

Investigation of the Concept and Values of Multiculturalism in the Holy Qur'an: A Narrative Literature Review

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Abstract-This study investigates the concept and value of multiculturalism in the Qur'an. This study is guided by the formulation of the problem, namely: First, what is the concept of multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an? Second, what are the values of multiculturalism contained in the Qur'an? This study is a literature review with a traditional literature review approach. The primary data for this study is the Qur'an, while the secondary data is scientific journals obtained from internet-based databases, namely Google Scholar and DOAJ. The study found: First, the relationship between the Qur'an and multiculturalism can be seen from a normative and historical perspective. Normatively, many verses of the Qur'an contain the teachings of multiculturalism. Historically, the "Medina Charter" has affirmed the values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* in the Qur'an as the ideological basis of multiculturalism. Second, the values of multiculturalism in the Qur'an are: the value of peace and reconciliation; the value of competitiveness; the value of appreciation and interdependence; the value of kindness; the value of equality; the value of justice; and the value of tolerance. This study contributes to the strengthening of the concept and values of multiculturalism in Islam by promoting Islam as a religion that supports multiculturalism.

Index Terms- Concept, Values, Multiculturalism, Qur'an

I. INTRODUCTION

Every nation, including Indonesia, lives with a variety of distinctions, including cultural distinctions, or multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is an ideology that was spawned by religious, ethnic, linguistic, and other religions. It is undeniable that differences frequently lead to conflicts and even protracted communal conflicts, so the multiculturalism ideology was created to promote harmony amidst diversity.

As a global issue, multiculturalism must be promoted globally by involving all individuals and groups. Each individual and group can play a role in strengthening the ideology of multiculturalism. For example, researchers can conduct scientific research to strengthen the concept and practice. One approach that can be taken is to strengthen the concept of multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an so that people understand that Islam, as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, strongly supports the ideology of multiculturalism. Therefore, this study becomes important as

a way of promoting multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an.

In addition, this study is essential to educating the public about the importance of understanding multiculturalism according to the teachings of the Qur'an. Muslim communities are expected to have a strong awareness of the need to support the ideology of multiculturalism without presenting unfounded reasons, such as calling multiculturalism a liberal idea, apostasy, and so on. In essence, the Qur'an has prepared concepts and values that can be practiced to promote multiculturalism, even though the Qur'an does not explicitly mention or discuss the issue of multiculturalism. However, the Qur'an introduces many conceptual terms related to multiculturalism, such as the terms *qabā'il* (tribes) and *shu'ūb* (nations). In addition, the Qur'an also introduces the values of multiculturalism, such as *al-silm* (peace), *al-ta'āwun* (mutual cooperation), *al-ta'āraf* (knowing each other), and so on.

Previous studies of multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an have been very limited. This can be proven in a literature survey that the author conducted in the Google Scholar database. Search results with the keyword "alintitle: multiculturalism, al-Qur'an" turned up twelve articles. This number can be said to be limited when compared to the issue of multiculturalism as a global issue. Among the previous studies that examine multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an are: multiculturalism in the Qur'anic review (Roswati, 2019); values of multiculturalism in the Qur'an, Surah al-Hujurat verses 9–13 (Nurmalia, 2020); multiculturalism in Indonesia according to the Qur'an (Yasin, 2019); the values of multiculturalism in the Qur'an; the urgency of attitudes towards Indonesian society (Sa'dan, 2015); and others.

In addition, the educational values of multiculturalism in the Qur'an dominated earlier studies. Therefore, this study intends to compile and reinterpret the concept of multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an in a comprehensive manner. Two formulations of the problem serve as the foundation for this study because multiculturalism is such a broad issue: First, what is the

concept of multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an? Second, what are the values of multiculturalism contained in the Qur'an? The contribution of this study is to strengthen the concept of multiculturalism in Islam and promote Islam as a religion that supports multiculturalism. The current study also contributes to a comprehensive mapping of multiculturalism values in the Qur'an.

II. METHOD

This study is a literature review with an internet-based narrative literature review approach. Data was collected through searches on the article search engines Google Scholar and DOAJ.

III. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Based on the research objective: to analyze the relationship between culture-based learning experiences and students' critical thinking skills based on gender, the average score and standard deviation were first determined. Determining the average score aimed to describe students' level of critical thinking skills and cultural-based learning experiences based on gender. The data analysis showed that students' culture-based learning experience was higher, with a mean value of 88.50. The average value of students' critical thinking skills was 80.75, as shown in Table 1.

1. The concept of multiculturalism

a. Definition of Multiculturalism

The term multiculturalism is rooted in two words: multi, which means many or diverse, and cultural, which means culture or culture. So in simple terms, etymology means cultural diversity from the perspective of etymology. Next, the term multicultural is added with the suffix *ism*, which indicates ideology, philosophy, or view on life (Rustanto, 2015; Tilaar, 2014). In simple definition, multiculturalism means "cultural diversity". Multicultural is often used to describe the condition of a diverse society in terms of religion, race, language, and culture (PBPN, 2008). In the Merriam-Webster (2021), multiculturalism is defined as equivalent to pluralism. Pluralism or cultural diversity (as in societies, organisations, or educational institutions) Thus, pluralism is part of the ideology of multiculturalism.

In terminology, multiculturalism means an ideology that recognises, accommodates, and upholds differences in equality both personally and culturally (David & Jary, 1991). According to Mahfud (2010), multiculturalism is the attitude of recognising the dignity of humans living in their communities, the unique culture inherent in each of them, and mutual respect for each other as a form of collective life responsibility. The author views that the multiculturalism is the view of life that humans are created in different cultural contexts that require them to have tolerance, respect each other, and support each other.

In the context of nationality, multiculturalism is considered an understanding that recognizes and accepts diversity and differences, including cultural, racial, religious, and linguistic diversity (Yusuf, 2018). In this case, culture means all the dialectics of man towards his life. This dialectic will give birth to

many perspectives, such as history, thought, verbal culture, language, and others.

According to the *libguides.ecu.edu* page (Libguides.ecu.edu, 2023; Library, 2023), the use of Google Scholar is considered more effective and efficient because researchers can more easily access various scientific journals, books, journal proceedings, and so on. Google Scholar is a very familiar article search engine that is relatively easy to use. Practically, the method used in this study goes through a number of stages: first, keyword mapping according to the topic of study; second, opening the Google Scholar page and entering the mapped keywords; third, conducting a search; fourth, downloading data in the form of scientific journal documents in the form of PDFs; fifth, reading journals through the Adobe Acrobat Reader PDF application; Sixth, code words, sentences, or paragraphs related to the study; Seventh, developing themes into in-depth discussions

many perspectives, such as history, thought, verbal culture, language, and others.

The concept of multiculturalism entering Indonesia is known as diversity. The concept of multiculturalism emerged related to religious multiculturalism, namely, religion cannot be separated from the Indonesian state, which does not tolerate the existence of understanding, culture, and atheist people. Therefore, multiculturalism acts as an enrichment of the concept of religious harmony, which is programmed nationally in Indonesia (Hidayat, 2016). In fact, the issue of multiculturalism has become a global issue in every country that has people with different religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds.

Multiculturalism cannot be an ideology that stands alone and is separate from other ideologies. Multiculturalism requires other ideologies to be used as a reference in understanding and developing multiculturalism in social life. The foundation of knowledge in the form of building concepts relevant to multiculturalism is needed to support the existence and function of multiculturalism in human life (Mahfud, 2010) and to improve the degree of humanity (Maksum, 2011).

Multiculturalism is an ideology that allows individuals and groups from numerous diverse cultures to coexist permanently, in light of current, more pressing needs. Multiculturalism emphasises that individuals can acquire a comprehensive and empathetic understanding of other cultures. In this instance, multiculturalism has implications for appreciating and evaluating the cultural diversity of others in a positive light.

Multiculturalism is not merely an ideology that presents diverse ethnic and cultural identities; it is presented to raise awareness that ethnic and cultural groups are capable of interacting with one another. To develop multiculturalism, structural, political, and economic approaches must be implemented more systematically. There should be an integration of multiculturalism with other approaches. Integration with multiple approaches seeks to make issues pertinent to economic justice, equal rights, and tolerance, thereby promoting multiculturalism (Hidayat, 2016). In essence, multiculturalism is intended to build awareness about the importance of living

together despite differences. Through a strong understanding of multiculturalism, people can live peacefully and away from conflict.

b. The Concept of Multiculturalism in the Perspective of the Qur'an

Al-Qur'an, as a complete holy book, has a very close relationship with social issues, including multiculturalism. The Qur'an teaches and upholds human values. The Qur'an is a holy book that recognizes the diversity of cultural backgrounds, pluralism, and equal rights among human beings. The Qur'an views that the condition of man living in multicultural societies is a rule of God (*sunnatullah*) that will not change. A multicultural society cannot be resisted or denied. Everyone will face pluralism wherever and in any case (Suparta, 2008). Therefore, everyone, especially Muslims, must understand the urgency of multiculturalism.

The Qur'an is the main source of rules in Islam and can be used as a reference in understanding and implementing the concept of multiculturalism. The author believes that the Quran has recognized the idea of multiculturalism in aspects of cultural diversity, religion, taste, language, ethnicity, and others. Even normatively, the Qur'an recognizes that people are made into nations (*shu'ūban*) and tribes (*qabāil*) so that they know and respect each other (Roswati, 2019). In addition, the Qur'an accommodates values that demonstrate multiculturalism, such as peace (*al-silm*), mutual help and cooperation (*al-ta'āwun*), mutual understanding (*al-ta'āruf*), and others.

A number of verses in the Qur'an contain multiculturalism-related concepts and values, according to the author's investigations. In Qur'anic discourse, the epistemological foundation for multiculturalism is human nobility, from which a set of human rights must be respected and protected; this is the ethical foundation for multiculturalism. In interpreting the Qur'an regarding multiculturalism, it is essential to keep in mind that the Qur'an does not only communicate to Muslims, but also to Christians, Jews, and others.

The author considers that phrases such as "O believers" (*yā ayyuḥa alladzīna āmanū*), "O man" (*yā ayyuḥa al-nās*), "O infidels" (*yā ayyuḥa al-kāfirūn*), and so on, prove that the Qur'an, at that time, not only communicated with one party, namely Muslims, but also spoke to many parties. The Qur'an speaks on multicultural issues. The communication reflected in the Qur'an varies. The Qur'an speaks of many representations. There was a communication devoted to the Prophet Muhammad. There are communications conveyed to mankind, and so on. In essence, the Qur'an has recognised the idea of multiculturalism in the sense of cultural diversity based on religion, ethnicity, and others. Even normatively, the Qur'an

recognises that people are made into nations (*shu'ūban*) and tribes (*qabā'il*) so that they know and respect each other, as stated in Q.S.al-Ḥujurat (49):13; however, if Allah wanted, He would only make this humanity one, as He said in Q.S. al-Shura (42): 8 (Roswati, 2019). Thus, the issues of multiculturalism have been discussed in the Qur'an for hundreds of years.

Regarding the relationship between Islam and multiculturalism, the author believes that both the normative and historical perspectives should be considered.

First, the normative perspective: normatively, many verses of the Qur'an contain principles, values, and teachings of multiculturalism. However, al-Qur'an does not mention it implicitly with the word "*al-ta'addud al-thaqāfi*" for example, which means "multiculturalism". The term multiculturalism in the Qur'an is implicitly referred to by the phrase "*walaw shā'a Rabbuka*"—"if your Lord wills"—mentioned in Surah Hud (11): 118. The verse is interpreted as a form of supposition that does not require an answer, or what is known as rhetorical style. That is, this phrase does not require further affirmation. Therefore, Surah Hud (11):8 emphasises that multiculturalism is a necessity (Heru Suparman, 2017). In addition to Surah Hud (11):8, there are a number of verses that contain the principle of multiculturalism, which are as follows:

Surah al-Hujurat (49): 13

Surah al-Hujurat (49):13 contains universal principles that include the value of quantity and quality. The value of quantity includes the recognition of human diversity, both in terms of type and tribe. While the value of quality includes brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah*) and equality (*al-musāwah*). *Al-Musāwah* means equality, which affirms that man is equal before Allah, and what distinguishes him before Him is faith (*iman*) and piety (*taqwa*) (Yasin, 2019) According to As-Sabuni (n.d.), that Surah al-Hujurat:13 is addressed to all human beings. This is an affirmation that man should not glorify his descendants. Essentially, human ancestry derives from a single lineage, that of Adam and his wife Hawwa. Therefore, the wisdom behind the creation of humans who reside in groups and tribes is for them to know and love one another.

In the Qur'an, Allah says that humans are created in diverse settings, both in terms of religion, nation, and culture. Allah created these differences so that people could know and love each other (Surah al-Hujurat [49]: 13) (Sa'dan, 2015) From the teachings of "*ta'āruf*", knowing each other, humans are expected to love each other in their differences. There is an adage that is very popular in Indonesia: "People who do not know each

other cannot love each other". Therefore, the diversity of gender, physical appearance, ethnicity, and nation necessitates getting to know one another. In the existence of the nation and state, the attitude generated by self-awareness to know one another is a positive one. By knowing others, it is anticipated that mutual understanding of behaviour, desires, benefits, and drawbacks will be stronger and more durable.

Surah al-Maidah (5):18

Surah al-Maidah (5):18 & 48 affirms that *al-ta'aruf* or mutual knowledge among people, should be done regardless of class, group, or religion. Allah commands mankind, whether Muslim or not, to compete in doing good. The author considers that through the differences Allah bestows, people can compete for good (*al-istibāq fi al-khayr*).

Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60): 8

The author considers that Surah al-Mumtahanah (60): 8 affirms the obligation to be just. Justice must be understood in a broader context, including justice in religion, politics, law, economics, and human rights. In doing justice, justice must not look at ethnic, racial, cultural, or religious backgrounds. In addition, justice means that there is no mutual control (hegemony) between the majority group and the minority group (Waskito & Rohman, 2018). The author considers that each individual and group should be treated according to their rights and responsibilities. Fairness is not reflected by the marginalisation, discrimination, or specialisation of certain individuals and groups. Consequently, the Qur'an emphasises the significance of justice in a pluralistic society.

Additionally, the author argues that the state and its governance must exist for justice to be realised. In order to realise multiculturalism within society, the government must adopt an equitable stance. Multicultural societies may tolerate one another if their leaders uphold the law. Therefore, the government should not discriminate against minorities or favour the majority with policies that undermine minority communities' sense of justice.

Surah Yunus (10): 99

Surah Yunus (10): 99 emphasises the imperative of difference, or *sunnatullah*. Although differences are inevitable, they simultaneously demonstrate God's greatness and authority over his creation. This differentiates between the limitations of man's and God's power. All of the universe's creations are unique (Waskito & Rohman, 2018). The author argues that God creates diversity not to be opposed, but to find common ground through tolerance and mutual respect. Regarding

religion, political liberties, etc., one cannot impose one's will on others.

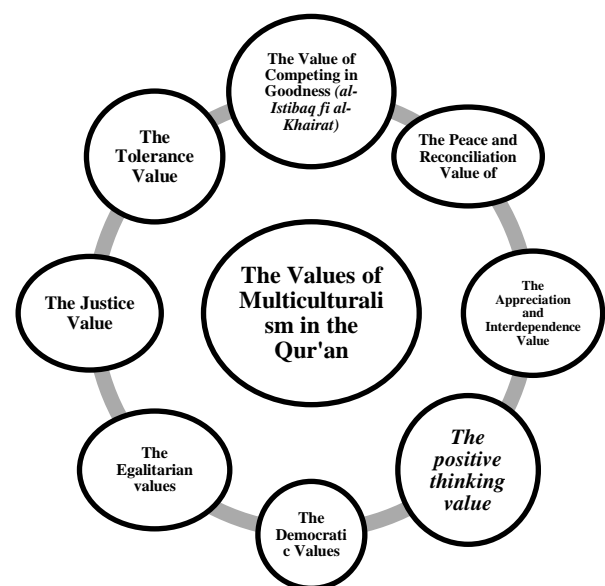
Second, the historical perspective

In the past, the Prophet Muhammad was extremely passionate about establishing Islam and multiculturalism in a multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural community. This lasted thirteen years in Mecca before moving to Medina. At that time, society was quite multicultural and pluralistic. Nevertheless, these multicultural contexts inspired the Prophet Muhammad to construct Medina on the Medina Charter. The charter includes universal values such as justice, freedom, egalitarianism, and equal treatment (Heru Suparman, 2017). The multiculturalism supported by the Prophet Muhammad is mandated by the Qur'an, as he will never engage in any action unless it is in accordance with Allah's command in the Qur'an.

Even though the Prophet Muhammad was frequently persecuted and treated unjustly during his *da'wa* journey, he always prioritised a peaceful disposition. War was only pursued as a last resort following the failure of truce efforts. Thus, it is clear that the Qur'an does not contain any teachings that are antagonistic to any particular tribe, nation, culture, or religion. In order to create a better human civilization, the Qur'an commands people to establish good cooperation and contact with everyone.

2. The Values of Multiculturalism in the Qur'an

In this study, researchers can map a number of values of multiculturalism from the perspective of the Qur'an, which are as follows:



First, the value of competing in goodness (al-Istibaq fi al-Khairat)

al-Ta'aruf means not looking at differences in groups, society, or religions. That is because Allah commands mankind, both Muslims and non-Muslims, to compete in doing kindness (QS. al-Ma'idah [5]: 48). Allah does not regard whether a human being is Jewish, Christian, or *Ṣābi'ūn* (The Sabians) in the context of doing good. God does not compare the male or female sexes in the context of doing good. Similarly, Allah does not discriminate between Arabs or not, poor or not, because whoever does good, Allah's promise is the reward for all good doers (QS. al-Baqarah [2]:62). Even according to Allah, the noblest man is the most pious man, not the most powerful ethnic, racial, and ethnic individuals and groups (Sa'dan, 2015). The author argues that multiculturalism is a necessity that can motivate everyone and every group to contend for the common good. This is the most effective method for addressing differences in religion, nation, and state.

Second, the peace and reconciliation value

The Qur'an places a strong emphasis on avoiding conflict and resolving various problems through reconciliation, specifically through the means of forgiveness. In situations of communal conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation are necessary. In accordance with Islamic teachings, all humanity must prioritise peace, cherish peace, and provide a sense of safety for all beings. The Qur'an expressly encourages forgiveness and leads to a peace accord.

The Qur'an emphasises peace rather than war. This can be seen from the words *al-salām*, *al-silm*, and *al-iṣlāh*, for example, which translate to peace. The words that lead to peace are numerous. Jalal discovered over 140 verses in al-Mu'jam al-Mafahras fi Alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm by Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī that refer to peace and are derived from the word *al-salām* and its derivatives. Jalal also revealed that the word *al-ḥarb*, which means war, appears in only six verses (Jalal, 2006). In the Qur'an, the number of words that express the meaning of peace is greater than the number of words that convey the meaning of conflict (Hadisaputra; Farhan; Kasim; Yussuf, 2020). This argument shows that the Qur'an is a holy book that teaches peace and reconciliation.

Third, the appreciation and interdependence value

This value prioritises care for fellow humans. All members of society can show mutual appreciation and maintain strong relationships, attachments, cohesion, and

social linkages. It is important to underline that humans cannot survive without dynamic social ties. Such concepts are widely contained in the Qur'an, one of which is Q.s. al-Maidah (5): 2. The verse explains the urgency of the principle of mutual help in virtue, maintaining solidarity and social bonds (piety), and avoiding helping in evil (Hidayat, 2016, 127) The author sees that diversity, which often triggers conflict, can be suppressed by caring for others. Psychologically, caring can bind affection.

Forth, the positive thinking value

The basic principle of Islamic teaching is to avoid prejudice. In a multicultural society, people cannot avoid interaction between one group and another. If a society is unable to avoid prejudice, harmony is potentially unsustainable. Therefore, God strictly forbids people to avoid prejudices, as taught in the Qur'an, Surah al-Hujurat (49):12 (Saifuddin, 2021)

Positive thinking can be implemented through mutual respect for differences and always upholding a sense of brotherhood (Suparta, 2008). Multicultural societies must be able to compensate for their differences with kindness and without prejudice. However, prejudice, mutual suspicion, and fault-finding can erode brotherhood, which continues to cause disharmony in the lives of society, nation, and state.

Fifth, the democratic values

The closest equivalent of the term democracy in the Qur'an is the term deliberation (*mushāwarah*). The word *mushāwarah* is usually juxtaposed with the word consensus (*muwāfaqah*). Both deliberation and consensus are derived from Arabic. Deliberation is rooted in the word *shāwara-yushāwiru-mushāwarah* while consensus is taken from the word *wāfaqa-yuwāfiqumuwāfaqah*. Deliberation is a picture of how the faithful solve the affairs of the people (Munawar-Rachman, 2006). So, the value of democracy is a reflection of the teachings of deliberation in the Qur'an. Deliberation is one of the values emphasised in the Qur'an; it is proven that when facing problems involving personal problems, individuals or groups are taught to deliberate. The Qur'an teaches to always prioritise clarification, dialogue, discussion, and deliberation as contained in the Surah Ali Imran (3): 159 (Yusuf, 2018). In a multicultural society, the author believes that democratic values have to be maintained. Living democratically demonstrates a spirit of cooperation and harmony. In order to establish a peaceful environment in the midst of a multicultural society, democratic values must be developed and upheld.

Sixth, the egalitarian values

The theme of egalitarianism in the Qur'an is expressed through the term *sawa*, with various derivations that show the meaning of egalitarian values. *Sāwā* in Arabic means equal, straight matter, equal, fair, and balanced. All of these notions basically have the same meaning, showing the meaning of *sāwā* as equal or balanced. *Al-Musāwah* in the Qur'an is also spoken in other terms, namely just, *al-qist*, and *al-mīzan*. The mention of *sāwā* itself in the Qur'an is repeated only once, precisely in Surah al-Kahf (18):96. The author understands that the practice of egalitarian values in the midst of a multicultural society can support the creation of a harmonious life. Through egalitarian values, each person and group does not feel more special from religious, ethnic, ethnic, and group aspects than other people and groups.

Seventh, the justice value

This study finds that justice in the Qur'an is termed *al-'adl*. The command to apply justice clearly can be found in the Qur'an, Surah al-Nahl (14): 90, Surah al-Nisa' (4): 58 and 135. Apart from the term *al-'adl*, the Qur'an also reveals justice with the term *qist*. The term *al-qist* can be found in the Qur'an in Surah al-Hujurat (49): 9 and Surah al-Ma'idah (5): 8. Some interpreters include part of the word *mīzān* in the sense of *al-'adl*. All the meanings of these words converge in a general idea, which is to be in the middle and balanced, supported by honesty (Munawar-Rachman, 2006). The author argues that justice contributes to community harmony. Multicultural societies are capable of coexistence if justice is upheld in accordance with the law. The government must therefore be present to uphold justice for all of its citizens, regardless of religion, tribe, or nation.

Eighth, the tolerance value

Tolerance is the ability to respect others and embrace their differences without feeling self-righteous or imposing one's own views and beliefs on others. Tolerance is an attitude of respecting, permitting, and accepting the views, opinions, and beliefs of others that differ from or are in conflict with one's own (Saifuddin, 2021). Therefore, in the context of the life of a multicultural society, tolerance is needed to maintain the conduciveness of society so that people feel safe worshipping, holding opinions, and carrying out their rituals. The Qur'an does not mention the term tolerance explicitly. The verses that show tolerance are implicitly revealed, but with a strong emphasis. Among the verses of the Koran that show the meaning of tolerance is Surah al-Baqarah (2): 256, which emphasises that there is no compulsion in religion. As a result, every human being must be tolerant of other people's religions. The Qur'an forbids someone from forcing others to believe in a

certain religion. In addition, verses that show tolerance can be found in Surah Yunus (10): 40 and 99, namely, Allah does not force His will to be believed by humans. Likewise, Surah al-Kahf (18): 29 teaches that faith is the choice of each individual, so it cannot be forced. More than that, the guidance to faith belongs to Allah, which He gives to whomever He wills.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Qur'an contains teachings that are in accordance with the human condition in every space and time, including the teachings of multiculturalism. The teachings of multiculturalism in the Qur'an can be seen from a normative in historical perspective. Normatively, many verses of the Qur'an contain concepts, teachings, doctrines, and values of multiculturalism. However, not all verses on multiculturalism are explicitly revealed in the Qur'an. Historically, the condition of the multicultural city of Medina inspired the Prophet Muhammad. To manage the city of Medina on the "Madinah Charter" which contains the values of *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* (universal) as taught in the Qur'an. Among the values of multiculturalism in the Qur'an that are investigated in this study are: 1) *the value of competing in goodness*; 2) *the peace and reconciliation value*; 3) *the appreciation and interdependence value*; 4) *the positive thinking value*; 5) *the democratic values*; 6) *the egalitarian values*; 7) *the justice value*, and 8) *the tolerance value*

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