

Conference Paper

Facing the Global Islamic Leadership Crisis: An Islamic Process and Modes Toward a Unified Governance of the Muslim Ummah

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ORCID**Ali B. Panda:** <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1550-6629>**Abstract.**

Data and facts show that strong political influence often influences the election of leaders in several Muslim countries. This can lead to a lack of democracy and transparency in the political system and increase the risk of corruption and authoritarianism. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2016, most Muslim communities in several countries, such as Egypt, Pakistan and Tunisia, were dissatisfied with the quality of leadership. Facing the global crisis and democracy's future and its problems, challenges, and resolutions is broad enough to be presented and discussed thoroughly within the timeframe. It is essential to focus on a specific topic that might encompass this theme. There is an inquiry if there is a unified governance that the Muslim *Ummah* must observe and may be followed by the global community. How to solve the global crisis and problems of democracy in Islamic leadership? The research method used was qualitative analysis. In view of the above presentation and discussion, it is because of this conclusion that the Islamic process and modes, if properly observed, strongly influence to have unified governance of the Muslim Ummah. After the divine mode of having a leader as it was applied to the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, such is left to the Muslim community following the above-mentioned modes. Based on the above presentation and the need to realize the unified governance of the Muslim Ummah, it is hereby recommended the need to reexamine, reinvestigate, and to study in deep the educational system and curricular offerings of state colleges and universities to include the Islamic process and modes toward a unified governance of the Muslim Ummah seriously as a core subject following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and the four rightly guided Caliphs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Islamic countries such as Syria, Libya, and Iraq experienced a leadership crisis that triggered conflicts and political instability. In addition, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2016, most Muslim communities in several countries, such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Tunisia are dissatisfied with leadership quality.(1,2)

The corruption perceptions index by Transparency International in 2021 shows that most countries with a Muslim majority population are at the bottom of the list. For example, Somalia ranks at the bottom with a score of 12 out of 100, while Afghanistan and Sudan rank 165th and 174th out of 180 countries evaluated. (2021 Corruption Perceptions Index - Explore New Transparency.Org, n.d.)

One example of nepotism in Muslim Leadership is in Middle Eastern countries, where royal families often influence politics and economics significantly. For example, several royal families in Saudi Arabia control much of the country's economy and politics. (4)

The data and facts presented show that strong political influence often affects the selection of leaders in some Muslim countries. This can lead to a lack of democracy and transparency in the political system and increase the risk of corruption and authoritarianism.

Facing the global crisis and democracy's future and its problems, challenges, and resolutions is broader enough to be present and discussed within the timeframe thoroughly. It's important to focus on a specific topic that might encompass this theme.

With this, facing the global Islamic leadership crisis under the impact of western civilization, acculturation and globalization is one area that must be understood deeply from an Islamic perspective. This is mainly because Islam has its process and modes of achieving unified governance and Leadership that can address the global crisis and the problems of democracy in the future. Such problems and resolutions have been discussed in various conferences and meetings.

There is an inquiry if there is a unified governance that the Muslim *Ummah* must observe and may be followed by the global community. There is an affirmative answer to this inquiry. The term democracy of the West is a mere form of government that gives plenary power to people to speak according to their will and interest in the government towards peace and development. It is a form of government in which the people have the authority to deliberate and decide legislation ("direct democracy") or to choose governing officials to do so ("representative democracy") (5). Therefore, this is merely a concept its nature and purposes may be varied from place to place.

The original form of democracy was a direct democracy. Its most common form today is a representative democracy, where the people elect government officials to govern on their behalf, such as in a parliamentary or presidential democracy. (6)

Islam as a way of life recognizes that way and no Islamic impediment to giving people empowerment provided that such does not transgress the essence and principle of Shariah, the commandments of Allah as enshrined in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Therefore, this present paper provides an alternative resolution to the global crisis and the problems of democracy in addition to the already published knowledge and literature.

2. METHODS

The research method used was qualitative analysis. (7) Analyzing the sources of study in the form of relevant verses in the Quran related to the theme of Leadership in Islam and understanding various concepts and theories related to Islamic Leadership, in addition to understanding the leadership models during the four caliphs after the death of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

This study will also explain various opinions from Muslim scholars and Western literature that have explained their views on Leadership in Islam, taking into account the social, cultural, and religious contexts in providing concepts and models of Islamic Leadership towards the governance of a united Muslim Ummah. A literature review can be done by reading books, journals, articles, and other relevant online sources related to the topic. (8)

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The article Spiritual leadership as a model for Islamic Leadership explores the potential of spiritual Leadership as a model for Islamic Leadership. The authors argue that Islamic Leadership faces significant challenges due to political, social, and economic pressures and that spiritual Leadership can provide a valuable framework for addressing these challenges. Drawing on previous research on spiritual Leadership, the article examines the principles and practices of Islamic Leadership in light of spiritual Leadership, highlighting the importance of values, vision, and ethics in Leadership. The article concludes by calling for further research on the potential of spiritual Leadership as a model for Islamic Leadership and for developing practical tools and strategies for implementing this model. Overall, the article provides a valuable contribution to the literature on Islamic Leadership and highlights the potential of spiritual Leadership to address the challenges facing Muslim communities worldwide.(9)

Article Islam, models and the Middle East: the new balance of power following the Arab Spring, examines the aftermath of the Arab Spring on the political landscape of the Middle East. The authors argue that the uprisings in the region have challenged the traditional power structures and created new opportunities for Islamic movements

to gain power. The article analyzes the different models of Islamic governance and their compatibility with democracy, secularism, and human rights. The authors suggest that there is a need for a new model of Islamic governance that balances the principles of democracy and human rights with Islamic values and traditions. The article provides valuable insight into the ongoing debates about the role of Islam in politics and the challenges of democratization in the Muslim world.(10)

Article The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies explore the multifaceted nature of political Islam and how it manifests in different Muslim societies. Through an examination of case studies from countries such as Turkey, Iran, Egypt, and Indonesia, the authors argue that political Islam cannot be viewed as a monolithic entity and that a variety of factors, including historical context, regional dynamics, and social and economic conditions, shape it. The Book provides a nuanced and comprehensive overview of the complex relationship between religion and politics in the Muslim world, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities Muslim societies face in navigating the intersection of these two spheres.(11)

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this research, the problem formulation will be answered in the results and discussion section, namely:

1. Is there a unified government that must be obeyed by Muslims and allowed to be followed by the global community?
2. How to overcome the global crisis and problems of democracy in Islamic Leadership?

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. ISLAMIC PROCESS

This part presents and discusses the Islamic process toward unified governance. To be more specific, the Islamic process molds the value of *Taqwa* or God-fearing through Islamic education in order to have a considerable number of *Muttaqiin* who should be united as one and be developed to become competent towards a unified governance of the Muslim *Ummah*.

Islamic education as a process consists of both the revealed/divine and acquired knowledge. The former is the one directly learned from the Qur'an as explained by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. in his *Ahadith* (sayings). The latter is the one learned from the different creatures of Allah on earth through science which is indeed the expression

of His omnipotent. Its main objective is to teach *Taqwa* or God fearing in order to mold a God-fearing person.

The process is basically enshrined in the Qur'an, where Allah says:

Read! in the Name of your Lord who has Created (all that exist). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not. (Q.S. Al-'Alaq: 1-5) (12)

The verse implies that Muslims should primarily know Allah, the Creator, and to comprehend and appreciate His attributes. The use of "pen" also implies the process of human struggle in search for Islamic knowledge.

The Qur'an identifies three processes of change through Islamic Education. They are: *Telawah* (Reading), *Ta'aleem* (Teaching) and *Tazkeyah* (Purification). In the Qur'an, Allah says:

Our Lord! Send amongst them a messenger of their own, who shall recite unto Them Your verses and instruct them in the Book (this Qur'an) and Al-Hikmah and purify them. Verily, You are the All-Mighty, The All-wise. (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 129). (12)

The said verse stresses *Telawah* first, which means recitation/reading/rehearsing of the verses of the Qur'an. Secondly, it speaks *Ta'aleem*, which implies both teaching and learning. Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said that: the best among you are those who either learn or teach the Qur'an. To the best of our ability, we should believe, read, understand, apply, learn and teach it. Thirdly, *Tazkeyah* is the process of self-purification. This was the job of the Prophets and their followers. Allah says:

By the soul and the way of molding it and its polar nature of wickedness and righteousness. Truly he succeeds who purifies it and truly he fails who corrupts it. (Q.S. Asy-Syams: 7). (12)

The process of *Tazkeyah* stands for all efforts made to help people move upward on the ladder from the *Ammarah* or evil-inciting soul (lowest level) to the *Lawwamah* or self-reproaching soul (middle level) to *Mutma'innah* or reassured soul (highest level). This change process starts from oneself to familial, social, national and international. This is basically mentioned in the Qur'an, where Allah says:

Indeed, Allah does not change people's conditions unless they change what is in themselves... (Q.S. Ar-Ra'd: 11). (12)

This is related to Hassan Al-Banna's seven primary stages, an approach to Muslim reawakening in Egypt as summarized by Badawi, to wit:

1. To reform one's self,
2. To reform one's family,
3. To reform society,

4. To free the society politically (referring to the colonialist and Their sponsored government),
5. To establish an Islamic government,
6. To revive the Khilafah, and
7. To lead the world and to try to carry the responsibility of Guiding it to the path of Allah s.w.t. (13)

These seven primary stages can serve as a vital framework for achieving unified governance of the Muslim *Ummah*.

So, an important consequence of a change of the human heart to make the cultivation of bonds and unity among fellow believers. This is the centrality of their harmonious relationships and unity as proclaimed in the Qur'an, which states:

Indeed the believers are brothers. Make peace among your brothers and fear Allah, so that you may be shown mercy. (Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 10). (12)

5.1.1. Taqwa as a Core Islamic Value

This *Taqwa* or God-fearing could be considered a core Islamic value sustaining the unity and development of the Muslim *Ummah*. It should be an effect of Islamic education as a process. Those who have internalized this *Taqwa* are known to be *Mutthaqun* or God-fearing persons. It is the inner core value of the *Mutthaqun*. As *Mutthaqun*, Allah says:

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah. Who believe in the Unseen; establish prayer; spend out of what we have provided for them; And who believe in the revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and have the assurance of the Hereafter. (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 2-5). (12)

When a place has a considerable number of *Mutthaqun*, the culture, technology and governance are observed within the bounds of Islam and a sense of unity takes place. This happened during the life time of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. He was able to teach and develop the value of *Taqwa* among the *Sahabah* (companions). With this, the *Sahabah* had internalized the sense of unity and brotherhood in Allah alone and that they were united in defending the Islamic religion, society and governance from outside forces.

5.1.2. Unity and Development

Unity and development could be an effect of the Islamic process through education and the internalization of *Taqwa* or God-fearing as a core Islamic value. It can be referred

to as the unity towards unified governance and its forms as observed during the early period of Islam. Its revival, establishment, and development are highly significant.

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said: “The believers, in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other, are like a single body; if one limb feels pain, the whole body becomes restless.”

This means that the only key to development lies on building up unity. The foundation and development of this unity is through Islamic education and the internalization of Taqwa. The rationale of uniting the Muslim *Ummah* is to make people with common feelings and visions. Such unification is also enshrined in the Qur’an, where Allah says:

Holdfasts, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and no to divide among yourselves. (Q.S. Ali Imran: 103). (12)

The verse implies that Muslims should unite among themselves. The rope is a thing that is visible and can be used to keep various things into one and therefore, it may be used in this verse to make people aware that it is only through unity in Allah that people can do something to manage their goal and vision for sustainable development.

5.2. ISLAMIC MODES

This part presents and discusses the Islamic modes toward unified governance of the Muslim *Ummah*. Islamic modes in governance constitute the form of government that can be seen in democratic governments in modern parlance. Such modes were demonstrated in the selection of a leader or successor happened after the demise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. This was applied to the *Kulafa al Rashidun* (Arabic: “Rightly Guided,” or “Perfect”), the first four caliphs of the Islamic community, known in Muslim history as the orthodox or patriarchal caliphs: Abū Bakr (reigned 632–634), ʿUmar (reigned 634–644), ʿUthmān (reigned 644–656), and ʿAlī (reigned 656–661). They were observed as leaders of the unified Islamic governance.

The first mode which is the selection made among the few at Banu Saada, was indeed applied to Abu Bakr Abdallah ibn Uthman Abi Quhafa who is known as Abu Bakr As-Siddiq to become the first Caliph of Islam after Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. Abu Bakr was nominated by Umar after the exchange of talks in that area and finally chosen by the Sahabah who were present. Later, the majority of the Sahabah declared they pledged allegiance or *muay*.

Abu Bakr is a senior companion of Muhammad and his father-in-law. He ruled over the Rashidun Caliphate from 632 to 634 CE when he became the first Caliph following Muhammad’s death. As Caliph, Abu Bakr continued the political and administrative functions previously exercised by Muhammad s.a.w. He was called *As-Siddiq* (“The Truthful”), (14) and was known by that title among later generations of Sunni Muslims.

He prevented the recently converted Muslims from dispersing, and kept the community united.

The second mode which is the appointment of a leader made by Abu Bakr As-Siddiq. He appointed Umar Ibn Al Kattab (586-590-644) (14) to become the second Caliph and rule for 10 years. (15) After his appointment, the majority of the Muslims at that time declared the pledge of allegiance.

Umar ibn al-Khattab was a leading companion and adviser to Muhammad s.a.w. His daughter Hafsa bint Umar was married to Muhammad; thus, he became Muhammad's father-in-law. He succeeded Abu Bakr on August 23 634 as the second Caliph and played a significant role in Islam. Under Umar, the Islamic empire expanded at an unprecedented rate, ruling the whole Sassanid Persian Empire and more than two-thirds of the Eastern Roman Empire. His legislative abilities, firm political and administrative control over a rapidly expanding empire and brilliantly coordinated multi-prong attacks against the Sassanid Persian Empire resulted in the conquest of the Persian empire in less than two years. Among his conquests are Jerusalem, Damascus, and Egypt. (16) He was killed in 644 by a Persian captive named Abu Lu'lu'a Firuz.

The third mode refers to the *Majlis Al Surah*, comparable to the parliament in modern parlance, created by Umar Ibn Al Kattab and this mode was applied to Usman Ibn Affan to serve as the third Caliph of Islam. Uthman ibn Affan (c. 579–July 17 656) was nominated at the *Majlis al Shurah* composed of the companions or Sahabah and finally, he was chosen and a majority of the Muslims declared the pledge of allegiance.

Usman Ibn Affan was one of the early companions and son in law of Muhammad. Two of Muhammad and Khadija daughters Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum were married to him one after another. Uthman was born into the Umayyad clan of Mecca, a powerful family of the Quraysh tribe. He became Caliph at the age of 70. Under his Leadership, the empire expanded into Fars (present-day Iran) in 650 and some areas of Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan) in 651, and the conquest of Armenia was begun in the 640s. (17) His rule ended when he was assassinated.

The fourth mode was made through people power after the assassination of Usman and this was applied to Ali bin Abu Talib to become the fourth Caliph of Islam. Ali ibn Abi Talib was Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law (18). In Mecca, a young Ali was the first male to embrace Islam and the person who offered his support when Muhammad first presented Islam to his relatives (19). Later, he facilitated Muhammad's safe escape to Medina by risking his life as the decoy (20). In Medina, Ali swore a pact of brotherhood with Muhammad and later took the hand of Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah, in marriage (21). Ali commonly acted as Muhammad's secretary in Medina and served as his deputy during the expedition of Tabuk (21). Ali is often considered the ablest warrior in Muhammad's army and the two were the only Muslim men who represented Islam

against a Christian delegation from Najran (22). Ali's role in the collection of the Quran, the central text of Islam, is deemed as one of his key contributions (23).

These four modes are seen in a place or country observing democracy as its form of government. It implies that any of these can be adopted by the government, more particularly the Muslim *Ummah* in the modern days.

Sardar kindles hope to the Muslim *Ummah* when he revealed that: "the ultimate goal of any Muslim community is the creation of an order where at least a few basic principles of Islam are paramount. These principles are best expressed in terms of Islamic concepts such as *ad'l* (justice), *Khilafah* (trusteeship), *Shura* (consultation) and *Istisla* (public interest)...(24). According to Sardar's understanding, these are the minimum conditions to be fulfilled by the people so that their society can be categorized as Islamic(25)

The unified governance shall have the executive, legislative and judiciary branches. The executive shall implement the *Shariah* and the laws made by the legislative branch and the judiciary branch is the final arbiter on the basis of the *Shariah* and the legislative acts. On the part of the legislative branch, legislation is merely an extension of the *Shariah* as enshrined in the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma and *Qiyas*, as well as the supplemental sources of Islamic laws and jurisprudence.

Unified governance may have laws on bureaucracy or the entire governmental structure, Islamic culture, external relations, or foreign policy positions. This bureaucracy is designed to maintain uniformity and control within the organization. Islamic culture refers to cultural practices common to historically Islamic people and external relations refer to the government's domestic and international relations.

The need to have unified governance is in line with one of the purposes of man's creation: establishing the rule of Allah on earth. In the Qur'an, Allah says:

"And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: Verily, I am going to place a Khalifah on earth." (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 30). (12)

This Khalifah refers to humanity who should live, act and rule according to the *Shariah*, the totality of the commandments of Allah.

6. CONCLUSION

Given the above presentation and discussion, it is concluded that the Islamic process and modes, if correctly observed, strongly influence the unified governance of the Muslim *Ummah*. After the divine mode of having a leader as it was applied to the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, such is left to the Muslim community following the abovementioned modes.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above presentation and the need to realize the unified governance of the Muslim Ummah, it is as a result of this recommended the need to reexamine, reinvestigate and study in deep of the educational system and curricular offerings of state colleges and universities to include the Islamic process and modes towards unified governance of the Muslim Ummah seriously as a core subject following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and the four rightly guided Caliphs.

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