



The Social Policy of the Prophet Muhammad as an Agent of Transformation of the Pre-Islamic Social Hierarchy

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Abstract

This article departs from the character of the social hierarchy of pre-Islamic Arab society, which was rigid and exclusive based on lineage, clan, economic status, and gender relations, as well as from the limitations of contemporary hadith and sirah studies, which are still predominantly normative-descriptive, so that they are inadequate in explaining the mechanisms of social change structurally and their implications for the development of hadith studies. This study aims to critically analyze the social policies of the Prophet Muhammad as an agent of transformation of social hierarchy through normative, institutional, and social-praxis dimensions, while also offering a socio-structural reading that is relatively underused in hadith studies. This study uses a qualitative approach based on a thematic-contextual analysis of social hadiths in a purposively selected corpus of canonical hadith books, proceeding through the stages of theme identification, categorization, and contextual interpretation, and is supported by socio-historical readings and a theoretical framework of social change. The results of the study indicate three main mechanisms: first, the deconstruction of lineage-based stratification through the principle of moral equality that negates genealogical superiority; second, the reconstruction of social structures through the inclusion of marginalized groups such as enslaved people and people experiencing poverty in a system of welfare distribution and equitable social relations; third, the institutionalization of inter-tribal solidarity through brotherhood, collective ethical regulation, and the strengthening of women's roles in the socio-symbolic sphere. This

transformation occurred systematically and continuously, resulting in a more egalitarian social order. These findings affirm the Prophet Muhammad as an agent of strategic social change and broaden the horizons of hadith studies toward contextual, relevant socio-structural analysis.

Keywords: Prophetic Policies; Social Transformation; Pre-Islamic Arabia; Contextualization of Hadith; Social Solidarity

Abstrak

Artikel ini berangkat dari karakter hierarki sosial masyarakat Arab pra-Islam yang rigid dan eksklusif berbasis nasab, kabilah, status ekonomi, dan relasi gender, serta dari keterbatasan studi hadis dan sirah kontemporer yang masih dominan normatif-deskriptif sehingga belum memadai dalam menjelaskan mekanisme perubahan sosial secara struktural dan implikasinya bagi pengembangan kajian hadis. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis secara kritis kebijakan sosial Nabi Muhammad sebagai agen transformasi hierarki sosial melalui dimensi normatif, institusional, dan praksis sosial, sekaligus menawarkan pembacaan sosial-struktural yang relatif belum banyak digunakan dalam studi hadis. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis analisis tematik-kontekstual terhadap hadis-hadis sosial dalam korpus kitab hadis kanonik yang dipilih secara purposif, melalui tahapan identifikasi tema, kategorisasi, dan interpretasi kontekstual dengan dukungan pembacaan sosial-historis serta kerangka teori perubahan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga mekanisme utama: pertama, dekonstruksi stratifikasi berbasis nasab melalui prinsip kesetaraan moral yang menegasikan superioritas genealogis; kedua, rekonstruksi struktur sosial melalui inklusi kelompok marginal seperti budak dan fakir ke dalam sistem distribusi kesejahteraan dan relasi sosial yang setara; ketiga, institusionalisasi solidaritas lintas kabilah melalui ukhuwah, regulasi etika kolektif, serta penguatan peran perempuan dalam ruang sosial-simbolik. Transformasi ini berlangsung secara sistemik dan berkelanjutan dalam membentuk tatanan sosial yang lebih egaliter. Temuan ini menegaskan Nabi Muhammad sebagai aktor perubahan sosial strategis serta memperluas horizon kajian hadis menuju analisis sosial-struktural yang kontekstual dan relevan.

Kata Kunci: Kebijakan Nabi; Transformasi Sosial; Arab Pra-Islam; Kontekstualisasi Hadis; Solidaritas Sosial

Introduction

The social structure of pre-Islamic Arab society was characterized by rigid stratification based on lineage, economic power, and clan affiliation, which determined individual status almost deterministically (Harahap, Is, & Julaiha P, 2025). The clan patronage system (*himāyah*) placed individuals without genealogical protection—such as *mawālī*, enslaved people, women, and orphans—in a subordinate position with limited access to resources and legal protection. The practice of transactional slavery, the neglect of women's inheritance rights, and the social exclusion of immigrants were concrete indicators of this structural inequality (Nasution, 2025). Marshall Hodgson (2002) shows that group cohesion is built through the exclusion of others. The Prophet Muhammad's intervention shifted the basis of social legitimacy from lineage to moral-spiritual criteria and social responsibility, through institutionalized policy instruments such as eliminating

discriminatory practices, strengthening inter-clan solidarity, and establishing operational norms of equality in social life.

The phenomenon of structural inequality resonates strongly in the contemporary global context. A United Nations Development Program (2024) report indicates that more than 70% of the world's population lives in societies with high levels of inequality, as reflected in rising Gini indices across regions. The International Labor Organization (2023) notes that vulnerable groups—including women and informal workers—are twice as likely to experience economic exclusion. Meanwhile, the World Bank (2024) asserts that social exclusion directly contributes to political instability and weak social cohesion. This pattern demonstrates similarities in mechanisms with pre-Islamic hierarchical structures, namely the dominance of certain groups over resource distribution and social legitimacy (Nasution, 2025). The historical relevance of the Prophet Muhammad's social policies lies in his ability to intervene at the structural roots of inequality through distributional regulations (*zakat*, the prohibition of usury), institutionalization of solidarity (the Muhājirīn-Anṣār brotherhood), and socio-political contracts (the Medina Charter) that integrate heterogeneous groups into a single normative order. This analogy serves as a comparative-analytical framework for assessing the potential of a religion-based social transformation model to address modern inequalities.

Previous studies have shown a dominant tendency toward a normative-descriptive approach, with limited structural analysis. Tolan (2024) emphasized the Prophet's role as a moral reformer but did not elaborate on policy instruments as mechanisms for social change. Yilmaz et al. (2024) examined the development of early Islamic civilization with an institutional-political focus but ignored the dynamics of the reconstruction of social hierarchies. Yulingga et al. (2025) situated the Prophet's teachings within a social-ethical framework, without linking them to the transformation of stratification structures. Ali and Abdollahi (2024) analyzed the formation of the Medina community as a political entity but stopped at describing institutions without explaining the causal relationship with changes in social structure. Lala (2023) emphasized moral-spiritual exemplars, thus reducing social policy to non-structural individual practices. Overall, these studies reveal three main gaps: a conceptual gap in the absence of a framework that positions the Prophet's social policies as an agent of structural transformation; a methodological gap in the dominance of normative approaches without integrating sociological analysis; and an analytical gap in the absence of an explanation of the concrete mechanisms of social hierarchical deconstruction. This research addresses this gap through an integrative approach that combines analysis of hadith and *sīrah* with theories of social transformation and stratification.

The research questions include: how the Prophet Muhammad's social policies functioned as agents of transformation in pre-Islamic social hierarchies, and what

structural mechanisms were used to deconstruct exclusive stratification and build an inclusive social order. The research aims to systematically analyze the Prophet's social policies within the framework of structural transformation by identifying their instruments, processes, and impacts on changing the basis of social hierarchy. The initial argument of the research asserts that the Prophet Muhammad's social policies constituted a planned and institutionalized strategy that operationalized the principle of equality through concrete mechanisms, thereby transforming lineage-based social legitimacy into one grounded in ethics and collective responsibility. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in formulating a model of social transformation, grounded in religious policies, that integrates normative and structural dimensions in early Islamic studies. The methodological contribution is the development of an interdisciplinary approach between hadith studies, *sīrah*, and sociology. The practical contribution includes providing a relevant conceptual framework for formulating contemporary social policies to address structural inequalities and strengthen social cohesion.

Method

This study uses a qualitative design based on thematic-contextual analysis within a constructivist-critical paradigm, integrating historical reconstruction, sociological analysis, and the critical discourse analysis model of Norman Fairclough, operationalized in layers to reveal power relations and the transformation of social hierarchy. The data corpus was selectively determined to include *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* hadiths from *Kutub al-Sittah*, as well as early *sīrah* sources such as *Sīrah Ibn Ishāq* reconstructed through *Sīrah Ibn Hishām*, with inclusion criteria based on sanad validity, chronological proximity, and thematic relevance to the Prophet's social policy. Data collection was carried out through systematic procedures, including identifying conceptual keywords, searching academic databases, screening abstracts and full texts, and concept-based data extraction to minimize selection bias. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of open coding to identify themes, axial coding for relations between social categories, and selective coding for the construction of transformation narratives, which were deepened with critical discourse analysis at the text level, discursive practices, and social practices to map changes in social structures in a relational-historical manner.

Results and Discussion

Deconstruction of Lineage and Social Class Stratification through Equality Policy

Pre-Islamic Arabian social stratification operated as an institutionalized system based on genealogical logic and the reproduction of clan-based collective honor. Lineage was not merely a symbolic identity but a mechanism for distributing power, economic access, and political legitimacy, relatively closed to non-aristocratic groups. Ibn Khaldūn (1967) emphasized the function of tribal solidarity as political

capital that reproduced elite domination, while Fred M. Donner (2010) demonstrated the close link between clan structure and control over ritual and economic resources. The Prophet Muhammad's policies represented structural interventions that targeted these symbolic foundations by transforming the criteria of honor. The hadith narrated by Abū Dāwud (1993) about eliminating the pride of the Jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic period) did not cease to be a normative statement; rather, it functioned as a delegitimizing discourse that disrupted the mechanisms of status reproduction. A contextual reading of this hadith, taking into account the social conflict in Mecca, reveals a systematic effort to expand social mobility based on individual capacity rather than lineage.

This transformation occurred through the reconstruction of principles of equality that were operational and tested in the social practices of the early Islamic community. The hadith narrated by al-Bayhaqī (1997) concerning the unity of human origin and piety-based superiority serves as both a normative and regulatory tool, shifting the logic of hierarchy toward universal moral evaluation. The implementation of this principle is evident in the integration of non-Arab individuals and formerly enslaved people, such as Bilāl, Salmān al-Fārisī, and Suhayb al-Rūmī, into the Muslim social structure without genealogical barriers (Ishāq, 1955). Ira M. Lapidus (2002) shows that the social acceptance of these figures was not merely symbolic but reflected a shift in patterns of social interaction toward greater inclusivity. Hodgson (2002) demonstrates that the hadith operated as an egalitarianizing mechanism that reduced the exclusivity of the Quraysh aristocracy. This analysis confirms that the policy of equality was not utopian but rather served as a measurable, repeatable instrument of social restructuring across various contexts of community interaction.

Hierarchical restructuring is also reflected in the transformation of leadership patterns, shifting from a genealogical basis to a meritocratic system grounded in competence and trustworthiness. The practice of appointing individuals such as Usāmah ibn Zayd and Mu'ādh ibn Jabal demonstrates that authority is no longer determined by lineage but by personal capacity, as verified through experience and trustworthiness (Watt, 1956). The hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) on trustworthiness contains both normative and institutional dimensions that guide leadership selection in line with professional standards. Vilfredo Pareto (1991) shows that this policy represents an early form of elite circulation that opened access to power for non-aristocratic groups. The social tensions that emerged, particularly among the Quraysh elite, can be read as resistance to changes in the established structure of domination. Historiographical analysis shows that this conflict was not destructive, but rather part of a social negotiation process that resulted in a new, more open and adaptive configuration of power.

The symbolic dimension of honor underwent a redefinition as social capital, previously grounded in material and genealogical values, shifted toward individual

ethical qualities. The concept of inner wealth, emphasized in the hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993), served as a deconstruction strategy for aristocratic values that linked honor to the accumulation of wealth and clan status. The perspective of symbolic capital theory suggests that this shift shifted the source of social legitimacy from external capital to internal capital accessible to all individuals (Lewis, 2024). Historical evidence demonstrates a shift in patterns of honor within early Muslim communities, evident in the increased appreciation of individuals with high moral integrity, even those from low social backgrounds. This transformation reduced the effectiveness of status-reproduction mechanisms based on clan symbols, creating a more open space for social competition (Shaukat et al., 2024). This analysis confirms that the redefinition of honor is not merely a change in values but a cultural strategy with long-term structural implications.

The legal aspect plays a crucial role in institutionalizing the principle of equality by applying non-discriminatory norms to all members of society. Law enforcement practices that asserted that even members of the Prophet's family were not immune (Al-Bukhārī, 1993) demonstrated a commitment to the rule of law as the foundation of a new social order. Comparisons with pre-Islamic systems reveal a significant shift from status-based differential law to one that judges individuals based on their actions (Zulfiqar, 2023). Wael B. Hallaq (2009) demonstrates that this principle was implemented in various concrete cases, thereby limiting the previously dominant sphere of aristocratic privilege. A legal-anthropology approach demonstrates that this transformation shifted authority relations from clan-based to more rational, normative institutions (Sarfaty, 2021). Structural impacts are evident in increased trust in the legal system and a reduction in the practice of protection based on genealogical affiliation (M. Hodgson, 2002).

The integration of these policies demonstrates a layered, interconnected pattern of social transformation encompassing symbolic, political, legal, and cultural dimensions. Each policy does not stand alone but forms part of a network of interventions that collectively alter society's stratification structure. An analysis of the *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (the principles of Islamic law) as proposed by Jasser Auda (2008) shows that the primary objective of this policy was to create structural justice by redistributing access to honor and authority. Wael B. Hallaq (2015) emphasized that this transformation did not eliminate stratification, but rather shifted the basis of social legitimacy toward more inclusive criteria. A systemic approach demonstrates that this change occurred gradually through social adaptation and the community's internalization of new values. This demonstrates that the Prophet's policy possessed an institutional character capable of surviving and evolving in a dynamic historical context.

The analytical model of social transformation that can be formulated from this policy encompasses three main stages: the symbolic delegitimization of old structures, the reconstruction of norms through normative instruments, and the

institutionalization of practices within the new social structure. The first stage is seen through the dismantling of lineage legitimacy as the primary source of honor. In contrast, the second stage is realized through the production of hadith as a normative framework guiding social behavior. The third stage is reflected in concrete practices that integrate the principle of equality into systems of leadership, law, and social relations. This approach aligns with theories of social change in historical sociology, which emphasize the interaction between discourse and institutions (Clayman & Heritage, 2021). This model emphasizes that transformation is not spontaneous but rather the result of planned, sustained policy strategies.

Reconstruction of the Status of Marginalized Groups: Slaves, the Poor, and the Non-Elite

The reconstruction of the status of marginalized groups in Medinan society can be understood as a structured social intervention through mutually reinforcing normative, legal, and institutional practices. The analytical framework employed draws on theories of social stratification and status mobility, which emphasize the importance of changes in access to symbolic and material resources as indicators of transformation (Tan et al., 2021). The hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) concerning the relationship between master and slave is treated as normative data intervening in structures of domination, not simply as a moral imperative. The context of pre-Islamic Arab society, which viewed enslaved people as economic commodities, serves as a comparative basis to demonstrate their shifting position as social subjects with ethical claims to equal treatment.

An analysis of the hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) that states enslaved people are brothers demonstrates a restructuring of labor relations that reduces the symbolic distance between the owner and the owned. According to al-Kishmīrī (2005), the command to provide equal food and clothing indicates a binding minimum standard of welfare, so that the relationship is no longer wholly exploitative. Al-Kishmīrī's interpretation is strengthened by Jonathan A. C. Brown's (2019) critical reading, which argues that this norm served as a mechanism for the gradual humanization of the system of slavery. The positioning of enslaved people as dignified entities created space for redefining their social status within the community. The moral, economic, and symbolic rights that emerged were not merely conceptual but connected to concrete practices that governed daily interactions. This argument suggests that the hadith texts served a regulative function, shifting patterns of domination toward more reciprocal relationships.

The policy of manumission, as narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993), functioned as an instrument of structural transformation integrated into the legal system and social practices. According to Brown (2019), the mechanism of expiation and the moral incentive to free enslaved people demonstrate the existence of recurring normative incentives, so the practice of manumission was not sporadic. Historical data show

that the practice of manumission increased in early Muslim society through various channels, including the mukatabah contract, which allowed enslaved people to purchase their freedom (Harvey, 2019). This transformation did not eradicate slavery instantly but created previously closed pathways for social mobility. This analysis positions the Prophet's policies as a gradual-reformative strategy leading to long-term change. Claims regarding the redistribution of human property are understood as gradual shifts in ownership structures rather than immediate revolutionary changes. This approach asserts that social transformation occurs through a combination of legal regulation and the internalization of values.

The reconstruction of the status of the poor demonstrates a paradigm shift in the understanding of poverty from an individual issue to a structural condition requiring collective intervention. The hadith narrated by Muslim (1955), which defines poverty as a hidden disability, broadens the scope of previously unidentified vulnerable groups. According to Monzer Kahf (1995), *zakat* policies, almsgiving, and the management of the *Bayt al-Māl* (treasury) became concrete instruments that linked norms to economic practices. Early Islamic economic analysis demonstrated that resource distribution was not only charitable but also redistributive, reducing inequality. People experiencing poverty gained a position as recipients of rights that were normatively and institutionally legitimized (Azmi & Marpaung, 2025). This transformation led to the establishment of an early welfare system that integrated social responsibility into community structures. This argument shows that the Prophet's policies not only changed perceptions of poverty but also created economic mechanisms that supported this change.

The concept of moral meritocracy explains the shift in the standards of legitimacy for social status, which previously relied on lineage and wealth. The hadith narrated by Ibn Mājah (2014), which emphasizes judgment based on deeds and the heart, serves as a normative principle that shifts the basis of social rewards. Theoretical analysis of status groups suggests that social legitimacy can change through the redefinition of dominant values (Vargas-Salfate et al., 2018). This transformation does not eliminate hierarchies, but rather changes the criteria that determine position within them. According to Mernissi (1991), non-elite individuals gain opportunities to improve their status through ethical contributions and social participation. A critical reading demonstrates that this meritocracy is both normative and operational, as it is integrated into community practices. This change led to greater social mobility, albeit within the constraints of a specific historical context. This argument demonstrates that the Prophet's policies created new standards that challenged the dominance of traditional elites.

The involvement of non-elite individuals in strategic social functions demonstrates a concrete implementation of the principle of moral meritocracy. A hadith narrated by Muslim (1955) states that Bilāl's appointment as chief muezzin reflected a redistribution of symbolic roles that elite groups had previously

dominated. A comparative analysis with other cases, such as the involvement of non-elite companions in administrative and military functions, confirms that this policy was not single-minded (Donner, 2010). The representation of non-elites in the religious and social public spheres indicates a continuous institutional change. This transformation cannot be reduced to symbolism, as it is embedded in recurring worship practices and shapes collective perceptions. A critical evaluation suggests that this phenomenon is closer to structural transformation than tokenism. This argument asserts that the distribution of social honor shifted, enabling marginalized groups to participate more actively in community life.

A critical evaluation of the overall process of status reconstruction demonstrates that the success of the Prophet's policy lay in his ability to connect norms with social institutions and practices. The resulting transformation was not merely ideological but also measurable through changes in the distribution of roles and access within the community. Historical limitations are acknowledged, particularly regarding the continuation of slavery and economic inequality. Nevertheless, the policy created a normative foundation that enabled further change in subsequent periods. This analysis positions the Prophet's social policies as a model of context-adaptive transformation with universal potential within the framework of social change theory. This conclusion emphasizes that the reconstruction of the status of marginalized groups is not merely a moral narrative but a structural process supported by integrated normative and institutional frameworks.

Transformation of Gender Relations and Women's Position in Social Structure

Pre-Islamic Arab society exhibited a hierarchical configuration of gender relations legitimized by structures of kinship, ownership, and symbolic control over women's bodies. Women's marginalized position was reflected not only in inheritance practices and coercive marriage but also through the construction of clan honor based on sexual control (Sabiruddin et al., 2024). Prophetic interventions were not merely normative but represented a gradual process of social transformation that can be analyzed through the framework of gendered power relations and the concept of patriarchal bargain as developed by Deniz Kandiyoti (1988). The reforms initiated by the Prophet followed a strategy of negotiation with patriarchal structures, rather than their immediate elimination. The early *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* perspective, as elaborated by Jassr Auda (2008), served as a normative tool for protecting human dignity, including women's, while simultaneously opening space for legal reinterpretation. Amina Wadud (1999) and Asma Barlas (2012) demonstrate that religious texts operate as discursive fields that enable egalitarian readings, allowing the Prophet's policies to be understood as practical articulations of revelation-based transformation that are contextual and historical.

The prohibition of violence against women, as narrated by Ibn Mājah (2014), cannot be read merely as a moral call but rather as a discursive intervention into social practices previously legitimized by culture. Historical analysis shows that domestic violence is rooted in patriarchal authority structures that place men in absolute authority (Putra & Acela, 2023). The hadith narrated by al-Tirmidhī (1975), which emphasizes the ethical treatment of the family, reconstructs standards of masculinity through new moral parameters, while simultaneously creating social pressure against violent practices. The approach of hadith as social discourse allows for an understanding that hadith texts function as tools of social regulation that operate through the internalization of norms (Mokhtarzadeh et al., 2026). Jonathan Brown (2009) asserts that the authority of hadith is not static, but rather negotiated through social practice. Tensions arise when other traditions are interpreted differently, demonstrating that transformation is not linear. This dynamic demonstrates the limits of structural change, namely, cultural resistance that maintains the legitimacy of domestic power, even as alternative norms begin to gain public legitimacy.

The reform of authority in marriage marks a significant shift in the structure of family law, particularly regarding women's consent as a prerequisite for validity. This transformation can be analyzed through the lens of legal anthropology, which views norms as the product of the interaction among texts, practices, and social authority (Canfield, 2023). The hadith narrated by Muslim (1955) concerning the case of a woman who objected to a forced marriage reflects the emergence of a new legal consciousness facilitated by prophetic authority. This practice was not merely casuistic but also established precedents that were later institutionalized in classical *fiqh*, albeit with varying interpretations across schools of thought. Kecia Ali (2016) demonstrates that Islamic family law develops through negotiations between normative ideals and patriarchal social realities. This shift in authority did not eliminate the dominance of guardians but rather opened up agency for women as legal subjects. This process emphasized the gradual nature of transformation, namely, change that occurs through the accumulation of legal practices that shift the distribution of power without causing radical social disruption.

Women's access to religious public spaces demonstrates a crucial dimension of the transformation of gender relations through expanded social participation. Women's presence in mosques is not only related to worship activities but also to access to the production and transmission of religious knowledge (Kusuma et al., 2025). The concept of public space can be analyzed through an adaptation of Habermas's (1989) theory, which positions discursive interaction as the basis for the formation of social authority. The hadith narrated by Abū Dāwud (1993) prohibiting restrictions on women serves as a corrective against gender-based exclusionary tendencies. Debates within the classical tradition regarding women's presence in public spaces demonstrate that these policies did not always remain linear after the

prophetic period (Caniago et al., 2024). Saba Mahmood (2005) emphasizes historical fluctuations influenced by political and social factors. This transformation resulted in increased women's visibility, although they still faced structural limitations in the form of normative resistance that sought to restore gender-based segregation.

Recognizing women's intellectual capacity requires a critical reading of the hadith, which is often problematically understood in gender studies. The hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) regarding women's perfection cannot be understood literally as a limitation; rather, it must be analyzed within the context of the moral rhetoric that developed in patriarchal societies. Feminist critiques of the hadith tradition demonstrate that classical interpretations often reproduce gender biases that obscure women's epistemic potential (Kusuma et al., 2026). 'Āisha's role as the primary narrator of hadith demonstrates that women wield significant authority in the production of religious knowledge (Kusuma et al., 2025). Historical data demonstrate women's significant contributions to the transmission of hadith, strengthening the argument that early Islamic epistemic structures were not entirely exclusive (Friyadi et al., 2024). This analysis confirms that hadith texts functioned as arenas for contestation of meaning, not as the sole sources of legitimacy. Structural transformation is evident in the opening of women's access to scholarly authority, although male dominance remains a key characteristic of the intellectual structure.

The redefinition of women's honor represents a symbolic shift that has structural implications for gender relations. The concept of honor in pre-Islamic Arab society was closely linked to control over women's bodies, which served as a representation of clan dignity (Aboulhassan & Brumley, 2019). Prophetic wisdom shifted this meaning toward an emphasis on moral qualities and social contributions. Anthropological analysis of the concept of *'ird* (honor) shows that symbolic change takes time because it confronts entrenched cultural structures (Harahap et al., 2025). Modern interpretations that emphasize women's moral values need to be critiqued to ensure they are not separated from their historical context. According to Talal Asad (1993), the transformation of the meaning of honor does not occur linearly, but rather through a process of discursive negotiation between old norms and new values. Alternative narratives constructed through sermons and social practices serve as strategies for symbolic change, broadening the definition of honor. This shift results in a reconstruction of power relations that reduces the objectification of women, although residues of patriarchal culture persist.

Institutionalization of Social Solidarity as the Basis of a New Social Structure

The institutionalization of social solidarity in early Islamic society was achieved by transforming collective norms into structural devices that systematically regulate relations between individuals and groups. The concept of

ta'āwun ijtīmā'ī (social solidarity), formulated by Ibn Khaldūn (1967), remained an ethical principle; rather, it served as an analytical framework for understanding the shift in social interaction patterns from tribal affiliation to cohesion based on social function. The hadith narrated by Muslim (1955) about the parable of the believers as one body demonstrates the construction of norms that bind collective behavior. Still, its significance lies in the internalization of these norms as social obligations with practical consequences, including mutual responsibility for maintaining the community's welfare and stability. This transformation is reflected in changes in social alliance patterns that are no longer determined by genealogical lines but are structured through reciprocal obligations legitimized by prophetic authority and internalized as shared norms. Historical indicators of change are visible through the easing of inter-tribal conflict and the emergence of more integrative relationship patterns. New social structures do not simply replace old forms but rather reconstruct the logic of social interaction so that solidarity functions as an operational and institutionalized binding mechanism (Hodgson, 2002).

The practice of *mu'ākhāt* between the Muḥājirīn and the Anṣār demonstrates the concrete articulation of solidarity as a social institution comprising actors, norms, goals, and mechanisms of legitimacy. This policy is not merely a symbol of brotherhood but a structural intervention to address the social disruption caused by migration. The relationships established encompass economic obligations, social protection, and community integration, and are regulated by the authority of the Prophet as policymaker (Donner, 2010). The hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) that mentions the brotherhood between 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf and Sa'ad ibn Rabi' reflects a systemic model of resource redistribution rather than an individual case. This practice was replicated in other couples, forming a recurring and legitimized social pattern (Sa'ad, 1990). *Mu'ākhāt* serves as a prototype of a redistributive institution that reduces structural inequalities without creating class antagonisms (Hodgson, 2002). Institutional analysis shows that the sustainability of this practice depends on a combination of normative legitimacy and collective compliance, so that solidarity depends not on individual initiative but on a value system that consistently binds all community members.

The Medina Charter represents a legal-political framework that formalizes solidarity as an organizational principle for multi-group societies. The document regulates relations between communities by establishing rights, obligations, and mechanisms for collective conflict resolution (K. Nasution, 2025). The formulation of "one people" redefines social identity, transcending tribal boundaries without erasing internal diversity (Samosir et al., 2025). Institutional analysis of the charter reveals a mechanism for enforcing norms through mutual agreements that bind all parties, including obligations to maintain collective security and uphold justice. This structure does not eliminate hierarchy, but rather reconfigures the distribution of authority so that it no longer relies on genealogical dominance. Potential tensions

between groups are anticipated through structured conflict resolution procedures, marking a shift from a system of revenge to a mechanism of collective adjudication. A critical reading of the charter demonstrates that civic solidarity serves as an effective instrument of social stabilization in a pluralistic context, while also providing a foundation for a more inclusive political order.

The *zakat* system demonstrates the economic dimension of institutionalized solidarity, functioning as an organized redistribution mechanism. The practice of collecting and distributing *zakat* involves specialized officials who administer collective resources, thereby reflecting a managed fiscal structure. A hadith narrated by Muslim (1955) concerning the collection of *zakat* from the wealthy for distribution to the poor indicates a systemic design that links wealth production to welfare distribution. The role of *amil* (collectors) as administrators reinforces the institutional aspect, while the provisions for *zakat* recipients indicate a normatively regulated social classification (Azmi & Marpaung, 2025). Institutional economic analysis indicates that *zakat* reduces wealth concentration and strengthens social resilience without triggering class conflict (Malik, 2016). The implementation of *zakat* during the time of the Prophet and its continuation under the Companions demonstrate a consistent practice that underscores the institution's sustainability. Economic solidarity does not depend on individual generosity but is regulated through collective obligations with religious and social legitimacy, thus forming the foundation for structural balance in society (Ag Said et al., 2024).

Conflict management and the distribution of justice demonstrate the regulative dimension of solidarity, which functions as a mechanism of social control. The Prophet's role as a leader was not merely personal but institutionalized through an adjudicative function that regulated dispute resolution and maintained social balance. A hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī (1993) that emphasizes the obligation to prevent oppressors demonstrates that solidarity contains an active corrective dimension. Conflict resolution practices are carried out through procedures that involve mediation, arbitration, and enforcement of binding decisions within the community (Al-'Asqalānī, 1970). This structure creates a system of social control that relies not on repressive power but on the internalization of collective norms accompanied by the legitimacy of authority. Governance analysis shows that authority is not entirely centralized but involves community participation in maintaining social order (Azmi & Marpaung, 2025). This mechanism replaces patterns of unilateral domination with a more functional regulatory system, enabling solidarity to serve as a control mechanism that simultaneously maintains cohesion and justice.

The integration of social, political, economic, and legal dimensions demonstrates that the institutionalization of solidarity did not occur partially, but rather through a mutually supportive systemic configuration. *Mu'ākhāt* provided the basis for social integration; the Medina Charter established the political framework,

zakat regulated economic redistribution, and adjudication mechanisms managed conflict. These four elements operated as a whole, forming a new social structure with a cohesive and adaptive character. A comparative analysis of pre-Islamic structures shows that this new system shifted tribal dominance from personal relationships to a network of collective obligations. Social hierarchies were not completely abolished but restructured so that access to resources and social legitimacy was no longer determined by lineage. This transformation resulted in greater social stability because conflict could be managed through structured institutions.

The institutionalization model of solidarity can be formulated through four main components: collective norms, institutional actors, operational mechanisms, and legitimacy. Collective norms are formed through religious teachings that internalize social obligations. Institutional actors include leaders, officials, and community members. Operational mechanisms include redistribution, adjudication, and social integration. At the same time, legitimacy stems from religious authority and social consensus. This framework enables a more systematic analysis of the dynamics of early Islamic society and makes theoretical contributions to historical sociology. This approach also opens up dialogue with modern institutional theory, which emphasizes the importance of rules, norms, and structures in shaping collective behavior. Reading the hadith is no longer limited to normative texts, but rather as social data reflecting institutionalized historical practices. This model demonstrates that solidarity is not merely a moral value but a structural device with regulative and distributive functions.

Conclusion

The transformation of seventh-century Arab social hierarchy is mapped through four prophetic policy mechanisms verified through thematic-contextual hadith: the reorientation of status from lineage to ethical merit through the principles of piety and capacity; economic redistribution through *zakat* and *mu'ākhāt* practices that reduce class inequality; the reconstruction of gender relations through the recognition of inheritance rights, dowries, and family responsibilities; and cross-tribal integration through norms of solidarity and the prohibition of discrimination. These four mechanisms operate as institutional models grounded in consistent norms, social practices, and symbolic authority, rather than ad hoc responses, thereby forming an inclusive and equitable social configuration. The theoretical contribution positions hadith as an operational source for socio-historical analysis while integrating it with theories of structural change, particularly at the levels of agency and the institutionalization of values. The practical implications include the formulation of public policies grounded in the ethics of distribution, social inclusiveness, and normative leadership. Limitations include selecting hadiths using a thematic approach, which may introduce bias; limited verification of the historical context of the *sanad-matn*; and a specific policy

focus that limits generalization. Further research agendas include comparative analysis across civilizations, the integration of digital humanities methods, and the testing of prophetic models through contemporary interdisciplinary approaches.

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Author Contribution Statement

NA contributed to the formulation of the research concept, the development of the methodology, data analysis, manuscript writing, and correspondence for publication. IM contributed to the collection of study materials, the literature review, and the development of the theoretical framework. JC contributed to the analysis of research results, data interpretation, and editing of the manuscript's substance. NM contributed to data validation, methodological review, and the academic revision of the manuscript. FB contributed to the final examination of the manuscript, the alignment of the writing system, and the review of linguistic aspects. All authors have read, reviewed, and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that this manuscript was prepared independently and has no conflicts of interest whatsoever, whether personal, professional, institutional, or financial. The entire research, analysis, and writing process was conducted based on the principle of academic objectivity without any influence from any party that could affect the content, results, or conclusions of this manuscript.

AI Usage Statement

The author declares that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the preparation of this manuscript was limited to assistance in improving language quality, correcting grammar, technical editing, and supporting writing formatting. AI was not used to generate scientific substance, research data, analysis results, interpretations, arguments, concepts, ideas, or conclusions in this manuscript. All academic content, including problem formulation, analysis, discussion, conclusion, and scientific responsibility for the manuscript, is entirely the result of the author's thoughts, studies, and intellectual work. The author has also independently checked and verified all contents of the manuscript to ensure accuracy, academic integrity, and compliance with scientific publication ethics.

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