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Contextual Exegesis of Qur'anic Verses of Unity through Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement: Responding to Muslim Polarization in the Age of Social Media

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Abstract: Muslim polarization on social media is shaped not only by theological disagreement but also by the ethical management of difference in digitally mediated discourse. This article examines how contextual exegesis can reread selected verses of unity Q.S al-Baqarah [2]:143, Q.S Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, and Q.S al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 and 13 in relation to contemporary Muslim polarization. Employing qualitative library research and hermeneutical content analysis, this study integrates classical and contemporary exegesis with Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement. The cases involving Ade Armando and the controversy surrounding the Prophet's birthday are used as illustrative contexts rather than systematically analyzed datasets. The selected verses articulate universal moral orientations of balance, solidarity, mutual recognition, and human dignity. These principles offer a normative and hermeneutical framework for addressing binary framing, stigmatizing labeling, and mutual delegitimation in digital religious discourse. Contextual exegesis can connect the historical meaning of revelation with contemporary ethical questions without making empirical claims about all social-media users.
Keywords: *Contextual Exegesis, Double Movement, Digital Ethics, Muslim Polarization, Social Media, Qur'anic Verses of Unity.*

Abstrak: Polarisasi Muslim di media sosial tidak hanya dipengaruhi oleh perbedaan teologis, tetapi juga oleh bagaimana perbedaan tersebut dikelola secara etis dalam wacana yang dimediasi secara digital. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana tafsir kontekstual dapat membaca kembali ayat-ayat persatuan, yaitu QS al-Baqarah [2]:143, QS Āli 'Imrān [3]:103, dan QS al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 dan 13, dalam kaitannya dengan polarisasi Muslim kontemporer. Penelitian ini mengintegrasikan tafsir klasik dan kontemporer dengan teori Double Movement Fazlur Rahman. Kasus yang melibatkan Ade Armando dan kontroversi peringatan Maulid Nabi digunakan sebagai konteks ilustratif, bukan sebagai dataset yang dianalisis secara sistematis. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa ayat-ayat tersebut memuat orientasi moral universal berupa keseimbangan, solidaritas, saling menghargai, dan perlindungan terhadap martabat manusia. Melalui pembacaan ulang berdasarkan teori Double Movement, prinsip-prinsip tersebut dapat menjadi kerangka normatif dan hermeneutis untuk merespons pembingkaian biner, pelabelan yang menstigma, dan praktik saling mendelegitimasi dalam wacana keagamaan digital. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tafsir kontekstual dapat menghubungkan makna historis wahyu dengan persoalan etis kontemporer tanpa membuat klaim empiris mengenai seluruh pengguna media sosial.
Kata kunci: *Tafsir Kontekstual, Gerak Ganda; Etika Digital; Polarisasi Muslim; Media Sosial; Ayat-Ayat Persatuan Al-Qur'an.*

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has transformed how people interact, including in religious life. Social media no longer functions merely as a medium for daʿwah or sharing knowledge; it has also become an arena of debate that can culminate in polarization. This phenomenon arises when religious groups set their respective interpretations against one another, selectively citing Qur'anic verses to attack opposing parties

Social media has expanded connectivity and altered how information is produced, circulated, and interpreted. It does not merely function as a channel for exchanging messages; it also creates a digital environment in which users encounter competing narratives, religious interpretations, and social identities. This environment closely connects to offline social life because online discussions can shape how individuals perceive religious groups, authorities, and social differences. Simultaneously, the speed and breadth of digital circulation allow information to move beyond its original context and be reinterpreted by different audiences. Consequently, social media can function both as a space for knowledge sharing and as a site of contestation over religious meaning and identity.[1]

In religious matters, polarization carries particularly serious risks. Information circulation can trigger conflict and intensify intolerance. For example, hate speech, hoaxes, and slander disseminated through social media can aggravate tensions among religious groups and weaken social bonds. Such polarization damages not only intergroup relations but also the democratic values and diversity that underpin national life.[2]

Ironically, religious scholars and ulamā' are also drawn into these polemics, affecting their authority in the eyes of Muslim communities. Competition for influence can produce extreme sympathy or antipathy. Instead, religious figures who should serve as moral exemplars may instead become involved in mutual denunciation, obscuring universal spiritual values. This vulnerability encourages the use of derogatory labels, even though the Qur'an expressly prohibits such conduct: "Do not insult one another by offensive nicknames; how evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith." This situation may ultimately enable the delegitimization and even criminalization of scholars who should be treated with respect."

Public responses to daʿwah in the public sphere vary considerably, particularly in digital contexts. The presence of multiple social media platforms has generated sharp audience segmentation, with each group consuming religious content according to its own ideological, cultural, and social preferences. This segmentation produces a filter bubble, a condition in which individuals encounter only information that reinforces their existing views and lacks balanced access to different perspectives.

This situation makes responses to daʿwah highly uneven. Some audiences respond positively when daʿwah corresponds to their values and group identity, whereas others feel alienated or offended when the content conflicts with their frame of reference.

[1]Iyad Suryadi dan Saeful Anwar, *Realitas Virtual dan Polarisasi Agama: Menelaah Pengaruh Media Sosial di Indonesia*, 1 (2023): 42.

[2]Suryadi dan Anwar, *Realitas Virtual dan Polarisasi Agama: Menelaah Pengaruh Media Sosial di Indonesia*, (2023):51.

Digital algorithms intensify this phenomenon by repeatedly presenting similar content, thereby narrowing opportunities for dialogue across perspectives.[3]

These varied public responses demonstrate the need for a more profound understanding of Qur'anic exegesis. Tafsīr occupies a crucial position in addressing these problems. Classical exegetes primarily understood the Qur'an through linguistic and traditional approaches. Subsequently, modern exegesis introduced more rational and historically grounded paradigms, while contemporary exegesis seeks contextual interpretations, critical, and relevant to present circumstances and challenges.

Polarization calls for a more critical and adaptive approach to Islamic teachings, particularly those concerning unity and communal harmony. It fosters unilateral truth claims and attempts to delegitimize other groups. However, the Islamic intellectual tradition contains rich resources concerning the importance of maintaining unity and respecting differences. One approach capable of responding to this challenge is the double-movement principle in contextual exegesis, which enables the reinterpretation of the Qur'anic message to remain relevant to contemporary social dynamics, including polarization in digital spaces.

In understanding the Qur'an, double movement hermeneutics comprises two principal stages. First, the text is examined in relation to the sociohistorical context of seventh-century Arabian society, including broader conditions such as prevailing customs, political structures, and culture at the time of revelation. This stage seeks to understand why a particular verse was revealed and its social meaning. Second, universal moral values are identified for application across different times and places. Therefore, double movement hermeneutics therefore attends not only to textual aspects but also to historicity and the contextualization process in application.[4]

Historically, verses concerning unity have been widely examined in classical and modern exegesis, including Q. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:10, and Q. al-Anfāl [8]:46. However, most of these studies remain normative and textual, emphasizing theological and moral dimensions without addressing the new social context created by the digital era. Although modern exegesis has begun to adopt thematic and contextual approaches, few studies have connected Qur'anic messages of unity with the real-time, viral, and symbolically charged phenomenon of Muslim polarization on social media. This constitutes the article's central research gap: the limited application of contextual exegesis specifically to verses of unity within contemporary Muslim digital communication.

Previous scholarship can be grouped into four research tendencies. First, studies of digital religion examine the construction of religious authority[5], polarization surrounding religious issues[6], and the role of digital literacy in strengthening

[3]Murniati, "Ruang Publik Dan Wacana Agama: Dinamika Dakwah Di Tengah Polarisasi Sosial," *Khazanah: Journal of Religious and Social Scientific* 1, no. 1 (2025): 31, https://doi.org/10.70742/khazanah.v1i1.260.

[4]Muhammad Arsyad, *Nilai-Nilai Universal QS. al-Mujâdalah [58]: 11: Kajian Hermeneutika Double Movement Fazlur Rahman*, t.t., 115.

[5] Nur Afni Muhammad, "Populisme dan Dinamika Otoritas Keagamaan dalam Islam di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Peurawi: Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021): 127–28, https://doi.org/10.22373/jp.v4i2.10487.

[6] Barzan Faizin, "Polarization of Religious Issues in Indonesia's Social Media Society and Its Impact on Social Conflict," *Journal of Applied Data Sciences* 6, no. 1 (2024): 426, https://doi.org/10.47738/jads.v6i1.447.

moderation.[7] Second, studies of unity and ukhūwah compare interpretations of religious and national solidarity,[8] discuss brotherhood and reconciliation[9], and relate Qur'anic unity to Indonesian social cohesion.[10] Third, research on Qur'anic communication ethics addresses miscommunication through thematic exegesis, and racism through al-Tafsīr al-Munīr.[11] Fourth, contextualist scholarship develops ethical readings informed by historical contexts,[12] connects Double Movement with religious moderation, applies it to interpretive absolutism and disinformation,[13] and critically reconstructs it for digital discourse.[14] These studies establish that contextual interpretation and digital ethics already intersect in several areas of scholarship.

Building on this literature, the present study addresses a specific analytical problem: how commitments to unity can be articulated alongside justice, human dignity, and recognition of difference when evaluating online religious disagreement. It applies Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement to Q. al-Baqarah [2]:143, Q. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, and Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 and 13 through a comparative reading of classical and contemporary exegesis. Its contribution lies in explaining how historical interpretation and moral principles generate criteria for distinguishing substantive criticism from identity-based degradation, including the circulation of decontextualized statements and derogatory labels. The Ade Armando debate and the Prophet's birthday controversy provide illustrative contexts for this normative analysis, without being treated as representative datasets or evidence of the framework's empirical effectiveness.

This article is limited to a conceptual analysis of religious discourse on social media, particularly debates and fragmentation within Islamic discourse that contribute to communal division. This study focuses on how contextual exegesis can offer a renewed reading of verses of unity, treating them not only as normative texts but also as hermeneutical guidance for developing religious ethics in digital spaces. Accordingly, the study does not address every form of Muslim political polarization but concentrates on the epistemological dimension of exegesis and its implications for social media-based religious consciousness.

Against this background, the study addresses three interrelated questions. First, how is Muslim polarization in digital religious discourse explained in the literature and

[7] Pardianto Pardianto dan Abd A'la, "Pengembangan Moderasi Beragama di Era Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi 4.0," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 156, 160, https://doi.org/10.15642/jik.2023.13.2.147-162.

[8] Rifa Tsamrotus Sa'adah dan Rohmatul Maulidiana, "Al-Qur'an and the Unities: The Study of Ahmad Sanusi and Ahmad Hassan's Thoughts in Indonesia," *Tashwirul Afkar* 40, no. 1 (2021): 133–35, https://doi.org/10.51716/ta.v40i1.37.

[9] Moh Faesal, "Konsep ukhuwah dalam perspektif al-Qur'an dan relevansinya dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat: (Kajian Surat Al-Hujurat Ayat 10)," *Jurnal al Irfani Ilmu Al Qur an dan Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1, https://doi.org/10.51700/irfani.v3i1.336.

[10] Tsamrotus Sa'adah dan Maulidiana, "Al-Qur'an and the Unities," 1461–62.

[11] Azharani Filza dkk., "Rasisme di Media Sosial: Studi Tafsir Al-Munir Karangan Wahbah Az-Zuhaili Q.S. Al-Hujurat Ayat 11–13," *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (2024): 141–43, https://doi.org/10.29240/jdk.v9i2.11915.

[12] Abdullah Saeed dan Ali Akbar, "Contextualist Approaches and the Interpretation of the Qur'ān," *Religions* 12, no. 7 (2021): 527, 1–2, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070527.

[13] Akhmad Aidil Fitra dkk., "Wa Lā Taġlū Fī Dīnikum' in Q.S. An-Nisā' (4):171: A Hermeneutic Analysis of Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement in the Context of Religious Moderation in the Post-Truth Era," *FOKUS: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan* 10, no. 2 (2025): 185–87, https://doi.org/10.29240/jf.v10i2.15023.

[14] Ira Bariroh dan Nurul Huda, "The Double Movement Method in the Post-Truth Era: A Critique of Scripturalism and Contextualism," *DAAR EL-KAMIL: Multidisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 1 (2026): 216–17, https://doi.org/10.66931/jmlt.v2.i01.474.

illustrated by the selected controversies? Second, how can Q. al-Baqarah [2]:143, Q. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, and Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 and 13 be interpreted through Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement in relation to their historical contexts and contemporary digital communication? Third, how can the ethical principles derived from these verses inform responses to digital polarization, particularly by distinguishing substantive criticism from identity-based degradation? These questions follow an analytical sequence from the contemporary problem to contextual interpretation and ethical application. The study examines how moderation, unity, human dignity, and respect for difference can guide Muslim communication, with the selected controversies serving as illustrations for a normative and hermeneutical analysis.

This article demonstrates that contextual exegesis is relevant not only as an academic approach to the Qur'anic text but also as an epistemic strategy for bridging differences and cultivating collective Muslim awareness during digital polarization. Therefore, it positions exegesis as a social praxis: a creative, open, and contextual process of understanding revelation to restore the spirit of ukhūwah at the heart of Islamic teaching.

This study employs a qualitative, library-based design supplemented by digital phenomena observation. The primary sources fall into two categories. The first comprises normative data: the verses of unity in the Q. al-Baqarah [2]: 143, Q. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, and Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 and 13, together with their interpretation in classical works such as al-Ṭabarī's Jāmiʿ al-Bayān and contemporary works such as Quraish Shihab's Al-Misbah. The second consists of illustrative documentation of digital polarization, including the debate involving Ade Armando and the controversy surrounding the Prophet's birthday celebration, which serve as empirical contexts for applying DMT. Secondary sources include literature on religion's sociology, digital communication, and Qur'anic hermeneutics.

The digital cases are not examined through systematic or quantitative content analysis. Instead, they function as contextual illustrations that demonstrate the applicability of contextual exegesis to contemporary social problems. This approach follows the tradition of theoretical-conceptual research in tafsīr studies, which prioritizes the depth of hermeneutical analysis over data quantification.

The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis informed by Fazlur Rahman's double movement hermeneutics. In this study, the method is operationalized into three analytical stages: (1) examining the meanings of the selected verses within the historical and sociological context of Arabia at the time of revelation; (2) deriving general moral-social principles concerning unity and moderation from those contextual meanings; and (3) contextualizing these principles as an ethical response to labeling and hate speech in the social media era. The first two stages correspond to Rahman's first movement, and the third represents the second movement, through which general principles are applied to this sociohistorical context. The Qur'anic text is positioned as a constructive guide for critically engaging with digital polarization.[15]

Results and Discussion

General Framework

A. A Portrait of Polarization: Delegitimizing Faith and Labeling

1. Clash between Modern Rationality and Religious Tradition

[15]Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 8th impression, Publications of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies 15 (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 6–8.

Indonesia's digital public sphere has created an information ecosystem that is fundamentally different from conventional communication. Interactions no longer occur face-to-face within a clear social context but through technological mediation that frequently lacks adequate ethical filters. Eickelman and Anderson observed that new media in the Muslim world have structurally transformed patterns of religious authority and practice.[16]

The debate surrounding Ade Armando's remarks on Qur'an memorization offers an illustrative context for examining different interpretations of religious practice. Republika reported that Armando questioned the priority of memorization when digital devices provide immediate access to Qur'anic verses. In response, Cholil Nafis emphasized the spiritual rewards of memorization, its contribution to learning, and its role in preserving the Qur'an's authenticity.[17] This study interprets these reported positions as different ways of evaluating memorization: one foregrounds practical access to information, while the other combines educational benefits with religious commitments. This example supports a conceptual discussion of these orientations without establishing the prevalence of polarization or representing the views of social media users generally.

Max Weber's distinction between instrumentally rational and value-rational action provides a framework for this interpretation. Instrumentally rational actors weigh available means and anticipated consequences against intended ends, whereas value-rational actors follow commitments they consider intrinsically binding, irrespective of practical success.[18] This study reads Armando's emphasis on digital access as an instrumental argument about the means of religious learning. Nafis's defense suggests a value-rational orientation insofar as it treats memorization as a religious commitment whose worth exceeds information retrieval. These interpretations concern the reasons expressed in the reported statements, rather than the speakers' complete motivations. Weber's categories also allow different orientations to coexist within concrete action.[19]

The tendencies of digital communication intensify this tension. Instead of generating a balanced intellectual discourse that considers competing perspectives, social media may reduce complex religious debates to binary oppositions rather than sustaining discussions between competing interpretations. Such simplification encourages reactive responses and narrows opportunities for rational dialogue. Recommendation systems that repeatedly present users with content similar to their previous interactions, thereby limiting exposure to alternative perspectives.[20]

Rather than consistently functioning as a deliberative public sphere, social media may become an arena in which religious issues are contested through identity and

[16]Eickelman, D. F., & Anderson, J. W. (2003). New media *in the Muslim world: The emerging public sphere.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 1–18.

[17] This article contains Armando's statement and Nafis' response used in the first paragraph. See Muhammad Hafil, "Ade Armando Pertanyakan Fungsi Menghafal Alquran, Ini Respons KH Cholil Nafis," dalam *Republika Online*, 4 Februari 2025, https://iqra.republika.co.id/berita/sr5e22430/ade-armando-pertanyakan-fungsi-menghafal-alquran-ini-respons-kh-cholil-nafis.

[18] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, ed. oleh Guenther Roth dan Claus Wittich (University of California Press, 1978), 24–26.

[19] Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 1:26.

[20]M. Amirul Mukhlasin Al Hariri dkk., "Moderasi Beragama: Pelang Dan Tantangan di era digital," *Salimiya: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Keagamaan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2024): 158, https://doi.org/10.58401/salimiya.v5i2.1401.

visibility.[21] Discussions that would ideally be conducted through ethical and scholarly procedures can instead become arenas of competing opinions and group differentiation.[22] Religious identity may consequently function as a public marker through which groups claim legitimacy and distinguish themselves from others. In this process, the rapid circulation of religious content can contribute to the erosion of the sacredly meaning of religion in digital communication.[23]

These dynamics are accompanied by a reconfiguration of religious authority in digital media. In this environment may be shaped not only by formal scholarly credentials but also by visibility, popularity, and follower networks. Felix Siauw's digital preaching illustrates how Instagram and YouTube can expand a preacher's public reach and contribute to changes in the construction of religious authority. Therefore, a public figure with a large following may therefore influence religious discourse widely, although digital visibility should not automatically be equated with scholarly authority.[24]

2. Identity Polarization and Labeling Practices

The ideological dimension of religious identity is also visible in debates over the permissibility of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet. A study of Muslim communities in Lombok describes tensions between Salafi-Wahhabi groups and traditionalist communities, particularly over the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, which some reformist actors reject as bidʿah.[25] In digital religious polemics, differences in interpretation may subsequently shift from a jurisprudential disagreement into mutual accusations, name-calling, and derogatory labeling. Thus, term such as "Wahhabi," "traditionalist," or "people of bidʿah" can function not only as descriptions of religious positions but also as tools for drawing boundaries between in-groups and out-groups.[26]

Such derogatory labeling conflicts with the Qur'anic ukhuwah ethic, which emphasizes solidarity and the restoration of relations among believers.[27] Instead of seeking common ground, each group may define itself through opposition to the other and seek to delegitimize its rival. Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory explains this process through in-group/out-group comparison: by favoring their in-group and

[21]Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. oleh Thomas Burger dan Frederick Lawrence, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (MIT Press, 1989), 27–31, https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262081801/the-structural-transformation-of-the-public-sphere/.

[22]Habermas, A. (1993). The *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 153–55.

[23]Suryadi, I., & Anwar, "Realitas Virtual dan Polarisasi Agama: Menelaah Pengaruh Media Sosial di Indonesia," *Al-Balagh: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023): 42.

[24] Nur Afni Muhammad, "Populisme dan Dinamika Otoritas Keagamaan dalam Islam di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Peurawi: Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021): 125–26, https://doi.org/10.22373/jp.v4i2.10487.

[25]Taufiq, M., & Said, "Qur'anic Interpretation among Sasak Muslims across communities, theologies, and Ideological Conflicts," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 26, no. 2 (2025): 401–2, https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.6287.

[26]S. Nasihin, "Polarisasi Spiritualitas Ummat Islam di Era Pandemi Covid-19," *AS-SABIQUN* 3, no. 1 (2021): 102–3, https://doi.org/10.36088/assabiqun.v3i1.1327.

[27]Khaerul Asfar Khaerul Asfar Khaerul Asfar, "Konsep Ukhuwah Perspektif Al-Qur'an; Relevansinya Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Al-Wajid: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Quran Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 2 (2021): 224, https://doi.org/10.30863/alwajid.v1i2.1258.

differentiating it from relevant out-groups.[28] The speed and reach of online media can amplify the circulation of such group-based contestation.[29] The relative anonymity, invisibility, and reduced interpersonal cues of online interaction may further weaken the restraints on aggressive expression.[30] Consequently, labeling practices on social media should be understood not only as individual insults but also as social processes shaped by group identification and digital platforms' communicative affordances.

B. Reconstructing the Exegesis of Unity Verses

As the primary source of Islamic teaching, the Qur'an gives considerable attention to Muslim unity. Numerous verses affirm that unity is not merely a social concern but also a part of the religious mission embedded in the Muslim identity. This is especially relevant today, when polarization is increasingly visible on social media and produces division, exclusive truth claims, and avoidable intergroup conflict. Therefore, examining verses of unity through classical and modern exegesis is therefore essential for establishing a Qur'anic foundation from which to address contemporary challenges. These verses include the QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 143, QS. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, and QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 and 13.

1. QS. al-Baqarah [2]:143: Wasaṭiyyah as a Balancing Principle

In responding to extremism, the concept of wasaṭiyyah offers a balancing solution. God states:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّسَطًا لِّتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَاۤءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِيْ كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَآ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَّتَّبِعُ الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبُ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِ ۗ وَاِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيْرَةً اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيْعَ اِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

Thus, we have made you a middle community so that you may bear witness over humanity and the Messenger may bear witness over you. We assigned your former direction of prayer only to distinguish those who would remain faithful to the Messenger from those who would lose faith. It was certainly difficult, except for those rightly guided by God. God would never discount your faith. Surely, God is Ever Gracious and Most Merciful to humanity.

The expression *ummatan wasaṭan* in Q. al-Baqarah [2]:143 links the community's moral standing to its responsibility to bear witness. Al-Ṭabarī associates *wasaṭ* with excellence, justice, and religious moderation, and connects the community's testimony to the prophets' delivery of revelation.[31] Al-Rāzī shares this ethical emphasis and explains its rationale: witnesses must possess justice, while just judgment requires

[28]Henri Tajfel dan John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," dalam *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2 ed., ed. oleh Stephen Worchel dan William G. Austin (Nelson-Hall, 1986), 13–14.

[29]Lubis, M. R., & Abdullah, "Transformasi Media Islam di Era Digital: Studi Perkembangan Media Online Islam Indonesia Pasca Reformasi," *Citizen: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia* 5, no. 1 (2025): 265–66.

[30] John Suler, "The Online Disinhibition Effect," *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 7, no. 3 (2004): 321–26, https://doi.org/10.1089/1094931041291295.

[31] Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān* (Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1423), 3:141–142, 145–146.

avoiding partiality toward either disputing party.[32] Their interpretations therefore converge on the relationship between moral integrity and credible testimony. The difference lies in emphasis: al-Ṭabarī develops the interpretation through linguistic explanation and transmitted reports, while al-Rāzī elaborates the reasoning connecting moderation, impartiality, and testimony. Read together, these perspectives provide a basis for understanding *wasaṭiyyah* as a responsibility that requires fair judgment and ethical conduct.

In *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, M. Quraish Shihab similarly connects the middle position with fairness and exemplary conduct, explaining that Muslims can serve as a model for others when they follow the Prophet's guidance.[33] His emphasis on exemplary conduct gives practical social expression to the relationship between justice and testimony identified in the classical interpretations. Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement provides a method for contextualizing this ethical principle through historical understanding, the formulation of general moral principles, and their application to contemporary circumstances.[34] In this study, the movement toward digital discourse translates impartiality into concrete responsibilities: evaluating arguments fairly, avoiding double standards based on group affiliation, and distinguishing criticism of ideas from the degradation of religious identities. These responsibilities represent the study's contextual application of the verse to Muslim communication on social media. Contextualizing this verse is highly relevant to contemporary challenges, particularly extremism and digital polarization. Moderation, as the principle of ummatan wasaṭhan, can ground constructive dialog and conflict resolution through a balanced and inclusive understanding. Thus, the interpretation of this verse thus evolves from personal justice and balance into a principle of sociopolitical moderation responsive to the needs of modern Muslims.[35]

Wasaṭ in this verse signifies a just and balanced middle position that inclines neither toward the extreme right (radicalism) nor the extreme left (excessive liberalism). Moderation does not mean lacking principles; it requires the courage to draw both extremes toward the center for justice and the common good. Ummatan wasaṭan therefore denotes a just and moderate community capable of maintaining balance between opposing extremes.[36] In digital conflict, wasaṭiyyah requires Muslims to avoid both glorifying modern rationality at the expense of tradition and romanticizing tradition while rejecting the reality of change. Instead, it enables their integration: technology serves as an instrument, while tradition remains a foundation of spirituality and religious identity.

2. QS. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103: Unity and Taʿāruf as a social framework

In addition to defining moderation as a central communal characteristic, the Qur'an affirms diversity as inevitable. In Q. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103, God commands:

[32] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)* (Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1420), 4:84.

[33] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, 5 ed. (Lentera Hati, 2005), 1:347–48.

[34] Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 5–7.

[35]Haif, R. M. M. (2024). *Transformasi Intelektual dan Kultural: Perkembangan Islam Pasca Serangan Mongol*, 1 Juli 2024, 152, https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.12607380.

[36]M. Amirul Mukhlasin Al Hariri dkk., "Moderasi Beragama: Pelang Dan Tantangan di era digital," *Salimiya: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Keagamaan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2024): 151–58, https://doi.org/10.58401/salimiya.v5i2.1401.

وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا وَّلَا تَفَرَّقُوْا ۠ وَاذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ كُنْتُمْ اَعْدَاۤءً فَاَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهٖٓ اِخْوَانًا ۚ وَكُنْتُمْ عَلٰى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَاَنْقَذَكُمْ مِّنْهَا ۗ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ۝١٠٣

Hold firmly to the rope of God and do not be divided. Remember God's favor upon you when you were enemies. Then, He united your hearts, so that by His grace you became brothers. You were on the brink of a fiery pit, and He saved you from it. This is how God makes His revelations clear to you so that you may be guided in the right way.

The linguistic analysis of QS. Āli ʿImrān [3]:103 centres on the command وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا (*waʿtaṣimū bi-ḥabli Allāhi jamīʿan wa-lā tafarraqū*). Ibn Fāris associates the root ʿ-ṣ-m in *iʿtaṣimū* with holding, protection, and persistent attachment.[37] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains that *ḥabl* denotes a rope and extends metaphorically to connection, a means of reaching something, and a covenant.[38] For *tafarraqū*, Ibn Fāris identifies distinction and separation as the core meanings of f-r-q.[39] Within the verse, the collective command to hold fast and the prohibition against division frame unity as a shared commitment to a divine bond. The verse's ethical direction thus emerges from its lexical meanings, grammatical structure, and communal context.

Classical exegesis clarifies the social implications of this wording. Al-Ṭabarī interprets the command as adherence to God's religion and covenant through mutual affection, agreement upon the truth, and obedience to divine instruction.[40] Al-Qurṭubī emphasizes brotherhood and the avoidance of estrangement, while explicitly distinguishing destructive division from differences in subsidiary legal matters arising through *ijtihād*.[41] Their interpretations converge on shared religious commitment; al-Qurṭubī further clarifies that such commitment can accommodate juristic disagreement. On this basis, this study understands *ukhūwah Islāmiyyah* as solidarity that sustains principled disagreement. Applied to digital communication, this reading supports criticism directed at arguments and discourages derogatory labeling that turns disagreement into hostility. This digital application constitutes the study's contextual extension of the exegetical discussion.

Modern exegesis contextually analyses this verse contextually in order to relate its meaning to the present's dynamic needs. In Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab explains that the prohibition wa-lā tafarraqū affirms the importance of preserving Muslim unity and rejecting all forms of division. The verse not only prohibits differences that culminate in conflict but also commands Muslims to collectively hold firmly to God's teachings so that unity becomes a source of strength and prevents social and spiritual harm. Historically, it recalls how division plunged communities into hostility before Islam

[37] Aḥmad ibn Fāris, *Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*, ed. oleh ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 4:331.

[38] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qurʾān*, 1st ed., ed. oleh Ṣafwān ʿAdnān al-Dāwūdī (Dār al-Qalam & al-Dār al-Shāmiyyah, 1412), 217.

[39] Fāris, *Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*, 4:493.

[40] Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, vol. 5, ed. oleh ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Dār Hijr, 2001), 643.

[41] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān* (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), 4:159.

rescued them and bound them through ukhūwah. This contextualization is particularly relevant to social media, which often triggers division, hoaxes, and digital social fragmentation.[42]Therefore, the instruction to "hold firmly to the rope of God and do not be divided" can therefore be understood as a moral appeal to preserve unity and prevent fragmentation in digital life. Internalizing this value can help Muslims and the wider society rebuild social harmony fractured by online polarization.[43] The verse is, consequently, not only a historical basis for unity in traditional contexts but also an important guide for responding to digital communication technology's contemporary pluralism and social fragmentation arising from digital communication technology.

3. QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11: An Ethics against Labeling

In confronting cyberbullying and negative labeling in digital spaces, Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 provides a firm ethical foundation:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاۤءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاۤءٍ عَسٰٓى
اَنْ يَّكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّۚ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوْا بِالْاَلْقَابِۗ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ الْفُسُوْقُ بَعْدَ الْاِيْمَانِۚ
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَاُولٰۤىِٕكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾

O believers! Let no men ridicule other men, for they may be better than them, nor let women ridicule other women, for they may be better than them. Do not defame one another or use offensive nicknames. How evil is it to act rebelliously after having faith? Those who do not repent are the wrongdoers (Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11).

QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 establishes a Qur'anic ethical foundation for protecting human dignity in interpersonal and digital communication. Its prohibitions against ridicule, defamation, and offensive nicknames show that verbal harm is not only a violation of social etiquette but also conduct that is incompatible with the moral discipline required by faith. This principle is particularly relevant in social media, where messages' rapid circulation of messages can intensify misunderstanding, provocation, and public stigmatization.[44] Therefore, calling fellow Muslims by derogatory labels therefore does more than express disagreement; it can delegitimize their identity and deepen hostility between groups. A contextual reading of the verse requires its moral objective to prevent humiliation, preserve dignity, and maintain social cohesion to be applied to contemporary forms of communication.[45] Refraining

[42]M. Quraish Shihab, Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an, Lentera Hati, 2002, Jilid 2, hlm. 158.

[43]Hani NurWulan dkk., "Aktualisasi Nilai-Nilai Persatuan Menurut Qs. Ali-Imran Ayat 103 Dalam Konteks Keindonesiaan," *At-Thullab : Jurnal Mahasiswa Studi Islam* 6, no. 1 (2024): 149, https://doi.org/10.20885/tullab.vol6.iss1.art1.

[44]UlvahUlvah Nur'aeni, "Kontekstualisasi Miskomunikasi dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi atas Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama RI)," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 7, no. 1 (2021): 1–2, 20–23, https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v7i1.227.

[45]Rahmi Rahmi dan Novizal Wendry, "Double Movements Dalaman Tafsir Al-Mishbah," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al- Qur'an dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2019): 134–35, 137–38, https://doi.org/10.15575/al-bayan.v4i2.7478.

from insults, stigmatizing labels, and harmful narratives is not passive silence but an active form of obedience to Qur'anic ethics. QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 functions as an ethical brake on digital polarization and provides a normative basis for responsible Muslim communication.

Existing empirical evidence indicates that religious polarization in digital spaces is associated with stigmatizing labels and hostile speech. In a mixed-method study of Indonesian Twitter, Faizin et al. analyzed 23,433 tweets collected between July 21, 2023 and October 21 2023. The most frequent religious labels included #salafi (6,596 tweets; 31.274%), #wahabi (4,952 tweets; 23.479%), and #intoleransi (2,300 tweets; 10.905%). In the same study, 64.5% of the 200 respondents agreed that religious issues discussed on Twitter could trigger social conflict. During the 2024 election campaign, a separate monitoring project found that hate speech appeared most frequently on Twitter (51.2%) and Facebook (45.15%), while Instagram accounted for 3.34% of the monitored content.[46] These figures do not prove that every online conflict begins with labeling; however, they demonstrate that religious classification and hostile speech are observable features of Indonesian digital discourse. From a Qur'anic ethical perspective, the problem is not merely a failure of social etiquette. QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 prohibits mockery, defamation, and offensive nicknames and characterizes such conduct as "the evil name of *fusūq* after faith." Al-Ṭabarī interprets *tanābuz bi-l-alqāb* as addressing another person with a name or attribute that they dislike; he further explains that siqn are those who mock, defame, or label fellow believers after faith are described as *fāsiqūn*.[47] Therefore, negative labelling has both a social and a religious dimension: it damages communal relations while contradicting believers moral discipline expected of believers. Consequently, online freedom of expression cannot consequently be separated from moral responsibility, particularly when religious labels are used to delegitimize opponents or intensify group hostility.

4. QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13: Pluralism and Diversity Recognition

The unity emphasized by the Qur'an does not require uniformity but recognizes diversity. Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13 affirms this principle by explaining that humanity was created as nations and tribes so that people might know one another (taʿāruf):

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقۡنَٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٖ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلۡنَٰكُمۡ شُعُوبٗا وَقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوٓاْۚ إِنَّ أَكۡرَمَكُمۡ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتۡقَىٰكُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٞ ١٣

Translation:
O humanity! We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the most noble of you before God is the most righteous among you. God is truly All-Knowing and All-Aware.

QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13 presents human diversity as a divinely established basis for taʿāruf rather than a justification for hierarchy. Al-Ṭabarī interprets shuʿūb and qabāʾil as different levels of genealogy through which people can identify one another's near

[46]Data & Democracy Research Hub dan Alliance of Independent Journalists Indonesia, "Rising levels of hate speech on social media during the 2024 election campaign," Monash University Indonesia, 12 Februari 2024, https://www.monash.edu/indonesia/news/rising-levels-of-hate-speech-on-social-media-during-the-2024-election-campaign.

[47]Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, vol. 21, ed. oleh ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Dār Hijr, 2001), 366–73.

and distant relations. In his reading, taʿāruf concerns social identification, not the establishment of moral superiority; therefore, the verse redirects the criterion of honor from ancestry to taqwā.[48] Al-Qurṭubī develops this interpretation by explaining that genealogical distinctions enable taʿāruf and tawāṣul, or mutual recognition and social connection, while rejecting pride in lineage, wealth, and social status.[49] A modern elaboration appears in Tafsir al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab. He reads the address "O humankind" as establishing a universal principle of human relations, arguing that all people possess equal human dignity, and interprets taʿāruf as a reciprocal process that opens opportunities for learning, cooperation, mutual benefit, and social peace.[50] Thus, the modern interpretation does not abandon the classical meaning but develops it from genealogical recognition into an active and egalitarian social ethic.

The Double Movement makes this transition explicit. In the first movement, the verse is read against a social order in which lineage, tribal affiliation, and inherited status could be used to construct a hierarchy. The Qur'anic response acknowledges human differentiation but denies that such differences determine moral worth. This historical meaning yields a universal moral principle: difference should facilitate reciprocal recognition, communication, and cooperation rather than exclusion or domination.[51] Applied to digital society, this principle addresses a structural problem rather than merely an individual failure of tolerance. Networked platforms place diverse communities in the same communicative space, yet rapid circulation, fragmented contexts, identity-based clustering, and unequal visibility can turn differences into oppositional "us" and "them" categories. Evidence from Indonesian Twitter shows that religious issues circulate through interconnected discussion networks, while 64.5 percent of surveyed respondents believed that religious issues could trigger social conflict.[52] Taʿāruf therefore becomes an operational ethic: users should accurately represent other groups accurately, seek context before judging, engage in reciprocal dialogue, and refuse to reduce people to sectarian, ethnic, or ideological labels.

Analysis

A. Contextual Exegesis Paradigm as a Response to Polarization

Contextual exegesis offers a middle path for understanding the Qur'an because it relates it to continually changing social, cultural, and historical realities. Fazlur Rahman emphasizes the double movement: understanding the Qur'anic text in depth, extracting universal principles, and applying them to contemporary conditions. Quraish Shihab stresses the relevance of exegesis to Indonesia's plural society, while Arkoun opens a space for progressive, inclusive, and socially responsive interpretation.

The principal difference between traditional and contextual exegesis lies in their paradigms and approaches. Traditional exegesis preserves inherited classical values through conventional and literal interpretive methods, emphasizing religious understanding's stability. In contrast, contextual exegesis, responds to modern challenges by emphasizing the adaptability and relevance of religious teachings within changing social, cultural, and political contexts. It reads scripture dynamically and

[48]Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, vol. 22, ed. oleh ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Dār Hijr, 2001), 309–11.

[49]Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 16, ed. oleh Aḥmad al-Bardūnī dan Ibrāhīm Aṭfayyish (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), 342.

[50]M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 2002), 13:260–62.

[51]Rahman, A., *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 5–8.

[52]Faizin, A. (1994). "Polarization of Religious Issues in Indonesia's Social Media Society and Its Impact on Social Conflict." Journal of Social Studies, 430," 438.

attends to historical and social circumstances, producing richer and more applicable insights. This approach is important for addressing pluralisms, social justices, and human rights while encouraging dialogue between tradition and modernity toward relevant and inclusive solutions.[53]

Unlike rigid and exclusive, contextual exegesis enables a more inclusive understanding that can mitigate exclusive truth claims and strengthen intergroup dialogue. Social media offers a normative and hermeneutical framework for addressing polarization by moving verses of unity and moderation beyond normative reading toward practices that encourage constructive dialog and cooperation across groups.

In confronting modernity, particularly the growing polarization of religious discourse in digital spaces, literal-textual exegesis is no longer sufficient to explain the complexity of contemporary Muslim social reality. Therefore, Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement theory therefore becomes relevant as a methodological framework that is oriented toward the text while remaining sensitive to social dynamics and historical change.54

Fazlur Rahman begins with the premise that the Qur'an was not revealed in a historical vacuum. Revelation emerged as a moral and ethical response to the concrete problems confronting seventh-century Arabian society. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an therefore requires more than a literal reading; it demands a dialectical process involving the text, its historical context, and contemporary social reality. The double movement framework offers two inseparable intellectual movements: from the present to the time of revelation and, conversely, from the past to the present.[55]

1. The First Movement: From the Present to the Revelation Context

The first movement retraces the original revelation context. This study is not intended to romanticize history or express nostalgia for Islam's past but to uncover the moral ideal underlying a Qur'anic provision or message. Rahman emphasizes that the Qur'an frequently responds to highly specific problems while conveying universal moral values. The process involves two complementary stages of analysis:

a. Analysis of the Sociohistorical Context (Micro and Macro):

In the first stage, interpreters must understand both the macro and microconditions of Arabian society when revelation occurred. The macrocontext encompasses the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions structuring society, whereas the microcontext concerns the specific event or case underlying a verse's revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*).[56]

The background of Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13 provides an illustrative example. According to reports concerning its occasion of revelation, the verse was revealed when members of Banū Tamīm mocked Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ because of his skin color as he called the prayer from the Kaʿbah after the conquest of Mecca. The event demonstrates that although Islam introduced a message of divine unity and brotherhood, remnants of racist and exclusionary culture remained deeply rooted in social consciousness.

[53]Zahra, R. d. (2025). *Studi Komparatif Tafsir Tekstual dan Tafsir Kontekstual dalam Pemahaman Ayat-Ayat Sosial di Era Modern*, 6, no. 1 (2025): 53.

[54]Ulya, "Hermeneutetika Doppelmovement Fazlur Rahman: Menuju Penetapan Hukum Bervisi Etis," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam* 12, no. 2 (2011): 111–27, https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v0i0.2385.

[55]Priyantika Lesyaina Az Zahra Dkk., *Teori Double Movement Pada Penafsiran Fazlurrahman*, no. 10 (2024).

[56]Muhammad Umair dan Hasani Ahmad Said. "Fazlur Rahman dan Teori Double Movement: Definisi dan Aplikasi." *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2023): 71–81, https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v2i1.26.

QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13 intervened in this context as a theological and social correction. It affirms that all humans share the same origin and that ethnic and national differences are not grounds for degradation but a means of taʿāruf an active and equal process of mutual recognition. The moral ideals extracted from this context are human equality, social inclusivity, and the rejection of every claim to identity-based superiority. Islam does not eliminate difference, but orders how humans understand and manage it.[57]

b. Generalizing universal moral values

The second stage of the first movement generalizes the values. After understanding the historical and social context, interpreters move beyond the answer specific to a particular case and derive a universal moral principle that is applicable across time and space.[58]

From Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13, human equality and social inclusivity are the universal values derived. Differences in ethnicity, nation, and social identity are not grounds for degradation but avenues for ta'āruf or mutual recognition. Human nobility is determined not by social identity but by moral quality and piety. This principle constitutes the moral ideal and ethical foundation for applying the verse in broader contexts.[59]

2. The Second Movement: From the Universal Moral Message to the Digital Age

The second movement incorporates the moral ideal made from the historical context into contemporary social reality. This stage is crucial because the challenges Muslims now confront differ structurally from those of seventh-century society, particularly due to digital technology and social media.[60] The second movement in this study focuses on digital polarization, including the delegitimation of faith, cyberbullying, and labeling within online religious discourse.[61]

a. The Ade Armando Debate as an Illustrative Case

The debate concerning Ade Armando's remarks on Qur'an memorization provides an illustrative context for examining religious disagreement in the digital era. This discussion draws on the reported positions introduced earlier, without treating them as representative of Muslim social-media users.[62] Following Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement, this study applies the principles of justice, unity, and human dignity

[57]Siti Fahimah, "Al-Quran dan Semantik Toshihiko Izutsu," *Jurnal Al-Fanar* 3, no. 2 (2020): 113–32, https://doi.org/10.33511/alfanar.v3n2.113-132.

[58]Umair dan Said. 2023. "Fazlur Rahman dan Teori Double Movement," 2023.

[59]Sugiarto, M. S., & Sugiarto, Sumarlin, "Penafsiran QS. Al-Hujurat [49] Ayat 13 Tentang Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Al-Qur'an Menurut Quraish Shihab dan Sayyid Quthb: Studi Komparatif Atas Tafsir al-Mishbah dan Tafsir Fi Zhilalal-Qur'an," *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran dan Tafsir* 4, no. 1 (2021): 12–28, https://doi.org/10.58518/alfurqon.v4i1.634.

[60]Nadhila Mastura dkk., "Metode Double Movement sebagai Inovasi Fazlur Rahman dalam Pembaharuan Pendidikan Islam," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 3 (2024): 4011–19, https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i3.1303.

[61]Nur Rahmah Ramadhani dkk., "Islam Sebagai Pilar Etika Sosial: Telaah Normatif Dan Empiris Di Era Digital," *Prosiding Kajian Islam Dan Integrasi Ilmu Di Era Society (KIIIES) 5.0* 4, no. 1 (2025): 583–87.

[62] Muhammad Hafil, "Ade Armando Pertanyakan Fungsi Menghafal Alquran, Ini Respons KH Cholil Nafis," dalam *Republika Online*, 4 Februari 2025, https://iqra.republika.co.id/berita/sr5e22430/ade-armando-pertanyakan-fungsi-menghafal-alquran-ini-respons-kh-cholil-nafis.

developed in the preceding exegesis to this contemporary disagreement.[63] The analysis asks how arguments about memorization and digital access can address the educational and spiritual purposes of Qur'anic learning while preserving mutual respect. Its focus is the ethical distinction between assessing an argument and discrediting the religious standing of the person expressing it.

In the early Islamic oral context, memorization can be understood as a central means of preserving and transmitting Qur'anic revelation. However, the historically specific medium should be distinguished from the broader moral objective: maintaining the authenticity of revelation and internalizing its guidance in Muslim life. Digital media create a new communicative environment in which Qur'anic materials can be accessed, circulated, and discussed beyond face-to-face instruction.[64] This does not mean that technology replaces memorization or reproduces its spiritual and embodied dimensions. Rather, the ethical question is whether digital tools assist or weaken the process through which Muslims engage with revelation. Therefore, a contextual reading therefore does not place technology and tradition. It distinguishes between the medium and the moral end: memorization remains a spiritual and embodied practice that can cultivate an inner relationship with revelation, while digital tools may facilitate access, repetition, and learning. Because this case is illustrative, this claim should be understood as a normative possibility and not as proof that digital devices are equally effective or that online audiences generally accept this complementarity. Instead, the case shows how Double Movement can redirect the debate from a choice between "tradition" and "technology" toward an evaluation of whether each medium serves the preservation, understanding, and ethical enactment of Qur'anic guidance.

The ethical implication concerns the manner in which the disagreement is conducted. The value of ukhuwah requires participants to distinguish criticism of an idea or practice from the delegitimization of the person who holds it. Accordingly, differing judgments about memorization and technology should not automatically become accusations of ignorance, impiety, or betrayal of tradition. A more ethically mature digital discourse that preserves the dignity of interlocutors, recognizes the spiritual significance of religious practices, and remains open to evidence and contextual reasoning. This normative conclusion does not describe what all netizens actually do; rather, it identifies the ethical standard by which online religious disagreement can be assessed.[65]

b. The Prophet's Birthday Controversy as an Illustration of the Digital Ethics of *Ikhtilāf*

The controversy surrounding the Prophet's birthday serves as a conceptual illustration of how Qur'anic ethics can inform the management of ikhtilāf online. Terms such as "Wahhabi" and "people of bidʿah" illustrate potential stigmatization when used to humiliate interlocutors; their inclusion does not imply findings from a systematically collected digital corpus. Al-Ṭabarī's interpretation of Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 condemns ridicule, disparagement, and offensive naming.[66] Building on the preceding contextual interpretation, this study follows Rahman's Double Movement by deriving a general principle of protecting dignity and considering its implications for digital

[63] Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 5–7.

[64]Suryadi dan Anwar, "Realitas Virtual dan Polarisasi Agama: Menelaah Pengaruh Media Sosial di Indonesia," 2023, 41–56.

[65]Dini Febriyanti dkk., "Makna Ukhuwah dalam Al-Qur'an: Studi Komparatif antara Tafsir Ibnu Katsir dan Tafsir Al-Munir," *Adh Dhiya | Journal of The Quran and Tafseer Studies* 1, no. 2 (2024): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.53038/adhy.v1i2.113.

[66] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, 21:373.

disagreement.[67] The ethical criterion concerns whether participants engage with an argument's substance or use religious labels to undermine another person's dignity.

The original ethical principle concerns the protection of personal dignity from ridicule, disparaging speech, and offensive naming. By analogy, this principle can be applied to disputes over the permissibility of celebrating the Prophet's birthday. Differences among legal schools and theological orientations may constitute legitimate *ikhtilāf*, but they do not by themselves justify attacking a person's moral standing or religious identity. Therefore, a contextual reading therefore distinguishes between criticizing and condemning an argument. The objective is not to eliminate disagreement but to prevent it from becoming a mechanism of humiliation, exclusion, or communal fragmentation. This formulation connects the Qur'anic principle to digital ethics without claiming that all online participants behave according to it.[68]

Therefore, the ethical implication is therefore normative rather than descriptive. Digital religious dialogue should provide space for clarification, respectful disagreement, and recognition of the spiritual concerns that underlie different positions. Users should be encouraged to criticize arguments without reducing their interlocutors to sectarian labels or impiety accusations. Existing contextual studies have connected Qur'anic communication ethics with contemporary miscommunication, while literature-based exegesis has applied QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11–13 to the problem of insult and stigmatization in social media.[69] However, neither studyprovides a dataset for measuring the prevalence of labeling in debates over the Prophet's birthday. Such a claim would require a separate empirical study involving a defined platform, time period, digital corpus, sampling procedure, and content analysis. Therefore, this discussion uses this controversy only to demonstrate how QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 can provide a normative framework for managing *ikhtilāf* online.

B. Practical Implications: Developing Qur'an-Based Digital Ethics

1. Transforming the Digital Public Sphere: From a Battlefield to a Dialogical Space

Contextual exegesis practical contribution of contextual exegesis lies in translating Qur'anic moral principles into guidance for contemporary communication. The expansion of press freedom and digital technology enabled Islamic online media to become an important channel for disseminating information, religious knowledge, and public discourse. This transformation has also generated challenges, including polarized opinions and misinformation circulation.[70] Social-media dynamics may further foster forms of digital segregation in which users tend to interact within groups that share similar religious interpretations, thereby intensifying polarization and reducing intergroup tolerance.[71] The argument here is normative and interpretive; it does not claim that every platform or user produces the same outcome.

Therefore, a paradigm shift is therefore needed: digital communication should

[67]Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 6–7.

[68]Nur'aeni, "Kontekstualisasi Miskomunikasi dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi atas Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama RI)," 1–26.

[69]Azharani Filza dkk., "Rasisme di Media Sosial: Studi Tafsir Al-Munir Karangan Wahbah Az-Zuhaili Q.S. Al-Hujurat Ayat 11–13," *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 9, no. 2 (2024): 141–53, https://doi.org/10.29240/jdk.v9i2.11915.

[70]Lubis dan Abdullah, "Transformasi Media Islam di Era Digital: Studi Perkembangan Media Online Islam Indonesia Pasca Reformasi," 264–66.

[71]Enjang, D. S., "Dampak Media Sosial Terhadap Identitas Keagamaan Muslim pada Abad ke-21: Perspektif Sosial dan Budaya," *Al-Afkar: Journal for Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2025): 1604–5, https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i1.1996.

move from strategic interactions oriented toward defeating opponents or winning group contests to an inclusive and dialogical mode of engagement.[72] A contextual approach requires the translation of Qur'anic values into principles that can be practiced in contemporary social life, rather than leaving them at the level of abstract interpretation.[73] Within this framework, digital daʿwah should be contextual, reflective, and attentive to human dignity, rather than reproducing exclusive narratives that intensify social division.

2. Creating an Islamic Digital Ethics Framework

The study also points to an Islamic digital ethics framework that translates Qur'anic values into practical habits of information use, speech, and disagreement. The following principles are presented as normative implications of the contextual reading developed in this study.

a. The check-and-recheck principle (*Tabayyun*). In an environment in which unverified information can provoke conflict, QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:6 establishes tabayyun as a central ethical requirement. The verse requires recipients to clarify important reports before acting on or circulating them, thereby reducing the risk of unjustly harming individuals or groups. Applied to digital communication, users should verify the information's source, content, and context of information before forwarding it.[74]
b. Principle of Self-Restraint QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11 prohibits ridicule (yaskhar), mutual disparagement (lamz), and offensive nicknames (*tanābazū bi-l-alqāb*). This principle calls users to avoid labels that reduce interlocutors to accusations of impiety, deviance, or moral inferiority. Refraining from such labels protects human dignity and can help prevent verbal abuse and cyberbullying.[75]
c. The Principle of Moderation (*Wasaṭiyyah*). QS. al-Baqarah [2]:143 presents the Muslim community as an ummatan wasaṭan, which classical exegesis associates with justice, balance, and moral excellence.[76] In digital disagreements, moderation means avoiding both rigid extremism and unrestricted liberalism that dismisses foundational religious commitments. It also requires intellectual openness, respect for disagreement, and digital literacy so that Muslims can collaborate without abandoning the faith's ethical integrity.[77]

Therefore, Qur'anic exegesis should therefore not remain confined to abstract academic discussion. Its values should inform concrete practices of writing,

[72]Murniati, "Ruang Publik dan Wacana Agama: Dinamika Dakwah di Tengah Polarisasi Sosial," *Khazanah: Journal of Religious and Social Scientific* 1, no. 1 (2025): 26, https://doi.org/10.70742/khazanah.v1i1.260.

[73]Siti Fahimah, "Al-Qur'an dan Semantik Toshihiko Izutsu: Pandangan dan Aplikasi dalam Pemahaman Konsep Maqam," *Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2020): 114–115, 120–121, https://doi.org/10.33511/alfanar.v3n2.113-132.

[74]Nur'aeni, "Kontekstualisasi Miskomunikasi dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi atas Tafsir Al-Qur'an Tematik Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama RI)," 21–23.

[75]Patonah dkk., "Implikasi Pendidikan dari Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat Ayat 11–12 tentang Upaya Pencegahan Perilaku Bullying," *Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2022): 796–797, https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsied.v2i2.4608.

[76] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān fī Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān*, 3:142; al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*, 4:84.

[77]Pardianto dan Abd A'la, "Pengembangan Moderasi Beragama di Era Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi 4.0," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 156–61, https://doi.org/10.15642/jik.2023.13.2.147-162.

commenting, sharing, and responding to disagreement online. The Qur'an is approached here as a living source of moral guidance whose principles can help Muslim users cultivate more respectful, inclusive, and socially responsible digital interaction. The proposed framework is normative and further empirical research on specific platforms, users, and forms of online interaction.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that polarization in online religious discourse is caused not simply by theological disagreement but more significantly by failures to ethically and contextually. The rapid, fragmented, and algorithm-driven nature of social media frequently reduces religious discourse to mutual delegitimation of faith, identity labeling, and symbolic harassment that depart from foundational Qur'anic values.

The study affirms that the central problem lies not in the religious practices themselves, but in how Muslims understand, communicate, and defend their respective claims to truth in the digital public sphere. Therefore, Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement theory is therefore relevant as a contextual exegetical paradigm capable of connecting the moral message of the Qur'an with contemporary social reality.

The first movement allows the verses to be interpreted by tracing their sociohistorical context, thereby preventing an ahistorical literal reading. This process shows that verses of unity, particularly Q. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:11–13, convey moral ideals of human equality, social inclusivity, and the prohibition against degrading others' identities. These values emerged in response to a society fragmented by tribal fanaticism and social hierarchy.

The second movement directs these universal moral values toward the digital context. The conflict between modern rationality and religious tradition rejects an extreme dichotomy between technologies and spiritual practices. Digital technology is understood as a means of accelerating religious literacy, while traditions such as the memorization of the Qur'an remain media for internalizing revelatory values. Both are situated complementarily within a Qur'anic ethical framework that emphasizes brotherhood and solidarity.

In the controversy over the Prophet's birthday, the Double Movement highlights the importance of Qur'an-based communication ethics as a moral brake on labeling and name-calling on social media. Through digital stigmatization, the Prophetic-era prohibition against insulting lineage and identity is transformed into a prohibition against character assassination through digital stigmatization. Thus, the difference in opinion (ikhtilāf) is treated not as a threat but as part of religious dynamics that must be managed dialogically and inclusively.

Overall, this study concludes that contextual exegesis through the double movement theory can preserve the relevance of revelation during digitalization without compromising the sacred character of the Qur'an. It functions not only as an interpretive method but also as an ethical paradigm for building a Qur'anic digital society: technologically literate, open to difference, and committed to every person's honor and dignity of every person.

Future research should combine Fazlur Rahman's Double Movement theory with empirical approaches such as digital discourse analysis or virtual ethnography to more concretely map religious polarization on social media. Cross-platform research is also needed to examine how algorithms and digital cultures shape religious communication. Practically, Qur'anic ethical principles such as taʿāruf, respect for human dignity, and the management of ikhtilāf should ground digital daʿwah and religious interaction so that social media can function as an inclusive and civilized dialogical space.

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