquiry and debate) and *bahth al-masa' il* (deliberation).⁶

In community development there are also principles of togetherness, cooperation, solidarity, hard work, and sincere work. Through the participatory principle, everything is negotiated and understood together. There are no changes that are not recognized by the community members who are the target of community development. Managing organizational activities, programs and activities must also be based on mutual benefit and true managerial principles. The development of management can certainly be observed, because *dakwah* activism is a public service. Therefore, Total Quality Management (TQM) and Friendly Management are not only important but also very meaningful for the application of three major concepts and the principle of *dakwah*.⁷

This paper seeks to present the contribution of sociology in formulating *dakwah*. The framework of scientific development is

⁵ Ali Nurdin, "Peace Journalism, Konsep, Realitas dan Perspektif Islam", *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, Vol. 06, No. 1, 2016, pp. 65-91; Isabelle Leconte, "The Integration of Dakwah in Journalisme" *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, Vol. 04, No. 1, 2014, pp. 1-19.

⁶ Aswadi Syuhadak, *Teori dan Teknik Mujadalah dalam Dakwah, Debat, Diskusi, Musyawarah Perspektif al-Qur'an*, (Surabaya: Dakwah Digital Press, 2016), p. 44.

⁷ Nur Syam, *Friendly Leadership, Kepemimpinan Sebagai Roh Manajemen* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2018).

interdisciplinary,⁸ which combines one discipline and the other with a condition that *dakwah* has to be the object of study, while sociology becomes an approach.

The Foundations of *Dakwah*

Dakwah studies as part of religious studies is based on certain foundations. There are at least five aspects that can be called foundations: factor, system, developmentalism, interpretive and participatory. All of them are the shared objects of study and research by several experts.⁹ Factor as a foundation is the perspective of *dakwah* that is influenced by communication science. Some even claim that structurally the *dakwah* science is part of the science of communication. Substantially the difference is in the message it uses. If the science of communication is general, while *dakwah* is more specific. Therefore, *dakwah* can be defined as a process of delivering messages from *da'i* (proselytizer; pl. *du'a*) through certain media and methods to obtain changes in the behavior of certain targets (*mad'ūnni*).¹⁰ Meanwhile, the science of communication focuses more on delivering messages to certain targets with certain ways. Thus, *da'i* delivers religious messages with certain methods and media, but have a specific mission to changes the religious behavior of the targeted audiences. The concept of mission here can be related to the ideas of influencing, giving positive impacts, and even opening new horizons.

Dakwah activism consists of several elements: proselytizer, methods, media, and implication. Religious message is different from other messages because the latter are not related exclusively to religion,

⁸ Allen F. Repko, Rick Szostak, Michelle Phillip Buchberger, *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* (Los Angeles: Sage Publication, 2017).

⁹ Nur Syam, “Re-Assesing the Development of Dakwah Science: Dakwah Study in Academic Work Discourse”, Proceeding International Conference of Dakwah and Communications by Dakwah and Communications Faculty UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 24-26 September 2019.

¹⁰ Moh. Ali Aziz, *Ilmu Dakwah* (Jakarta: Prenada, 2015), p. 356.

but to such broader aspects as social, economic, cultural, legal, and even national aspects. Meanwhile, religious message is an exclusive message that is linked to religion and its elements such as theology, rituals and interpersonal relations. In practice, each factor can have a particular relationship with the targeted audiences. Each factor can be used as a variable that is very much in accordance with empirical facts. It is so because what is used as the subject matter is the fact of *dakwah*. It is something external and coercive to the object of *dakwah*.¹¹ The *da'i*, the message, the media and the methods of *dakwah* studies are classified as external and influential factors to religious behaviors. These factors are used to understand whether the audiences' behaviors are something consistent and done repeatedly, or there is a gap between understanding the messages of *dakwah* and the religious behaviors of the audiences. In other words, religious understanding is not necessarily related to religious behavior, and vice versa.

The principle of *dakwah* involves the inter-system of *dakwah* that forms an integral and systemic network.¹² The distinction between the foundational factors and the system lies in each integrality and systematization. If things can be separated one another in certain variables, it is included in the sphere of *dakwah* factor. But if things cannot be separated one another, it is called *dakwah* system.¹³ Likewise, subsystems and *dakwah* factors are integrated in the process, so that they are included in the study of *dakwah* system. Another distinctive feature is problem solving, which is an effort to solve religious problems in a community and also individual problems. Problems can be the relationship between religion, economics, social life, culture and so on. Thus, the characteristics of *dakwah* system are located in the strength of the process and the problem solving

¹¹ George Ritzer, *Sosiologi Ilmu...*, p. 26-28.

¹² Amrullah Ahmad (eds.), *Dakwah dan Perubahan Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Bima Putra, 1993).

¹³ Abdullah Sattar, "Dakwah Inovatif pada Masyarakat Urban: Analisis Konsep dan Praktik Terapi Salat Bahagia" *Ph.D Thesis*, Surabaya: PPs UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2019.

effort. For example, behavioristic studies caused by external factors that are based on the applied process of integral subsystem can be categorized as a study in the perspective of *dakwah* system. The study on the process of changing the behaviors of *abangan* (nominal) Muslims in *pesisir* (northern coastal areas of Java) is an interesting case study. The case depicts a problem that has to be solved. It can be related to the substance or locus.

The principle of developmentalism also serves as an interesting tool to analyse *dakwah* activities. The notion of “development” can come from something that does not yet exist or develop an existing model to be further strengthened. Thus, developmentalism in *dakwah* activism is an effort to produce innovations that bring benefits to people’s lives.¹⁴ There are two distinctive features in this principle of developmentalism: models and results, or products. This is related to the discovery or development of a model. It has a number of influences for the improvement or development of community. The position of the researcher here is to observe the existing model, and to act in its development when needed. These steps must be considered if someone wants to formulate an appropriate model in the socio-cultural dimension of society. For instance, research on the management of the Jogokaryan Mosque in Yogyakarta introduces a model for the development of mosque management in other areas. This is an example of developmentalism research. Likewise, a model of *zakat* village in Malang is also an example of model findings or innovations that can be adopted by other Muslim communities with the same concern.¹⁵

The interpretative foundation is derived from the thoughts of experts. The role of experts can be instrumental for the success of *dakwah* activism. In other words, reality is something behind action. Meaning is obtained by understanding something behind individual actions. So what are explored here are ideas, and individual actions in relation to the

¹⁴ Mohammad Ali Aziz, dkk., *Dakwah Pemberdayaan Masyarakat, Paradigma Aksi Metodologi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren, 2005).

¹⁵ Nur Syam, “Manajemen Masjid: Dari yang Kecil menuju yang Besar” <http://www.nursyam.uinsby.ac.id>.

messages of *dakwah*. These include messages delivered by the proselytizers to their audiences.¹⁶ Reality is a result of man construction.¹⁷ It is more an in-depth event or individual meaning, not a mere psychological reality. Psychological reality is related to the psychological phenomena, whereas *dakwah* studies is related to the studies of thoughts, or ideas that become the basis for its actions. Feeling happy, sad, or suffering is not the result of *dakwah* activism. Rather, the result is an event that encompasses the thought behind *dakwah* and religious actions.

In some research, studies on the meaning of *dakwah* can be done from the subject or the object. *Dakwah* and *tarekat* (sufi order), for example, can be assessed from their respective meaning dimensions. Does preaching done among the adherents of a certain *tarekat* deliver a unique meaning different from the meaning of non-*tarekat* preaching? Interpretive studies emphasize the dimensions of uniqueness and specificity or special patterns that apply in depth. In contrast to the studies of social facts, interpretive studies focus on general patterns of fundamental validity. Another example is *dakwah* activism among the *inlander* (local communities). In this context, there is the uniqueness and specificity of *dakwah* activism. There is a specific meaning of being “inland”. This study can use interpretative studies. There are several important concepts in interpretive studies, namely from the native points of view¹⁸ and interpretative understanding.¹⁹ Based on the method used by some anthropologists, data must be separated from analysis, because data is the understanding of the actors whereas analysis is the understanding of the researchers. Analysis is associated with the perspective of what theories are employed.

¹⁶ Nur Syam, “Mencermati Paradigma Ilmu Dakwah” <http://www.nursyam.uinsby.ac.id>.

¹⁷ George Ritzer, *Sosiologi Ilmu*..., p. 43-44.

¹⁸ Clifford Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” Michael Banton, *Anthropological Approaches to The Study of Religion* (London: Tavistock Publication, 1985), p. 1-39; Nur Syam, *Mazhab-Mazhab Antropologi* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2009).

¹⁹ Nur Syam, *Model Analisis Teori Sosial* (Surabaya: PNM, 2010), p. 37.

Meanwhile, the participatory²⁰ principle is the fundamental thinking of the experts about the targets of *dakwah*, namely the participatory behavior of citizens in their activities. Its difference from developmentalism lies in the focus of the involvement of the target of *dakwah* for the sake of community empowerment projects. Thus, what is studied is a community empowerment program based on *dakwah* activism that is designed, formulated, and determined jointly by subjects and objects for strengthening or empowering various aspects of life, such a study on the relationship of *dakwah* and economic empowerment within *pesisir* communities in Muncar and Popoh. In so doing, the community is involved in the process of empowerment planning, preparation of alternative empowerment, empowerment selection, implementation of empowerment, and evaluation to measure the level of success and the follow-up.

Each discipline of science is certainly to develop in accordance with the principles of interdisciplinary or cross-sectoral, and even multi-field approaches.²¹ It is the experts who have the task and responsibility to develop it. Thus, *dakwah* activism can also develop if all experts are involved in the science development project.

Sociology as a Perspective

Within the scientific research -especially in social, humanities and religion-, four essential concepts should be addressed: definition, foundation, methodology, and theory. The concept of definition provides limits on the study of both the formal-material objects, and the scope, whereas the notion of foundation serves as a tool to understand what is the subject matter of a particular science or what is the subject of scientific studies. Methodology provides an overview and steps of how

²⁰ Rajesh Tandon, *Riset Partisipatoris Riset Pembebasan* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1993).

²¹ Nur Syam, *Twin Towers: Arrah Baru Pengembangan Islamic Studies Multidiscipliner* (Surabaya: SAP, 2010).

research is conducted, whereas theory illustrates what has been produced in the forms of concepts and approaches that provide insights for scientific development.

Theories are tentative propositions or inter-concept relationships that can be empirically tested. Therefore, every theory is a relationship between concepts. Although this explanation refers more to understanding theory based on quantitative research, which idealizes that each theory must have two or more concepts, in fact, it can also be used as a reference in the conception of qualitative research approaches. Qualitative research often does not produce theories as the results of quantitative testing—from theory to theory—but actually can produce conceptions, typologies or social categories that have similarities with the concept of propositions. Conception is usually characterized by characteristics inherent in typology, making it possible to be reviewed in another sphere.

Endang Turmudzi's qualitative research on the transformation of *kiai*'s (religious leaders) leadership in East Java, the typology of *kiai kampung* (rural), *kiai panggung* (stage), and *kiai* in politics is a good example.²² Meanwhile, Prajarta Dirdjasanjoto found other categories, i.e., *kiai langgar* (small mosque), *kiai pesantren* (boarding-based Islamic education) with characteristics inherent in each.²³ Nur Syam in his study of *Tarekat Petani* (farmers' sufi order) with a phenomenological perspective found the concept of *kanoman* and *kasepuhan*.²⁴ In another study, he found the collaborative Islamic concepts or acculturation of Islam with local cultures, thus configuring a distinctive form of Islam.²⁵ This study rejects Geertz's study about syncretic Islam or Islam mixed in one melting pot, that suggests the absence of the so-called indigenous

²² Endang Turmudzi, *Perselingkuhan Kiai dan Kekuasaan* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004).

²³ Prajarta Dirdjosanyoto, *Kiai Pesantren Kiai Langgar di Jawa* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2013).

²⁴ Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani, Fenomenologi Tarekat Syattariyah Lokal* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2014).

²⁵ Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005).

Islam.²⁶ Examples of quantitative research can be found in PM Laksono's research, which suggests that decision making in a behavior is not only influenced by internal factors but also by external factors.²⁷ This theory asserts that decision-making is not only determined by internal factors. Meanwhile, Amaluddin's research finds that poverty does not always cause social polarization. It therefore rejects a theory that suggests that poverty will always affect social polarization.²⁸

Sociological Contribution to *Dakwah* Studies

Some research has suggested the possibility of analyzing *dakwah* activism from the perspective of social theories. There seems to appear the so-called sociological theory of *dakwah*. There are several theories that can be explained by using interdisciplinary studies. The first is the phenomenology of *dakwah*. Phenomenology theory can be used to see how *dakwah* activism is carried out with a certain concept and motive, which becomes the driving force. If the focus is on concept, it is related more to Max Weber's view, and if the focus is on motive, it is more to Alfred Schultz's view.²⁹ Every practice of *dakwah* is related to the motive of the goal (internal motives), and may also be determined by the motives of the cause (external motives). Phenomenology basically has two scopes as philosophical thought and theory, or research methodology. Phenomenology is not only used as a tool to analyze the actions that are understood by the researchers, but also to reveal the actions carried out by individuals. Thus, as a proposition, it can be stated that *dakwah* activism contains expressions of thoughts by individuals. The *da'i* and the audience share a rationale in determining what actions are relevant. A person who

²⁶ Clifford Geertz, *Abangan Santri Priyayi pada Masyarakat Jawa* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1981).

²⁷ Nur Syam, *Metodologi Penelitian Dakwah: Sketsa Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah* (Solo: Romadloni, 1990), p. 144.

²⁸ Mohammad Amaluddin, *Kemiskinan dan Polarisasi Sosial: Studi Kasus di Desa Bulugede, Kabupaten Kendal Jawa Tengah* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1987).

²⁹ Periksa Finn Collin, *Social Reality* (London: Routledge, 1997).

prefers *Gus* Baha's style of *dakwah*, for example, is certainly related to the similarity of thoughts and actions about what material is delivered and received. Mohammad As'ad's research on *tarekat* and farmers in Bluto is an example of how *tarekat* can transmit religious knowledge to farmers' families based on the shared thoughts.³⁰

A theory of social construction in *dakwah* is originally developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann.³¹ Later, it is developed in discussions on the theories of communication and sociology. The core of this theory is dialectic externalization, objectivation, and internalization. In their opinion, society is both objective and subjective realities. Through community, externalization becomes an objective reality, and through the community, internalization becomes a subjective reality. In the case of phenomenology, there are two motives, namely in-order-to motive and because motive. The social construction theory presents the concept of pragmatic motive or related to material aspects. So both in-order-to motive and because motive are largely determined by material factors. Society as a target of *dakwah* activism becomes an objective reality through externalization, and a subjective reality through internalization. In externalization, individuals use text or values as a pattern for behavior, and by human objectivity they can interact with the proselytizer and the messages of proselytization. Through internalization they will find the ability to identify themselves as devout Muslims. From the pragmatic aspect of motives, it can be stated that the motives of taking action are determined by material-patterned replies.

The dramaturgy theories of *dakwah* designate that man can live in many characters. Sometimes what appears physically and mentally can be different. This is the uniqueness of human and is portrayed by the theory

³⁰ Mohammad As'ad Amin, *Tarekat dan Petani: Studi tentang Pola Pewarisan Nilai-Nilai Kegamaan pada Keluarga Penganut Tarekat Tijani di Desa Pekandangan Barat Kecamatan Bluto* (Surabaya: Fakultas Dakwah IAIN Sunan Ampel, 1992).

³¹ Nur Syam, *Model Analisis...*, p. 214.

of dramaturgy as introduced by Erving Gofman.³² There are a front stage and backstage. Life is like a theater stage that features certain plays, and the players play according to their functions. This theory can be used to map the relationship between religious performance and religious thought both at individual and social levels. This study is included in the study of the target of *dakwah* activism, because it maps the actions and religious thoughts. It can also be used to study the thoughts of the proselytizer who actively use various media and methods in delivering messages.³³

Ethno-methodological theory introduced by Harold Garfinkle³⁴ is also interesting to be used as an instrument to analyze *dakwah* activism. This theory states that an individual can make a surprise by carrying out deviant actions or what is commonly termed as breaching experiment. The purpose of this research is to understand whether events that occur every day have unique and interesting meanings. An example is how people react when in the prayer there are persons (*jamaah*) who use strange attributes.

In addition, *dakwah* can also be observed from hermeneutical theories.³⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer is a figure who contributes to the development of this theory.³⁶ The core of this theory is that the text can be understood through dialogue-based interpretation between the text and the reader. Understanding the meaning of the text is the same process as understanding reality. First, it happens through the process of reasoning, understanding, and life experiencing. A person who writes a text certainly cannot be separated from a certain social

³² Ibid., p. 187; Nur Syam, *Agama Pelacur, Dramaturgi Transendental* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010).

³³ Sulaeman, Irita Sulastri, & Ali Nurdin, "Dramaturgi Komunikasi Dakwah Para Dai di Kota Ambon, Pola Pengelolaan Kesan di Panggung Depan", *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, Vol. 08, No. 1, 2018, pp. 86-110.

³⁴ George Ritzer, *Sosiologi Ilmu...*, p. 373; Harold Garfinkle (ed.), *Ethnomethodological Studies of Work* (London & New York: Routledge, 1986).

³⁵ Malcolm Waters, *Modern Sociological Theory* (London: Sage Publication, 1994), p. 192-193.

³⁶ Poespoprojo, *Hermeneutika* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2004), p. 91-104.

context, intellectual background, and life experience. Therefore, hermeneutics places a text in an intended social situation. *Second*, it takes place through understanding practical things, meaning that someone not only understands the meaning of the text based on his reason alone but also on his practical activities. To understand a text also requires meaning negotiation. There is a negotiation between the text and the reader. In the studies of *dakwah*, hermeneutics can be applied, for example, to study the messages—which represent the text in this regard—delivered by the proselytizer. *Dakwah* studies can use hermeneutics to understand whether there is an understanding that can be drawn from the social, cultural and linguistic contexts around the *da'i* and the audiences.³⁷

Theory of communicative action is introduced by Jürgen Habermas. This theory presupposes that in every social life there are three important moments: relations in the objective world (impartial realm of truth), relations in the social world (the realm of interaction between individuals and communities based on consensus), and subjective domains (realm of experience that allows it to be expressed).³⁸ *Dakwah* activism can be analyzed through these three domains. There are normative texts that have objective truths that are believed by both parties, and the texts experience interactions based on their respective aspects and produce experiences that can be told. The essence of communicative action is how the *da'i* and the audiences can understand each other.³⁹

Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict of authority theory suggests that conflict occurs because of differences in understanding of authority.⁴⁰

³⁷ Prihananto, "Hermeunetika Gadamer Sebagai Teknik Analisis Pesan Dakwah" *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, Vol. 04, No. 1, 2014, pp. 143-167.

³⁸ Malcolm Waters, *Modern Sociological...*, p. 192-193.

³⁹ Sri Rejeki, "Dakwah Pada Masyarakat Pertanian: Studi Tindakan Komunikatif Masyarakat Desa Siwalan Kecamatan Panceng Kabupaten Gresik dalam Tradisi Sedeah Bumi," *Thesis*, Surabaya: PPs UIN Sunan Ampel, 2019.

⁴⁰ Nur Syam, *Model Analisis...*, p. 121.

It should be noted that community has a double side, not only aspects of conflict but also aspects of cooperation. In this case, society is subject to change; various elements in society can contribute to disintegration and change. There are groups of ruling classes that force social order or consensus to occur. They hold the function of maintaining social orders. In analysing *dakwah* activism, conflict theory can be adopted by exploring whether the *da'i* can turn conflict into consensus through religious messages, or whether the community with all its characters can make disintegration into integration through preaching messages, or whether initiatives to change are determined by internal or external desires, namely understanding of religion that they believe.

Lewis Coser's conflict and integration theory is called functional conflict theories.⁴¹ This means that conflict is not merely destructive but also constructive. There are some important propositions: conflict can strengthen identity; conflict can strengthen ties of solidarity between members; the intensity of conflict is in the core circle; and conflict can foster a new medium for interaction.⁴² This theory can be used to examine the facts of *dakwah* activism in the community through a series of studies, for example, conflict and integration through the role of *da'i*, preserving harmony based on differences in religious understanding, and the role of religious and social organizations in eliminating social conflict through effective communication.

The functional structural theory as initiated by Robert K. Merton⁴³ can also be adopted as a sociological theory of *dakwah*. Among its

⁴¹ Lewis Coser, "The Function of Social Conflict" Selo Soemardjan dan Soelaiman Soemardi, "Setangkai Bunga Sosiologi" (Jakarta: UI Press, 1974).

⁴² Ahmad Fediyan Saifuddin, *Konflik dan Integrasi Studi Perbedaan Paham Agama* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 1986); Nur Syam, "Konflik NU dan Muhammadiyah: Perbedaan Paham Agama dalam Teori Fungsional Konflik" Thoha Hamim, *Resolusi Konflik Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: LKiS, 2007), p. 247-260.

⁴³ Nur Syam, *Model Analisis...*, p. 99.

important propositions are concerned with manifest functions and latent functions. Each social structure provides both manifest and latent functions and has an important role in a social structure. A lecturer, not only manifestly has a role as a transformer of knowledge—in accordance with his professional certification—but also has a latent function, in the form of honor, authority in society, and high social status. In the study of *dakwah*, this theory can be used to analyze the relationship between the *da'i* and the audiences in religious practice based on authority, social strata, and structures. It also can examine the figures of religious organizations in influencing the religious diversity of their members.

Social action theory as proposed by Talcott Parson is designed to study macro or medium aspects of community's social action.⁴⁴ Social action recognizes four important aspects: adaptation, goal attainment, interest, and latent maintenance. In relationships between communities there are adjustments, desires to be achieved, interests and benefits, and ways to care for these relations. In this context, people can choose which actions are fast, easy, and profitable. There are many alternatives to choose, which are called as means of action. *Dakwah* activism can be studied from the perspective of how people with their ability can adapt, achieve desired goals, and realize their interests, and how they care for their diversity. This research can be related to the subjects of *dakwah*, its targets and organizations in their relation with communities.

Conclusion

Dakwah studies is a discipline in the studies of Islam apart from other disciplines like *tarbijah* (education), *usuluddin* (theology), *sharia* (Islamic law), *tafsir* (Qur'anic commentary), and *hadith* (prophetic tradition). It is not only descriptive or ideographic, but also prophetic. By this, I mean that *dakwah* studies is a scholarly science that discusses how an Islamic society should be oriented. In the terms of the advancement

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

of *dakwah*, what can be done is that the *da'i* as the key actors need to develop their knowledge through the integration of sciences. *Dakwah* as a sociological category can be studied from various approaches: sociology, psychology, communication and so forth. Thus, this discipline can be seen in the form of propaganda sociology, propaganda psychology, missionary communication and so forth. The bases of *dakwah* that can be developed are factor, system, developmentalism, interpretative and participatory. There are many theories in sociology that can be used as perspectives, among which are classical social theories that have a broad scope, so it is very possible to be applied in the research and study of *dakwah* activism. There have been many new developments in the theories of social science, which are derived from the existing grand theories. The next task is to formulate the relationship between new theories in social science for the benefit and the progress of *dakwah* studies.

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