

Toward a Maqāṣid-Oriented Hermeneutics: Reinterpreting Qur'anic Migration Ethics in the Contemporary Muslim Diaspora

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Abstract: Contemporary forced migration has generated new ethical and hermeneutical questions for Muslims living as minorities across diverse diasporic settings. This article examines how key Qur'anic migration verses—Q. al-Nisā' 4:97–100, al-Ḥajj 22:58–60, and al-'Ankabūt 29:56—have been interpreted across classical and modern exegetical traditions. Using a qualitative comparative-hermeneutical method, the study analyzes selected interpretations of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, Fazlur Rahman, Yusuf al-Qaradawī, and Quraish Shihab. The analysis focuses on three issues: the historical-normative logic of classical tafsīr, the contextual expansion of modern readings, and the methodological tensions produced by both approaches. The article argues that classical exegesis preserves textual fidelity and historical specificity, yet often remains limited in addressing modern forms of displacement. By contrast, contemporary contextualist readings increase ethical relevance, but may insufficiently define the normative boundaries of interpretation. To address this tension, the article proposes a maqāṣid al-sharī'ah-oriented hermeneutic as a mediating framework. Such an approach enables migration verses to be read in relation to religious freedom, human dignity, protection of life, and civic belonging while remaining anchored in the moral objectives of revelation. The study contributes to Qur'anic hermeneutics, Islamic migration ethics, and contemporary Muslim diaspora studies.

Keywords: Qur'anic hermeneutics; maqāṣid al-sharī'ah; hijrah; forced migration; Muslim diaspora; Islamic ethics; tafsīr

1. Introduction

Forced migration has become one of the defining moral and political crises of the present century, and for Muslim communities it is also a profound hermeneutical challenge rather than merely a demographic event (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2025; Niazi, 2016). By the end of June 2025, 117.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced by persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order, with major displacement situations concentrated in countries such as Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, and Myanmar, all of which directly shape contemporary Muslim mobility and vulnerability (UNHCR, 2025). In this setting, migration is no longer reducible to the classical binary of dār al-Islām and dār al-kufr, because Muslim mobility today unfolds through asylum regimes, labor migration, family reunification, transnational belonging, and minority citizenship in secular states (Mandaville, 2003; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). Studies of religion and forced migration have also shown that scriptural narratives, ritual memories, and ethical vocabularies remain central to how displaced communities interpret suffering, resilience, hospitality, and belonging (Niazi, 2016). For Muslims living as minorities in Europe, North America, and other plural social settings, Qur'anic verses on hijrah therefore re-emerge not only as historical accounts of the Prophet's migration, but as normative texts invoked in debates on residence, loyalty, integration, and the preservation of faith under conditions of displacement (Ghatas, 2023; Essabane et al., 2022). Contemporary forced migration has thus reopened the question of how Qur'anic migration ethics should be interpreted in a world shaped by diaspora, citizenship, and humanitarian crisis.



The scholarly literature relevant to this question is already substantial, but it remains dispersed across several conversations that do not fully converge. Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī (1999) and Ibn Kathīr (1988) treated Q. 4:97–100, Q. 22:58–60, and Q. 29:56 primarily within the formative historical horizon of the Meccan persecution and the Prophet's migration to Medina, thereby stressing obligation, sacrifice, and fidelity to faith. Reformist and modern Muslim thinkers, including Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā (1947–1959), Fazlur Rahman (1980, 1982), Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2001), and Quraish Shihab (2002), widened the discussion by reading migration verses in relation to social reform, minority life, adaptation, and the moral purposes of the Qur'an. Beyond tafsir proper, Mandaville (2003) showed that Muslim diaspora life reconfigures authority, belonging, and public religion in transnational settings, while Jureidini and Hassan (2020), Abou El Fadl (2020), and Zaman (2020) demonstrated that Islamic ethical traditions such as hijrah, amān, jiwār, and citizenship can illuminate current debates on displacement and refugee protection. More recent work has examined second- and third-generation Muslim identity in Europe, the civic dimensions of Islamic education, and the relationship between religion and forced migration (Ghatas, 2023; Essabane et al., 2022; Niazi, 2016). Yet these strands of scholarship rarely undertake a sustained methodological comparison between classical and contemporary readings of specific Qur'anic migration verses.

This article departs from those existing studies by identifying a clear research gap at the intersection of Qur'anic hermeneutics, migration ethics, and Muslim diaspora studies. Although scholarship on fiqh al-aqalliyyāt, citizenship, and transnational Muslim identity has offered important insights into how Muslims negotiate minority life in modern states, it has tended to privilege legal adaptation, sociological description, or policy relevance rather than a systematic critique of the interpretive methods used to read the Qur'anic verses most closely associated with migration (al-Qaradawi, 2001; Mandaville, 2003; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). Conversely, studies of classical tafsir preserve the historical depth of revelation but often stop short of asking how historically embedded readings can normatively address refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable Muslim minorities in present-day secular polities (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). Even recent studies that connect Islam, citizenship, and social participation generally do not examine how scriptural interpretation itself mediates those ethical and political positions (Essabane et al., 2022). This article, therefore, asks how selected classical and modern exegetes interpret the key migration verses, what methodological tensions emerge between text-centered and context-centered readings, and whether a maqāṣid al-sharī'ah framework can provide more disciplined interpretive guidance. The purpose of the article is thus not merely descriptive; it is to reconstruct, compare, and critically evaluate competing exegetical approaches in order to propose a more coherent hermeneutic for contemporary Muslim diasporic conditions.

The central argument of this article is that neither classical literal-historical exegesis nor unconstrained contextual adaptation, by itself, is sufficient to address the ethical complexity of contemporary Muslim migration. Classical tafsir retains an indispensable strength because it preserves the historical specificity, textual integrity, and transmitted authority of revelation, thereby preventing Qur'anic discourse from being dissolved into contemporary political preference (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). At the same time, its normative categories emerged from a formative setting in which migration was primarily linked to persecution and the construction of an early Muslim polity, and this setting does not map neatly onto present realities such as refugee law, plural citizenship, and long-term minority residence (UNHCR, 2025; Niazi, 2016). Modern contextualist approaches make the Qur'an more normatively available to new conditions by foregrounding justice, religious freedom, public welfare, and social participation, yet their methodological limits become visible when the criteria for legitimate reinterpretation remain underdefined (Rahman, 1982; al-Qaradawi, 2001). This article, therefore, argues that a maqāṣid-oriented hermeneutic, especially one informed by the preservation of religion, life, dignity, and moral agency, can mediate between fidelity and relevance without collapsing into either rigidity or relativism (al-Shāṭibī, 2001; Auda, 2008). Such a framework enables Qur'anic migration verses to function as ethically generative texts for displaced Muslims while remaining anchored in the broader moral objectives of revelation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Classical Exegesis of Hijrah Verses and the Historical-Normative Paradigm

Classical Qur'anic exegesis treated hijrah primarily as a historically situated but normatively charged act of faith, and this framing continues to shape later Muslim understandings of migration ethics (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). Within the formative exegetical tradition, verses such as Q. al-Nisā' 4:97–100, Q. al-Ḥajj 22:58–60, and Q. al-'Ankabūt 29:56 were generally read in close relation to the persecution of early Muslims in Mecca and their migration to Medina, so that migration became inseparable from obedience, sacrifice, and the preservation of religion (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). This interpretive model was anchored in tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr, which privileged transmitted reports, asbāb al-nuzūl, and prophetic-historical narrative as the primary means for securing the meaning of revelation (al-Ṭabarī, 1999). In this framework, hijrah was not merely spatial movement but a morally saturated act marking the passage from oppression to protected faith, from vulnerability to communal order, and from coercion to worshipful freedom (Ibn Kathīr, 1988). The strength of this paradigm lies in its textual conservatism and its insistence that Qur'anic injunctions must be understood within the architecture of revelation history rather than detached from their first audience (al-Ṭabarī, 1999). Consequently, classical exegesis established a durable norm: migration becomes obligatory when faith can no longer be lived openly and securely.

At the same time, contemporary scholarship has shown that the classical paradigm, while methodologically rigorous, is less explicit in translating its historical-normative conclusions into a broader ethics of modern displacement, asylum, and minority citizenship (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Abou El Fadl, 2020). The issue is not that classical tafsir lacks moral depth, but that its principal categories were formed in a world where migration was tied to persecution, territorial transition, and the formation of an early Muslim polity rather than to refugee law, secular citizenship, or transnational belonging in the modern sense (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). Recent work in Islamic ethics argues that the classical textual tradition contains powerful moral resources for migration, yet these resources require careful reconstruction if they are to speak to current dilemmas such as naturalization, residence, legal loyalty, and the protection of vulnerable non-citizens (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Zaman, 2020). In that respect, the classical literature remains indispensable but incomplete for present purposes: it supplies the normative gravity of hijrah yet does not, on its own, provide a sufficiently elaborated framework for reading migration verses under contemporary conditions of diaspora and forced displacement (Abou El Fadl, 2020; Niazi, 2016). The main lesson of this strand of scholarship, therefore, is that fidelity to the classical legacy must be preserved, but its categories cannot simply be transferred without hermeneutical mediation.

2.2 Contemporary Hermeneutics, Contextualism, and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah

Modern Muslim scholarship on Qur'anic interpretation emerged partly from dissatisfaction with purely literal or transmission-bound readings and sought to recover the moral dynamism of revelation for changing social realities (Rahman, 1980, 1982; Abduh & Riḍā, 1947–1959). Reformist and modernist thinkers such as Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, and especially Fazlur Rahman shifted attention from isolated legal outcomes to the ethical logic, social purposes, and broader objectives embedded in the Qur'anic discourse (Abduh & Riḍā, 1947–1959; Rahman, 1982). Rahman's "double movement" theory became especially influential because it proposed a disciplined movement from the historical circumstances of revelation to general moral principles and then back to contemporary application, thereby attempting to preserve both textual rootedness and ethical relevance (Rahman, 1982). In this broader interpretive climate, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah became increasingly important for articulating normative continuity without reducing interpretation to either literal repetition or unbounded contextualism (Auda, 2008; Johnston, 2007). Johnston's analysis is especially relevant because it frames maqāṣid not merely as a legal doctrine but as an epistemological and hermeneutical strategy for mediating between text, public welfare, and modern moral discourse (Johnston, 2007). Contemporary hermeneutics has thus contributed a crucial insight: Qur'anic

interpretation must remain historically aware while being capable of principled ethical extension beyond the original setting.

Even so, the literature also warns that contextual and maqāṣid-based approaches face their own methodological risks, especially when the criteria for legitimate reinterpretation are left insufficiently defined (Johnston, 2007; Auda, 2008). The attraction of maqāṣid lies in its capacity to foreground justice, dignity, freedom, welfare, and social coherence, all of which are highly relevant to the ethics of migration and minority life in modern societies (Auda, 2008; Johnston, 2007). Yet critics have noted that purposive interpretation can become overly elastic when detached from the linguistic, historical, and intertextual constraints of the Qur'anic text itself (Johnston, 2007). This tension is highly visible in discussions of hijrah, where some modern readings seek to transform a historically specific command into a universal ethic of movement, adaptation, or spiritual striving, while others worry that such expansion risks blurring the difference between exegesis and moral projection (Rahman, 1982; Abou El Fadl, 2020). The contemporary maqāṣid literature, therefore, does not simply authorize contextual freedom; rather, its strongest strands argue for a disciplined, multi-layered method in which objectives, text, and context remain mutually corrective (Auda, 2008; Johnston, 2007). For the present study, this debate is decisive because it shows that the real question is not whether migration verses should be contextualized, but how such contextualization can be normatively governed.

2.3 Muslim Diaspora, Citizenship, and Islamic Migration Ethics

A third body of literature, at the intersection of migration studies, religious studies, and Islamic ethics, has expanded the discussion beyond textual interpretation to the lived Muslim experience in diasporic settings (Mandaville, 2003; Ghatas, 2023). This scholarship shows that migration is not only a movement across borders but also a transformation of authority, belonging, identity, and public religious practice under conditions of minority life (Mandaville, 2003). Mandaville's work on transnational Muslim politics remains foundational because it demonstrates that diasporic Muslim communities generate new public spheres in which identity is negotiated across local, national, and global scales rather than inherited unchanged from a homeland framework (Mandaville, 2003). More recent studies have deepened this picture by examining second- and third-generation Muslims in Europe, showing that issues of identity, integration, family norms, and civic belonging are often refracted through the tension between inherited religious frameworks and secular social orders (Ghatas, 2023). Research on Islamic religious education in Europe similarly indicates that Muslim institutions increasingly seek to reconcile religious formation with citizenship, participation, legal status, and social rights rather than imagining these as inherently opposed domains (Essabane et al., 2022). Taken together, this literature demonstrates that the ethical meaning of hijrah in modern diasporic life cannot be reduced to territorial relocation alone; it is also implicated in questions of civic participation, institutional belonging, and the reproduction of Muslim identity under plural conditions.

Parallel to these sociological debates, scholarship on Islamic migration ethics has argued that the Islamic tradition offers a rich normative vocabulary for addressing refuge, host-guest relations, protection, and coexistence in the present (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Zaman, 2020; Abou El Fadl, 2020). Rather than treating migration as an external policy problem to which religion is later appended, this literature reconstructs concepts such as *mu'ākhā*, *ḍiyāfa*, *ijāra*, *amān*, *jiwār*, and *kafāla* as ethical resources that can inform both humanitarian practice and political imagination (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). Abou El Fadl's contribution is especially significant because he argues that the Islamic moral tradition contains ethical impulses that can elevate contemporary debates on migration and displacement rather than merely echo existing state-centered legal frameworks (Abou El Fadl, 2020). Zaman's analysis of *jiwār* is equally important because it shows how neighborliness may function not only as a right of temporary protection but as a social ethic of cohabitation that unsettles the exclusionary logic of the modern nation-state (Zaman, 2020). Niazi's work further supports the point that faith traditions often preserve much older protective narratives than modern asylum regimes themselves (Niazi, 2016). The implication for the present study is clear: any serious interpretation of Qur'anic migration verses today must engage not only classical tafsir and modern hermeneutics, but also the ethical and sociological realities of Muslim life in displacement and diaspora.

3. Methods

This study takes as its material object the Qur'anic discourse on migration as represented in three key passages: Q. al-Nisā' 4:97–100, Q. al-Hajj 22:58–60, and Q. al-'Ankabūt 29:56, because these verses are among the most frequently invoked in discussions of hijrah, religious vulnerability, and ethical mobility in Islam (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). Its formal object is the hermeneutical tension between classical historical-normative readings and modern contextual readings of those verses (Rahman, 1982; Johnston, 2007). The study, therefore, treats migration verses not merely as scriptural units, but as sites of competing interpretive logics relevant to forced displacement and Muslim minority life today (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Niazi, 2016).

The research employs a qualitative library-based design with a comparative-hermeneutical orientation, because the primary aim is to reconstruct, compare, and critically evaluate interpretive methods rather than to measure variables statistically (Bowen, 2009; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Qualitative document analysis is appropriate here because it allows systematic reading, selection, appraisal, and synthesis of textual materials across multiple layers of meaning (Bowen, 2009). At the same time, the study uses hermeneutically informed qualitative content analysis in order to move from explicit exegetical claims to their deeper methodological assumptions, normative priorities, and contextual extensions (Elo et al., 2014; Kyngäs et al., 2020). The design is therefore both descriptive and evaluative.

The data sources consist of primary and secondary materials. The primary sources are selected exegetical works representing classical and modern tendencies, namely al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, Ibn Kathīr's *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā's *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Fazlur Rahman's major works on Qur'anic interpretation, Yusuf al-Qaradawi's writings on Muslim minorities, Quraish Shihab's *Tafsīr al-Mishbah*, and al-Shāṭibī's *Al-Muwāfaqāt* as the principal maqāsid reference (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988; Rahman, 1980, 1982; al-Qaradawi, 2001; Shihab, 2002; al-Shāṭibī, 2001). The secondary sources include peer-reviewed scholarship on maqāsid hermeneutics, Islamic migration ethics, qualitative text analysis, and Muslim diaspora studies to situate the reading within contemporary academic debates (Johnston, 2007; Mandaville, 2003; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020).

The data collection technique used purposive document selection and close textual reading. Following the document-analysis procedure, texts were first identified on the basis of thematic relevance to hijrah, migration ethics, minority residence, and maqāsid al-sharī'ah, then selected, classified, and excerpted according to their interpretive treatment of the three focal verses (Bowen, 2009). The researcher then compiled meaning-bearing passages related to *asbāb al-nuzūl*, legal implication, ethical purpose, contextual extension, and normative limits, since qualitative content analysis depends on clearly defined units of analysis and a transparent selection logic (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Elo et al., 2014). This procedure ensured that the corpus remained both manageable and analytically coherent.

The data analysis technique combined comparative exegesis with deductive qualitative content analysis. In the first stage, each source was read repeatedly to identify its explicit interpretation of the selected verses and its underlying methodological orientation, following the hermeneutic principle that understanding moves iteratively between part and whole (Kyngäs et al., 2020). In the second stage, the findings were coded into analytic categories: historical context, legal-normative claim, moral objective, contextual adaptation, and interpretive limit, consistent with preparation, organization, and reporting phases in qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Elo et al., 2014). In the final stage, those categories were comparatively evaluated through a maqāsid lens—especially preservation of religion, life, dignity, and moral agency—to assess which interpretive model offers the most normatively disciplined response to contemporary migration (Johnston, 2007; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020).

4. Results

4.1 Classical Exegetical Data: Hijrah as a Historically Grounded Obligation of Faith

Classical exegetical materials consistently present hijrah as a response to religious oppression and as an obligation closely tied to the preservation of faith under coercive conditions (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). In al-

Ṭabarī's treatment of Q. al-Nisā' 4:97–100, the rebuke addressed to those who remained in an oppressive setting despite having the capacity to leave is recorded as a core element of the verse's legal and moral force, and the passage is linked to reports concerning Muslims who did not emigrate from Mecca when migration was possible (al-Ṭabarī, 1999). Ibn Kathīr documents the same passage in similarly normative terms, while preserving the distinction between those who were capable of migrating and those genuinely unable to do so, including the vulnerable groups explicitly mentioned in the verse sequence (Ibn Kathīr, 1988). Across both exegetes, migration is not described as voluntary movement in a general social sense, but as a morally serious departure from a setting that obstructs religious life and exposes believers to avoidable spiritual and communal harm (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). The classical textual record thus situates hijrah within a framework of oppression, obligation, and faith preservation rather than within a broad discourse of mobility or resettlement (Johnston, 2007; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020).

The classical corpus also shows that the normative force of hijrah is inseparable from transmission-based explanation, especially *asbāb al-nuzūl*, companion reports, and the juristic memory of the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Motzki, 2002). Al-Ṭabarī repeatedly organizes the migration verses through narrated historical circumstances, so that the legal and ethical meaning of the passages remains grounded in remembered events rather than abstracted into a general ethic of movement (al-Ṭabarī, 1999). Ibn Kathīr follows the same broad architecture, though in a more selective manner, and his commentary keeps the focus on divine reward, accountability, and the promise given to those who migrate in the path of God while enduring hardship (Ibn Kathīr, 1988). The treatment of Q. al-Ḥajj 22:58–60 is especially illustrative, because both exegetes document the verses as affirming divine recompense and provision for those who migrated and suffered, thereby reinforcing the sacrificial and merit-bearing dimension of migration in the formative Muslim community (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). What becomes visible in this corpus is not simply a thematic mention of migration, but a narrative theology of movement ordered around persecution, obedience, and trust in divine compensation (Abou El Fadl, 2020; Niazi, 2016). The descriptive profile of classical tafsir, therefore, remains historically embedded, transmission-heavy, and normatively oriented toward protection of religion rather than toward social adaptation in the modern sense (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988).

The classical sources also preserve important internal qualifications and temporal limits in their treatment of physical migration, which are significant for the comparative structure of the study (Ibn Kathīr, 1988; Abou El Fadl, 2020). Ibn Kathīr records that migration from Mecca as a binding historical duty belonged to a specific pre-conquest setting, although the broader moral sense of separating oneself from unbelief, sin, and conditions damaging to faith remained operative beyond that moment (Ibn Kathīr, 1988). In al-Ṭabarī's treatment of Q. al-ʿAnkabūt 29:56, the declaration that God's earth is vast is documented as encouragement to move in order to preserve worship, yet the verse remains tied to circumstances of vulnerability and pressure rather than to a generalized discourse of modern migration choice or civic belonging (al-Ṭabarī, 1999). The corpus, therefore, presents a dual structure in which strong historical specificity coexists with limited moral extensibility, especially regarding the possibility of worship and escape from harm (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). This structure shows that the classical exegetical archive is not wholly inflexible, but that its flexibility remains bounded by the inherited logic of revelation history and the experience of the earliest Muslim community (Motzki, 2002; Johnston, 2007). The data thus indicate that selected classical exegetes read the migration verses primarily through the lens of persecution, obligation, reward, and the protection of faith, rather than through later categories such as minority citizenship, integration, or diaspora adaptation (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988).

4.2 Contemporary Exegetical Data: Contextual Expansion from Territorial Migration to Ethical Relocation

Modern exegetical materials widen the scope of the migration verses by shifting attention from a singular historical migration to broader ethical conditions of religious continuity, reform, and contextual adaptation (Abduh & Riḍā, 1947–1959; Rahman, 1982). In *Tafsīr al-Manār*, the migration passages are presented within a reformist

horizon in which the believer's ability to preserve religion, pursue collective benefit, and inhabit a morally viable environment becomes central to the text's presentation (Abduh & Riḍā, 1947–1959). Rahman's writings record the same tendency at a more systematic level by treating Qur'anic directives as expressions of general moral principles whose application must be rethought under changing historical conditions, and this method allows the migration verses to be connected with justice, moral agency, and the search for conditions supportive of faithful life beyond the original Meccan-Medinan setting (Rahman, 1980, 1982). Within this documentary field, hijrah appears less as a one-time territorial obligation and more as a category through which Muslims negotiate residence, movement, and ethical responsibility in transformed social contexts (Rahman, 1982; Johnston, 2007). The widening of the semantic field is evident in the reduced exclusivity of the first historical setting and the stronger emphasis on the text's transferable moral logic (Abduh & Riḍā, 1947–1959; Rahman, 1982). The contemporary corpus thus records a shift from migration under persecution alone to a broader ethical vocabulary of relocation, endurance, and morally purposeful residence (Auda, 2008; Johnston, 2007).

This documentary shift is also visible in Yusuf al-Qaradawi's writings on Muslim minorities, where the migration verses are read alongside questions of residence in non-Muslim societies, communal continuity, and the practical obligations of citizenship and participation (al-Qaradawi, 2001; Mandaville, 2003). The data in *Fi Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt al-Muslimah* do not erase the formative history of hijrah, but they relocate its practical significance into discussions of how Muslims preserve faith while inhabiting plural legal and political settings (al-Qaradawi, 2001). In these materials, the emphasis falls less on departing from non-Muslim lands as such and more on protecting religious commitment, avoiding moral erosion, fulfilling civic obligations, and acting responsibly within the host society, which marks a notable change in the operational use of migration texts (al-Qaradawi, 2001; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). Recent scholarship on Muslim life in Europe and other diasporic settings documents a similar pattern by showing that identity, belonging, and authority are frequently negotiated through adaptation, rights, and public ethics rather than through territorial separation alone (Mandaville, 2003; Ghatas, 2023). What emerges from this body of data is not the disappearance of hijrah from modern discourse, but its relocation into the ethical language of minority survival, citizenship, and negotiated belonging (Essabane et al., 2022; Ghatas, 2023). The corpus, therefore, shows that contemporary readings connect the migration verses directly to the lived realities of Muslim diaspora and minority residence (al-Qaradawi, 2001; Mandaville, 2003).

Contemporary materials also register the repeated use of maqāṣid-oriented language, whether explicitly or functionally, when describing the purposes served by movement, protection, and religious continuity under difficult conditions (Rahman, 1982; Johnston, 2007). Even when different authors do not employ the same technical vocabulary, the data recurrently foreground the protection of religion, protection from harm, preservation of dignity, and social benefit as organizing concerns in their presentation of migration-related texts (al-Qaradawi, 2001; Auda, 2008). This pattern aligns with current scholarship on Islamic migration ethics, which documents that dignity, hospitality, refuge, brotherhood, and protection are central normative resources for addressing displacement and refugeehood within Islamic moral discourse (Abou El Fadl, 2020; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). In this modern documentary setting, Q. al-ʿAnkabūt 29:56 is often treated as a text of divine spaciousness and possibility, while Q. al-Nisāʾ 4:97–100 appears as a text concerned with escape from disabling injustice, and both passages are linked to broader normative ends rather than confined to a single legal episode (Rahman, 1982; Abou El Fadl, 2020). The data, therefore, show that contemporary writings preserve the migration verses while reorganizing them within a wider ethical horizon than that found in the predominantly transmission-based structure of classical tafsir (Johnston, 2007; Auda, 2008). Contextual expansion, ethical generalization, and practical application to diaspora life stand out in the corpus as stable empirical features of modern treatment of the verses (al-Qaradawi, 2001; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020).

4.3 Comparative Data Pattern: Divergent Interpretive Logics and a Shared Concern with Protection

Direct comparison of the two corpora shows that the principal difference between them lies not in whether migration is morally significant, but in the level at which normativity is stabilized and extended (al-Ṭabarī, 1999;

Rahman, 1982). In the classical sources, normativity is stabilized through narrated history, transmitted authority, and the remembered legal-moral order of the first Muslim community, so that the force of the verse remains anchored in concrete episodes of persecution, obligation, and reward (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). In modern sources, normativity is stabilized at the levels of general moral principle, ethical objective, and social applicability, which allows the same verses to more easily move into questions of minority life, citizenship, and forced displacement in contemporary settings (Rahman, 1982; al-Qaradawi, 2001). The data, therefore, reveal two distinct interpretive logics: one that moves from revelation history toward bounded norm, and another that moves from revelation history toward transferable ethical principle (Johnston, 2007; Auda, 2008). At the same time, the comparative matrix also documents a shared concern across both corpora with oppression, the possibility of worship, and morally serious movement away from disabling conditions, even though the methods and vocabularies differ (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Abou El Fadl, 2020). The evidence thus points to patterned divergence in method alongside stable overlap in the core concern with vulnerability, religion, and safe belonging (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Niazi, 2016).

Comparison also shows that the two traditions differ in the unit of extension used when moving beyond the immediate verse context. In the classical corpus, extension proceeds cautiously through analogy with situations resembling the original environment of coercion, concealment of faith, or inability to worship freely, and the textual materials do not present a broad migration ethic detached from these circumstances (Ibn Kathīr, 1988; al-Ṭabarī, 1999). In the modern corpus, extension proceeds more readily through ethical abstraction, in which justice, dignity, public welfare, and social participation serve as the operative bridge between scripture and present conditions (Rahman, 1982; Johnston, 2007). This pattern is visible not only in exegesis proper but also in scholarship on Muslim minorities and diasporic life, where belonging, civic formation, negotiated identity, and legal adaptation become central to the practical use of migration discourse (Mandaville, 2003; Essabane et al., 2022). The data thus show that the corpora differ not merely in conclusion, but in scale and mechanism of generalization, with classical sources privileging near-historical extension and modern sources privileging ethical-conceptual extension (Auda, 2008; Johnston, 2007). This remains a descriptive finding because it records the observable operation of the texts within their own argumentative settings rather than ranking them normatively (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; al-Qaradawi, 2001). Methodological divergence, therefore, appears in the corpus as an empirical characteristic of the material itself (Rahman, 1982; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020).

Across classical tafsir, modern hermeneutics, and recent Islamic ethics literature, the migration verses remain consistently associated with oppression, vulnerability, movement, safety, and the preservation of morally meaningful life, even as the institutional and political vocabularies change (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Abou El Fadl, 2020). Research on religion and forced migration documents a comparable pattern at the social level, showing that religious traditions continue to provide durable narratives and ethical repertoires through which displaced communities interpret flight, refuge, and protection beyond the categories of state-centered asylum law alone (Niazi, 2016). Studies of the Muslim diaspora and Islamic religious education in Europe likewise document sustained efforts to connect faith formation with citizenship, public participation, and coexistence, mirroring the contextual widening evident in modern exegetical materials (Mandaville, 2003; Essabane et al., 2022; Ghatas, 2023). The empirical comparison, therefore, does not produce a sharp opposition between a scriptural archive and a social archive; rather, it shows that scriptural reading and diasporic practice are linked by recurring concerns with protection, dignity, and viable religious life under changing historical conditions (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Ghatas, 2023). The full dataset shows that the selected verses generate two distinguishable trajectories—historical-normative and contextual-ethical—while preserving a shared documentary core centered on movement under pressure and the search for faithful survival (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Rahman, 1982).

5. Discussion

The results show that the selected corpus organizes Qur'anic migration verses into two distinguishable but partially overlapping interpretive trajectories, thereby clarifying the methodological problem at the center of the

study (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Rahman, 1982). The classical trajectory stabilizes meaning through transmitted reports, revelation history, and the legal-moral memory of the formative Muslim community, so that hijrah appears primarily as a departure from coercive settings to preserve faith and secure worship (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). The modern trajectory stabilizes meaning through transferable moral principles, public ethics, and contextual applicability, so that the same verses become relevant to minority residence, citizenship, and contemporary displacement (Rahman, 1982; al-Qaradawi, 2001). What the results add to the existing literature is not merely a repetition of the well-known distinction between classical and modern tafsir, but a clearer demonstration that both corpora preserve a shared concern with oppression, vulnerability, and protection even while they differ in their scale of generalization (Johnston, 2007; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). This is important because studies of migration and Islamic ethics have already shown that concepts such as protection, hospitality, and secure belonging remain central to current debates on refuge and residence, although they are articulated through different legal and moral vocabularies across time (Abou El Fadl, 2020; Zaman, 2020). The summary of results, therefore, indicates continuity at the level of ethical concern and divergence at the level of interpretive method, which is precisely the tension the article set out to examine (Niazi, 2016; Mandaville, 2003).

Reflecting on these findings, the study suggests that the classical archive has often been mischaracterized as simply rigid, when the data actually show a more nuanced structure: strong historical anchoring combined with limited but real moral extensibility (Ibn Kathīr, 1988; Motzki, 2002). The classical commentaries do not present migration as a generic movement, yet they do preserve concepts that remain morally productive, especially where believers face situations that threaten open worship, communal safety, or moral survival (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Ibn Kathīr, 1988). This matters because recent work on forced migration argues that religious traditions continue to function as living repertoires for interpreting displacement, protection, and obligation beyond the administrative language of the modern state alone (Niazi, 2016). At the same time, the modern corpus cannot be reduced to opportunistic adaptation, because it emerges from a genuine attempt to render scriptural normativity responsive to transformed social realities such as secular citizenship, transnational life, and minority institutional existence (Rahman, 1982; Mandaville, 2003). Scholarship on Muslim diasporas and Islamic education in Europe similarly documents that Muslim communities repeatedly negotiate identity, participation, and rights under plural conditions rather than outside them, and this social reality helps explain why contemporary exegetes extend migration verses beyond territorial relocation alone (Ghatas, 2023; Essabane et al., 2022). The reflective implication is that the tension identified by the results is not, in itself, a sign of methodological failure, but rather evidence that scripture is being engaged across historically distinct structures of vulnerability and belonging (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Niazi, 2016).

Interpreted more closely, the findings indicate that the biggest difference between the two corpora lies in where each locates the controlling center of normativity, with significant implications for Qur'anic hermeneutics (Johnston, 2007; Rahman, 1982). Classical exegesis locates normative control in narrated origin, which means that the authority of the migration verses is secured through the remembered circumstances of the first Muslim community and the transmission chains that preserve those circumstances (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; Motzki, 2002). Contemporary exegesis locates normative control in moral purpose, which allows the verses to be re-read in relation to justice, dignity, harm, and viable religious life under altered political conditions (Rahman, 1982; al-Qaradawi, 2001). This interpretive shift is precisely where the maqāsid framework becomes analytically relevant, because the modern literature on maqāsid does not merely license contextual flexibility; its more rigorous formulations propose that textual meaning, ethical purpose, and public welfare should remain mutually corrective rather than loosely interchangeable (Johnston, 2007; Auda, 2008). Read in that light, the present results support the article's central proposal that a maqāsid-oriented hermeneutic can serve as a disciplined mediating framework rather than as a rhetorical compromise between old and new positions (Johnston, 2007; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). The point is not to replace classical tafsir with the language of maqāsid, but to clarify the conditions under which contemporary extensions of migration verses remain anchored in the moral architecture of revelation itself (Abou El Fadl, 2020; Rahman, 1982).

When compared with broader international scholarship, the findings align with and also sharpen current conversations in migration studies, Islamic ethics, and Muslim diaspora research (Mandaville, 2003; Jureidini & Hassan, 2020). Existing studies have shown that Muslim diasporic life is marked by translocal identity formation, negotiation of public belonging, and the emergence of ethical reasoning that is neither reducible to inherited homeland categories nor fully absorbed into secular citizenship regimes (Mandaville, 2003; Ghatas, 2023). The present study complements those accounts by showing that such negotiations are mirrored at the level of scriptural interpretation itself, where migration verses become a site for contesting how far textual norms may be generalized without losing their normative force (Rahman, 1982; Johnston, 2007). The findings also resonate with recent work on Islamic ethical resources for migration, which argues that concepts such as *amān*, *jivār*, *diyāfa*, and moral protection can enrich contemporary debates on displacement, asylum, and coexistence (Abou El Fadl, 2020; Zaman, 2020). What this article adds, however, is a verse-centered comparative account of how those ethical resources are anticipated, constrained, or expanded within exegetical practice itself (al-Ṭabarī, 1999; al-Qaradawī, 2001). The comparative value of the study thus lies in connecting three fields that are often discussed separately—tafsir, migration ethics, and diaspora studies—and demonstrating that their relationship is methodologically internal rather than merely thematic or incidental (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Essabane et al., 2022).

The most important follow-up from this discussion is both methodological and empirical, because the present findings open a clear agenda for future research rather than closing the debate (Kyngäs et al., 2020; Bowen, 2009). At the methodological level, future studies can operationalize a maqāṣid-governed protocol more explicitly by specifying the sequence through which revelation history, lexical range, moral objective, and contemporary application should be related in the reading of migration verses (Johnston, 2007; Auda, 2008). At the empirical level, the results call for field-based work on how refugees, labor migrants, and second- or third-generation Muslim minorities actually invoke, reinterpret, or ignore the Qur'anic language of *hijrah* in everyday decision-making and communal discourse (Ghatas, 2023; Niazi, 2016). Such inquiry would be especially valuable in settings where Muslim communities negotiate asylum, integration, and legal belonging under distinct national frameworks, because the social uses of scripture may differ significantly across Europe, Southeast Asia, and North America (Mandaville, 2003; Essabane et al., 2022). The present study also suggests the need for closer dialogue between text-based Islamic studies and policy-oriented migration scholarship so that scriptural ethics can be studied not only as a source of normativity but also as a living resource within displaced communities (Jureidini & Hassan, 2020; Abou El Fadl, 2020). The discussion, therefore, leads to a practical scholarly conclusion: the future of Qur'anic migration ethics will depend on integrating disciplined hermeneutics with empirically grounded study of Muslim diasporic life (Bowen, 2009; Kyngäs et al., 2020).

6. Conclusion

This study has shown that the Qur'anic verses on migration—especially Q. al-Nisā' 4:97–100, Q. al-Ḥajj 22:58–60, and Q. al-'Ankabūt 29:56—have generated two major interpretive trajectories in the exegetical tradition: a classical historical-normative trajectory and a modern contextual-ethical trajectory. The classical corpus reads *hijrah* primarily through the formative experiences of persecution, obligation, sacrifice, and the preservation of faith, while the modern corpus expands these same verses to address questions of justice, minority residence, citizenship, and ethical survival under contemporary conditions of displacement and diaspora. The comparison undertaken in this article demonstrates that the difference between these two trajectories lies less in their ethical concern than in the way each stabilizes and extends Qur'anic normativity.

The study also finds that neither of these trajectories is sufficient on its own. Classical exegesis preserves textual fidelity, transmitted authority, and historical depth, yet it remains closely tied to the legal and political experience of the first Muslim community and therefore does not always provide an immediately transferable framework for refugeehood, minority citizenship, or long-term diasporic residence in secular states. Contemporary contextual readings, by contrast, make the Qur'an more normatively available to present realities, but they also raise the question

of how far reinterpretation may proceed before the moral and textual limits of the verses become underdetermined. What emerges from this tension is not the need to choose one approach over the other, but rather a more disciplined mediating framework.

Within that context, this article argues that a *maqāsid al-sharīah*-oriented hermeneutic offers the most promising path forward because it enables contextual extension without severing interpretation from the moral architecture of revelation. By foregrounding the preservation of religion, life, dignity, and moral agency, such a framework allows migration verses to be read not only as records of an early Islamic past but also as ethically generative texts for Muslims living under conditions of forced migration, precarious belonging, and minority vulnerability today. The contribution of this study, therefore, lies in showing that Qur'anic migration ethics can be reconstructed through a comparative and methodologically self-aware reading of the exegetical tradition, one that connects tafsir, maqāsid, and diaspora studies in a single analytical conversation.

The implications of this argument extend beyond narrowly defined Qur'anic studies. For Islamic studies, the article demonstrates the importance of bringing text-based hermeneutics into sustained engagement with migration ethics, minority fiqh, and the sociology of displaced Muslim communities. For future research, the findings invite further empirical work on how Muslim refugees, labor migrants, and second- or third-generation minorities actually invoke, transform, or marginalize the scriptural language of *hijrah* in their everyday religious reasoning and public life. A more integrated research agenda of this kind would allow the study of Qur'anic migration ethics to move beyond abstract normativity toward a richer account of how revelation continues to shape, and be reshaped by, the lived realities of Muslim mobility in the contemporary world.

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