



# Analysis of the Development of Islamic Studies in the Western World

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## Abstract

The golden ink of Islamic civilization that has long dominated the world certainly makes Islam a phenomenon worthy of study throughout the world, especially by people outside Islam. Westerners in particular. They research, conduct studies, and make Islam an object of study in their world of education. Moreover, it is supported by the methodological advantages they have. This article uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach which the author feels can be a method that can explain problems that are currently being widely discussed. As a result, to date, hundreds or even thousands of Islamic Studies experts have emerged from several universities in both America and Europe. With this background, the author wants to examine in depth the study of Islam in the Western world, especially in the academic world. Hopefully this can provide overall benefits

## INTRODUCTION

Since the presence of the Prophet, Islam has become a religion and a new civilization that emerged and later dominated civilization in the world. The progress of Islam has been widely known throughout the world since the time of Khulafaur Rasyidin until the progress of Islam grew rapidly. At that time, the progress made by Islam was not only in the military field. Islam has also experienced progress in the fields of science, technology, economics, state administration and so on. In short, Islam is no longer just an interesting religion to follow, but also a great civilization that must be followed. Islam is a religion that has many points of view, some consider it a blessing, some consider it terror. In Islam, there are those who use it as a guide in behavior. Then there are those who force them to carry out God's commands, there are those who invite them to carry out His commands (Jb & Darmawan, 2016; Rusydy, 2018; Adu et al., 2023).

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Sometimes people think of it as synonymous with the harsh conditions of the Middle East, sometimes people think of it as identical with the soft conditions in the archipelago. Until now, Muslims are still experiencing development, in almost all parts of the world, including in Europe which is not close to the place where Islam first appeared and developed, there were Muslim groups living and settling in the area (Hayat, 2012; Humaedi, 2017).

Islam began to enter Europe centuries ago. It all started with the conquest of the country of Andalusia in 756 AD - 1492 AD on the Iberian Peninsula. Then it continued through Sicily and the conquest of the Balkan region carried out by the Ottoman Caliphate. The presence and development Islam in Europe then continued from the massive immigration of Muslims from Islamic countries to Europe after the end of the second world war (Kaunain, 2020; Hasnahwati, 2020).

With the opening of Europe to foreign workers, it provided opportunities for workers who came from Muslim-majority countries. That was when the presence of Muslims in Europe began. Through immigration, Muslims can be grouped into two streams of arrival to see their presence. First, many Muslim immigrants are recruited as workers through guest worker policies or guest-worker schemes implemented by Western European countries, especially Germany as a pioneer of this policy.

Most Muslim immigrants come from Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Morocco and other North African countries. Second, since the 1950s, England, France and the Netherlands have experienced post-colonial migration where many immigrants to Europe from the former colonial territories. Immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Caribbean came to England. France came to immigrants from Algeria, Tunisia and other former colonies (Sassi, 2019; Rahman et al., 2023).

The majority of people are of the view that Europe is a repository for non-Muslims and always show disdain for the growing movement of Muslims in general because they have a black history with Muslims or after the crusade between the Christian religious community and Muslims. During its development, Islam became a source of knowledge for Europeans. Because of this, the presence of Islam in Spain attracted much attention from historians. The development of Islam in Europe came from immigrant workers (Harahap, 2020; Rahmah et al., 2023).

The increasing number of Muslim immigrants in Europe was initially welcomed by the governments of European countries because they were a source of cheap labor. However, slowly the immigrants began to reveal their identity and Islamic identity, including by building mosques and centers. Islam, and actively conveying Islamic teachings to the wider community in Europe. And that's when the government began to feel threatened by danger. In addition, the preaching and introduction of Islam in Europe became more widespread so that more and more European people embraced Islam. Problems that occurred in development Islam in Europe has given rise to anti-Islam movement groups in parts of Europe, one of which is the Pegida Islamic movement (Kasmar et al., 2019).

Pegida is a political movement based in Dresden, Germany. Since October 2014, Pegida has been holding demonstrations against the German government, against the Islamization of Europe. The demonstrations were originally organized through social media, by a person named Lutz Bachmann. Every Monday, Pegida holds weekly demonstrations This

group, which started as a Facebook group, has attracted public attention. In October 2014, the demonstration was attended by 350 people, and in early January 2015, the demonstration was attended by 18 thousand people.

The golden ink of Islamic civilization which has dominated the world for quite a long time has certainly made Islam a phenomenon worthy of study throughout the ages, especially by people outside Islam. Westerners especially. They research, conduct studies, and make Islam an object of study in their world of education (Mundzir & Aziz, 2018). Moreover, it is supported by the methodological advantages they have. As a result, to date, hundreds or even thousands of Islamic Studies experts have emerged from several universities in America and Europe. With this background, the author wants to study in depth the study of Islam in the Western world, especially in the academic world. Hopefully it can provide overall benefits. From the background that has been mentioned, several problems can be formulated that will be studied in this paper, including: What is the history of Islamic studies in the Western world?

## METHODS

This article uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach which the author feels can be a method that can explain problems that are currently being widely discussed (Hakim, 2018). Thick description, regarding complex processes and their influence in a particular context. The ability to provide a rich portrait in this way is a major benefit of case studies. Readers of your research should be made to feel as if they are there with you in the research you are doing, seeing what you see, concluding what you have concluded. According to Patton, the process of compiling a case study takes place in three stages. The first stage is collecting raw data about individuals, organizations, programs, places of events which become the basis for case study researchers (Yusanto, 2020; Luthfiyyah, 2023). The second step is to compile or organize the cases that have been obtained through compression, summarize the data which is still in the form of raw data, classify and edit them and enter them in one file that can be managed and accessible. The third step is the researcher's final report (Purba et al., 2021)

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Nature of Islamic Studies

Islamic studies or in western terms it is called *Islamic Studies* It is now being widely used as a study program by various institutions, both in countries where the majority of the population is Muslim and those that are not. Many higher education institutions, whether they have Islamic names or not, offer Islamic Studies majors for students and undergraduates. The emergence of the Islamic phenomenon as a scientific object seems to need to be understood first so as not to cause confusion in the meaning of Islamic studies. Islamic studies actually comes from two words, namely Study and Islam. Etymologically, study means scientific research, study, study and research. Meanwhile, Islam comes from the word *salima* which means safe and sound, which was later developed into *aslama* which means surrender to peace (Munir, 2018; Ghulam & Farid, 2019; Muslimin & Ruswandi, 2022)

If defined in terms of terminology, Islamic Studies means a conscious and systematic effort to know, understand and discuss in depth the ins and

outs or matters related to the Islamic religion. Whether in the form of teachings, history, or practical implementation in everyday life, day, throughout its history.

If you look at the nature and characteristics of the two words above, namely study and Islam, you will find a quite sharp contradiction. The word study relates to science which has critical, analytical, empirical and historical characteristics. Meanwhile, the nature and characteristics of religion tend to lead to an attitude of partiality, idealism, and is often even characterized by apologist-style defense (Pransiska, 2017)

Therefore, Amin Abdullah has an interesting view about the study of Islam that when Islam is seen from a normative perspective, Islam does not fit to be said to be a scientific discipline. Meanwhile, when Islam is seen from a historical perspective, that is, in the sense that Islam is practiced by humans and grows and develops in history. human life, then Islam can be said to be a scientific discipline.

One of the reasons why it is important to conduct Islamic studies is that it starts from the problem when the function of the Islamic religion is increasingly shifting. Religion actually means a bond that must be held and obeyed by humans, a bond that has a huge influence on everyday human life, which comes from a supernatural thing that is clearly much higher than humans. This bond should serve to improve the condition of humans throughout the ages.

The reality is that poverty, ignorance and arbitrariness are actually practiced by religious people. In fact, according to Harun Nasution, as quoted by Abudin Nata, that a pious person is a person who carries out God's commands and stays away from His prevention. Thus, a pious person is close with God. Meanwhile, people who are close to God are holy people. And holy people must have high morals.

In reality, religion in Indonesia tends to be used as a requirement for formal ritual activities. And this reality has been going on for a long time and is evenly distributed. Religion is no longer seen in its content but only in its form. From this fact, it can be seen that the Islamic religion in Indonesia is not fully understood. and in depth. With this background, deepening Islamic studies is necessary. A new study emerged with the name Islamic studies with Islam as its object. With Islamic studies, it is hoped that it will be able to change the understanding and appreciation of Islam in the Indonesian Muslim community in particular, and religious communities in general (Furqon, 2004).

Islamic studies linguistically comes from Arabic "Dirasah Islamiyah". While Islamic studies in the West are known as "*Islamic Studies*". So Islamic studies can be interpreted as the study of matters related to Islam. In terms of Islamic studies, it is a conscious effort to know and understand and discuss in depth matters relating to the Islamic religion, both in relation to its teachings, history and practical implementation practices in everyday life throughout its history (Shalahuddin, 2018)

Islamic studies are directed at Islamic studies which lead to three things: 1) Islam which leads to submission or surrender, 2) Islam can be interpreted as leading to salvation in this world and the hereafter, because Islamic teachings essentially guide humans to do good deeds and avoid all prohibitions. , 3) Islam leads to peace (Nurhidin, 2021; Hasanah & Hasanah, 2021)



Islamic studies reveal several intentions. First, Islamic studies which are related to activities and programs of study and research on religion as its object, such as studying the concept of zakat. Second, Islamic studies which is connoted with the material, fields and curriculum of a study of Islam, such as Islamic religious sciences, one of which is fiqh or kalam. Third, Islamic studies are connoted with Islamic study institutions, whether carried out formally in universities, or carried out informally in study forums and halaqah. Thus, the term Islamic studies can be used freely in academic circles. The main source of Islamic teachings which are completely taken from the Al-Qur'an and Hadith purely without being influenced by history, are teachings about faith, worship and morals.

### **History of Islamic Studies in the Western World**

Islam has become an object of study that is widely discussed in various corners of the world. It is clear that in Islamic countries, there is in-depth study of Islam in all educational institutions. However, it turns out that Islamic studies are also widely held by non-Muslim countries. Islamic studies in non-Islamic countries are organized, among others, by India, America, London and Canada. The Islamic studies held are different (Syamsudin, 2017; Darojatun, 2018). Some study Islam as a doctrine. There are also those who study Islamic language and culture. And many study Islam from a historical and sociological perspective. If viewed from a historical aspect, Jamali Sahrodi groups Islamic studies carried out by the western world into three stages. Namely the theological stage, political stage and scientific stage. The following is a detailed explanation:

**Theological Stage** It cannot be denied that Islam was a religion that developed very quickly in the early days of Islam. This is what then caused reactions from adherents of other religions, including Christianity, as the religion that existed first. Is a Christian theologian named St. John was from Damascus during the Umayyad dynasty who carried out the mandate to study Islam both from the Alquran as the main source of Islam and other sources. His efforts were supported by his ability to speak Arabic and Greek as well as the broadness of the Islamic rulers at that time which provided open space for theological debate. As a result, St. John considers Islam to be 'a religion that contains a thousand and one apostate teachings.

**Political Stage** The political stage began in the 12th century when efforts to study Islam were carried out more seriously with missionary aims. The aim is to face Islamic civilization by translating the Alquran and other Muslim texts. Due to the strong influence of Islamic studies in the early period, this stage was also still characterized by theological elements in the form of defending Christian beliefs. Among the figures is Peter the Venerable (1094-1156). He translated the texts of the Alquran, hadith, sirah of the Prophet and other manuscripts. Including figures in this stage are St. Thomas Aquinas who considered Islam to be a pagan teaching.

At this stage, Islam is studied more seriously. Not only matters of a theological nature, at this stage many works of Islamic science produced by Muslim scientists were also studied. Among the works of Islamic scientists that were widely studied in the Western world at that time included Ibn Sina's work *Al Qanun fi At-Tibb*, for example, which became the most important reference for medical science in Europe for more than three centuries. Likewise, Ibn Rushd's important book, *Fasl Al Maqal*, became a reference for enlightened people in Europe to face church domination. In

fact, Ibn Rushd is recognized as the most comprehensive commentator on Aristotle's thought through his work *Tahafut al-Tahafut*.

Then in the 16th century, Islamic studies were colored by a very complex political situation, namely when the European Reformation movement occurred. Among them is the conflict between Catholic and Protestant Christians. The study of Islam at that time was used as an intermediary and argument to blame each other among themselves. For example, a Protestant figure named Mathew Sutcliff used Islam as a point of comparison to attack Catholicism. On the other hand, Humphrey Prideaux, an Arabic scholar in England, defended Catholicism by comparing it with Islam. And in the 18th century, Islamic studies in the West were characterized by efforts in the form of theological polemics as a Christian reaction to the rapid development of Islam at that time.

**The Scientific Stage of Islamic Studies** The scientific stage began in the 19th century, when the attitudes of Christians in Islamic studies began to be linked to the suitability of the Islamic religion to social phenomena occurring in society. At that time, Islamic power experienced a drastic decline. Almost all of the Ottoman power was under the control of colonialism by Western nations.

Islamic studies at that time were created in the form of the study of eastern problems (oriental studies). At the beginning of the 20th century, a new study of Islam began to appear, namely in the form of area studies, especially in the Middle East. The study of Islam at this time is no longer dominant in raising the theme of theological controversy which is too excessive. The most important thing for the West is that the study of Islam should be able to give important meaning to the political interests of the West over Muslim nations. A real example is what has been done by one of the orientalist named Snouck Hurgronje who pays attention to the case of Islam in Indonesia.

Snouck combines the study of Arabic and Islam with a special emphasis on Islamic law on the one hand with his attention to contemporary Islam in Indonesia, or in a broader sense, the linguistics and anthropology of the Dutch East Indies and even the politics of colonialism. Snouck made direct observations about Islam by traveling around the island of Java. As a result, Snouck stated that Islam in Indonesia was like the Dutch East Indies as a Colonial Empire which had to be studied and worked on seriously.

Snouck also trains the next generation consisting of students to continue their Islamic studies in the future when he dies. In the modern era like today, we find that the western academic world is more open to other branches of science. Not only philosophy and science, but also branches of Islamic knowledge, such as the Alquran, hadith, fiqh, and Islamic history. This is a response to the increasing number of archaeological, anthropological, historical and sociological studies in Europe. In this case, A. Qodri Azizy observed that Western scholars who study Islam solely with academic considerations, they place pure Islam as an object of study. Just like they study other religions. Western scholars who belong to this group view Islam not only as a religion in a narrow sense, but also as encompassing civilization. A. Qodri Azizy also added that Islamic studies in the West tend to analyze reality both in relation to science and in relation to Islamic communities.

## CONCLUSION

Islamic studies is an effort to know and understand and discuss in depth the ins and outs of matters related to Islam from various aspects. By holding Islamic Studies, it is hoped that it will be able to increase understanding and appreciation of Muslims wherever they are. When viewed from a research perspective, Islamic studies can be grouped into two, insiders and outsiders. The study of Islam by Muslims themselves in classical times tended to use sustainable patterns from generation to generation. The pattern is experiencing a shift in the present, which tends to become a critical pattern. Meanwhile, from an outsider's perspective, Islamic studies are critical in various aspects because they are based on an attitude of defending themselves against the beliefs they have always believed in. The history of Islamic studies in the Western academic world has been around for a long time. The long history is divided into three according to the aims and content of Islamic studies. These three stages include: the theological stage, political stage and scientific stage. The condition of Islamic studies in the Western academic world can be seen from the rise of Islamic study centers in various countries, both in America and Europe. Many Islamic study centers have sprung up in the United States, Chicago, the Netherlands, Germany, London and so on. Keywords, Islamic, Western, Eastern and Orientalist Studies

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