

The Concept of Justice in Islam: A Socio-pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract: This study attempts to extend politeness theory beyond informal situations to a more serious type of discourse, using data collected from the Holy Quran and the Prophet's sayings. Specifically, different aspects of social justice have been investigated in this study from an Islamic point of view. The data comprises 191 Quranic verses and 100 sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. The study uses qualitative methods focusing on the concept of social justice, and in particular, the way Islam emphasizes numerous principles that organize relationships among members of the society. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the politeness theory as developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and Leech's (1983) model of politeness. The relevance of the politeness strategy is evaluated in terms of two factors: the medium of communication and the seriousness of the topic being discussed. The findings showed that the highest percentage of use is the bald-on-record strategy with (61%), followed by the positive politeness strategy (26%), and (8%) belongs to the negative politeness strategy. The least politeness strategy employed is the Off record with only (5%). Judging from the findings, one might argue that religion has an important role to play in legitimizing social justice and that discrimination is a man-made phenomenon, privileging certain groups of people over others. The findings presented here bear on orientations toward the importance of applying a social system based on divine justice and that in order to bring human justice in line with divine laws, people should exemplify God's justice and mercy in how they think and live.

Keywords: Social justice, pragmatics, Islamic sociology, sociolinguistics, religious discourse.

Oxford Reference (2023, quick reference section) defines social justice as “the objective of creating a fair and equal society in which each individual matters, their rights are recognized and protected, and decisions are made in ways that are fair and honest.” Duignan (2023, para.1) simply defines the term as “the fair treatment and equitable status of all individuals and social groups within a state or society.” From another point of view, Cole (2019, para.1) offers the following definition for racism: “a variety of practices, beliefs, social relations, and phenomena that work to reproduce a

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racial hierarchy and social structure that yield superiority, power, and privilege for some, and discrimination and oppression for others.”

Thus, from the above three definitions, it can be assumed that people may discriminate on the basis of a wealth of traits, such as ethnicity, political belief, color, race, religion, and sex, among a wealth of other socio-economic and political traits. Racism, socio-economic inequality, and class discrimination are some of the most deeply rooted problems facing people today in different parts of the world. Several incidents of injustice and racial discrimination, for example, which took place in different parts of the world have again risen to national attention worldwide (United Nations, 2020).

This paper outlines the pressing need to conduct research on Social Justice and determine effective ways on this issue so as to identify and meet the needs of people who are unable to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others. Unlike all previous research, this study deals with social justice from a socio-pragmatic and religious point of view. A considerable number of previous studies, as will be seen below have provided growing evidence of the interactive relationship between politeness as a socio-pragmatic phenomenon and justice (e.g., Al-Ameedi & Abd, 2021; Derek, 2008; Liao, 2019; Zhao, et al. 2016). These studies have dealt with the issue from different perspectives, political, religious, and socio-psychological.

Background of the Study

In the current research, the researcher will focus on the way of promoting and backing social justice by investigating the role played by religion as manifested in the Holy Quran and Hadith (i.e., the Prophet’s sayings), both of which see social justice as a mandate of faith (see Al-Khatib, 2012; Bassiouni, 2012). Islam is one of the three essential Abrahamic religions. It is faith-centered around belief in the one God (Allah). IslamiCity (2023, para.1) defines Islam as follows:

Islam means to achieve peace– peace with God, peace within oneself, and peace with the creations of God – through wholly submitting oneself to God and accepting His guidance.

Hadith, on the other hand, is defined by Encyclopaedia Britannica (2023, para.1) as a “corpus of the sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, revered by Muslims as a major source of religious law and moral guidance.” It is an important source, second only to the Quran, for law, ritual, and creed. The importance of Hadith is clearly reflected in one of the Quran verses saying “whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you from, leave it,” (The Noble Quran, Al-Hashr, 59:7). Hadith literature, which is the other major source of Islamic teachings is also aimed at explaining the Quran (cf. Bassiouni, 2012).

Thus, followers of Islam are those who submit completely to God’s will (see Al-Khatib, 2022). In Islam, personal piety and deeds are the basis for merit. The Quran explicitly denies any hint of socio-religious distinction or discrimination. It tells us that the diversity of life and the various languages and colors of human beings are a lesson for people to learn about humility, equality, and the appreciation of differences (cf.

Dubuque Tri-State Islamic Center, 2020). The importance of justice in Islam is deeply rooted in God's Divine nature. In Islam and according to the Islamic declaration of faith, there is only one God (Allah) Who is referred to and described in the Quran by 99 names that depict His attributes. Aladl, Al-Hakam, and Al-Muqsit, meaning in English the Utterly Just, the Impartial Judge, and the Just One respectively, are some of God's beautiful names in Islam (IslamiCity, 2023). The following verse in which Almighty Allah orders the human being to be just and do good to others reflects the great divine message that should ground all types of dealing between human beings: "Indeed, Allāh orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded" (The Noble Quran, Nahl, 16, verse. 90, p.278).

Islam is an all-embracing way of life extending over the entire spectrum of life, showing us how to conduct all human activities in a sound and wholesome manner (see Islamweb.net, 2014). Abdalati (2010, p.14) argues that "Islam is not only a religion but also a way of life." Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the principal source of Islamic law, the Sharia. It contains the rules by which the Muslim world is governed (or should govern itself) and forms the basis for relations between man and God, between individuals, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, as well as between man and things that are part of creation. Abdalati, (2010, p.18) states that:

The concept of God in Islam describes Him as the Most Merciful and Gracious, the Most Loving and most concerned with the well-being of man, and as Full of Wisdom and care for His Creatures. His Will, accordingly, is a Will of Benevolence and Goodness, and whatever Law He prescribes must be in the best interest of mankind.

Modes of Communication in the Holy Quran

Al-Hakam (2022) states that the Holy Quran is a code of conduct and a source of morality, etiquette, and manners. The Quran has 114 Suras (Chapters) each of which is divided into verses. The Holy Quran is a constitution covering all aspects of life from the most private to the most public. It regulates mankind's natural needs of all types from what to eat to how to deal with each other. God-man communication is based on a process of encoding and decoding. Encoding means here the process in which the messages are sent in a huge number of verses. Al-Khatib (2012) demonstrated that such messages are sent to the worshipers in three different ways: Direct mode of address, storytelling, and exemplifying. Verses through which Allah speaks to the believers directly such as "O believers! Avoid many suspicions, 'for' indeed, some suspicions are sinful," (The Noble Quran, Al-Hujraat, 49, p. 518), is seen as a direct method of address. By storytelling, we mean a large number of narratives of the previous prophets, which is meant to explain the general message of Islam and remind Muslims of the earlier prophets and their struggles, among other reasons (see Denffer, 2022). A good example of this is the story of Prophet Yusuf/Josef, Yakub/Jacob's son who suffered a lot during his life, a lot of lessons can be learned from His story, like faith, patience, and forgiveness. The third method of delivering messages is by exemplifying. Exemplification is one strategy by which Allah (God) aims to teach believers a

particular moral lesson or to warn them of behaving badly. The following verse is a case in point where God addresses Prophet Mohammad by saying, “Give them an example ‘O Prophet’ of the residents of a town when the messengers came to them” (The Nobel Quran, Ya-Sin:36:13, 2023).

The Present Investigation

This study is a qualitative research project incorporating 191 Quranic verses and 100 sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, examining the concept of social justice in Islam from a socio-pragmatic point of view.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is four-fold: first, to enrich our standing of the legacy of social justice in Islam; second, to gain insight into how Islam speaks of the rights of women and men, parents and relatives, black and white, and the poor and needy; third, to explore how the messages of politeness that call for social justice are formatted and encapsulated in the Holy Quran and Al Hadith; four, to see how politeness works within two frameworks of communication, namely the God-man relationship and the man-man (i.e., interpersonal) relationship.

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, an attempt will be made to address a number of questions that might help us not only to explain the norms of social justice in Islam but hopefully to constitute an adequate basis for making inferences about the most advantageous principles that may help in laying the foundations for social justice. These are: What is the view of Islam on social justice? What politeness strategies are adopted in the Holy Quran to stimulate and make an impact on access to justice for both men and women? What politeness strategies are adopted in the Holy Quran to stimulate and make an impact on access to justice for breaking the cycle of poverty? And finally, what politeness strategies are adopted in the Holy Quran to stimulate and make an impact on access to justice for breaking the cycle of racism?

Significance of the Study

This is a timely study providing a new level of knowledge in an area that is lacking good quality research. The potential effects of injustice and other types of discrimination have not yet been fully studied from a socio-pragmatic and religious point of view. Qualitative research, as collected through an examination of the Quran and Al Hadith data, could add significant information about the perspective of religion on this issue and provide helpful insight into the role that could be played by religion in shaping ideas of social justice, fairness, and equality.

Theoretical Background and Related Literature

This study is the first of its kind in that it examines social justice from a socio-pragmatic viewpoint. Specifically, it attempts to handle the issue of social justice from the interrelationship between religion and politeness as a human social behavior. The rationale behind using the politeness theory as a frame of analysis is that, according to Fraser (1990, p. 220), “the social norm view of politeness assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behavior, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context.” It is believed that politeness theory and Leech’s model of politeness can provide a robust theoretical and empirical framework that can be usefully applied to the study of divine rules and how they are encapsulated into fine-grained messages of politeness.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework of this study is based on two interrelated models of politeness: Brown and Levinson’s view of politeness and Leech’s model of politeness. The importance of politeness principles as one of the most essential sources of law is well recognized and emphasized in the literature. Politeness as a social and linguistic phenomenon has become one of the most important themes in recent pragmatic research. Brown (2015) contends that “politeness is essentially a matter of taking into account the feelings of others as to how they should be interactionally treated, including behaving in a manner that demonstrates appropriate concern for interactors’ social status and their social relationship” (p. 326). He adds that Since politeness is important for constructing and maintaining social relationships, indeed, it is probably a precondition for human cooperation in general. In like manner, Leech (1983) argues that the politeness principle works in a way “to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place” (p. 82). Following these claims, an outline of the two models of politeness is in order.

Brown and Levinson’s Theory of Politeness

Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) theory of politeness is basically established on Goffman’s (1955, p. 213) notion of face. It is defined by Goffman (1955) as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (p.213). The notion of “face” according to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (p. 61). Brown and Levinson’s model comprises three main notions: face, face-threatening acts (FTAs), and politeness strategies. The theory rests on the premise that people have two different types of face: positive face and negative face. The positive face represents the individual’s desire to be liked and appreciated by others. Whereas the negative face signifies the individual’s desire to protect his/her personal rights, such as his/her freedom of speech and action. Face-threatening acts (FTAs), according to Brown and Levinson (1987), are acts that infringe on the hearers’ need to maintain his/her self-esteem and be respected. The theory suggests that face threats could be directed at both the hearer’s face and the speaker’s face. Namely, the face-wants of the participants (i.e., speaker and hearer) could be threatened. Brown and

Levinson (1978) believe that there are three social factors that together determine the amount of threat to face: Power, social distance, and cultural rank.

The theory also suggests that there are four types of politeness strategies: Bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record politeness. Each of these strategies is used to communicate a particular message in a particular way, as follows:

- 1. Bald on record:** This type is a direct way of saying things. It is used in case of great urgency; speaking as if great efficiency is necessary; task-oriented; and request. In this case, no attempt is made on the part of the speaker to minimize the threat to the addressee's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987).
- 2. Positive politeness:** This type of politeness is known as positive face redress because the speaker's aim here is to address the positive face needs of the addressee. In this type of politeness, a number of strategies are used in a way to avoid giving offense by highlighting friendliness. Users of this type of politeness attempt to increase the addressees' self-esteem and make them feel good about themselves. Positive politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), includes fifteen positive politeness strategies: claiming common ground; attending to the hearer's wants; asserting knowledge of the hearer's wants; using in-group identity markers; presuppose/Raise/Assert common ground; juxtaposing criticism with compliments, seeking agreement; avoiding disagreement; being optimistic; using jokes, Assume or assert reciprocity; Give gifts to hearer; Offer, promise, among other strategies.
- 3. Negative politeness:** represents the individual's need for freedom of action, freedom from imposition, and the right to make his/her own decisions. People use this type of politeness to show that a speaker cares and respects the negative face of the addressee. This could be by attempting to be direct by being conventionally indirect, not assuming and presuming. and employing this type of politeness by not coercing the hearer. This view assumes that a large number of speech acts inherently threaten either the speaker or the hearer's face and that politeness is, therefore, a necessary component for non-imposing on the negative face of the speaker and the hearer. Negative politeness comprises ten negative politeness strategies: Be conventionally indirect; question, hedge; be pessimistic; minimize the imposition; give deference; apologize; impersonalize S and H by avoiding the pronouns 'I' and 'you'; state the FTA as a social general rule; nominalize; Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting hearer.
- 4. Off record:** If a speaker goes off the record there would be more than one explanation of the intention of the act being used. Namely, the speaker would not be blamed for his/her intention, as the act is performed in an ambiguous way that could be interpreted differently by the hearer. In another way, the speaker's intention is expressed implicitly in a way to maintain the faces of both the speaker and the hearer. This could be done by inviting some conversational implicatures, via hints triggered by a violation of Gricean Maxim (1975).

Leech's Model of Politeness

The Politeness Principle (PP) suggested by Geoffrey Leech (1983) reveals a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. The politeness principle was introduced by Leech for the purpose of producing and understanding language based on politeness. Specifically, the ultimate purpose of Politeness principles itself is to establish a feeling of community and social relationship, focusing on the effect of the hearer rather than the speaker. Six conversational maxims similar to those proposed earlier (1975) were proposed by Leech, they are: Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Agreement Maxim, and Sympathy Maxim. Four maxims of them complement each other, in the sense that the first and second ones pair together as do the third and fourth (Cutting, 2002). Leech (2014) assumes that the above maxims vary from culture to culture: what may be considered as polite in one culture, may be strange or downright rude in another. The six maxims proposed by Leech (2014, p. 35), are summarized as follows:

1. **The Tact maxim:** “Minimize cost to others, maximize the benefit to others.” The first half applied in Brown and Levinson’s negative politeness as minimizing the degree of imposition, and the second fits in the positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer’s interests, wants, and needs. The tact maxim has three submaxims:
 - a) **Size of imposition:** How great the request one is making. (Al-Khatib, 2001).
 - b) **Mitigating the effect of the request by offering optionality:** The degree to which the addressee will be given in case of proposing and choosing an action.
 - c) **The cost/benefit scale:** “if something is perceived as being to the hearer’s benefit, it can be expressed politely without employing indirectness (Thomas, 1995, reported in Al-Khatib, 2001, p. 183). The higher the cost to the hearer, the less polite the illocutionary act is, and vice versa. (See Leech 1983, pp. 108-109)
2. **The Generosity maxim:** “Minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self.” Minimize benefit to self; Maximize cost to self.” This maxim is like the tact maxim in that it is used in directives and commissives, though it is self-centered.
3. **The Approbation Maxim:** “Minimize dispraise of others; maximize praise of others.” This maxim requires minimizing dispraise of others and maximizing praise of others. That is, the first part of the maxim calls for avoiding disagreement, whereas the second part aims at pleasing others by showing a kind of solidarity.
4. **The Modesty Maxim:** “Minimize praise to self and maximize dispraise to self.” In this maxim, the speaker and hearer must minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self. This maxim is like the approbation maxim in that it is used in expressive and assertive utterances.
5. **The agreement Maxim:** “Minimize disagreement between self and others; maximize agreement between self and others.” In this maxim, speakers are

required to heighten the level of agreement between self and others and reduce disagreement between self and others.

6. **The Sympathy Maxim:** “Minimize antipathy between self and others; maximize sympathy between self and others.” This type of maxim can best be reflected in using such speech acts as congratulations and condolences (2014, p. 35).

Related Literature

This study is a multidimensional approach to studying social justice. The study attempts to handle the subject from a socio-pragmatic and religious point of view. The importance of examining the effect of religion on socio-cultural life has been emphasized in the literature. This issue has been studied from different points of view (Abdalati, 2010; Al-Ameedi & Abd, 2021; Al-Khatib, 2012; Bouchara & Qorchi, 2016; Ismail & Awang Mat, 2016; Klassen, 2009; Mirola, et al., 2016). As the concept of social justice is closely related to the concept of sociology, the topic has also been investigated by a large number of scholars from a sociological standpoint (e.g., Clair & Denis, 2015; Cole, 2019; Hiraldo, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tucker, 2020). Among the various views that have provided a strong stimulus for the appearance of much research on racism and social justice is the Critical Race Theory (CRT). Hiraldo (2010) provided an explanation of CRT in which she analyzed the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups.

Although the topic of social justice and racism have been studied by researchers from different perspectives, not that much research was carried out on the subject in light of politeness theory (e.g., Al-Momani et al., 2018; Keikhaei & Mozaffari, 2013; Kousar, 2015). the subject has been approached in terms of gender and wealth distribution. As politeness is a facet of interactional communication, a number of scholars have viewed and identified politeness in different aspects of religious texts. Among the scholars who have worked on the concept of politeness from a religious point of view is Al-Khatib (2012, 2022), who examined in the first study politeness as reflected in the Holy Quran, and in the other one, how to cope with COVID-19 from a socio-religious and pragmatic point of view. In both cases, the data was collected from several chapters of the Holy Quran. The theoretical framework in both studies was the Politeness theory as developed by Brown and Levinson, as well as Leech's view of politeness. In the first case, he noticed that a great deal of politeness strategies were used for conveying a huge number of divine ethical messages. The conclusion he arrived at was that the various politeness strategies employed in the Quran relate closely to the type of information being delivered to the target audience. In the other paper, Al-Khatib's (2022) findings of data analysis indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, positive religious coping among the Jordanian community is more prevalent than negative religious coping.

Gittan (2022) investigated the way men and women are addressed in the Holy Quran and the type of politeness strategies used in addressing each sex group. The findings indicated that both men and women are addressed decently and respectfully in the Qur'an. He also noticed that two types of strategies: giving deference or respect and the agreement maxim are the most frequently used in the analyzed data. Similarly, Al-Momani, et al. (2018) investigated the politeness strategies employed in the

representation of women in the Holy Quran, the holy book of Islam. Specifically, the main goal of their study was to examine two main aspects of women's image in the Holy book: The image of women in relation to sex and marriage and the forms of address. Data were analyzed quantitatively to reveal the hidden messages intended to be conveyed in the selected verses. One of the most prominent results of their study is that off-record strategies and positive and negative politeness strategies were found to be used most often in the collected data.

Al-Ameedi & Abd (2022) studied politeness in sixteen social justice texts derived from the New Testament and Nahjul-Balagh books. Their aim was to show how a just society can be built on justice and dignity. The adopted framework was that of Leech's (1983) maxims of politeness. they reached the conclusion that there is a close relationship between social justice and the divine law of justice as sent to people.

Data and Methods

Data Collection and Sampling

This is a descriptive qualitative study in which the data is obtained by employing descriptive qualitative methods. Van Maanen (1979) defines it as "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p. 520). Rahman (2017) adds that for this reason, "qualitative research appears to be an overarching concept under which a variety of issues may be placed, and it has positive and negative perspectives" (p. 104). By following this approach, an attempt will be made to examine not only "what" the verses intend to say but also in "what" polite formulae they are delivered and for "what" reasons.

Having said that, data for the current study is collected from the Holy Quran by searching the "IslamCity-Quran SmartSearch, 2023a" engine, and selecting the relevant verses to the subject under investigation. The chapters from which we obtained the verses were of both Makkan and Medinan origins. The Makkan surahs are the ones that were revealed before the emigration of the Prophet to Madinah, whereas the Medinans were revealed after emigration. Similarly, a huge number of sayings relevant to the topic under study were collected by searching the search engine "SUNNA.COM." Among the indicators that help us select our verses and sayings are those calling for:

1. Upholding justice as a divine command,
2. Advocating justice as a tool for maintaining social balance,
3. Standing up for what is right even at the expense of self.
4. Fairness and equitable distribution of wealth
5. Provision of basic necessities of life to the relative, poor, and the needy

In total, 191 verses are collected from different chapters of the Quran (IslamCity-Quran SmartSearch, 2023a) and more than 100 sayings are gathered from the Prophet's sayings and traditions, (SUNNA.COM., 2023).

Data Analysis

This study is a qualitative content analysis study. Content analysis, according to Lasswell (1948), examines “who says what through which channel to whom with what effect” (p. 117). The reason why the content analysis approach was chosen is that it can be applied to a broad range of texts, such as literary texts, religious scripts, news, etc. Bengtsson (2016) believes that content analysis can be used “to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and to draw realistic conclusions from it. Thus, Content analysis was selected for its ability to examine and identify the messages embedded in the texts (verses and sayings) relevant to the objectives of the study. Data analysis was carried out by the researcher himself. Maxwell (2012) argues that a basic principle of qualitative research is that data analysis should be done simultaneously with data collection. In so doing, a researcher could progressively focus his interviews and observations and decide how to test his emerging conclusions. The steps involved in the data analysis were as follows:

1. Following collection, one hundred ninety-one verses of the most related ones were selected for the purpose of investigation.
2. The collected scripts were read carefully one by one, and a considerable number of Tafsirs (meaning “explanation,” or “exegesis” of the Holy Quran) were consulted.
3. Categorizing the verses into three categories in terms of Gender, social solidarity, and social equality (in terms of color, race, and status).
4. Categorizing the data into four categories in terms of politeness strategies. The data here was categorized based on Brown & Levinson’s (1987) model of politeness.
5. Coding the data. In this step, the data was coded by three social factors: gender, social solidarity, and socio-economic background (i.e., in terms of color, race, and status).
6. Counting the frequencies of the strategies employed in the verses. The researcher here counted the frequencies of each data based on their categories.
7. Analysing the data. In this step, the data is analysed based on their frequencies and links them to the theories and previous research to get any possibilities that can explain why the data occurred.
8. Selecting and using several verses and sayings for the purpose of exemplifying and illustrating.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study and discusses them in relation to the research questions. The results will be presented and discussed in terms of three aspects of social justice and under three main headings: (1) gender; (2) social solidarity; (3) race, color, and socio-economic status. Before proceeding with our analysis, it is worth citing the following Aya (verse) which outlines the attitude of Islam toward the notion of justice from an Islamic point of view: “Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as a courtesy to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful” (The Noble Quran, An

Nahl: 90). It should also be noted here that, as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (2023) put it, “when dealing with the Islamic perspective of any topic, there should be a clear distinction between the normative teachings of Islam and the diverse cultural practices among Muslims, which may or may not be consistent with them” (para.1).

Gender Equity

A close examination of a huge number of verses and Sayings of the Holy Quran and Al-Hadith indicated that the sexes in Islam are perceived as complementary. That is the role of women and men is complementary rather than preferential (Munir, 2020). IslamiCity (2023) assumes that differences based on gender exist merely to allow for greater cooperation and harmony among individuals. It does not necessarily mean that there is a hierarchy, of men over women.

A thorough search of the “IslamiCity-Quran SmartSearch” engine revealed that women and their rights were tackled in the Quran in more than 129 verses. It has been noticed that the bald on-record was the most used politeness strategy in the examined verses, especially in the God-Man type of communication. In so doing, this strategy is meant to confirm a particular message that strengthens its meaning. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that upon using the Bald On-Record strategy speakers provide no effort to minimize the impact of the FTA’s on the hearers. Hence, such use can be justified on the grounds that: (1) maximum efficiency is very important and required; the speaker (Allah) is of great power, Who does not fear retaliation or non-cooperation from the hearer; And lastly, because doing the FTA (Face Threatening Act) is primarily in the hearer’s interest. Therefore, providing such constructive guidance may be given baldly on record.

To illustrate, let us look at the following verse (Example 1) in which Allah addresses the believers directly for the purpose of regulating the relationship between them by informing them about what is permissible and non-permissible:

- (1) *ya ʔayuhal laʔeena ʔamanou laa yaʔillu lakum ʔan tariθu ʔinisaʔa karhan wa la taʔdulouhunna litaθhabu bibaʔdi ma ʔataytumouhunna ʔilla ʔai yʔateena bifaaʔifatin mubaʔiyinah; wa ʔaaʔiro hunna bilmaʔrouf; fa ʔin karihtumouhunna faʔasaa ʔan takrahou ʔayʔanw wa yaʔʔal ʔal laahu feehi xayran kaθeeran.*
(Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 4:19)

O believers! It is not permissible for you to inherit women against their will or mistreat them to make them return some of the dowry 'as a ransom for divorce'—unless they are found guilty of adultery. Treat them fairly. If you happen to dislike them, you may hate something which Allah turns into a great blessing. (The Noble Quran, An Nisa, 4:19)

This same verse can also be interpreted on the ground that Allah uses a positive politeness strategy for addressing women’s needs, wants, and interests. This happens to protect women’s rights that men should not inherit women against their will or make them waive their rights by returning some of their dowry unless they are found guilty of

a big sin like, for example, adultery. Moreover, He intensifies the interest of this story by asking men to treat them fairly. Another positive politeness strategy used in the verse is by asserting or presupposing knowledge of the women's wants through showing His solidarity with them, saying, "if you happen to dislike them, you may hate something which Allah turns into a great blessing" (An-Nisa, 4, p.82). That is, the verse is meant to minimize antipathy between Him and others (women) and maximize sympathy between Him and others (women) (Leech, 1983).

Another example of intensifying interest and giving sympathy and understanding of women's needs can be seen clearly in the next verse (example 2 below), in which God tells men and women how life should be shared and regulated in terms of roles and relationships. Men are the caretakers of women both morally and financially. A righteous woman, in return, should guard her chastity and her honor, whether in her husband's presence or absence. The verse indicates that men should be the protector and maintainers of women by ensuring that their needs of love, expenses, and protection, are met and satisfied. According to Al-Awdah (2014), the man's status as protector and maintainer is just pure responsibility, pure liability, and not so much a position of authority. It means that a wife's opinions should be respected, appreciated, and valued. Prophet Mohammad once told Khalifa Umar Ben al-Khattab: "Shall I not inform you about the best treasure a man can hoard? It is a virtuous wife who pleases him whenever he looks towards her, and who guards herself when he is absent from her" (Abdur Rahman, 2023, para.10).

- (2) *ʔarrijaalu qawwaamouna ʔalan ʔinisaʔi bima fad^l d^lalallaahu baʔdahum ʔala baʔd^l wa bima ʔanfaqou min ʔamwaalihim; fas^laalihaatu qanitatun haaf^latul lil yaybi bima hafi^lal laahu.*
(Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 4:19)

Men are the caretakers of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and tasked with supporting them financially. And righteous women are devoutly obedient and, when alone, protective of what Allah has entrusted them with.
(The Noble Quran, An Nisa, 4-34)

- (3) *waʔadal laahu ʔalmuʔ mineena walmuʔminati Jannaatin tajree min taḥtiha ʔal ʔanharu xaalideena feehaa wa masaakina tayibatan fee Jannati ʔadn; wa rid^lwanum minal laahi akbar; ḍalika huwal fawzul ʔaḍeem* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 9:72)

Allah has promised the believers, both men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there forever, and splendid homes in the Gardens of Eternity, and—above all—the pleasure of Allah. That is 'truly' the ultimate triumph. (The Noble Quran, At-Tauba, 9-72)

Verse (3) demonstrates another example of the equal position of men and women in the eyes of God. This indicates that women have an inherent value equal to that of men. Gender equity is represented in the way God addresses men and women as completely independent entities, “Allah has promised the believers, both men and women” of something so precious (Paradise) (At-Tawba, 9-72). The politeness in this verse resides in the type of politeness strategies employed in the verse: using the in-group identity markers (i.e., the believers of both men and women) and offering or promising to do something with an aim of pleasing both men and women by rewarding the places in Paradise. Using these two strategies shows that women have an intrinsic value equal to that of men.

Social Solidarity

Douwes et al. (2018) assume that “Social solidarity emphasizes the interdependence between individuals in a society, which allows individuals to feel that they can enhance the lives of others. It is a core principle of collective action and is founded on shared values and beliefs among different groups in society” (Para.4). In a word, social solidarity, according to them, is an important element leading to promoting and realizing human rights.

The meaning of social solidarity in Islam is derived from Islamic law which imposes upon the wealthy a mandatory Islamic ritual (Zakat) for the benefit of the poor and needy, namely those people of low income in the community (Liberto, 2022). Zakat is one of the five Islam pillars. Zakat prescribes payment of fixed proportions of a Muslim's possessions for the welfare of the entire community and in particular for its neediest members.

Our search of the Holy Quran showed that the terms Zakat and charity have been mentioned in 85 verses of different chapters. As Zakat is the third pillar of Islam and is a form of worship, in the following verse (example 4 below) Allah asks His Prophet in a bald on-record manner, “Take from their wealth,” to take from Muslim peoples’ wealth a fixed share of money (2.5%)² and give it to the needy. Notice that the request is made here in a direct command that is meant to pressure the believers into paying the imposed share of Zakat unwillingly. Due to the seriousness of this issue, it is evident that no attempt is made on the part of the verse to limit the threat to the addressee's face. However, the findings clearly show that the verses apply most of the positive politeness strategies for the purpose of encouraging people to do that. Examples 4, 5, and 6 below provide a description of how the verses request Muslims to give charity to those in need for purifying themselves, and their wealth, averting calamity, and bringing barakah (blessing) to their life (Liberto, 2022). Moreover, Allah intensifies the interest of the giver of alms in doing that by asking the Prophet to reward them in two ways: by promising them purification and blessing and by praying to them so that His prayers will be a source of comfort and relief. One of the inspiring sayings on the importance of charity in Islam is also the Prophet’s Hadith: “Give Sadaqa

² According to Dubai Islamic Bank, Zakat on cash and bank balances should be paid at 2.5% on all cash balances and bank balances in your savings. The same also is true of Zakat on pure gold and gold jewellery (Dubai Islamic Bank, 2023).

(charity) without delay, for it stands in the way of calamity.” (Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith, 589, reported in SUNNA.COM).

Among the positive politeness strategies which do apply simultaneously in the following verse (example 4) are: claiming common ground, using in-group identity markers, Give Gifts to Hearer, and intensifying interest to the hearer in the speaker’s contribution to stress His interest in the addressee to indicate that their doing will be rewarded or to see the addressee simply do the FTA without reluctance.

- (4) *xuḏ min ṭamwaalihim sadaqatan tuṭ’ahhiruhum wa tuzakkeehim biha wa s’alli ṣalayhim ṭinna s’alataka sakanul lahum; wallahu sameeḥun ṣaleem.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration, At-Tawbah, 9-103)

Take from their wealth ‘O Prophet’ charity to purify and bless them and pray for them—surely your prayer is a source of comfort for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (The Nobel Quran, At-Tawbah, 9-103)

In examples 5 and 6 below, the verses still attempt to make use of a number of positive politeness strategies such as using in-group identity markers, claiming common ground with the hearers “who if we firmly establish them on earth, remain constant,” intensifying interest to the hearers, offering/promising in an indirect way by saying “with God rests the final outcome of all events,” indicating that “God does not fail to requite the doers of good.” This happens also by mentioning the main characteristics of the good believers, saying “Those who remain constant in prayer, *give charity*, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong.”

As regards the charity recipients, God reminds people, as seen in Example (6) below, to be thoughtful of their feelings by concealing their good deeds and not reminding them (the needy) of their favors or generosity. This is in order to avoid any type of face-threatening acts that might threaten the faces of the Zakat recipients. Put differently, the verses say don’t do a favor and expect a favor in return. On this issue, Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 24) say that “some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require ‘softening.’ Therefore, such an action should be performed in such a way as to minimize the threat to the positive and negative faces of the concerned people by softening or concealing the action. In return, Allah at the end of the verse shows His good intention to satisfy the charity givers’ positive face wants by promising them a precious reward from their Lord, that will result in no fear or grieve, namely, a paradise where the good believers are rewarded in the afterlife.

- (5) *Ṭallaḏeena ṭim makkān naahum fil Ṭard’i Ṭaqaamus s’alaata wa Ṭatawuz zakata wa Ṭamarou bilmaḥroufi wa nahaw ṣanil munkar; wa lillaahi ṣaqibatul Ṭumoor.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 22:41)

Those who, [even] if We firmly establish them on earth, remain constant in prayer, and give in charity, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong; but with God

rests the final outcome of all events. (Al-Hajj (The Pilgrimage) 22:41)

- (6) *ʔallaḏeena yunfiqona ʔamwaalahum fi sabeelillahi ʔumma laa yutbiʔouna ma ʔanfaʔo mannanw wa la ʔaḏa lahum ʔajruhum ʔinda rabbihim; wa la xawfun ʔalayhim wa la hum yaḥzanon.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 2:262).

Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah and do not follow their charity with reminders of their generosity or hurtful words—they will get their reward from their Lord, and there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve. (The Noble Quran, Al Baqara, (the cow), 2-262)

Another important aspect of social solidarity in Islam is the social responsibility of people toward their relatives such as parents, the elderly, and children. One of the most important aspects of social solidarity is parental responsibility which calls for looking after a person's parents in case they need that. Example (7) below is a case in point in which Allah commanded Muslims, whether males or females, in several verses of the Quran to take care of their parents.

- (7) *wa qadʔa rabbuka ʔalla taʔbudo ʔilla ʔiyyahu wa bilwalidayni ʔihsana; ʔimma yabluyanna ʔindakal kibara ʔahaduhuma ʔaw kilaahuma fala taqul lahuma ʔuffin wa laa tanharhuma wa qullahuma qawlan kareeman.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration, 9-72)

For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honour your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never say to them 'even' 'ugh,' nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully. (The Noble Quran, At-Tauba, 9-72)

In the above example, the use of “never say to them ‘even’ ‘ugh,’ nor yell at them.” can be seen as a linguistic politeness strategy that has the potential to address the face needs of the parents. He instructed people to ‘minimize the expression of benefit to self; and maximize the expression of cost to someone’s parents by speaking to them politely, honouring them, keeping them up to date and even putting them first instead of the self as Leech’s (1983) generosity Maxim indicates.

Several Positive politeness strategies of the ones suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987) can also be met by dealing with parents according to Islamic instructions, such as seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, promising, claiming common ground with them, asserting knowledge of their needs, being optimistic, etc. Other examples of asserting responsibility toward parents are drawn from the Prophet’s sayings, who once said, “Paradise lies under the feet of the mother,” and “He who wishes to enter Paradise through its best door must please his parents,” (SUNNA.COM, 2023). The above two sayings can be explained in terms of the strategy of intensifying interest to the hearer. By using this politeness strategy, the Prophet attempts to

exaggerate the interest of the hearers in the story and encourage them to exhibit goodness towards their parents and deal with them politely. For adding more politeness, the same saying uses hedges that have positive politeness – by saying your parents are your gateway to Paradise.

In-group identity marker is another politeness strategy used in the Prophet’s saying when he says, “He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders”(SUNNA.COM, 2023). By sending such a message to hearers, He meant to show a kind of solidarity with those who show mercy toward the young and respect toward the elders. An attempt is made here, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), to avoid any threat that an utterance would have caused to face because such markers help claim common ground between participants.

Eradication of Racism in Terms of Race, Color, Origin, and Status

Cole (2019) offers the following definition for racism: “a variety of practices, beliefs, social relations, and phenomena that work to reproduce a racial hierarchy and social structure that yield superiority, power, and privilege for some, and discrimination and oppression for others” (para.1). The basis of this research is that Allah (God), who is the foremost authority of the universe, has put significant instructions and guidelines for regulating the relationship between Him and His creatures; and on the other hand, regulating the relationship between man-man themselves in terms of rights and obligations. According to the Quran and Sunna, everyone is equal in dignity and rights regardless of his/her race, color, origin, or status. This fact was clearly reflected in Prophet Muhammad’s last public speech when He said, “All humans are descended from Adam and Eve” (IslamiCity, 2023, para. 6). He added, “There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a non-Arab over an Arab, and no superiority of a white person over a black person or of a black person over a white person, except on the basis of personal piety and righteousness” (IslamiCity, 2023, para. 6).

From the verses below we may draw some politeness messages by which Allah offers an exciting direction toward realizing social justice. The first of the below verses (example 8) describes how the universe has been created by Allah with its elements by mentioning some of His signs (i.e., with a diversity of languages and colors) to those of “sound knowledge.” The utterance “The diversity of languages and colors” indicates that all people of different languages and colors are noble signs of Allah the universal Creator. This verse can be seen as a redress directed to the hearer’s positive face, by addressing some kind of people having a desire that their wants or actions should be thought of as acceptable and desirable. Looking at this same verse from the standpoint of leech’s maxims of politeness, the verse calls for ‘minimizing the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; and maximizing the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other’, along with “minimizing antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other.” Thus, it implies that all humans are equal before Him in terms of their humanity, irrespective of their beliefs, color, origin, or race.

(8) *wamin ʔayatihi xalqu ʔassamawati waalʔardi waʔixtilafu
ʔalsinatikum waʔalwanikum ʔinna fee ʔalika laʔayatin
lilʔalimeena.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 30:22)

And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your languages and colors. Surely in this are signs for those of 'sound' knowledge. (The Noble Quran, Ar-Rum, 30:22)

In the second verse, Allah emphasizes this fact again by reminding all people of their origin (i.e., two parents Adam and Eve), and then they were made into people and tribes. This second verse intensifies the interest of the hearer in the verse by assuring people that all are equal and no superiority for one person over another, except by piety, "Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you." Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive face as an individual's desire to be liked, admired, ratified, and related to positively. Thus, by maintaining the positive face of all people irrespective of their color, origin, or race Allah intends to maintain and exhibit a positive self-image of those who are discriminated against. This fact is clearly manifested in the last verse (example 10) in which He warns the believers in a bald on-record manner and those who might think of discriminating to "stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony, and "do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice." In so doing, He makes all those people who are discriminated against feel good about themselves by complimenting them and confirming their right to live in peace and respect.

(9) *ya ʔayyuhan naasu ʔinnaa xalaqnaakum min ɗakarɪn wa ʔunθa wa jaʕalnakum fuʕoubanw wa qabaʔila litaʕarafu ʔinna ʔakramakum ʕɪndal laahi ʔatqaakum ʔinnal laaha ʕaleemun xabeer.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration 22:41)

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware. (The Noble Quran, Al Hujurat, 22-41)

(10) *ya ʔayuhal laɗeena ʔamanou kouno qawwameena lillahi fuħadaʔa bilqisti, wa la yajrimannakum fan ʔanu qawmin ʕala ʔalla taʕdilu ʔiʕdilu huwa aqrabu littaqwa wattaqu ʔalaah; ʔinnal laaha xabeerum bima taʕmaloun.* (Reproduced from Quran Transliteration, Al-Ma-idah, 5:8)

O believers! Stand firm for Allah and bear true testimony. Do not let the hatred of a people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to righteousness. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do. (The Noble Quran, Al-Ma-idah, 5:8)

In this respect, Umar Bin Al-Khattab, the second Khalif of Muslims and one of the best companions of the Prophet Muhammad, was a great symbol of social justice because of his meticulous statesmanship who once said: "Since when you have taken people for slaves and they were born free"³ (Al-Huseini, 2012).

Having said that, it seems that a great deal of positive politeness strategies such as "Notice the recipient's needs, presuppose common ground, intensify interest, among other strategies," have been used in the above verses for the purpose of redressing the intended peoples' faces and make them feel comfortable. Brown and Levinson (1987) asserted that positive politeness derives usually in a group whose participants have the same purpose, desire, and background knowledge. Holmes (2001) has also argued that positive politeness is solidarity-oriented because it emphasizes shared attitudes and values. Likewise, this same claim can also be identified in Leech's (1983) tact maxim, which calls for minimizing the expression of beliefs that imply cost to others and maximizing the expression of beliefs that imply benefit to others, the first part of which appears to fit in with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interest, wants, and needs. Moreover, for the purpose of building solidarity across our differences and making all things equal Leech (1983, p.81) believes that we have to "minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other and maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other."

Moreover, another observation worth discussing here is the use of combined politeness strategies by the speakers, where a large number of bald on-record strategies were frequently combined with positive and negative politeness strategies. For example, it has been noticed that the strategy of "claim common ground" has been utilized together with the bald on-record strategy in a considerable number of verses and Prophetic sayings. A case in point is the following verse in which the bald on record (i.e., the way the verse is said) strategy has been used together with the positive politeness strategy of gift offering (the way people should respond to a greeting) strategy saying: "When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. Allah takes careful account of all things" (An-Nisa,4:86, p.92). A strategy in which Allah asks people to be modest and, according to (Leech, 1983, p.80), "minimize the expression of benefit to self and maximize the expression of cost to self."

Conclusion

The principal aim of this study was to examine the legacy of social justice in Islam from a socio-pragmatic point of view. The study examined a large number of Quranic verses and Prophetic sayings (i.e., 191 verses and 100 sayings). It demonstrated, as seen in the above examples, that the concept of justice in Islam is rooted in God's Divine nature and words. Another objective of this

³Amr ibn al-As was the governor of Egypt. One of his sons beat up a Coptic Christian with a whip, saying, 'I am the son of a nobleman!' The Copt went to Umar ibn al-Khattab, the Muslim caliph who resided in the city of Medina and lodged a complaint. 'Commander of the Faithful, I come to you as a refugee.' So, Umar asked him about his problem, and he answered, Amr had a custom of letting his horses run free in Egypt. One day, I came by riding my mare. When I passed by a group of people, they looked at me. Muhammad, the son of Amr got up and came to me, saying, 'I swear by the Lord of the Kaaba, this is my mare!' I responded, 'I swear by the Lord of the Kaaba, the mare is mine!' He came up to me and began beating me with a whip." (The Religion of Islam, 2023).

study was to gain insight into how Islam speaks of the rights of women and men, parents, and relatives, black and white, and the poor and needy. Results of data analysis showed that the Quran and Hadith spoke of a huge number of rights in terms of social justice, such as the right to life, the right to the safety of life, the right to a basic standard of life, the right to justice, equality of human beings among other aspects.

A third aim of this study was to explore how the messages of politeness that call for social justice are formatted and encapsulated in the Holy Quran and Al Hadith. Put differently, what politeness strategies are employed in delivering the messages of social justice? Findings revealed that the most dominant politeness is bald on record, used at 61%, followed by positive politeness at 26%, negative politeness at 8%, and off-record at only 5%. The heavy use of the bald on-record strategy could be justified, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), on the grounds that whenever a speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he or she wants to satisfy the hearer's face, even to any degree, the bald on record strategy chosen. Comparing what is currently happening around us with the divine law of justice, one can conclude that all social ills could be, as Creanza et al. (2017, pp.151-152) put it, the by-product of "the accumulation of subsequent culturally transmitted behaviors shaped by an array of psychological and social mechanisms of socioeconomic inequalities."

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