



# International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics

Volume 20, Number 1 (2023)

ISSN: [2790-6345](https://doi.org/10.1080/27906345)

DOI: [10.55521/10-020-100](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-100)

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# The Islamic Basis of Social Work in the Modern World

DOI: [10.55521/10-020-113](https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-113)

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Albrithen, A. (2023). The Islamic Basis of Social Work in the Modern World. *International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 20(1), 171-193. <https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-113>

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## Abstract

Historically, social work existed in communities for charity and philanthropic purposes. There is a congruence in the quality of social work in all cultures. More recently, scholars and practitioners have explored questions of diversity that question universal constructions of social work and social work ethics. Up until now, there is no conclusive evidence that the theoretical frameworks of social work vary in different societies or among religious groups. Some authors write about social work and Islam. Some writers have illustrated that social work values and principles differ with various cultures or religions. Broadly, social work values and principles are global. There is no conflict between social work and Islam or Arabic cultures. The article goes beyond the cultural considerations of social work practice. It tries to investigate the reasons behind writing social work from an Islamic point of view. The author will focus on ethics and values, analyzing perspectives from the social work literature. The conclusion formed at the end of the article is that, despite what some may view as antagonism, there is ultimately no conflict between the values of social work and the values of Islam.

Keywords: Service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, competence

## Introduction

The Charity Organization Society, founded by Helen Bosanquet and Octavia Hill in 19th century London, was a groundbreaking organization in social theory. Its existence led to the birth of social work as a recognized profession. Back in the 19th century, social work started with practices related to poverty resulting from the social effects of the Industrial Revolution (Pierson, 2011). In America, contributions of social work as a profession in fields such as poverty were exemplified by leaders such as Jane Addams who founded the Hull House in Chicago, and the social welfare state developed by William Beveridge (Pople, 2018). From the beginning of social work as a profession, the development of the field has been ongoing. The results of this constant evolution are the methods, approaches, and models used by social workers today.

In 1893, a movement emerged urging the preparation of social workers as qualified practitioners. The goal was for these future social workers to gain the ability to understand and deal with various social problems such as the orphaning of children, domestic abuse, and other such ills. At the First National *Conference of Charities and Corrections* held in Chicago, Anna Daves presented a paper calling for serious consideration for the formal preparation of social workers. The Charity Organization Society of New York opened the first school for social work in 1898. In 1917, social casework existed wherein the efforts of Mary Ellen Richmond had a great influence on the development of the systematic method. This method can be seen in Richmond's book "Social Diagnosis." For the method of working with groups, social group work was also developed by Richmond in 1923 after she observed individual service clients from the perspective of their membership in a group. This proved the importance of studying the psychology of small groups. In the 1930s, Grace Longwell Coyle wrote "Social Process in Organized Groups." This book significantly contributed to formulating work with groups as a method of intervention. At the National Conference of Social Work of 1935, "W. I. Newsletter" presented a paper entitled "What Is Social Group Work." The paper recognized community

organization as a third method of social work practice. The schools of social work began teaching the concept of community organization in the academic year 1936. Later in 1946, the Association of the Study of Community Organization (ASCO) was organized at the National Conference of Social Work in Buffalo, New York. In 1970, Jack Rothman developed three basic models of community organization: a) locality development, b) social planning, and c) social action (Albrithen, 2010).

The evolution of social work in the Arab world followed the same path as many other societies. The socio-economic transformation of society forced social workers to respond to current conditions to best serve those in need. The political upheaval of the mid-20th century provides a historical perspective to understand and contextualize this transformation, perhaps the most significant being the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, led by the “Free Officers.” Socialism’s advance coalesced with the rise of Arab nationalism amongst the masses and ushered in remarkable changes that are still being discovered and recognized in their full potential. It would be a grave mistake to underestimate the political consciousness that underpinned this act of resistance on the part of the Arab people. Some scholars see this revolt against colonialism as a part of historical developments going back to the French Revolution of the 18th century. The nationalism that moved the French people to liberate themselves is the same nationalism awakened in colonized Arab countries (Ajoba, 1990).

The Arab people sought the application of social work in consideration of its cultural practices and social values. While working in Latin American societies, U.N. specialists had developed an approach to social work that emphasized national sovereignty and freedom from political and economic subordination. This concept influenced the establishment of the centers in local communities.

In 1975 a movement to apply Islamization in the social sciences began, including the field of social work. It was a period that indicated the beginning of the construction of curricula, collection of pedagogical resources, and reference materials firmly rooted in Islam and its teachings. In 1977, the first World Conference of Islamic Education was held in Mecca.

It was a culmination of the foundation built by Islamic educators and social workers who were seeking methods to make the field more responsive to the needs and desires of their nations. This monumental conference was swiftly followed by a second gathering in Lugano, Switzerland entitled the First International Symposium on Islamic Thought. Only five years later, in 1982, a second global Islamic educators conference was held in Islamabad, Pakistan. Dr. Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi's presented findings that proved to be an invaluable contribution to the primordial stages of constructing an Islamic basis for modern social work. This desire to establish the teachings of Islam at the heart of the social sciences and humanities has had a strong hand in molding the movement's policies and regulations. However, it is important to recognize that this move towards examining and developing the interconnections between religion and social work is not unique to the Islamic world. The trend is to be found in Western contexts as well. Writers such as Gisela Konopka (1910 -2003) and Felix Biestek (1912 – 1994) both connected social work with a higher spiritual purpose and positioned social workers as servants of God whose responsibility was to aid and uplift humanity in an act of brotherhood.

Of course, there were shades of variation among scholars, writers, historians, and other academics in their collective call for Islamic rooting. Several have called for the complete rejection of the entire social work canon and the recreation of all social work knowledge based on an Islamic perspective (e.g., Ragab, 1996). Others took a more open-handed approach, believing that certain aspects of established social work knowledge are universal and thus useful for all societies. Others agreed with the former, arguing that because the scholarship is contaminated, it is inherently antagonistic to Muslim societies. These scholars insist that social work be reconstructed in the spirit of Islam (e.g., Bashir, 1991). Others view that the reconstruction of the knowledge base utilizing the "Islamic methodology" should be followed by new Islamic theories (e.g., Cubari, 1985), and others believed that this should be administered beyond social work to extend to societal welfare and the humanities overall (e.g., Farooqui, 1997).

Authors such as Zidan (1985) and El-Sanhuri (1988) called for Islamic rooting and dedicated their careers to replacing long-established social work ethics with ethics based on an Islamic perspective. Contrary to this, other writers such as Al-Krenawi & Graham (2003; 2001; 1999; 1997; 1998), Al-Krenawi (1996), Al-Krenawi, Graham, & Al-Krenawi (1997), Al-Krenawi & Lightman (2000), and Al-Krenawi & Jackson (2014) documented their professional involvement in social work practice with various societies, an example being the Bedouins in the Levantine region. An awareness of various cultural behaviors, rituals, and practices such as polygamy, blood feuds, cultural mediation, and internal conflict resolution, gave the writers a real-world conception of social work that is responsive to the local people because of its cultural perspective. The contributions to the field of social work made by Al-Krenawi, Graham, Lightman, and Jackson should serve as important resources to aspiring social workers, readers, and academics interested in the social sciences and all those interested in pursuing a life of promoting societal welfare with a cultural outlook.

This study is descriptive research using existing literature to analyze the Islamic basis of social work. The following section will illustrate opinions that go beyond cultural considerations of social work practice.

## Islamic Fundamentalist Arguments Against Social Work

There are some common themes that appear in the writings of Islamic scholars. Writers like Meziane (2008), Ragab (1991; 2000), and Almesseiry (1993) focused on atheism, secularism, and materialism and held these against the pioneering sociologists. Looking objectively at the works of these pioneering social scientists, one would acknowledge the usefulness of these theories. These theories help analyze Islamic societies and solve social ills, including those in Muslim communities. For example, understanding the history of the European church and how it maintained its control over society and considering the context of the emergence of these schools of thought can give one a better understanding of the subject matter. Current

western sociologists do not share the same vision toward secularism which means not all theories that come from the West should be rejected outright.

Writers like Ragab (1993a; 1991), Yunus (1991), and Anwar (1997) tried to combine social sciences with religious sciences in their works to prove that it is a worthwhile endeavor to consider other visions in the field of social work. Nonetheless, while social work theories may not be “perfect” these theories and their application have produced positive results proving extremely useful for the larger fabric of society.

From the perspective of scholars such as Ragab (1996), Zidan (1991), Al-Dabbagh (1994), Yunus (1993), and Mukhtar (1991), social work has been facing many crises. These crises began at an early stage in the profession and put into question the effectiveness of the social work practice. Nevertheless, social work successfully addresses many social issues and problems. If there are some failures in solving social problems, this should not result in disregarding social work as a profession. At times, there are outside circumstances that mitigate its effectiveness. Some examples of this are scarce resources, social policy and its implementation.

Some writers like Barise (2005), Abdul Latif (1993), Bashir (1991), and Zidan (1993) argued that some human theories and models of social work practice are useful (e.g., behavioral theory, crisis intervention, problem-solving model), but other models and theories (e.g., Darwinism, psychoanalysis) should be evaluated and live up to Islamic knowledge and standards. This indicates that their ideas have been influenced by other theories and outside perspectives. Social work is built on the experiences of practitioners and empiricism. In social work, professionals must consider the cultural aspects of the clients and the salient points under the prevailing Social Work Code of Ethics.

Writers like Farooqui (1997), Ragab (2000; 2016; 1993b), Abdulhadi (1988), Sadek (1991), and Gubari (1985) stated that without an Islamic orientation to social work, the profession is not relevant to Muslim societies. As a result, social work will continue to be of questionable relevance and lose its expected positive role in Muslim society. It will also continue adopting literature espousing various theories without complete awareness of the

nature of the ideological and cultural differences between Western and Islamic societies. This may result in stunted growth and a lack of progress in the field. Some authors contend that an Islamic orientation of social work practice should start with a firm knowledge of Islam. It would then result in the blossoming of Islamic methodology in social work. Nonetheless, this perspective calls for building or developing new methods and approaches in social work; however, it might be worth considering that social work developed from practice and not from any philosophical perspective or deductive theory. The most important factor in professional development is the practice aspect of social work. This is true, regardless of location, benefactors, or beneficiaries of social service.

With all those criticisms from Islamic fundamentalists, the question remains of the value of social work. The fundamentalists generally see that current social work has imperfections in its theoretical, practical, and ethical sides. They criticize the profession as suffering from an identity crisis. Even more and without evidence, they believe that social work leads to the deterioration of their clients (i.e., negative outcomes of social work practice). If so, how can social work be reformed or surrendered since the core (not the branch) is ailing? What can be said here is that the problem is in the narrow perception and eclectic approach that focuses solely on the negative. While some authors have questioned the effectiveness of social work (Fischer 1973), this does warrant ignoring other studies that prove the effectiveness of social work practice. Also, the insufficiency of the profession does not mean to conclude its failure totally and asserting that success can only be achieved through Islamization. Although the call of Islamic rooting has existed for a half-century, there is no real action and actual contributions on the ground.

The varied social theories focused on the core values of social work, and its compatibility with Islamic values that go beyond cultural considerations in social work practice will be discussed at length in the next section.



## An Examination of the Key Principles of Social Work from an Islamic Outlook

This section is most concerned with the evaluation of the core values of social work (NASW, 2017; BASW, 2014; CASW, 2005; AASW, 2010) (i.e., service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence) from an Islamic perspective to uncover any possible conflict between these values and the teachings of Islam.

Patel et al (1998, p. 199) identify five core Islamic values: (1) emphasizing the well-being and welfare of the community, (2) all people, men and women, are regarded as equal, (3) there is a relationship between individual freedom and the community's obligations to the individual, (4) conscience and conformity dictate the individual's sense of responsibility and obligation, and (5) consultation between people in relationship building.

The first and perhaps most central value of social work is "service." The most basic definition of service is the requirement of social workers to help those in need of assistance and alleviate societal ills in the most efficient way possible. This excludes all personal motivation. Islam is highly conscious of human need, including the need for social support. Monasticism has no place in Islam as Muslims are taught to enact their religious teachings in day-to-day life where it is arguably most significant. Self-sacrifice, a recurring phrase found in Islamic texts, is a fundamental proposition that is fostered by Islam in relations between people. It is affirmed by Islam that the solution to the problem of achieving progress lies in self-sacrifice and that all peoples benefit from this act. It is also encouraged by Islam for everyone "to make use of all their effort and energy in service to the society and the community that they belong to" (Chaney & Church, 2017; El Fadl, 2015; Stefon, 2009; Watt, 2008; Akgunduz, n.d. Lammens, 2013; Sardar, 1984).

As maintained by an Islamic outlook, service constitutes charity and philanthropy, which are important aspects of Islamic practice. As it has been stated previously, the elemental feature of social work is derived from the charity where early humanitarians provided goods and services to those suffering under the crushing weight of poverty, war, and natural disasters. This ethos is echoed in Islam as charitable workers and collective efforts in alleviating the suffering of the poor, the orphans, and those in need are highly esteemed (Wolf, 206; Pring, 2016; Turker, 2016; Curiel, 2015; Rippin, 2012; Lammens, 2013; Hodge, 2005; Nasr, 2003; Farah, 1987). Islam is a way of life and not just a religious ritual that must be practiced. The meaning behind this is that the comprehensiveness of Islam does not include contributing to charitable activities only, but also provides remedies for worldly problems, hardships, and challenges (e.g., Islam calls for reconciliation, respect for adults, respect for the wife, truth in speaking and acting, and calls to avoid exploitation, and not prioritizing the interests of the individual over the interests of society). Moreover, Islam contains protective methods that prevent problems and disasters (e.g., prohibitions against begging, environmental destruction, waste of water, depletion of land, emphasis on cleanliness, goodwill in others, ties of kinship, and love and the desire for the good of others).

In consonance with the above assertion, a common denominator between Islam and social work is charity. Thus, based on this common thread between Islam and social work, there seems to be no necessity or logical reasoning to reconstitute this merit since it is harmonious with Islam and its most important teachings.

The second value to be discussed is that of social justice, which defines social workers as agents of progress who protest against social injustice, oppression, and exploitation. They have a keen focus on the afflictions caused by poverty, discrimination, unemployment, abuse, and other forms of inequality.

From an Islamic frame of reference, justice connotes moral uprightness rooted in ethics, natural and societal law, religion and rationality, equity, and fairness. It is the giving of equal and honest

treatment to all members of society. Ultimately, the goal of social justice is the creation of a just society where all members are treated with dignity. Indeed, Islam extends justice to all regardless of social standing and promotes the upholding of social justice for men, women, and children, including non-Muslims and non-relatives, especially neighbors, orphaned children, and the needy.

Islam confers various meanings to the phrase social justice. They are as follows: a) allotting every individual with what is naturally owed to them as a member of the society, and b) providing fundamental needs for human beings, such as food, clean water, and stable housing in a way that preserves their honor and integrity, c) dispensing all benefits created by the masses in society to individuals in a fair way, and d) safeguarding equal opportunities and ensuring the accessibility of important services, such as health and education, to all.

Social justice, an inherent call for equality, is a key tenet in Islamic belief and thought. In Islam, equality stems from conscience and is protected by legislation. It is the basis of peace, solidarity, and harmony between human beings. A second core aspect of social justice is “mutual guarantee,” which calls for regulating social relations at all levels and spheres of society: a) between the individual and their family, promoting unity and facilitation; b) between the individual and the larger community and the consolidation of public and private interests; c) between societies, supporting harmonious relations and trade; and d) between generations, implying a oneness in destiny (Qutb, 2000).

The best illustration of social justice can be found in *Zakat*, which is the fourth pillar of Islam. *Zakat* is defined as giving away a proportion of one’s wealth annually for the well-being of those in need and the overall Muslim community. It is considered one of the most important obligations to fulfill as a Muslim and is in direct support of those in need.

Security, peace, and justice are three aspects that are related and complementary to each other, or one can be the result of the practice of the other. By avoiding oppression, unfairness, and inequality one achieves justice, and as justice prevails peace and safety prevail. These basic pillars

represent points of convergence and compatibility between Islam as a religion and social work as a profession.

In sum social justice is a key aspect of both Islam and social work. Notwithstanding the higher and all-encompassing spiritual meaning of social justice in Islam, it is a critical value in social work. There is no conflict or disagreement between the two.

The third principle of social work is dignity and worth of the person. It is required within social work practice that social workers are to respect and honor the inherent human dignity and value of every person, regardless of social standing. Practitioners are to treat their clients in a sympathetic and dignified manner, respecting cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity.

Islam posits liberty as a universal value owed to every human being. However, the freedom of the individual must not be a source of social decay or corruption as the well-being of the entire community must be considered above a single person (Chane & Church, 2017; El Fadl, 2015; Lammens, 2013; Stefon, 2009; Watt, 2008; Sardar, 1984). Still, there are numerous Islamic principles that emphasize the value of dignity and individual worth such as:

- a. Islam promotes human dignity and struggles against socio-economic injustice,
- b. Islam places a high value on human life, health, and overall prosperity
- c. Islam places significant weight on the care and protection of the elderly, the disabled, the orphaned, and the sick and expresses this act as an obligation
- d. Islam accentuates the sanctity of human life by making the saving of just one individual life equal to that of saving the entirety of the human race
- e. Islam argues that achieving good health is a prerequisite for holistic human development
- f. Islam views education and the constant expansion of the pool of human knowledge as important to overall societal development

- g. Islam observes the spiritual realm to be a very crucial area for human development and seeks to enhance the relationship with the Creator and that between other fellow human beings and there is a need to fulfill certain social responsibilities)
- h. Islam emphasizes fulfilling all social and ethical responsibilities for a harmonious and holistic development of the human spirit
- i. Islam requires that society must provide equal opportunities for all peoples to develop and realize their potential for greatness and use that greatness for the ultimate benefit of society.

Islamic teachings about inherent self-worth and human dignity entail many tenets and varied understandings, such as personal dignity, group dignity, and societal dignity, the environment included. According to this outlook, there is no contention between Islamic social doctrine and social work values.

The fourth tenet of social work is the importance of human relationships. It is a requirement for social workers to be cognizant of the central importance of social relationships. It is also important to recognize that quality of life is advanced through social change. People are social beings who need interaction with one another to survive, develop, and fully achieve their potential. The importance of the individual is found within the larger societal structure they find themselves in. Society is not allowed to mistreat the individual. The individual is to respect the social doctrine to ensure the rights and well-being of all members of society. Thus, both the individual finds personal peace and fulfillment while the society is orderly and able to fulfill its purpose of protecting and providing institutions for development (Chaney & Church, 2017; El Fadl, 2015; Lammens, 2013; Murad, 2005; Sardar, 1984; Stefon, 2009; Watt, 2008). Islamic doctrines demand that its adherents be honest, morally upright, humble, kind, and open-minded. Corruption and malevolent behavior are to be repelled with righteousness, forgiveness, and regulation of emotions such as wrath and greed.

Cooperation between people to achieve a higher common good such as helping those in need is highly encouraged in Islam. Religion views cooperation between people as a means of assuring the overall development of human society. The benefit of this development is the possibility of a comfortable, meaningful life. *Ihsan* is instituted by Islam to mean acting virtuously towards others. This creates beauty, strengthens brotherhood, and enriches the overall quality of human existence here on earth. *Rahmah* is an additional terminology meaning mercy. The concept of mercy can refer to a variety of meanings including feelings of love and tenderness, tolerance, and acceptance. As a result, *Rahmah* is best exemplified through displays of devotion, affection, and generosity towards others. In addition, acts of self-restraint and fortitude in times of trial and tribulation function alongside maintaining an accepting, forgiving nature in the face of others' aberrations.

Islam is based on the principle of good character in words and actions for all people and is linked to the principle of integrity and truth in faith. Religion in the Islamic view has three dimensions: Islam, *Iman*, and *Ihsan*. *Ihsan* signifies the cultivation of inner faith (*Iman*). Its purpose is to regulate human relations between all people, including relatives and members of the same family. It is a sense of social responsibility borne from religious convictions. *Ihsan* also ensures positive relationships and the promotion of kindness, gentleness, kindness, and cheerfulness among people. *Islam* represents a religion of brotherhood among human beings, without distinction between their races, colors, or ethnicities.

To summarize from the discussion above, both social work and Islam acknowledge the value of relationships between human beings. There is no conflict between the two.

The fifth tenet of social work is known as integrity. This value demands social workers to behave in a trustworthy manner. Honesty and ethical behavior are part of the dignified Islamic personality. Social workers are to be honest, and fair in their interactions with the public. They are also to be punctual for their sessions out of respect for their client. Honoring confidentiality, contracts and agreements, boundaries, and maintaining

established commitments is also a part of the concept of integrity. Integrity is part of the social, legal, and religious duty of every human being in a society.

From the Islamic outlook, integrity is the diplomatic code that serves as the foundation for human ethics. Virtues such as compassion, reliability, respect, trustworthiness, kindness, wisdom, loyalty, and impartiality are the core principles of integrity. In full measure, the person must manifest these virtues internally in their personhood and externally in their day-to-day life. Islam views integrity as an ongoing commitment in both spoken word and action.

Islam urges integrity in everything (in speeches and actions). Religion emphasizes staying away from indecency, envy, and malice. Also, from an integrity perspective, Islam forbids lying and perjury. Islamic integrity means purifying the heart from all personal ills. These ills include hating and belittling others, especially the helpless, minors, strangers, uneducated, weak, or poor. All these worthy meanings of integrity are encouraged by social work.

As evidenced above, there is a broad approach to the concept of integrity within the realm of Islamic doctrine. However, despite this variety within the religion, integrity under Islam is in accord with the responsibilities placed on social workers. The Social Work Code of Ethics requires its workers to be honest and forthright beyond their profession and throughout their personal lives, which is also espoused in Islam.

The sixth value of social work is competence, which according to the social work ethical code emphasizes ongoing professional growth and development. As experts in their field, social workers are expected to contribute to the expansion of the pool of social work knowledge.

Competence is defined as the ability to perform certain roles and complete certain tasks in a given position. Competence also includes the integration of a wide range of knowledge, specialized skills, an awareness of a wide range of attitudes, techniques, methods, theories informed through practice, personal values, and the power to build one's knowledge and skills through experience (Bartram & Roe, 2005).

The purpose of Islam and its teachings can be applied to various aspects of life. Honesty is also an obligation in Islam and an important act of forthrightness is assigning appropriate duties to qualified individuals with the competence to complete the given tasks. Trustworthiness combined with experience through wisdom is a prerequisite of competence.

There are limited definitions of competence in Islam, while there are analogies to other values such as social justice, community service, preservation of dignity, individual worth, the importance of social relationships, and integrity. There is also an emphasis on social obligation, duty, and leadership. Nevertheless, the concept as understood in Islam is in accord with the value of social work.

## Conclusion

The most significant cultural tenet of Islam is also the most effective support for universally held ethics and values. Ethics in Islam presents a holistic view of all that concerns humanity. Contrary to what some may believe, Islam is not contradictory to facts and theories developed and confirmed through the scientific method, be they emergent from non-Muslim societies or introduced through non-Muslim academics (Al-Aidros, Shamsudin, & Idris, 2013). Islam is not in conflict with social work or any profession whose goal is establishing peace and unity.

Some commonly accepted principles in Islam affirm the close connection between social work, Islam, and human rights. Some examples are as follows: a) the right to life, b) the right to economic, social, and legal justice, and c) equality as the basis of social relations between human beings, d) the right to secure life and possession of the property, e) the conservation of honor and integrity, and f) the rights of civilians. In general, there is a precept in Islam that Islam is rational and sustainable at all times, in all regions, nations, and peoples, which is evidence of Islam's tolerance for all that is not prohibited in the religion. As Islam spread to all corners of the globe, the knowledge it presents accommodates the knowledge produced by other cultures, including its societal ethics and values. An overwhelming



amount of hard and soft scientific techniques, skills, and values are not expressed in Islam. Even so, these techniques, skills, and values are recognized as applicable to all human beings and their environments.

Through interrogating the history of social work, it is evident that the profession developed with an ethical framework in mind. The ethical goals of social work have existed through its ongoing progress for more than one hundred years. The invaluable central tenet of social work affirms that the profession is firmly based on ethics. If social workers are to abandon these ethics in their service to humanity, the profession will deteriorate and eventually no longer exist.

The foundation of social work as a vocation extends back to the earliest social welfare practices, such as feeding the poor and sheltering orphans. This practice has been established from the outlook of charity and philanthropy being for the good of the total society. Indeed, the origins of social work remain at its core, despite the emergence of modern social theories and scientific models which aid its progress. These values and ethical principles and practices have been recorded and are a part of the general tendency of humanitarians. The moral regulations of social work comply with varying religions and cultures while possessing little if any conflict with Islam, known for its promotion of peace, dignity, health, and prosperity for all human beings. Noted experts have illustrated those aspects demonstrating the agreement between the religious teachings of Islam alongside other belief systems and the values of social work (Canda & Furman, 2009; Albrithen, 2017).

Despite Western epistemology still influencing social work in the Muslim world, there is a powerful undercurrent of Islamic beliefs and thought that continues to shape social work knowledge and practice in these societies. By and large, there is no antagonism between Islam and social work. Consequently, sensitivity to cultural considerations from a social work standpoint does not imply that social work practice in the Muslim world differs from any other society. From a moral and ethical perspective, social work is a universal profession. The core values of social

work can and should be taken into consideration by all nations interested in furthering social development.

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