



ACTUALIZING THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSAL JUSTICE ('ADL) IN GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Justice is a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings that permeates all aspects of human life. In the context of modern states, universal values of justice ('adl) encompass not only legal justice, but also social, economic, and public service justice. This article discusses the concept of universal justice in Islam and its relevance to the state system and public policy. Through a literature review of several academic journals, this study finds that the concept of 'adl in Islam has three main dimensions: distributive, procedural, and restorative justice. All three can be used as an ethical and policy framework in creating a just government oriented towards the welfare of the people. However, the application of this principle faces challenges such as social inequality, a lack of transparency in the bureaucracy, and difficulties in integrating Islamic values into a secular legal system. This article recommends the need for public policy reform based on Islamic values of justice in order to create a balanced, transparent, and inclusive society.

Keywords: Universal justice ('adl); islamic teachings; public policy reform

1. INTRODUCTION

Justice is a core value in Islamic teachings that forms the basis of human life. Islam teaches that everyone must be fair in all matters without discriminating against religion, ethnicity, or social status. Justice is seen as a principle that maintains balance and harmony in communal life. The value of justice also serves as a moral guideline that regulates relationships between individuals and society, as well as between the people and the government.¹ If everyone applies fairness in their daily lives, a harmonious society will be formed, where people respect one another and live in balance. The government also needs to make justice the basis for its policies so that all people can enjoy prosperity without discrimination.

In state affairs, justice does not only mean law enforcement, but also includes economic equality, honesty in bureaucracy, and equal public services for all citizens.² A just government is one that prioritizes the interests of the people, enforces rules correctly, and avoids all forms of inequality and social injustice. Therefore, justice is an important measure in assessing the success of a government.

However, the implementation of justice in public life often faces many obstacles. Problems such as economic inequality, closed bureaucracy, and the lack of application of moral values in the modern legal system remain major challenges. Therefore, it is important to review how the principle of universal justice in Islam can be applied in today's government systems and public policies. This study is expected to strengthen the understanding that justice in Islam is comprehensive and can be the basis for building a government that is honest, open, and oriented towards the welfare of the people.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a literature review method. The research focuses on analyzing the concept of universal justice ('adl) in Islamic teachings and its relevance to governance and public policy in the modern state. Data were collected from various secondary sources, including academic journals, conference proceedings, books, and scientific publications related to Islamic law, justice, governance, and public policy.

The data collection technique was conducted through a systematic review of relevant literature, particularly sources discussing distributive justice, procedural justice, and restorative justice from an Islamic perspective. The selected literature was analyzed using descriptive-analytical methods, aiming to interpret concepts, principles, and findings from previous studies in order to identify patterns and theoretical frameworks related to justice in Islam.

Data analysis was carried out by categorizing the findings into key thematic dimensions of justice, namely distributive, procedural, and restorative justice. These themes were then examined in relation to their application in governance and public policy. The analysis emphasizes conceptual interpretation rather than empirical measurement, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of justice as both a moral and normative principle within Islamic teachings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Universal justice in Islam is a fundamental principle that teaches the importance of balance and fairness in all aspects of life. This principle requires everyone to be fair in all matters without discriminating based on religion, ethnicity, or social status. In Islamic teachings, justice encompasses three main things, namely justice in distribution, justice in implementation, and justice in restoration

Justice in distribution means that resources and opportunities must be given proportionally so as not to cause inequality. Justice in implementation relates to honesty and openness in decision-making, so that everyone is treated equally. Meanwhile, justice in restoration emphasizes the importance of repairing losses and maintaining good relations between fellow human beings.

In state affairs, these three forms of justice can be applied through a legal system that favors the community, such as providing legal aid for the poor, accessible courts, and resolving issues through deliberation. These steps help create laws that are more humane and fair for all parties.

In government policy, the principle of justice also needs to be applied so that prosperity can be felt evenly. This can be done through economic equality, a fair tax system, and assistance programs for people in need. However, its implementation still faces challenges such as social inequality, laws that do not fully reflect the value of justice, and bureaucracy that is not yet open.

To overcome this, the government needs to improve the policy system by emphasizing openness, accountability, and community involvement in the decision-making process. In this way, the value of justice in Islam can be realized in practice and become the basis for building a balanced, open, and prosperous society for all¹

1. Based on the results of studies from various scientific sources, it was found that justice in Islamic teachings is a core value that forms the basis for regulating human life. Justice is not only understood as a legal rule, but also as a moral guideline that maintains balance in relationships between individuals, communities, and governments. Islam emphasizes that every human being must be fair in all matters without distinguishing between religion, ethnicity, or social status.¹ It can be concluded that justice in Islamic teachings is not only related to law, but also serves as a guideline for life so that humans can live in balance and respect one another. Islam teaches that everyone must be treated fairly without distinction of ethnicity, religion, or status. This value of justice is important to be applied in society and government in order to create a just, prosperous life that respects fellow human beings.
2. Research shows that the application of justice in government can be carried out in three main ways. First, justice in distribution, which is the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities so that there are no economic or social disparities. In Islamic teachings, this principle is embodied through the implementation of zakat, taxes, and social assistance to help the underprivileged.² The application of the value of justice in government needs to be carried out through the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities so that prosperity can be felt by all levels of society. According to the author, the application of this principle shows that the government has a great responsibility to ensure that no party is disadvantaged or left behind. If the value of justice is implemented sincerely, social inequality can be reduced and society can become more prosperous and harmonious.
3. Justice in implementation, namely justice in the decision-making process and law enforcement. A just government must enforce rules honestly, openly, and impartially. All citizens have equal rights before the law.³ Justice in implementation requires the honest, open, and impartial application of the law. In my opinion, justice will be realized if the judicial system is improved, law enforcement acts with integrity, and the poor have equal access to the law.
4. Justice in restoration, which is justice that focuses on efforts to repair social relationships and restore rights to the injured party. In this context, problem solving through deliberation, mediation, and reconciliation is preferred over harsh punishment. ⁵ This principle is in line with human values that emphasize the importance of balance between justice and compassion. Justice in restoration emphasizes the repair of social relations and the restoration of rights to the aggrieved party. In my opinion, this approach is more

¹ Suud Sarim Karimullah, "The Relevance of the Concept of Justice in Islamic Law to Contemporary Humanitarian Issues" 8 (2023): 77–91.

humane because it prioritizes deliberation and reconciliation over harsh punishment, thereby creating a balance between justice and compassion.

5. In modern state practice, Islamic values of justice can be used as a basis for formulating public policies that favor the people. Equitable distribution of welfare, honesty in bureaucracy, and open public services are forms of applying the value of justice in government.⁶ The government is expected to be able to build a system that guarantees social justice for all citizens regardless of their background or social status.²
6. However, this study found several obstacles in the application of justice values in state affairs. There are still social inequalities, a closed bureaucracy, and weak application of moral values in public policy.⁷ The application of justice values in state affairs still faces various obstacles. In my opinion, social inequality, closed bureaucracy, and weak moral values in public policy need to be addressed immediately so that justice can truly be felt by all levels of society.³

Justice ('adl) is a core value in Islam that forms the basis of morality and law in all aspects of human life. Etymologically, the word 'adl comes from the root word 'adala-ya'dilu, which means straight, balanced, and putting something in its proper place. In the Qur'an, Allah commands humans to be just in all matters, as stated in the principle "al-'adlu ma'murun bihi fi jami' al-umur," which means "justice is commanded in all matters." This principle shows that justice in Islam is universal, transcending religious, ethnic, and social status boundaries.¹ The author argues that this view affirms the position of justice ('adl) as a fundamental value in Islamic teachings that is not only normative but also practical in everyday life. The principle of universal justice shows that Islam encourages the creation of a society that behaves in a straight and balanced manner without discriminating against social, religious, or ethnic backgrounds.

The concept of justice in Islam is not solely related to law, but also serves as a moral foundation that governs relationships between individuals and society. Justice in Islam has broad dimensions, namely distributive justice ('adalah al-tawzi'iyyah), procedural justice ('adalah al-ijra'iyyah), and restorative justice ('adalah al-tashhihiyyah).² According to the author, the division of justice into three dimensions—distributive, procedural, and restorative—is a comprehensive view of the application of justice in social life and government. This idea shows that justice in Islam includes the complementary aspects of economic equality, legal order, and social restoration. Distributive justice emphasizes the proportional distribution of resources to prevent social inequality. In this context, Islamic teachings mandate the implementation of zakat, infaq, and the prohibition of usury as concrete forms of economic equality.³ The author argues that the teachings on zakat, infaq, and the prohibition of usury are tangible manifestations of the application of economic justice in Islam. These three instruments prove that Islam has provided clear social mechanisms to maintain economic balance and prevent economic oppression by stronger groups. Procedural justice emphasizes a decision-making process that is honest, transparent, and accountable, where every individual has equal standing before the law (equality before the law). Meanwhile, restorative justice is oriented towards the recovery of losses, the rehabilitation of perpetrators, and the restoration of social relations between the parties involved.⁴ According to the author, the concept of restorative justice, which emphasizes recovery and social reconciliation, is highly relevant for application in modern society. This principle shows

² Nur Rofik Muhamad Ichrom et al., "Hukum Pernikahan Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Al-Wasith : Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2024): 33–37, <https://doi.org/10.52802/wst.v9i1.1117>.

³ Karimullah, "The Relevance of the Concept of Justice in Islamic Law to Contemporary Humanitarian Issues."

that Islam is not only oriented towards imposing sanctions, but also towards efforts to improve social relations and restore moral balance in society.⁴

In the context of state administration, Islamic principles of justice are highly relevant to modern judicial systems. Research shows that Islamic legal systems have long recognized the principles of judicial independence, impartiality, and transparency. The author argues that the principles of judicial independence and transparency in Islamic judicial systems demonstrate the maturity of Islamic legal thought since its early days. This proves that Islamic legal values have long contained elements of modern justice that are in line with the principles of democracy and human rights. In state practice, these values can be translated through legal aid mechanisms (legal assistance for the poor), small claims courts, and the development of mediation and arbitration systems as a form of restorative justice. According to the author, the application of legal aid mechanisms, simplified courts, and mediation and arbitration are concrete manifestations of the application of social justice in Islamic law. These steps are important to ensure that the poor have equal access to justice and legal protection. Thus, the law is not only an instrument of punishment, but also a means of social recovery and reconciliation.⁵

In the economic sphere, the application of distributive justice requires public policies that favor equitable welfare distribution. Zakat and progressive taxation can serve as the basis for fair income redistribution policies. Al-Khatib's (2023) research shows that the application of the principle of 'adl in Islamic economic policy can promote wealth distribution and reduce social inequality between rich and poor groups.⁷ The author argues that Al-Khatib's research results emphasize the importance of applying the principle of justice in national economic policy. By implementing zakat and progressive taxation proportionally, the state can reduce social inequality and achieve more equitable economic welfare across all levels of society. In addition, social security programs, subsidies for basic needs, and a decent minimum wage are concrete forms of the implementation of distributive justice in modern government.⁶

In the realm of public services, Islam emphasizes the importance of fair and nondiscriminatory access for all citizens. Fair public services must fulfill the principles of transparency, efficiency, and affordability. The universal value of justice in Islam demands that public services not discriminate based on race, religion, or social status.⁸ According to the author, the principles of fair and nondiscriminatory public services truly reflect the universal values of Islam. The government must ensure that every citizen has equal access to public services regardless of social or religious background, as this is a tangible manifestation of social justice. It is in this context that the concept of *maslahah* (public interest) becomes the basis for ethical considerations for state administrators.

However, the application of the principle of universal justice in modern governance is not without challenges. First, sharp socio-economic disparities make it difficult to implement distributive policies evenly. Second, secular legal systems are often unable to fully accommodate Islamic values of justice due to differences in paradigms.⁹ The author argues that the paradigm differences between secular legal systems and Islamic values are the main challenges in applying universal justice. Therefore, harmonization efforts are needed so that modern legal systems can adopt Islamic values of justice without neglecting the principles of humanity and social justice.

⁴ M. Mugiyono, "Integrasi Sistem Politik Islam Dalam Kancah Perpolitikan Nasional Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Agama UIN Raden Fatah* 16, no. 2 (2015): 1–19.

⁵ "Referensi 6," n.d.

⁶ Syed Hamid, Farooq Bukhari, and Naseem Akhtar, "Hadīth and the Question of Human Rights : Revisiting Universal Norms in Islamic Sources" 1, no. 1 (2024): 39–55.

Third, non-transparent bureaucracy and a culture of patronage remain major obstacles to realizing procedural justice in many countries.¹⁰ According to the author, non-transparent bureaucracy and a culture of patronage are major obstacles to the application of justice in modern government. The author believes that increasing the transparency, accountability, and integrity of state apparatus is a major step towards realizing a fair system of government in accordance with the principles of Islamic justice.

To address this issue, the government needs to develop policies based on Islamic values of justice through legal reform and public governance. The principles of transparency, accountability, and justice (TAJ) can be used as an ethical model in every state policy. The government also needs to strengthen public oversight mechanisms, improve public legal literacy, and expand citizen participation in the decision-making process. Thus, the universal value of justice in Islam does not stop at the normative level, but becomes a practical guideline in building a prosperous and just society.⁷

4. CONCLUSION

Justice is a fundamental value in Islamic teachings that forms the basis for human life, both in interpersonal relationships and in the system of government. Islam teaches that justice must be applied without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or social status. In the life of the state, justice means not only the enforcement of law, but also economic equality, honesty in bureaucracy, and public services that are open and equal for all citizens.

The results of the study show that justice in Islam has three main forms, namely justice in distribution, justice in implementation, and justice in restoration. All three complement each other in creating a balanced and harmonious society. Justice in distribution emphasizes the equitable distribution of resources to prevent social inequality. Justice in implementation requires the enforcement of honest and impartial laws, while justice in restoration focuses on repairing social relationships and restoring rights to those who have been wronged.

These values of justice can serve as guidelines for the government in formulating public policies that favor the people. A government based on justice will create equitable welfare, transparent laws, and equal public services. However, its implementation still faces challenges such as social inequality, closed bureaucracy, and weak morals in policy implementation.

Therefore, policy reforms that emphasize openness, accountability, and honesty are needed so that the value of justice can truly be realized in the life of the state. By making justice the basis for every decision and policy, a prosperous, balanced, and mutually respectful society can be realized in accordance with the teachings of Islam.⁸

⁷ Karimullah, "The Relevance of the Concept of Justice in Islamic Law to Contemporary Humanitarian Issues."

⁸ Masfi Sya'fiatul Ummah, "KONSEP KEDAULATAN IBNU KHALDUN DALAM KITAB MUKADDIMAH DAN RELEVANSINYA DENGAN SISTEM KEDAULATAN RAKYAT DI INDONESIA SKRIPSI," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 11, no. 1 (2019): 1–14, http://sciotea.caf.com/bitstream/handle/123456789/1091/RED2017-Eng-8ene.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2008.06.005%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/305320484_SISTEM_PEMBETUNGAN_TERPUSAT_STRATEGI_MELESTARI.

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