

Justice Manifesto: Strengthening Brotherhood and Social Justice Based on Islamic Values in an Era of Global Crisis

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ABSTRACTS

This article discusses the role of Islamic teachings in building unity and social justice in Indonesia, which is facing potential disintegration due to increasing identity-based conflicts. Through a qualitative approach with literature study, this research examines how theological values such as ukhuwah, tasamuh, and al-adl can become the moral foundation for the social life of a diverse nation. The results of the study show that the history of Islam in the archipelago has given birth to an inclusive and adaptive religious tradition that has strengthened social cohesion. In addition, Islamic economic instruments such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf have proven effective in reducing inequality through community empowerment. Islamic institutions—including NU, Muhammadiyah, and zakat institutions—play a strategic role in education, moderate da'wah, philanthropy, and strengthening social solidarity. This article concludes that collaboration between the Muslim community and Islamic institutions is key to realizing a united, just, and resilient Indonesia in the face of global crisis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Centuries ago, the archipelago was already a meeting place for various nations. Arab, Persian, and Gujarati traders came not only to trade, but also to bring religious values that emphasized compassion. The spread of Islam at that time did not take place through conquest or violence, but through friendly daily interactions. In port cities, Islamic preaching was conducted in a manner closely aligned with the local way of life. The Wali Songo, for example, conveyed Islamic teachings through art, local languages, and traditions that were already familiar to the Jawa people (Alif et al., 2020). Gamelan, Tembang, and symbolic stories became effective media for preaching. Social relations were also strengthened through marriage with the local community, so that

Islam was not positioned as a foreign teaching, but rather as part of communal life.

Due to its flexible and dialogical nature, Islam grew without eliminating existing cultural identities. Local values remained alive, coexisting with new teachings. It was from this process that the distinctive character of Indonesian civilization was formed, where differences in beliefs did not necessarily lead to social distance. Mosques, temples, and churches could stand side by side, while the practice of neighborly coexistence continued to be carried out with mutual respect (Maknun, 2020).

This story shows that from the beginning, Islam in the archipelago developed as a unifying force. It acted as a social glue that connected various islands,

tribes, and traditions, while also providing space for diversity to continue to grow (Ansari, 2024).

However, behind this, we see an alarming reality. In the last decade, the index of identity-based conflict potential in Indonesia has continued to increase and cause friction between community groups (Muliono et al., 2023). Friction between social groups often arises, triggered by issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations that are exploited for short-term interests. At the same time, economic inequality is widening: a small minority enjoys prosperity, while other groups are marginalized. In this context, Islam, as the majority religion, has a great responsibility to strengthen unity and maintain social harmony amid the nation's heterogeneity.

History has proven that Islamic teachings have not only served as a moral foundation, but also as a unifying force among tribes, ethnic groups, and cultures in the archipelago since the process of Islamization began (Azra, 2018). The principles of brotherhood and tolerance emphasize that diversity is God's will and must be nurtured, not contested. Therefore, Islamic values play a constructive role in maintaining the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

In addition to unity, Islam also promotes the principle of social justice to eliminate economic inequality and the marginalization of certain groups. Injustice is a real source of conflict and can undermine national stability (Fadillah et al., 2024). The concepts of al-'adl (justice) and al-ihsan (benevolence) in Islam emphasize that the distribution of welfare must be equitable so that every citizen feels a sense of belonging to this country. Thus, Islamic teachings provide both a normative and practical solution to overcoming social inequality. Furthermore, Muslims and Islamic institutions have a strategic role to play in realizing a united and just Indonesia. Through da'wah, education, economic

empowerment, and social advocacy, Islamic organizations can become the driving force for a moral and inclusive national transformation (Uliyah et al., 2025). When the entire potential of the people moves in unison, Indonesia's ideals of peace, justice, and unity are not merely utopian idealism, but a vision that is very possible to achieve.

To achieve sustainable social transformation, Islamic education needs to be strengthened through the integration of the values of ukhuwah (brotherhood) and tasamuh (tolerance) into the curricula of schools, Islamic boarding schools, and majelis taklim (Islamic study groups) (Maulana et al., 2025). Islamic organizations can play a strategic role in economic empowerment in disadvantaged areas through entrepreneurship and skills training programs. The establishment of regular and inclusive platforms for interfaith and interethnic dialogue is also essential to reduce prejudice and strengthen social cohesion. Meanwhile, public policy advocacy oriented towards social justice and the protection of minorities is a crucial step in the more equitable redistribution of resources so that Muslims and their Islamic institutions can function as key actors in building a more united, just, and harmonious Indonesian society.

When Islamic teachings are truly understood and practiced correctly, they become more than just a personal religion; they become a unifying force for the nation and a solution to all forms of inequality. A united, peaceful, and just Indonesia is not a utopia, but a vision that is very possible to achieve if we all, especially the majority community, are willing to make Islamic values the common foundation for diversity. By promoting tolerance and moderation, Muslims in Indonesia can contribute to creating sustainable social harmony and mutual respect among various groups. Thus, the application of moderate religious values in everyday life can strengthen unity and integrity amid the diversity that exists in Indonesia (Rahmadani et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, this article seeks to explore how Islamic teachings can serve as a foundation for unity in diversity, social justice as a solution to inequality, and the role of Muslims and Islamic institutions in building a united and just Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method as the main strategy in exploring data related to Islamic teachings as the foundation of unity, social justice, and the role of Islamic institutions in national life. This approach allows researchers to explore credible classical and contemporary texts to find theoretical and practical solutions for the Indonesian social context.

Data collection techniques were carried out through scientific literature searches such as journals, academic books, and official institutional documents focusing on the themes of unity, social justice, and community life in Indonesia. Each source was selected based on its academic authority and relevance to the research problem formulation. Thus, the data analyzed is valid and capable of supporting in-depth scientific arguments.

Data analysis in this study uses content analysis and descriptive-analytical methods, which involve systematically reading the data to find conceptual patterns regarding *ukhuwah*, social justice, community empowerment, and the contribution of Islamic institutions in nation building.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Results

Islamic Teachings as the Foundation for Unity in Diversity in Indonesia

Islamic teachings emphasize the values of brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), humanity, and social responsibility as an integral part of religious life. These principles teach believers to help one another, respect one another, and treat others fairly regardless of differences in ethnicity, customs, or language. Because

these values are ethical and universal, they can serve as a common ground for groups from different backgrounds, thereby helping to build a shared space that accommodates differences (Idi, 2022).

In Indonesia, the history of interaction between Islam and local cultures shows a strong pattern of adaptation; religious practices in many regions combine Islamic teachings with local traditions, giving rise to a tolerant and contextual form of Islam. These forms of Islam in the archipelago allow religion to be a social unifier rather than a cause of cultural homogenization, as they place greater emphasis on the values of togetherness and mutual respect than on the need to standardize identity (Duraesa & Ahyar, 2019).

Religious institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, mosques, Islamic organizations, and local religious institutions play an important role as arenas for moral and social education. Through educational activities, social charity, and inter-community dialogue, these institutions translate theological principles into practices that strengthen social cohesion, such as interfaith aid programs, tolerance education, and joint initiatives for community welfare. Therefore, the institutional capacity of Islam determines the extent to which its teachings become the foundation of unity (Gunawan, 2024). Despite its great potential, Islamic teachings do not automatically guarantee unity; there is a risk if religious interpretation is carried out exclusively or politically. Several studies show the phenomenon of asymmetrical pluralism and practical challenges in implementing the value of tolerance in various social contexts; therefore, the quality of religious education, dialogue between religious leaders, and commitment to the principle of public justice are key to preventing religion from becoming a divisive force. This emphasizes the importance of an inclusive interpretation of Islam based on human rights and common interests (Nuriz & Awang, 2018).

In conclusion, when Islamic values of justice, compassion, brotherhood, and social responsibility are consistently actualized through educational practices, community empowerment, and inter-institutional cooperation, Islam has the potential to become a social foundation that strengthens national unity. Proactive efforts by the Muslim community, scholars, and Islamic institutions to translate teachings into concrete policies and programs are important steps to ensure that diversity in Indonesia becomes a source of strength, not a weakness (Aziz, 2016).

Social Justice in Islam as a Solution to Overcome Inequality

Social justice in Islam is built on the belief that wealth is not merely personal property, but a trust that must be used for the benefit of society. The principles of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah (ZIS) are institutionalized mechanisms to ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth, especially for those in need. These values lead Islam to view economic inequality not only as an economic problem, but also as a moral problem that must be resolved through instruments of social worship (Hariyanto & Nafi'ah, 2023). In the Indonesian context, various studies show that good zakat management contributes directly to poverty reduction. During the pandemic, for example, zakat has proven to be able to support the basic needs of affected communities, especially low-income groups (Arbi et al., 2024). This impact shows that zakat not only provides temporary assistance, but can also increase the economic capacity of beneficiaries when distributed in a targeted and measurable manner, thereby effectively reducing inequality.

Islamic social justice does not stop at zakat alone. Productive waqf, Islamic philanthropy, and empowerment-based zakat management are other instruments that can be used to overcome structural inequality. Many studies emphasize that zakat distributed in the form of business capital assistance, training,

or economic investment is more effective in creating independence for mustahik than consumptive assistance. This strategy enables Islamic social instruments to function not only to reduce burdens, but also to create equal opportunities (Gojali et al., 2024). Recent studies show that Islamic social finance also has a spatial impact, affecting not only individual zakat recipients but also the areas where they live. Equitable distribution of zakat can reduce the concentration of poverty in certain areas and promote equitable development across regions (Karim et al., 2020). This emphasizes the importance of managing zakat based on data on needs and geographical conditions so that it can be more effective in reducing inequality.

The role of zakat institutions is crucial to the successful implementation of Islamic social justice. Institutions such as BAZNAS and LAZ have a major responsibility in developing a system that is transparent, trustworthy, and accountable. A study on the optimization of zakat management in Central Java shows that the separation of consumptive and productive funds, careful program planning, and long-term assistance are effective strategies for improving the welfare of mustahik (Faizah, 2022). However, the implementation of Islamic social justice is not without challenges. There are still many obstacles, such as low zakat literacy among the community, a lack of innovation in fund distribution, and the potential for politicization of zakat institutions. Therefore, research on Islamic philanthropy suggests innovations such as the digitization of zakat, impact measurement, and strengthening public education so that the Islamic wealth distribution system is truly effective in reducing inequality (Pertiwi et al., 2023).

Thus, social justice in Islam provides both a moral foundation and practical instruments for overcoming inequality. If zakat, waqf, and Islamic social finance instruments are managed professionally and combined with public policies oriented towards equity, economic disparities can be

significantly reduced (Birjaman et al., 2023). The combination of religious values, good governance, and program innovation makes Islam not only a spiritual teaching, but also a real solution in creating a more just and prosperous society.

The Role of Muslims and Islamic Institutions in Realizing a United and Just Indonesia

The role of Muslims in maintaining unity and justice in Indonesia stems from the basic teachings of Islam, which view humanity as one big family (ukhuwah insaniyah). The awareness that diversity is sunnatullah encourages Muslims to respect cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. This teaching serves as a moral foundation for Muslims to actively create social harmony amid Indonesia's diverse society. The Islamic thought of the archipelago, as discussed in the works of Azyumardi Azra, shows that Islam in Indonesia has grown as a tradition that is culturally friendly and upholds unity (Azra & Hasan, 2002).

Muslims have a social responsibility to uphold justice as a direct command from the Qur'an. The value of justice is not only normative, but is manifested in everyday behavior such as helping others, avoiding discrimination, and promoting social order. When Muslims practice these values, social stability can be maintained, even amid potential conflicts between identities. This role becomes even more important when Indonesia faces challenges such as political polarization and rising intolerance.

In a more organized context, Islamic institutions such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah have made significant contributions to maintaining social cohesion. History records that these two organizations not only played a role in the struggle for independence, but also in developing education, health, and social structures within society. Research shows that the moderate approach to da'wah (proselytizing) taken by these two organizations has been very effective in reducing the potential for conflict

and strengthening the sense of national identity (Anggraini & Yola, 2024). This makes Islamic institutions an important pillar in creating a united society.

In addition to maintaining unity, Islamic institutions also play a major role in upholding social justice through Islamic philanthropy mechanisms such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf. Empirical evidence shows that good zakat distribution can significantly reduce poverty levels. Research by Dion Saputra Arbi et al. shows that zakat management during the COVID-19 pandemic played an important role as a tool for economic equality for vulnerable groups (Amirudin & Sabiq, 2021). This shows that Islamic teachings are not only about morality, but also provide real solutions to overcome social inequality.

The strengthening of social justice is growing with digital innovations in the management of zakat and waqf. Modern zakat institutions utilize technology to ensure faster fund collection and more targeted distribution. In a recent study, Rofiq et al. found that the digitization of zakat and waqf significantly expands the impact of economic empowerment of the people and supports the objectives of maqashid sharia (Arbi et al., 2024). Thus, Islamic institutions act as modern actors that are responsive to the needs of society in the digital age. Not only in economic aspects, Islamic institutions also play a role in strengthening ukhuwah (brotherhood) through social, educational, and interfaith dialogue programs. These programs provide a space for people to interact positively and erode prejudice between groups. Habibah Indah Ratnasari's research shows that the role of NU, for example, is very prominent in preventing social conflict and maintaining community solidarity (Rofiq et al., 2025).

Thus, the role of the Muslim community and Islamic institutions in building a united and just Indonesia is a complementary joint effort. The community provides the moral and cultural foundation, while Islamic institutions facilitate the

implementation of these values into concrete actions. This collaboration makes Islam not only a spiritual teaching, but also a social-transformational force that is capable of maintaining unity while promoting justice across all levels of society (Ratnasari et al., n.d.).

b. Discussion

In the context of Indonesia as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world and a highly diverse society, Islamic teachings actually provide a strong foundation for maintaining unity and promoting social justice, especially when identity-based conflicts and economic disparities are increasingly felt (Ilham et al., 2024). This shows that Islam cannot be understood merely as ritual worship practices, but also as a source of values that can address real social issues. The experience of Islam in the archipelago shows how Islamic teachings have grown adaptively, engaging in dialogue with local cultures and emphasizing moderation as a middle way. The principle of *wasathiyah* or moderation is important because it teaches balance, justice, and openness, which can ultimately help build a more inclusive and harmonious Indonesian society that is capable of dealing with socio-cultural diversity without falling into extremism (Rahmadani et al., 2025).

Islamic teachings as the basis for unity in a diverse society have actually been proven through a long history of peaceful acculturation, in which Islam has been present and developed without eliminating local identities, giving rise to a relatively tolerant and open form of Islam (Ramdhan & Arifin, 2025). This pattern is in line with the idea of religious moderation, which has long been a characteristic of the majority of Islam in Indonesia, as it emphasizes balance, a middle ground, and harmonious coexistence. However, challenges still arise when religious teachings are understood in a narrow and exclusive manner, which has the potential to trigger social tensions. Therefore, education that instills moderate values and

provides space for interfaith dialogue is important for maintaining national cohesion. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation not only serves to maintain harmony among communities, but is also a strategic step to prevent radicalization that could disrupt national unity (Hasbullah, 2024).

Konsep keadilan sosial dalam Islam sebenarnya tidak berhenti pada tataran normatif, tetapi juga menawarkan langkah-langkah praktis untuk mengurangi kesenjangan sosial melalui instrumen seperti zakat, infak, sedekah, dan wakaf yang bersifat redistributif sekaligus produktif. Jika dikelola secara profesional dan transparan, zakat terbukti mampu berkontribusi pada penurunan angka kemiskinan, terutama pada situasi krisis, serta sejalan dengan mendukung Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seperti pengentasan kemiskinan dan pertumbuhan ekonomi yang inklusif (Rokhlinasari & Widagdo, 2023). Digitalization and pentahelix collaboration can increase the realization of zakat potential, which is still low, thereby strengthening equity between regions.

The role of Muslims and Islamic institutions in Indonesia, especially Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, is very important in maintaining social harmony. So far, these two organizations have not only been active in the religious sphere, but also in the fields of education, health services, strengthening moderate *da'wah*, and opening up spaces for interfaith dialogue (Khalida et al., 2024). Their collaboration is valuable social capital for strengthening democratic consolidation and creating peace, because even though they have different approaches, they complement each other in their efforts to maintain national unity and integrity.

Overall, amid various global crisis whose impacts are also felt in Indonesia, Islamic teachings still have strong relevance as a foundation for maintaining unity and promoting social justice. However, this success does not happen automatically, but

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