

## Karl Marx's Socialist Economic Perspective Compared To Umar Bin Abdul Aziz's Islamic Economic Thoughts On Social Justice

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### Abstract

#### Keywords:

Karl Marx, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, socialist economics, Islamic economics, social justice, wealth distribution

*The concept of social justice in societal development. Karl Marx, through his socialist economic theory, highlighted the inequality born of the capitalist system, while Umar bin Abdul Aziz, in the Islamic economic tradition, emphasized the principle of equitable distribution of wealth based on sharia values. This study aims to compare the thoughts of Karl Marx and Umar bin Abdul Aziz from a social justice perspective, while identifying common ground and conceptual differences between the two. The study employed a qualitative approach through library research. The analysis was conducted using a comparative-descriptive method.*

*The analysis shows that Karl Marx rejected capitalism because it resulted in class exploitation and proposed the abolition of private ownership of the means of production in order to create a classless society. In contrast, Umar bin Abdul Aziz maintained the recognition of individual ownership but emphasized distributive justice through zakat, taxes, and redistribution policies. The similarities between the two lie in the goal of creating social justice, but fundamentally different in their ideological foundations: Marx's origins stem from historical materialism, while Umar bin Abdul Aziz's is based on monotheism and Islamic law.*

*This comparison of the thoughts of Karl Marx and Umar bin Abdul Aziz demonstrates that social justice can be understood from both secular and religious perspectives. Marx's thought offers a structural critique of capitalism, while Umar bin Abdul Aziz presents solutions rooted in moral and religious values. Both make important contributions to contemporary social justice discourse*

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## INTRODUCTION

Social justice is a central theme in the study of economics and political philosophy. Karl Marx, a 19th-century German philosopher and economist, developed the theory of socialism as a critique of the capitalist system, which creates economic inequality and the exploitation of the working class. Born in the context of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, Marx observed how workers were exploited while capitalists reaped excessive surplus value. He emphasized that to achieve a just society, ownership of the means of production must be collective, so that wealth can be distributed more equitably. (Fauziah & Yuliantina, 2024).

Social justice is a central theme in economic discourse, both in the Western and Islamic traditions. Social justice is viewed with an emphasis on equality, caring, and the need to overcome domination and hierarchy. In a pluralistic society, justice also means providing space for everyone to be treated fairly and equally, regardless of cultural, gender, and background differences. (Alfensius Alwino, 2016) Historically, Karl Marx, as a leading figure in socialism, emphasized the importance of eliminating class oppression in order to achieve a society without exploitation. Meanwhile, Umar ibn Abdul Aziz (717–720 AD), the caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty known as a just leader, offered an economic approach based on Islamic values, namely the

equitable distribution of wealth based on sharia. These two figures had different backgrounds and fundamental ideas, but both placed social justice as their primary orientation.

Meanwhile, in Islamic tradition, social justice has been upheld long before the modern era, one example being during the reign of Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz (717–720 CE). He was known as an ascetic and just leader, committed to eliminating discrimination, restoring people's rights, and restructuring the Baitul Mal (treasury) for the benefit of the people. Umar bin Abdul Aziz succeeded in reducing poverty to the point where there were almost no zakat recipients during his time, demonstrating the concrete implementation of the principle of social justice in Islamic economics.(Mubarak & Sultan, 2017)A comparison of the thoughts of Marx and Umar bin Abdul Aziz reveals two distinct paradigms, both oriented toward social justice. Marx began with a historical materialist analysis, viewing class struggle as the path to a classless society. Umar bin Abdul Aziz, on the other hand, emphasized the just distribution of wealth based on Islamic law, without eliminating private ownership but by ensuring that wealth does not accumulate in the hands of a few.(Fauziah & Yuliantina, 2024)This comparative study is important because it provides a cross-civilizational perspective on social justice. On the one hand, Marxist socialism emphasizes structural change through class revolution, while on the other, Islamic economics emphasizes moral, spiritual, and public policy reform based on revelation. Both have common ground in their efforts to create shared prosperity and reduce social inequality, despite their different philosophical and epistemological foundations.(Bernadus Wibowo Suliantoro Caritas Woro Murdiati Runggandini, nd)

## METHODS

This research is a comparative library research.(Sugiyono, 2012)Data were collected from secondary sources. The analysis was conducted using a thematic approach: identifying basic assumptions, justice objectives, economic mechanisms, and policy implications

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social justice is a fundamental goal in both Karl Marx's socialist economic perspective and the Islamic economics practiced by Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz. While both aim to eliminate inequality and poverty, their philosophical foundations, methodologies, and methods of implementation are very different. Karl Marx's economic perspective on social justice is rooted in his radical critique of the capitalist system. Marx saw the primary social injustice as a result of private ownership of the means of production (capital), which created two main classes: the bourgeoisie (capital owners) and the proletariat (workers). True justice can only be achieved in a classless society, where collective ownership of the means of production has replaced private ownership. The core of injustice is the exploitation and alienation of workers, where the surplus value of their labor is stolen by capital owners as profit. Islam tends to highlight the power behavior of individuals (capital owners), while Karl Marx tended to focus on the framework of his system (division of labor and ownership).(Abdurrauf, 2020)

Umar bin Abdul Aziz, as Caliph during the Umayyad era (99-101 H / 717-720 AD), succeeded in realizing social justice and extraordinary prosperity in a short time, which is a real historical example of the application of Islamic Economic principles. Social justice is achieved through the enforcement of Islamic law, which recognizes private ownership but with limitations and obligations for the distribution of wealth (especially through Zakat and Baitul Mal). The core of his economic policy is the enforcement of trust, honesty, and the elimination of all forms of injustice (radd al-mazhalim) carried out by previous rulers, including the return of confiscated state

assets. The ultimate goal is the welfare of the people (falah) and the achievement of a condition where no one is entitled to receive Zakat (mustahik), a proof of the equality of wealth. (Zetrina Alya & Herman, 2023).

Social justice is a central issue championed by Karl Marx within the framework of socialist economics and Umar bin Abdul Aziz within the framework of Islamic economics, but with very different philosophical foundations and mechanisms for achieving it. Karl Marx viewed social injustice as rooted in the capitalist system, particularly private ownership of the means of production, which results in the exploitation of surplus value and the alienation of workers (the proletariat). The primary goal of social justice in Marxism is the realization of a classless or communist society, in which private ownership of the means of production is abolished through revolution, thereby eliminating exploitation and allowing for an equal distribution of the fruits of labor. (Naya Adeliana, Davinadila Putri Kusdiana, Satria Cakra Nugraha, Rizal Aziz Mahendra, 2025) (Appearance, 2023)

On the other hand, Umar bin Abdul Aziz implemented social justice based on Islamic law, which focused on the equitable distribution of wealth and the fulfillment of basic needs, without eliminating private property. From an Islamic perspective, injustice arises from economic injustice and disobedience to religious commands, not from property itself. Umar bin Abdul Aziz's most prominent policies were the redistribution of illegitimate wealth to the Baitul Mal (state treasury) and the effective management of Zakat, which was distributed until it succeeded in "transforming society from the mustahiq (proletarian) into the muzaki (bourgeoisie)." (Khairunnisa et al., 2021) This success demonstrates that social justice during the time of Umar bin Abdul Aziz was realized through fiscal-religious instruments that guaranteed "fair distribution of zakat" and were directed at alleviating poverty and improving the welfare of society. (Priyonggo et al., 2024).

Fundamentally, the difference lies in the foundation and method: Marx relied on historical materialism and offered a revolutionary solution that abolished property ownership, while Umar bin Abdul Aziz relied on Islamic values and offered an institutional solution through state policies based on morals and sharia to regulate property and ensure its fair distribution. Thus, although both men envisioned prosperity and a society free from oppression, Marx achieved this through class conflict, while Umar bin Abdul Aziz achieved it through the enforcement of legal and moral justice by the state.

### **Normative and Empirical Basis**

Marx: The historical-materialist basis of justice is judged by the structure of production and class relations; injustice is the result of private ownership of the means of production, which gives rise to the exploitation of surplus labor. The distributive principle often associated with Marx is "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (contemporary criticism and interpretation have extensively discussed the meaning of this principle). (Bellando, 2021).

Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz: theo-normative foundations (Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic principles of justice/maqāṣid). Social justice is realized through state policies that ensure the welfare of the people: management of zakat and public assistance, restrictions on wealth accumulation, equitable distribution, and the elimination of discriminatory practices. Contemporary articles explore the relevance of Umar's policies for the modern fiscal/zakat model. (Umar & Abdul, 2021).

### **The concept of ownership and property**

For Marx, private ownership of the means of production is the core problem; system transformation involves the abolition/transformation of capitalist ownership into collective ownership (or socialist control of production). This critique positions redistribution not as mere charity, but as a reconstruction of the relations of production. (Duan, 2023).

Umar did not advocate the complete abolition of private property, but rather the regulation of ownership through moral-religious instruments (zakat, inheritance limits, prohibition of usury) and public policy to prevent the accumulation of wealth and ensure basic access for all. Many studies emphasize the role of zakat and Umar's fiscal policy as tools for equality. (Umar & Abdul, 2021).

### **Mechanisms for achieving justice (practices & policies)**

Marxian, systemic change, revolution, or transformation of economic structures that privilege productive collectivities; institutional solutions (political power of the working class, production planning, the abolition of wage exploitation). Contemporary philosophical studies still debate whether Marx formulated detailed normative principles of justice or emphasized an empirical critique of capitalism.(Duan, 2023).

Umar's model, administrative policies (effective zakat collection and distribution, subsidies/incentives for the needy, elimination of discriminatory taxes/deductions, public audits) and enforcement of government ethics. Empirical research in Indonesian journals depicts Umar as an example of a leader who prioritizes welfare through pro-poor fiscal policies and moral oversight of officials.(Shofya Humaira Siti Salma & Ayi Yunus Rusyana, 2023).

### **Views on labor, exploitation, and human dignity**

Marx: drew attention to the alienation of labor and the exploitation of capitalism, which leads workers to lose control over the product of their labor and become commodities; justice requires the reconstruction of labor relations (Modern literature discusses how this theme is relevant in the era of the gig economy and critical accounting)(Mantzari et al., 2025).

Umar emphasized human welfare and dignity through the prohibition of oppression, fair wage/payment policies (in the tradition of tarjih hadith/fiqh), and the state's obligation to protect vulnerable groups, focusing more on public welfare practices than class theory. Contemporary studies explore examples of Umar's pro-people policies (e.g., increased zakat distribution, elimination of unjust burdens).(Arsyadi et al., 2025).

### **The role of the state and legitimacy**

Marx saw the state as a tool of the ruling class in a class society; a just transformation requires the control of state institutions by the working class or the dismantling of capitalist state structures. In the tradition of Umar, the state (caliph) is directly responsible for the distribution of welfare; state legitimacy is based on sharia and the moral accountability of leaders must be trustworthy and required to implement the sharia of justice. Contemporary historical studies highlight Umar's accountability practices, transparency of state revenues, and the use of public funds for welfare.(Umar & Abdul, 2021).

The research results show that there are several points of agreement and fundamental differences between the perspectives of Karl Marx and the economic thought of Umar bin Abdul Aziz in interpreting social justice. From the literature analysis, it was found that Karl Marx emphasized the importance of changing the economic structure as a way out of the injustice that stems from the capitalist system. He saw the exploitation of the working class and the accumulation of capital by capital owners as the roots of social inequality, so the solution offered was the elimination of private ownership of the means of production and the development of a classless society.(Burns, 2024)(Onuoha & Gwunireama, 2022).

In contrast, a review of Umar bin Abdul Aziz's policies shows that social justice was achieved not through the abolition of property, but through administrative and religious reform. Umar emphasized optimizing zakat management, improving the tax system, reducing the burden on the poor, and building public facilities for their welfare.(Hayati, 2019)(Kamaluddin et al., 2021)Another finding is that Marx proposed radical, structural, and long-term transformation, while Umar demonstrated tangible, short-term results through practical policies. For example, during Umar's reign, historical records show a decline in poverty to a minimum due to the effective management of zakat and taxes.(Nurpalah & Nurdin, 2025)(Subaidi, 2024)On the contrary, Marx's ideas provide more of a theoretical framework which is then debated in various implementations of socialism in modern countries.

Thus, this research demonstrates that both figures shared a vision of social justice, but differed in their normative foundations, implementation mechanisms, and levels of practical success. Marx emphasized the structural and systemic dimensions, while Umar bin Abdul Aziz emphasized the moral, religious, and concrete policies that could be immediately felt by society.

## CONCLUSION

Penelitian ini menguji pengaruh lima elemen pemasaran media sosial (entertainment, customization, interaction, electronic word-of-mouth, dan trendiness) terhadap keterlibatan merek dan pengetahuan merek pada produk sepatu fashion melalui pendekatan kuantitatif dengan 116 responden. Hasil analisis SEM-PLS menunjukkan bahwa secara keseluruhan, tidak ada satupun elemen pemasaran media sosial yang berpengaruh signifikan terhadap brand awareness, dengan nilai R-square brand awareness sebesar 0,278 (kategori moderat) menunjukkan bahwa masih banyak faktor lain di luar media sosial yang mempengaruhi kesadaran merek. Lebih lanjut, hubungan antara brand awareness dan brand image juga tidak terbukti signifikan dengan nilai R-square yang sangat lemah (0,042), mengindikasikan bahwa pengetahuan merek konsumen tidak hanya dibangun melalui elemen-elemen digital tetapi memerlukan faktor-faktor substantif seperti kualitas produk, pengalaman pembelian langsung, dan reputasi merek yang telah terbangun melalui investasi marketing jangka panjang. Temuan ini memperkaya literatur pemasaran digital dengan memberikan konteks empiris bahwa dalam industri fashion sepatu yang kompetitif dengan pemain global yang kuat, upaya pemasaran media sosial individual brand memiliki dampak marginal terhadap pembentukan brand awareness dan image konsumen.

Penelitian ini memiliki beberapa keterbatasan yang perlu dipertimbangkan dalam interpretasi hasil. Pertama, pengumpulan data dilakukan secara daring yang cenderung melibatkan responden yang aktif di media sosial, sehingga mungkin kurang merepresentasikan konsumen yang tidak intensif menggunakan platform digital. Kedua, desain penelitian yang kuantitatif belum menggali aspek kualitatif dan emosional yang mendalam mengenai pengalaman konsumen dengan brand di media sosial. Saran untuk penelitian mendatang meliputi penggunaan metode mixed methods untuk mendapatkan pemahaman holistik, perluasan cakupan penelitian ke kategori produk lain seperti busana dan kosmetik untuk generalisasi yang lebih luas, serta pertimbangan variabel moderator seperti gaya hidup digital dan pengalaman konsumen menggunakan media sosial. Implikasi praktis penelitian ini menekankan bahwa brand sepatu fashion perlu mengintegrasikan strategi media sosial dengan inisiatif marketing offline yang lebih komprehensif, mengutamakan relevansi konten dan value proposition yang kuat daripada sekadar mengejar tren, serta membangun kepercayaan konsumen melalui komunikasi autentik dan konsistensi dalam menyampaikan brand promise.

## CONCLUSION

Solutions to address systemic injustice require the integration of a thorough analytical framework and effective implementation mechanisms. Karl Marx's thought, which emphasizes structural solutions to the root causes of systemic injustice, provides a crucial analytical foundation for understanding why inequality persists in contemporary society. Umar bin Abdul Aziz, on the other hand, offered a practical model rooted in religious rules and state administration for achieving better distribution and well-being, making him a practical example of equitable governance practices. Therefore, contemporary policy recommendations should integrate structural analysis of inequality with rapid redistributive mechanisms such as efficient management of zakat/OTB (Religious-Based Non-Profit Organizations) or effective progressive fiscal programs, as well as strengthening public governance aimed at ensuring transparency,

accountability, and equitable public services. This integration ensures that policies not only address the symptoms but also address the root causes, while providing a practical framework for sustainable improvements in well-being and distribution.

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