



## Empowering Communities through the Living Qur'an: Alumni Contributions from a Qur'anic Boarding School in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** This study explores how the alumni of the Raudhatul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School in Metro City contribute to community empowerment through the Living Qur'an framework. The research aims to examine the effectiveness of alumni-led initiatives in sustaining religious knowledge and practices in a city undergoing cultural and religious transitions. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach and a case study method, data were collected through in-depth interviews with alumni and pesantren caregivers, as well as documentation of institutional and community activities. The analysis employs Jim Ife's community development theory and Robert D. Putnam's social capital theory to assess how alumni utilize social trust, norms, and networks to promote Quranic values within society. The findings reveal a distinct model of Living Qur'an-based community empowerment implemented through three main strategies: active community participation, social justice, and local capacity building. The study concludes that the alumni effectively preserve and revitalize Quranic culture by leveraging their social capital, reinforcing the potential of religious institutions as drivers of community development in urban transitional contexts. This research contributes to the discourse on Islamic education, social cohesion, and faith-based community empowerment in contemporary urban settings.

**Keywords:** community empowerment; Islamic boarding school; living Qur'an; social capital; urban religion

### Introduction

In the community, we often find tahfizh and tahfizhoh institutions that produce alumni who have memorized the Qur'an. However, the problem of interpreting the Qur'an in community life remains unanswered, one of which is the interpretation of social actions within the community. This, without realizing the need for understanding the Qur'an is very much needed. Therefore, tahfizhoh institutions need to revive the living Qur'an in the community holistically. The many practices of living Quran that position the Quran outside its capacity as a text in their lives. These phenomena seem to be concrete indicators of the expression that is often labeled to the Quran that it is a pious book that have relevance to various situations and conditions in people's lives (Galib, 2017).

Living Qur'an in recent years has become a new phenomenon in practical terms, because society has various responses in interpreting the Qur'an (Goldziher, 1983). The responses that emerge cannot be separated from their interaction patterns towards the Qur'an. In addition, the socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts also play a role in changes in people's behavior (Syamsuddin, 2007). Most of the living Quran in society is emphasised as a motivation and inspiration in behaving in community life. The Quran, as the main source of teachings in Islam, plays a central role in the lives of Muslims throughout the world (Shihab, 2012). However, despite

being the main guideline, understanding and implementing the teachings of the Quran in daily life is often a challenge for many Muslims (Arsyad, 2023). To overcome this challenge, various religious groups, including Jamaah Hafizoh, have been actively involved in efforts to promote the appreciation of the Quran in society.

Jamaah Tahfizh is a forum that plays a very important role in bringing the Quran to life in the community through various methods and strategies. Today, it is committed to empowering the Living Quran, namely actively integrating the teachings of the Quran in the daily lives of the community. They are not only focused on reading and memorizing the Quran alone, but also emphasize the importance of understanding the meaning and application of these teachings in various aspects of life (Yusuf, 2020). Thus, Jamaah Tafizoh plays a crucial role in spreading and strengthening the understanding and practice of the Quran in society.

By deepening our understanding of the roles and strategies of Jamaah Hafizoh, we can better assess their potential in increasing their effectiveness in empowering the Living Quran in the community (Stewart, 2004). Furthermore, further research will also help us understand the impact of Jamaah Hafizoh activities, both at the individual and community levels. This will provide a more solid foundation for the development of more relevant and effective educational and da'wah programs in strengthening the understanding and practice of the Quran in an increasingly complex society. Therefore, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to efforts to strengthen Islamic identity and values in everyday life.

Building on the above phenomenon, the importance of Tahfizh institutions in enabling society to practice the living Quran in daily life. However, in reality, these tahfizh institutions are still limited to the memorization stage. In the context of this study, it will provide an overview of the role of tahfizh institutions in empowering the Quran through the tahsin, tahfizh and interpretation methods by looking at the methods, strategies and impacts on people's lives.

The Tahfizh Institution has a very important role in improving the quality of society related to the understanding of the Qur'an. The tahfizh institution is known as Roudlatul Qur'an which already has five branches including Roudlatul Qur'an Center in Metro City, Roudlatul Qur'an 02 Tamadhun, Roudlatul Qur'an 03 Children, Roudlatul Qur'an Putri 04 in Sekampung East Lampung, and Roudlatul Qur'an 05 in Jati Agung South Lampung. This Tahfizh Institution has been in operation for 21 years and has produced 300 tahfizh and tahfizhoh alumni, spread across various regions.

The activities of the Tahfizh Roudlatul Qur'an institution have a leading activity which is held on Thursday wage once a month. This activity is attended by all alumni and the surrounding community to complete the Quran and discuss about *entrepreneurship*. The alumni activities always evaluate the methods and strategies for learning tahsin, tahfizh and interpretation of the Al-Quran. This is related to the problems experienced by alumni in their respective regions. Alumni carry out this learning in the taklim assembly as a form of practicing knowledge in society. In addition, the daily activities carried out by these alumni create taklim assemblies such as TPA for the Elderly/Mothers which use the reading, writing and memorizing Juz Amma methods, this activity is spread across various regions which are carried out in the afternoon. Also, every week alumni go around to taklim assemblies from prayer rooms to prayer rooms which provide sermons from the Al-Quran which are interpreted according to the social conditions of the community.

Metro City is an example of a transitional society that has experienced significant changes in various aspects of life. Economic transformation, increasing Human Development Index, social diversity, and cultural changes indicate that Metro City is moving towards a more modern and urban society. However, this process also presents challenges, such as social integration and preservation of local values, which require attention and wise handling.

The condition of religiosity of society in the transition period is generally characterized by complex dynamics, because this transition involves significant social, economic, political, and cultural changes. In general, religiosity in transitional societies reflects the response of society to the various changes that occur. Some maintain and strengthen religious values as a way of dealing with uncertainty, while others begin to modify their understanding of religion according to the modern context. The biggest challenge in this transition phase is maintaining a balance between maintaining religious traditions and adapting to dynamic social changes, while encouraging pluralism, tolerance, and social peace. Overall, the knowledge of reading and writing the Qur'an in

Metro City is quite good, with support from various parties, both government, educational institutions, and the wider community.

Thus, it can be understood that this research is a breakthrough in answering problems in people's lives in interpreting *Al-Qur'an* through the role of the tahfizh institution in reviving *living quran* in the community, especially in the city of Metro Lampung. This research focuses on the implementation, role, and model of community empowerment based on living the Qur'an.

## Literature Review

### Puttman's Social Capital

Social capital can be linked to efforts to manage, improve, and utilize social relations as resources invested in order to gain economic and social benefits. This relationship is related to norms that provide guarantees of values about trust, and institutionalize mutually beneficial relationships. Social capital has an analytical focus in the form of groups to society (Tenten & Sufyadi, 2020). This is because social capital can only function effectively if there are multiple individuals to establish social relations. Social capital is often associated with mutual trust, norms, and networks used by the community in solving common problems (Fathy, 2019). This explanation suggests that social capital can be effectively implemented in community empowerment activities aimed at enhancing the ability to identify and resolve common problems. Community empowerment activities are characterized by efforts to increase access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and strengthening the capacity of local organizations where these are closely related to elements of social capital. In addition, social capital has several roles such as: providing access to information, useful for mobilizing support, a tool for instilling and spreading trust, and creating relationships of mutual respect through clear identities (Usman, 2018a).

The definition of social capital varies widely, but in general social capital can be interpreted as institutions, relationships, attitudes and values that facilitate interaction between individuals between community groups in order to improve welfare through economic development and community development itself. Social capital can be linked to efforts to manage, improve and utilize social relations as resources invested in order to gain economic and social benefits. This relationship is related to norms that provide guarantees of values about trust, and institutionalize mutually beneficial relationships. Social capital has a focus of analysis in the form of groups to society. This is because social capital can only function effectively if there are multiple individuals to establish social relations. Social capital is often associated with mutual trust (*trust*), norms, and networks used by society to solve common problems (Fathy, 2019).

This explanation suggests that social capital can be effectively implemented in community empowerment activities aimed at enhancing the ability to identify and resolve common problems. Community empowerment activities are characterized by efforts to increase access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and strengthening the capacity of local organizations where these are closely related to elements of social capital. In addition, social capital has several roles such as: providing access to information, useful for mobilizing support, a tool for instilling and spreading trust, and creating relationships of mutual respect through clear identities (Usman, 2018a). Actually, the discussion of social capital (*social capital*) is not a new concept. This concept was first discussed by economists in the 19th century (Castiglione et al., 2008). However, the term social capital only appeared for the first time in 1916 when Lyda Hudson Hanifan wrote about *The Rural School Community Center* (Moelyono, 2010). Discussions about social capital are increasingly prominent, because economists realize that to drive economic activity, it is not solely based on or based on human capital, physical capital, or financial capital, but there are other types of capital that are effective in lubricating economic activities, and can even produce better results than relying solely on human, physical, and financial capital, namely social capital.

This is in line with Lin's argument that emphasizes the relationship of social capital to operational social networks as resources embedded in the network and accessed and then used by actors to act. Lin's argument seems to be in line with Potes and Sensenbrenner, who use social capital as a collective expectation and action that influences economic goals (Robinson et al.,

2000). Talking about social capital, there are several debates regarding the themes raised, namely economic capital and social capital. Talking about economic capital, there are at least 3 types of capital, namely: liquidity (capital), land and labor. The sociological approach has expanded the dimensions in the spectrum that there are factors outside of production and non-economic that can be utilized to generate economic benefits, originating from a person's sociality. This capital is social capital.

Like other capital, social capital is also productive, making an end goal possible to achieve. The goal would not be achieved without this capital. More detailed, according to Putnam, the benefits of social capital include: first, enabling society to solve common problems easily. Second, fostering a sense of mutual trust in social relations to realize common interests. Third, enabling the creation of a network of cooperation so that it is easy to obtain information (Putnam, 2000). Sociologists and economists distinguish three types of social capital;

*First*, bonding social capital or if freely translated, is social capital that is binding in nature. *Bonding social capital* is a form of social capital that pays attention to similarities and allows for a network of cooperation between members in a group and between members in an association (club). The main characteristic of bonding social capital is that its power potential is closely related to the size of the group. The larger the membership of an association, the better the social capital there. However, it is essential to recognise that bonding social capital is not always beneficial for economic development. In various cases, horizontal associations do not always thrive because personal interests can arise from conducting special lobbies that benefit themselves but harm society as a whole.

*Second*, bridging social capital, or if freely translated, is social capital that acts as a bridge. Bridging social capital looking at the relationship of members of a group with other groups and not relationships with fellow members in the same group. The relationship in bridging social capital is looser than the relationship in bonding social capital. Bridging social capital is highly beneficial for economic development, as it involves members from diverse groups. This type of social capital is more challenging to acquire in both developed and developing countries. The lack of "bridging" social capital has the potential to ignite conflict between social groups because there is a lack of interaction between groups

*Third*, linking social capital. Linking social capital can be translated as connecting social capital. Linking social capital refers to social capital that seeks to connect various social groups across different strata. Linking social capital connects one group or individual with another in a vertical manner. This type of social capital better explains the relationship built on the basis of social class or between subordinates and superiors. It is indeed rather difficult to imagine how social capital can be formed for two individuals with different economic statuses. Usually in this form of relationship, the group in the higher position benefits more so that the relationship formed tends to be antagonistic.

One of the political experts who has discussed a lot about social capital is Robert Putnam. Putnam's concern about the decline in public trust in the government triggered his attention to the problem of social capital. Putnam defines social capital as a collection of horizontal associations that affect the productivity of society, including social networks and norms that facilitate cooperation and coordination to achieve mutual benefit (Haridison, 2013). Putnam stated that social capital has three components, namely trust, social norms, and social networks. Trust is a key element in building strong social capital. Trust is considered a foundation because it has a profound impact between society and leaders or officials. The higher the public trust, the more positive and productive communication will be created between the two. The importance of this trust is built to maintain public trust.

Social norms are informal rules held by people in a community. Social norms that encourage integrity, transparency, and ethics are one of the keys to social capital. This not only has an impact on the quality of leaders but also on justice, community participation and sustainable development. Social networks can help a leader to be able to solve challenges better (Khairussalam et al., 2024).

According to Putnam, voluntary associations have an important role in efforts to develop social capital. Not only in terms of distributing information but also as a place to interact and

conduct transactions between the actors involved. This encourages them to develop norms that facilitate mutually beneficial cooperation between the actors. Voluntary associations and mutually beneficial relationships are two factors that are believed to be able to foster *trust* positive values that value development. Then *trust* will strengthen mutually beneficial relationships and voluntary associations. In understanding the problem of social capital, Putnam tends to use a functionalist sociological approach rather than a conflict sociological approach. This tendency is clearly seen in the way Putnam analyzes the power relations between the state and civil society. Putnam ignores internal conflicts that occur in voluntary associations as well as external conflicts between associations. In Putnam's view, social capital focuses more on collective values, consensus and social integration (Usman, 2018b).

Based on the results of his research, Putnam concluded that social capital in the form of norms and networks of relationships is a precondition for economic development. In addition, it is also an absolute prerequisite for the creation of good and effective governance. There are three important reasons for Putnam to say so. First, the existence of social networks allows for coordination and communication that can foster a sense of mutual trust among members of society. Second, trust (*trust*) has positive implications in social life. This is proven by the fact that people who have a sense of mutual trust are related (*mutual trust*) in a social network reinforces norms regarding the need to help each other. Third the various successes achieved through previous cooperation in this network will encourage the continuation of cooperation in the future. Putnam further said that social capital can even bridge the gap between groups with different ideologies and strengthen agreement on the importance of community empowerment.

A community considers that social capital has a great influence on its residents. According to the World Bank, social capital is an aspect of institutions, social relations, and norms that can influence the quality and quantity of social interactions in society, and can strengthen bonds between groups. The emphasis on togetherness in society can improve the quality of life. For this reason, it is important to build values that must be accepted by its members, such as participatory attitudes, caring for each other, giving and receiving, and trusting each other. Social capital is an important foundation for an orderly and developing society. In a community, social capital is used to connect, strengthen, and even increase the potential of other assets (Alfiansyah, 2023).

### **Empowerment**

Community empowerment can basically be called as one of the approaches used in the socio-economic development of the community. Empowerment itself means an effort made to provide capabilities to weak community groups with the aim of being able to seek and find needs, problems, and potential independently (Widjajanti, 2011). Empowerment is also interpreted as a process because it requires a series of planned activities to improve people's lives to be better in various sectors (Prayitno, 2013). Efforts and processes in empowerment are carried out from, by, and for the community itself so that there is an increase in knowledge, skills, and power for their lives. This is in accordance with the purpose of empowerment, namely to improve the conditions of disadvantaged community groups to be more empowered through transformation and improvement in structural, cultural, and personal aspects (Huda, 2009).

According to Edi Suharto, in community empowerment, the concept of economic development is embedded in social values which consist of four principles, namely community-based (*community base*), participation, self-reliance, and sustainability (Jamaludin, 2016). These four principles have important values because they clearly place the community as the main subject in development. Furthermore, participation means that the community is actively involved in finding alternative solutions to meet shared needs. This participation leads to self-reliance so that they can be truly independent in improving their lives. must be carried out sustainably from time to time so that improvements in the quality of life in various sectors can continue to occur.

In addition to discussing the importance of a principle, community empowerment must also discuss strategy. The diversity of culture, capacity, and level of community awareness requires a series of appropriate empowerment strategies (Najiyati, 2005). The strategy can start from the potential that is owned as important capital to be developed further. Potential in this case can be in the form of natural resources, humans, or culture. Furthermore, the potential is developed through

group training and mentoring through collaborative interactions in sharing knowledge and experiences. In addition, empowerment must also maintain local community wisdom in the form of values and norms so that empowerment activities are easily accepted and carried out by the community. The strategy can be carried out in stages through the daily social process of the community.

Community Empowerment according to Jim Ife In his book entitled *Community Development, Creating Community Alternatives-Vision, Analisis and Practice* (1997), Jim Ife explains that the definition of empowerment is providing resources, opportunities, knowledge and skills to citizens to increase their ability to determine their own future and participate in efforts to influence the lives of their group.

According to Jim Ife, the concept of empowerment is closely related to two main concepts, namely: the concept of power and the concept of disadvantaged. Therefore, the concept of empowerment can be explained using 4 perspectives: pluralist, elitist, structuralist, and post-structuralism. The explanations of the 4 perspectives are as follows.

*First*, the pluralist perspective sees empowerment as a process to help disadvantaged individuals or groups in society, so that they can compete more effectively. In the pluralist perspective, empowerment is done by helping the community by providing learning on how to use lobbying skills, using media related to political action and understanding how the system works (rules of the game). So, empowerment is done by increasing the capacity of the community to be able to compete fairly so that no one wins or loses (J. W. Ife, 1995).

*Second*, the elitist perspective views empowerment as an effort to influence elites, such as community leaders or figures, officials, the rich, by forming alliances with them, or confronting and seeking change among the elites. This effort is made considering that society becomes powerless due to the strong power and control of the elites (J. W. Ife, 1995).

*Third*, The structuralist perspective views empowerment as a more challenging struggle agenda because its goal is to eliminate forms of structural inequality. In other words, community empowerment is a process of liberation that must be accompanied by fundamental structural change and the loss of structural oppression (J. W. Ife, 1995).

*Fourth*, Post-structuralist perspective assesses empowerment as an effort to change discourse that emphasizes intellectual aspects rather than action or praxis. Thus, community empowerment is understood as a step to develop understanding of the development of new and analytical thinking. The emphasis of empowerment is on the aspect of education for the community (J. W. Ife, 1995).

Jim Ife also identified 6 types of community strengths that can be utilized in their empowerment process. The six strengths are: the ability to determine personal choices; the ability to determine one's own needs; freedom of expression; institutional capacity; access to economic resources; and freedom in the reproductive process (J. W. Ife, 1995). By identifying the factors of community strength and the inequalities that make them backward, there are three empowerment strategies that can be carried out. The three strategies are:

1. Empowerment through planning and policies implemented by building or changing structures and institutions that can provide equal access to resources, services and opportunities to participate in community life.
2. Empowerment through social and political actions carried out by political struggles and movements in order to build effective power.
3. Empowerment through education and awareness building carried out through educational processes in various aspects that are quite broad. This effort is carried out in order to provide knowledge and skills for lower-class communities and increase their strength.

In its implementation, empowerment has the meaning: encouragement or motivation, guidance, or assistance in improving the ability of individuals or communities to be independent. This effort is a stage of the empowerment process in changing behavior, changing old habits to new, better behavior, in improving the quality of life and welfare.

### **Living Qur'an**

The term "Living Qur'an" is a combination of "living" which means life, and "Qur'an" which refers to the holy book of Muslims. Living Qur'an can also be interpreted as the Qur'an that lives in society

(Syamsuddin, 2007). The Qur'an has many functions, one of which is as proof of the truth of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

The study of the Qur'an has begun since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, as a systematic effort related to the holy book. The characteristics of Islamic teachings in the social field are an interesting topic of study, because these teachings are given for the social welfare of humanity (Rustandi et al., 2022). Branches of the science of the Qur'an, such as the science of Qira'at, Rasm Al-Qur'an, and asbab al-nuzul, have existed since the early generations, and developed systematically in the following generations.

The Living Qur'an study aims to produce a new understanding of the Qur'an as a guide to life for believers. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the Qur'an as a guide to life for humans. The Qur'an was conveyed to humanity as a guide to life through the Prophet Muhammad, so the relevance of the Qur'an to social problems in society is the focus of the study.

For academics, the study of the Living Qur'an is not only about understanding the text in terms of interpretation, but also applying it in the context of society. Several branches of Al-Qur'an knowledge, such as al-nuzul and the date of the Al-Qur'an, became the focus of this study to understand the context of the writing and compilation of the Al-Qur'an.

The Living Qur'an study also leads to a social understanding of humans as a guide to life that can provide peace and guidance in various aspects of life. In a social context, social science methodology becomes crucial for understanding social phenomena related to the Living Qur'an. This study also tries to reveal the beauty and secrets of the Qur'an from various academic perspectives.

Living Quran is a concept that describes the Quran as a relevant and practical life guide for Muslims in every aspect of life. This concept emphasizes that Al-Quran is not only a holy book that is read and worshipped, but also a source of inspiration and guidance for individuals to face various situations in everyday life. By looking at the Al-Quran as a Living Quran, Muslims are expected to be able to apply the teachings contained in the Al-Quran concretely in various contexts of their lives.

Living Qur'an can also be interpreted as symptoms that appear in society in the form of behavioral patterns that originate or respond as meaning to Qur'anic values. The form of community response to the text of the Qur'an is the community's reception of a particular text of the Qur'an and the results of a particular interpretation. Meanwhile, the social reception of the results of the interpretation is manifested and institutionalized in the form of a particular interpretation in society, both on a large and small scale. The text of the Qur'an that lives in society is what is called the living Qur'an, while the application of certain interpretation results in society can be called the living tafsir (Ahimsa-Putra, 2012).

As is living Qur'an which is a form of the Qur'an that is understood by the Muslim community contextually. So that living Qur'an is a form of scientific study or research on various social events related to the presence of the Qur'an or the existence of the Qur'an in certain Muslim communities. The Qur'an which is understood contextually will have an impact on the social life of society which is full of the values of the Qur'an.

### 1. History of the Living Qur'an.

History records, *living Al-Qur'an* has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, this can be seen in practice *Ruqyah*, namely treating himself and others who are sick by reciting certain verses in the Qur'an. According to a narration, Prophet Muhammad SAW once cured diseases with *ruqyah* using the letter of Al-Fatihah or rejecting magic by reciting the letter *Al-Mu'awwizatain* (Al-Falaq dan Al-Naas) (Faizin, 2011). More than that, it was the Companions who actually did the research *living Qur'an* scientifically and empirically for the first time. They understood religious teachings from what they could see and what they witnessed or experienced themselves in front of the Prophet. Not infrequently they asked the Prophet about it, then they reported it and made it a hadith *fi'li*. The methods used by the friends are almost the same as the participant observation and in-depth interview methods. (*in-dept interview*) to collect data in field research. They are directly and actively involved in studies and daily activities with the Prophet Muhammad SAW (A. 'Ubaydi Hasbillah, 2011).

Living Qur'an what the companions did was in the form of observations such as when the companions saw the Prophet Muhammad SAW wearing a ring, the companions also wore rings in

large numbers. And when Prophet Muhammad SAW took off his ring, the companions also took it off in large numbers. The decree of the Prophet Muhammad SAW caused differences among the companions, so that the companions asked the Prophet about the tayammum incident in the middle of the journey. The Prophet Muhammad SAW instructed not to pray Asr unless they had arrived at the village of Bani Quraizah. However, the companions in the middle of the journey, had different opinions. Some companions continued to perform prayers on time, even though they were still on the journey and "violated" the instructions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Some other companions remained "loyal" to the instructions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. These companions only prayed Asr when they had arrived at the village of Bani Quraizah. even though the time for Asr prayer had passed. This was then questioned by companions to find out which of their actions is better, then this incident was responded to by the Prophet wisely (A. U. Hasbillah, 2019).

The Prophet Muhammad's SAW's decree relating to rings and tayammum activities can be understood as a form of *living Qur'an* because based on the concept of the actions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is *living Qur'an*. Because of the Prophet's function as *good news* This provision is a legal provision of the Al-Qur'an.

Based on the above information, that *living Qur'an* has existed since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions. But this is not yet the case *living Qur'an* which is in the form of a scientific study. This is only an embryo of *living Qur'an* has existed since the time of the Prophet and his companions. *Living Qur'an* began to become an object of study when observers of non-Muslim Qur'an studies. For them, there are many interesting aspects of the Qur'an that are reflected in various social phenomena within Muslim life. For example, social phenomena related to lessons in reading the Qur'an in certain locations, the phenomenon of writing certain parts of the Qur'an in certain places, the cutting of verses of the Qur'an which then become a means of treatment, prayers and so on that exist in other Muslim communities. This study model makes the phenomena that live in the midst of Muslim society related to the Qur'an the object of their study, basically nothing more than social studies which with its diversity. Only with this social phenomenon emerged because the presence of the Qur'an. Then it was initiated into the area of Qur'an studies. Which in its development this study is known as the term *living Qur'an* (Syamsuddin, 2007).

The Living Qur'an became an object of study when non-Muslim observers of the study of the Qur'an began to pay attention to the phenomenon of the use of the Qur'an among Muslims and to use the Qur'an which is understood and experienced by Muslims in real terms. The study model was brought and popularized by several figures named Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, Kristen Nelson, Farid Esack, and Neal Robinson. The idea of expanding the sciences of the Qur'an was presented by these reform figures and the growth of Qur'an studies. The research and study are called the study of the living Qur'an as a social event.

In 2005, Indonesia introduced the term "living Qur'an". In Indonesia, especially at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, the pattern of a person's relationship with the Qur'an has been tested publicly in Indonesia. The FKMTHI Congress was held at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in 2005. A seminar on the topic of "living Qur'an" was held at one of the congresses. The study of living Qur'an continues to gain popularity as a sub-field of science (Suryadilaga, 2019).

The Faculty of Tafsir and Hadith Usuluddin held a workshop at UIN Yogyakarta on November 8 and 9, 2006 to strengthen and popularize the name of the new science, the workshop even began to glance at the study of hadith, in addition the workshop also reviewed the methodological aspects of the study model in addition to discussing the name of the science and the study model which was still abstract in order to strengthen it into a science. A year later, seven lecturers from UIN Yogyakarta wrote a book entitled "Living Qur'an and Hadith Research Methodology" which contains the findings of the workshop, namely M. Mansyur, The speakers were Muhammad Chirzin, Muhammad Yusuf, Abdul Mustaqim, Suryadi, M. Alfatih Suryadilaga, and Nurun Najwah.

Term *living Qur'an* first appeared by Fazhurrahman, this was stated by Alfatih Suryadilaga even though the term used by Fazhulrahman indicates a non-verbal sunnah which is known as the term *living Tradition* (Suryadilaga, 2019). But the term *living Qur'an* the forerunner of the new science was introduced by Barbara Dali Metcalf in her research on *living Hadith* entitled "*Living Hadith in The Tablighi Jamaat*" which was written in 1992 (A. 'Ubaydi Hasbillah, 2011).

Although basically *living Qur'an* starting from the study of the Qur'an from among non-



Muslims. But the scholars of the Qur'an from The Muslim community received this study well. By entering the study *living Qur'an* into the area of Qur'anic studies by contemporary observers of Qur'anic studies.

One of the most important topics to establish a science is the problem of the object of study. A field of science will not be realized if there is no object of study. The object of study of the living Qur'an is divided into two The categories are as follows:

Philosophically, every field of science requires an object as a target of research and scientists. In philosophy, material objects can be visible or invisible. Empirical objects are visible objects, while metaphysical objects are invisible objects whose existence is in the mind and possibility (Yusuf, 2020). Empirical objects are objects that can be measured, while metaphysics, which includes thought and possibility, are rational objects. We can learn more about certain material objects by looking at some examples of material objects in science. For example, sociology has material objects such as society, psychology has material objects such as psychological symptoms, and linguistics has material objects such as sounds, symbols and words.

It can be concluded that the material object of the study of the living Qur'an is the manifestation of the non-textual or non-text Qur'an. It can be in the form of multimedia, images or cultural works, as well as the way humans think and act (Suryadilaga, 2019).

Formal objects can also be referred to as paradigms, methods, or ways to draw conclusions through material objects. To draw conclusions sometimes use deductive and inductive methods. The deductive method is drawing conclusions from a paradigm or large assumption. The inductive method is used to find one large conclusion from the similarity or difference in patterns of small cases. The conclusion obtained is what then becomes a theory. So, the formal object of living Qur'an can be sociology, socio-culture, art, psychology, or science and technology. What is clear is that the formal object of living Qur'an does not have the nature of a script, but the existence of society and humanity (A. U. Hasbillah, 2019).

## Method

This type of research is qualitative research, namely research that combines words, sentences, schemes and images to produce accurate data, so that researchers are able to provide research results based on actual facts. The qualitative research process is by collecting data, then analyzing the data using theories so that researchers can draw accurate research conclusions. Qualitative research usually examines an event that occurs in the community environment naturally or the object of research is actually in the surrounding environment. Qualitative research when analyzing data emphasizes the meaning or essence of the research results or is deductive. Qualitative research will produce descriptive data, namely collections of oral interview results that are poured into writing (Moleong, 2018). In qualitative research, the research subjects used include comprehensive data starting from primary/secondary data, based on field observations, done, personal experiences, and research subjects in the field based on interviews and observations conducted by researchers.

This research is of a Constructive Analysis nature, namely explaining research by a learning approach from someone who is able to build their own knowledge based on the knowledge that other people already have so that the data obtained is easy to understand or analyze using certain theories (Bishop & Bridges, 2012). Based on the location and theme raised in This research is located in Metro City, which is called the city of education in Lampung Province. Metro City has formal education from kindergarten to college, as well as non-formal education such as tahfizh or salafiyah Islamic boarding schools. This research is located at the Roudlotul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, which focuses on the Alumni Community of the Raudhatul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School.

## Results and Discussion

Community empowerment carried out by alumni of the Roudlatul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School is a concrete example of how two theoretical approaches, namely *community development* from Jem Ife and *social capital* from (Putnam, 1994), can meet and strengthen each other in socio-religious practices. These two theories, although born from different backgrounds, both emphasize the importance of the strength of society from within. (*internal strength*) as a basis for social change.

Community empowerment carried out by alumni of the Roudlatul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School shows the existence and utilization of strong social capital. In Robert Putnam's perspective, social capital includes three important elements: trust, social norms, and social networks (Portes, 2024). The three are not only the foundation for healthy social interactions but also strategic instruments in encouraging sustainable social change. Alumni activities in various forms, both on a personal, community, and institutional scale, clearly reflect the application of these principles.

### **Social Capital Owned by Alumni**

Trust is a key element in the interaction between alumni and the community. This process begins from the early stages of establishing a branch Islamic boarding school, where alumni first build social relationships with local residents. They come with typical Islamic boarding school etiquette: asking permission, establishing friendships, and introducing the vision of da'wah openly. This creates a conducive psychological atmosphere, because the community feels valued and involved (Kawiana et al., 2021). This trust continues to be maintained over time, strengthened by the consistency of alumni in providing quality religious and social education services, especially in activities such as Qur'an reading, regular religious studies, and involvement in local traditional ceremonies or traditions.

Meanwhile, social norms play an important role in framing alumni behavior when interacting with the community. Alumni show respect for local values, and uphold the manners and politeness that are characteristic of Islamic boarding school alumni. In implementing religious programs, they do not impose their will, but rather adjust their approach to the needs and readiness of the community. For example, in the formation of religious study groups, women's religious studies, and children's educational activities, alumni always consider the time, customs, and characteristics of the local culture. They also prioritize the principle of equality, by opening access to learning without distinguishing between socio-economic backgrounds of the community. This spirit creates a new norm in society: that Qur'anic education is the right of every individual and can be accessed by anyone who has the spirit to learn (Mukh et al., 2021).

On the other hand, alumni social networks are formed through formal and informal relationships, which allow for the exchange of information, program collaboration, and mutual support. One form of formal network is the formation of an alumni community that coordinates da'wah and educational activities across regions. In addition, informal networks are created through small initiatives at the local level, such as opening TPA (Al-Qur'an Education Park) in private homes, forming traveling congregational groups, to involvement in social activities such as fundraising and strengthening community solidarity. This network is also a means of regenerating Islamic boarding school values, where alumni not only teach, but also encourage new cadres from the community to actively play a role in Islamic education and da'wah (Efendy et al., 2023).

Empowerment by alumni can be seen from a Post-structuralist perspective which assesses community empowerment based on the Qur'an by alumni of Raudhatul Qur'an as an effort to change the discourse that emphasizes the intellectual aspect rather than action or praxis (Leone, 2022). So, community empowerment is understood as a step to develop an understanding of the development of new and analytical thinking. The emphasis of empowerment is on the educational aspect of the community.

In Jim Ife's perspective, empowerment must be carried out in a participatory, fair, and local strength-based manner (J. Ife, 2016). This approach is reflected in the initial steps of alumni who do not force programs, but first take a cultural and sociological approach. They enter the community's life gradually, build relationships, and involve residents in every development process, both physically and non-physically. Alumni do not come with instructions, but rather open up a space for equal dialogue and collaboration, as Ife emphasized that the community must be positioned as a subject, not an object of change.

Alumni in empowering the community have unknowingly used a community development approach that is rooted in three main principles, namely Active Community Participation, Social Justice, Strengthening Local Capacity. This statement has been explained by (J. Ife, 2013), that empowerment cannot be done with a top-down or charitable approach alone. Empowerment must rely on local strength and involve the community as a subject.

### Active Community Participation

The community is not only the object of preaching or the beneficiary of the program, but is involved since the planning stage. One of the practices is that the community has formed a religious assembly driven by the community itself, and alumni play a role in the community by serving as part of the religious assembly. This is part of the social responsibility and request from the community itself which recognizes the importance of the role of alumni from Islamic boarding schools. Not only that, alumni also serve as preachers in mosques. The task of being a preacher is also one of the media used by alumni to spread religious knowledge to the community, as well as provide motivation and inspiration for life. In addition, this activity is also a form of contribution from alumni of Islamic boarding schools to build a better society.

The establishment of TPA (Al-Qur'an Education Park) in residential or village environments is often initiated by the community, because alumni are able to provide Al-Quran learning for children aged 5 to 5th grade of elementary school. The role of alumni is very helpful for parents of students to teach about religion, especially the Al-Quran, to children. This learning is not only given to children but also for parents, learning about the interpretation of the Al-Quran, which is very useful in behavior. By studying the interpretation, the community can increase religious knowledge and the values of Islamic teachings in everyday life. The material to be studied is usually adjusted by alumni to the desires and needs of the community. In addition to alumni who come to the community, Islamic boarding schools also invite the community to participate in activities held in the Islamic boarding school.

Social justice in the context of community empowerment refers to efforts to provide equal access and opportunities to all levels of society, especially vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged groups (J. Ife, 2001). Roudlatul Qur'an alumni highly uphold this value in the programs they run. Religious education, especially tahfizhul Qur'an, they open as widely as possible for children from low-income families regardless of social background. Some alumni even open tahfizh houses with a system *free* or based on donations from the surrounding community so that all groups can get the same opportunity to learn the Qur'an. They also encourage the creation of an egalitarian environment in their da'wah community, where there is no hierarchy that limits interaction between social groups. This attitude shows that alumni view every individual as part of society who has the same right to grow, learn, and contribute. This practice is very much in line with the principle of social justice (J. Ife, 2016), that true empowerment must target an equal and non-discriminatory distribution of opportunities.

The principle of strengthening local capacity emphasizes the importance of exploring, developing, and utilizing the potential of resources owned by the local community (Franco & Tracey, 2019). The main goal is to create long-term community independence, without relying on outside assistance. Alumni of the Roudlatul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School play an important role in this process. Through activities such as Qur'an reading training (tilawah), calligraphy, coaching young preachers, and developing teaching skills, they encourage the birth of local cadres who are able to continue the relay of Islamic preaching and education. Alumni do not only come to fill empty spaces, but also involve local young men and women to become teachers at TPA or religious study groups. In fact, in some cases, alumni facilitate special training for villagers so that they can become mosque imams, Friday preachers, or administrators of other religious activities. In this way, the local community not only becomes a beneficiary, but also becomes the main actor who is able to sustain religious activities in their environment.

At the same time, this practice is also in line with Robert Putnam's theory of social capital, where trust, social norms, and social networks are binding factors that enable effective cooperation. The trust built by alumni through exemplary behavior and consistency makes them accepted with open arms by the community. The social norms they bring, namely pesantren values such as simplicity, politeness, and sincerity, strengthen social cohesion and make the pondok part of the daily lives of residents (Solihin et al., 2020). Alumni social networks, both through communities such as Kalami and through informal activities such as TPA rumah and Majelis Taklim, expand the reach of the pesantren's influence to a wider area.

The synthesis of these two theories shows that the success of empowering Roudlatul Qur'an alumni is not only due to technical factors, but also because they have succeeded in integrating value-

based and relationship-based approaches. From (J. Ife et al., 2022), they instill the principles of participation and social justice, while from Putnam, they build a structure of trust and social solidarity. In other words, alumni do not just fill the void of preaching, but become catalysts for change through a down-to-earth presence and strong social relations.

This synthesis model also shows that effective empowerment is not only based on programs and curriculum, but must be supported by healthy social relations and binding noble values. In this context, alumni of Islamic boarding schools do not only act as preachers or teachers, but also as social leaders who understand the pulse of community life. They practice preaching with a community development approach, and at the same time strengthen the social network that is the foundation of togetherness.

## Conclusion

Community empowerment model based on living Al-Qur'an, carried out by alumni by utilizing social capital such as trust, social norms and social networks. Trust held by alumni is a key element built through interaction between alumni and the community, namely ethics of politeness, establishing friendship, introducing the vision of da'wah openly so that a conducive psychological atmosphere is created. This trust is maintained by strengthening the consistency of alumni in providing quality social religious education services through Al-Qur'an simaan activities, routine religious studies, involvement in local traditional ceremonies and traditions. This is related to social norms in society playing an important role in interacting with the community through local values, upholding customs and politeness which are the characteristics of Islamic boarding school alumni. In practice, alumni religious activities do not force their will but rather adjust their approach to the needs and readiness of the community and prioritize the principle of equality by opening access to learning without distinguishing between the socio-economic backgrounds of the community. Alumni social networks are built from formal and informal relationships as an exchange of information, program collaboration and mutual support.

Formal alumni networks are established as a means of coordinating da'wah and educational activities across regions. While informal networks are created through local initiatives such as opening TPA, forming listening groups, involvement in social activities such as fundraising and mutual cooperation. These three social capitals are a model for community empowerment based on the living Qur'an with three methods: active community participation, social justice and strengthening local capacity. The practice of alumni in empowering the community must rely on local strengths, such as active community participation, where the community is not the object of da'wah but is involved from the time of planning, namely forming a taklim assembly driven by the community and alumni carrying out their roles. Second, social justice in empowering the community as equal access and opportunity to obtain religious education for all levels of society. Third, strengthening local capacity in principle creates independence for the community by exploring, developing and utilizing existing resources such as reading the Qur'an, calligraphy, coaching young preachers and developing teaching skills. This is a relay of da'wah and Islamic education in the community.

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