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Reconstructing the Qur'anic Concept of Corruption: Amin al-Khulli's Semantic Approach to *Ghulūl*, *Risywah*, and *Suht*

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Abstract

The divergence in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses concerning the divine attributes has led to theological fragmentation, which has evolved into socio-cultural polarization, potentially undermining the harmony of contemporary Muslim communities. This study examines the hermeneutical dialectics of four theological schools in interpreting the verses on God's attributes, focusing on their epistemological and practical implications within the Indonesian context. Employing a qualitative approach based on library research and al-Farmawi's comparative analytical framework, this research analyzes three representative verses—Q.S. Tāhā [20]:5, Q.S. al-Fatḥ [48]:10, and Q.S. al-Raḥmān [55]:27—through four key exegeses: al-Mizān (Shi'a), al-Kashshāf (Mu'tazilah), Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (Ash'ariyyah), and Taysīr al-Karīm (Salafi). The findings reveal distinct interpretive tendencies: the Shi'a emphasize consistent philosophical ta'wīl; the Mu'tazilah prioritize rational and philological reasoning; the Ash'ariyyah construct a complex dialectical hermeneutic; while the Salafi adopt a literalist approach with fluctuating methodological consistency. These divergences extend beyond theoretical discourse, manifesting in Indonesia's socio-cultural contestations across digital spheres, religious institutions, and communal practices. This study argues that the diversity of interpretations regarding the divine attributes should not be perceived as a theological threat but rather as an epistemological richness that calls for a more inclusive and nuanced Qur'anic hermeneutic to preserve Muslim cohesion amid theological plurality. The novelty of this research lies in integrating theological and hermeneutical analysis within a comparative study of four major exegetical traditions and

situating their interpretive dynamics within the contemporary socio-religious context of Indonesian Islam. This study contributes to advancing Qur'anic hermeneutics through a systematic analysis of methodological consistency across diverse theological schools.

Introduction

The reconstruction of the concept of corruption seeks to redefine the understanding of corruption by incorporating adjustments to legal frameworks and justice values that are relevant to contemporary phenomena. Jack Bologne, in *Gone Theory*, identified four factors that cause corruption: greed, opportunity, exposure, and need.¹ The term from a Latin word meaning "to destroy completely. of corruption are classified as major criminal offenses that severely harm the nation and state. Therefore, special laws are required to apprehend the perpetrators. In Indonesia, corruption affects many aspects of society. Socially, it reduces social welfare by obstructing people's access to education and healthcare. Economically, corruption leads to budget inflation and misappropriation of funds, resulting in higher living costs and disrupting state tax revenues, thereby hindering economic growth.² Other studies show that there is a causal relationship between economic growth, state financial growth, corruption, and financial development in the long run.³

The World Bank's 2000 definition of corruption has become an international standard for policy formulation: "an abuse of public power for private gain. Robert Klitgaard defines corruption as occurring individual illicitly places personal interests above those of the people and the ideals he or she is pledged to serve. In line with this, Tamrin Amal Tomagola categorizes corruption into three levels. First, the act of betraying one's beliefs, also known as moral corruption. Second, the abuse of power, even if the perpetrator does not receive material benefits but still harms others. Third, the highest level of corruption is the abuse of power for material gains that are not rightfully theirs, whether for personal or group interests. Despite the various definitions, acts of corruption take many forms, including bribery, forgery, embezzlement, extortion, gratuities, and nepotism.⁴

Islam addresses the issue of corruption, even though it does not explicitly mention the term. The Quran describes the concept of corruption using several terms that refer to such actions. In Islamic leadership, the concept of government, as appointed by the Quran, is based on the principles of trust and justice, which form the foundation for a leader in exercising authority. In the Islamic perspective, the state exists to promote the welfare of the people, in accordance with the objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah.⁵ Some terms in the Quran commonly used to depict acts of corruption include gulul, suht, and sariqah. Numerous studies discussing the concept of corruption frequently reference these three terms. For example, research conducted by Firdian Rizky Pratama and colleagues analyzed the Islamic perspective on corruption and its solutions. This study examines two Quranic verses that mention the terms suht and ghulūl, as well as one verse addressing the act of risywah, each of which emphasizes the

¹ Norapusrita and Mohamad Djasuli, 'Individual Factors Causing Corruption in an Islamic Perspective', *Journal of Economics and Business (JEBS)*, 2.3 (2022), 770–75 <<https://doi.org/10.47233/jeb.v2i3.270>>.

² Purisa Cristiwini Winatalia and Ismunarno, 'Analysis of the Impact of Corruption on Socio-Economic Aspects in Indonesia', *Journal of Law and Citizenship*, 13.12 (2025), 1–23. 6.

³ Chang Qing Song, Chun Ping Chang, and Qiang Gong, 'Economic Growth, Corruption, and Financial Development: Global Evidence', *Economic Modelling*, 94 (2021), 822–30 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ECONMOD.2020.02.022>>.

⁴ Sukron Kamil, *Anti-Corruption Education: Cultural, Political, and Integrity Theory Approaches* (Jakarta: Erlangga Publisher, 2019).

⁵ Ibnu Rusydi, 'Good Governance According to Islamic Perspective', *Munaddhomah: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 4.4 (2023), 1001–7 <<https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v11no1.696>>. 1001.

illegality of corrupt actions, as Allah forbids Muslims from using anything obtained unlawfully.⁶ Morally speaking, acts of corruption constitute ethical and moral violations because they have a negative impact that can harm many people. For example, making important decisions based on personal motives without considering the rights of others and the consequences for citizens.⁷

Other more specific research explaining corruption in the Qur'an focuses on a single term. For example, the study conducted by Ahmad Sudioanto and colleagues analyzes the word **ghulūl** as a concept of corruption in the Qur'an. Their research demonstrates that *ghulūl* encompasses a broad meaning, referring to various forms of misappropriation of power and public property, which negatively impact the relationships among human beings and between humans and God.⁸ In addition, Ahmad Zaruni and Reka conducted a study that explores the meaning of **ghulūl** in the Qur'an from both classical and modern interpretative perspectives. Their research concluded that **ghulūl** is not only related to the spoils of war; in contemporary times, it can also be understood as betrayal of the state or abuse of office by an individual.⁹ In addition to this, the high incidence of corruption can be attributed to several factors: weak internal and external institutional supervision systems, a lack of individual integrity, and suboptimal law enforcement. These are the primary causes of the increase in corruption practices in Indonesia.¹⁰

In addition to its association with war booty, the concept of corruption is often linked to theft. Fauzi Aziz and colleagues, in their research, correlated Surah Al-Maidah, verse 38, which addresses theft, with acts of corruption. They identified three common aspects: the unlawful taking of property, the harmful impact on the community, and the detrimental effects on the country.¹¹ In addition, Heru Susetyo correlates the concept of corruption as a crime in Islamic law with verses related to *ghulūl* and *sariqah*, concluding that corruption is a heinous act, a crime, and a fraudulent violation of others' rights carried out unlawfully.¹² Furthermore, Mirza Abdul Hakim, through the semiotic perspective of Ferdinand de Saussure, interprets corruption in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 188, as an act that harms many parties. Corruption is not only about acquiring something that is not rightfully one's own but also encompasses its use and the consequences it produces, both materially and immaterially.¹³

Many academics have conducted research on the concept of corruption, resulting in a substantial body of literature on the topic. However, there are still very few studies focusing on the semantic analysis of terms commonly used to describe corruption. Some research addresses this term within the context of Islamic law. Nevertheless, regarding the semantic study of various terms related to corruption in the Qur'an, Amin al-Khulli has not identified any literary interpretations specifically addressing corruption. Therefore, this research is necessary to explore both general studies and, in particular, the interpretation of the frequently used terms themselves.

⁶ Firdian Rizky Pratama, Muhammad Akbar Rahib, and Nugroho Joyo Prakoso, 'Islam Views Corruption and Its Solutions', *Diponegoro Journal of Islamic Economics and Business*, 2.1 (2023), 38–55 <<https://doi.org/10.14710/djieb.20232>>.

⁷ Gokma Toni Parlindungan and Dkk, *Character Education and Anti-Corruption*, ed. by Ermanto Fahamsyah (Bali: Intelektual Manifes Media, 2024). 20.

⁸ Ahmad Sudioanto and Jufri Hasani, 'Gulūl: Analysis of the Concept of Corruption in the Qur'an', *El-Wasathy: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2.2 (2024), 311–32 <<https://doi.org/10.61693/elwasathy.vol22.2024.311-332>>. 331.

⁹ Ahmad Zaruni and Ahmad Isaeni, 'The Meaning of Ghulul in the Qur'an According to the View of Classical and Modern Interpretation', *Unian Journal of Management and Education*, 2.3 (2022), 22–35 <<http://journal.an-nur.ac.id/index.php/unisanjournal/article/view/713>>. 34.

¹⁰ Della Juwita and Yoserizal, 'Factors Causing the Increase in Corruption Rates', *Sanskara Education and Teaching*, 3.01 (2025), 52–58 <<https://doi.org/10.58812/spp.v3i01>>.

¹¹ A. Fauzi Aziz and Lukman Afifudin, 'Analysis of Corruption in the Correlation of Legal Interpretation in Theft Verse', *Al-Faruq: Journal of Sharia Economic Law and Islamic Law*, 3.1 (2024), 1–19 <<https://doi.org/10.58518/al-faruq.v2i2.2343>>. 17.

¹² Heru Susetyo, 'Corruption as a Crime in Islamic Law', *Misykat Al-Anwar Journal of Islamic Studies and Society*, 5.2 (2022), 239 <<https://doi.org/10.24853/ma.5.2.239-260>>.

¹³ Mirza Abdul Hakim, 'Semiotics of Corruption in The Qur'an Ferdinand De Saussure's Perspective', *Abdurrauf Journal of Islamic Studies (ARJIS)*, 3.2 (2024), 80–96 <<https://doi.org/10.58824/arjis.v3i2.133>>.

Profile Amin al-Khulli

Amin Ibn Ibrahim Abdul Baqi' Ibn Amir Ibn Ismail Ibn Yusuf al-Khulli was born on May 1, 1895, in a small town in Egypt. He came from a religious family, which greatly influenced his strong understanding of religious sciences, as reflected in his writings across various disciplines. Al-Khulli began studying religion at a young age. At seven, he lived with an uncle who provided him with a rigorous education, focusing on memorizing the Quran, studying tajweed (including al-Thuhfah and al-Jazariah), fiqh, and nahwu. By the age of ten, Amin al-Khulli had successfully memorized the Quran, particularly mastering the Qiraat Hafs within 18 months. Throughout his intellectual journey, Amin al-Khulli produced several works on the theory of Quranic interpretation, which are frequently used as reference materials by scholars, as they are considered foundational for developing new methodologies.

Amin al-Khulli was an Egyptian intellectual who emphasized the importance of applying literary criticism methods to the texts of the Qur'an. The Qur'an remains a text that cannot speak for itself without interpretation. From the time of the Prophet until the present, interpretation of the Qur'an has been continuously undertaken to understand the message and meaning it contains. Human efforts to interpret the Qur'an have only achieved relative understanding, resulting in the emergence of various types of interpretations, including those focused on literary styles. The beauty of the Qur'an's language attracted the interest of Muslim intellectuals, who viewed interpretation as a way to appreciate the Qur'an, including Amin al-Khulli.

In addition to the beauty of the Quranic language, the large number of non-Arabs who converted to Islam necessitated further explanation of the privileges and meanings contained within the Quran. According to Amin al-Khuli, in his thesis, the Quran is the greatest work of Arabic literature. Discussions about Arabic are ongoing, especially since Arabic serves as the medium for conveying the messages of the Quran, making it a subject of endless study.

Although Amin al-Khulli did not write a formal tafsir, he extensively explored the interpretation of the Qur'an and developed a theory on the relationship between philology and Qur'anic interpretation that was influential in Egypt. The application of Amin al-Khulli's approach to reconstructing the concept of corruption in the Qur'an is carried out in two stages. The first stage involves a study about the Qur'an (Dirasah Ma Hawla al-Quran), which explains the phenomenon of fundamental verses. This aspect is further divided into general and specialized studies. General studies include the socio-political context at the time the verses were revealed, while specialized studies focus on the process of revelation, the compilation of verses, and other topics discussed in the ulumul Qur'an. The second stage is the study of the Qur'an itself (Dirasah Ma Fi al-Quran), which analyzes linguistic vocabulary by interpreting each word and its pronunciation. This is followed by an analysis of the arrangement of words, including nahwu (syntax), sharaf (morphology), and balaghah (rhetoric), to uncover the deeper meaning of the verses.

Aisyah Abdurrahma bint al-Syathi, the wife of Al-Khulli, employed the method she developed in writing *Al-Tafsir Al-Bayani li al-Quran al-Karim*. In his book *Manahij Tajdid fi al-Nahw wa al-Balaghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab*, Al-Khulli advocates for the use of thematic methods in interpreting the Qur'an, emphasizing philological interpretation based on the chronology of the text and the analysis of the meanings of Arabic words. Additionally, Amin al-Khulli established principles for interpreting the Qur'an: first, interpreting using thematic methods; second, arranging verses according to the chronology of revelation to obtain a comprehensive explanation of time, place, and agent; third, understanding the semantic indications of words (*dilalah lafadz*) by interpreting them according to their original linguistic meanings in various contexts. This involves collecting all occurrences of words in the Qur'an to discern both their general and specific meanings; fourth, interpreting each word in the Qur'an according to its own meaning.¹⁴

In reconstructing the concept, al-Khulli identifies two methods. The first is extrinsic criticism (al-Naqd al-Khariji), which focuses on evaluating sources by examining external factors influencing the

¹⁴ Yossi Kurnia Yudatama and Meirando Rukhuz, 'Linguistik Al-Qur'an in the Interpretation of Bintu Syathi', *Al-Afkar: Journal for Islamic Studies*, 7.4 (2024), 162–72 <<https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v7i4.1533.Linguistics>>. 165.

emergence of a concept or work, including socio-political, cultural, and other contexts. This approach aims to uncover the relationship between the historical period, the background of the concept's appearance, and the meaning that aligns with those conditions. Al-Khullī emphasized that understanding the meaning of the Qur'an requires a careful study of language, rather than relying solely on theological interpretation. The second method is intrinsic criticism (*al-Naqd al-Dakhili*), which concentrates on literary texts through linguistic analysis. This approach closely resembles the egocentric school, which examines literary works based primarily on the texts themselves.¹⁵ In addition, Amin al-Khullī believes that each verse contains a psychological element, granting it the unique ability to interpret itself naturally. Understanding this psychological aspect is essential to fully grasp the intended meaning of the verse.¹⁶

The Context of Corruption Over Time

Amin al-Khullī revealed that the first step in interpreting a verse involves an analysis called *dirasah ma hawla al-Quran*, which examines the context in which the verse was revealed. This initial step aims to prioritize a socio-historical analysis of the verse to understand the roots and nuances of its true meaning. This stage is divided into two parts: first, a special study that explains information related to *Asbab al-Nuzul* (the occasions of revelation), methods of verse composition, differences in *qiraat* (Quranic readings), and other related aspects; second, a general study that explores the material and immaterial environment of the verses, such as the scientific development of Arabic literature related to the Quran, geography, climatology, and other contextual factors relevant to the verse.¹⁷ According to him, this two-stage explanation is useful for fully understanding the meaning of the Qur'an and may lack interpretive depth if it does not consider the socio-anthropological aspects of the Arab community itself.

At this early stage of analyzing *dirāsah ma hawla al-Quran*, particularly in examining the context of interpreting verses related to corruption, it is essential to understand how the concepts and instances of corruption have evolved over time. The Quranic verses addressing this issue demonstrate that corruption has existed historically. During the time of the Prophet SAW, trust was not only understood as a relationship between individuals but also as a responsibility before Allah SWT. Even minor acts of betrayal could provoke the Prophet's anger and were considered direct betrayals before Allah. This was evident when the Prophet imposed severe moral sanctions, such as refusing to participate in the funeral prayer for someone who, during their lifetime, had committed *ghulūl* (embezzlement of war booty). This incident was narrated by Abu Daud:

From Zaid ibn Khalid al-Juhani: Indeed, one of the companions of the Prophet died in the Battle of Khaibar. When this was reported to the Prophet (SAW), he said, "your friend!" The faces of the companions changed due to the Prophet's reluctance to pray for him. Then he said, "Indeed, your friend has embezzled the spoils of war. searched his belongings and found a Jew's jewelry worth less than two dirhams.. (HR. Abu Daud)

The Prophet, known as the most trusted and honest person, was once suspected of betraying the distribution of war spoils. This suspicion arose when one of the items listed was missing, although there was no official record of it. This incident prompted the revelation of a Qur'anic verse that denied such accusations. The event occurred during the distribution of spoils after the Battle of Uhud in the third year of Hijri, as narrated by Ibn Abbas. A piece of red velvet obtained from the polytheists was lost, leading some to suspect the Prophet, with rumors suggesting he might have taken it for personal gain. In response, a verse was revealed defending the Prophet and warning those who commit corruption:

¹⁵ Habibur Rahman, "Amin Al-Khullī; Literary Criticism Approach to the Quran," *Al-Irfan: Journal of Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2019): 94–120, 113–114.

¹⁶ Moh. Mofid and Mohammad Zainal Hamdy, 'Deconstruction of the Approach to Literary Criticism of the Quran from the Perspective of Amin Al-Khulī', *Al-Irfan: Journal of Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies*, 4.2 (2021), 238–53 <<https://doi.org/10.36835/alirfan.v4i2.5069>>.

¹⁷ Habibur Rahman, 'Amin Al-Khullī; Literary Criticism Approach to the Quran', *Al-Irfan: Journal of Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies*, 2.1 (2019), 94–120 <<file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/318919-amin-al-khuli-pendekatan-kritik-sastra-t-9d154382.pdf>>. 110–111.

It is not fitting for a prophet to misappropriate the spoils of war. Whoever does so will surely be held accountable for their misdeeds on the Day of Resurrection. Then, everyone will be rewarded justly according to their actions, and no one will be wronged. (QS. Ali-Imran: 161)

This verse uses the word *ghulūl* to refer to acts of corruption. In the tafsir of at-Tabari, it is explained that, during the Battle of Uhud, no actual corruption occurred. Instead, the archers stationed on the hill harbored a prejudice, suspecting that the troops led by the Prophet beneath the hill were engaging in *ghulūl* while defeating the polytheists. This incident highlights how sensitive issues related to wealth are within the community, as even the Prophet, who is highly trusted, faced suspicion. Therefore, in managing public assets, transparency is essential as a form of accountability to prevent any accusations regarding asset management.

A cautious attitude toward the mandate must always be maintained due to its high sensitivity. Although public crimes during the time of the Prophet were not as sophisticated as they are today, their impact was still significant. The Prophet provided moral sanctions, as mentioned above. This aligns with the philosophy of an Islamic government that seeks to uphold its reputation,¹⁸ The concept of prudence must be emphasized, as exemplified in the case of Amil Zakat, who are strictly prohibited from accepting gifts while performing their duties. To prevent this, the Prophet once reprimanded an Amil Zakat who accepted gifts during the execution of his responsibilities:

Ibn Humaid as-Sa'idi reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) appointed a man from the tribe of Asad named Ibn Lutbiah to collect zakat. When he returned, he said, 'is for you, and this is a gift for me. Prophet then stood on the pulpit, praised Allah, and said: 'happened to the zakat collector I sent who came back saying, 'This is zakat for you, and this is a gift for me'? Why didn't he stay at his father's or mother's house to observe if anyone was offering gifts? By Allah, in whose hands is the soul of Muhammad, none of you will accept a gift except on the Day of Resurrection, when he will carry on his neck a complaining camel, a barking cow, or a barking goat. Then the Prophet raised his hands, revealing the whiteness of his armpits, and said, Allah, have I not conveyed the message? He repeated this twice. (H.R. Muslim)

Announcing a crime publicly can have a deterrent effect on perpetrators and serve as a lesson for the community, discouraging both corrupt individuals and their families from engaging in corrupt acts. It also educates those who have never committed such offenses. In today's context, this is comparable to exposing the perpetrator's image in mass media, which provides the public with information about the crime committed. Corruption often stems from dishonesty and a lack of empathy. Therefore, the Prophet was strict with his subordinates, urging them to perform their duties fairly, honestly, and with integrity.

The issue of gratuity can lead the recipient to develop partiality toward the giver, which compromises the neutrality of the heart. Therefore, actions that damage this impartiality should be avoided. The Qur'an also prohibits unlawfully consuming others' property and bribing judges to win cases, as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 188. This act of bribery mentioned in the verse is commonly referred to as risywah. (At-Tabari)¹⁹ Ibn Kathir, in his commentary, explains the asbab al-nuzul (circumstances of revelation) of this verse as relating to a man who owns property and has disputes with others but lacks strong evidence to prove his ownership. The opposing party denies his claim and brings the matter before a judge. The man knows that the property rightfully belongs to him and recognizes that the other person is sinful for consuming property unlawfully that does not belong to him.

From the two cases above, it is evident that the Prophet SAW did not implement physical punishment during his time. Instead, he focused on moral development by instilling awareness to avoid acts of corruption. However, the threat of accountability in the hereafter was more impactful for them because it was grounded in strong faith.

¹⁸ Ibnu Rusydi, 'Good Governance According to Islamic Perspective', *Munaddhomah: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 4.4 (2023), 1001–7 <<https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v1i1no1.696>>. 1003.

¹⁹ Abu Ja'far Muhammad Bin At-Tabari, *Tafsir At-Tabari Volume 03*, 2008. 196.

In the second stage of the analysis of *rasasāh ma hawla al-Quran*, the focus is on the general study of scientific development, particularly the evolution of the concept of corruption. Furthermore, during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin, especially under the Caliphate of Umar ibn Khatab, the management of public property was conducted with great care, similar to a guardian's responsibility over the property of orphans. Under stable conditions, financial management was carried out properly, and in times of need, resources were used appropriately. One of the policies during Umar ibn Khatab's rule regarding the safeguarding of public property was to assess the wealth of officials at the beginning and end of their tenure. If there was an unjustified increase, the official was required to account for how the property was acquired. If unable to do so, Umar ordered the excess property to be handed over to the Baitul Mal, which then divided the property equally—half returned to the official and half allocated to the state.²⁰ This happened when Umar ibn Khatab asked for an explanation regarding the income from Abu Hurairah's wealth as a form of his responsibility for the public trust.²¹ This occurred when Umar ibn Khatab requested an explanation concerning the income derived from Abu Hurairah's wealth, as part of his responsibility for managing the public trust.²² If an official is unable to prove their innocence, they may be subject to corruption sanctions. Corrupt practices are suppressed as much as possible, guided by the principle of prudence regarding public and private property. The caliphs firmly believed that the misuse of state property constituted a form of treason that must be accounted for both before humans and before God. As a result, cases of corruption were very rare during the time of the Rashidun Caliphs. Allegations of corruption and nepotism during the time of Uthman ibn Affan, however, are often viewed by many historians as politically motivated accusations, largely driven by his political opponents.²³

In Indonesia, the enforcement of laws against corruption is primarily governed by Law Number 31 of 1999 concerning the Eradication of Corruption, as amended by Law Number 20 of 2001. These laws provide a strong foundation for combating corruption offenses such as bribery, gratuities, abuse of authority, and embezzlement of funds. They also prescribe severe penalties for perpetrators, including fines, revocation of certain rights, and other sanctions. However, the implementation of these regulations faces significant challenges due to numerous legal loopholes exploited by offenders to evade punishment, such as manipulating legal defenses and influencing the process through power relations.²⁴ In addition, Law No. 13 of 1999 and Law No. 20 of 2001 categorize corruption offenses into two groups: the first group comprises corruption crimes, and the second includes other offenses related to corruption.

Law enforcement in Indonesia has led to positive developments as a normative effort to eradicate corruption. However, the lack of effectiveness in enforcing these laws is due to several factors, including the insufficient severity of punishments, such as the death penalty for perpetrators proven guilty of corruption. This shortcoming is one of the factors contributing to the increasing number of corruption cases each year, which has a detrimental impact on society.²⁵ One commonly proposed punishment with a deterrent effect for corrupt offenders is asset confiscation. From the perspective of Maqasid al-Sharia, asset confiscation represents a contemporary form of *ijtihad* aimed at progressively realizing the values

²⁰ Febri Kusuma and Ersya Amara Zahwa, 'The Historical Manifestation of Islamic Economic Thought at the Time of Khulafaur Rasyidin', *Al-Hasyimiah: Journal of Sharia Economics*, 03.01 (2024), 52–59.

²¹ When Abu Hurairah met Umar ibn Khatab after returning from Bahrain (carrying 400,000 from Bahrain). Then Umar asked: "Have you wronged someone?" Abu Hurairah replied: "No". Umar asked: "Did you take something that was not his right?" He replied: "no". Umar again asked: "How much have you taken?" He replied "20,000". Umar asked: "Where did you get it from?" He replied: "I trade". Umar said: "Calculate your principal capital and your income. Take and return the rest to Baitul mal"

²² Masyhuri Na'im, Nur Rofiah, and Imadadun Rahmat, *NU Fights Corruption in the Study of Tafsir and Fiqh* (Jakarta: National Movement for the Eradication of Corruption Working Team, 2006).

²³ Murtiningsih, 'The Accusation of Nepotism Against Uthman bin Affan and His Influence on the Caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib', *Journal of Religious Science: Examining Religious Doctrines, Thoughts, and Phenomena*, 19.1 (2018), 159–76 <<https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v19i1.2385>>.

²⁴ Farid Nur Mustaqim and others, 'Law Enforcement of Corruption Crimes in Indonesia Against Corporate Actors', *Nusantara Scientific Journal*, 2.2 (2025), 153–64 <<https://doi.org/10.37303/magister.v10i1.26>>.

²⁵ Diya Ul Akmal, 'Indonesia's Corruption Eradication: Legal Romanticism and the Reality of Its Implementation', *Integrity: Anti-Corruption Journal*, 11.1 (2025), 27–42.

of Maqasid al-Sharia. Its implementation primarily focuses on safeguarding state property while respecting individual rights. The confiscation of assets as a deterrent against corruption holds true Maqasid value only when conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural justice, transparency, and proportionality. It serves not only as a sanction but also as a reflection of the spiritual and social commitment of Muslims to uphold a just and dignified state.²⁶

Eradicating corruption is not solely the responsibility of the state; it requires the collective effort of all sectors, institutions, and society. This can be achieved by establishing effective policies that develop means to eliminate corruption, provide a deterrent effect for perpetrators, and prevent corruption in public affairs. Corruption must be uprooted by focusing on the private sector, institutions, anti-corruption education, and imposing the harshest sanctions on offenders who harm multiple parties. In the Law on the Crime of Bribery, several terms describe gratuities or gifts with a broad meaning. Unlike ordinary gifts, giving in the context of generally aims to influence the recipient's judgment, thereby compromising the neutrality of decisions to favor the giver's interests.

The Term in the Quran and Its Meaning

The second stage in Amin al-Khullī's semantic analysis is the study of *dirasah ma fi al-Quran*, which involves explaining the analysis of the vocabulary and context of the Quran. This is achieved by examining both the etymological and functional meanings to determine the intended use of each word. The next step involves analyzing the structure of words with the aid of linguistic and literary sciences. At this stage, the analysis focuses on defining and comparing the similarities in meaning between different verses of the Quran. Some Quranic terms frequently associated with corruption include *ghulūl*, *suht*, and *risywah*.

Ghulūl

The term in the Qur'an 16 times as verbs, 9 times as mashdar (verbal nouns), 2 times as fi'il mudhāri' (present tense verbs), and 2 times as fi'il māḍī (past tense verbs). The discussion of ghulūl occurs during the Makkan period of revelation, which primarily addresses matters of faith, whereas the Madinan period focuses more on mu'amalah (social transactions). During the Makkan period, several related terms appear in different surahs with varying meanings. For example, in Surah al-Haqqah (verse 30), in Surah al-A'raf (verse 43) and in Surah al-Hijr signify malice; in Surah al-A'raf (verse 157) refers to Shariah responsibility; in Surah Saba' (verse 33) and Surah Ghaafir (verse 71) denotes shackles of torment; in Surah Yasin (verse 8) represents the consequences of rejecting the truth; in Surah al-Insan (verse 4) means shackles; and in Surah al-Isra' (verse 29) means being prevented from donations (charitable spending). Overall, the etymological meanings during the Makkan period relate closely to verses concerning faith.

During the Medina period, several similar terms were also used, such as *yagul*, *yaghlul*, and *galla* in Surah Ali-Imran, verse 161, meaning misappropriation or embezzlement of property; *gullat* in Surah Al-Maidah, verse 64, meaning curse; *gillan* in Surah Al-Hasyr, verse 10, meaning malice; **aglal** in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 5, and Surah Al-Insan, verse 4, meaning shackles; and *maglulah* in Surah Al-Maidah, verse 64, which means prevented from donations.²⁷ Ghulūl, which linguistically means is often associated with the concept of corruption, particularly in relation to the spoils of war, as mentioned in Surah Al-Imran, verse 161:

And when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "O Messenger of Allaah (peace and
!(blessings of Allaah be upon him

²⁶ Sofwan Tambunan, Budi Sastra Panjaitan, and Arifuddin Muda Harahap, 'A Review of Maqashid Syariah on the Draft Law on Asset Forfeiture in the Eradication of Corruption in Indonesia', *Nirta Journal: Innovation Studies*, 4.2 (2025), 1–22.

²⁷ Ahmad Sudianto and Jufri Hasani, 'Gulūl: Analysis of the Concept of Corruption in the Qur'an', *El-Wasathy: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2.2 (2024), 311–32 <<https://doi.org/10.61693/elwasathy.vol22.2024.311-332>>.. 315-316.

It is not worthy of a prophet to misappropriate (spoils of war). Whoever perverts, he will surely come with what he has misled on the Day of Resurrection. Then, everyone will be rewarded perfectly according to what they did and they will not be wronged. (QS. Ali Imran: 161)

In the context of the aforementioned mention of *yaghul*, the majority of scholars interpret it as treason. Ibn Abbas argued that it is impermissible for a Prophet to betray the spoils of war, even if he is the leader of the ummah. This demonstrates that, despite the leader's authority, common property cannot be used for personal gain, as doing so constitutes an act of betrayal. Al-Qurthubi also defines *yaghul* as treason, emphasizing that it is impossible for a Prophet to betray the spoils of war, which rightfully belong to the ummah. However, some scholars contend that this verse serves as a form of admonition rather than a prohibition.²⁸

Meanwhile, in his commentary, ath-Thabari relies on several narrations that explain the meaning and cause of the revelation of this verse. Giving wealth to some people while withholding it from others is also considered an act of treason. According to him, this verse rejects the notion of the Prophet's treacherous nature and prohibits treachery toward anyone. It is narrated by Ishaq bin Ibrahim in ath-Thabari's tafsir that the reason for the revelation of this verse is related to the loss of the red velvet during the Battle of Badr. Some of the Sahabah alleged that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had taken it, so Allah revealed this verse to deny that it is possible for a Prophet to betray.²⁹

Quraish Shihab, in his commentary, translates *yaghul* as which is also understood as rushing to seize something valuable from the spoils of war. However, the context of this term can be interpreted in two ways: as treachery in a general sense, including betrayal of the trust bestowed by society, and as personal betrayal for individual gain.³⁰ In contrast to the previous interpretation, Hamka understands the word *yaghul* as taking something and secretly adding it to a collection of other goods, which can be equated with theft. Corruption has been unequivocally condemned and will be punished; however, the underlying cause of the corrupt act will also be taken into account to ensure that the sanctions imposed correspond appropriately to the individual's behavior.³¹ This is due to the fundamental nature of the problem and the justice system that Allah has established to ensure that no one is wronged by Him.

The development of this interpretive meaning demonstrates a contextual influence that also affects the scope of interpretation. In classical times, *yaghūl* was understood as the betrayal of war spoils, as documented in many historical accounts. In contrast, contemporary interpretations by Hamka associate *yaghūl* with stealing behavior, while Quraish Shihab further expands its meaning to include undermining public trust in authorities. Thus, across these two periods, the meaning of *yaghūl* evolves to reflect the changing needs of the times in understanding and reciting the Qur'an.

São Paulo

Etymologically, the term from the Arabic language and means stick out the head. Ibn Mandzur explained that is derived from the behavior of a bird chick that sticks its head out of its mother's beak to ask for food. In terminology, giving with the intention of justifying what is void (untruthful according to Sharia) or blaming what is right.³² The word *risywah* is not a term from the Qur'an but rather a fiqh term that refers to bribery. *Risywah* is classified among crimes that involve manipulation and harm, particularly in a political context, where it can shift one's objectives from public welfare to personal gain and self-enrichment. In the Qur'an, *risywah* is associated with the prohibition of bribing judges to secure personal interests.

²⁸ Al-Qurthubi, *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi Volume 4* (Azzam Library, 2008). 637-640.

²⁹ Abu Ja'far Muhammad Bin At-Thabari, *Tafsir At-Thabari Volume 06* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2008). 137.

³⁰ Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah Jilid 2* (Lentera Hati, 2002).

³¹ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 02* (Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD Singapore, 1982). 979.

³² Corruption Eradication Commission, *Anti-Corruption Education for Adherents of Islam, Aclc.Kpk.Go.Id* (Jakarta).

Do not eat the wealth of among you in a wrong way, and do not bring it to the judges in order that you may eat some of the wealth of others in the way of sin, even though you know it. (QS. Al-Baqarah: 188)

This verse contains two interrelated prohibitions. The first prohibits unlawfully consuming the property of others, while the second forbids offering something to a judge to influence their decision, thereby benefiting the giver and harming others. The first prohibition is general, addressing the improper consumption of others' property. The second is specific, as Allah provides an example of bribery directed at judges. In his commentary, At-Thabari explains that Allah regards a person who unlawfully consumes their brother's property as if they are consuming their own property unlawfully. The editorial *تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ*

(do not eat your property) is considered a mockery of those who consume others' property because Allah makes believers brothers, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and care *الْحُكَّامُ بَيْنَكُمْ إِلَى وَتُنْذَرُوا*. Bringing the matter before the judge, even though he knows the truth about the property, will not legalize it through the judge's decision; it remains an act of self-righteousness.³³

Ali bin Talhah, in his commentary on Ibn Kathir, stated that this verse refers to a person who possesses wealth of unclear origin. He then disputes it with the ruler, even though he knows the property is not rightfully his, thereby consuming haram (forbidden) goods. Even if a judge is bribed to rule in his favor, the haram property does not become halal (permissible), nor does halal property become haram.³⁴

Sayyid Qutb also emphasized that this prohibition was mentioned following the call to fear Allah, serving as a reminder that the subsequent prohibition must still be observed. Regarding the unlawful consumption of others' property, al-Qurthubi discussed the situation of a judge who issues a ruling favoring one party, fully aware that the party is cheating. Even if a judge declares something forbidden or lawful, this does not alter the original ownership of the property, which should not belong to the wrongdoer. Yusuf al-Qardhawi defines *risywah* as the act of giving money to a ruler in order to secure a favorable punishment for the giver.³⁵ In addition, al-Rubaye identified several types of corruption, including financial corruption related to embezzlement and money laundering; political corruption, which in this case involves ignoring the public interest; and judicial corruption, which pertains to financing the issuance of decisions by judges.³⁶

Quraish Shihab, in his tafsir, also mentions the prohibition of taking and controlling the property of others without rightful authority. This act is considered a form of *zulm* (injustice). People should not leave property matters to the judge to decide when they themselves know they have no rightful claim to the property. This behavior falls under the category of taking something that does not belong to them.³⁷ Hamka interprets that the concept of *risywah* in this verse is intended to take the property of others by The way of sin can be interpreted differently. Hamka does not explicitly address bribery in the context of this verse; rather, he emphasizes the prohibition against consuming property unlawfully. If this occurs, it is considered an act of fraud.³⁸

Risywah is an act that harms others for the benefit of an unauthorized party. It involves paying judges to justify wrongful actions or to condemn what is right. The interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 188, clarifies that the act of *risywah* is explicitly condemned in the Quran. From classical to contemporary interpretations, bribing judges to influence decisions is considered null and void, and the outcome is regarded as an unlawful gain.

³³ At-Thabari, *Tafsir At-Thabari Volume 03*. 196.

³⁴ Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdurrahman bin Ishaq Al-Sheikh, *Tafseer of Ibn Kathir Volume 1*, 2004. 36.

³⁵ Siti Kadariah, Tuti Anggraini, and Marliyah, 'Economic Risks in the Practice of Risywah and Ihtikâr', *OUR EMT Journal*, 6.2 (2022), 334–41 <<https://doi.org/10.35870/emt.v6i2.678>>. 337.

³⁶ Maha Farooq Ezzat Al-Rubaye, 'Administrative Corruption: Causes and Solutions Special Reference to Iraq', *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 7.5 (2022), 1–27 <<https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2022.v7i5.e1015>>.

³⁷ Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah Jilid 1* (Lentera Hati, 1999).

³⁸ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 01* (National Library of PTE LTD Singapore, 1971). 438-439.

Suḥt

Linguistically, all the wrongful aspects related to business practices. Suḥt is often associated with São Paulo because both terms imply the act of unlawfully taking others' property. In his commentary, Sayyid Tantawi explained that sin encompasses every word and deed forbidden by Allah, including enmity that exceeds the bounds of wrongdoing. Al-Suḥt specifically refers to illicit gains, such as bribes and other forms of illegally obtained property.

They (the Jews) are very fond of hearing false news and eat a lot of forbidden food. So, if they come to you (the Prophet Muhammad to ask for a verdict), give judgment between them or turn away from them. If you turn away, they won't harm you in the slightest. However, if you decide (their case), decide justly. Indeed, Allah loves the righteous. (QS. Al-Maidah: 42)

Suḥt is interpreted as the consumption of illicit property. Ath-Thabari, in his commentary, states that this verse refers to Suḥt as a custom among the Jews, who are categorized as a group from São Paulo. Suḥt also refers to a situation where a person in need requests help from another party, and when the help is provided, the recipient offers a reward that the giver accepts; this transaction is considered Suḥt and is associated with São Paulo. However, the primary meaning of Suḥt in this verse is the wrongful consumption of others' property. Examples of Suḥt include usury, bribes, loot, gambling proceeds, and all forms of property obtained illegally. São Paulo is a specific category that falls under the broader concept of Suḥt.³⁹ Al-Qurthubi also interprets of accepting bribes, which is categorized as wicked behavior. Consequently, the decisions made by a wicked person are not considered valid.⁴⁰ Hamka emphasized in his interpretation that bribes render people speechless, preventing them from discerning right from wrong and upholding justice.⁴¹

From some of these interpretations, it is shown that Suḥt generally refers to the consumption of haram (forbidden) property, with its specific form being the acceptance of bribes. This behavior can obscure and distort what is clearly right. Besides Suḥt, which is often used to denote the consumption of haram property, other terms frequently associated with corruption include Sariqah. Sariqah refers to theft, an act punishable by the amputation of the hand as a sanction for the offender. Sayyid Sabiq defines theft in three forms: taking someone else's property, doing so secretly, and properly storing the stolen property. These three forms all involve the consumption of haram property, and the relevant verse explicitly prescribes the punishment for the perpetrator.

Men and women who steal, cut off their hands as a retribution for their deeds and as a punishment from Allah. God is All-Powerful and All-Wise. (QS. Al-Maidah: 38)

Even though theft is punishable by amputation, this penalty requires thorough analysis to determine its application under the law. Sayyid Qutb, in his commentary, defines theft as the act of taking someone else's property from a place where it is stored and guarded. Punishment is applied if the value of the stolen property is at least a quarter of a dinar. There are several differing opinions regarding the minimum value that warrants this sentence. At-Tabari mentioned that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) once ordered the amputation of a thief's hand for stealing armor worth three dirhams. Abu Hanifah, however, argued that the threshold should be ten dirhams or more.⁴² This verse emphasizes that there should be no hesitation in enforcing the law and that punishment applies universally to thieves, regardless of gender.

Reconstruction of the Concept of Corruption

After elaboration based on Amin al-Khullī's two-step semantic analysis, this stage represents a form of synthesis that produces a complex understanding of the topic discussed. This aligns with the initial goal of reconstructing the concept of corruption, aiming to redefine the understanding of corruption in light of contemporary developments. In Islam, corruption is considered a despicable act and is classified as a form of betrayal that must be accounted for before Allah. Some forms of corruption

³⁹ At-Thabari, *Tafsir At-Thabari Volume 06*.

⁴⁰ Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami' Li Ahkam Al-Quran Jilid 6* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007). 440.

⁴¹ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 03* (National Library of PTE LTD Singapore, 2004). 1739.

⁴² Abu Ja'far Muhammad Bin At-Thabari, *Tafsir At-Thabari Volume 08* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2008). 865.

mentioned in the Qur'an are referred to as *ghulūl* and *suht*, while *risywah* is not explicitly named in the Qur'an, though its actions are addressed. Each represents a different type of crime but is equally harmful, both individually and collectively. The Qur'an condemns all forms of acquiring and using property illegally and prohibits any actions that harm others. Insulting others for personal gain reflects moral and spiritual corruption rooted in greed, which can ultimately damage justice, as well as social and economic systems.

"Who is more unjust than the one who fabricates a lie against Allah or denies His verses? Indeed, the unrighteous are not lucky" (QS. Al-An'am: 21)

This verse addresses the polytheists who claim to follow the religion of Allah but lie to Him. Sayyid Qutb, in his commentary, explains that they create laws, establish rules, and formulate policies based on their own desires rather than on Allah's guidance. The term *ẓālim* in this verse alludes to shirk, as polytheism is considered an act of *ẓulm* (injustice) against the truth, oneself, and others.⁴³ Qiyas, in the context of corruption, considers the act of unlawfully taking others' property as a form of polytheism because it involves creating harmful laws that disregard Shari'a. Regarding *risywah* (bribery), the act of offering a bribe to a judge to obtain a desired outcome does not make the action permissible (*halal*) if it involves an illegal process, as it causes harm to other parties. The Qur'an addresses *risywah* by prohibiting the misuse of property and the act of giving something to a judge with the intention of altering the law unjustly (*ẓālim*).

In its general usage, the Quran employs the term *suht*, which appears in Surah Al-Maidah, verse 42. This verse addresses the habit of consuming something *haram* (forbidden), which can lead a person to be unable to uphold truth and justice. Examples include accepting bribes (*risywah*) and theft (*sariqah*). In classical interpretations, *suht* commonly refers to the consumption of unlawful wealth, such as that obtained through bribery (*risywah*). In contemporary interpretations, *risywah* is categorized under *suht* and encompasses all forms of bribery in politics and business, viewed as the root cause of widespread corruption and disruption of justice. *Suht* covers all illegal and unethical transactions; therefore, preventing *suht* and its associated risks must be a priority for individuals, groups, institutions, and the state, as acts of bribery can lead to significant problems on a large scale in the future.

Risywah is not limited to legal processes but encompasses all forms of bribery within social systems, the law, and beyond. This includes the concept of *suht*, which broadly refers to *haram* property, the proceeds of manipulation, embezzlement, and an unjust economic system. Reconstructing these two concepts positions *risywah* and *suht* as moral foundations for combating corruption and abuse of power in contemporary society. This can be achieved by addressing the issue at its root—namely, by refusing to accept any bribes in all matters. This understanding emphasizes the principles of integrity and justice as fundamental values for both authorities and individuals in the management and use of property.

Furthermore, according to classical interpretation, the term *ghulūl* refers to the betrayal and embezzlement of war spoils, reflecting the historical context of that time. However, in today's world, the interpretation of *ghulūl* has broadened and become more contextual. It is no longer limited to the embezzlement of war booty but also includes betrayal of trust and the misappropriation of public funds for personal or group interests. *Ghulūl* is regarded as a grave sin that undermines the integrity and trust placed in administrators by the public. All forms of betrayal of trust, fraud, and abuse of power are considered acts of *ghulūl* because they fall under the category of authority misuse. The evolution of the concept of *ghulūl*—from its historical context during the Prophet's time to its application to contemporary corruption—demonstrates the elaboration and contextualization of ethical and Islamic legal principles to enhance community understanding.

Embezzlement of funds by authorities can be considered an act of theft of public property because it is carried out secretly and deprives the public of their rights. Although there is a distinction—*ghulūl* involves the perpetrator's betrayal in managing public property, while theft generally refers to taking someone else's property without authority—both involve unlawfully taking property. *Ghulūl* specifically

⁴³ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an Jilid 4* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2002). 53-54.

pertains to the embezzlement of public property and breach of trust, whereas sariqah refers to the theft of individual property. Essentially, both actions involve taking others' property and violating a trust, but they are subject to different legal treatments. However, depending on the context, a perpetrator of ghulūl may be sentenced to hand amputation, as both offenses involve unlawfully taking the rights of others.

Conclusion

The Quran strongly prohibits the illegal acquisition and use of property. Various forms of corruption, such as misappropriation of trust, bribery, and embezzlement, demonstrate the erosion of personal and moral-spiritual integrity. Amin al-Khulli's interpretation of corruption in the Quran broadens the concept significantly. Today, ghulūl can be understood as abuse of authority, embezzlement, and betrayal of Allah, whereas historically, ghulūl referred specifically to the betrayal of war spoils. This evolution in meaning illustrates Islam's adaptability and relevance to contemporary developments. The terms ghulūl, risywah, and suht are essential in explaining the Quran's perspective on corruption, which remains prevalent in modern times. Suht, a general term for consuming unlawful property, encompasses acts of risywah (bribery) that undermine justice by impairing a person's ability to discern right from wrong and uphold the truth. The reconstructed concept of corruption views it as an act of zulm (oppression) that harms others by illegally consuming property through various means. Such acts can harden a person's heart, preventing them from recognizing injustice and promoting fairness. Corruption extends beyond the mere consumption of others' property; it also damages the moral compass, leading to further societal problems due to an impaired sense of justice.

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