

When Text Meets Context: Sociological and Hadith Perspectives on Interfaith Marriage in Indonesian Muslim Society

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Abstrak

This study aims to analyze the perspectives of sociologists and hadith scholars on the practice of interfaith marriage in Indonesia, as well as to evaluate the social and religious impacts of the interaction between these two perspectives within the context of a Muslim society that is plural yet tends to be legally conservative in religious matters. This research is significant because interfaith marriage frequently generates dissonance between the constitutional rights of citizens and shar'ī norms, while also serving as a site of value negotiation amid the increasing intensity of interreligious interactions. The method employed is descriptive qualitative research using a sociology of hadith approach, combining an analysis of both classical and contemporary hadith literature with theories of the sociology of religion. Data were collected through a literature review encompassing hadith collections, exegetical and jurisprudential works of scholars, academic publications, as well as legal and policy reports. Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, hermeneutics, and comparative analysis in order to identify points of convergence and divergence between sociological and normative-hadith perspectives. The findings reveal that the sociological perspective positions interfaith marriage as a complex social phenomenon—closely related to social integration, identity negotiation, and value conflicts—whereas the hadith perspective emphasizes the preservation of faith, household stability, and protection of lineage, with only limited and conditional space for permissibility. The interaction between these perspectives produces multidimensional effects, ranging from social resistance and the marginalization of couples to the creation of interfaith dialogue spaces within inclusive urban communities. The implications of this research lie in the need for policies that bridge religious norms and positive law, including through interfaith dialogue, public education, and pastoral guidance for interfaith families. The originality of this study lies in its integration of sociological analysis with hadith studies to contextualize the issue of interfaith marriage, offering an analytical framework that connects religious texts with socio-historical dynamics, and providing practical contributions for policy development in plural societies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In a plural society such as Indonesia, interfaith marriage constitutes one of the most complex, sensitive, and widely debated socio-religious issues (Sinaga, 2023). This phenomenon does not only concern the private domain of individual relationships but also directly relates to collective identity, religious norms, and social stability (Crespin-Boucaud, 2020). On the one hand, the constitution and human rights principles guarantee the freedom of every citizen to embrace

religion and establish a household according to their own choice. On the other hand, dominant religious norms and conservative social views often reject interfaith marriage, considering it as potentially threatening the purity of *'aqidah* (faith), group identity, and social harmony.

Empirical data indicate that although interfaith marriage is not a majority phenomenon, the trend remains significant. A report from the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, in 2023 recorded more than 1,000 applications for the registration of interfaith marriages submitted to district courts, rather than to the Office of Religious Affairs, due to Islamic legal regulations that do not directly accommodate interfaith marriage (Mazrieva, 2023). Furthermore, the exact number of interfaith marriages in Indonesia is not officially available because there is no centralized registration system. However, data from the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP) show that at least 1,655 interfaith couples married in Indonesia between 2005 and July 2023 (Nazam, 2025). The Constitutional Court even received a judicial review petition against Article 2 of the Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, on the grounds that the article restricts the rights of citizens who wish to enter interfaith marriages (Harlina, 2020). These data illustrate the tension between individual constitutional rights and the prevailing religious-based legal regulations in Indonesia.

From a sociological perspective, interfaith marriage reflects the dynamics of identity encounters, value negotiations, and normative conflicts within the structure of society. Sociologists such as Emile Durkheim (2014) and Peter Berger (1964) emphasized that marriage functions not only as a private institution but also as a mechanism for reproducing values and social solidarity. Consequently, when interfaith marriages occur, social resistance frequently arises because such practices are perceived as disrupting consensus and established value orders. This phenomenon shows that the issue of interfaith marriage is not merely a matter of religious law but also involves social constructions that regulate interpersonal relations within a plural society.

Research on interfaith marriage in Indonesia can be grouped into three main categories. First, normative-historical studies that examine the debates of religious law from the early Islamic period to the modern context. Aini (2008) demonstrated that discourse on interfaith marriage has long been a concern of scholars, with differences of opinion among *fiqh* schools, while stressing the importance of considering social context in textual interpretation. This approach also appears in Saepullah's (2019) study, which compares Islamic law and Indonesian positive law, although the focus still predominantly lies on the normative aspect.

Second, empirical-sociological studies that portray the social dynamics and demographics of interfaith marriage. Sewenet, Tessagaye, and Tadele (2017) highlighted the tension between religious norms and individual rights, as well as the role of social stigma that complicates this practice. Aini, Utomo, and McDonald (2019) found that although rare, interfaith marriages tend to increase in urban areas and often proceed through civil or court-based mechanisms. Seo (2013), through ethnographic research in Java, revealed that religious conversion in interfaith marriages is often strategic rather than purely theological.

Third, policy and public law studies that analyze the role of the state in regulating or restricting interfaith marriage. Lathifah (2020) criticized the limitation of legal space through the Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, which forces couples to pursue "civil marriage" or administrative conversion. Romadhon and Bahori (2023) demonstrated how Supreme Court and Constitutional Court rulings reinforced the state's position in rejecting interfaith marriage, although constitutional loopholes remain contested.

Although various studies have examined interfaith marriage from legal, theological, and sociological perspectives, most of the research remains focused on normative aspects or state policy, while the sociological dimension of *hadith* texts related to this issue has rarely been explored in depth. Few studies have integrated *hadith* analysis with sociological perspectives to understand how these texts shape, are shaped by, or are negotiated within social structures. This gap is crucial to fill in order to present a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction

between religious teachings, social dynamics, and state regulations in the context of interfaith marriage in Indonesia.

This study seeks to address this gap by integrating sociological perspectives and *hadith* analysis in examining the phenomenon of interfaith marriage in Indonesia. First, it will analyze sociologists' views on the practice of interfaith marriage, particularly how interfaith unions are understood as encounters of identities, arenas of value negotiation, and challenges to established social consensus. Second, it will examine *hadith* scholars' views on interfaith marriage, both from classical literature and contemporary readings, in order to identify interpretative variations and the social contexts underlying them. Third, it will evaluate the social and religious impacts of sociologists' and *hadith* scholars' perspectives on Muslim society in Indonesia, including how such perspectives shape public discourse, influence policy, and affect social practices at the community level. In this way, the study aims to provide a new contribution in the form of an analytical framework that empirically and contextually connects *hadith* texts with social structures.

This research proceeds from the argument that sociologists' and *hadith* scholars' perspectives on interfaith marriage do not stand separately but mutually influence one another in shaping understandings and social practices in Indonesian Muslim society. From a sociological standpoint, interfaith marriage is seen as a social phenomenon reflecting intergroup relations, where resistance or acceptance largely depends on prevailing value structures and social cohesion. Meanwhile, from the perspective of *hadith*, interpretations of texts related to interfaith marriage tend to be influenced by historical contexts and the social interests of their time, thus opening space for reinterpretation in the modern era. The hypothesis of this study is that the interaction between social constructions explained by sociologists and normative interpretations articulated by *hadith* scholars produces a dual impact on Indonesian Muslim society—on the one hand reinforcing religious identity and group solidarity, while on the other potentially limiting individual freedom and generating social exclusion for interfaith couples.

2. METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study is the discourse on interfaith marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia, analyzed through two main dimensions. First, the sociological dimension views interfaith marriage as a social phenomenon that reflects transformations in values, identity, and power relations within a plural society. Second, the *hadith* dimension focuses on the *hadith* texts of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) along with the interpretations of classical scholars such as Imam al-Shafi'i, as well as the thoughts of contemporary scholars including Quraish Shihab, Abdullah Saeed, and Khaled Abou El Fadl. The study focuses on how these two dimensions influence one another and shape public understanding of interfaith marriage in Indonesia.

This research employs a descriptive qualitative design because it aims to deeply understand the meanings, patterns of thought, and socio-religious logics underlying the discourse of interfaith marriage, rather than to generalize statistically (W Darmalaksana, 2022; Lune & Berg, 2017). This approach was chosen because it enables the exploration of the relationship between normative *hadith* texts and contemporary social dynamics, while also allowing comparative analysis between religious perspectives and sociological views. It also facilitates a contextual reading of *hadith* texts alongside a structural analysis of social phenomena in plural societies.

The primary data for this study were obtained from major *hadith* sources related to interfaith marriage, including canonical collections such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *al-Umm* by Imam al-Shafi'i, as well as exegetical and *fiqh* works by scholars such as al-Tabari, Wahbah al-Zuhaili, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nawawi, al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Hazm. Secondary data included works of contemporary scholars such as Abou El Fadl, Abdullah Saeed, and Quraish Shihab, as well as sociological literature from classical figures including Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Karl Marx, Lewis Coser, Ralf Dahrendorf, and George Herbert Mead, alongside Muslim sociologists such as Ibn Khaldun, Syed Farid Alatas, and Ali Shariati. In

addition, the study analyzed data from official reports of the Supreme Court, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and online media publications.

Data collection was conducted through library research encompassing three main steps (W Darmalaksana, 2020). First, the researcher examined relevant *hadiths* regarding the prohibition of marriage with non-Muslims, the permissibility of marrying *Ahl al-Kitab*, and the interpretations of both classical and contemporary scholars. Second, the study reviewed relevant sociological theories to map the position of interfaith marriage within the social structure, whether as an institution, an arena of conflict, or a product of meaning construction. Third, the research traced public discourse in social media and related literature to complement the analysis with contemporary societal perspectives. All data were collected using structured literature review guidelines to ensure relevance and accuracy.

The data were analyzed through two main approaches: thematic content analysis and comparative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2013). The analysis process began with coding and classifying data into themes such as legal validity, social arguments, identity tensions, and interreligious tolerance. Data reduction followed, filtering only relevant information and avoiding repetition. The interpretation stage applied hermeneutic methods to understand the meaning of *hadith* texts within their socio-historical context, while discourse analysis was used to examine the dynamics of public opinion and social media narratives. The final stage involved comparative analysis to identify similarities and differences between sociological and normative-*hadith* perspectives, as well as to discover intersections that could build a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of interfaith marriage in Indonesian Muslim society.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociologists' Perspectives on the Practice of Interfaith Marriage

Sociology rests on three paradigms or perspectives, namely *structural functionalism*, conflict, and *symbolic interactionism*. First, within the framework of Émile Durkheim's *structural functionalism*, interfaith marriage can be understood through the concepts of social integration, social solidarity, and the role of religion in maintaining social order. In plural societies, social cohesion is preserved when members share common values and beliefs, which often originate in religion (Kotzé, 2021). Interfaith marriage may disrupt this uniformity and trigger potential conflict, but it also opens the possibility for new forms of solidarity to emerge. Durkheim distinguished between mechanical solidarity, which is based on similarity, and organic solidarity, which relies on interdependence in diversity. Interfaith marriage, more common in societies with organic solidarity, requires tolerance and mutual respect in order to maintain social stability (Merton, 1934).

According to Durkheim, religion shapes collective consciousness that strengthens norms and social cohesion (É. Durkheim, 1997). In interfaith marriage, the blending of religious rituals and symbols can redefine collective consciousness, producing new forms of sacredness that facilitate social integration. Nevertheless, differences in belief pose the risk of generating *anomie*—a normless state—especially when couples or families struggle to reconcile religious values, such as in child-rearing or the celebration of major religious holidays (Maryanski, 2014).

Durkheim also viewed *anomie* as a potential starting point for the emergence of new norms and values that integrate elements from both religious traditions (Han, 2017). Successful interfaith marriages can serve as models of adaptation to pluralism, fostering organic solidarity based on interdependence and mutual respect. Thus, although they challenge traditional social consensus, interfaith marriages have the potential to enrich the social order in ways that are more inclusive and harmonious.

From a *structural functionalist* perspective, Talcott Parsons regarded marriage as a crucial social institution that maintains stability and integrates shared values within society (Parsons, 2013). Although he did not specifically address interfaith marriage, his theoretical framework is relevant for analyzing this phenomenon. Parsons emphasized the function of the family as the primary unit for child socialization and the stabilization of adult personalities. In interfaith

marriages, the family becomes an arena where two different value systems meet, requiring negotiation and adaptation. This process can generate values of tolerance and openness that are transmitted to the next generation, thereby strengthening social solidarity (Parsons, 2010).

For Parsons, social integration is achieved through shared values and norms. Interfaith marriage challenges this integration by introducing divergent beliefs that may provoke conflict. Yet, he also viewed conflict as an opportunity to form new, more inclusive norms through adaptation and compromise (Turner, 2014). Challenges faced by interfaith couples, such as social recognition from families and communities, compel them to negotiate with dominant norms. This negotiation may result in value changes that promote tolerance within broader social settings.

Parsons also highlighted the importance of a social system's adaptation to change. From his perspective, interfaith marriage can be understood as part of a process of social differentiation, in which modern societies that are increasingly plural and secular begin to accept diverse family forms and relationships (Smelser et al., 2001). This phenomenon reflects a decline in the dominance of religious authority in determining marital choices, while simultaneously expanding space for individual rights and religious freedom. Thus, Parsons' theory helps explain interfaith marriage as a social process that, although it challenges traditional value stability, also encourages the creation of new social solidarities based on tolerance and respect for diversity.

Interfaith marriage in sociology can also be explained through the conflict perspective. Although Karl Marx did not explicitly discuss interfaith marriage, his analytical framework is relevant through his views on social relations, economic conditions, and structural inequality. For Marx, personal relationships, including marriage, reflect the material conditions of society and are influenced by the economic base and social superstructure (Smith & Thompson, 2017). In this context, interfaith marriage can be seen as a form of tension arising from religious normative differences and social rejection, as well as an act of resistance against structural boundaries imposed by the capitalist system (Klepper, 2016).

Marx considered the family as an economic unit that reproduces conditions of production. Interfaith marriage, especially when it transcends social or economic group boundaries, can challenge the structures that uphold the status quo (Wendling, 2009). However, he also emphasized that in unequal societies, new forms of solidarity such as these risk remaining trapped within capitalist hegemony. Structural barriers—from discriminatory religious policies to community resistance—can hinder the inclusive potential sought by interfaith couples (Bouma & Ling, 2007; Kuch, 2016).

Nonetheless, interfaith marriage has the potential to serve as a space for negotiating more egalitarian norms, creating solidarity based on social reciprocity and recognition of difference (Smits, 2010). This phenomenon can reduce intergroup conflict and encourage intercultural dialogue, but its success depends on the extent to which society accommodates religious diversity within broader social structures (M. A. Nasir, 2022). Thus, from Marx's perspective, interfaith marriage not only reflects value conflicts but also functions as a potential agent of social change capable of challenging inequality and expanding solidarity within plural societies.

Another conflict perspective is offered by Randall Collins. Through his *interaction ritual theory* and analysis of power dynamics, Collins (1999) provides valuable insights into the complexity of interfaith marriage. Although he did not discuss it explicitly, his concepts of emotion, symbols, and social negotiation are highly relevant in the Indonesian context, where interfaith marriages are often constrained by norms and laws. A study in Lombok shows how interfaith marriage generates tensions between the state, local communities, and religious leaders concerning the legitimacy of such unions (S. Nasir, 2020). Within Collins' framework, this situation represents a social negotiation arena that reflects the dynamics of power in society.

Interfaith marriage presents the potential for conflict but also opens spaces for social adaptation through compromise and value integration, as observed in the study by Nasir (2022). Challenges frequently arise in religious rituals, worship, and child-rearing (Walsh, 2022), yet the negotiation processes involved can strengthen social cohesion within the family. According to Collins, couples who successfully manage their differences may construct new rituals that

integrate elements from both religions, thereby expanding understanding and tolerance at the household and community levels (Shoaf et al., 2022).

Beyond domestic challenges, interfaith couples often encounter obstacles to social acceptance from families, religious communities, or broader society (Idiatullov, 2022). Collins viewed this as part of the power structures that determine social legitimacy. Although such tensions may provoke conflict, they also create opportunities for establishing new, more inclusive social norms. Through active participation in social negotiation, interfaith couples can encourage value adaptation and reinforce diversity within society (Mehta, 2020).

Overall, Collins' perspective positions interfaith marriage not merely as a consequence of value differences but as a strategic space for forming new social solidarities that are more tolerant and adaptive. The symbolic interactions and negotiations that take place within such marriages can contribute to shifting social norms toward greater acceptance of religious diversity.

Another approach to explaining interfaith marriage in sociology is *symbolic interactionism*. George Herbert Mead's theory of *symbolic interactionism* provides a relevant framework for understanding the dynamics of interfaith marriage, even though he did not directly address it. Mead emphasized that individual identity develops through social interaction and recognition from others (Deegan, 2017). In the context of interfaith marriage, this identity formation occurs continuously through spousal interactions and the influence of religious communities and society. Reciprocal recognition forms the foundation of healthy relationships, where both partners respect each other's identities and beliefs (Penitente, 2013).

Mead's concepts of the "I" and the "Me" explain that effective communication is key to navigating religious differences. Interfaith couples need open dialogue to align values, worship practices, and household life. Mead also highlighted the role of *self-efficacy*—confidence in one's own ability—as a crucial factor for couples in facing social and cultural challenges (U Saepullah et al., 2020). High levels of *self-efficacy* foster optimism and adaptive solutions without erasing individual identities.

Interfaith marriage requires adaptation processes involving the negotiation of religious traditions and rituals, which may take time but also enrich family identity. Diversity within the household creates opportunities for learning and for the creation of new family identities that incorporate broader religious, cultural, and social values. Mead also stressed the influence of inspirational figures in shaping *self-efficacy*, such as Sri Mulyani Indrawati for Teti Kirnawati, who exemplifies resilience in facing challenges (U Saepullah et al., 2020).

Thus, Mead's perspective frames interfaith marriage as a process of symbolic interaction involving communication, reciprocal recognition, adaptation, and respect for diversity. When carried out effectively, this process can foster resilient and harmonious relationships capable of withstanding socio-cultural challenges.

Another figure is Herbert Blumer. Blumer emphasized that social meaning is constructed and maintained through interaction and may change along with social dynamics (Knauff, 2006). In the context of interfaith marriage, the meaning of such relationships varies depending on societal perceptions, religious norms, and cultural expectations. In some communities, interfaith marriage is viewed as an expression of tolerance, while in others it is perceived as a violation of norms. Interfaith couples must negotiate the meaning of their marriage within their families and communities, balancing their religious identities with social expectations.

Blumer underscored the importance of reciprocal recognition as the basis for healthy relationships (Hammersley, 2010). In interfaith marriage, such recognition entails accepting the partner's faith and adjusting to different religious practices. This process reflects *intersubjectivity*, which strengthens relationships and fosters harmony. Blumer also emphasized the concept of social adaptation (Low, 2008), whereby couples adjust family traditions, rituals, and social norms to create a coherent shared life. The family's social identity evolves through ongoing interaction, representing compromises between two religious traditions (Athens, 2010).

Effective communication is crucial for overcoming value differences and building mutual understanding (Blumer et al., 2018). Couples need to engage in open dialogue about their beliefs,

find ways to celebrate differences, and create new inclusive family values. Blumer argued that social change occurs through the redefinition of social meanings (Hałas, 2012), which positions interfaith marriage as a space of transformation that fosters adaptive and harmonious family identities.

In addition to Western sociologists, several Muslim sociologists have also provided perspectives on interfaith marriage, particularly Ibn Khaldun, Ali Shariati, and Syed Farid Alatas.

First is Ibn Khaldun. Although he did not explicitly discuss interfaith marriage, his theories of society, politics, and ethics offer a framework for understanding this phenomenon. His focus on social stability, political harmony, and social integration (Lissoni, 2024) suggests that interfaith marriage would be approached with caution, particularly in terms of whether it preserves or threatens social cohesion. In his view, social norms and religious practices function to maintain social balance, meaning that changes in family structures, including interfaith marriages, should be assessed based on their impact on social and cultural patterns (Hałas, 2012).

In the context of Islamic law, Ibn Khaldun would take into account regulations concerning Muslim marriage with *Ahl al-Kitab*, as indicated in Surah al-Mā'idah 5:5 (Zubair & Hamdani, 2025), while emphasizing the necessity of clear regulations to preserve social harmony. He would regard interfaith marriage as a form of social adaptation requiring new norms acceptable to a plural society. This perspective aligns with Blumer's view that social definitions are formed through dynamic social interactions (Knauff, 2006), where interfaith couples must adapt, negotiate, and integrate value differences into family life.

Ibn Khaldun also warned that conflict could arise when differing religious values clash, necessitating social mechanisms to manage differences and prevent their escalation into division (Athens, 2010). The adaptation process includes acceptance of ritual and tradition differences, social negotiation, and the creation of new family identities that blend elements of both religions. His perspective is reflected in the *Muqaddimah*:

"In every society, the stability of the community is ensured by the shared values and practices that bind the individuals together. When a society deviates from these shared values, it faces disintegration and conflict. The more cohesive the religious and social norms are, the greater the stability of the society." (Khaldun, 2015).

في كل مجتمع، يضمن استقرار الجماعة القيم والممارسات المشتركة التي تربط الأفراد معاً. وعندما ينحرف المجتمع عن هذه القيم المشتركة، يواجه التفكك والصراع. وكلما كانت القيم الدينية والاجتماعية أكثر تماسكاً، كانت استقرار المجتمع أكبر. (ابن خلدون، "المقدمة"، ترجمة ف. روزنتال، 1967)

Thus, Ibn Khaldun's perspective situates interfaith marriage within a framework of safeguarding social stability through adaptation, reciprocal recognition, and effective communication. Such relationships can create inclusive new social norms, but they require proper regulation to avoid disrupting existing social harmony.

The next figure is Ali Shariati. Ali Shariati (1974), a revolutionary Muslim thinker, emphasized the importance of preserving Islamic identity and resisting Western cultural imperialism. Although he did not directly address interfaith marriage, his socio-political framework remains relevant for understanding this phenomenon. Within his perspective, interfaith marriage may challenge Islamic values if not carefully managed, since marriage plays a vital role in shaping social identity (Moqadam, 2025). Shariati argued that interaction within interfaith marriages must respect and preserve religious values without undermining social balance, even while acknowledging that such relationships can remain harmonious if both partners mutually respect each other.

For Shariati, interfaith marriage must also consider gender equality as part of Islam's vision of social justice. He emphasized the importance of ensuring equal rights for women in marriage, regardless of religious differences, provided that religious values are upheld (M. A. Nasir, 2022). The process of social adaptation in interfaith families—including adjustments to rituals,

traditions, and family values—was seen by him as an essential mechanism for maintaining harmony. This approach resonates with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which demand the protection of religion, life, intellect, and property, thereby allowing interfaith marriage if these objectives are achieved (Safrodin & Fihris, 2024).

Shariati recognized that social conflict often emerges when different religious identities are combined within family life. In this context, he stressed the importance of effective communication, value negotiation, and reciprocal understanding as keys to sustaining family harmony. Thus, although Shariati did not explicitly discuss interfaith marriage, his socio-political framework suggests that such relationships can be acceptable provided that both parties uphold principles of equality, justice, and value adaptation in pursuit of social balance.

Finally, there is Syed Farid Alatas. Alatas, a Muslim sociologist who focuses on religious identity, social politics, and global society, although not explicitly addressing interfaith marriage, provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding it. According to Alatas, interfaith marriage represents a social process requiring the adjustment of religious values and social identities, in which inclusive and tolerant societies are better able to manage differences without sacrificing social stability (Safrodin & Fihris, 2024). He emphasized that maintaining religious identity remains important, particularly for Muslim families, because interreligious interaction in marriage can create anxieties about the loss of identity unity, especially in conservative communities.

Alatas also examined the relationship between Islamic law and human rights, particularly concerning Muslim marriages with *Ahl al-Kitab*, which on the one hand are strictly regulated by *sharī'a* but on the other intersect with modern legal principles of freedom to choose one's partner (Aziz et al., 2024). Gender equality is a central concern, since interfaith marriages involving Muslim women and non-Muslim men are often constrained by religious norms that limit women's autonomy (Jawad & Elmali-Karakaya, 2020). Alatas viewed social transformation and the advancement of women's rights as vital for achieving equality within families and societies.

In the context of globalization, Alatas warned that external cultural influences may shape different perceptions of interfaith marriage—more progressive in liberal societies but perceived as threatening in conservative settings. He regarded interfaith marriage as part of social adaptation that demands compromise, negotiation, and effective communication, both between spouses and with extended families. Thus, although interfaith marriage presents challenges in social integration and religious practice, Alatas' perspective suggests that such unions can foster social harmony if the management of values and religious identities is carried out wisely.

Table 1. Sociologists' Perspectives on the Practice of Interfaith Marriage in Indonesia

Paradigm / Thinker	Key Findings / Perspective	References
Structural Functionalism – É. Durkheim	Interfaith marriage influences social integration; it may generate <i>anomie</i> or normlessness, but it also creates opportunities for organic solidarity and the adaptation of new norms; religion strengthens collective consciousness.	Durkheim, 1997; Merton, 1934; Maryanski, 2014; Han, 2017; Kotzé, 2021
Structural Functionalism – Talcott Parsons	The family functions as the primary social institution; interfaith marriage requires adaptation and negotiation of norms, potentially building tolerance, new values, and social solidarity across generations.	Parsons, 2010, 2013; Turner, 2014; Smelser et al., 2001
Conflict Perspective – Karl Marx	Interfaith marriage reflects tensions between dominant norms and individual freedom; it challenges social and economic structures; it	Smith & Thompson, 2017; Klepper, 2016; Wendling, 2009; Bouma & Ling, 2007;

	can serve as an agent of social change and expand solidarity.	Kuch, 2016; Smits, 2010; M.A. Nasir, 2022
Conflict Perspective – Randall Collins	Interfaith marriage constitutes an arena of social negotiation; challenges in rituals and social acceptance may trigger conflict but can also establish new social norms; it strengthens social cohesion when negotiations succeed.	Collins, 1999; S. Nasir, 2020; Walsh, 2022; Shoaf et al., 2022; Mehta, 2020; Idiatullof, 2022
Symbolic Interactionism – G.H. Mead	Individual identity develops through interaction; interfaith marriage demands communication, reciprocal recognition, value adaptation, and the creation of new family identities; <i>self-efficacy</i> is crucial for addressing social challenges.	Deegan, 2017; Penitente, 2013; U Saepullah et al., 2020
Symbolic Interactionism – H. Blumer	Social meaning is constructed through interaction; couples must negotiate religious values and social practices; adaptation and compromise processes create harmonious and inclusive family identities.	Knauff, 2006; Hammersley, 2010; Low, 2008; Athens, 2010; Blumer et al., 2018; Hałas, 2012
Muslim Sociologist – Ibn Khaldun	Emphasized social stability, community cohesion, and the adaptation of new norms; interfaith marriage is viewed as a process of social negotiation that must consider social harmony and religious regulations.	Lissoni, 2024; Hałas, 2012; Athens, 2010; Khaldun, 2015
Muslim Sociologist – Ali Shariati	Stressed the importance of Islamic identity, gender equality, and social justice; interfaith marriage can be accepted if both partners respect religious values and adjust traditions fairly.	Shariati, 1974; Moqadam, 2025; M.A. Nasir, 2022; Safroodin & Fihris, 2024
Muslim Sociologist – Syed Farid Alatas	Interfaith marriage requires adjustment of religious values and social identities; inclusive and tolerant societies can manage differences without undermining social stability; emphasizes women's rights and the intersection of religion with modern law.	Safroodin & Fihris, 2024; Aziz et al., 2024; Jawad & Elmali-Karakaya, 2020

This table presents findings from various sociological perspectives on the practice of interfaith marriage in Indonesia. From the standpoint of *structural functionalism*, Durkheim and Parsons viewed interfaith marriage as a challenge to social integration, yet also as an opportunity to form new solidarities and adapt values. Conflict perspectives (Marx and Collins) highlighted tensions between dominant norms and individual freedoms, but also emphasized the potential of interfaith marriage to serve as an agent of social change and foster inclusive norms. The *symbolic interactionist* approaches (Mead and Blumer) underscored the importance of communication, reciprocal recognition, and value negotiation in constructing harmonious family identities. Muslim sociologists such as Ibn Khaldun, Ali Shariati, and Syed Farid Alatas stressed aspects of social stability, normative adaptation, gender equality, and the intersection of religious law with modern contexts. Overall, interfaith marriage emerges as a complex social phenomenon that demands a balance between tradition, law, identity, and socio-religious values.

Hadith Scholars' Perspectives on Interfaith Marriage

The first figure is Imam al-Bukhari. One of the *hadiths* in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* No. 5090 serves as a key guideline in Islam regarding criteria for choosing a spouse. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

«تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لَأَرْبَعٍ: لِمَالِهَا، وَلِحَسَبِهَا، وَلِجَمَالِهَا، وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرُبَّتْ يَدَاكَ»

“Women are married for four reasons: for their wealth, their lineage, their beauty, and their religion. So choose the one with religion, and you will prosper” (ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, 2001). This *hadith* affirms that religion must be the primary consideration, rather than merely worldly aspects. Imam al-Nawawi, in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, emphasized the importance of choosing a pious spouse with strong religious commitment as the foundation of a lasting household blessed by Allah.

In Indonesia’s plural context, interfaith marriage represents a complex social reality. However, from the perspective of this *hadith*, such marriages do not meet the ideal criteria, as they neglect the unity of faith that forms the basis of a family’s vision, goals, and practices. Classical scholars generally prohibited Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims, while Muslim men were given limited permission to marry women from the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, under strict conditions—such as that the women must be *muḥṣanah* and devout (Hasan et al., 2025). Contemporary research also affirms that differences of faith within households often generate value conflicts, legal ambiguities, and social tensions. Although some scholars adopt more contextual interpretations (Asy’ari & Fisa, 2022; Zubair & Hamdani, 2025), the majority remain anchored in the spirit of this *hadith*: religion is the primary foundation of marriage. Thus, even though Imam al-Bukhari did not issue a direct legal opinion on interfaith marriage, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* No. 5090 lays down the normative principle that shared faith and piety are keys to a blessed marriage, which remains relevant for preserving both spiritual and social cohesion in plural societies.

The next figure is Imam Muslim. A *hadith* narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Ṭalāq, Bāb Taḥrīm Nikāḥ al-Muslimah min al-Kāfir*, No. 2737, constitutes an important reference regarding the prohibition of interfaith marriage, especially between Muslim women and non-Muslim men. In this narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a letter to the people of Mecca:

«أَنْ لَا يُنْكَحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ الْمُسْلِمَاتِ»

“...that they should not marry off Muslim women to polytheist men” (Muslim, 1996).

This *hadith* not only affirms a theological prohibition but also conveys a prophetic policy with universal significance in Islamic law. From the perspective of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, it reinforces the prohibition in Q.S. al-Baqarah 2:221: “Do not marry [your women] to polytheist men until they believe...”, which closes the possibility of marriage until the man embraces Islam.

The context of this *hadith* also includes cases involving female war captives, where the Prophet forbade relations with pregnant women—whether from lawful marriage or fornication—until the status of their wombs was clarified. This principle of caution underscores the importance of preserving purity, honor, and legitimate lineage, especially in the context of interfaith unions.

Accordingly, this narration by Imam Muslim provides a strong legal foundation that marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men contradicts the principles of *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion) and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of lineage). This view simultaneously rejects the legitimacy of interfaith marriage based solely on tolerance, since Islamic law positions shared faith as the essential foundation of an Islamic household.

Imam al-Nawawi, a prominent scholar of the Shafi‘i school, also held a firm stance regarding interfaith marriage. He absolutely prohibited marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men, whether polytheists or *Ahl al-Kitāb*, citing Q.S. al-Baqarah (2):221:

“Do not marry polytheist men [to your women] until they believe.”

According to al-Nawawi, this prohibition aims to safeguard the purity of faith, the tranquility of the household, and the spiritual safety of the family. He allowed, with limitations, marriages

between Muslim men and *Ahl al-Kitāb* women based on Q.S. al-Mā'idah [5]:5, but classified it as *makrūh* and even potentially forbidden if it posed risks to the faith or lineage (al-Nawawī & bin Syaraf, n.d.).

Al-Nawawī distinguished between categories of *Ahl al-Kitāb* women, considering their historical origins and the clarity of their religious commitment. For him, the permissibility of marrying them was not an absolute right but rather a restricted exception, regulated by strict conditions and guided by the principle of caution. This approach aligns with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, especially *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-nasl*.

In Indonesia, al-Nawawī's principles are reflected in the *Compilation of Islamic Law* (KHI), which explicitly prohibits interfaith marriage—Article 40(c) and Article 44—on the grounds of protecting faith and ensuring social welfare (Harlina, 2020). Although Q.S. al-Mā'idah [5]:5 provides limited permission, its implementation in Indonesia remains restrictive, shaped by the plural context and the necessity of preserving communal harmony. Thus, Imam al-Nawawī's perspective has become a key reference in the formulation of marriage policies in Indonesia's multicultural Muslim society.

Another figure is Abu Dawud. He based his views on the story of Zaynab, the daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and her husband Abu al-'Āṣ ibn al-Rabī'. Initially, Abu al-'Āṣ had not embraced Islam and was captured by Muslims during the Battle of Badr. After several events, including his release by the Prophet in honor of Khadijah's necklace, he returned to Mecca. Years later, Zaynab granted him protection in Medina until he eventually embraced Islam, after which they were reunited (Al-Asqalani, 2015).

The strongest narration comes from Ibn 'Abbās, transmitted by Abū Dāwud, stating:

«رد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ابنته زينب على أبي العاص بالنكاح الأول، لم يحدث شيئاً»

“The Messenger of Allah returned his daughter Zaynab to Abu al-'Āṣ on the basis of their first marriage contract, without conducting a new one” (Abu Dawud, 2007).

This narration was corroborated by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah with similar wording, while another narration from Ibn 'Umar suggesting a new contract and dowry was considered weak (*da'if*). The majority of *hadith* scholars concluded that the couple was reunited without a new contract, since Abu al-'Āṣ's acceptance of Islam restored the validity of their original marriage according to *sharī'a*.

This account demonstrates that marriage between Muslims and polytheists was not permitted in Islam. Their earlier relationship had taken place during the pre-Islamic period and only became lawful again once religious unity was established. This aligns with practices in the early Islamic era, such as the marriage of Umm Sulaym and Abu Talhah, which only occurred after the latter embraced Islam. Normatively, this provision was intended to prevent the reintroduction of pre-Islamic practices incompatible with the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in establishing a righteous family.

The next figure is al-Tabarī. Al-Ṭabarī distinguished two principal forms of interfaith marriage: (1) Muslim men with *Ahl al-Kitāb* (Jewish or Christian) women, and (2) Muslim women with *Ahl al-Kitāb* men. The permissibility of the first type was based on Q.S. al-Mā'idah 5:

“...[Lawful in marriage are] chaste women from among those who were given the Scripture before you.”

This verse permits Muslim men to marry *Ahl al-Kitāb* women who preserve their chastity. However, the second type lacked explicit textual support, and most scholars prohibited it, citing Q.S. al-Mumtaḥanah 60:10, which forbids marrying Muslim women to non-Muslim men, including *Ahl al-Kitāb*.

Al-Ṭabarī narrated a *hadith* from Jabir ibn 'Abdillah:

«نحن نتزوج نساء أهل الكتاب، وهم لا يتزوجون نساءنا»

“We (Muslims) marry women from the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, but they do not marry our women” (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000). Although its chain of transmission is considered weak (*ḍa‘īf*), the meaning of this *hadith* was widely practiced by the Companions and jurists (Al-Maqdisi, 1997). Companions such as ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, Hudhayfah, Talhah, and Salman permitted Muslim men to marry *Ahl al-Kitāb* women. By contrast, Ibn ‘Umar opposed the practice, arguing that Christians should be considered polytheists, although his opinion was regarded as weak (Katsir, 1999).

Hadith Scholars’ Perspectives on Interfaith Marriage

Historically, this practice did occur during the time of the Companions, but restrictions were imposed, such as the prohibition by Caliph ‘Umar for the sake of *maṣlahah*. The Ḥanafī school even limited this permissibility only to *Ahl al-Kitāb* women from peaceful territories (*dār al-islām*), while prohibiting it with women from enemy lands (*dār al-ḥarb*) due to the risk posed to the faith of the offspring (Abdurrahman, 1992). Thus, although the permissibility of Muslim men marrying *Ahl al-Kitāb* women is normatively acknowledged, its application requires caution. Meanwhile, the marriage of Muslim women to non-Muslim men—whether polytheists or *Ahl al-Kitāb*—continues to be rejected by the majority of scholars, as it is considered contrary to the principle of protecting faith.

The next figure is Imam al-Tirmidhi, who narrated a *hadith* from ‘Amru ibn Shu‘aib that the Prophet (peace be upon him) separated his daughter Zaynab from Abu al-‘Āṣ ibn al-Rabī‘ due to their difference in religion, and only returned her after Abu al-‘Āṣ embraced Islam, with a new contract and dowry:

«رَدَّ ابْنَتَهُ زَيْنَبَ عَلَى الْعَاصِ بْنِ الرَّبِيعِ بِمَهْرٍ جَدِيدٍ وَنِكَاحٍ جَدِيدٍ»

“He returned his daughter Zaynab to al-‘Āṣ ibn al-Rabī‘ with a new dowry and a new marriage contract” (At-Tirmidhi, 1994).

This narration became a normative precedent for the prohibition of Muslim women marrying non-Muslims, supported by the consensus (*ijmā‘*) of scholars across the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi‘ī, Ḥanbalī, and Zāhirī schools, and reaffirmed by modern *fatwas* as *ma‘lūm min al-dīn bi al-ḍarūrah* (Al-Tirmidhi, 2002).

Ibn Kathir, in *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, interpreted Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221 as an absolute prohibition on marrying polytheist men or women, and Q.S. al-Mā’idah: 5 as an exception permitting Muslim men to marry *Ahl al-Kitāb* women under certain conditions. He also affirmed that Q.S. al-Mumtaḥanah: 10 is *qaṭ‘ī* (definitive) in prohibiting Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men, including *Ahl al-Kitāb*. For Ibn Kathir, the permissibility of Muslim men marrying *Ahl al-Kitāb* women was contextual to the early Islamic era and did not alter the absolute prohibition for Muslim women.

Al-Qurṭubī, in *al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān* (1980), also cited Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221 as the basis for prohibiting interfaith marriage, with some scholars viewing Q.S. al-Mā’idah: 5 as an exception for Muslim men. He highlighted differences in the classification of *Ahl al-Kitāb*—whether they should be considered polytheists or not—and stressed that the central issue lies in faith. The view of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, who argued that the greatest act of polytheism is declaring Jesus as God, became a significant reference.

Ibn Ḥazm al-Zāhirī permitted Muslim men to marry Jewish, Christian, and even Magian women, considering them *Ahl al-Kitāb* by analogy with the obligation of *jizyah* in Q.S. al-Tawbah: 29. He reconciled Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221, which prohibits marrying polytheists, with Q.S. al-Mā’idah: 5, which makes an exception for *Ahl al-Kitāb*, provided that they maintain chastity. His view differed from the majority of schools, which prohibited marriage to Magian women, yet it reflected a literal and textual approach to interpreting the scriptures.

Contemporary Muslim thinkers such as Abdullah Saeed, Khaled Abou El Fadl, and Quraish Shihab have offered new approaches to reading the texts on interfaith marriage, diverging from classical *fiqh* formulations.

Abdullah Saeed (2006) applied contextual hermeneutics to distinguish the universal message of the Qur'an from the historical context of its revelation. He argued that the prohibition in Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221 arose from the specific political and social situation of the early Muslim community in conflict with the Quraysh, making it context-bound rather than absolute. For him, Q.S. al-Mā'idah: 5 demonstrates that interfaith marriage may be permissible under conditions that prevent harm, injustice, or the loss of religious freedom. Saeed proposed conditional legality, emphasizing moral character, mutual respect, and a commitment to building a harmonious household.

Khaled Abou El Fadl (2001) emphasized an ethical interpretation rooted in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, rejecting literalism that divorces verses from their historical contexts. He interpreted the term "polytheist" (*mushrik*) in Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221 as referring to those who actively opposed Islam during the Prophet's time, rather than all non-Muslims across eras. He criticized the double standard of classical *fiqh* that allowed Muslim men to marry *Ahl al-Kitāb* women while prohibiting Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men, describing it as a product of patriarchal *ijtihād*. Abou El Fadl also questioned the validity of historical *ijmā'*, which excluded women, and opened the door for a more inclusive *ijtihād* that accommodates interfaith marriage within the framework of justice, compassion, and wisdom.

Quraish Shihab (2002), in *Tafsīr al-Mishbāh*, distinguished clearly between marriage with polytheist women, which is absolutely forbidden, and marriage with *Ahl al-Kitāb* women, which is textually permitted for Muslim men (Q.S. al-Mā'idah: 5). However, he emphasized caution: although lawful according to the text, its application must take into account concrete *maṣlaḥah* and *mafsadah*. In the Indonesian context, where Muslims form the majority, he considered interfaith marriage highly vulnerable to family conflicts, identity crises among children, and social unrest, which may render it *makrūh* or even forbidden under the principle of *sadd al-dharī'ah*. For Muslim women, he adhered to the consensus of scholars prohibiting marriage with non-Muslim men, while leaving limited space for new *ijtihād* provided that faith and justice remain safeguarded.

In general, these three contemporary figures agreed that the rulings on interfaith marriage must be reexamined in light of the historical context of the verses, the values of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, and the realities of modern society. They did not simply annul prohibitions but rejected rigid interpretations that ignore ethical dimensions, *maṣlaḥah*, and justice, instead opening space for conditional permissibility as long as requirements safeguarding faith and social harmony are fulfilled.

Table 2. Hadith Scholars' Perspectives on Interfaith Marriage in Indonesia

Scholar	Main Findings / Perspectives	References
Imam al-Bukhari	<i>Hadith</i> No. 5090: choosing a spouse must primarily be based on religion; emphasizes shared faith and piety as foundations of a blessed household.	Al-Bukhari, 2001; al-Nawawi
Imam Muslim	Prohibited Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men; reinforced by Q.S. al-Baqarah 221; emphasized <i>ḥifẓ al-dīn</i> (protection of faith) and <i>ḥifẓ al-nasl</i> (protection of lineage).	Muslim, 1996
Imam al-Nawawi	Absolutely prohibited Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men; allowed Muslim men to marry <i>Ahl al-Kitāb</i> women under restrictions; aimed at preserving faith, household tranquility, and spiritual safety.	al-Nawawi & bin Syaraf, n.d.; Harlina, 2020
Abu Dawud	The story of Zaynab and Abu al-ʿĀṣ: marriage was valid only after Abu al-ʿĀṣ embraced Islam; affirmed the prohibition of Muslim women marrying non-Muslims during pre-Islamic times.	Abu Dawud, 2007; Al-Asqalani, 2015

Al-Ṭabarī	Differentiated forms of interfaith marriage: permitted Muslim men to marry <i>Ahl al-Kitāb</i> women, but rejected Muslim women marrying non-Muslim men; normative practices of the Companions serve as precedent.	Al-Ṭabarī, 2000; Al-Maqdisi, 1997
Imam al-Tirmidhi	Narrated the separation of Zaynab from Abu al-‘Āṣ due to difference in faith; reunited only after his conversion with a new contract and dowry; normative precedent prohibiting Muslim women’s interfaith marriages.	At-Tirmidhi, 1994, 2002
Ibn Kathir	Interpreted Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221 as an absolute prohibition; Q.S. al-Mā’idah: 5 as a restricted exception for Muslim men; Q.S. al-Mumtaḥanah: 10 as definitive against Muslim women’s interfaith marriages.	Ibn Kathir, 1999
Al-Qurṭubī	Based prohibition on Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221; interpreted Q.S. al-Mā’idah: 5 as a limited exception for Muslim men; highlighted the core issue of faith and status of <i>Ahl al-Kitāb</i> .	Al-Qurṭubī, 1980
Ibn Ḥazm al-Ẓāhiri	Allowed Muslim men to marry Jewish, Christian, and even Magian women by classifying them as <i>Ahl al-Kitāb</i> ; adopted a literalist approach to texts; emphasized caution and protection of faith.	Abdurrahman, 1992
Abdullah Saeed	Applied contextual hermeneutics; distinguished universal Qur’anic messages from historical context; considered Q.S. al-Baqarah: 221 context-bound; advocated conditional permissibility.	Saeed, 2006
Khaled Abou El Fadl	Advocated ethical interpretation based on <i>maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah</i> ; rejected literalism; contextualized “polytheist”; emphasized justice, compassion, and gender equality.	Khaled Abou El Fadl, 2001
Quraish Shihab	Distinguished between polytheist women (absolutely prohibited) and <i>Ahl al-Kitāb</i> women (permitted for Muslim men with caution); stressed <i>maṣlaḥah</i> , <i>mafsadah</i> , social risks, and <i>sadd al-dharī‘ah</i> .	Quraish Shihab, 2002

This table summarizes the views of *hadith* scholars regarding interfaith marriage. In general, classical *hadiths* and exegetical traditions emphasized that shared faith constitutes the main foundation of marriage, especially for Muslim women, who were categorically prohibited from marrying non-Muslim men. Muslim men were granted only limited permission to marry *Ahl al-Kitāb* women, under strict conditions designed to protect faith and lineage. Historical precedents, such as the marriage of Zaynab and Abu al-‘Āṣ, became normative examples of this practice. On the other hand, contemporary scholars such as Abdullah Saeed, Khaled Abou El Fadl, and Quraish Shihab proposed contextual and ethical approaches that integrate *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, *maṣlaḥah*, justice, and social harmony. Thus, while the principle of shared faith remains foundational, modern approaches open the possibility for more adaptive interpretations in light of plural and diverse societies such as Indonesia.

Social and Religious Impacts of Sociologists’ and Hadith Scholars’ Views on Interfaith Marriage in Indonesian Muslim Society

Interfaith marriage in Indonesia is not merely a private matter between two individuals but rather a contested arena between religious norms, social constructions, and the authority of state law (Z. Arifin, 2018). From a sociological perspective, this phenomenon carries multiple layers of complex social meaning: ranging from the structure of values in society, symbolic power relations, to strategies of identity negotiation within the context of cultural and religious plurality. Meanwhile, from a *hadith* perspective—particularly as analyzed by classical and contemporary scholars—interfaith marriage is understood within the framework of preserving doctrinal purity,

ensuring household stability, and adhering to *sharī'a*. When these two perspectives interact within Indonesia's plural yet highly religious Muslim society, they produce multidimensional social and religious impacts (Telhalia & Natalia, 2021).

One of the most evident impacts is the emergence of dissonance between positive law and religious norms. On the one hand, the Supreme Court and several District Courts have legalized interfaith marriages based on the principle of religious freedom and civil rights of citizens (Sirait, 2024). On the other hand, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Islamic organizations reject such unions by referring to the *Compilation of Islamic Law* (KHI) and *sharī'* arguments prohibiting interfaith marriage, particularly for Muslim women (Zahara, 2022). This dissonance generates normative confusion in society, especially for couples who face the reality of religious difference but seek recognition of their marriage as legitimate and socially acceptable.

From the social standpoint, sociologists such as Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons argued that marriage functions as a social institution responsible for maintaining cohesion and reproducing collective norms. Within this framework, interfaith marriage is perceived as a potential source of disintegration because it blurs group identity boundaries. For Muslim communities that place high importance on the sanctity of faith and family structures based on shared belief, interfaith marriage is often seen as a deviation from established social norms. This perception can lead to stigma, family rejection, and even the marginalization of interfaith couples (Karunia & Ninin, 2022).

From a conflict perspective, figures such as Karl Marx and Ralf Dahrendorf viewed interfaith marriage as a reflection of ideological conflict between dominant structures (the religious majority) and individual freedoms. In Indonesia, the dominance of conservative interpretations within religious institutions often restricts individual autonomy to form interfaith families. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of equal interfaith dialogue, leaving conflicts of values without constructive mediation. As a result, society frequently responds to interfaith marriage with prejudice and resistance rather than empathy and understanding (Gusmian, 2013).

Another significant impact is the psychosocial tension within families and communities. Interfaith couples often experience internal pressures regarding the religious education of their children, the performance of rituals, and the celebration of religious holidays. In a society that has not fully practiced multicultural principles, religious differences within the household may become latent sources of conflict (Muliono, 2020). This finding is reinforced by *symbolic interactionism*, as developed by G. H. Mead and Herbert Blumer, which shows that religious meaning is continuously constructed through symbolic and repetitive social interaction. In the case of interfaith marriages, religious symbols within the family become sites of negotiation that are not always balanced.

Nevertheless, multicultural approaches provide a more progressive reading of the impacts of interfaith marriage. Muslim sociologists such as Ali Shariati and Syed Farid Alatas argued that in multicultural societies, differences in faith should not necessarily be seen as threats but rather as opportunities for dialogue and value transformation (Alatas, 2006). They emphasized the importance of inclusive interpretations of religious texts and the need for contextualizing laws within dynamic social realities. In this regard, the practice of interfaith marriage can encourage Indonesian Muslim society to reflect more critically on the relationship between religious law, civil rights, and cultural diversity.

Meanwhile, in the *hadith* tradition, most classical scholars such as Imam al-Shafi'i, Ibn Kathir, and al-Tirmidhi firmly held that the marriage of Muslim women to non-Muslim men is *ḥarām qaṭ'i* (absolutely prohibited). In several narrations, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have separated Muslim women who embraced Islam from husbands who remained disbelievers, as in the case of Zaynab with Abu al-ʿĀṣ. This position is reinforced by scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*) across legal schools, as well as by Qur'anic injunctions in al-Baqarah 2:221 and al-Mumtaḥanah 60:10. Such religious narratives provide the normative foundation for Indonesian religious institutions in rejecting interfaith marriages, thereby reinforcing social conservatism on the issue (Wahyudin Darmalaksana et al., 2017).

However, several contemporary scholars such as Quraish Shihab, Abdullah Saeed, and Khaled Abou El Fadl have proposed new readings of *hadiths* and related Qur’anic verses. They highlighted the necessity of interpreting religious texts within their historical context and the social dynamics of modern societies. For example, Quraish Shihab rejected the validity of interfaith marriage but also acknowledged that Islam calls for wisdom, dialogue, and humanism in responding to social realities. Khaled Abou El Fadl, meanwhile, advanced a *maqāṣid al-sharī’ah* approach that prioritizes justice, compassion, and communal welfare as the basis of legal interpretation.

The divergence between classical and contemporary scholars directly affects how Muslim society perceives the legitimacy and morality of interfaith marriage. For conservative groups, classical views constitute an unquestionable reference. For urban Muslim youth, however, who are more exposed to multicultural and human rights discourses, contemporary perspectives offer contextual spaces for reflection. This phenomenon signals an epistemological shift in understanding *hadith* and Islamic law in the modern era (Mustaqim, 2008).

Furthermore, these divergent views also affect public policy and state services. The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) refuses to register interfaith marriages, whereas District Courts may grant approval (Suma & SH, 2023). The lack of harmony between these two legal institutions leaves interfaith couples caught in administrative confusion. Some couples resort to formal conversion in order to register their marriage, even when such conversions do not represent genuine belief. This situation produces a crisis of spiritual integrity and feelings of compulsion in religious life (Mursalin, 2023).

Internal conflicts are also frequently experienced by children of interfaith couples (Karunia & Ninin, 2022). Their religious identity is often questioned by both society and educational institutions. In several cases, these children face difficulties participating in religious education programs that are tailored to a single faith. This demonstrates that the impacts of interfaith marriage extend into the next generation, reinforcing Durkheim’s argument that the family is the primary foundation for reproducing social norms.

Conversely, in some inclusive urban communities, interfaith couples serve as pioneers of tolerance and interfaith dialogue. They establish interreligious communities, spiritual forums, and shared spaces that bring together people of different backgrounds (J. Arifin, n.d.). Although still a minority, their presence plays a crucial role in counterbalancing dominant narratives that often lean toward exclusivism. Thus, from a sociology of *hadith* perspective, interfaith marriage can be viewed as a dynamic socio-religious phenomenon—one that is not merely a legal issue but also an arena of contested meanings and identities.

Accordingly, the social and religious impacts of interfaith marriage in Indonesia reflect ongoing tensions between text and context, between normative authority and sociological realities (Turnip, 2021). While the majority of society continues to rely on classical scholars and social conservatism, there are reformist efforts by academics, progressive scholars, and interfaith communities to reinterpret religious norms more contextually. Through a sociology of *hadith* approach, this phenomenon can be understood more holistically, balancing the authority of religious texts with social dynamics, and reconciling the sacredness of religion with the lived realities of humanity in plural contexts.

Table 3. Aspects of the Impact of Interfaith Marriage According to Sociologists and Hadith Scholars

Aspect	Main Findings
Law and Norms	Dissonance between positive law (District Court) and religious norms/KHI; creates normative confusion for interfaith couples.
Social Impact	Potential stigma, family rejection, and marginalization of couples; interfaith marriage is perceived as a deviation from social norms.
Conflict Perspective	Interfaith marriage reflects ideological conflict between the dominance of majority religion and individual freedom; limited space for dialogue.

Psychosocial Pressure	Couples face internal pressure related to children's education, rituals, and religious celebrations; religious symbols become an arena of unbalanced negotiation.
Multiculturalism Approach	Differences in faith can serve as resources for dialogue and value transformation; encourages reflection on religious law, civil rights, and cultural plurality.
Classical <i>Hadith</i> Perspectives	Marriage between Muslim women and non-Muslim men is prohibited; provides the normative basis for rejection by religious institutions.
Contemporary <i>Hadith</i> Perspectives	Interpretation of religious texts in historical and contextual terms; emphasizes justice, compassion, and communal welfare.
Public Policy	The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) rejects such marriages, while District Courts approve them; some couples convert religion for legal recognition.
Impact on Children	Children's religious identity is questioned; difficulties in formal religious education; implications for the next generation.
Role of Inclusive Communities	Interfaith couples become pioneers of tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and shared spaces; still a minority but significant as a counterbalance to exclusive narratives.

The table above summarizes the findings related to the social and religious impacts of interfaith marriage within Indonesian Muslim society. The findings indicate that this phenomenon is not only a matter of legal or religious doctrine in a narrow sense but also has far-reaching consequences for social dynamics, psychology, and interfaith interactions. The dissonance between positive law and religious norms, the psychosocial pressures on couples and their children, and the potential for social conflict constitute the main challenges. At the same time, *multiculturalism* approaches and efforts to reform *hadith* interpretation provide opportunities for society to foster dialogue, tolerance, and critical reflection on the practice of interfaith marriage. This phenomenon underscores that interfaith marriage is a complex arena involving the interplay between religious texts, social norms, and the lived realities of plural life.

4. DISCUSSION

This study finds that sociologists and *hadith* scholars hold two major streams of thought on interfaith marriage in Indonesia: (1) the sociological perspective, which situates interfaith marriage as a complex social phenomenon encompassing social integration, identity negotiation, value conflict, and adaptation in plural societies; and (2) the *hadith*-based perspective, which tends to be normative, emphasizing the purity of faith, household stability, and the protection of lineage. These perspectives interact within Indonesia's legal and social contexts, producing multidimensional impacts: ranging from dissonance between positive law and religious norms, social resistance, and marginalization of couples, to the emergence of opportunities for interfaith dialogue in more inclusive urban communities.

These findings arise because interfaith marriage touches on three highly sensitive domains in Muslim society: faith (*'aqidah*), social norms, and the authority of law. The sociological perspective explains that resistance toward interfaith marriage stems from the role of religion in binding collective consciousness (Durkheim) and from the clash between individual freedom and the dominance of majority structures (Marx, Dahrendorf). Meanwhile, the *hadith* perspective affirms that restrictions originate from religious texts that, from the outset, regulated marriage based on shared faith, with limited permissibility under strict conditions. When these perspectives converge in Indonesia—religiously plural yet legally conservative—they create a dynamic tension between the demand for loyalty to *shari'a* norms and the need for social adaptation.

These findings reinforce and expand three categories of earlier research. First, consistent with normative-historical studies (Aini, 2008; Usep Saepullah, 2019), this study confirms the existence

of interpretive differences among scholars since the early Islamic period, while adding a dimension of sociology of *hadith* that has received little attention. Second, in line with empirical-sociological studies (Aini et al., 2019; Seo, 2013; Sewenet et al., 2017), this study demonstrates that interfaith marriage in Indonesia is indeed vulnerable to stigma and adaptive strategies such as administrative conversion, but also shows that interfaith couples can serve as agents of social norm transformation. Third, supporting public policy and legal studies (Lathifah, 2020; Romadhon & Bahori, 2023), this research reveals that restrictive state policies not only limit civil rights but also reinforce social conservatism rooted in *hadith*-based arguments, thereby narrowing the scope for interfaith negotiation.

Historically, *hadith* perspectives on interfaith marriage emerged in the context of early Islam, which was marked by identity conflicts and the need to preserve Muslim communal cohesion. During this period, the prohibition of marrying Muslim women to non-Muslims and the limited permissibility for Muslim men to marry women from the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (Q.S. al-Mā'idah 5) functioned as mechanisms of social, political, and theological protection, while also reflecting the pre-Islamic Arab patriarchal system that was adapted into Islamic norms (Elmali-Karakaya, 2022; Safrodin & Fihris, 2024). As Islamic law developed in the classical and medieval periods, the scholarly consensus continued to uphold this prohibition to safeguard the purity of faith and the integrity of Muslim families. Yet some contemporary thinkers argue that the absence of an explicit Qur'anic prohibition for Muslim women opens a space for new *ijtihad*, especially when such marriages are built upon equality, mutual respect, and the protection of each party's religious rights.

In the modern context, this discourse reflects a tug-of-war between religious norms, state law, and human rights principles. In Indonesia, for instance, the prohibition in the *Compilation of Islamic Law* is often contested by District Court rulings that legalize interfaith marriages on the basis of religious freedom (Setiawan et al., 2024; Zubair & Hamdani, 2025). A study in Lombok shows that interfaith marriage practices display various patterns, ranging from formal conversion to maintaining respective faiths, as strategies of negotiation between law, custom, and personal autonomy (M. A. Nasir, 2022). Meanwhile, in regions such as Wollo, Ethiopia, the long history of Muslim-Christian interaction has fostered a culture of tolerance that accommodates interfaith marriages as part of social cohesion (Tilahun et al., 2025).

Ideologically, prohibitions or restrictions on interfaith marriage highlight the role of religion as a normative authority that seeks to regulate personal relationships in order to preserve the hegemony of majority values. However, amid the rise of interreligious interaction and the strengthening of multicultural values, there is a growing demand to reinterpret religious texts through *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and social justice perspectives (Jawad & Elmali-Karakaya, 2020; Salam et al., 2024). This condition creates opportunities for more inclusive legal reform that still preserves religious identity, so that interfaith marriage is not seen solely as a threat to communal cohesion but also as a potential space for dialogue and value transformation within Muslim societies.

The primary function of this study's findings is to provide a holistic understanding that connects *hadith* texts with social realities, thereby serving as an academic and policy reference for managing the issue of interfaith marriage in a just and contextual manner. The findings also serve to open space for dialogue between normative religious interpretations and civil rights demands in plural societies. However, this study also highlights potential dysfunctions that warrant attention. First, reaffirming the restrictive position of classical scholars may reinforce social conservatism and hinder policy innovation, as evidenced in Indonesia, where religious authorities often reject reforms perceived as deviations from traditional *fiqh* (Alfitri, 2015). This conservatism is strengthened through public preaching and sermons that tend to reproduce gender-biased interpretations of Islamic family law (Hayat, 2022), and it is rooted in intrinsic religiosity that positively correlates with pro-authoritarian attitudes and socially conservative values (Ji & Ibrahim, 2007). Second, progressive readings by contemporary scholars, who attempt to integrate *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* with principles of gender equality and human rights—as

successfully implemented in Morocco and Tunisia (Tamanna, 2008)—risk being rejected by conservative communities, thereby generating polarization of views in society.

This tension is also evident in cross-national comparisons. In Malaysia, for example, the dual legal system of *sharīʿa* and common law functions relatively harmoniously, yet jurisdictional conflicts frequently hinder legal transformation (Trakic & Tajuddin, 2021). In Bangladesh, reforms of Islamic family law face strong resistance from conservative groups that adhere to classical interpretations, in contrast to Morocco’s reformist model, which successfully adopted a “women-friendly” framework without being perceived as departing from the bounds of *sharīʿa* (Tamanna, 2008). These cases illustrate that the success of reform is highly dependent on strategies of adaptation to sociopolitical contexts and the degree of public acceptance.

Thus, the interaction between Islamic legal reform and social conservatism in Indonesia reflects broader dynamics within the Muslim world: on the one hand, there are pressures for legal modernization through the integration of values of justice, equality, and human rights (Fakihudin, 2023; Sezgin, 2023); on the other, there is resistance rooted in religious orthodoxy and concerns about the erosion of religious identity. This push-and-pull pattern not only influences policy direction but also shapes the social landscape that determines whether legal reform can be accepted or instead deepens societal fragmentation.

Based on these findings, policies are needed to bridge differences between religious norms and positive law. First, the state can facilitate a national interfaith dialogue to deliberate legal procedures that safeguard both freedom of religion and *sharīʿ* principles. Second, educational institutions and media should educate the public about the history, context, and interpretations of *hadith* related to interfaith marriage, in order to reduce social stigma. Third, religious institutions can develop pastoral guidelines or family counseling for interfaith couples, emphasizing tolerance, moral responsibility, and child protection. These steps are expected to help manage potential conflicts while also utilizing interfaith marriage as a site of social learning that strengthens cohesion in plural societies.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the perspectives of sociologists and *hadith* scholars on interfaith marriage in Indonesia form two major frameworks that interact yet often diverge. The sociological perspective views interfaith marriage as a complex social phenomenon, encompassing social integration, identity negotiation, value conflict, and adaptation within plural societies. In contrast, the *hadith* perspective tends to be normative, emphasizing the purity of faith, household stability, and the protection of lineage, with only limited and conditional allowances. The interaction between these two perspectives in Indonesia’s legal and social context creates a dynamic tension between adherence to *sharīʿa* norms and the demands of adaptation to multicultural realities and human rights principles.

The main contribution of this study lies in integrating sociological analysis with *hadith* scholarship—*sociology of hadith*—in examining interfaith marriage within Muslim societies. This approach broadens the scope of previous normative-historical and empirical studies by offering a framework that connects *hadith* texts with socio-historical and ideological dynamics in a contextual manner. Moreover, this study provides both academic and practical foundations for policymakers, religious institutions, and interfaith communities to formulate mediation strategies that consider normative legitimacy as well as the need for social cohesion in plural societies.

The limitations of this study lie primarily in its focus on literature analysis and normative-sociological discourse, without directly measuring the perceptions or lived experiences of interfaith couples in practice. Future research can extend these findings through fieldwork involving in-depth interviews, quantitative surveys, or case studies of communities practicing interfaith marriage. Such approaches are expected to offer a more comprehensive picture of how texts, contexts, and social practices interact in shaping the realities of interfaith marriage in Indonesia.

6. REFERENCES

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