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Distribution in the Perspective of the Al-Qur'an

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze economic verses related to the concept of distribution from the Qur'anic perspective. Employing a qualitative approach, the research explores the contextual meaning of distribution through primary sources, including Qur'anic verses and their interpretations. Data were gathered through textual analysis of relevant verses and supported by literature reviews. In economic terms, distribution refers to the process by which products or wealth are delivered from producers to consumers at the right time and place. Within the Islamic economic framework, distribution is more than a logistical function; it embodies principles of justice, equality, and social responsibility. The Qur'an emphasizes that wealth should circulate equitably and must not remain concentrated among the elite. The findings highlight that Surah Al-Hashr (59:7), Al-Baqarah (2:195), and Al-Isra (17:26) provide clear guidance on distribution principles rooted in Islamic teachings. These verses underline the importance of fair distribution to promote social welfare and reduce economic disparity, aligning with the overarching objectives of Islamic law.

Keywords: Qur'anic distribution; Islamic economics; Al-Hashr; Al-Baqarah; Al-Isra

INTRODUCTION

Distribution is one of the fundamental economic activities carried out by society, alongside production and consumption. In the framework of Islamic economics, the concept of distribution remains a central and continually relevant discourse due to its deep connection not only with economic principles but also with social and political dimensions. This issue has been the focus of both classical and contemporary Islamic economic thinkers.

A fundamental teaching in Islam emphasizes the importance of achieving balance in life, where individuals are expected to secure both worldly prosperity and spiritual well-being. To realize this dual objective, economic resources must be managed efficiently and ethically, based on Islamic values (Holis, 2016).

In societal economic processes, distribution refers to the act of delivering goods or wealth to users or consumers in a timely and appropriate manner. It functions as an

essential link between producers and end-users, ensuring that value created through production is transferred meaningfully to those in need (Zabura et al., 2024).

The Islamic view of distribution is rooted in the principle of equitable wealth circulation, seeking to prevent wealth accumulation within a small elite. The Qur'an strongly advocates for a fair and just economic system where the distribution of wealth supports communal welfare, minimizes social inequality, and ensures no group is economically marginalized (Fadilla, 2016; Holis, 2016).

Previous studies have examined various dimensions of distribution in Islamic economics. Ahmad Bahrul Hikam highlighted that the Qur'an and Hadith mandate principles of justice, freedom, and equality in wealth distribution, particularly in domains such as *da'wah*, education, and social development. Moh. Holis further noted that the Qur'an explicitly addresses the need for equitable distribution to prevent wealth concentration and socioeconomic disparity. Zulfa Nur Fadilla identified key aspects including resource management, labor markets, political economy models, and regulatory limitations. Meanwhile, Zabura et al. categorized distribution instruments into *zakāt*, *waqf*, inheritance, and charity, emphasizing their function in establishing socioeconomic equilibrium and promoting compassion-driven economic behavior (Fadilla, 2016; Zabura et al., 2024).

However, none of the above studies specifically analyze the *tafsir* (interpretation) of Qur'anic verses from an economic standpoint. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by offering a focused analysis of Qur'anic verses related to distribution, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of wealth distribution principles in Islamic economics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, which is suitable for exploring social phenomena in their natural settings. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in the process of data collection and analysis. The qualitative method allows for in-depth understanding of the contextual and interpretive aspects of economic distribution as addressed in the Qur'an.

The data for this research are drawn primarily from Qur'anic verses and their interpretations by renowned scholars in the fields of *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Thus, the main sources comprise both primary and secondary qualitative data. According to Yulianto (in Sugiyono, 2017), primary data refers to information gathered directly from original sources specifically for the purposes of the study, while secondary data are obtained through indirect means, such as institutional reports, scholarly publications, or other publicly available documents.

The data collection process was conducted through a comprehensive literature review involving books, academic articles, and prior research closely related to the theme of Qur'anic perspectives on distribution. Descriptive analysis was employed to interpret and synthesize the findings from various textual sources. This method facilitated the identification of core themes and key insights relevant to the understanding of wealth distribution from an Islamic viewpoint.

By integrating classical interpretations with contemporary academic discourse, this study aims to present a systematic understanding of Qur'anic teachings concerning distribution, with the broader objective of highlighting the ethical and social responsibilities entailed in Islamic economic thought.

Definition of Distribution

In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary), the term “distribution” is defined as the act of spreading or delivering something to the public or to multiple destinations. More broadly, it also refers to the allocation of essential goods, particularly in times of crisis, as undertaken by governmental agencies for civil servants, the general public, and other stakeholders. Within a corporate context, distribution denotes the process of sharing production output to ensure business continuity.

In Islamic economics, distribution is defined as the allocation of wealth—whether privately or publicly owned—to those who are rightfully entitled to it. The core objective of distribution in Islam is to foster social welfare in accordance with *shari’ah* principles. Islamic economic thought emphasizes both the process of distribution and the production mechanisms related to it.

The Islamic system of wealth distribution is grounded in the protection of the five essential objectives (*maqāsid al-shari’ah*): religion (*dīn*), self (*nafs*), intellect (*‘aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*māl*). Accordingly, distribution must address three tiers of human needs: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi highlights that the most critical aspect of Islamic economic discourse lies in the domain of distribution. For this reason, many Islamic economists have concentrated their research in this field. Distribution holds a central place in Islamic microeconomic theory because it is closely linked to political, social, and economic issues. Consequently, the topic continues to attract scholarly attention, particularly due to its alignment with the broader humanitarian goals of Islamic economics.

In contrast, liberal economic theory posits that poverty can be eradicated by increasing national production and income. However, this assumption is often flawed. In practice, poverty frequently results not from a shortage of resources, but from unjust and inefficient systems of distribution. Empirical data suggest that hunger and deprivation are primarily caused by the misallocation of resources, rather than their scarcity. In fact, the widening gap in wealth distribution, exacerbated by capitalist economic systems, has deepened the crisis of poverty in numerous countries, including Muslim-majority nations.

Distribution Mechanism

Economic challenges often emerge when individuals are unable to fulfill their basic needs (*al-hājāt al-asāsiyyah*). Due to the limited availability of resources, not everyone has equal access to the means necessary for survival. The root cause of this issue lies in the ineffective distribution of wealth. Therefore, a collective and global effort is required to ensure that every individual has access to basic necessities and the opportunity to meet additional needs.

In addressing these challenges, Islamic economics provides a unique and comprehensive distribution mechanism. This system is broadly categorized into two main types: **economic mechanisms** and **non-economic mechanisms**.

Economic mechanisms include systems and tools embedded within market-based or formal financial institutions that regulate distribution through instruments such as wages, prices, trade, and taxation. These mechanisms ensure that wealth flows within the society in a structured and productive manner, allowing individuals to participate in the economy fairly and sustainably.

Non-economic mechanisms, on the other hand, involve moral and spiritual incentives grounded in Islamic teachings. These include *zakāt* (obligatory almsgiving), *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity), *waqf* (endowment), and *‘irfānī* or moral calls to contribute toward societal welfare. These instruments serve not only to redistribute wealth but also to cultivate compassion, social solidarity, and accountability to Allah in managing resources.

The holistic integration of these mechanisms reflects the Islamic worldview that regards wealth as a trust (*amānah*) from Allah, which must be utilized not only for personal benefit but also for the greater good. In doing so, Islamic economics addresses both the material and spiritual dimensions of human well-being.

Objectives of Distribution in Islamic Economics

Islamic economics establishes a distribution system designed to achieve holistic objectives across various dimensions of human life. These objectives align with the overarching goals of Islamic law, known as *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*. The aims of distribution in Islam are classified into the following categories:

1. Da‘wah Objectives

Distribution mechanisms in Islam—such as *zakāt*—serve as a means of Islamic propagation (*da‘wah*). For instance, *zakāt* given to *mu‘allaf al-qulūb* (those whose hearts are inclined to Islam) is intended to encourage conversion to Islam and to strengthen the faith of new or wavering Muslims. This reflects a broader social function of distribution, fostering harmony and reducing hostility through material support.

2. Educational Objectives

From an Islamic economic perspective, distribution contributes to moral and educational development. It promotes values such as generosity, altruism, and prioritization of communal welfare over individual interests. The act of giving nurtures noble character traits (*akhlāq al-karīmah*) and instills a culture of social responsibility.

3. Social Objectives

Wealth distribution in Islam is fundamentally aimed at fulfilling the needs of vulnerable populations, including the poor and marginalized. It upholds the principle of solidarity (*ta‘āwun*) within the Muslim community and cultivates empathy and compassion among its members. Equitable distribution helps prevent social unrest caused by poverty and inequality, thereby promoting social justice.

4. Economic Objectives

Islamic distribution practices aim to activate and circulate wealth through both obligatory (*farḍ*) and voluntary (*nafl*) giving, such as *infaq*. These instruments enhance community welfare by empowering human resources—particularly the unemployed—through access to business capital and skill development. Furthermore, the equitable flow of wealth contributes to increased consumption power, which in turn drives economic growth and sustainability.

Through these multidimensional objectives, Islamic economics promotes a system in which wealth serves not only private interests but also fulfills a greater moral

and social purpose. Distribution, therefore, is not merely an economic function but a form of worship and social engineering rooted in divine guidance.

Factors Affecting Distribution

Several factors influence the effectiveness and efficiency of distribution within an economic system. In the context of Islamic economics, understanding these factors is essential for ensuring that distribution aligns with ethical principles and promotes social justice. The following are key determinants that affect distribution outcomes:

- 1. Cost**

Cost or pricing is a fundamental operational factor in distribution. It significantly influences the timing, efficiency, and quality of the distribution process. High distribution costs may reduce accessibility and hinder equitable delivery, especially to remote or underserved areas.

- 2. Payment Method**

The mode of payment—whether cash, credit, or installment—affects distribution dynamics. The suitability of a particular payment method often depends on the nature of the goods being distributed. Flexible payment systems can enhance accessibility for consumers, especially those with limited financial resources.

- 3. Sales Volume**

The volume of sales impacts distribution logistics. Large-scale distribution may be pursued even when consumer demand is moderate, especially in the case of mass-produced or subsidized goods. However, this may lead to inefficiencies if not aligned with actual market needs.

- 4. Product Characteristics**

The perishability, durability, and packaging of products influence how they are distributed. Goods that are sensitive to time and environmental conditions—such as food or medicine—require more sophisticated and expedited distribution channels to preserve their quality and utility.

- 5. Profitability**

Producers must consider the profitability of distribution activities. If long-term distribution leads to financial losses, alternative models or more cost-effective methods must be explored to maintain business sustainability while still upholding social responsibilities.

- 6. Capital**

The amount of capital available to producers determines the scale and reach of distribution. Businesses with greater capital can afford longer and more extensive distribution channels, while those with limited funds may be constrained to local or shorter-range operations. Capital also affects transaction modalities, including the choice between cash-based or credit-based systems.

Each of these factors plays a critical role in shaping the distribution system, not only from an economic standpoint but also from an ethical and humanitarian perspective within Islamic economics. Efficient and fair distribution is necessary to fulfill the principles of *'adl* (justice), *maslahah* (public interest), and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood).

Verses Related to Distribution

This section explores Qur'anic verses that directly address the principles and mechanisms of wealth distribution. Three key verses—Surah *Al-Hashr* (59:7), *Al-Baqarah* (2:195), and *Al-Isrā'* (17:26)—are highlighted for their foundational role in shaping Islamic economic ethics regarding distribution.

1. Wealth Distribution in Surah Al-Hashr (59:7)

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ ۚ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

Translation (interpretive):

“Whatever *fa'i* (spoils) Allah has bestowed upon His Messenger from the people of the towns—it belongs to Allah, His Messenger, the near relatives, the orphans, the needy, and the stranded traveler—so that it does not circulate only among the rich among you...” (Q.S. *Al-Hashr* [59]: 7)

According to scholars of *fiqh*, *fa'i* refers to wealth acquired from disbelievers without direct combat, often as a result of abandonment or fear. The verse highlights that such wealth is not to be monopolized but must be redistributed among designated groups: *ahl al-bayt*, orphans, the poor, and travelers. The underlying message is that wealth should not remain concentrated among the wealthy elite. Instead, it must be mobilized for broader social benefit (Zabura et al., 2024).

Imam Ahmad narrates that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb stated that the wealth of Banū Naḍir was obtained without warfare and was distributed to meet the needs of the Prophet's household for a year, with the remainder used for communal welfare. This illustrates a model of proactive redistribution based on moral governance.

2. Distribution of Infaq for Family and Society in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:195)

وَأَنْفَقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ۚ وَأَحْسِنُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Translation:

“Spend in the way of Allah and do not throw yourselves into destruction. And do good; indeed, Allah loves those who do good.” (Q.S. *Al-Baqarah* [2]: 195)

This verse was revealed in response to the attitude of the *Anṣār* who intended to prioritize rebuilding their lost wealth after the victory of Islam. According to *tafsīr* by al-Suyūṭī and al-Shihāb, Allah commands believers to continue charitable expenditure (*infaq*), warning that neglecting it leads to moral and societal decay. Wealth must be used not only for personal security but also to uphold collective dignity and resist social collapse (Shihab, 2005).

3. Equitable Distribution in Surah Al-Isrā' (17:26)

وَأَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا

Translation:

“Give the relative his right, and [also] the poor and the traveler, and do not spend wastefully.” (Q.S. *Al-Isrā'* [17]: 26)

This verse mandates the allocation of wealth to relatives, the poor (*al-masākīn*), and travelers in need (*ibn al-sabīl*). According to *Tafsīr al-Azhar* and Wahbah al-Zuhaylī's *al-Munīr*, extravagance is condemned, while structured giving is encouraged. This reinforces the ethical duty to support family and community members, addressing economic inequalities through both obligatory (*zakāt*) and voluntary (*ṣadaqah*) means (Nadia et al., 2024).

The Correlation Between the Qur'anic Verses and Distribution from the Qur'anic Perspective

The Qur'an offers a comprehensive ethical and theological foundation for wealth distribution, emphasizing justice, balance, and communal responsibility. The following subsections analyze how each of the previously discussed verses supports these core principles from the perspective of Islamic economics.

1. Surah Al-Ḥashr (59:7) and Economic Justice

The verse from *Surah al-Ḥashr* (59:7) emphasizes that wealth should not be monopolized by the affluent but must be fairly circulated among society's vulnerable segments—such as orphans, the poor, and travelers. The Qur'anic principle aims to prevent wealth accumulation in a small elite class, thereby establishing economic equilibrium.

This redistribution reflects the Islamic economic rejection of monopolization and highlights the central role of instruments such as *zakāt*, *ṣadaqah*, and *waqf* in promoting social justice. By advocating for structured wealth distribution, the Qur'an envisions a society where economic resources are aligned with moral and spiritual development (Fikriyyah & Kurniawan, 2022).

2. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:195) and Charitable Responsibility

Surah al-Baqarah (2:195) underscores the spiritual and social imperative of *infaq*—spending in the cause of Allah—as a vehicle for equitable distribution. This verse reinforces the concept that wealth is not merely a private asset but a divine trust to be managed for public good.

Charity, in this context, functions not only as an act of piety but also as a preventive mechanism against socioeconomic degradation. The Qur'an warns that withholding charitable spending leads to societal harm, while generosity fosters resilience and spiritual reward (Shihab, 2005).

3. Surah Al-Isrā' (17:26) and Familial & Social Obligations

The directive in *Surah al-Isrā'* (17:26) to give rights to close kin, the poor, and travelers reflects the integrative nature of Islamic distribution ethics. It demonstrates that wealth allocation should prioritize both familial responsibilities and broader social welfare. Additionally, the verse discourages wasteful spending (*tabdhīr*), advocating for efficiency and intentionality in financial conduct.

This holistic framework ensures that wealth serves not only the individual but also strengthens communal bonds and addresses social challenges such as poverty, displacement, and economic exclusion (Ulirrahmi, n.d.; Nadia et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted analysis, three Qur'anic verses—*Surah al-Hashr* (59:7), *al-Baqarah* (2:195), and *al-Isrā'* (17:26)—serve as foundational references for the Islamic concept of wealth distribution. These verses collectively illustrate that distribution in Islam is not only an economic necessity but also a moral and spiritual obligation.

Surah al-Hashr (59:7) emphasizes that wealth should not remain concentrated among the wealthy, but should be redistributed to benefit the poor and other entitled groups. This verse supports the principle of economic justice and social equity, promoting financial circulation across all strata of society.

Surah al-Baqarah (2:195) highlights the importance of charitable giving (*ṣadaqah* and *infaq*) as instruments for achieving economic and social balance. Such acts are presented not as optional generosity but as integral duties for Muslims, helping to alleviate poverty and strengthen communal solidarity.

Surah al-Isrā' (17:26) further strengthens this framework by calling for responsible and equitable allocation of wealth to family members, the poor, and travelers in need, while also cautioning against extravagance and wastefulness.

In conclusion, the Qur'anic perspective on distribution is rooted in the values of justice (*ʿadl*), compassion (*raḥmah*), and social responsibility (*mas'ūliyyah ijtīmā'īyyah*). Through mechanisms such as *zakāt*, *ṣadaqah*, and *infaq*, Islam envisions a socio-economic order that minimizes inequality, uplifts the underprivileged, and fosters collective well-being.

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