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THE DIALECTICS OF TEXT AND CONTEXT: THE RELEVANCE OF THE ADABI IJTIMA'I METHODOLOGY OF QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

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ABSTRAK

Isu sosial kontemporer di era modern menghadirkan beragam persoalan sosial seperti ketimpangan ekonomi, krisis moral, dan degradasi kemanusiaan yang menuntut pembacaan ulang terhadap teks-teks keagamaan. Dalam konteks ini, Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i sebagai salah satu metodologi tafsir modern menempatkan Al-Qur'an sebagai pedoman sosial yang hidup dan relevan dengan realitas manusia. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dialektika antara metodologi Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i dan konteks sosial kontemporer serta menilai sejauh mana pendekatan tersebut dapat menjawab problem sosial aktual. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif-deskriptif dengan pendekatan kontekstual dan analisis kepustakaan (library research). Data diperoleh dari karya-karya tokoh tafsir sosial seperti Muhammad Abduh, Rasyid Ridha, dan Sayyid Qutb, kemudian diinterpretasi secara kritis dalam kerangka dialektika teks dan konteks. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i memiliki relevansi tinggi dalam membumikan nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an pada isu-isu kemanusiaan modern, karena menekankan aspek moral, sosial, dan aksiologis dari pesan wahyu. Pendekatan ini mampu menghadirkan pemahaman keagamaan yang dinamis, progresif, dan kontekstual. Kesimpulannya, dialektika antara teks suci dan realitas sosial melalui metodologi tafsir ini membuka ruang baru bagi aktualisasi nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an dalam kehidupan masyarakat. Kontribusi tulisan ini terletak pada penguatan paradigma tafsir kontekstual sebagai instrumen transformasi sosial berbasis nilai-nilai Qur'ani.

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Keywords:

Adabi Ijtima'i interpretation, Modern Exegetical Methodology, Contextualization, Text-Context Dialectics, Contemporary Social Issues.

ABSTRACTS

The development of modern society presents various social challenges such as economic inequality, moral crises, and the degradation of humanity, all of which demand a renewed reading of religious texts. In this context, the Adabi Ijtima'i (literary-social) interpretation of the Qur'an represents a modern exegetical methodology that views the Qur'an as a living guide relevant to human reality. This paper aims to analyze the dialectical relationship between the Adabi Ijtima'i methodology and contemporary social contexts, as well as to evaluate its effectiveness in addressing current social issues. The research employs a qualitative-descriptive method with a contextual approach and library research as the main data source. The works of prominent social interpreters such as Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, and Sayyid Qutb are critically analyzed within the framework of text-context dialectics. The findings reveal that the Adabi Ijtima'i approach demonstrates a high degree of relevance in grounding Qur'anic values within modern human issues by emphasizing the moral, social, and axiological dimensions of revelation. The study concludes that the dialectical engagement between the sacred text and social reality opens new horizons for the actualization of Qur'anic values in contemporary life. The contribution of this paper lies in strengthening the contextual interpretation paradigm as an instrument of social transformation based on Qur'anic principles.

A. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary social issues in the modern era present a range of humanitarian challenges, including social inequality, moral disorientation, crises of justice, and violence against women. These issues have become serious concerns within society and call for the recontextualization of religious understanding. Such an effort is necessary to ensure that Qur'anic teachings are not confined to purely textual interpretations but can actively contribute to addressing the social problems faced by Muslim communities. In this context, Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) is not merely an explanation of the linguistic meaning of the text; rather, it serves as a means of establishing a dialectical relationship between the divine text and human social realities.

Contemporary Qur'anic studies have gradually developed from textual-literal approaches towards more socially and humanistically oriented interpretations. Scholars such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida introduced the *tafsir ijtima'i* approach, which emphasizes the relevance of Qur'anic messages to the social life of communities. This approach was further developed by Sayyid Qutb in *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, which highlights the importance of implementing Qur'anic values in society. Similar ideas have been advanced by M. Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, which seeks to contextualize divine messages in relation to local social realities.

Nevertheless, most existing studies have primarily focused on describing exegetical methods and the theoretical ideas of individual Qur'anic scholars, without sufficiently examining the dialectical relationship between text and context as the epistemological foundation for the renewal of Qur'anic interpretation. This study aims to analyze the relevance and dialectical relationship between the Qur'anic text and contemporary social contexts through the methodology of *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i*. It also seeks to demonstrate how this approach can serve as a new paradigm for understanding modern social issues.

The central argument of this study is that the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology, with its emphasis on literary and social dimensions, offers an epistemological bridge between the revealed text and empirical human realities. This approach enables Qur'anic interpretation to function as an instrument of social transformation that is both contextually grounded and dynamic.

Previous studies have demonstrated that *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* is effective in highlighting the social values embedded in the Qur'an, particularly justice, humanity, and solidarity. This approach has also been regarded as a response to the stagnation of classical exegesis, which has often been characterized by normative interpretations. What remains insufficiently explored, however, is how the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology can be systematically applied to address contemporary social issues. An epistemological gap persists in understanding how the dialectical process between text and context operates methodologically within this approach. Few studies have systematically explained the hermeneutical mechanisms through which textual meanings are connected to contemporary social structures.

The application of the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology to contemporary social issues requires careful consideration of the social and cultural contexts of communities, alongside the literary and social dimensions of Qur'anic interpretation. Its relevance lies in the understanding that the Qur'an was revealed as divine guidance for humanity in all aspects of life. To address this gap, this study undertakes a hermeneutical-contextual analysis of the fundamental principles of *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i*. This approach positions the Qur'anic text as a normative source and social context as an interpretive space, with both interacting in a dialectical relationship. Consequently, Qur'anic interpretation moves beyond literal meanings towards socially transformative understandings capable of addressing humanitarian challenges. Through this framework, the study seeks to demonstrate that the renewal of Qur'anic interpretive methodology does not constitute a departure from the exegetical tradition; rather, it represents an effort to expand the horizons of revelation's meaning so that it remains meaningful and relevant to changing times.

B. METHOD

1. Research Object

a) Contemporary Social Issues as the Context of Qur'anic Interpretation

The primary object of this study is the dialectical relationship between the Qur'anic text and its socio-cultural context, with particular attention to contemporary social issues that are relevant to modern society, such as structural poverty, social inequality, moral crises, and environmental degradation. The selection of these issues is based on the understanding that the Qur'anic text does not exist in isolation but continuously interacts with the social realities surrounding it. The *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* approach is adopted because of its moral and social orientation, which emphasizes the function of the Qur'an as guidance for human life within a collective social framework. In other words, this study does not merely interpret the text but also examines the social relevance of the resulting interpretations.

b) Research Design and Types of Data

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library research approach and socio-hermeneutical analysis to understand social phenomena in

depth and within their contexts. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study aims to explore the meanings, values, and contexts embedded in religious texts, as well as their interaction with social realities.

The data used in this study consist of two categories. (1) Primary data comprise exegetical works that represent the *Adabi Ijtima'i* approach, including *Tafsir al-Manar* by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, *Tafsir al-Azhar* by Hamka, and *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab. (2) Secondary data include books on Qur'anic exegetical methodologies, scholarly articles, and previous studies examining the social relevance of Qur'anic interpretation. The collected data consist of texts, concepts, arguments, and socio-religious discourses relevant to the research theme.

c) Research Participants and Sources of Information

Since this study is based on library research and analytical inquiry, its participants do not consist of individuals or human respondents. Instead, the primary subjects of analysis are the exegetical scholars and their respective works, namely Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida (*Tafsir al-Manar*), Hamka (*Tafsir al-Azhar*), and M. Quraish Shihab (*Tafsir al-Mishbah*).

The main sources of information are written documents, including exegetical texts, methodological works, academic journals, and books discussing socially oriented approaches to Qur'anic interpretation. The selection of sources is based on their temporal relevance, particularly works from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and their methodological connection to contemporary social issues.

d) Research Procedures and Stages of Data Collection

The research process is conducted through several systematic stages.

(a) Heuristic Stage (Initial Data Collection)

The researcher identifies and examines exegetical works that reflect the *Adabi Ijtima'i* approach, along with contemporary literature discussing the social relevance of Qur'anic interpretation. This stage involves text identification, source cataloguing, and the selection of primary and secondary data.

(b) Interpretative Stage

After the data have been collected, critical reading is conducted to identify social themes emerging from the exegetical texts and their respective social contexts. At this stage, hermeneutical principles are employed to understand texts by considering both the historical context of their authors and the contemporary social context of their readers.

(c) Comparative Stage

The researcher compares the interpretations of the selected scholars (Abduh, Hamka, and Shihab) to examine how each scholar approaches the dialectical relationship between text and context in responding to the social issues of their respective periods.

(d) Reflective and Analytical Stage

In the final stage, the interpreted data are critically examined to formulate conceptual conclusions regarding the relevance of the *Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology to contemporary social problems.

(e) Data Collection Techniques

The primary data collection technique is documentary research, supported by content analysis. Data are collected through the examination of primary exegetical texts (*Tafsir al-Azhar*, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, and *Tafsir al-Manar*) and the exploration of secondary literature through academic repositories, scholarly books, and Qur'anic studies journals. The collected data are subsequently classified into thematic categories, including social justice, humanity, and ecological responsibility.

(f) Data Analysis Techniques

Data are analyzed using a hermeneutical and descriptive-analytical approach through three main steps:

(1) Data Reduction: Selecting, organizing, and simplifying information obtained from exegetical texts into thematic categories encompassing moral, social, political, and ecological dimensions.

(2) Data Display: Presenting the analytical findings in the form of conceptual narratives that illustrate the relationship between the Qur'anic text and social realities.

(3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Formulating conclusions based on the interpretation process and verifying their consistency with the conceptual framework of *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* and the principles governing the dialectical relationship between text and context.

The hermeneutical approach serves to uncover implicit meanings underlying the text rather than focusing solely on its explicit meanings. This perspective is consistent with Paul Ricoeur's argument that meaning emerges through the tension between the text and the world of the reader.

Overall, this methodological framework is expected to demonstrate how *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* functions as a mechanism for establishing a dialectical relationship between the Qur'anic text and its social context. The findings are intended to contribute not only to theoretical discussions but also to offer a methodological framework for rereading the Qur'an in response to contemporary humanitarian and social challenges, particularly those concerning justice, poverty, and ecological crises

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

The findings indicate that the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* approach originates from a dialectical awareness of the relationship between sacred texts and social realities. Through textual analysis of modern exegetical works, particularly *Tafsir al-Manar* by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, as well as *Tafsir al-Mishbah* by M. Quraish Shihab, a pattern of interpretation emerges in which the Qur'an is positioned as a living ethical and social guide within society. The findings demonstrate that *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* regards the Qur'anic text as a source of social ethics that continuously engages in dialogue with societal realities. A compelling example of this dialectic between text and context can be found in the interpretation of QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1-3:

الْمِسْكِينِ طَعَامِ عَلَىٰ يَحُضُّ وَلَا ،الْيَتِيمَ يَدُعُّ الَّذِي فَذَٰلِكَ ،بِالدِّينِ يُكَذِّبُ الَّذِي أَرَأَيْتَ

(QS. al-Mā'ūn: 1-3)

"Have you seen the one who denies the religion? That is the one who repulses the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor." (QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–3).

In *Tafsir al-Manar*, Muhammad Abduh interprets these verses not merely as a condemnation of individuals who neglect religious worship, but also as a social critique of collective hypocrisy, namely, a society that upholds religious rituals while allowing social injustice to persist.

Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i demonstrates that the Qur'anic text should not be interpreted solely through its linguistic dimensions but also through the social and moral dimensions of society. For instance, verses concerning poverty and social justice are understood as active calls to establish a civilized and equitable social order. In the Indonesian context, the socially oriented interpretation developed by Hamka in *Tafsir al-Azhar* illustrates the Qur'an's capacity to engage with the nation's colonial and postcolonial realities.

Overall, the findings highlight three distinctive characteristics of the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology: (a) the active involvement of exegetes in the social realities of their respective contexts; (b) an emphasis on the Qur'an's social values, including justice, mutual assistance, and equality; and (c) the effort to position the Qur'an as a source of inspiration for societal transformation.

a) Critical Findings

A critical analysis of the data reveals that although *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* is capable of connecting revelation with social realities, the approach has not yet fully addressed the complexities of contemporary social issues. Its characteristic moral orientation is often not accompanied by a systematic framework of social theory. This study finds that some modern socially oriented exegetes continue to interpret the Qur'an within normative frameworks without sufficiently examining the underlying social structures, such as economic, political, and gender inequalities. Furthermore, social exegesis often depends on the exegete's personal background and ideological context, which influence the direction of interpretation and may result in variations that are not always methodologically consistent. Another limitation is the insufficient dialogue between Qur'anic exegesis and contemporary social sciences, particularly the sociology of religion and critical theory. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need to further develop *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* by incorporating greater awareness of power relations, discourse, and the social structures within which interpretation takes place.

b) Implicative and Transformative Findings

The findings concerning the implications of this approach indicate that *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* has the potential to function as a transformative method of Qur'anic interpretation when directed towards understanding social realities with an awareness of the need for change. This approach can provide a foundation for developing an Islamic social ethic that responds to global challenges, including structural poverty, gender inequality, and environmental crises.

The methodological implication is the need to integrate socially oriented Qur'anic exegesis with contextual hermeneutical theory so that interpretation does not remain confined to general moral principles but can also contribute to the formulation of social and cultural policies. In practical terms, *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* can also serve as a means of community empowerment through contextual Islamic education that makes Qur'anic values relevant to everyday life.

From a transformative perspective, this study affirms that the dialectic between text and context in social exegesis is not merely an academic process but also an act of consciousness that guides society towards justice, humanity, and ecological responsibility.

Empirically, the implications of this approach can be observed in contemporary Islamic movements that develop interpretations grounded in social realities, including environmental exegesis, gender-oriented Qur'anic interpretation, and humanitarian exegesis.

2. Discussion

a) Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i as a Bridge between Text and Context

The *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology (social-educational exegesis) emerged as a response to the disconnect between the meanings of the Qur'anic text and the social realities of Muslim communities. This approach emphasizes that Qur'anic interpretation cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and historical contexts of its readers. Accordingly, exegesis becomes a dialectical process between the normative text and dynamic social realities.

According to Abd. Hadi, this method aims to bring Qur'anic values into public life through literary language and communicative social narratives. Consequently, Qur'anic interpretation does not remain confined to theological dimensions but develops into a living form of social praxis.

Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i is grounded in two fundamental principles: (1) linguistic and literary beauty (*al-adab*), which reflects the Qur'an's rhetorical inimitability; and (2) social relevance (*al-ijtima'*), which positions the Qur'anic text as a guide for social ethics. One example can be found in QS. al-Mā'ūn [107]: 1–3:

رَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ۝ فَذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ ۝ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

(QS. Al-Mā'ūn (107:1–3))

"Have you seen the one who denies the religion? That is the one who repulses the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor."

M. Quraish Shihab explains that these verses constitute a social critique of structural hypocrisy rather than merely a reprimand directed at individuals who are unwilling to share their wealth. This interpretation positions religion as a form of social consciousness that demands solidarity with and advocacy for oppressed communities. Hamka similarly emphasizes in *Tafsir al-Azhar* that faith which does not encourage social solidarity amounts to a mere religious formality devoid of moral substance.

Thus, the descriptive analysis demonstrates that *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* is contextual, communicative, and humanistic. It views the Qur'anic text as a living social guide that engages in dialogue with the needs of modern society.

B. Epistemological Evaluation and Limitations of Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i

Despite its progressive orientation, the *Adabi Ijtima'i* approach continues to face several methodological challenges. First, this approach sometimes becomes confined to normative morality without adequately addressing the structural causes of social inequality. According to Nasaruddin Umar (2019), many socially oriented interpretations emphasize individual morality rather than transforming oppressive social systems. Second, because social exegesis often emerges from the exegete's

personal experiences, it is highly susceptible to subjectivity, potentially undermining its scientific objectivity. Adis Duderija (2017) argues that contextual hermeneutics in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation can sometimes become ideological because it is shaped by the social preferences of the exegete. Third, the *Adabi Ijtima'i* approach has yet to establish sufficient integration with modern social theories. Asma Barlas (2019) argues that, in addressing global challenges such as gender inequality, ecological degradation, and economic disparities, Qur'anic interpretation needs to engage with critical social sciences to uncover structures of domination embedded in texts and cultural practices. A relevant textual example is QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 135:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ

(QS. an-Nisā' (4:135))

"O you who believe, stand firmly for justice as witnesses for Allah, even if it is against yourselves."

M. Quraish Shihab explains that this verse affirms the principle of universal justice, which transcends social boundaries and family affiliations. Nevertheless, in social practice, this principle is rarely translated into public policy. This criticism indicates that social exegesis still requires appropriate analytical instruments to bridge normative values and social realities. From a critical perspective, it can therefore be concluded that *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* needs to strengthen its epistemological foundations by balancing the moral inspiration of the Qur'an with empirical social theories capable of examining the root causes of social inequality.

C. Implications and Transformation: Qur'anic Exegesis as a Social Movement

Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i fundamentally possesses transformative potential, particularly in mobilizing Muslim communities to reshape social structures in accordance with Qur'anic values. According to A. Basri, social exegesis should not stop at the level of "ethical awareness" but should develop into "practical consciousness," namely, the implementation of Qur'anic values in social policies and community movements. In this context, QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 serves as an ethical foundation.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُو

(QS. al-Ḥujurāt (49:13))

"O humankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another."

Fazlur Rahman interprets this verse as a foundation for a pluralistic and just social order. Through the *Adabi Ijtima'i* approach, the verse can serve as an ethical basis for developing social policies that reject discrimination, promote gender equality, and protect minority rights. This perspective further reinforces the need to strengthen the epistemological foundations of *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* by balancing the moral inspiration of the Qur'an with empirical social theories capable of uncovering the root causes of social inequality.

Social exegesis also has implications for Islamic education, particularly in promoting social awareness. According to Hamdani, social exegesis should be integrated into educational curricula to cultivate students who are critical, socially conscious, and transformative in their outlook. In this regard, *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i*

becomes a space for dialectical engagement between text and reality: the text provides ethical direction, while social realities offer the context for its practical implementation. Through this dialectical process, Qur'anic exegesis becomes more than a religious discourse; it develops into a social movement aimed at realizing Qur'anic humanism.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology is highly flexible in responding to contemporary social issues. This approach emphasizes the dialectical relationship between the text (*nash*) and social realities (context), enabling Qur'anic interpretation to move beyond the linguistic level towards meanings that have practical relevance to people's lives. Accordingly, *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* serves as a bridge between the ideals of divine revelation and the lived realities of human society. Another finding indicates that social dynamics, such as gender inequality, structural poverty, and environmental crises, can be reinterpreted through this approach in a more humanistic and responsive manner. This is consistent with Amin al-Khuli's view that the Qur'an should be approached as a living text that remains in continuous dialogue with changing times. Therefore, this methodology remains relevant as an instrument of contextual Qur'anic interpretation in the modern era.

The primary contribution of this study lies in its dialectical analysis of text and context, which is not merely theoretical but also applicable to the analysis of social issues. Whereas previous studies have tended to emphasize either the aesthetic dimensions of language in *Tafsir Adabi* or its social dimensions, this study proposes a methodological synthesis, arguing that these two dimensions cannot be separated without compromising the substantive meaning of divine revelation. Another contribution of this study is its emphasis on the understanding that the *Adabi Ijtima'i* approach is not merely an interpretive tool but also a means of promoting social transformation. By emphasizing moral and humanitarian values derived from the sacred text, Qur'anic interpretation can function as a critique of social injustice while simultaneously providing ethical inspiration for transforming modern society. This study positions Qur'anic interpretation not merely as an effort to understand the meanings of verses but also as a form of social praxis that has direct implications for discourses on justice and humanity.

Although this study successfully establishes the relevance of the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology to contemporary issues, several limitations remain. First, the scope of the discussion is still largely confined to theoretical inquiry and has not yet addressed its concrete implementation in thematic Qur'anic interpretation. Second, this study has not examined in depth the variations in the application of this methodology by modern exegetes across different geographical contexts, particularly Indonesia, Egypt, and Morocco. Another limitation concerns the scope of social issues examined. This study addresses only selected contemporary social issues; therefore, further research is needed to explore the relevance and applicability of the *Tafsir Adabi Ijtima'i* methodology to a broader range of social challenges.

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