

Islamic Constitutionalism and the Management of Diversity: The Dialectic of Coexistence and Empowerment — A Case Study of "Rukun Negara" and "Pancasila"

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ABSTRAK: *Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki dimensi-dimensi fundamental dari koeksistensi damai dan pemberdayaan konstitusional bagi masyarakat majemuk dalam kerangka sistem konstitusional Islam. Studi ini menggunakan metode analitis-tekstual terhadap nas-nas dan perjanjian kenabian, terutama Piagam Madinah, yang diakui sebagai dokumen konstitusional pertama yang mengatur kewarganegaraan dalam masyarakat plural. Penelitian ini menjawab sebuah permasalahan utama: adanya kesalahpahaman bahwa pemberdayaan referensi Islam dalam pemerintahan dan legislasi niscaya akan melemahkan koeksistensi atau mengurangi hak-hak non-Muslim. Sebaliknya, penelitian ini mengajukan hipotesis bahwa "pemberdayaan" konstitusional yang didasarkan pada prinsip-prinsip Islam (keadilan, kebebasan beragama yang bersifat kontraktual, martabat manusia, dan tanggung jawab bersama) merupakan jaminan terkuat dan paling efektif untuk mewujudkan koeksistensi yang sejahtera dan kewarganegaraan yang penuh. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan komparatif, tulisan ini mengulas model-model koeksistensi di Malaysia dan Indonesia, serta menganalisis bagaimana kerangka konstitusional dan filsafat nasional mereka (Rukun Negara dan Pancasila) telah berkontribusi dalam mengelola keragaman dan tantangan yang dihadapinya. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa Piagam Madinah menyajikan sebuah model praktis yang dinamis dan kontemporer, yang menunjukkan bahwa pemberdayaan sistem konstitusi Islam bukanlah tujuan bagi mayoritas, melainkan sarana untuk mengakhiri kekacauan, menegakkan supremasi hukum, dan melindungi hak seluruh warga negara. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menawarkan sebuah visi terpadu yang menegaskan bahwa pemberdayaan dan koeksistensi bukanlah dua konsep yang saling bertentangan, melainkan saling terkait secara organik; tidak ada koeksistensi sejati tanpa adanya otoritas adil yang memungkinkannya.*

Kata kunci: *Konstitusionalisme Islam, Koeksistensi, Pemberdayaan, Malaysia, Indonesia.*

ABSTRACT: *This study aims to investigate the foundational dimensions of peaceful coexistence and constitutional empowerment for a diverse society, within the framework of the Islamic constitutional system. The study employs a textual-analytical methodology, examining Prophetic texts and covenants, chief among them the Constitution of Medina, recognized as the first constitutional document to regulate citizenship in a pluralistic society. The study addresses a central problem: the misconception that empowering the Islamic frame of reference in governance and legislation necessarily leads to the weakening of coexistence or the infringement upon the rights of non-Muslims. In contrast, this study posits that constitutional "empowerment" based on Islamic principles (justice, contractual religious freedom, human dignity, and shared responsibility) is the strongest and most effective guarantee for achieving prosperous coexistence and full citizenship. Using a comparative approach, the paper reviews models of coexistence in Malaysia and Indonesia, analyzing how their constitutional frameworks and national philosophies (the Rukun Negara and Pancasila) have contributed to managing diversity and the challenges they face. The study concludes that the Constitution of Medina presents a vibrant and contemporary practical model, demonstrating that the empowerment of the Islamic constitutional system was not an end for the majority but a means to end chaos, establish the rule of law, and protect the rights of all citizens. Thus, the study presents an integrated vision that affirms that empowerment and coexistence are not contradictory concepts but are organically intertwined; genuine coexistence is impossible without just authority to enable it.*

Keywords: *Islamic Constitutionalism, Coexistence, Empowerment, Malaysia, Indonesia.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Peaceful coexistence, founded on mutual respect and shared citizenship, represents the cornerstone of the stability and civilizational progress of nations. In an era marked by escalating identity politics and mounting challenges related to diversity, this issue assumes exceptional importance, particularly within nations characterised by a complex religious, ethnic, and cultural mosaic. The Muslim world, with its countries extending from North Africa to Southeast Asia, stands as a primary arena for this discussion, where the issue of coexistence is raised not only as a social matter but as a profound constitutional and legal problem, concerned with defining citizenship, delineating the boundaries of the relationship between religion and state, and specifying the rights and duties of individuals and groups within the single national fabric (Low, 2016).

This study aims to address a central intellectual and methodological problem that often dominates the academic and political discourse related to Islam and modern governance. This problem manifests in the "supposed tension" or "perceived conflict" between the concept of "empowerment" (Tamkīn) of the Islamic frame of reference in the structure and laws of the state, and the demand for comprehensive and just "coexistence" (Ta'āyush) for all components of society, including non-Muslim minorities. This perception stems from an implicit premise that "empowerment" is a Zero-Sum Game; thus, empowering one party (the Muslim majority) must inevitably come at the expense of weakening or marginalizing other parties, which inevitably leads to the erosion of the foundations of coexistence and threatens equal citizenship.

In complete contrast to this reductionist proposition, this study advances a contrary central hypothesis: that the constitutional "empowerment" of Islamic principles, in its original and teleological essence, is not the problem but the solution; it is not an obstacle to coexistence but a condition for its existence and the most firmly established guarantee for its sustainability. Islamic constitutional thought does not aim to empower "persons" or "groups," but rather to empower a "system of higher principles," chief among them: absolute justice as a governing value, human dignity as a fundamental right for all humanity (Kymlicka, 1995), religious freedom as a personal conviction not subject to coercion, and citizenship as a social contract based on mutual rights and duties. Empowering this "value-based system" is what creates the safe and just constitutional and legal environment that allows all citizens, regardless of their beliefs or ethnicities, to feel secure and participate effectively in nation-building. In this sense, "empowerment" transforms from a narrow conflictual goal into a functional tool for achieving the "public interest" which necessarily includes the interests of all segments of society (Auda, 2008).

To substantiate this hypothesis, there is no richer or more authentic historical laboratory or foundational model than the "Constitution of Medina." This unique document, declared by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) immediately upon his arrival in Yathrib, was not a mere temporary peace treaty, but a real "constitution" that laid the foundations for the first state of citizenship in Islam (Sadzali, 2019).

It represents the historical moment in which the political and legislative "empowerment" granted to the Islamic leadership was translated into a practical project for building a nation of multiple faiths and ethnicities. The evocation of these luminous models from Islamic history is not mere nostalgia, but rather a methodological necessity to achieve moderation and build peace in our contemporary societies (Akbar, 2022). (Al-Karboly, 2023).

To add a practical dimension to the theoretical analysis, this study will review the models of coexistence in Malaysia and Indonesia, not as ideal applications of the Medinan model, but as two contemporary case studies that reflect the opportunities and the significant challenges facing attempts to build coexistence in the context of the

modern nation-state, and how the spirit of the Constitution can provide valuable insights for these experiences.

Based on the foregoing, this research aims to achieve four main objectives: First, to deconstruct the dialectical relationship between the concepts of empowerment, coexistence, and citizenship within the Islamic constitutional framework. Second, to analyze the Constitution of Medina as a practical methodology that clarifies how empowerment can be a catalyst for coexistence. Third, to study the models of Malaysia and Indonesia to understand the contemporary dynamics of coexistence in pluralistic Islamic societies. Fourth, to present an integrated vision confirming that the empowerment of a "state of law, justice, and citizenship" inspired by Islamic principles is the optimal path to achieving sustainable and prosperous coexistence.

2. The Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Dialectical Relationship Between Empowerment and Coexistence

To gain a deeper understanding of the study's hypothesis, it is essential to begin with a precise definition and grounding of the core concepts within their intellectual and axiological framework.

2.1. The Concept of Empowerment (Tamkīn) in Islamic Constitutionalism: From Authority to Responsibility

In the Quranic paradigm, the concept of "empowerment" (Tamkīn) transcends mere political control or material dominance. It is a functional concept intrinsically linked to purpose and responsibility. The Quranic verses that address this concept, such as His words: "Indeed, We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a way" (إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبِيلًا) (Al-Kahf: 84) in the story of Dhul-Qarnayn, and His words, may He be exalted: "Those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakah and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to Allah belongs the outcome of [all] matters" (الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ) (Al-Hajj: 41), clearly illustrate that empowerment is not a privilege but a commission; not an end in itself but a means to achieve higher objectives.

As commentators have explained, empowerment is the ability granted by God to establish religion, achieve justice, and manage the affairs of the state in a manner that secures righteousness and public good (al-Qurtubi, 1964). From this perspective, "Islamic constitutional empowerment" can be analyzed on two complementary levels:

2.1.1. The Value-Based Level: Empowering Principles

This does not mean the forceful imposition of creed but rather the empowerment of the Islamic "system of principles and values" to serve as the supreme frame of reference governing the public sphere and guiding legislation and policies. These principles include justice as an absolute value that transcends affiliations (Karabi et al., 2023), consultation (shura) as a mechanism for good governance, and the public interest (al-maslahah al-'ammah) as the goal of legislation. Empowering these values is what prevents the tyranny of the ruler and ensures that authority does not transform into a tool of oppression.

2.1.2. The Functional Level: Empowering the State

This entails possessing the material and human capacities—political, economic, educational, and military—that enable the state to protect its sovereignty, enforce its laws, defend its citizens, and achieve their welfare.

The separation of these two levels leads to misunderstanding. Functional empowerment (state authority) without a connection to axiological empowerment (the authority of principles) devolves into tyranny and domination. Axiological empowerment without the functional capacity to implement it remains mere theoretical idealism. Thus, Islamic constitutional empowerment is the integrated process of building a state that is both strong and just, which constitutes the ideal environment for any form of coexistence.

2.2 The Concept of Coexistence (Ta'āyush) in Islamic Constitutionalism: From Acceptance to Active Partnership

In the Islamic perspective, the concept of coexistence (Ta'āyush) does not stop at the limits of "tolerance" or passive acceptance of the different Other. It transcends this to an active, positive concept based on firm Quranic and ethical foundations aimed at building relationships of partnership and cooperation.

2.2.1. The Principle of Human Dignity as a Common Foundation

The fundamental starting point for any coexistence is the recognition of the intrinsic value of every human being, a principle established in the Quranic verse: "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam" (وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ) (Al-Isra: 70). This dignity, a divine gift, is not tied to religion, race, or color; it forms the common ground that prohibits contempt for the Other or the violation of their fundamental human rights.

2.2.2. The Principle of Ta'āruf (Mutual Acquaintance) as a Methodology for Communication

The Quran presents in His words: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another" (يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا) (Al-Hujurat: 13), a profound philosophy of diversity. Diversity is not a problem to be solved but a divine norm whose purpose is ta'āruf (mutual acquaintance). Here, ta'āruf is not mere superficial knowledge but a dynamic process of mutual communication and constructive dialogue aimed at breaking stereotypes and understanding the Other. This represents the essence of any successful dialogue between religions and cultures (Maulana, 2024).

2.2.3 The Principle of Religious Freedom as a Guarantee for Belief

No coexistence can be based on religious coercion. Therefore, the Quranic principles were categorical in this matter: "There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong" (لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ تَتَّبِعُونَ) (Al-Baqarah: 256), and "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion" (لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ) (Al-Kafirun: 6). These principles affirm that faith is a matter of personal conviction and free choice and that the state's role is not to impose beliefs but to protect freedom of belief for all. This understanding has extended to modern intellectual theses on tolerance in reformist Islamic thought, such as in the thought of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Saumantri et al., 2025).

2.2.4 The Principle of Righteousness (al-Birr) and Equity (al-Qist) as a Framework for Interaction

The Quran outlines a practical framework for relations with peaceful non-Muslims in His words, may He be exalted: "Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly" (لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ) (Al-Mumtahanah: 8). Al-Qist is absolute justice, while al-birr is a higher degree that includes kindness, good treatment, and cooperation for the good, thereby elevating the relationship from mere non-aggression to positive partnership.

2.3 Citizenship (Muwāṭanah): The Constitutional Framework for Coexistence

If coexistence is the soul, then citizenship (Muwāṭanah) is the legal and constitutional body that embodies this soul. Citizenship is the mechanism that translates the principles of coexistence into clear rights and duties for all members of society within a state entity. In modern political thought, citizenship is linked to belonging to a nation-state on a territorial and legal basis, regardless of religion or ethnicity (al-Sayrafi, 2001). However, what is remarkable is that Islamic constitutional thought, in its earliest model, presented a very early and advanced form of this concept, which is clearly manifested in the Constitution of Medina.

The concept of the Ummah proposed by the Constitution was not exclusively religious; in its essence, it was the foundation of a "contractual citizenship" based on shared belonging to the homeland (Yathrib) and allegiance to the constitution (the document itself). This forms the basis of any inclusive social system that seeks to embrace diversity (Yongbao, 2024).

2.4 The Synthetic Dialectic Between the Three Concepts

Through this analysis, the organic relationship between the three concepts becomes clear. Empowerment is not the goal, but the necessary tool to establish a strong and just state. This strong and just state is what can establish a constitutional framework for citizenship. This constitutional framework for citizenship, based on equal rights and duties, is what allows the principles of coexistence (dignity, mutual acquaintance, religious freedom) to transform from mere moral values into a practical reality and daily practice. Thus, "empowerment" becomes the necessary starting point that leads to "coexistence" through the gateway of "citizenship."

3. The Constitution of Medina as a Methodology for Applying Coexistence through Empowerment

The Constitution of Medina is not just a historical document; it is a unique case study that illustrates the methodology (Manhajiyah) through which political empowerment was transformed into a civilizational project of coexistence. Before the arrival of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Yathrib was an open arena for tribal conflict between the Aws and Khazraj, with strong and independent Jewish blocs. There was no overarching political entity or a common law that applied to everyone. In this context, the Constitution was introduced to use the empowerment granted to the Islamic leadership to implement radical constitutional transformations.

3.1. Engineering Inclusive Citizenship and the Concept of the Comprehensive Ummah (Clauses 2 and 25)

The Constitution introduced a unique constitutional innovation in its definition of the new political entity's identity. It began with Clause 2, which stated that the believers and Muslims and those who follow them are "one community (ummah wāḥidah) distinct from other people," thereby defining the solid nucleus of the new state. But the true genius was manifested in Clause 25, which stated: "And the Jews of Banu Awf are a community with the believers (ummah ma'a al-mu'minīn); to the Jews their religion and to the Muslims their religion...". The phrase "a community with the believers" is the constitutional formula through which non-Muslims were integrated into the political body of the state. The Constitution did not say "they are part of the community of believers" in its creedal sense, but "a community with the believers" in its political and social sense. The Jews were recognized as a community with its own identity, but at the same time, they were an integral part of the Ummah in its broader sense as a political entity or

"commonwealth" (Denny, 1977). This establishes modern citizenship based on a social contract and allegiance to the constitution (the document), not just on religious identity.

3.3 Guarantees of Religious Rights and Freedoms (Clause 25 and beyond)

Religious freedom in the Constitution was not a mere slogan; it was an explicit and detailed constitutional provision. The phrase "to the Jews their religion and to the Muslims their religion," repeated for the different Jewish tribes, was a recognition of the right to belief and the practice of rituals. More importantly, Clause 16 provided for protection and equality: "And whoever of the Jews follows us shall have help and equality (uswah); they shall not be wronged, nor shall their enemies be aided against them." The word uswah here means full equality in treatment and protection. A Jew was no longer protected by the power of his tribe alone but became a citizen enjoying the protection of the state and its law, just like any Muslim. This covenantal spirit in Islam can form the basis for positive relations even in modern and complex contexts, such as the relations of Muslims with Indigenous peoples (Rane et al., 2024).

3.4 Building a System of Shared Security and National Defense (Clauses 24, 37, and 44)

The Constitution recognized that true coexistence cannot be achieved without a sense of shared destiny, and the most prominent manifestation of this destiny is common defense. Therefore, the Constitution stipulated that "the Jews shall contribute to the expenses of war so long as they are at war with the believers" (Clause 24) and that "among them is help against whosoever raids Yathrib" (Clause 44). These clauses transformed the responsibility for defending the city from a task specific to each tribe into a collective "citizenship duty" incumbent upon all inhabitants of the state. This commitment to common security created a strong national bond that transcended religious and ethnic affiliations.

3.5 Criminal Justice and Individual Responsibility (Clauses 13, 21, and 22)

The Constitution eliminated one of the most dangerous sources of conflict in tribal society: the principle of "collective retribution." It stipulated clearly the principle of individual responsibility. In case of murder, "he is to be killed in retaliation, unless the guardian of the victim is satisfied" (a rendering of clause 21), meaning retribution falls on the killer alone. It also affirmed that "a man shall not be held liable for the guilt of his ally" (clause 22), and that "this document shall not protect any wrongdoer or sinner" (related clauses). This focus on individual responsibility established a society governed by justice and fairness, where a group is not held accountable for the crime of one of its members, which is the foundation of stability and the rule of law.

The analysis of these axes reveals a unique prophetic "methodology": empowerment was used not to oppress others or impose a single religion, but was ingeniously invested in building institutions, enacting laws, entrenching principles, and creating a just and inclusive "state of citizenship." This state, created by empowerment, was the only environment in which coexistence could flourish and thrive.

4. Contemporary Applications and Current Challenges: Malaysia and Indonesia

Malaysia and Indonesia, as two large nations in Southeast Asia with significant diversity and Muslim majorities, offer realistic laboratories through which the success or failure of applying the "spirit" of the Constitution of Medina in the context of the modern nation-state can be measured.

4.1 The Malaysian Model: Coexistence under the Constitutional "Social Contract"

The modern Malaysian state was founded on a historic "social contract" among its main ethnic groups (Malays, Chinese, Indians). This contract was translated into a

unique constitutional formula that attempts to balance the recognition of "Islam as the religion of the Federation" (Article 3) with the guarantee of other communities' rights to practice their religious rites "in peace and harmony" (Article 11). Furthermore, the national philosophy of Rukun Negara ("Principles of the State") constitutes a value framework aimed at strengthening national unity through principles such as Belief in God, Loyalty to King and Country, Supremacy of the Constitution, and the Rule of Law. (Gill et al., 2023). This philosophy is seen as fundamental for guiding Malaysia's diverse society (Hassan et al., 2023), with specific objectives designed to foster unity (Ismail et al., 2023).

An examination of the compatibility of the Rukun Negara with Islamic constitutionalism reveals a deep harmony, not conflict:

Belief in God (Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan): Provides a common moral foundation for all religions, which is the essence of the monotheistic outlook in Islam that rejects atheism and value-based chaos and establishes mutual respect among believers of different faiths (Din et al., 2025).

Supremacy of the Constitution (Keluhuran Perlembagaan) and the Rule of Law (Kedaulatan Undang-undang): Corresponds perfectly with the principle of the "contract" or "covenant" in Islamic thought... This is increasingly viewed as foundational, positioning the Rukun Negara as a preamble to the Malaysian constitution (Hamid et al., 2021).

Good Behaviour and Morality (Kesopanan dan Kesusilaan): This is a direct call to activate the higher ethical values urged by all religions. In Islam, these values are an inseparable part of faith and are essential for weaving sound social relations in a pluralistic society.

Despite this congruence, the challenges facing the Malaysian model, such as the politicization of religion and ethnicity (Fauzi Abdul Hamid & Ismail, 2014), reveal that a shared philosophical framework alone is insufficient unless it is based on a supreme, firm, and accepted authority from the majority. Here, the importance of Islamic constitutionalism as a legislative and foundational reference emerges; it does not nullify the Rukun Negara but gives it spiritual and historical depth, grounds it in the nation's conscience, and provides a Maqāṣid (objective-based) framework (justice, protection of rights, human dignity) that guarantees minority rights authentically, not as a concession or a political compromise subject to erosion. It is a humane, civilizational reference capable of elevating the Rukun Negara from the level of a political declaration to that of a sacred covenant, a concept central to nation-building efforts alongside ideas like Bangsa Malaysia and 1Malaysia (Muis et al., 2012).

4.1.1 Manifestations of Coexistence: The Practical and Social Level

Malaysia exhibits a high degree of daily coexistence. Markets, universities, and workplaces are shared spaces where different groups interact smoothly. Various religious festivals (Eid al-Fitr, Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Christmas) are national occasions celebrated by all, which strengthens the sense of a shared national identity.

4.1.2 Challenges of the Malaysian Model

Despite this apparent coexistence, the Malaysian model faces deep structural challenges. The "social contract" itself is subject to competing interpretations, as conservative Islamic currents seek to expand the scope of Shari'a application, which is met with concern from non-Muslims. These tensions have been evident in debates over the "Islam Hadhari" (Civilizational Islam) initiative, which some saw as an attempt to present a progressive Islam, while others considered it a retreat from "Islamic Rights: Fauzi Abdul Hamid & Ismail" (2014). The politicization of religion and ethnicity in election campaigns remains the greatest challenge threatening the fragile social fabric of the country.

4.2 The Indonesian Model: "Pancasila" as a Unifying Umbrella for Diversity

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has taken a different path. The state was founded on the philosophy of Pancasila, which does not stipulate an official religion for the state, yet its first principle is "Belief in One God" (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa), providing a spiritual foundation for the state without being exclusively Islamic. Pancasila has formed a unifying umbrella and a national pact that has managed to contain the immense religious and cultural diversity of the Indonesian archipelago, though its interpretation remains a subject of debate (Kim, 2025). An examination of its compatibility with Islamic constitutionalism shows that it represents a contemporary application of its objectives:

Belief in the One and Only God (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa): This is an affirmation of the monotheistic dimension that is the basis of Islam, but it is formulated in a way that embraces all monotheistic religions.

Just and Civilized Humanity (Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab): This is a direct translation of the objectives of protecting life, human dignity, and achieving justice, forming a core part of modern Indonesian legal reform (Akbar Hadiprabowo & Wasino, 2024).

The Unity of Indonesia (Persatuan Indonesia): This reflects the concept of a single Ummah politically based on a shared homeland, as in the Constitution of Medina. This principle also serves as a socio-legal nexus for national consensus and deradicalization efforts (Muslimin et al., 2024).

Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom... (Kerakyatan yang...): This embodies the Islamic principle of Shura.

Social Justice (Keadilan Sosial): This is a supreme objective of Islamic law.

The pivotal role played by major Islamic organizations like "Nahdlatul Ulama" and "Muhammadiyah" in defending Pancasila (Mutawali, 2016) proves that they did not see it as an anti-religious philosophy, but as an authentic Indonesian expression of the core humanistic and civilizational values in Islam. (Saputra et al., 2024). However, the challenge Indonesia faces from radical currents is precisely the attempt to portray Pancasila as a "secular" alternative to Islam. Herein lies the paramount importance of emphasizing that Islamic constitutionalism is not a rival to Pancasila but its spiritual source and deeper origin. (Akbar Hadiprabowo & Wasino, 2024) The recognition that Islamic constitutionalism is the foundational reference that makes Pancasila possible and legitimate is the strongest guarantee for protecting it from extremism and for affirming that it is an inseparable part of Indonesia's civilizational Islamic identity. Islamic constitutionalism is a humane reference that does not conflict with rights and civilization but is their very foundation. (Silalahi, 2024).

4.2.1 The Role of Islamic Civil Society

Major Islamic organizations, such as "Nahdlatul Ulama" and "Muhammadiyah," have played a pivotal role in reconciling Islam and the national identity... This has deep historical roots, with organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama consistently navigating the relationship between Islam and Pancasila throughout their history [Add Citation Here: 14 - Haidar, 1994]. This ongoing dialogue has shaped Indonesia's constitutional identity, creating a unique comparative model of Islamic constitutionalism (Nggilu et al., 2024), and influences the modern application of Islamic law within the national legal system (Muhja et al., 2024).

4.2.2 Challenges of the Indonesian Model

Despite the success of Pancasila as a unifying philosophy, it has not prevented the emergence of radical Islamic currents that demand the full implementation of Shari'a and challenge the foundations of the pluralistic state. Furthermore, some local laws, sometimes enacted under pressure from conservative groups, can lead to discrimination

against religious minorities in certain regions. Nevertheless, the soft power of the Indonesian model, based on religious moderation and pluralism, remains a significant asset for the country in its international relations (Damayanti, 2023).

4.3. A Comparative Analysis and a Vision for the Future

The Malaysian and Indonesian models demonstrate that Islamic societies possess the flexibility and capacity to develop diverse frameworks for coexistence. The Malaysian model is more explicit in defining the Islamic identity of the state but faces continuous challenges in managing ethno-religious tensions. The Indonesian model relies on a unifying and officially non-religious national philosophy but gives a major role to the moderate Islamic civil society in maintaining balance.

Comparative Overview of Malaysia's Rukun Negara and Indonesia's Pancasila

Basis of Comparison	Malaysia	Indonesia
Foundational Philosophy	Rukun Negara	Pancasila
State & Religion	Islam official; freedom for others	No official religion; belief in God
Approach to Diversity	Social contract; communal identities	National pact; unity over identity
Unity Framework	Loyalty & Constitution	Unity in Diversity
Islamic Thought Role	Maqāsid-based depth	Humanistic Islamic values
Challenges to Coexistence	Ethnic/religious politicization	Radical discourses; local law issues

Source: Author's compilation.

4.3.1 The Common Challenge in Both Countries and the Muslim World at Large

The challenge lies not in the core principles of Islam, which we have shown to support coexistence, but in three main factors: (1) the rise of exclusionary discourses that reduce religion to a conflictual identity. (2) The politicisation of religion and its use as fuel for competition for power. (3) The gap between the noble constitutional and legal texts and the actual practices, which may be marred by nepotism and discrimination.

Towards a Contemporary Methodology for Activating the Islamic Constitutional Model

Diagnosing the challenges, as important as it is, is incomplete without presenting a constructive vision to overcome them. If Islamic constitutionalism, as the analysis has proven, holds authentic solutions for contemporary challenges, what is the practical methodology through which this model can be reactivated in the reality of modern Islamic states? The transformation towards this model cannot be random or revolutionary; it requires a clear and systematic vision, based on three integrated and interconnected steps:

5. Step One: Conceptual Liberation

The essential starting point is to liberate core Islamic constitutional concepts from the narrow frameworks and reductionist interpretations that have clung to them throughout history or were imposed on them in the context of modern ideological conflict.

Concepts such as the "Islamic State," "Hākimiyyah," "application of Shari'a," and "empowerment" have sometimes been hijacked by activist and political movements and presented to society in a rigid and confrontational manner, leading to alienation among large segments of the population. Therefore, the first step is a "conceptual revolution" aimed at:

Transitioning from "Shari'a" as texts to "Shari'a" as objectives (Maqāsid): This means moving beyond a rigid, literalist understanding of texts and focusing on the higher objectives of the Shari'a (protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property) as the ultimate goals that any law or policy must serve.

Transitioning from the "State" as an end to the "State" as a means: Redefining the state in contemporary Islamic thought not as an end in itself, but as a functional tool to achieve justice, dignity, and welfare for its citizens. Thus, the criteria for its success are not the extent of its formalistic application of texts, but the extent to which it achieves these humanistic objectives.

Liberating the concept of "Empowerment": Freeing it from being an "empowerment of a dominant identity" to being an "empowerment of a just and inclusive system of values," capable of embracing all identities within a framework of equal citizenship.

5.1. Step Two: Institutional Ijtihad (Constitutional Jurisprudence)

If the first step relates to "thought," the second step relates to the "mechanism." The application of Islamic constitutionalism in today's world, with its complex political and legal structure, cannot be an individual effort relying on the isolated judgments of individuals. It requires a transition from "individual ijthad" to "institutional ijthad," carried out through specialized and capable bodies. These institutions include:

Strong and representative parliaments: These would be the main arena for translating the Maqāsid principles into detailed legislation and laws, through democratic debate and societal participation.

Independent constitutional courts: Their function would be not only to protect the written constitution but also to monitor the compatibility of laws with the supreme constitutional principles derived from the objectives of Shari'a, ensuring no deviation towards injustice or discrimination.

Modern Fatwa Councils and Scholarly Bodies: To act as consultants to the state and society, offering collective views and jurisprudence on emerging issues, and helping to build public awareness and guide societal discourse.

5.2. Step Three: Gradual and Cumulative Building

No profound societal transformation can happen overnight. Attempting to impose a new constitutional model suddenly or coercively (through revolution or a coup) often leads to adverse outcomes, generating strong resistance and social fragmentation. Therefore, the methodology of activation must rely on the principle of "gradualism" and "cumulative reform." This approach means:

Starting from common ground: Beginning with the values and principles that have a broad national consensus (such as justice, anti-corruption, and human dignity), and re-grounding these values in the Islamic frame of reference to give them spiritual and ethical depth.

Reforming from within: Instead of calling for the complete demolition of existing legal systems, one can work on their "Islamization" or "harmonization" with the higher objectives gradually, by amending partial laws that conflict with the principles of justice and equality and adding new legislation that serves the public interest.

Building awareness before imposing laws: Focusing on education and media to build broad societal awareness of the importance of these principles and their civilizational value, so that legal change comes later as the culmination of societal conviction, not as an imposition from a higher authority.

Conclusion

This study has sought to deconstruct a dialectical relationship that has long dominated the discourse on Islam and the modern state—the relationship between "empowerment" and "coexistence." Through a systematic and in-depth analysis of the Constitution of Medina as a foundational model and the experiences of Malaysia and Indonesia as contemporary cases, the research has reached a central conclusion: the relationship between the two concepts is not one of contradiction or conflict, but one of organic synergy and logical necessity.

The analysis has demonstrated that "empowerment" in its authentic Islamic perspective is not the empowerment of one human group at the expense of another, nor is it aimed at ethnic or religious hegemony. Rather, it is a foundational process aimed at "empowering a system of principles", the principles of the rule of law, justice, and inclusive citizenship. When the Islamic leadership in Medina was empowered, it did not use its authority to impose its creed or marginalize others. Instead, it used it to end chaos and establish a "state of institutions" which was the only incubator in which coexistence could flourish and take root.

Consequently, any anxiety about the "empowerment" of Islam in contemporary societies is anxiety about a distorted and reductionist version of Islam, not about its constitutional and civilizational essence. The real challenge facing the Muslim world today is not the "empowerment of Islam," but defining which Islam we want to empower: Is it the Islam of conflictual identities, isolationism, and exclusion, or is it the Islam of justice, mercy, human dignity, and mutual acquaintance that was manifested in its most magnificent form in the Constitution of Medina?

The study concludes that the path towards more just, cohesive, and stable societies in the Muslim world does not lie in fearing or neutralizing the Islamic frame of reference, but in the diligent pursuit of a comprehensive activation methodology that begins with conceptual liberation, passes through institutional *ijtihad*, and culminates in gradual building. It passes through the empowerment of "justice" to reach everyone, the empowerment of "citizenship" to include everyone, and the empowerment of the "rule of law" to govern everyone. By adopting this model, Islamic countries can not only solve their internal challenges but can also offer the world an authentic and necessary civilizational contribution in a time that is searching for successful models of unity in diversity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings reached, the study offers the following recommendations:

- 1- Adopting a Constitutional Reading of the Constitution of Medina: A call for academic and legislative institutions in the Muslim world to move beyond a purely historical reading of the Constitution of Medina and adopt a "constitutional and methodological" reading that considers it a source of fundamental inspiration for formulating constitutions and laws that address issues of diversity and citizenship in the 21st century.
- 2- Promoting Maqāṣid-Oriented Empowerment: The need for a shift in contemporary Islamic discourse from focusing on "empowering Muslims" as a identitarian slogan to focusing on "empowering the higher objectives of the Shari'a" (protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property) for all members of society as a program of action for the state.
- 3- Developing a Contemporary Fiqh of Citizenship: Urging jurists and thinkers to intensify efforts to develop a comprehensive and Maqāṣid-based "jurisprudence of citizenship" that draws inspiration from the spirit of the social contract in the Constitution and provides clear and innovative answers to modern challenges

related to minority rights, political participation, and the balance between individual and collective rights.

- 4- In-depth Study of Successful Models: Encouraging comparative academic research to deeply study models of coexistence in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, documenting success stories and analyzing failure factors, to extract lessons and provide evidence-based policy recommendations for decision-makers.
- 5- Integration of Internal and External Empowerment: Adopting a strategic vision that sees the achievement of economic, scientific, and technological empowerment for Muslim societies as a prerequisite for boosting their self-confidence and their ability to lead a project of peaceful coexistence from a position of civilizational strength, not from a position of weakness and reaction.

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