Qur'anic Values as a Foundation for Social Change in Modern Society

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Abstract

The Qur'ān plays a significant role in shaping societal values and guiding social transformation by emphasizing justice, collective responsibility, and social care. This study employs a qualitative method with a thematic interpretation approach, where Qur'ānic verses are identified, categorized, and analyzed based on their relevance to critical social concepts. The thematic analysis enables a comprehensive understanding by linking individual verses to broader themes, such as Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar and social justice, to explore their practical implications. The findings highlight the Qur'ān's emphasis on justice, education, tolerance, and dialogue to address modern challenges like inequality and globalization. The study concludes that the Qur'ān offers spiritual guidance and a practical framework for fostering inclusive and sustainable social transformation, encouraging Muslims to contribute to equitable change in modern society actively.

Keywords: Qur'an, social change, education, modern society

Abstrak

Al-Qur'an memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk nilai-nilai sosial dan memandu transformasi sosial dengan menekankan keadilan, tanggung jawab kolektif, dan kepedulian sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan tafsir tematik, di mana ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an diidentifikasi, dikategorikan, dan dianalisis berdasarkan relevansinya dengan konsep sosial utama. Analisis tematik memberikan pemahaman yang komprehensif dengan mengaitkan ayat-ayat individu dengan tema yang lebih luas, seperti amar ma'ruf nahi munkar dan keadilan sosial, untuk mengeksplorasi implikasi praktisnya. Hasil penelitian menekankan pentingnya keadilan, pendidikan, toleransi, dan dialog dalam Al-Qur'an sebagai pilar untuk menghadapi tantangan modern seperti ketidaksetaraan dan globalisasi. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Al-Qur'an tidak hanya memberikan panduan spiritual, tetapi juga kerangka praktis untuk mendorong transformasi sosial yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan, mendorong umat Muslim untuk berkontribusi aktif dalam perubahan sosial yang adil di masyarakat kontemporer.

Kata kunci: qur'an, perubahan sosial, pendidikan, masyarakat modern

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, as the holy book of Islam, provides both spiritual guidance and a comprehensive framework for shaping the social order. Its teachings

promote justice, equality, and social responsibility, solving historical and contemporary societal challenges.¹ Throughout history, particularly during the Jahiliyyah period, these principles drove significant social transformations by addressing human rights, gender equality, and the welfare of marginalized groups.²

Several studies have examined the relationship between the Qur'an and social change. Ahmad Anis (2020) explored the pivotal role of Qur'anic values in fostering social transformation, highlighting how these values can guide ethical behavior and collective progress within society.³ Meanwhile, Rania Adel Al-Bawwab (2023) examined zakat as a tool for redistributing wealth, emphasizing its importance in addressing economic disparities and promoting social justice by Islamic teachings.⁴ These studies demonstrate the relevance of Qur'anic principles in addressing modern social dynamics, offering a theoretical foundation for further research on integrating Islamic ethics into public policies.

In modern contexts, the Qur'an's focus on wealth redistribution through zakat, infaq, and sadaqah provides a practical framework for tackling economic inequality.⁵ This aligns with contemporary economic theories advocating wealth redistribution as essential for societal stability. The Qur'an's emphasis on communal responsibility ensures that spiritual obligations directly support societal well-being, promoting sustainable development by linking moral behavior with economic justice.⁶

Additionally, the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of dialogue and cooperation in promoting social harmony (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). This principle aligns with Habermas' theory of communicative action, highlighting dialogue's role in resolving conflicts and fostering mutual understanding.⁷ In today's globalized world, where cultural diversity and social fragmentation pose challenges, these teachings provide valuable guidance for achieving

¹ Salehuddin Matawang, "Quran's Insight On Human Rights," *Journal of Social Science (JoSS)* 3, no. 9 (2024).

² Karam Hussain Wadho, Roshan Ali, and Zain Ul Abdin, "ENGLISH-ISLAM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GLOBALIZATION," *The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal* 5, no. 2 (2019): 55–80.

³ Anis Ahmad, "The Role of Values in Social Change: An Analysis from The Qur'ānic Perspective," *Al-Milal: Journal of Religion and Thought* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1–36.

⁴ Rania Adel Al-Bawwab, "Zakat: Changing the Framework of Giving," *Islamic Economic Studies* 30, no. 2 (2023): 86–103.

⁵ Nurudeen Abubakar Zauro et al., "Enhancing Socio-Economic Justice and Financial Inclusion in Nigeria: The Role of Zakat, Sadaqah and Qardhul Hassan," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 11, no. 3 (2020): 555–72.

⁶ Haithem Kader, "Human Well-Being, Morality and the Economy: An Islamic Perspective," *Islamic Economic Studies* 28, no. 2 (2021): 102–23.

⁷ Rúna í Baianstovu and Phillip Ablett, "The Transformation and Integration of Society: Developing Social Work Pedagogy through Jürgen Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action," in *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Pedagogies for Social Work* (Routledge, 2020), 450–64.

coexistence and peace. This study bridges Islamic ethics with frameworks such as Sen's capability approach, demonstrating how religious principles complement modern social theories and shape inclusive policies.⁸

Recent studies on Qur'anic values and social change highlight gaps this research addresses. Junaidi et al. (2023), in their work "Revisiting Social Justice: Exploring the Qur'anic Paradigm in Addressing Contemporary Challenges," focus on justice and collective well-being but remain primarily theoretical, with limited attention to how these principles can be practically applied in governance or policy-making to tackle modern issues such as globalization and inequality. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering practical strategies to implement Qur'anic values in various social contexts, providing clearer pathways for sustainable societal transformation.⁹

The paper "The Concept of Justice in Islam: A Socio-pragmatic Analysis" by Mahmoud A. Al-Khatib (2023) examines the socio-pragmatic aspects of Islamic justice, focusing on interpersonal relationships and community-level actions. However, the research lacks a broader perspective on how these principles can inform systemic change at institutional or national levels. This study builds on these insights by connecting individual and collective responsibilities, presenting a more comprehensive framework that integrates Qur'anic teachings with modern social structures and challenges. Besides, there are several Western scholars' views as a comparison, such as Durkheim's focus on collective consciousness, John Rawls' concept of justice as fairness, and Weber's theory of charismatic leadership, which provide additional perspectives that enrich the discussion on justice and social responsibility.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative method with a thematic interpretation approach, focusing on Qur'anic verses related to social transformation. The research explores how essential Qur'anic teachings, such as justice, collective responsibility, and social welfare, contribute to meaningful social change. Relevant verses like QS. An-Nisa: 58, which emphasizes justice, and QS. Ali 'Imran: 104, highlighting collective responsibility, serves as a core example.

The primary data collection involves the thematic selection of Qur'anic verses, analyzed through classical and contemporary *Tafsir* (exegesis). This method interprets verses within their socio-historical contexts, ensuring a deeper understanding of their relevance to modern social issues. The approach provides insights into how Qur'anic values align with contemporary

⁸ Tom Jacobson and Leanne Chang, "Sen's Capabilities Approach and the Measurement of Communication Outcomes," *Journal of Information Policy* 9 (2019): 111–31.

⁹ Jacobson and Chang.

¹⁰ Mahmoud A Al-Khatib, "The Concept of Justice in Islam," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 10, no. 5 (2023): 45–66.

concepts of justice and societal well-being, facilitating sustainable social reform.

Data analysis is conducted through interpretive analysis, where selected Qur'anic verses are examined in the context of modern social challenges. The selection process follows clear criteria to ensure relevance and rigor. First, the focus is on verses explicitly or implicitly addressing themes related to justice, collective responsibility, social welfare, and moral behavior. These themes are aligned with key concepts such as *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, social justice, and community well-being.

The selection begins with Al-Qur'an verses to identify relevant verses. Each verse is assessed based on its thematic relevance to personal and societal change. Specific attention is given to verses like QS. An-Nisa: 58, which emphasizes social justice and QS. Ali 'Imran: 104 focuses on collective responsibility. After identifying the relevant verses, they are categorized thematically to match the research objectives. Only verses that meet the predefined criteria are included in the final analysis to ensure consistency and avoid bias.

THE QUR'ANIC CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The Qur'anic concept of social change integrates personal moral development and structural transformation, offering a comprehensive framework for reform. Unlike Durkheim's notion of collective consciousness, which emphasizes shared social norms, the Qur'an roots change in divine accountability.¹¹ It ensures that personal responsibility and communal efforts are intertwined, as demonstrated by QS—Ali 'Imran: 104, where ethical vigilance is both an individual and collective duty.

The staged prohibition of alcohol in the Qur'an (QS. Al-Baqarah: 219; QS. Al-Ma'idah: 90) aligns with modern theories of gradualism but adds spiritual depth. It fosters community readiness and nurtures individual moral growth, a dual strategy often missing in secular policy models.¹² This method ensures that change is absorbed organically, promoting sustainability by aligning reforms with human limitations.

The concept of justice ('adl') in the Qur'an extends beyond John Rawls' "justice as fairness," incorporating both spiritual obligations and social equity.

¹¹ Alexander Gofman, "Tradition, Morality and Solidarity in Durkheim's Theory," *Istanbul University Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 1 (2019): 25–39.

¹² Ridho Adiansyah and Nurul Faezah binti Yahaya, "KHAMR IN THE QUR'AN," n.d.

¹³ Rawls emphasizes fairness through institutional frameworks, while the Qur'an binds justice to divine accountability, motivating individuals to act justly even without external enforcement. This model fosters a deep personal commitment to justice, making it a moral and public duty.¹⁴

Weber's theory of charismatic leadership emphasizes the role of extraordinary individuals who inspire followers through personal qualities, gaining legitimacy by offering transformative visions. In the Indonesian context, this model has been applied to Muslim leaders who gain political influence by positioning themselves as moral exemplars and mobilizing religious sentiments.¹⁵ This contrasts with the Qur'anic approach, which distributes responsibility across the entire community. Leaders are seen as ethical role models, but the burden of reform lies with all members of society. This decentralized approach ensures that societal progress is not dependent on transient figures but is a continuous, collective effort.¹⁶

The Qur'an's emphasis on shared welfare through practices such as *ta'awun* (cooperation) and *zakat* (charity) reflects a robust ethical framework. These practices align with modern ideas of social justice but incorporate a spiritual dimension, linking material welfare with divine accountability. ¹⁷ This ensures that economic justice and ethical behavior are inseparable.

Unlike some Western leadership models that focus on individual authority, the Qur'anic framework suggests that moral integrity must be embedded at all levels of society. Leaders are administrators and custodians of collective values, working alongside communities to maintain reforms.¹⁸ This collaborative model builds resilience, ensuring sustainable progress beyond any generation or leader.

The Qur'anic framework offers a balanced approach in today's globalized world, where inequality and moral crises persist. It addresses structural issues and personal ethics, suggesting that meaningful progress requires continuous

¹³ Nazan Yeşilkaya, "John Rawls' Justice As Fairness: A Political Conception," *Darulhadis İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi*, no. 3 (2022): 318–39.

¹⁴ Ejder Okumuş, "Islam, Muslims, and Social Change," *Tevilat* 1, no. 2 (2020): 479–506.

¹⁵ Jennifer L Epley, "Weber's Theory of Charismatic Leadership: The Case of Muslim Leaders in Contemporary Indonesian Politics," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5, no. 7 (2015): 7–17.

¹⁶ Agus Akhmadi, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Keragaman Indonesia Religious Moderation in Indonesia's Diversity," *Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* 13, no. 2 (2019): 45–55.

¹⁷ Hamza R'boul, "Alternative Theorizing of Multicultural Education: An Islamic Perspective on Interculturality and Social Justice," *Journal for Multicultural Education* 15, no. 2 (2021): 213–24.
¹⁸ Attahir Shehu Mainiyo and Muhammad Maga Sule, "Impact of Qur'anic Moral Excellence on the Lives of Muslim Society: An Exposition," *Demak Universal Journal of Islam and Sharia* 1, no. 03 (2023): 188–205.

moral refinement and policy reform.¹⁹ This dual focus ensures that solutions are practical and deeply aligned with human values.

Ultimately, the Qur'anic concept of social change complements modern theories by filling gaps between individual virtue and institutional reform. It offers an enduring model for sustainable progress, demonstrating that lasting change requires a harmonious blend of ethical behavior, communal responsibility, and gradual adaptation. This makes the Qur'anic approach especially relevant in tackling contemporary challenges such as globalization and social inequality. ²⁰

Table 1. Research Timeline

No	Activity	Duration
1	Preliminary Observations	10 days
2	Research Process	30 days
3	Report Writing and Finalization	7 days

Source: Data processed from the study

QUR'ANIC PRINCIPLES IN MODERN SOCIAL CHANGE

The Qur'anic principles of justice ('adl'), equality (musawah), and social responsibility (ta'awun) offer a robust ethical framework for addressing contemporary social challenges. QS. Al-Nahl: 90 emphasizes that Allah commands justice and good conduct while prohibiting immorality and oppression. This reflects the Qur'an's approach to ensuring both personal virtue and structural equity, aligning with frameworks like Sen's capability approach, which prioritizes providing opportunities for individual development.²¹ Both approaches emphasize the importance of empowering marginalized individuals by ensuring access to opportunities.

A key Qur'anic principle is collective responsibility, which mandates care for the vulnerable, including the poor, orphans, and marginalized groups (QS. Al-Baqarah: 177). This resonates with modern social theories advocating wealth redistribution as a tool for minimizing inequality. Scholars such as Wilkinson and Pickett (2019) argue that narrowing wealth gaps leads to healthier societies. The Qur'an operationalizes this principle through zakat,

¹⁹ Muhammad Nasri Md Hussain, Mohd Shahril Ahmad Razimi, and Ahmad Khilmy Bin Abd Rahim, "A New Dimension of Islamic Corporate Ethics in the Light of Al-Quran and Assunnah," *International Journal of Entrepreneurship* 25 (2021): 1–20.

²⁰ Nael Y M Sayedahmed and Samir A Abuznaid, "Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility from an Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 2, no. 4 (2019).

²¹ Jacobson and Chang, "Sen's Capabilities Approach and the Measurement of Communication Outcomes."

infaq, and sadaqah, making wealth redistribution a spiritual duty beyond economic policy. ²²

The emphasis on dialogue in QS. Al-Hujurat: 13, which encourages believers to engage with people of different nations and tribes, reflects the Qur'anic imperative for mutual respect and understanding. This aligns with Habermas' theory of communicative action, which highlights the role of dialogue in resolving conflicts and fostering cooperation.²³ In practice, this principle promotes peaceful coexistence in a globalized world, where cultural diversity is both an asset and a challenge.

The relevance of Qur'anic principles becomes evident in addressing modern issues such as economic inequality and social injustice. For example, contemporary economic models, including Piketty's work on inequality, show the dangers of unchecked wealth concentration and advocate for redistributive policies to address systemic disparities.²⁴ The Qur'anic injunction for wealth redistribution provides a spiritual foundation for such practices, ensuring that economic reforms are morally grounded and sustainable.

The principle of *ta'awun* (cooperation) reflects a cooperative welfare model, paralleling the Islamic economic system's focus on ethical finance.²⁵ Unlike secular welfare models, the Qur'anic framework ties welfare obligations to spiritual rewards, ensuring that social responsibility becomes a shared moral duty. This combination makes the Qur'anic model uniquely effective in fostering community solidarity and support for the underprivileged.

The research findings from this study make several academic contributions. They extend existing literature by demonstrating how Qur'anic principles align with and enhance modern social justice, equality, and conflict resolution theories. Practically, the study offers a framework for policymakers, showing how ethical principles from the Qur'an can be applied to address pressing global challenges, such as economic inequality and cultural fragmentation. ²⁶

²² Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Inner Level: How More Equal Societies Reduce Stress, Restore Sanity and Improve Everyone's Well-Being* (Penguin, 2019).

²³ í Baianstovu and Ablett, "The Transformation and Integration of Society: Developing Social Work Pedagogy through Jürgen Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action."

²⁴ Giuseppe Arbia, "Income Inequality, Redistribution and Economic Growth," *SpringerBriefs in Economics*, 2023.

²⁵ Khatib Ahmad Khan et al., "Islamic Model of Political Economy and Finance and Contemporary Trends of Financial Engagements From Historical Policy Management," *Russian Law Journal* 11, no. 4 (2023): 781–86.

²⁶ Shafi Fazaluddin, *Conciliation in the Qur'an: The Qur'anic Ethics of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 9 (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2022).

This research bridges the gap between faith-based ethics and secular policy frameworks by linking spiritual obligations with practical solutions. It offers a sustainable, morally grounded model for reform, providing fresh insights for academics and practitioners alike. This integrated approach ensures that solutions are practical and resonate with individual and collective aspirations for a just society.

PENUTUP

Conclusion:

- 1. The Qur'an defines social change as a process that begins with individual moral reform and extends to collective societal transformation. Through principles such as *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil), justice, and collective responsibility, the Qur'an provides a comprehensive ethical framework for guiding personal and communal change.
- 2. Qur'anic principles can be effectively applied to address modern social challenges like globalization, inequality, and moral crises. By promoting justice, tolerance, education, and dialogue, the Qur'an offers practical solutions for creating a balanced, inclusive, and equitable society in the face of contemporary issues.
- 3. This research contributes to the academic discourse by providing a detailed analysis of how Qur'anic values can serve as a foundation for social change, particularly in modern society. It highlights the potential for integrating Qur'anic teachings with contemporary social theories, offering a unique ethical framework for both scholars and practitioners in addressing global challenges.

Suggestions:

- 1. Practical Application: This research's findings should be implemented by integrating Qur'anic values into modern societal practices. This can include promoting justice, collective responsibility, and moral leadership in addressing contemporary social issues.
- 2. Development of New Theories: Based on this study's insights, scholars are encouraged to develop further theories on how Qur'anic principles can drive social change in the context of current global challenges such as inequality, globalization, and moral crises.
- 3. Further Research: Future research should delve deeper into specific Qur'anic teachings to explore their relevance and application to

emerging social problems. This includes examining how gradual social change, as emphasized in the Qur'an, can be adapted to modern contexts.

4. Academic Contribution and Practical Relevance: This study offers a novel contribution by linking Qur'anic principles with contemporary social challenges. It provides a practical model for addressing issues like inequality and cultural fragmentation. By aligning spiritual obligations with modern policy frameworks, this research advances academic understanding and offers actionable insights for policymakers and community leaders striving for sustainable, ethical social transformation.

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