

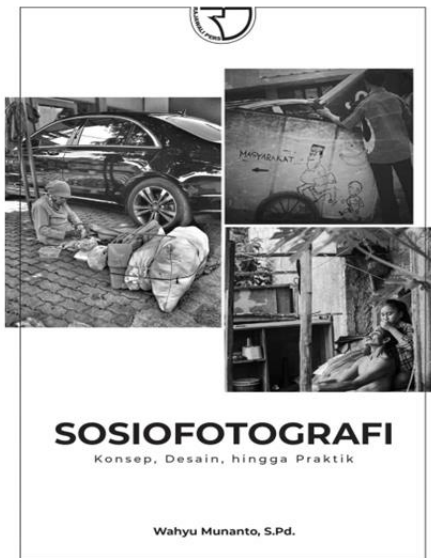
BOOK REVIEW

Sosiofotografi
Konsep, Desain, hingga Praktik: A Review Essay

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Extract

The concept of sociophotography offers an innovative approach to sociology education, particularly at the high school level. By combining photography and sociological theories, this book enables students to connect abstract sociological concepts with real-life social phenomena. It emphasizes active student engagement, where learners document, analyze, and interpret societal issues through photography projects. This approach fosters critical thinking, social awareness, and an appreciation for sociological concepts beyond rote memorization. The book outlines the application of sociophotography through three paradigms: positivistic, interpretative, and critical, each offering distinct methodologies to examine themes such as social equality, cultural change, and urban poverty. These paradigms enrich students' understanding of sociology while developing their practical skills.



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The book also underscores the pedagogical value of sociophotography in engaging students with sociological materials while stimulating interest in sociology as a discipline. By providing detailed explanations and case studies, it equips educators and students with the tools to explore sociology innovatively. The integration of this method into secondary education curricula can revitalize sociology learning and attract more students to the field. The potential of sociophotography as both an academic and practical tool ensures its relevance in addressing contemporary social challenges, making it a significant contribution to the advancement of sociology education.

Background

Sociophotography is a relatively new concept in the field of sociology, particularly in educational settings. Originating from a blend of 'sociology' and 'photography', it represents an innovative approach to learning at the Senior High School (SMA) level, primarily through the use of photography projects. As a method, sociophotography serves as a medium for students to identify and comprehend various sociological concepts and to connect them with everyday life realities, thereby fostering critical thinking skills.

The learning method comprises one or several approaches implemented to execute a pre-planned strategy in actual activities, ensuring the optimal achievement of predefined objectives (Majid 2014). Numerous studies indicate that the lecture method predominates at the university level. Marmah's (2014) study highlights students' preferences for lecture-based learning methods, as they have invested in tuition fees and generally seek knowledge directly from lecturers rather than independently. However, it is crucial for lecturers to provide efficient learning aids during lectures to maintain students' focus and engagement.

At the secondary school level, learning methods differ significantly due to distinct characteristics and needs. Typically, school learning involves the teacher explaining material, providing opportunities for interactive question-and-answer sessions, and administering quizzes and written exams. Sociology education relies heavily on understanding concepts and terms, such as acculturation, internalization, values, and norms at the high school level. Students usually receive explanations from the teacher, study from modules and books, and memorize the content to later recount it during final exams.

If not supplemented with other teaching methods, the lecture approach can lead to student disengagement and difficulty in absorbing material. As students often rely on rote memorization, their primary focus

is on passing the final semester exams. Consequently, sociology has developed a reputation as a memorization-based subject, which has affected its desirability as a college major. The future of sociology as a discipline hinges on the interest of high school students, which is critical for its regeneration and scientific advancement.

Munanto, the author of this book, has empirically and factually observed and studied the patterns of sociology teaching and learning since his first day as a secondary-level sociology teacher. He has explored teaching dynamics and material absorption through interactions with students, including simple queries about sociological concepts paired with real-life examples. Often, students struggle to explain these concepts and fail to provide personal examples that support their understanding of sociological theories.

This book significantly contributes to the field of sociology education. As an innovative educational tool, it delves into the potential of sociophotography to enhance sociology learning among high school students. This method combines photography with sociological theories, encouraging students to document and analyze social phenomena. This process emphasizes a constructive learning approach, engaging students actively from the design to the analysis stages of sociophotography projects. The goal is to bolster students' critical thinking skills and their connection with sociological materials and concepts. To fully appreciate this book, a deeper examination of the concept of sociophotography, its practices, student responses to sociology learning, and the educational outcomes post-introduction is essential.

Keypoint

The book **“Sosiofotografi: Konsep, Desain, hingga Praktik”** explores the learning method of sociophotography in student learning,

especially in sociology material. The author uses theoretical ideas of sociology to introduce and apply sociophotography to students. This work is valuable as an essential reference for sociology teachers, students, and those interested in sociology and photography.

This book is divided into three main sections including, first, the introduction of the concept and design of sociophotography learning supported by an explanation of photography, an explanation of the intersection of sociology and photography, and the discovery of sociology in a photograph. Second, the application of sociophotography is supported by an explanation of the application of positivistic, interpretative, and critical sociophotography. Third, the assessment and analysis section is equipped with three explanations that support it, namely the assessments of sociophotography learning outcomes and the analysis of the sociophotography method on student interest and learning outcomes.

Some of the strengths of this book include, first, bringing innovations in sociology learning for high school students. The idea is to encourage learners to be active in observing the phenomena around them, recording them in photo shoots, and then interpreting them from a sociological point of view. Through this new method, each learner can understand the concept of sociology, abstracting the social phenomena around them. In understanding sociology, students are no longer charged with memorizing materials but are now capable of conceptualizing and abstracting them from a sociological perspective.

Second, the book shows a comprehensive methodology, giving space for the opinions of learners who have been introduced to and activated sociophotography learning. Learners revealed that the sociophotography method in sociology learning aroused their interest in sociology because this method allows learners to explore phenomena outside the classroom, encouraging each learner to observe various social phenomena amid community life. With that constructive impression, he even continued his

studies at a leading university in Yogyakarta by choosing a sociology study program. In addition, this book explains in detail the design and practice of the sociophotography method, thus further complementing the reader's understanding, having previously explained how it is the meeting point between sociology and photography. Third, the book describes various case studies while explaining each approach to the application of sociophotography including positivistic sociophotography, interpretative sociophotography, and critical sociophotography.

Conceptually, positivism uses a value-free, austic model of science to find cause-and-effect relationships (Collier 2005). Meanwhile, interpretive sociology conceptually rests on the subjective nature of social life, and anyone who studies social life systematically must pay attention to how people understand and interpret the social world, their identities, and actions. Inspired by the thoughts and ideas of Max Weber, interpretive sociology contributed to the emergence of symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, helping sociologists in participant observation and interviews to place analysis empirically with the lived experiences of social actors in their social world (Kelly 2016). Furthermore, critical sociophotography as a family of social science, Neuman defines critical social science as a process of critical inquiry to uncover various illusions that exist on the surface to reveal the real structure in the material world and help people change a condition and build a better world for themselves (Neuman 2014).

In positivistic sociophotography, the theme of social equality is chosen as a case study for learning sociophotography in class XI SMA, starting with an explanation of the concept of social equality, making a framework for reducing the concept into elements or indicators to be photographed. The goal is that the conceptual framework that students have made can be visualized through photographs, for example, religious harmony. Next is the stage where the book author explains photography

conceptually so that learners understand photography as a planned activity to convey certain ideas, concepts, or messages through photo shots. It is emphasized that learners must be able to formulate their concepts according to the theme of the assigned sociology material, so there is no need to look for community activities around them. In the next stage, students begin to carry out shooting activities by the main concept, social equality and religious harmony as a derivative conceptual framework. Finally, several photos emphasize the meaning of concept interpretation and concept derivatives, including social interaction in religious harmony, helping activities as a mirror of religious harmony, kinship as a mirror of religious harmony, and joint activities in religious harmony.

Furthermore, the interpretative socio-photography approach chooses the theme of social change and its impact on learning sociophotography. The author in the initial learning session invites students to observe a phenomenon through YouTube shows, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and various government policies in breaking the transmission of the virus, including encouraging people to improve health protocols and policies to impose restrictions on community activities (*PPKM*). The next stage is to build an ideal type based on the parameter of behavioral changes that occur amid *PPKM* such as the habit of using masks, washing hands, and maintaining distance. The three habit parameters become a guide for learners when carrying out shooting field studies.

In field study activities, students are encouraged to prioritize the ethics of shooting by asking permission from the informant as the object of the figures. In addition to the importance of permission from the object of the figures, learners should build a good relationship with the informant starting with a session of introducing themselves, establishing two-way interaction, and mingling with the informant's activities. The importance of some of these things is considering that the emphasis of photography is human interest, which is a type of photography that focuses on

photographing several interesting human activities. One thing that is also important is to allow informants to provide input suggestions for taking or shooting photos. As for some of the photos result in the concept of social change and its impact, and derivatives of the concepts, namely community activities in limiting the application of community activities (*PPKM*) including photos figures of community activities in a traditional market, buying and selling transaction activities through the takeaway system, and buying and selling transaction activities through the Cash on Delivery (*CoD*) system.

Finally, as the third approach is critical socio-photography, the author of this book consciously positions himself to see the different 'contrasts' of a social reality. This approach begins with relevant general concepts, such as the setting of the theme of urban poverty with the support of the sociological concept of social exclusion. As a multidimensional approach, social exclusion explains that poverty is not caused by a single causal factor, such as lack of access to economic resources. However, it views powerlessness in accessing economic resources as related to various aspects including politics, health, and education. The social exclusion perspective for policymakers can obtain accurate analysis in formulating policies where policymakers have understood a group most marginalized to be a priority target for poverty reduction policies and community empowerment programs.

For this book's authors and learners, social exclusion can help operationalize urban poverty into more specific visual depictions. Next, it defines vulnerable groups including the elderly, women, and girls. Next, define the social exclusion elements of each group including gender, education, livelihood, place of rest, and age.

After the stages of establishing a position towards a theme and recognizing the concept, learners begin critical socio-photography shooting activities supported by the foundation of social exclusion element

construction. Some of the photos in the critical socio-photography approach include a picture of an elderly man sitting next to his cart parked on the sidewalk of an urban highway; a picture of a human cart where a mother pulls a wooden cart in which two daughters under the age of three are walking along the road around the Jatibening toll road, Bekasi City; an old woman who collects used goods is sitting resting while eating next to a luxury sedan car that shows the contrast of life and emphasizes social inequality in people's lives.

Socio-photography Contextualization in Islamic Education and Critical Evaluation

In the context of the discussion of the relevance of socio-photography to Islamic education, especially religious activities, it appears in the description of the explanation of the application of interpretative socio-photography. This book explains photographs of the practice of the *rebo wakanan* (*rabu pungkasan*) tradition to students. *Rebo wakanan* is a tradition carried out every last Wednesday of the Safar month of the Hijri calendar, by carrying out *zikir* (*tahlil*) activities together, *sunnah* prayers, and various foods to anticipate diseases and calamities. *Rebo Wekasan* ritual is local wisdom combined with Islamic values (Farida 2019). Other literature discusses the implementation of the *Rebo Wekasan* tradition in the socio-religious realm in Sitanjung Village, Lebaksiu, Tegal Regency (Nurozi 2016), and the symbolic meaning of the *Rebo Kasan* tradition in Garut Regency (Rahmawati et al. 2017).

As a note, before or in addition to observing social phenomena in the wider community such as the practice of the *rebo wakanan* (*rabu pungkasan*) tradition, the socio-photographic approach needs to encourage students to observe how the learning process and student interactions in the *pesantren*. However, the socio-photographic learning approach can also be adapted and applied in the context of Islamic education, for example in the Islamic

education environment and Islamic religious education learning to encourage students' critical thinking and social awareness in the *pesantren* environment. This can also be done in other religious education contexts and environments.

In addition to encouraging students' critical thinking, socio-photography can encourage social awareness that is in line with the moral and ethical teachings that are the spirit of Islamic education learning. One of the learning objectives of interpretative socio-photography and positivistic socio-photography learning is to identify social changes and social equality that occur in the surrounding community to foster an attitude of religiosity and social ethics. Another goal in positivistic socio-photography learning is to instill an attitude of social responsibility in each student to contribute to overcoming problems faced by certain communities. It can also be interpreted that socio-photography encourages students to identify and develop important social values in life as religious people, including the value of religiosity, social ethics and morals, social equality, concern and empathy for others, and social responsibility in contributing to solving social problems.

Because of these various constructive benefits, this socio-photography is also useful and can be utilized by teachers/educators of Islam and other religions. In principle, socio-photography seeks to build students' critical thinking followed by the development of social and religious values that are useful in strengthening students' character in navigating actual and factual life. Socio-photography can be an option for teachers in utilizing pedagogical tools for teaching sociology to high school students.

For this book to reach more people, it is important to collaborate with the Provincial Education Office as a policymaker, to introduce the socio-photography method and get responses to add innovation to learning methods that can be adapted in the secondary education curriculum. In

addition, introducing the methods to teachers, parents, and students through seminars. The introduction of the methods to many parties and the feedback will help the author of the book in improving the sociology learning method in secondary schools. In the end, sociology will be the main choice of students before entering college, and sociology becomes a science needed by many parties such as government, companies, NGOs, media, and academics because it can contribute to solving social problems.

Conclusion

This book integrates learning approaches related to learning methods with sociological approaches related to how humans understand the world and social reality. The socio-photography learning approach, in constructivism, emphasizes the involvement and active role of students in planning and implementing socio-photography projects to solve problems.

Three sociological paradigms including constructivism, interpretative, and critical adopting in socio-photography, where each paradigm has characteristics. Positivism relies on deductive logic, causality, rationality, and generalization. Meanwhile, the interpretive paradigm relies on inductive thinking, manifested as a field study. The basic assumption of this paradigm is that humans (society) have subjective meanings to their actions that are built through the process of human interaction. Meanwhile, the basic foundation of the critical paradigm is Karl Marx's dialectic of materialism, a human perspective and way of thinking to observe a phenomenon as a thesis, which then gives birth to a new antithesis within itself.

The three paradigms are combined by the author into several forms and models of socio-photography, where each approach model has different stages of procedures. In practice, teachers can determine one of the approaches or combine the three approaches in learning socio-

photography. The results of the practice of the three approaches found that socio-photography helps achieve the core competencies expected from learning, including mastering knowledge, social ethics, spiritual attitudes, practiced in life, and even practical skills including photography, social research, and essay writing. In addition, there was an increase in high school students' interest in learning academically and non-academically, where students made achievements in photography competitions and scientific writing competitions throughout Jabodetabek.

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