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A Values-Based Approach for Development: An Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Recurrent and concurrent crises call for new development paradigms, as dominant theories of economic development are not fostering equity or sustainability. We argue that part of the reason is that the conceptualization of development, and the resulting metrics driving decision-making, are narrow. Building on work that proposes adding values/ethics as a fourth pillar to development, along with economic, environmental, and social pillars, this article presents an Islamic perspective of how values-based development would differ from the dominant, contemporary forms. While rooted in a specific perspective and worldview, it has great relevance as approximately a quarter of humanity adheres to the faith. We offer a holistic, values-based approach to development, drawing on classical foundations and contemporary lessons, rooted in a different epistemic and ideological orientation. On this basis, we highlight five values that could be the foundation for re-orienting development: vicegerency, justice, excellence, tranquility, and freedom. Integrating these values in a fourth, values-based pillar of development alters the conceptualization and the metrics of development, resulting in processes driven by different objectives for individuals and societies.

Keywords

Values-based development – Islamic ethics – development

نهج التنمية القائم على القيم: منظور إسلامي

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الخلاصة

يتطلب التعامل مع الأزمات المتكررة والمتزامنة التفكير في نماذج إنمائية جديدة، ذلك أن النظريات السائدة في التنمية الاقتصادية لا تعزز قيم العدالة أو مفهوم الاستدامة. نطرح في هذه الدراسة تصورا مفاده أن جزءاً من سبب الأزمة هو ضيق الرؤية التي تساهم في تشكيل تصوراتنا لمفهوم التنمية، والذي يعكس بالضرورة على طبيعة المعايير والقياسات التي تتحكم في عملية اتخاذ القرارات. بالإضافة إلى الركائز الثلاثة المعتمدة في مجال التنمية، وهي الركائز الاقتصادية والبيئية والاجتماعية، نقترح في هذه الدراسة إضافة ركيزة رابعة، هي "القيم والأخلاق" من منظور إسلامي يختلف عن الأطروحات المعاصرة السائدة. صحيح أن المنظور المقترح يتعلق بمجموعة معينة، تمثل فيمن يعتنق الإسلام ويؤمن بقيمه وقدرتها على إصلاح المجتمع، لكنه في الوقت ذاته يتعلق بجمهور واسع يمثل ربع سكان الكوكب تقريباً. نقدم في هذه الدراسة مقارنة تنوية شاملة مؤسسة على القيم، وتعتمد على الموازنة بين الأسس الكلاسيكية لتلك القيم والدروس المعاصرة. وبشكل محدد، نسلط الضوء على قيم خمسة يمكن أن تشكل حجر الأساس لهذا المنظور المقترح، وهي الخلافة والعدل والإحسان والطمأنينة والحرية. ونخلص في هذه الدراسة إلى القول بأن دمج هذه القيم بوصفها ركيزة رابعة لمفهوم التنمية سيساهم في تغيير مفاهيم ومقاييس التنمية، وبالتالي يؤدي إلى تطوير ودعم الأفراد والمجتمعات بصورة مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية

التنمية المبنية على القيم - الأخلاق الإسلامية - التنمية

1 Introduction

When the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda were being debated, some scholars suggested that while we need new metrics and an integrated understanding of them, we also need different approaches to frame what development is. One such proposal is re-envisioning development by integrating an ethical or values-based pillar to guide not only measures but also objectives (e.g., Burford et al. 2013). In parallel, there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of faith and faith-based organizations as critical actors within development processes (e.g., Clarke 2006; Olarinmoye 2012; Duff and Buckingham 2015; Gade 2019; Marshall and Van Saanen 2007). This article explores how ethically grounded, values-based developmental objectives and metrics could be expanded upon from an Islamic perspective by offering a theoretical overview of an Islamic paradigm of development. This perspective is important to this discourse because integrations of ethical and religious traditions need to move beyond ideas emanating from the Euro-West. Furthermore, the Islamic perspective has global influence, as there are 57 member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, within which some two billion people live (OIC 2021), for whom this perspective is not only relevant but resonates with their worldview and values. To achieve this aim, this article attempts to integrate existing literature on development, and the key gaps identified therein, as well as the Islamic vision of development and what key values might be considered within an overview of Islamic development framework that is based on key orienting values (Figure 1).

While this article attempts to offer a unique perspective and draws on broad sets of literature, the scope is limited to a selective use of literature (given how broad development studies, development economics, and religious studies are as disciplines). We draw on a thorough search of literature on Islamic development perspectives (via Web of Science), which guided us to what has been covered and what has yet to be covered in the existing literature. With regard to existing literature on development and economics, our utilization was selective, and our utilization of religious studies literature was purposeful. From a methodological perspective, we began with the existing literature on Islamic

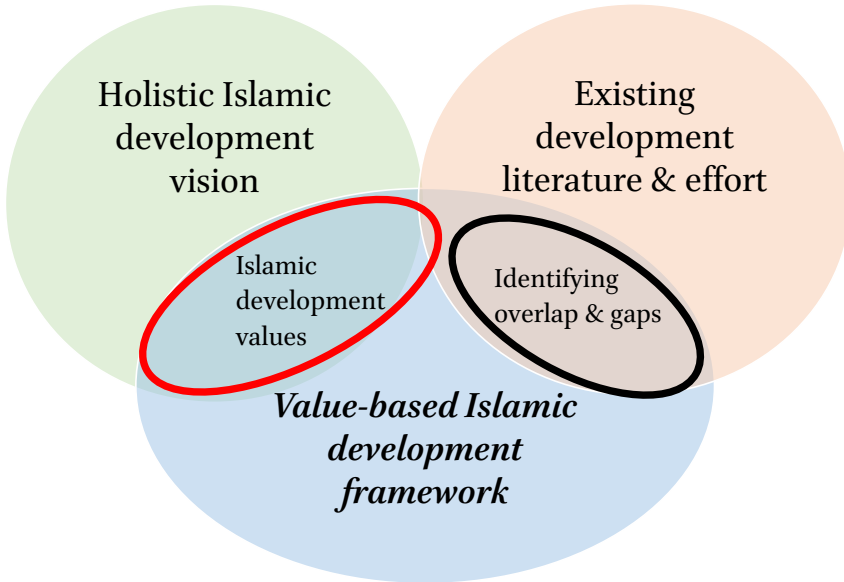


FIGURE 1 Overall approach for Islamic development values and metrics

perspectives of development, as identified on Web of Science. We then analyzed existing perspectives on development, largely drawing on development economics, and identified the critiques or shortcomings of these approaches. Based on these two starting points, we were able to identify gaps and begin to develop an Islamic framework, including outlining specific guiding values for development. We aim to contribute to filling a gap at the theoretical level, which bridges the theological and the implementation aspects, whereby values from the former can support and guide the decisions and actions of the latter. Specifically, this paper advances the broader, theoretical level of conceptualizing what values-based development might prioritize through offering a theoretical overview of an Islamic paradigm of development. This article aims to contribute to this emerging area of values-based development, and in doing so aims to act as a contribution for future research on the theories guiding development objectives and metrics.

Since studies on development and faith have covered a wide range of topics, we think it is useful to be clear what this article is not. We do not aim to offer a theological exposition, in other words, this is not an analysis of sacred texts and their interpretation to examine what development is from a scriptural study (for readers interested in such an analysis, see: Dunyā 1979; Harvey 2018; Izutsu 2002; Abuiyada 2018; Gade 2019). This study is not a practical analysis

of Islamic faith-based organizations (FBOs), for which there is a growing set of literature that documents case studies of organizations driven by Islamic values (e.g., Khan and Cheema 2020). Rather, we propose a framework guided by core values found within Islam, from which we explore implications for re-envisioning development objectives.

In the following section we provide a background of the dominant ideas informing development from the perspective of economics, as well as emergent critiques and proposed alternatives. We then briefly highlight what has been put forward in classical and contemporary thought regarding development from an Islamic perspective. This foundation allows us to speak more specifically about objectives, metrics, and indicators, before moving to a presentation of a holistic framework of development. The proposed model is guided by cross-cutting, integrated themes of multidimensionality, complexity, and distinctiveness, and five specific values of vicegerency (*istikhlāf*), justice (*ʿadl*), excellence (*ihsān*), tranquility (*sakīna*), and freedom (*hurriyya*). We conclude with discussions on how this framework intersects with some emergent ideas and practices in development studies as well as in Islamic thought and practice.

2 Contemporary Conceptualizations of Development and Its Measurement

The dominant orientation and resulting metrics used to assess development progress, or a lack thereof, has been economic. In its contemporary, post WWII formulation, economic recovery and growth have commonly been viewed through the theoretical lens of modernization theory, and thereby envisaged as occurring within stages of economic transformation (e.g., as in the work of Rostow 1960). Economic growth was viewed, via this conceptualization, as a technical and managerial concern, primarily of finance (e.g., capital to stimulate growth via the Bretton Woods institutions, or before that via the Marshall Plan, see Lewis 1955) and technical assistance to strengthen capacity limitations (Millikan and Rostow 1957). While these theoretical foundations were pervasive, the conceptualization and measurement of economic development based on them have differed. At times, the metrics employed to assess economic development have implied a process (e.g., rates of macro-economic growth) while at other times the metrics implied movement toward a condition (e.g., self-sustained growth). This has largely been a matter of emphasis, as the economic measures were often examined in tandem.

A number of assumptions were embedded within this economic vision of development, which included ideas that: (1) individuals are self-interested and thus conflict is expected due to a competition over finite resources, (2) capitalism provides the most efficient pathway to economic development, (3) inequality was, via Kuznets, expected and a sign of progress, (4) that macro-economic growth would “trickle down” to people throughout society, (5) that greater global integration would “trickle down” to nations, (6) and that liberalizing markets is a necessary component of development to achieve such integration. Critiques of these assumptions have been put forward, including ones shortly after these ideas were proposed (e.g., Amin 1976; Seers 1969; Pearson 1969) as well as many since (e.g., Easterly 2002; 2007; Chang 2003; Piketty 2014; Stiglitz 2012; Raworth 2017). It is not our objective to survey all of the dominant theories and their critiques, nor the metrics each respectively put forth, however we seek to briefly outline the dominant conceptualization of development as economic and its key assumptions so that alternatives can be viewed with sufficient contextualization.

Although mainstream economics continues to rely on macro-economic growth metrics as primary measures for development, the conceptualization of development has significantly altered following the publication of UNDP's Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990 (led by Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen, both economists). This report re-centered people as the wealth of a nation and put forth metrics regarding individual well-being (e.g., health, education, standard of living). The report has been published annually since, with an updated Human Development Index, providing a much broader global data set for comparisons. Influenced by the work of Amartya Sen, the Human Development Report is not limited to outcomes, but also draws attention to opportunities, freedoms, and choice. As it relates to this study, it is notable that preceding the first publication of the Human Development Report, arguments were put forth in the Arabic language about the need to rethink development, with scholars developing theories to reorient its conceptualization and measurement (see for example the work of Dunyā 1979). Beyond the Human Development Report, a range of additional critiques and alternatives have been proposed, using diverse objectives, such as those relating to freedom, happiness, rights, inequality, and sustainability, each having their own respective metrics.

Specific development metrics reflect broader assumptions about the objectives and processes that enable it. The dominance of macro-economic metrics, of annual GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment rates for example, were rooted in assumptions that a “big push” could enable economic growth

to move from one stage of modernization to another, while the benefits were assumed to spread in society. The metrics that were considered relevant in these measures were relatively few, and primarily economic. As noted, the Human Development Index proposed a broader set of metrics (as of 2020, it had 171 indicators) when it became clear that macro-economic metrics were not necessarily improving the well-being of all members of society. In what follows, we briefly analyze the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000–2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015–2030) to situate the current development discourse within this broader critique. These global initiatives set forth objectives, and metrics, to assess their respective progress. Based on this, we then explore what is missing from these dominant agendas and why a values-based approach can address these critical gaps.

The MDGs emerged following a donor report (*Shaping the 21st Century*, produced by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD). The eight goals were related: (1) poverty and hunger, (2) education, (3) gender equality and empowering women, (4) child mortality, (5) maternal health, (6) HIV, malaria and other diseases, (7) environmental sustainability, and (8) global partnership for development. Under the 8 goals, there were 21 targets and 60 indicators. The metrics set forth to assess progress for these goals tended to be relative improvements, such as “reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.” Meaning that targets could be met without necessarily changing the situation of the most vulnerable or most marginalized. One of the criticisms of these relative target improvements is that cost-effective interventions were prioritized (e.g., people accessible by road) to demonstrate progress toward MDG targets and thereby used for promotional purposes or to attract donor funding. In parallel, those who most needed support (e.g., those in remote areas) may have been left behind. The MDGs attracted significant attention to the goals, targets, and indicators, and in some countries significant progress was made regarding them (albeit uneven globally).

As the MDG era approached its end, negotiations began preparing for a new agenda. The objectives of the SDGs sought to “leave no one behind” and “start with those most behind” as operational principles that would address the challenges experienced during the MDG era. The SDGs also shifted focus, they were no longer oriented toward the “least developed nations,” but took a global approach – with all nations expected to report on progress. This global approach was integrated because of the increasing recognition that many challenges cannot be addressed without global action, and indeed many of the most developed countries were the primary cause of the challenges (e.g., climate change). The seventeen goals have more bold objectives (e.g., no poverty,

end hunger), which is also reflected in some of the 169 targets and 232 indicators (e.g., by 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than 1.25 USD a day).

These improved goals, targets, and indicators, have unfortunately not translated into transformative action, particularly when analyzed on the global scale. We argue that in order to understand why, we need to revisit the underlying theory driving these objectives and explore what alternatives might have to offer. Currently, not a single country is on track to meet the SDG targets. One (of the many) challenge contributing to this outcome is that responsibility has primarily remained within the nation-state. Due to this framing of targets by nations, there have been some nations that have disregarded their responsibility (e.g., on environment, greenhouse gases, biodiversity, life under the sea) and thereby left the rest to suffer the consequences. A second challenge is that power has not been sufficiently acknowledged; for example, Goal 16 focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions and it is assumed that modalities of interaction between nations (e.g., treaties, trade, and collaboration), because of their consensual nature, are just. However, we need another lens to evaluate the ways such interactions, including development cooperation, occur. For example, while conventional interest-based lending may offer opportunities (even at concessional rates), the process places minimal responsibility on the lender, and heavy burdens on the people of the borrowing nation (often resulting in intergenerational burdens of repayment). The power imbalances of access to finance, and the conditions thereof, are reflective of colonial structures, not of solidarity, partnership and mutual responsibility. It was for this reason that the former President of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, called the debt system neo-colonial and proposed a “united front against debt” at the African Union (at the time the Organization of African Unity) in 1987. It is not only the financial system that requires transformation; however, other mundane targets and indicators can result in negative, unintended outcomes. For example, in some countries we have witnessed MDG and SDG progress on developmental outcomes, but in these same places freedoms are being restricted (e.g., more children are enrolled in school, but freedom of movement is limited). In cases such as these, the targets are being met but the broader aim of enabling people to live dignified lives is not.

A different approach is needed to navigate these contradictions. A values-based approach to development in the form of principles may provide avenues to approach development and development cooperation differently. Values-based approaches have been employed in a range of fields, such as in management (Anderson 1997) and health (Fulford 2011). Although less developed, there are emerging studies taking a values-based approach to

development, and specifically the SDGs (e.g., Burford et al. 2013), which build on broader works in economics considering values (e.g., Sen 1984). Faith-based organizations (FBOs) that work in development also have roots in values-based approaches, although this varies from a motivating factor for engagement to an intrinsic and focal aspect of the work (e.g., as in proselytization). In what follows, we turn to classical Islamic scholarship to explore how development was conceptualized, and thereby explore what alternative directions this might offer in formulating an Islamic perspective on values-based development.

3 Perspectives on Development from Classical Islamic Scholarship

Discussions about the idea of “development” did not begin in the post-WWII era. In considering an Islamic perspective of development it is crucial to consider other sources, particularly as we seek insight that guides us to overcome the biases and blinders of our current historical moment. Classical Islamic literature approached the idea of development using a range of principles and terminologies. Examples of such literature include the work of Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) and his discussion about the concept of *‘umrān* or societies development’s reasons, forms, and dynamics (which is different, but close to some elements of the contemporary development conceptualizations). In his famous work, later known as *The Muqaddima* (“Introduction”), Ibn Khaldūn gives an outline of why and how civilizations rise and fall, and the traits that encompass such transitions. The focus of Ibn Khaldūn was rooted in values and ethics, and in particular how interconnected or alienated individuals in society were. Based on these traits, Ibn Khaldūn proposed a theory for the cyclical rise and decline of dynasties based on social, political, and economic factors. Many of these factors are still discussed today in contemporary development literature. For example, the ideas of Ibn Khaldūn can be applied to indices of and research on social capital, social cohesion, equality, and trust, as well as to institutions and ideas. Notably, some of the critiques of the dominant ideas in development economics were written by people who drew on the work of Ibn Khaldūn, including Frank (1998) and Harvey (1984).

As a founder of social sciences, the work of Ibn Khaldūn is relatively well-known, but some of his contemporaries were also putting forth works that elaborated on the enabling or driving of development. For example, preceding Ibn Khaldūn, the scholar Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) wrote about the role of every member in the society, and their respective utilization of their skills and resources for the betterment of their community, in his work *Mu‘īd al-Ni‘am wa-Mubīd al-Niqam* (“The Restorer of Favors and Restrainer of

Punishments”). Unlike contemporary development economics, which has a focus on growth, al-Subkī prioritized how these skills and resources could be utilized to preserve the blessing granted by God. In other words, the focus was on sustainable use of resources in responsible ways, while avoiding exploitative and excessive utilizations of people, their skills, and the resources available to societies. Based in a religious worldview, al-Subkī elaborated on the concept of being thankful to God by using His bounties in accordance with His orders, which includes a clear call for justice and balance as well as the avoidance of oppression and wastefulness. In his work, al-Subkī provides detailed examples of what this entails for people in society, from the elite political class to the craftspeople, each of whom are called to excel in their work with excellence and integrity in the carrying out of their tasks, while acting as members of society that uphold justice for the collective good and to foster a just community. In this regard, values and ethics were critical factors for development for al-Subkī, which could be considered as an early attempt of what was later known as value-based development.

Following the work of Ibn Khaldūn, but still within the classical period of Islamic scholarship, is the work of Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Daljī (d. 838/1435) and his book *al-Falāka wa-l-Maflūkūn* (“Poverty and the Poor”). Al-Daljī approached the development discussion in a unique way as he focused on poverty and people experiencing it. After a detailed and comprehensive definition of poverty, the book discusses the forms and causes of poverty, refuting any religious justification for this state and highlighting the negative physical and spiritual impact of poverty on individuals and society (providing a long list of examples). Al-Daljī provides practical directions on how to combat poverty and navigate the journey to alleviate its hardship. As a book that focuses on individuals, the directions are mainly focused on individual efforts to secure the means for provision and to avoid poverty traps, understanding social monetary dynamics and having full trust in God the sustainer as a governing value for both individuals and society.

These three examples (Ibn Khaldūn, al-Subkī, al-Daljī) are only three examples of classical scholars, out of many others that could, and indeed should, be revisited as we seek to explore ways to reconsider the conceptualization of development, particularly for ideas beyond those that have become dominant in the post WWII era, in what Milanović (2018, 3) describes as an uncontested ideological domination of the idea that “money-making not only is respectable but is the most important objective in people’s lives.” Along similar lines, it is important to explore the paradigm and domain difference (using the terminology in Hallaq 2018) between Islam and neoliberal capitalist approaches to

development and what Hallaq referred to in his discussion about the modern relationship between knowledge and power as the “exploitation of matter and people for the single but highest goal of profit” (Hallaq 2018, 187).

This brief analysis of classical Islamic scholarship highlights that in contrast to contemporary development approaches, the underpinning philosophy of Islamic development is founded on values, which guide individuals and societies, which should act as the guiding principles of Islamic development, both at the holistic as well as the detailed implementation level. Building on the above analysis of contemporary and classical conceptualizations of development, the next section sets out an Islamic development process, followed by an outline of specific values that could guide an Islamic framework or approach to development.

4 A Holistic Approach to Understand Islamic Development

A conceptualization of Islamic development could be realized through a development process, and the aligned outcomes, that embody, manifest, and put to practice Islamic values. Thus, the starting point to understand the contextual setup of values-based Islamic development (and in turn its metrics) is to draw on the overarching vision and objectives that Islamic teachings sets for the purpose of human life and then deconstruct the components of such a vision that are necessary for, and/or guide, development. We should note that this is substantively different from current indices, such as the Islamicity Index, which ranks countries based on four criteria (economy, law and governance, human and political rights, international relations). We see these as interesting explorations, but rooted in the contemporary paradigm and metrics of dominant definitions of development, and does not propose an alternative epistemology or ontology regarding what development could or might be informed by. It is in this direction we strive to offer reflections.

As outlined in the Qurʾān, humanity has been entrusted by the Creator to act as vicegerents in making the earth a place of goodness and justice (Q 2:30), which set forth the foundational epistemology required to enable individual flourishing and civilizational development, or *ʿumrān*, as Ibn Khaldūn termed it. When the epistemological view of vicegerency (*istikhlāf*) is combined with the values of justice (*ʿadl*), excellence (*iḥsān*), tranquility (*sakīna*), and freedom (*ḥurriyya*) this values system translates into individual and collective developmental processes (opportunities as per the Senian formulation of justice in process and distribution; Sen 2009) and enables developmental

outcomes (as in the human, environmental, economic, political, and socio-cultural domains). In alignment with contemporary decolonial perspectives (e.g., Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1992; 2012), the flourishing is pluralistic, where every group of people has its unique priorities and contributions, reflective of specific socio-cultural, political, and temporal contexts they exist in. The Islamic epistemology does not dictate the processes nor the outcomes, rather this epistemology presents foundational values to guide the navigation of decision making so as to determine what is more appropriate, suitable, and feasible given the specificities of time, place, resources, and capacities. This approach is not a modern (re)rendering of Islamic values but reflects the decentralized nature of governance and governing that has existed at multiple times throughout the history of Islamic civilizations (e.g., Kimball 2019; Ware 2014), with diverse examples from Europe, West Africa, and Asia demonstrating how these orientations were reflected and guided by the underpinning epistemology and values they shared.

From an Islamic perspective (Figure 2), ideals and exemplars of development could be drawn from different sources: the religious pinnacle during the time of Prophet Muḥammad, scientific excellence in the golden age of Islam, the valuing, contribution to, and translation of global knowledge in the Bayt al-Ḥikma (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad, political and military power when the Muslim empires were the largest known in human history, amongst others. We do not propose a single source for inspiration, but rather orient this reconceptualization with a sense of revival within a contemporary and future outlook. Engaging with historical ideals and exemplars requires intellectual engagement with the heritage of scholarship, combined with an innovative spirit that contextualizes the present and future for novel directions. The knowledge sphere, as is viewed in its various disciplinary forms in contemporary education systems, diverges from the historical systems of Islamic education wherein ethics and values were focal, as was the honoring of art and aesthetics. The latter, by way of example, can be seen in the majestic geometry of Isfahan or the architecture of Cordoba. The time and resources invested into beautification were viewed as inherently connected to the pursuit of excellence in spirituality and knowledge. The socio-religious and politico-economic environment fostered individuals motivated by different objectives; one example of which is the vast array of charitable foundations (pl. *awqāf*, sing. *waqf*) that were established to serve the public good, in some places amounting to the majority of productive land (e.g., Ghazaleh 2011). Although the list of values could be more exhaustive, due to the limited space of academic articles this is only a beginning of a proposal. In the section that follows, we focus on five values: vicegerency/trust, justice, excellence, tranquility, and freedom.

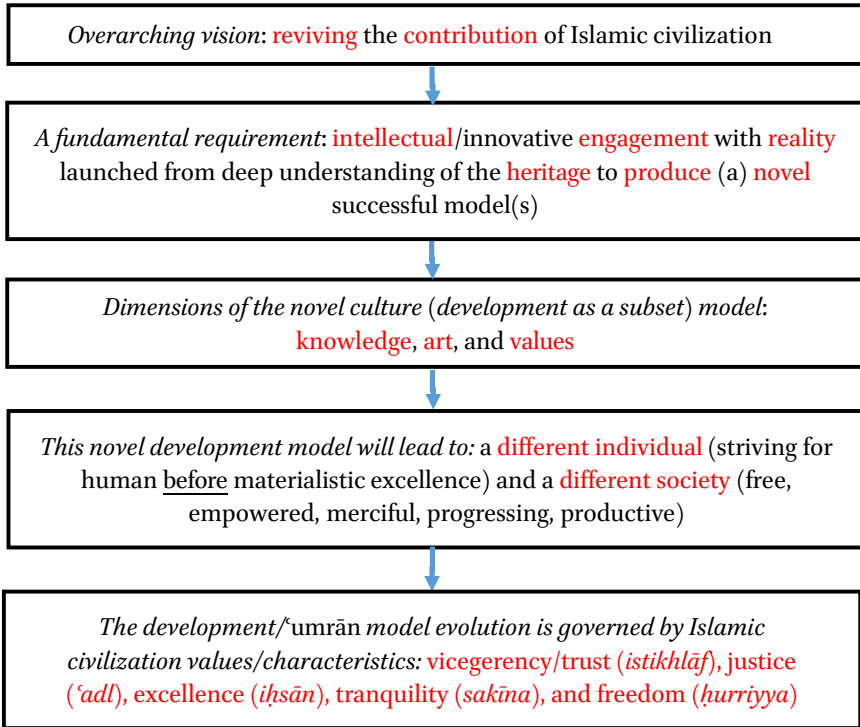


FIGURE 2 A holistic approach for Islamic development metrics formulation

Civilizations are the products of individuals' and societies' intellectual and materialistic cumulative and innovative engagement with demography, geography, and history to generate novel cultural models. These models (in an aggregate sense) flourish within the dimensions of knowledge, arts, and values (Maḥmūd 1993) and are shaped by the contextual reality that each confronts in its developmental (*‘umrān*) processes and objectives. In this context, the approach for what we call Islamic Development should be a *unique* contemporary development model rooted in Islamic values while engaging in the realities of modern development challenges. This uniqueness (or what makes it Islamic) stems from both the *end products* and the *values* governing of this model.

The targeted Islamic development's end products are the paramount of an expected new model offered by the discussed Islamic paradigm. These products are a) the individual and b) society who are both the producers and beneficiaries of the development process. Modern Islamic development will seek to develop and nurture an individual who believes that s/he is a vicegerent of the Creator, striving for justice, excellence, and freedom, which in turn is

reflected in the institutions and processes of society. In this regard, this individual is concerned about, and motivated by, more than the simple accumulation of material wealth as advanced in the ideology of modern capitalism. The individual is less self-centered, more rounded and balanced in terms of ethics, knowledge, spirit, and value-added productivity. As for society, it is characterized by being free, empowered with excellence, merciful with tranquility, progressive with justice, and productive. It is a society that is not limited by its ethnic definition and able to leverage its diverse strengths and collective richness. One can also expect that given the different individual and society sought after, Islamic development can play an integral role in the formation a new type and definition of a future state.

5 Five Values to Guide Development

The five Islamic values we propose that could contribute to broadening the conceptualization of development, indeed providing it with a new epistemological foundation, is rooted in scriptural texts and reflective of the Islamic civilizational values that were noted earlier. While these five values are not drawn from a systematic review of all values present in texts nor from a survey of exemplars, we develop them here as an alternative paradigm which others may build on. These five values inform processes and outcomes of development, which may be further developed in indicators, and collectively into a dashboard where progress can be monitored. Each of the five values is considered a container notion, in terms of each specific value encompassing many other interrelated values and aspects (on each of which several papers could be written). We explore the five values individually below, aiming to provide a broad definition as well as examples to demonstrate the implications each value has for development.

5.1 *Vicegerency (Istikhlāf)*

Istikhlāf, or vicegerency, means the responsibilities individuals and collectives have with regard to the sustainable management of resources, knowledges, and capabilities granted by God.

Acting as vicegerent means ensuring resources are not only available for other people, but also for those generations that will follow. The Prophetic tradition corpus contains many such narrations: teaching others, saving water resources, sharing resources and wealth, reviving barren lands, planting trees, etc. Similar to the indigenous philosophy of North America, an orientation looking to the future aligns with the seventh generation perspective, which we

consider as one way to utilize resources such that those living in future generations will still be able to enjoy such resources and live dignified lives. The Islamic tradition does not specify a set of generations, but puts forth guidelines for living sustainable lifestyles. The underpinning philosophy of this value is that humanity has been entrusted to preserve, develop and increase (*tanmiya*) the beautiful creation of God. Conversely, one is to avoid wastefulness, frivolousness, and excessiveness, each of which run contrary to sustaining resources and ensuring the continuation of dignified living.

With regard to operationalization, this value aligns with many of the goals of the 2030 Agenda as it relates to sustainability, but the implications are that the dominant systems need to change. The form of extractive capitalism driven by short-termism does not align with the vision put forth in the value of vicegerency, thus demanding a course correction in the politico-economic spheres. As noted, the dominant forms of economic thought assume that resources are finite and conflict expectedly emerges from the competition for such resources. One of the assumptions of the Islamic perspective is that – while currently available resources should be sustainably managed – resources are not finite; God may replenish resources or alter a situation. These two paradigms can exist in parallel: humanity is tasked with managing what has been bestowed, while also having the ability to call upon the Creator to alter an existing situation. Such an ability does not, however, alleviate or minimize the responsibility of vicegerency. For clarity, this conviction does not entail believers continuing a destructive status quo while awaiting miraculous resolutions. On the contrary, this conviction calls on believers to do the opposite: the Qur'an explains that one's situation will not be changed until one seeks to change it (Q 13:11), and the Prophetic traditions clarify that it is necessary to do the appropriate work *and* trust in God.

The impact of holding the conviction that God is in control of all that occurs is mainly at the spiritual level and leads to tranquility (as will be discussed below) and cooperation, rather than aggressive and zero-sum competition, as primary outcomes. This conviction also asserts that non-material occurrences are critical components for success, such one seeking the blessing of God in time, resources, health, etc. As a specific developmental example, this value can be employed as a governing principle in selection criteria, for example in deciding between two development routes: one pathway may suggest engaging in extractive and exploitative approaches that are not sustainable, profitable but harmful, while another pathway might suggest the pursuit of circular economies as an alternative route to provide for the needs of all members of society. Vicegerency prioritizes the latter, and in so doing, ensures that the required policies and laws are put into place (a further analysis of this value

and what it generates from a sense of environment stewardship can be found in Gade 2019).

5.2 *Justice* ('Adl)

The comprehensive term justice (*adl*) has implications in many realms, from commercial transactions to criminal law, however for this purpose we focus on aspects that encompass the values of cooperative (rather than competitive) development, social integration with tolerance and equality (including fair distribution), and balanced development approaches. These aspects of justice draw on the Islamic conceptualization of justice as placing things in their rightful place.

Justice is assessed in the present (e.g., social policy) but is also viewed in context (e.g., redistributive justice, equity; for more see Harvey 2018). Due to the scope of this paper, we present only a few components of how the value of justice can guide development. On the basis of all humans being equal before God, in their potentials and capabilities, and the explicit prohibition of discrimination based on race or socio-economic status, the policies that regulate society should be ones that ensure broad, dignified participation. Specific development activities may incorporate justice in different ways, depending on the situation. For example, a justice perspective would ensure that everyone who needs to participate is included (such as ensuring inclusion for those with diverse abilities and avoiding an ability bias by excluding those who are unable to reach a particular location). Justice is putting things in their right place, and so inclusion does not mean full equality in participation in this context, since justice can also demand equity. The duty of *zakāt*, the annual religious tax, is mandatory for specific people in society. Thus, having equity-based programming, putting first those who are marginalized the most, is a way of operationalizing "putting things in their right place" and is found in Islamic systems, including *zakāt*. Justice ensures that trade is fair and based on the value of vicegerency, and also integrates targeted redistributive systems to enable the flourishing of all members of society. One of the limitations of some ethical theories is a neglect of historical injustice, and thereby perpetuating entrenched privilege and marginalization. This conceptualization of justice offers an alternative decision-making approach that balances ideas of equality before God with equity in interventions.

Building on the value of vicegerency, which called for politico-economic transformation, the value of justice may re-orient how business is carried out. At present, the dominant modality in the private sector is that a few people reap the benefits of many workers within a corporation. Islam does not set limits on what can be earned, but a justice-based model would ensure that the disparity between workers is within reason and that those working within

the company are able to live dignified lives. A different orientation of business, which is not novel to Islamic thought or the contemporary era, are worker owned companies where profits are fairly distributed among a collective of business owners (all the workers), as opposed to a few individuals having the majority of the profits while the majority of workers struggle to meet their basic needs. There are many existing development instruments that can serve as a starting point for worker-owned business, such as guilds and cooperatives, which could be supported with policies and purchasing to advance a justice-oriented society. Alongside forms of justice that rectify, there are also justice-based limitations (e.g., against hoarding and holding lands beyond what one is capable of utilizing) as a means to ensure resources are not unjustly held by a minority, thereby creating and perpetuating entrenched inequality. Augmenting these instruments with social services and redistribution mechanisms is necessary; endowed trusts (*awqāf*) played an important social role for centuries (in many countries these trusts operated for centuries, but they institutions were targeted and destroyed by colonialism; see: Nasution 2002; Powers 1989; Zilli 2018) and some still operate in a range of forms today (e.g., Ismail Abdel Moshin 2013; Hakim and Sarif 2021; Kahraman 2021; Medias et al. 2022). It is in this regard that revival plays an important function, the historical legacy provides not only models, but also values, which reorient individuals and societies.

5.3 *Excellence (Iḥsān)*

Iḥsān is excellence in all things. Excellence encompasses governance and business, it also includes the seeking of perfection and the process of beautifying. Excellence connects inner knowledge with outer actions, the internal decisions to the external design and architecture.

Striving for excellence in all things fosters or supports other values, such as seeking perfection (*itqān*) and beauty (*jamāl*), the latter inspiring everything from the arts to urban planning. Elements of this value can be reflected in the avoidance of cloning or copying development policies, processes, or products that either contradict or do not positively contribute to these values. Excellence in this context, therefore, relates to the ability to link the guiding Islamic values to the local reality through contemporary intellectual and artistic engagement, leading to unique development models, products, and solutions. For example, adopting an education system and curricula that promote alternative values and/or dehumanizes oneself, one's history, culture, and language should be rejected. Lessons might be drawn from others, however replicating such systems may result in generations that are longing to become similar to the originators of such a curriculum and look to those people for guidance, rather than believing in themselves as capable to do so. This is the reality in

many post-colonial contexts, where colonial education systems engrained ideas for generations and in some places this continued largely unaltered following independence. Excellence necessitates an innovative alternative that capitalizes on global experience but caters toward what is suitable and appropriate, centering the local, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993; 2012) has described, such that its history, culture, language, and context is the vantage point from which everything else is viewed and engaged with. The implications of this localized approach suggest that it ought to encompass and support efforts, not only at curricular reform, but also at reorienting the knowledge systems to relevant epistemologies and conveying knowledge in relevant languages, which in turn will transform individuals by enriching their sense of self and societies by crafting locally relevant policies. This aligns with, and indeed requires, a decentralized approach to decision making (a process not based on international best practice as a standard, but based on localized best fit).

5.4 *Tranquility (Sakīna)*

Sakīna, or tranquility, is a value that leads to the balance between physical needs of the present and future with aspirations for the hereafter.

A values-based approach to development is attentive to physical needs as well as spiritual needs, and it is oriented not only to success in this world as we know it, but also for the next life. On this basis, a “good life” is envisioned in an entirely different fashion. Rooted in an Islamic perspective, development goes beyond, for example, improving the productivity of agricultural, industrial, or service sectors wherein human subjects are considered as production tools or components of the production cycle. Building on the values of vicegerency, justice, and excellence, the notion of tranquility encompasses objectives of serenity and peacefulness. As a value, this alters the consumption patterns that occur in society, as people do not view resources as finite, nor things that ought to be fought over, but as means or pathways to better living with oneself and with others. One manifestation of this value is a socio-cultural environment that is less materialistic and more balanced intellectually and spiritually. One might look to emerging indices, such as the Happiness Index or measures of Gross National Happiness (the latter utilized by the Government of Bhutan), for examples of how this apparently intangible and/or subjective aim has been integrated into planning objectives and metrics.

5.5 *Freedom (Ḥurriyya)*

From an Islamic perspective humanity is created to serve God. Fulfilling this requires that each person has the freedom (*ḥurriyya*) to pursue their unique talents and interests.

In many countries, people are not free to pursue and develop their skills. This includes places where discussion is unwelcome, policies that dictate subject areas of study based on exam scores, and projects that pre-determine what is needed rather than being based on the priorities of those being served. Freedoms unleash potentials, of individuals and societies, to flourish in ways that are not, and cannot be, centrally planned. For these potentials to be met, everyone must have the ability to explore and cultivate their skills, to have access to knowledge and opportunities, and to engage with diverse ideas. The result can be the fostering of an empowered, *inclusive* society that can *think and decide* freely. Freedom also has societal implications; communities and countries that are dependent on others for knowledge and critical resources cannot think and act freely. Thus, the politico-economic spheres may integrate policies that foster greater self-sufficiency that enhance independence (as opposed to having vulnerabilities due to reliance on external parties), which aligns with the value of vicegerency and reorienting economic systems to ones that are sustainable (e.g., through localization of supply chains, circular economies, et cetera).

6 An Islamic Development Process

In addition to the five above-described values, lessons from the past emphasize the importance of an integrated and interconnected approach to rethinking the conceptualization and implementation of development (within the values, across the values, and in relation to other pillars guiding development). This is reflective of the learning that has been the result of the transition from the Millennium Development Goals era to the Sustainable Development Goal era, wherein the integration of the goals emerged as crucial to enabling positive change and have proven to be essential for avoiding policy incoherence. In this section, we discuss how to approach the design of values-based development metrics that can capture/measure the previous outlined values, the progress and the impact of development activities as well as the end products of development. We will start by outlining some important intersectional or crosscutting characteristics of this vision.

6.1 *Approaches to Enable the Integration of Development Metrics (As Shown in Figure 3)*

6.1.1 Multidimensional

An important characteristic of the proposed metrics is their ability to capture the specific changes taking place as well as the values within the pillars

of the development (in the sustainable development literature the three pillars are environmental, economic, and social, to which we, as in Burford et al. (2013), add values or ethics). The measurement of specific indicators needs to consider the ways in which these actions affect other spheres of life, positively and negatively. These secondary outcomes, or sometimes unexpected outcomes, should be closely monitored, drawing on this cross-cutting vision of multidimensionality. When putting these objectives together, one can envision a dashboard monitoring and tracking the development as a dynamic multidimensional matrix. An example could be to strive to develop a multidimensional economic metric that corrects the pitfall of how classical metrics of economic development sees Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a positive development move while failing to capture how such investment contributes to the labor injustice through the power imbalance that dictates more productivity for less pay. Incorporating the values of justice and freedom in this discussion can lead to multidimensional, valued-based metrics.

6.1.2 Complexity

The complexity of the proposed metrics in the additional pillar of development stems from both the diverse ways in which values are encultured and inculcated in individuals and collectives as well as the difficulty of their measurement. The development process is usually horizontal and vertical, making it a cross sectional and sectorial at the same time. Metrics that measure such processes are usually hierarchical in order to decompose such structural complexity. As for the data, capturing qualitative value-based development targets is indeed a difficult task. Managing the complexity of such task can be done through mapping the five outlined Islamic development values to pragmatic, functioning and clear mechanisms that can be quantitatively (or quasi quantitatively) measured through clear and smart Key Performance Indices (KPIs). This mapping is a challenging innovative process, which we look forward to exploring in future works and by monitoring its exploration by other researchers.

6.1.3 Distinction

A values-based approach to development, or the additional of a values-based pillar to development, requires new objectives and metrics. However, these metrics are not necessary all formulated from scratch. The wealth of existing clear and studied metrics can support a foundation for adoption and adaptation. Thorough attention and scrutiny need to be considered in such adoption process to differentiate between the underpinning philosophies that led to the

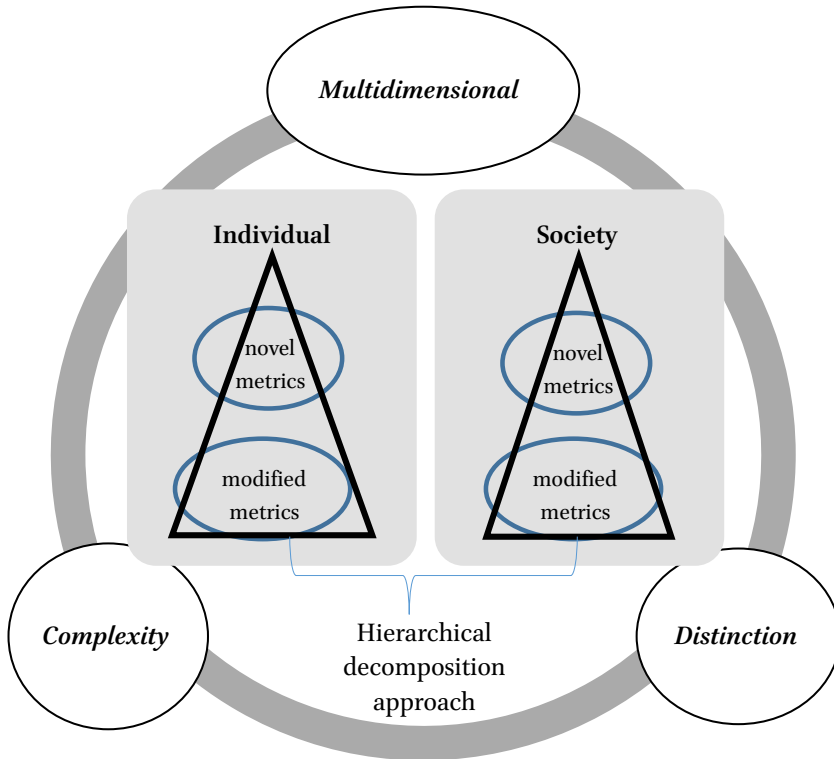


FIGURE 3 Characteristics of the proposed development metrics system

development of these metrics and their capability to address specific elements of interest within the Islamic perspective outlined in this paper and the specific proposed values. A good example in this regard is the Human Development Index and its wealth of metrics, which include many useful elements that capture the socio-economic elements of development. A dashboard inspired by Islamic values will require a mix of novel metrics together with modified existing development metrics.

6.2 Description of the New Islamic Development Metrics Dynamics

It is important to note that this paper does not intend to specifically produce novel development metrics that can quantify the discussed foundational Islamic development values (this is part of a future research agenda). Rather, it gives an overview (in alignment with the foundational spirit of the paper) on how to understand the dynamics that will govern the production of such metrics. The formulation and deployment of the new Islamic development metrics

is expected to be carried out in a hierarchical decomposition approach, as mentioned earlier. At the highest level (*strategic level*), there will be a need to formulate metrics that can monitor and describe the evolution and results of the developmental impact on both individuals and societies. For example, a group of metrics will be developed to track and trace the progress of the different dimensions of the well-rounded, and balanced individual targeted by the value-based development. These metrics will be mapping the Islamic values of vicegerency, justice, excellence, tranquility, and freedom at this individual level. The same applies for monitoring the dynamics of societies engaged in Islamic development through aggregated metrics that assess empowerment and freedom, for example, of these societies.

This higher assessment level will be decomposed into sector-specific metrics (for example education, agriculture, industrial, health) that measure the deployment of the strategic Islamic development vision along these sectors at the *operation level*. This decomposition process will involve an innovative mapping to capture both the technical targets as well as the Islamic development values within each sectoral plan and within specific projects. For example, having metrics for agricultural development may look into improving its productivity from upstream to downstream (technical targets) while maintaining a high level of local cooperation/integration and fair revenue distribution (the value of justice) in the most eco-friendly manner (the value of vicegerency).

A crucial development assessment activity to complement the previous strategic and operation metrics is what can be called the *alignment and coherence metrics*. These metrics are dedicated to assessing how development goals and activities across all sectors are aligned with the underpinning vision and values. Coherence will examine how policies, programs and projects complement one another to ensure that the overall development process results in the sought-after character of the individual and society. Undoubtedly, such comprehensive metrics and assessments are difficult to develop, but they are essential for ensuring the coherence and success of the developmental activities (we look forward to future works that further elaborate on these points, which we have only been able to introduce). An example of such metrics can include the assessment of society's ability to formulate, engage and execute its own value-added development plans that will unleash its creativity and abilities as well as ensure its happiness and independence (the values of vicegerency, justice, excellence, and freedom). This will be based on an exhaustive data and information gathering process from various sectors' plans and results aggregated together in a quantitative and qualitative manner.

7 Discussion

One of the fundamental challenges with shifting toward a values-based approach to development is that it would be transformative, which would require disruption of the status quo. Past attempts of this have been made, but faced barriers, often of the ideological sort. For example, there were efforts by the World Bank to engage religious institutions in the development process in the period from 1995 to 2005 (Haynes 2013), but these had limited success, in part because of conflicting ideological orientations. To be clear, this is not an attempt to stimulate faith-based organizations to promote their faith per se, but to allow them to take radically different stances on issues – for example the World Bank provides interest-bearing loans, which some faith-based groups do not agree with as a form of financing/do not want to participate in. Agreement on values might resolve some of these conflicts, but we have no illusion that they will reach a common ground across all issues. Navigating this challenge, at least for the values rooted in an Islamic perspective, might need partners to pilot and test that are already ideologically aligned (e.g., faith-based organizations), or in countries wherein the population shares, at least to some degree, the religious foundation of the values (e.g., in member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), or in intergovernmental organizations that do so (e.g., the Islamic Development Bank, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development). For these organizations, this values-based approach may be considered as a way to take the global lead in thought and practice, as it is increasingly apparent that recurrent and concurrent crises are products of a system driven by a specific set of metrics, one which must be transformed. Into what, that is a pending question. Nevertheless this experiment might provide some novel directions.

8 Conclusion

The contribution of this paper is a holistic, values-based approach to development, drawing on classical foundations and contemporary lessons, to formulate a values-based approach for the contemporary context. A values-based approach to development aims to foster a different individual and a different society, rooted in an alternative epistemic and ideological orientation. The Islamic perspective is well suited to contribute to this value-based development discussion due to its fundamental position on the role of human beings

on earth as entrusted worshipers to make the world a place of humanity and civilization. An Islamic perspective is important for two reasons: first, around two billion people adhere to this faith and hence it relates to their worldviews and values; secondly, there is emerging consensus that current development theories are not yielding desired outcomes and alternatives beyond the status quo are needed. Recurrent and concurrent crises call for new development paradigms. Additionally, an Islamic perspective draws on a unique intellectual history which acts to remove from the center ideas that have appeared dominant by virtue of political and economic power, and re-center other ideas that have been silenced and/or less visible. This contribution sets forth a broad outline, and specifies five values. Yet, due to the broad scope of this work, the ideas remain largely at the level of examples. As a result, there are many knowledge gaps and potential areas for future research, including developing the ideological vision, specifying quantifiable metrics for the values and piloting these measures with empirical data, creating innovative ways to assess the interconnectivity and coherence of integrating values into other pillars of development activities, plans and policies. We hope this article will encourage further scholarship and that such research may provide new avenues for reconsidering the conceptualization and implementation of development.

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