

Islamic Politics As An Ethical And Moral System In Modern Government

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Jun 1st, 2026

Revised Jun 5th, 2026

Accepted Jun 10th, 2026

Keyword:

Islamic Politics, Ethics, Morals,
Modern Government

ABSTRACT

Islamic politics since its conception has by no means been perceived as a power game, yet as a moral tool of achievement of social good (maslahah 'ammah). Islamic politics turned into an ethical system, which links transcendental values and social agreement throughout history. This paper will attempt to unveil the ethical and moral aspects of the Islamic politics through the historical background of the religion, its normative basis, and importance to present day governance, which suffers a crisis of integrity and ethical direction. Classical thinking (Al-Farabi, Al-Mawardi, and Ibn Khaldun) and the practices of the Islamic state, since the Medina Charter to the modern dynamics of Muslim-majority countries, are reread critically-analytically. The discussion indicates that Islamic politics is not just a value system but includes theological ideals but constitutes an ethical system of governance founded on justice, trust, responsibility to the people and shura. In the contemporary world, the values have been used in the fight against corruption, maintenance of good governance and enhancement of moral authority of the state in the backdrop of findings of secularization and crisis of the confidence of the citizens. Islamic politics, thus is not opposite of modern democracy but a morally based foundation of state government which is integrally oriented on human welfare, both on spiritual, social, and political fronts.



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INTRODUCTION

Modern politics in many Muslim countries today faces a fundamental dilemma: on the one hand, the spirit of democracy and modern governance demands transparency, accountability, and public participation; but on the other hand, the practice of power is often detached from the moral principles that are at the heart of Islamic teachings (Shamsaei & Mahmoudi, 2017). This phenomenon has given rise to what several contemporary Muslim thinkers call a political ethical crisis, namely, when politics loses its spiritual soul and becomes an arena for pragmatic competition without moral direction (Javed, 2024). In this context, the idea of Islamic politics needs to be reread, not as a normative political system that rejects modernity, but rather as an ethical system that provides a value orientation for modern governance (Jalili, 2024).

Islamic history demonstrates that the political dimension is always closely intertwined with ethics. In establishing the society of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not present a model of absolute power, but rather a leadership based on deliberation, justice, and social responsibility. The Charter of Medina was not only the first constitution in the Islamic world, but also a public ethical document that guaranteed religious freedom, minority rights, and collective responsibility for social security (El Syam, 2017). These are the same principles that make Islamic politics not only a power system, but also a moral system that is used to strike a balance between individual rights and communal interests.

Within the classical scholarly tradition, Islamic political thought developed into a philosophical and normative discourse. Al-Farabi, in *Al-Madinah al-Faḍilah*, asserted that the goal of politics is not power, but the moral improvement of citizens, leading to true happiness (*sa'adah*) (Javed, 2024). Al-Mawardi, in his *Al-Aḥkam al-Sultāniyyah*, views government as a divine mandate that demands justice and social responsibility. Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun views power as a sociological phenomenon that will only endure if supported by moral solidarity (*aṣabiyyah*) and public ethics (Idrees & Naazer, 2024). All three positions ethics as the substance of power, not merely a formal legal complement.

However, amidst the tides of globalization and secularization, Islamic political ethics are often reduced to symbols, slogans, or even tools for legitimizing power. Modern governments in a number of Muslim countries often adopt Western political systems without instilling the distinctive moral values of the Islamic tradition (M. Z. Hasan & Hanafi, 2024). As a result, corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power flourish amidst the persistent claims of Islam. This situation exposes the gap between ideas and practices, between sharia as a normative value and the political system that should reflect it (Oladapo & Rahman, 2024).

This article stems from an awareness of this crisis. It seeks to reaffirm that Islamic politics is not a project to establish a religious state, but rather a moral system that guides governance in favor of justice, humanity, and public integrity (Omar & Ismail, 2022). Islamic politics rejects the reduction of morality to rhetoric, as ethical values in Islam are practical, affecting policy, the distribution of power, and the welfare of the people. Therefore, this study aims to analyze in depth how Islamic politics can function as an ethical and moral system in modern governance, combining historical, normative, and applied approaches.

Thus, this paper positions Islamic politics as a system of public ethics relevant to modern governance. The values of justice (*al-'adl*), responsibility (*amanah*), participation (*shura*), and welfare (*maṣlahah*) are not merely normative concepts, but the philosophical foundation for the formation of dignified public policy. Islamic politics is not a project of the past, but a moral paradigm for building a future of civilized, humane, and just governance.

RESEARCH METHODS

The methodology used is qualitative-descriptive with a hermeneutical approach. This approach was chosen to reinterpret classical Islamic political texts in the context of modern issues: how the values of justice, trust, and shura are translated into democratic and inclusive governance (Bakar, 2011). This analysis does not aim to idealize the past, but rather to use it as a moral resource for presenting ethical governance in the modern, technocratic world. Conceptually, this paper aims to demonstrate that Islamic political ethics offers a leadership model that integrates spiritual and social dimensions, unlike secular models that separate religion from the public sphere. This fusion does not mean theocracy, but the recognition of the fact that a real political legitimacy can emerge none other than as a result of moral justice. Therefore, in a time when efficient and efficacious control is all that counts, the value of the moral aspect that the success of nations does not rely only on growth, but also on civilization as well, is as well remembered by Islamic politics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical and Conceptual Review of Islamic Politics

Politics is not a distinct field in Islamic scholarship as compared to ethics. The Islamic politics is never independent of principles that are based on moral values that are stipulated in the Quran, which is that power is never an end in itself, but a responsibility to enforce justice and to promote the common good (I. Iqbal, 2019). The Qur'an emphasizes, "Indeed, Allah commands you to fulfill your trust to those who are entitled to receive it, and when you establish a law between people, you must determine it fairly" (QS. al-Nisa': 58). This verse contains dual moral principles: responsibility and justice, the two main foundations that gave birth to the theory of Islamic political ethics.

Islamical politics is not a value-neutral politics of power as represented by Western political realism, instead it is a politics of social worship (*ibadah ijtima'iyyah*). The concept of power is seen to support social morality as opposed to vice versa. This opinion falls in line with the theory of virtue ethics of Aristotelian moral philosophy, but it is distinguishing as it is based on monotheism (Hamzah & Sulaiman, 2025). In Islam, political ethics does not just aim at the good life, but at the just life, a life that is in harmony with Divine will and social justice.

Theoretically, Islamic politics builds a layered moral system: (1) individual leader ethics (honesty, trustworthiness, justice), (2) institutional ethics (transparency and deliberation), and (3) public policy ethics (orientation towards the public interest). These three layers make Islamic politics a comprehensive ethical system, not just an abstract moral ideal.

One of the unique features of Islamic political theory is the unification of religion and morality in legitimizing power. Power in Islam is not based solely on the will of the people (as in social contract theory), nor on God's will in the form of theocratic authoritarianism, but rather on the principles of trust and public participation (Yuliana et al., 2025). A leader is legitimate because he is trusted by the people and is also responsible before God.

Al-Mawardi (d. 1058 CE) in *Al-Aḥkam al-Sultāniyyah* explained that the imamate was formed to continue the prophetic function of safeguarding religion and governing the world. However, he rejected absolutism of power by emphasizing the principle of consultation (*shura*) as a moral and political mechanism (Elok et al., 2025). Within this framework, power has no intrinsic value; it is valuable only insofar as it serves as a means to achieve social justice and maintain the moral stability of society.

On the other hand, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 CE) offered a synthesis of religion, morality, and the sociology of power. In *al-Muqaddimah*, he asserted that power without ethics will collapse due to the loss of moral solidarity (*‘aṣabiyyah*). In the case of Ibn Khaldun, not only is morality a spiritual need, it is also a sociological element that defines political soundness (Negara & Latua, 2025). This view would play a significant role in the contemporary political theory in terms of the need to focus on moral capital and trust on the sustainability of governance.

Transformation of Islamic politics into a modern context

The ideal state is an ethical order described by al-Farabi (d. 950 CE) of *Al-Madinah al-Fadilah* in which the leaders are ethical in the sense that they are like prophets leading the people to spiritual and social happiness. This concept is idealistic but it lays emphasis on the role of ethical leadership as a requirement as far as the legitimacy of power is concerned (Mellanti & Abbas, 2024). Al-Farabi's concept finds relevance in the modern ethical governance paradigm, which demands the moral integrity of leaders as a pillar of public trust.

This classical thinking is then linked to modern governance theory, which emphasizes ethical governance and moral leadership. The concept of *al-‘adl* (justice) in Islamic politics parallels the principle of the rule of law, while *amanah* aligns with the concept of public accountability in modern administrative theory (Yunus, 2017). Thus, Islamic politics can be read as a universal value system that is compatible with the principles of ethical democracy, not antithetical to them.

In the contemporary context, the integration of Islamic ethical values with modern governance systems has become the object of empirical study in various countries. For example, Malaysia developed an Islamic governance framework model that combines sharia principles with administrative accountability (Muhamad Sori et al., 2015). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the discourse of civilized politics promoted by Nurcholish Madjid and Din Syamsuddin represents an effort to present moral politics without using religion as a tool of power (Syamsuddin, 2012).

This conceptual review also demands a critique of the secularist paradigm that separates morality from the public sphere. In the modern secular view, politics is a value-neutral realm; morality is considered a private matter (Abdillah, 2015). Islamic politics rejects this dichotomy because it views that this separation gives rise to a crisis of legitimacy and the dehumanization of public policy (M. T. Rahman, 2020). In the Islamic ethical system, public morality is not solely the property of individuals, but a shared social responsibility (*al-mas’uliyah al-ijtima’iyyah*).

However, Islamic politics also avoids theocratic extremes. Islamic political ethics do not demand religious domination over the state, but rather emphasize that the state must submit to universal ethical values based on justice, trustworthiness, and respect for human dignity. (Dahlan, 2021) This is the form of epistemic moderation that is characteristic of Islamic politics as a moral system, distinguishing it from secularism and theocracy.

Historical Dimensions of Islamic Politics

The history of Islamic politics begins with the moral foundations laid by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the Islamic perspective, the Prophet's leadership in Medina was

not a project of political power in the secular sense, but rather the embodiment of *akhlaq an-nubuwwah* (prophetic morals) within the social order (Sulni, 2024). The Charter of Medina (622 AD) is a concrete manifestation of the ethical-political vision of Islam: combining the principle of monotheism with a pluralistic social order that guarantees justice and peace between communities.

The document affirms that justice and social responsibility are the main pillars of government. The Prophet practiced a participatory leadership model, rejected absolute power, and upheld the principle of deliberation as a form of respect for the collective reason of the people (Kusuma, 2025). In this context, Islamic politics appears as a politics of morality, where power is subordinated to morality, not the other way around.

This prophetic method is very close to the contemporary models of ethical leadership. The leadership of the Prophet had focused on setting a good example and not rule; submission, not advantage. This idea shows that spiritual practice is what leads to the development of political ethics in Islam, rather than an ideological system (Nurhayati, 2024). Moreover, the prophetic political model does not support the Machiavellian paradigm that legitimizes any of the means to the end in the name of power. The Islamic culture never believes that outcomes can in any way justify ethical transgressions, since power is a duty, not an entitlement. This is what makes Islamic politics to have an eternal moral nature and applicability within the framework of contemporary governance that lacks fundamental morals in most cases.

The *Khulafa' al-Rashidin* period (632–661 AD) was an important phase where Islamic political ethical values were tested in the reality of government. Abu Bakr al-*Siddiq*, the first caliph, in his inauguration speech, emphasized the moral principle of power (Ismail & et al, 2025). "I have been appointed your leader, even though I am not the best among you. If I do right, support me; if I do wrong, correct me." The speech demonstrates that political legitimacy is based on moral responsibility, not personal glory or lineage.

Umar ibn al-Khattab then strengthened a transparent and just public administration system. He created a mechanism for monitoring officials, regulated civil servant salaries, and rejected the undue accumulation of wealth among the ruling elite. These reforms were the beginnings of the public accountability system recognized in modern government theory. The ethics of justice (*'adl*) and public responsibility (*amānah*) became concrete administrative principles (Rasheed, 2024).

However, during the time of Uthman ibn Affan, the ideals of political ethics faced serious challenges. Practices of nepotism and social inequality triggered a crisis of public trust that led to internal conflict. This crisis demonstrated that when power loses its moral foundation, political stability collapses (Devi, 2025). On the other hand, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib attempted to return Islamic politics to the path of morality by refusing to compromise on justice, even at the expense of the stability of power. 'Ali's ethical views later became the inspiration for the concept of moral justice in many Islamic political theories (Wahid et al., 2025).

These four caliphs demonstrated a variety of ethical approaches to governance, but they all had a common thread: power is a divine mandate that must be carried out with honesty and social responsibility (Kencana et al., 2025). In a modern context, these values can be translated as the principles of good governance based on spirituality and public justice.

After al-Rashidin's time, Islamic rule entered the dynastic era, starting from the Umayyads (661–750 AD) to the Abbasids (750–1258 AD). The transition from a *shura*-based semi-democratic system to a hereditary monarchy marks a moral shift in Islamic politics (Erwina et al., 2025). Power was no longer based on moral virtue, but rather on the legitimacy of blood and military might. However, the dynastic period also brought institutional innovations such as bureaucracy, fiscal administration systems, and a formal judiciary. However, Islamic political ethics began to formalize; moral values were no longer the spirit of policy, but merely rhetorical symbols that legitimized power (Kay, 2024).

The emergence of *ulama* and *fuqaha* as a counterweight to power is proof that in Islam, public morality cannot be completely handed over to the ruler (Rumadi, 2012). It is in this context that Al-Mawardi's thinking becomes crucial. He emphasized the need for moral order in politics so that law and power do not lose their spiritual legitimacy.

The relationships between the state and the *ulama* during the Abbasid period were a depiction of the morality versus power tug of war (Burhanuddin et al., 2024). At the time when politics is alienated to ethical principles, religion comes to the rescue. This is where the tradition of checks and balances in

Islamic politics has roots, which today can be applied to the institute of the public ethics, or the anti-corruption commissions in the Muslim world, in the majority.

Historical Relevance to Modern Government

This historical dimension shows that Islamic politics, from the time of the prophets to the classical caliphate, has a clear moral continuity (Jasvi & Rehman, 2019). Power without ethics always leads to social disintegration. The relevance of this historical lesson to modern governance is significant.

First, the principle of shura can be translated in the context of participatory democracy, emphasizing that public consultation is part of social worship, not just a political procedure (Shavit, 2010). Second, the concept of trust can serve as the basis for modern bureaucratic reform that rejects corruption and abuse of authority. Third, the value of 'adl demands the arrangement of public policy that is oriented toward social welfare, not the interests of political elites.

Thus, history is not nostalgia, but rather an epistemic source for building a modern Islamic political theory that is ethical, inclusive, and oriented towards universal human welfare (Fouz Mohamed Zacky & Moniruzzaman, 2024). Islamic politics does not stop as a legacy of the past, but becomes the moral energy that guides the direction of government today, so that power is always subordinate to values, not the other way around.

Islamic politics stems from the theological belief that power is a trust, not a property. This trust has two dimensions: vertical responsibility to God and horizontal responsibility to the people (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). The two are interconnected, forming a political ethic that is not only legalistic but also moralistic. In the Islamic perspective, political legitimacy is not determined solely by majority power, but rather by al-'adl (justice) and amanah (integrity).

Justice (al-'adl) is a core value of the entire Islamic political system (Faridzadeh, 2021). It demands that leaders maintain a balance between individual rights and the public interest. The Quran explicitly states: "O you who believe, be upholders of justice, witnesses for Allah, even against yourselves" (QS. al-Nisa': 135). This verse contains a universal moral message: justice is the primary benchmark of all political policy.

This principle is, in the contemporary setting, the foundation of the conception of ethical governance, that is, governance by integrity, transparency, and moral responsibility (Hasaninasab & Mirtabar, 2024). The Islamic political ethics do not simply control how individual leaders conduct themselves, but it establishes a state of affairs that would force the leaders to adhere to ethical standards. Thus, Islamic politics provides a moral structure that can serve as the foundation for a just state based on the rule of law.

The concept of trust in Islam encompasses both personal and social responsibility. In politics, trust requires leaders to manage power transparently and responsibly (Eaosinsup & Kulachai, 2025). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asserted in a hadith, "Each of you is a leader, and every leader will be held accountable for those he leads" (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). This hadith emphasizes that the legitimacy of power is moral, not merely legal.

The Islam faith places accountability not only on administrative arrangements, but also includes a spiritual aspect. The leaders do not just owe obligations to the people but also to God (Abbasi et al., 2010). Thus, power misuse is not only a crime but it is also a sin. It is a broader concept of social responsibility that looks at politics as a place of power to a place of social worship (ibadah ijma'iyah).

In the contemporary governance, the concept of trust necessitates the development of an effective check and balance system, open public reporting of finances, and control of office abuse (Ayogu, 2023). Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Morocco, and Malaysia that have established independent anti-corruption institutions can be seen as a form of actualizing amanah in a modern institutional context.

The principle of shura (deliberation) is a pillar of democracy in Islamic politics (Adua & Salahu, 2016). The Qur'an describes an ideal society as one in which "their affairs are decided by consultation among themselves" (QS. al-Syura: 38). This principle asserts that public consultation is not merely a political instrument, but rather a moral expression of respect for human dignity (Mattson & Clark, 2011).

Shura in Islamic politics rejects two extremes: authoritarian absolutism and individualistic liberalism (Madung, 2017). He emphasized that political decisions must be made through collective deliberation that favors the common good (maṣlaḥah 'ammah). In the context of modern democracy,

shura can be understood as a deliberative mechanism, namely a process of public participation rooted in moral values, not merely pragmatic competition (Dean, 2017).

Therefore, shura is not just a process, but social morality, which develops social empathy and responsibility. It teaches the citizens how to take part in politics with the view of worship, but not just to benefit oneself (Levitt, 2008). The relevance of this concept is high in the establishment of civil society in contemporary Muslim nations where money politics and patronage are likely to dice political involvement.

The Islamic politics perceives power as a moral challenge. The ethical leader is not faultless, but he is a person who knows his boundaries and responsibilities. Ibn Khaldun wrote that when there is power devoid of morality it will become tyranny, and devoid of power will be devoid of morality (Gule, 2015).

The ethics of public leadership in Islam require three things: integrity (ṣīdīq), justice (ʿadl), and exemplary conduct (uswāh). These three constitute what can be called an ethos, a government based on moral superiority, not material domination (Wickham, 2010). In a modern framework, this is in line with the idea of servant leadership developed by Robert Greenleaf, where leaders function as public servants, not rulers.

An ethical leader from an Islamic perspective must balance policy rationality and moral spirituality (Burlone & Richmond, 2018). He views public policy not merely as a technical decision, but as a manifestation of moral responsibility for the well-being of the people. In this context, Islamic politics makes a significant contribution to global civilization, reminding the modern world that politics without ethics is a dangerous void (Moaddel, 2002).

The Islamic political ethics system also includes the dimension of public policy (al-siyasah al-ʿammah). The main goal of policy in Islam is to achieve maṣlaḥah, benefit, which includes the protection of religion, soul, mind, lineage, and property (maqāṣid al-syariʿah) (S. Hasan, 2023). Therefore, any policy that contradicts the principles of social justice is considered morally illegitimate, even if it is legally valid.

Social welfare in Islam is not understood solely as economic well-being, but also as spiritual and moral balance. The state is responsible not only for creating jobs and economic growth, but also for upholding noble human values (Bina & Vaz, 2011). In the context of globalization that emphasizes efficiency, Islamic politics offers an alternative paradigm: the politics of rahmatan lil ʿalamin, politics that spreads mercy and makes humanity the center of public policy.

Thus, Islamic politics as an ethical system rejects the reduction of power to a tool of domination. It demands that power be directed towards creating justice, prosperity, and spiritual happiness (Salim et al., 2016). This kind of politics is not a utopia, but rather a moral vision that has proven capable of building a just and civilized society when implemented consistently.

Islamic Politics in Modern Government

Political modernity, marked by the rationalization of bureaucracy, the secularization of law, and economic globalization, has given rise to new tensions between religion and state in much of the Muslim world (M. A. Iqbal & Mabud, 2019). Politics is often reduced to a competition for power, while the moral values at the heart of Islamic teachings are marginalized from the public sphere. In this context, an urgent need arises to reactualize Islamic political ethics within the modern system of government.

Islamic ethics is not simply a set of religious dogmas, but rather a normative framework that guides the direction of the nation's moral development. This reactualization demands a reinterpretation of classical concepts, such as shura, amanah, and maslahah, within the framework of modern democracy and governance (H. Rahman, 2020). This is in line with the contemporary concept of Islamic jurisprudence developed by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, which states that Islamic law and politics are dynamic and can adapt to social contexts as long as they adhere to universal moral principles.

This process does not mean Islamizing the state in a formalistic manner, but rather moralizing politics by making the values of justice, responsibility, and humanity the constitutional basis (Kadivar, 2020). Modern Islamic politics, then, is not an ideological project, but an ethical one, namely, building a government that upholds human dignity and rejects all forms of abuse of power.

Case Study of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Morocco

Indonesia is a compelling example of how Islamic ethical values can be integrated into a modern democratic system without erasing social plurality. In this context, the concept of civilized politics developed by Nurcholish Madjid and Din Syamsuddin serves as a model of public ethics that bridges religion and democracy (Abdullah, 2021). Madjid emphasized that Islam must appear as a public moral value, not a tool of political power.

Post-reform Indonesian political practice demonstrates that public morality remains a crucial issue. Corruption, money politics, and party pragmatism pose major challenges to the actualization of Islamic ethics in government (Hopper, 2017). However, various socio-religious initiatives, such as the Progressive Islam movement by Muhammadiyah and Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin by Nahdlatul Ulama, demonstrate that Islamic values can serve as a corrective moral force against deviant political practices.

The application of the values of trust and justice in public governance is also beginning to be seen in anti-corruption policies, budget transparency, and public participation in government oversight (Abbas & Hassan, 2023). Although not yet ideal, Indonesia demonstrates that ethical democracy based on Islamic values can thrive amidst pluralism, provided the state does not monopolize religious interpretation for political gain.

Malaysia developed a different approach through the Islam Hadhari policy and the Islamic Governance Framework (IGF), which seeks to integrate sharia principles into public management (Obid & Naysary, 2014). In practice, the IGF places the values of tawhid, 'adl, amanah, and shūrā as pillars of state governance. The Malaysian government has succeeded in creating a technocratic model that combines bureaucratic efficiency with Islamic morality (Mauzy & Milne, 1983). Nevertheless, there is the difficulty of religious symbolism at times being employed to sanction political authority, whereas the moral spirit is shunned. This effect illustrates that Islamic political ethics can never be enforced through regulation but one must come through the moral consciousness of the leaders and citizens.

However, Malaysia is a significant case study to the Islamic world since the country has managed to craft a paradigm of a government that uses religion as a source of morality, rather than an instrument of ideology (N. F. A. Rahman & Khambali, 2013). As the public governance is concerned, this nation can illustrate that the implementation of the Islamic moral principles in fact will enhance the responsibility of the administration and the trust of the people.

Morocco has chosen another route where it integrated a constitutional monarchy and the Islamic ideals in its rule. The Moroccan king, with the title of Amir al-Mu is a constitutional and religious legitimacy leader (Naguib, 2020). Nevertheless, after the reforms of 2011, the nation has transformed into the principles of good governance and social transparency and has focused on the importance of social justice based on Islamic teachings.

These reforms demonstrated a unique dynamic: religion was not separated from the state, but transformed into a source of public ethics. In this context, Morocco successfully demonstrated how Islamic values can strengthen constitutional legitimacy, rather than hinder it (Laadam & Hasnaoui, 2025). The principle of maṣlaḥah is translated into pro-people social and economic policies, such as women's empowerment and Islamic education reform.

Morocco, thus, became a laboratory of modern Islamic politics that combined spirituality and modernity without losing its moral direction (Hashas, 2024). This model refutes the notion that Islam and constitutional democracy are incompatible; instead, they can synergize within a framework of public ethics oriented toward justice.

Challenges and Prospects of Modern Islamic Politics

Although Islamic political values have great potential to strengthen the morality of modern governance, the challenges of their implementation are not small (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2024). First, globalization and secularization often place religion on the fringes of politics, making public morality subordinate to economic interests and power. Second, some political elites in Muslim countries still treat Islam as a symbolic legitimacy, not an ethical foundation (Mowlana, 2018).

Nevertheless, the opportunities are very broad. The world is going through a period of crisis of trust in politics. The desire to have morality politics is being fuelled by corruption, populism, and manipulation of information (Giroux, 2016). This is where Islamic political ethics finds momentum. The principles of justice, trustworthiness, and social responsibility can become a universal basis for building a new political civilization, one that is not only efficient but also dignified.

By combining spirituality and rationality, Islam offers an alternative paradigm to the global moral crisis(Ahmad et al., 2025): transcendental ethical politics, in which public policy is guided not only by rational calculation but also by moral awareness. This paradigm can serve as a theoretical foundation for modern government reform movements in the Muslim world.

In the past two decades, global politics has experienced what thinkers call the moral fatigue of modernity, a moral exhaustion resulting from the dominance of instrumental rationality and the reduction of ethical values in the public sphere. In many countries, including the Muslim world, power tends to be understood as a tool of economic and ideological domination, rather than as a moral mandate(Noury & Roland, 2020). The phenomena of corruption, populism, money politics, and identity polarization show that political rationality without ethics only gives rise to social instability.

This situation reinforces the relevance of Islamic politics as a moral paradigm that rejects the total separation of religion and politics. Islam views power as legitimate only to the extent that it reflects Divine justice and the welfare of humanity(Fadel, 2008). When power is detached from moral values, it loses its spiritual dimension, and at the same time, loses its credibility in the eyes of the people.

It is in this context that Islamic ethical principles such as al-'adl (justice), amanah (responsibility), and shura (deliberation) re-emerge as an antithesis to the global political moral crisis(Abdurrahman, 2025). These values are not merely religious doctrines, but universal norms that can correct the structural flaw in modern democracy, namely the gap between political freedom and moral responsibility.

Islamic Politics and Ethical Democracy

A major criticism of modern politics lies in its lack of moral orientation. Liberal democracies often succeed in creating political freedom, but fail to produce a strong public morality(Charney, 1998). In this regard, Islamic politics offers a paradigm of ethical democracy, namely, democracy rooted in universal spiritual and moral values.

Ethical democracy in Islam does not mean the subordination of the people to religion, but rather the affirmation of human dignity (karamah insaniyyah). In Islamic politics, every individual has the right to participate because humans are moral beings with social responsibilities(Rifai, 2022). Thus, shura can function as a democratic mechanism that is not merely procedural, but substantial, because it is oriented towards the value of the common good (maṣlaḥah 'ammah).

Furthermore, Islamic ethical democracy offers a critique of moral relativism in secular democracy. While in Western democracies, truth is determined by the majority vote, in Islamic democracies, moral voice remains the determinant of political direction(F. Z. Rahman, 2013). This principle makes Islamic politics not anti-democratic, but rather a corrective to democracy that has lost its ethical values.

The concept of akhlaqiyah al-siyasah (political ethics), which has developed since the classical era, has become the foundation for this ethical democracy. It rejects unlimited power and directionless liberalism(Shah, 2015). Islamic politics maintains a balance between freedom and responsibility, between the people's aspirations and moral values. In a global crisis like the current one, such a balance is urgently needed.

Islamic politics also offers a sharp critique of two modern extremes: authoritarianism and populism. Both disregard public morality. Authoritarianism rejects popular participation, while populism manipulates it for the benefit of power(Adler, 2023). In both systems, ethics are often sacrificed for the sake of stability or popularity.

In contrast, Islamic politics places morality as the determinant of the legitimacy of power. Shura limits authoritarianism, while amanah controls populism. The ideal leadership in Islam is not one loved for its rhetoric, but one trusted for its integrity(Nasution & Lutfi, 2025). This principle can be a correction for many Muslim countries that are still trapped in identity politics and the cult of the individual.

Islamic political ethics rejects the worship of figures, because in Islam, there is no human being who is infallible after the Prophet Muhammad SAW(March, 2025). Leadership is a heavy responsibility, not a self-glorifying honor. This awareness makes Islamic politics a model of moral resistance against abuses of power in the modern era.

Islamic Politics and Global Good Governance

Globally, the concept of good governance is often measured by administrative indicators such as bureaucratic efficiency, law enforcement, and fiscal transparency. However, these indicators are not sufficient to guarantee public morality (Brinkerhoff, 2017). Islamic politics broadens the concept of good governance to include ethical governance, namely, governance that balances legality, morality, and spirituality.

This approach is in line with Amartya Sen's idea of development as freedom, but in Islam, economic and political freedom is only meaningful if accompanied by moral responsibility (*mas'uliyah*) (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). Thus, Islam enriches the discourse of good governance with a transcendent ethical dimension.

The principle of *maqasid al-syari'ah* can be used as an ethical framework in global public policy. Protection of the soul (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), property (*hifz al-mal*), and human dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) is a universal value that is acceptable across all political cultures (Adnan & et al, 2021). Thus, Islamic politics is not merely the property of Muslims, but an ethical contribution to a more humane global governance.

A critical analysis of history, theory, and practice shows that Islamic politics has two main functions in modern government reform:

1. The normative-transformational function provides moral direction for the development of a just political system. Islamic politics restores the relationship between power and morality, making ethics a source of legitimacy and social control.
2. The corrective-empirical function is to be an evaluative instrument for contemporary political practices that are caught in a moral crisis and abuse of power.

Bureaucratic reform, corruption prevention, and increasing public accountability in the Muslim world can find their ethical spirit if they are carried out with the spirit of trust and *'adl* (Muslim & Mais, 2023). Thus, Islamic politics is not historical nostalgia, but an ethical paradigm for the future of civilized global governance. Modern society needs not more rules-based politics, but more moral politics. And Islamic politics, with its holistic ethical heritage, is here to fill that void.

The core of Islamic politics is a bid to hold the face of morality in history. It reminds us that power devoid of values only generates destruction whereas values devoid of power lack power to transform the society. Thus, it is the mission of Muslims in the present day to unite morality and power not to form a religious state, but to form an honorable, fair and civilized government.

In a more pragmatic and secular world the call of the Islamic politics is a wake-up call, that the greatest task of man is not to conquer the world, but to defend the truth in it. Power is used as a social service and politics as a moral mandate when then the the Islamic civilization will shine a moral light again that light that guides the universal humanity.

CONCLUSION

Islamic politics as evidenced in this paper is not just a power structure which is purely historic, but is a vibrant and living moral system. Since the Prophet to present-day governance, Islamic politics has always aimed at achieving the implementation of spiritual values and social rationality into a just and civilized political system of governance. Power in Islam is never free from morality; it is a trust that must be exercised with ethical responsibility before God and humanity. The historical dimension demonstrates that every success of Islamic politics, whether during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the *Khulafa' al-Rashidin* (the Caliphs), or the institutional experiments of the dynastic era, has always depended on the level of public internalization of ethics. When ethics are abandoned, politics loses legitimacy and civilization weakens. Conversely, when the values of *'adl* (justice), *amanah* (responsibility), and *shura* (moral participation) are upheld, Islamic society emerges as an inclusive, just, and civilized community.

From a theoretical perspective, Islamic politics can be understood as an ethical-transcendental paradigm: a system that places divine values as the basis of legitimacy and human well-being as the ultimate goal. This paradigm does not reject democracy or modern governance, but rather adds a moral dimension missing from secular political systems. Islamic politics can bring about a novel accounting of power and virtue, law and morality in a global setting riddled with integrity crisis, political polarization and social inequality. Therefore, Islamic politics is not an ideology, but an official ethic that sets the course of civilization. It states that the real prosperity of a country cannot be judged only

by material wealth, but rather on how well the country can maintain justice, truth and accountability. According to Islamic politics, morality is the soul of human beings, and without it, a given nation will be misplaced and meaningless.

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