Construction of Muslim Community Identity from the Perspective of *Tafsīr Maqāṣidī* Ibn 'Āsyūr (Analysis of Lafaz *Ummah* in the Qur'an)

1st Sihabussalam¹, 2nd Jauhar Azizy²

{sihabussalam471@gmail.com¹, jauhar.azizy@uinjkt.ac.id²}

Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, Indonesia^{1,2}

Abstract. The construction of the identity of the Muslim community, which starts from a religious community and then transforms into a civil society, is the purpose of the presence of lafaz *ummah* in the Qur'an. This paper will explore the interpretation of lafaz *ummah* as the basis for constructing Muslim identity. The methodology of this paper is a qualitative method using a historical-critical approach and *tafsīr maqaṣidī* Ibn 'Ashūr. The results of this paper show that the lafaz *ummah* in the Qur'an has two objectives: first, to strengthen society as religious citizens, and second, to create a group with a shared vision that correlates with society as citizens. The conclusion of this paper emphasizes that the construction of Muslim identity is formed on constructive differences, not division, so that the goals of this *ummah* must have the same vision and mission as citizens.

Keyword: Ibn 'Āsyūr, Muslim Community, Tafsīr Maqāṣidī, Ummah.

1 Introduction

The structure of modern Muslim societies is the end product of a protracted historical process of Islamic tradition. The response of revelation given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad was as follows: It can be used to understand how Muslim civilization is constructed[1]. The Prophet Muhammad's da'wah was historically significant, and this relationship has always influenced how quickly early Muslims came to define themselves as Muslims. The Makkah period was characterized by the development of a tawhid-based social structure[2] and by its alignment with the circumstances and demands of pre-Islamic society at the time[3]. This tawhid-based foundation served as the model for the development of Muslim society's identity in Medina following the Makkah era. The plan to create Madinah society was inspired by the neighborhood's distinct territorial and social features from those of Makkah. Muslim communities develop an inclusive viewpoint that is characterized by an understanding of state-building through interaction with other religious communities.

The study of lafaz *ummah* initially concentrated primarily on linguistics,[4–6] ignoring the sociolinguistics and relevance of lafaz, particularly those connected to the comprehension of political language. Bernard Lewis[7] first described the numerous interpretations of political language used by an individual or group to understand the political behavior or attitude of the

subject in 1994. Lewis addresses words that are frequently used in Islam to refer to politics, such as lafaz *ummah*.

In 1999, George C. Decasa researched the concept of lafaz *ummah* and its connection to Muslim identity[8]. He published his findings in a book, which was later evaluated by Dadi Darmadi in 2014[9]. Decasa's research focused on the variability of lafaz *ummah* in tafsir literature and how it relates to the creation of a Muslim identity. This study sheds light on the early stages of the development of lafaz ummah within Muslim society. Decasa's work also highlights the conflict between Islam and the Philippine government, which was not a practical political issue but rather a battle for the *ummah* among Filipino Muslims at the time.

Hasnan Bachtiar[10] examines the evolution of the lafaz *ummah* in light of modern discourses on democracy, liberalism, pluralism, human rights, and sustainable development. His research lists the scholarly perspectives from the East and the West on the societal challenges of the day. Bachtiar emphasized that the idea of humanitarian solidarity is present in the *ummah* concept. Saleh and Arsyad utilized *Al-Wujūh wa al-Nazā'ir*, a scientific investigation of tafsir, in 2019 to conduct a more detailed study on the lafaz *ummah*[11]. Their linguistic research revealed that the connotation of lafaz *ummah* is constantly associated with that of apostles, pilgrims, and religion. A similar research was used by Ridhatillah to analyze the synonymity of the lafaz *ummah*[12].

The concept of citizenship, known as civil society, is integral to the *ummah* and is constantly influenced by the state of society. The meaning of the lafaz *ummah* in the Qur'an is not fixed in time or location. Ibn 'Āsyūr's *tafsīr maqāṣidī* aims to reconcile the original meaning with the current situation, which is important because Muslim civilizations discuss not only theological issues but also social, economic, and political ones. The purpose of the lafaz *ummah* in the Qur'an is to establish the identity of the Muslim community, which originally began as a religious community but has since developed into a civil society. This research will explore the interpretation of Ibn 'Āsyūr's perspective of lafaz *ummah* as the basis for the construction of Muslim identity.

2 Methods

This study is classified as qualitative research. The information used in this study is sourced from *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* by Ibn 'Āsyūr, which is a secondary source. To gain an insight into how Islam uses the term in its socio-political discussions, the author also refers to Bernard Lewis' The Language of Political Islam. Additionally, secondary data from relevant books, publications, and articles is used to supplement the primary data for this research project.

In order to gather material for this study through library research, the author follows these steps: (1) Selecting the formal subject of the study, which is the building of the Muslim community's identity. The lafaz *ummah* in the Qur'an serves as the subject of investigation. (2) Collecting and choosing information, particularly works of literature that cover the history of the emergence of early Muslim cultures. The depth and evolving connotations of lafaz *ummah* in the Qur'an should also be taken into consideration. (3) Grouping significant components related to the creation of Muslim society by classifying fundamental presumptions, formation factors, and terminology found in the Qur'an; 4) The author utilized Al-Farmāwī's *tafsīr mawdū'ī*

approach to gather the words of the *ummah*. (5) The data was carefully extracted using descriptive-content analysis techniques and Ibn 'Āsyūr's *tafsīr maqāṣidī* method. (6) The author conducted a historical-critical analysis of the fundamental assumptions and examined all aspects of Muslim society's formation; and (7) Finally, conclusions are drawn to address the research topic formulation, specifically in the context of the lafaz *ummah* perspective on *tafsīr maqāṣidī*.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Overview of the Lafal Ummah

Lafaz ummah in Arabic dictionaries is derived from umm, which means mother. It is associated with the verb amma, which means "to go toward." According to Ahmad ibn Fāris, the root of the word amma gave rise to four meanings: origin (al-aṣl), site of return (al-marji), affiliation $(al-jam\bar{a}'ah)$, and religion $(al-d\bar{n}n)[13]$. These four meanings are closely related. They are based on three main aspects: height $(al-q\bar{a}mah)$, time $(al-h\bar{n}n)$, and purpose (al-qaṣd). Understanding these aspects is essential to give meaning to the term lafaz ummah.

In order to understand the meaning of lafaz *ummah* that has evolved, the correlation of each lafaz will be important. A social society's emergence is the source of an *ummah* (country or people). Because society and the nation-state are intertwined, the idea of the *ummah* in relation to the state becomes a place of refuge for the populace. This is why citizens need to have rights and responsibilities. The association of someone who occupies one territory is also the foundation for the notion of the *ummah* in the context of statehood. *Ummah* is a phrase for religious groups that is more specifically associated with spirituality. It is possible to say that geography, time, and religion all play a part in how an association is formed[14].

Lafaz ummun "mother/parent" also forms from the amma root. If the four aforementioned meanings are connected, ummun is the root or tree from which various branches sprout. The mother takes on the role of the child's ancestor. Ummun is used as a singular noun (mufrad), and ummahāt or ummāt is used as a plural noun (jama'). The phrase lā umma lahu is a common example of using the word umma to express praise or criticism. There are parallels since lafaz ummah and lafaz ummun are frequently connected. Al-Khalīl places restrictions on the definition of ummun in this regard. He claims that "kullu syai" yuḍamm ilaih mā siwāh mimmā yalīh"[13] (all things combined with the things that follow). Al-Khalīl's viewpoint is founded on customs that are unique to Arabs. Al-Khalīl's opinion is based on the traditions of the Arabs. For example, the brain (al-dimāgh) is often said by Arabs to be umm al-ra's (basically head). Judging from this example, al-dimāgh will always join and follow the head because his position is in the head.

According to al-Khalīl's definition, the lafaz *umma* has a wide range of meanings. One of its formations is lafaz *ummah*. Following al-Khalīl's logic, lafaz *ummah* generally refers to the collective meaning of each individual. This implies that a people is a group of individuals who share a strong bond with each other. Hence, the context of the people is inseparable from the dynamics of a group, and the essence of a human being in this context is the *ummah*. Understanding the concept of *ummah* entails comprehending the nature of human beings as social beings who cannot exist in isolation. This knowledge is based on the Qur'an and is crucial in understanding the nature of man as a group being[15].

3.2 Lafaz Ummah in Tafsir Literature

The Qur'an mentions lafaz *ummah* and its etymology 64 times in 24 suras[16]. Lafaz *ummah* once had a definition that referred to a community organization, religion, nation, faith, or leader[17]. This range of interpretations is centered on the overall framework that the lafaz *ummah* has. The tradition of interpretation will vary depending on the period, from the classical to the present. The definition of *ummah* in the tradition of tafsir does not, however, negate the meaning that is clearly apparent from the study of Arabic dictionaries.

The investigation of the words the Qur'an uses to define the meaning of society is also included in the search for the *ummah*'s meaning in tafsir literature. Lafaz *Ummah*'s relationship to lafaz *qawm*, *hizb*, *fawj*, *asbat*, *ahl*, *al*, and *Qabā'il* is dialogical, particularly in the evolution of society's meaning. The notion of a religious community can be distilled from these connotations, according to Decas[9]. The intricacy of early Islamic civilizations' conditions suggests that lafaz *ummah* was used in response to these conditions. According to lafaz *ummah*, the standard of an ideal society is a man who submits to Allah. For example, in Qs. Al-Baqarah/2:213.

Man is essentially a member of a monotheistic community. However, as time went on, the people began to suffer the decadence of monotheism, necessitating the necessity for a messenger (apostle) to bring about the restoration of the people's original nature. The meaning of the people in the verse symbolizes the community's harmony based on faith. *Ummah* in the sense of the verse means to the community of people who signify religious unity. The *ummah* mentioned in the verse was also present between the ages of Noah and Adam, as stated by Ibn 'Abbās[18].

When the prophets and the *ummah* were named side by side, a concept of the *ummah* was developed that was tied to the circumstances and health of the Prophet at the time. However, when considered collectively, the *ummah* was taught monotheism and submission to God Almighty by the spirit of each Prophet. Because it adheres to tradition, the relationship between the Prophet and the *ummah* has consequences for the abundance of the treasures of variety within the *ummah*. Lafaz *ummah* was in use in pre-Islamic antiquity, even before Islam was practiced in the Arab lands[7]. The idea of the *ummah* that existed before Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) evolved later, when he was sent by Allah as the final Prophet. The prior population was more exclusive and interreligious contact was avoided. Lafaz *ummah* resurged during the time of Prophet Muhammad in Medina, indicating mutual respect between the Muslim community and the other major faiths of Judaism and Christianity.

In studying tafsir, one can uncover the true meaning and depth of the *ummah*. Decasa argues that the concepts of the *ummah* found in interpretation studies are still scattered and need to be organized. Al-Ṭabarī likened the Islamic *ummah* or community to just people or *wasaṭ*[19]. This implies that the *ummah*, in this context, does not focus on its own religious origins when displaying its social behavior, resulting in efforts to convert non-Muslims to Islam[9]. Al-Ṭabarī's definition of *ummah* in his tafseer is a response to the historical realities of the period he depicted. During that period, concerns were raised due to the Islamic expansion which extended to Spain and Morocco. Al-Ṭabarī's perspective was a reaction to the situation faced by Muslims who were embroiled in conflicts due to the threats posed by other nations and cultures.

The concept of *ummah* originated from the interpretation of religious texts by scholars such 'Abduh and Riḍā, or Mawdudi, and Sayyid Quṭb. They believed that ummah was not just limited to religious and ideological aspects but also encompassed humanity. According to Mawdudi and Quṭb, *ummah* was considered as the primary source of leadership and guidance for humanity. However, the current tradition of interpretation of religious texts still upholds the earlier definition of *ummah*. It is advised not to deviate from the entire Islamic community.

3.3 Ibn 'Āsvūr's Tafsīr Maqāṣidī: Theory and Basis of Community Formation

Manhaj maqāṣidī Ibn 1Āsyūr can be classified into three, namely Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān al-'Ulyā, Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān al-Aṣliyyah, and Maqāṣid Al-Qur'ān al-Tafṣīliyyah.

First, maqāṣid al-qur'ān al-'ulyā. The Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān al-'ulyā, also known as maqāṣid al-qur'ān al-'āmmah, refers to the overall and universal objectives of the Qur'an[21]. These objectives are closely related to the central themes of the holy book, and Surahs or verses in the Qur'an cannot be separated from these general maqāṣid or main themes. Classical scholars believed that the content of the Qur'an primarily revolved around theology and metaphysics. However, modern tafsir scholars understand that the core theme of the Qur'an also discusses humanitarian issues and the progress of society throughout time.

Many scholars, both classical and modern, believe that meeting human needs for divinity, prophethood, and the last days is important. In fact, modern scholars have expanded on the main theme of the Qur'an and applied it to various aspects of human life, including family formation, society, law enforcement, and the political affairs of the ummah. One such scholar who expressed these concepts and ideas is Ibn 'Āsyūr.

Second, maqāṣid al-qur'ān al-aṣliyyah. Maqāṣid al-'aṣliyyah, also known as maqāṣid al-qur'ān al-khāṣṣah, refers to the specific purposes of the Qur'an. Its aim is to explain these purposes in detail. According to Ibn 'Āṣyūr, the basic purpose of interpreting the Qur'an or maqāṣid al-'aṣliyyah is the specific purpose of the Qur'an. This specific purpose is closely related to the discussion or thematic contained in each surah. It is important to note that this special maqāṣid is limited to only certain parts of the Qur'an[21].

Third, maqāṣid al-qur'ān al-tafṣīliyyah. The final section of the Qur'an's maqāṣid is the most intricate and precise, found within each verse. These verses hold wisdom and hidden meanings that contribute to the overall purpose of the Qur'an. This is what the maqāṣid verse aims to accomplish by emphasizing the importance of each individual verse.[21] Ibn 'Āsyūr explains this concept in his tafsir:

This construction of Ibn 'Āsyūr's interpretation is a dialectic between the inevitability of the text and the reality of life. Based on these two inevitabilities, his theory of interpretation stands on a linguistic analysis synchronized with the social life of society. It is not linguistic analysis that struggles with the position and derivation of lafaz alone, but rather the starting point for building the *maqāṣid al-qur'ān*. It starts with peeling the position of lafaz using the rules of Nahwu science, followed by the mention of the form of each lafaz ('ilm ṣarf). After conducting an analysis of the linguistic realm, tafsīr maqāṣidī will try to come up with the intention behind the birth of the lafaz[24].

3.4 The Reality of Muslim Identity Perspective Tafsīr Magāṣidī Ibn 'Āsyūr

The religion itself serves as the foundation for Muslim society's identity. Lafaz *ummah*'s existence in Muslim society serves as a means of religiously based unification. The highest *maqāṣid* of the Lafaz *ummah* becomes upholding religious benefit. The lafaz *ummah* itself is a lafaz with numerous meanings, *ism musytarak*. However, in the sense of Ibn 'Āsyūr lafaz *ummah* refers to a vast group (*al-jamā'ah al-'azīmah*) who have a shared concern and understanding, regardless of *nasab*, religion, or period[22]. They are referred to as "the people of the Prophet Muhammad" because they adhere to the prophethood of the Holy Prophets. There is something underlying the community that can be referred to as the *ummah*. Therefore, the ummah is not only formed with certain media but also has ethical, prophetic, and transformative goals[24].

There is a dualism in understanding the ummah as a Muslim identity, that is, a community that has a common origin and common goals. Both are important, especially in common views, to shape transformative morals. As for its origin, Islam already has power in it with the presence of the Prophet as the bearer of the Islamic treatise. The foundation built to form a harmonious goal is *al-ummah al-islāmiyyah* (the nation of Islam). That is, human beings who are able to maintain and return to their belief in Islamic values[22]. Nevertheless, Muslim identity does not deny freedom of thought or even democracy. These identifiable characteristics of Islam give power over reason so that society can maximize the role of reason.

According to the Qur'an (Qs. Al-An'ām/6:38), the most important aspect of the *ummah*'s identity is the promotion of reason. This passage suggests that Muslims are encouraged to express themselves without restraint. This kind of freedom is commonly known as democracy nowadays. A civil democracy ensures that new perspectives, individuals, and ideas,[25] are welcome and can adapt to any situation. Ibn 'Āsyūr believes that a man can be considered part of the ummah when he can contemplate the wisdom of the *ummah*'s impeccable design and the purpose behind all his actions[22]. This mindset leads to the belief in equality and mutual respect for differences.

The differences within Muslim identity are handled with care and wisdom, without conflicting with diversity but instead preserving it. However, this diversity should stem from well-established traditions that allow each community to have its own unique identity. Every group acknowledges and respects these differences[26]. This attitude is reflected in the verse from Qs. Āli Imrān/3:113, which emphasizes the significance of the word *ummah* and its relationship with lafaz *min ahl al-kitāb*.

According to Ibn 'Āsyūr, the term *ummah* can have two meanings: "group" (*tā'ifah and jamā'ah*) and *al-farīq* (group). The first meaning describes the number of people, while the second emphasizes the attitude of the group. If the verse refers to Jews and Christians who remain

faithful to tawhid, then the term *ummah* is used to maintain the identity of the Muslim community. This is evident in the way it is used in conjunction with *min ahl al-kitāb*, which pays tribute to obedient Jewish and Christian groups[22].

Two factors that contribute to the formation of the Muslim identity are the existence of $q\bar{a}'imah$ and the contrast between it and $min\ ahl\ al-kit\bar{a}b$. With positive neutrality, these frameworks give the actuality of Muslim identity significance. For Muslims, this mindset is crucial for distinguishing between religion and the state. Muslim identity within the framework of lafaz ummah can offer a compromise between state and religion. In other words, this mindset is considered moderate. According to Saputra (2018), who studied the connection between moderation and constructive neutrality, the institutional separation of religion and state does not negate the importance of religion in social services, development, and welfare[27]. This point emphasizes the importance of the ummah's reality in the context of statehood, rather than just focusing on the state and religious systems. The Muslim community continues to use Islam as the basis for promoting social welfare. Being a $q\bar{a}'imah$ (positively neutral) ummah is a requirement for Muslim identity, even when living in a non-Muslim society.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this paper shows that the construction of Muslim identity is formed on constructive differences, not division, so the purpose of this *ummah* must have the same vision and mission as citizens. The meaning of lafaz *ummah* recognizes the historical context of the mufassir period in interpreting the lafaz. The synchronization between lafaz *Ummah* as text and historical reality is one of the attempts to see the identity of Muslims today. The presence of the *ummah* in various contexts in the Qur'an points to the temporality of the formation of the *ummah*. The identity of Muslim society crystallizes into a religious community based on Islamic and democratic values. At the highest stage, identity is built on commonality as citizens and individual, collective, and global benefits.

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