

Development Strategy and Its Implications for Unity in the Muslim World

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Abstract

This paper seeks to achieve the following objectives: to discuss the idea of unity from the Islamic and secular perspectives; to test empirically how the absence of certain universal values (virtues) in the pursued development strategies shattered unity and thereby led to the Ummah's disintegration; to examine how the interrelationships between growth and democracy can promote unity by creating a civil society through higher human development; and to examine the Organization of the Islamic Conference's (OIC) role in strengthening unity among diverse Muslim communities.

Introduction

The lack of unity and trust, as manifested through the lack of consensus, was the major cause of dissension leading to the world's social, political, cultural, and economic destabilization during the twentieth century. The many dominance-dependence relationships, as operationalized through interacting with egoism and self-aggrandizement, as well as self-proclaimed ideological, tribal, racial, and cultural superiority, also were significant contributory factors. The end result was – and remains – an ongoing clash of interests between the privileged and the underprivileged; the affluent and the deprived; and those with economic, political, and military power and those without. As such, a diversity of interests is seen among individuals, classes, groups, races, communities, and nations.

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The pre- and post-cold war situations can be explained largely by the above-stated conflicts. Regardless of the causes on each level, the poor are always the worst victims in terms of degrading human life, freedom, dignity, and rights. Unfortunately, these dehumanizing conditions are more conspicuous in Muslim than non-Muslim communities, which seems to suggest that the components of unifying forces that can successfully counter the challenges to human life, freedom, dignity, rights, peace, and harmony are much weaker in the Muslim world than elsewhere.

In addition, the Muslim world's externally dependent development strategy has made things even worse by promoting bad polices and bad governments. This calls for formulating an integrated endogenous development strategy based upon Islamic values and culture to strengthen Muslim communities' ideological and cultural foundations.¹ A strategy characterized by the resource endowments of each member state with an Islamic social order will facilitate the integration of Muslim communities.

The strength of the unifying forces that can establish Islam's universality, which is based upon the *tawhidi* philosophy of freedom, equality, justice, peace, tolerance, and moderation, depends upon the level of effective adherence to virtues that seek to promote economic and political democracy, and thereby promote both material and spiritual peace and harmony through unity. These essential virtues or prerequisites encompass learning through all forms of knowledge, whether revealed or acquired, and applying reason to all aspects of life; working toward material, moral, and spiritual development; defining self-respect and honor based upon the dignity of life; promoting equality, regardless of race, belief system, and geographical boundaries; encouraging justice and fairness to ensure peace and stability; urging tolerance, irrespective of any political, ideological, moral, and ethical prejudice; and highlighting altruism as the basis for moderation, trustworthiness, cooperation, sharing, and caring.

The Idea of Unity from the Islamic Perspective

The universality of Islam as a divine system, as enshrined in *tawhid* (belief in the One God's supremacy) is derived from a strong adherence to the universal virtues outlined above. This divine message of unity is addressed to humanity regardless of time and space; gender, race, color, or language; and economic, political, or social strata. According to the principles enshrined in the Qur'an and the authentic *ahadith*, the unity of human ori-

gin and fate provides the basic underlying fraternity among human beings. This unity is also manifest through God's promise: "Thus have We made you an Ummah justly balanced" (2:143). Here the term *ummatan wasatan*, implying the middle or median community, namely, one having moderation and the approximation to just means, truly characterizes the Muslim community. God also tells the Muslims that "you are the best of peoples that has ever been raised up for humanity, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God" (3:110). The Ummah is also one, as stated in: "Surely this community (Ummah) of yours is one community" (21:92).

To demonstrate this divine system's ability to establish a strong Ummah, God sent Prophet Muhammad as the best example at a time when humanity was experiencing the worst form of social and moral degradation due to various disintegrating forces. By emigrating from Makkah to Madinah, the Prophet demonstrated how equality and coexistence through cooperation could be used to forge unity not only among the Muslims, but also among people of other faiths, regardless of the area's prevailing racial and tribal natures.

After the Prophet's death, Islamic universality, as embodied in tawhid, manifested itself in all dimensions of life (e.g., economic, social, moral, political, intellectual, and cultural).² In the economic sphere, Muslim lands protected the interest of minorities (*ahl al-dhimmah* [People of the Covenant]) and encouraged them to join the Muslims on the principle of equality in pursuing such economic activities as agriculture, industry, trade, and commerce. In the social sphere, the coexistence of different faith communities was strengthened by the Muslims' participation in the minority community's social ceremonies. In the cultural sphere, the presence of ongoing debates among intellectuals having diverse ideologies contributed to the discovery of new ideas and innovations by many internationally recognized Muslim philosophers, physicists, chemists, mathematicians, and historians.

Muslims also benefitted from the knowledge assimilated by non-Muslims in terms of translating scientific and philosophical literary treasures from their original Greek, Persian, and Indian sources into Arabic. As such, the righteous caliphs established the highest level of socio-religious, moral, and political tolerance by promoting lively debates between Muslim and non-Muslim scholars on all aspects of intellectual discussions, including theology.³ Non-Muslims were offered high administrative positions under the Umayyads and 'Abbasids.⁴ Such facts speak highly for the inter-

national leadership role in all fields of civilization, which was made possible by the highest level of religious tolerance, socioeconomic justice, and respect for intellectual and political freedom. The benefits of these glorious civilizational achievements, which existed from the eighth century to the fourteenth century, were enjoyed by everyone in terms of peaceful coexistence, socio-cultural solidarity, and politico-economic stability.

The views of such renowned Muslim scholars as Malik Bennabi (d. 1973) and Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) on the need for human associations in the form of societies are quite unique.⁵ According to Bennabi, ethico-spiritual factors constitute the root of all human association. However, Ibn Khaldun's views in this regard refer to the very existence and survival of human beings, which are created helpless. He thinks that without the mutual cooperation required to satisfy complex human needs, humanity would vanish.⁶

The Idea of Unity from a Secular Perspective

The basic distinction between the secular and the Islamic approach to unity is that the former is primarily preoccupied with matter (i.e., natural objects), while the latter is primarily preoccupied with the Creator (God) of nature. Based upon the postulate of matter's presupposed existence, classical Greek philosophy's contributions to the understanding of unity remain confined to pattern or form (i.e., matter). The Christian worldview is based upon incarnation, meaning that Christ is "God incarnate" only if he shares fully in the Divine nature. Thus, the unique relationship between the "God incarnate" (i.e., Christ) and the Absolute power (God) presupposes a coequal divine person.⁷ According to Judaism, the monotheistic character of later Judaism, when compared to the polytheistic character of the New Testament (i.e., the Trinity), fully recognizes the manifestation of the Divine's absolute unity in the Jews' daily prayers.⁸

Unlike the secular worldview, Islam never assumes human nature to be part and parcel of the Divine Power and thus rejects any unity between humanity (in this case Jesus) and God. While accepting the Supreme Unity (i.e., God), the great medieval philosopher Nicholas of Cusa (1401-64) tried to see God's image in all things, including seeing humanity as a part of nature, by integrating diversity and complexity. He thought that since unity may not demand uniformity, it is not antithetical to diversity but rather is a harmonious diversity. Based upon the same logic, there is an interrelationship between the person (unity) and the community representing diversity.

Cusa's view, being a mixture of Platonism and Aristotelianism, also suggests that unity (the feature of God) is not the suppression of difference (the feature of human beings), but that the former (God) is a harmonious synthesis in which the latter (individual identity) is not totally erased.⁹

Cusa thought that a conflict between social diversity and religious unity was beneficial for society.¹⁰ He observed that religious differences emerge inevitably because God has endowed humanity with free will. Only a life of miserliness and servility prevents people from being able to seek out the Divine themselves.¹¹ However, religious diversity can contribute to increased devotion among believers by fostering a spirit of competition among groups. In this process, each follower has the possibility of making his or her own practice the most splendid.¹²

This spirit of competition can be beneficial in the sense that each group strives to perfect itself as much as possible. In other words, any political (state) or religious (church, synagogue, or mosque) attempt to impose uniformity, instead of permitting diversity, implies compelling people to adopt practices that they do not consider effective and beneficial.¹³ As long as peace and faith are preserved through the pursuit of diverse expressions, religious diversity is tolerable. This view also conforms to Islam.¹⁴

History shows that diversity, manifesting itself either through personal religious or political freedom, is always a challenge to integrating the common interest of the individual and that of his or her society. This is true, because sometimes personal freedom must be limited (*ummatan wasatan*) so that society will not be subjected to the anarchy of excessive individualism or to the repressive uniformity of totalitarian dictatorship.¹⁵ Thus, medieval and Renaissance perspectives on human freedom differ. The former assumes people to be completely passive, whereas the latter recognizes their ability to exercise some degree of control over their worldly life.

Cusa takes the Renaissance perspective when he argues that reason enables people to create things that, to a limited extent, allow them to gain control over the forces of nature.¹⁶ Thus, applying reason permits people to correct their own defects, heal illnesses, and educate themselves and others. This last ability is most vital, for it enables people to drive out ignorance by exploring divine things. It also seems to suggest that people's very rational nature enables them to improve both their physical world and spiritual condition by using their rational nature to increase their likeness to the Divine.

Those people who explore divine things can contribute to creating a great community in concert with national and international unity. In this interrelationship, the role of religious unity in maintaining national unity

cannot be ignored. However, due to the recent social disintegration caused by the cultural and religious divide, religion is hardly regarded as a universally inclusive identity. In fact, the most powerful tool of unity at any level is now considered to be national political identity. In this regard, Cusa believed that a true community of nations could still be built even by preserving a unique identity and autonomy at the national level. This approach also can contribute significantly to lessening the likelihood of international conflict.

According to Cusa, the mutual integrationism needed to forge international unity can be achieved by discarding the isolated role of singularism based upon the primacy of individual fulfillment, as well as collectivism based upon the primacy of community interest.¹⁷ This implies that the complementary relationship between individual and collective interest renders the isolated role of the self-fulfilling free-market capitalistic economic system and the self-sacrificing command economic system irrelevant as the foundation for a true community of nations. This holds true regardless of the ideological divide among individual nation states.

The mutuality of the interests belonging to the individual, the community, and the society at all levels was delineated above. The roles of personal religious as well as political freedom and identity in forging unity among these entities also were considered in this regard. The above discussion on the existence of unity or the lack thereof (diversity) remains abstract if the role of economic interaction among these entities, together with social institutions and the individual's legitimate delegations and expectations, are not recognized.

In the economic sphere, Cusa's philosophy of integrated entrepreneurship, as opposed to an acquisitionist philosophy based upon a postulate of avarice and a statist philosophy based upon the state's supremacy by rejecting individual initiative, seems to be in perfect harmony with his earlier discussion on mutual integrationism when compared to singularism and collectivism as regards the goal of unity.¹⁸ Individual initiative, considered the *summum bonum* (the greatest or supreme good) of singularism or self-fulfilling capitalism, is treated as purely superficial and hence replaced by statism, collectivism, or socialism.

The great philosopher Michael Novak argues that democratic capitalism is not confined to the individual's acquisition of private wealth only, but that it also encourages innovation and invention depending upon society's needs and expectations.¹⁹ Novak claims that democracy, under

democratic capitalism, can play a vital role in solving legitimacy problems through a peaceful succession of power aimed at attracting long-term investment. Thus, some of capitalism's excesses (e.g., excessive accumulations of wealth) are checked by the power of the majorities when the authorities are engaged in the economic decision-making process.

Historical evidence derived from analyzing economically powerful societies also suggest that the democratic political structure stimulates creativity and cooperation within society, since its social structures (rules and regulations) are being formulated through the public's continuous debate and participation. To operate successfully and attain the best result, an economic enterprise must feature the interaction of individual initiative and creativity with social cooperation. The economic entity's success is manifested by implementing the idea of many individuals acting together in a creative enterprise (i.e., cooperation).

A market based upon the cooperative competition model, as opposed to only cut-throat competition for profit maximization, allows both customers (consumers) and enterprises (producers) to gain.²⁰ In this process, the rights and entitlements of poor workers should receive as much importance as the most powerful multinationals, since only the workers can produce the high-quality products in which the companies can take pride for their success. So, when the good of all becomes the goal of each, humanity in general and the community in particular see identity with the individual person. Once individual men and women fully understand the communal nature of personal responsibilities, they identify with the community or society to achieve the common goals of peace, harmony, and a good quality of life.

Given the above conceptual and theoretical underpinnings, let's see how the virtues' universal character, as outlined above, were incorporated into the development strategy for fostering unity, peace, and harmony.²¹ Despite clear promises of success in the Qur'an (e.g., 3:103-6; 6:160; 8:47), Muslims have not adopted these lofty virtues to build a strong community of nations (i.e., the Ummah based upon tawhid). This has allowed non-Muslims, who remained united and realized the universal virtues, to subjugate Muslim nations. However, imperialism's divide-and-rule policy can no longer be blamed for Muslim disintegration, since Muslim-majority nations have ruled themselves for almost 50 years.

Empirical Evidence Leading to the Ummah's Disintegration

The Muslim leadership's failure to pursue an appropriate educational strategy based upon revealed as well as acquired knowledge could be identified as the most important factor behind the Muslim world's dependent development strategy. As pointed out earlier, any nation that wants to develop must focus on a human-centered development strategy. Although the moral and spiritual dimensions are not incorporated, the concept of human development as posited by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the basis of three fundamental criteria (i.e., life sustenance, proxied by real purchasing power; access to knowledge, proxied by literacy; and the desire to live longer, proxied by longevity) fulfill the most significant elements for the biological existence of human life. Without these factors, the need for humanity's spiritual and moral development would be unrealistic. This explains why poverty due to the lack of adequate material development is considered inimical to faith.

According to the Hadith literature, the Prophet sought refuge from poverty so that its persistence would not weaken his faith. Judged by the three stated criteria of purchasing power, literacy, and longevity, a higher level of human development can act as a motivational factor to uplift moral and spiritual development. For believers, the growing urge to enhance moral and spiritual development must go hand in hand with material success, which can be translated through a higher level of human development. This is why inadequate material development, which can be manifested through extreme deprivation, can easily weaken the moral fabric of any individual, community, society, and nation. Given such circumstances, the very feeling of identity in establishing unity among Muslim nations cannot take place if believers in tawhid find themselves living in a dehumanizing environment.

Empirical findings related to the state of education based upon the level of human development suggest that even access to general education for both adults and non-adults is dismally low in the Muslim world. The relevant information for about 40 Muslim countries is available in world publications.²³ The newly independent Central Asian Republics (the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS]) are not included, for their recent independence and different historical background makes any comparison with the earlier independent Muslim states rather unrealistic. The low policy priority for such merit goods as education, as reflected through

the lower gross national product (GNP) allocation, which ranges from .7 to 5 percent, speaks for the perpetuation of ignorance and exploitation within and among communities. The combined primary, secondary, and tertiary level gross enrollment ratios also indicate a very poor performance in human capital. The unequal access to education caused by the low level of income and class-biased educational and state institutions, particularly at higher educational institutions, further contribute to limiting knowledge in the Muslim world.

The dependent development strategy pursued by both resource-poor and resource-rich Muslim countries since independence reflects what is stated above. Even some of the resource-rich Muslim countries (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Algeria, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Bahrain, UAE, and Oman), which have achieved higher literacy rates through easier access to education, are not immune to pursuing a western-oriented development strategy based upon costly structures, showy monuments, and luxurious gadgets that, by Islamic standards, would be considered a grand and pompous lifestyle.²⁴

Such a development strategy places the symbols of luxury and prestige (e.g., costly palaces and condominiums, cars, refrigerators) over the construction of low-cost affordable housing and pure drinking water for all. These wish-fulfilling items get priority over need-fulfilling ones, and disproportionately more priorities are attached to directly productive activities (DPA) than to investment in such social overhead capital (SOC) as education, health, rural roads, and so on for the masses. Only Sri Lanka, which has based its development strategy upon SOC, has achieved a high literacy rate in particular and a reasonably high human development that is, in general, comparable to those in developed countries.²⁵

Contrary to the ahadith suggesting that education is compulsory for both men and women, the gender-bias in education is quite conspicuous in the Muslim world. As a result, almost half of all Muslims, the vast majority of them women, have little or no education and thus only a limited ability to prepare the future generation. Women's inadequate access to education also implies greater dependency upon men and a lower level of input when making important family decisions, especially on how many children to have.

An inappropriate development strategy, designed by borrowed expertise and consultants and financed by borrowed funds, uses more foreign than indigenous resources and so creates less job opportunities for the abundant supply of available labor.²⁶ This contributes to underutilized

capacity, lower rates of employment, and higher dependency within the family. As such, growing unemployment is a major destabilizing force in the Muslim world's slow economic growth.

An external aid-dependent development strategy brings forth a whole host of restrictions associated with labor standards being maneuvered by the vested interest of western producers. As a matter of fact, control over the development funds used to finance development projects, particularly education and knowledge-based technologies, is used to change fundamental policy decisions to the detriment of capital-poor Muslim countries. Unfortunately, this dependency strategy has made the better-off Muslim countries, most of which belong to the median human development category, more dependent upon external aid than the less well-off Muslim countries.²⁷

The obvious consequence is that the virtues of indigenous knowledge, divine and acquired values, and cultures are sacrificed for secular and/or modern knowledge. In addition, the virtues of wage goods (i.e., sacrificing human effort for better-paid luxury and non-wage goods for the privileged) and the virtues of self-sufficiency and self-respect are sacrificed for sophistication and maintaining easy popularity.

Like the virtues of learning, effort, and self-respect, the virtues of equality, justice, and fairness also can be instrumental in establishing a bond of friendship, unity, and fraternity throughout the Muslim world, as it did in the non-Muslim West. This applies as much to a micro-unit (i.e., family) as to a macro-unit (e.g., communities and societies at all levels, including that of the Ummah). Inequality, which is manifested by tolerating exploitation and injustice, disturbs a society's balance.²⁸ As long as absolute and relative inequality exists, the privileged always will claim identity not with their community's underprivileged members, but with the privileged members of another community.

This is clear from the countless incidents and acts of maltreatment reported by the media that are meted out to emigrant workers from poor countries by their employers in better-off countries. Such cases are more conspicuous in the Muslim world than in the non-Muslim world.²⁹ The lack of awareness resulting from the lack of knowledge and education, as opposed to nationality, is a major factor in the highly organized employers' ability to exploit the highly unorganized workers.

The results of the highly unequal development pursued by the state worsens the relationships between workers with no assets and powerful employers-cum-producers-cum-capitalists. Empirical evidence suggests

that the inequality and poverty contributing to the perpetuation of exploitation in all societies are two sides of the same coin: growth. Although World Bank publications lack systematic information on inequality as a proxy for exploitative mechanisms and the magnitude of deprivation as a proxy for poverty, relevant (but limited) statistics seem to suggest that inequality and poverty remain serious challenges to the bond of unity and fraternity among Muslim communities. These two social problems question the role of the privileged members' obligation toward the underprivileged members (*huquq al-'ibad*). Records on the magnitude of relative inequality and poverty based on the level of human development suggest that most Muslim countries, except for the few oil- or resource-rich countries belonging to the category of high human development, are confronted with these twin social problems that continue to strain the Muslims' bond of fraternity.³⁰

Tolerance is recognized as a universal virtue that can promote unity through identity among the adherents of any revealed or non-revealed religion, or among members of homogeneous or heterogeneous societies. In any society, the degree of democracy goes hand in hand with the degree of tolerance for opposing views that can be publicized through the media. In other words, an extremely competitive democratic society is highly tolerant in terms of accommodating opposing views and vice versa.

By this measure of democracy, most Muslim countries fall under the category of less-tolerant societies, for they do not enjoy a true multiparty democracy based on regularly held free and fair elections. Of course, this is quite contrary to the fundamentals of *tawhid*. The Qur'an specifies the reward for patience, and God promises to help or remain with those who are patient and forgive. Contrary to this, Muslim rulers are well-known for showing intolerance in terms of imposing laws and regulations, along with political pressure and controls, on media content. Repressive actions by the state (e.g., killing or harassing journalists, imposing censorship, arresting and torturing helpless citizens) have seriously limited the process of democratization in many countries.³¹

Findings on the status of press freedom, used as a proxy for the tolerance of opposition views expressed through the media, suggest that some countries become more intolerant even though they have attained a medium human development (MHD) level.³² In fact, the rulers of these countries use the achievement in human development components, in terms of socioeconomic rights, to justify their suppression of civil liberties and political rights. Out of 32 Muslim countries, half are classified as MHD and yet resort to oppressive measures against any calls for governmental trans-

parency and accountability. The experiences of established democracies suggest that without a well-developed civil society, it is well-nigh impossible to have an atmosphere that supports democracy. In a civil society, while civil liberties (CL) include freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion, political rights (PR) allow citizens to apply civil liberties to change their governments through regularly held free and fair elections.

Judged by the criteria of CL and PR, as applied by the Freedom House Survey of 1998, the performance of Muslim countries appears to be equally disastrous. All of the countries studied failed to satisfy even one-third of CL and PR criteria, as included in civil and political rights (CPR). Only Gambia fulfilled one-third of the CPR components; however, its CPR record worsened in the latter part of 1990s. Four-fifth of the countries could fulfill only one-fifth of CPR; only 6 out of 38 could fulfill around one-quarter of CPR. Unfortunately, of all of the countries studied, three-fifths of which are categorized as MHD in terms of satisfying 50 to 94 percent of the requirements set for achieving a good human development record, none could fulfill half of the CPR requirements.

As for the virtue of altruism, defined as helping others particularly at times of natural and man-made disasters, the Ummah's performance is even worse. At the national level, better-off individual Muslims might pay zakat as a religious obligation. But at the international level, the number of wealthy Muslims who support benevolent or charitable organizations compares very unfavorably with the wealthy believers of other faiths. The active role of innumerable voluntary organizations, NGOs, and Christian missionary activities in providing disaster relief to Muslim countries should make us ashamed. Thus, it seems that Muslims are more concerned with formal obligations (*fard al-'ayn*) manifested through worship (*'ibadah*) on the personal level (*haqq Allah*), while non-Muslims are more concerned with altruistic activities (*haqq al-'ibad*).

Altruism has implications for moderation in earning and spending, be it at the very micro-level or the highly aggregated macro-level. Overall consumption patterns in the Muslim countries speak more in favor of conspicuous, rather than moderate, consumption habits.³³ Pramanik's 1996 study suggests that during the 1980s, better-off Muslim countries experienced the highest deficits in such strategic items as food and related products.³⁴ The composition of food items further indicates that the deficits could be reduced significantly by changing food habits.

The overall composition of imports also indicates that consumers in the Muslim world prefer goods that they cannot produce and produce goods

that they themselves do not consume or use. Despite the availability of imports from other Muslim countries, some Muslim countries prefer to import from non-Muslim countries. This explains why four-fifths of the Muslim world's total imports during the 1980s came from non-Muslim countries, whose number varied from 5 to 16, as opposed to Muslim countries, whose number varied from 1 to 7. In terms of imports and exports, Muslim countries prefer to depend more on non-Muslim than Muslim countries. The colonial linkage, along with the Muslim countries' lack of confidence in the quality of what they produce and the capacity to handle the exports in time, seem to have directed trade dependency more toward non-Muslim countries.

The OIC's Role in Integrating the Ummah

Islam's tawhid-based ideological worldview was the guiding factor behind the OIC's formation in 1969.³⁵ The OIC, which represents the political, economic, and cultural conglomeration of Muslim countries, seeks to change the balance of power at the international decision-making level in order to consolidate the Ummah's economic and political power. Although the universal concept of nationhood that integrates the diverse people, nations, and religions into a unique cultural and political harmony was used as the basis to strengthen the Ummah, the OIC's performance during 1969-2001 is not encouraging. In fact, the Ummah seems even more disintegrated now than it was in 1969. Perhaps this is due to the rapid increase in the West's technological and economic power structures, which are supported by superior human capital when compared to what is available in the Muslim world.

The Ummah's failure to achieve integration can be explained largely by each OIC member country's externally financed dependent development strategy. Muslim leaders involved in the IOC gradually became aware of the fact that a nation's political strength, or that of a group of nations, is determined largely by its economic strength. The communist bloc's recent disintegration was caused more by misplaced ideological and military priorities than economic muscle. As such, its failure to make their citizens' quality of life comparable to that of the free-market economy sowed the seeds of its sociopolitical destabilization.

It is equally true that the system's failure to involve the masses in the official decision-making process contributed to the mismatch between the relatively stronger socioeconomic rights (SER) as a measure of economic

democracy, being proxied by the human development indicator, and the relatively much weaker civil-political rights (CPR) as a measure of political democracy. It appears that poor Muslim countries with poor records on human development are, on the whole, enjoying a higher level of political democracy than the better-off Muslim countries with higher human development records but enjoying limited political democracy.

Recent political experience demonstrates that state machineries that fail to balance SER and CPR are confronted with a stronger political opposition. The indomitable demand for political power-sharing by the vocal masses, after having reached a certain level of human development, triggered a revolution in the communist bloc, just as it brought a wave of destabilization in Iran and elsewhere.³⁶

The fast-growing East Asian miracle economies are not exceptions to this rule, although they enjoy socioeconomic and political stability, as well as higher growth, together with many other Latin American, African, West and South Asian countries that currently are experiencing much slower growth and relatively more instability. Such countries as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, Algeria, Nigeria, as well as most Latin American countries, all of which have experienced serious sociopolitical and economic unrest during the last 3 decades, attest to the above hypothesis that there is a vital need to balance economic and political democracy.

Apart from promoting a few educational institutions of higher learning, including training and research centers, the OIC's objectives of realizing the virtues of learning and applying reason to all aspects of life, by acquiring and promoting all kinds of knowledge, remains unfulfilled. Not only has it failed to create a favorable environment in any Muslim country that is capable of attracting Muslim scholars and researchers, it also has failed to stop the Muslim world's brain drain. The Islamic Development Bank's (IDB) cumulative allocation for financing knowledge-based development compares very unfavorably with the large showy infrastructure projects that benefit the privileged far more than the underprivileged. As such, the OIC has yet to exploit the potential of *tawhid*'s fundamental principles to consolidate the Ummah's economic, political, and cultural power so that the Ummah can strengthen its power base and protect its interests from the onslaught of other international organizations.

The absence of legitimate governments with the popular mandates necessary for making the vital decisions that will affect both the country's and the Ummah's interests are largely responsible for this failure. Western gov-

ernments, except for a few that have the virtue of both economic democracy (SER) and political democracy (CPR), are now even more united in their attempt to dominate world organizations in order to squeeze benefits from the Muslim world. It also appears that the West's unity has been achieved by establishing a sound balance among economic power, free-market economies, and respect for human rights and freedom (see section 1). The Ummah disintegrated largely because it did not achieve this balance.

Strengthening Unity through Economic and Political Democracy

The continuous prosperity of the economically powerful West since World War II is the result of the beneficial effect of the interdependence of economic freedom (EF) and political freedom (PF). If the freedom of economic enterprises is to survive, political freedom must be promoted and developed in an atmosphere of civil liberty. Likewise, the economic prosperity brought by the continuous freedom enjoyed by economic enterprises creates an environment in which people, after having achieved a certain level of prosperity, ask for more power-sharing and thereby promote democratization.³⁷ The relative strength of EF and PF might have different implications for sustainable economic growth and human development. In addition, EF's stronger positive impact might partly compensate for PF's weaker negative impact and vice versa.

Our findings, presented in chart 1 at the end of this paper, show that 25 out of 39 Muslim countries conform to the positive linkage between EF and PF (column 1), although 16 out of those 25 occupy an undesirable position in terms of limited economic and political freedom. As a whole, the oil-rich countries show a weaker association between these two variables. Economic freedom's instrumental role in economic growth has been well-documented by Gwartney and the Heritage-Foundation.³⁸ With the exception of the oil-rich countries, there is positive association between EF and EG (column 2). The economic freedom being nurtured in an atmosphere of civil liberty and political freedom is expected to promote human development.

However, some oil-rich countries that have restricted civil liberty and political rights have managed to ensure the three essential components of HD (i.e., literacy, purchasing power, and longevity) only because they enjoy a higher per capita income. Some countries, including the oil-exporting ones (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Uganda), failed to demonstrate the linkage between EF and HD (column 3).

These countries were experiencing limited EF for a variety of reasons, among them ongoing warfare, political unrest, or UN economic sanctions (e.g., Libya, Sudan).

Explanation of Column 1. Third-quadrant countries are the economically “least free” but politically “not free,” first-quadrant countries are economically “mostly free” but politically only “partly free,” second-quadrant countries are economically “mostly free” but politically only “partly free,” and fourth-quadrant countries are economically “mostly free” but politically “not free.” As the empirical evidence shows, Mali and Benin are the two politically “most free” countries, and Bahrain is economically the “most free” country, in the Muslim world.

Explanation of Column 2. Third-quadrant countries have a very low growth with the “least free” economic status, first-quadrant countries have very high economic growth with a “mostly free” economic freedom, second-quadrant countries have either a very low or low economic growth with a “mostly free” economic freedom status.

Explanation of Column 3. Third-quadrant countries have either a medium or high level of human development with a “mostly free” economic freedom, first-quadrant countries have either a very low or a low HD with either the “least free” or “mostly not free” economic freedom, second-quadrant countries have a “mostly free” economic freedom with low economic growth, and fourth-quadrant countries have either a medium or a high HD (only Libya) with either the “least free” or “mostly not free” economic freedom.

Explanation of Column 4. Third-quadrant countries are experiencing either a very low economic growth with either “not free” or “mostly not free” political freedom, second-quadrant countries have a very low economic growth with “mostly free” political freedom status (Benin and Mali, which enjoy complete freedom, are exceptions), and the fourth-quadrant countries have a high HD with mostly a “not free” political freedom status.

The linkage between PF and EG (column 4) operates through the linkage between PF with EF and EF with EG, as is evident from columns 1, 2, and 4. The key factors promoting long-term HD appear to be EF and PF or per capita income in the short-term absence of PF. But neither EF nor PF could be promoted in the presence of higher literacy rates without promoting civil society (e.g., trade unions, professional and other associations, and NGOs) that seek to counter the negative forces affecting economic and political freedom. Hence, some resource-rich countries might attain a rea-

sonably good human development record in terms of satisfying medium HD even in the absence of PF.

However, if civil society has no effective role, limited political freedom may not only restrict sustainable growth by constraining the freedom of economic enterprises, but simultaneously severely limit the scope of growth-promoting factors resulting from the innovative ideas generated by free-thinking entrepreneurs, scholars, and researchers. This, perhaps, is the primary reason why even the oil-rich Muslim countries have failed to attract such Muslim professionals. In fact, the restrictions and regulations associated with doing business and research in these countries continue to “encourage” many professionals to migrate to the West and feel comfortable with identifying themselves with their counterparts in the West.

This 50-year trend has restricted the ability of learning by applying rational reasoning to unite and protect the Ummah’s interests from the onslaught of western hegemony, whether direct or indirect. The failure of the IDB (the OIC’s sister organization) to give higher priority to social overhead capital also has forced capital-poor Muslim countries to resort to externally financed social development projects. According to a renowned Muslim scholar Abdullahi An-Naim, this will not help reduce the Ummah’s intellectual and political dependency. Rather, in all probability, this dependence will restrict the scope of the local tradition of knowledge and belief system instead of helping us understand the relevance and need for human rights from the philosophical foundation of tawhid, which is not so different from such fundamental universal values as peace, freedom, justice, equality, harmony, cooperation, and moderation.

In light of the theoretical discussions on the role of unity through identity (see section 1), the principle of tawhid does not warrant any forced uniformity among Muslim communities with diverse cultural, traditional, and historical backgrounds. The personal freedom of being guided by individual responsibility to satisfy collective interests can be integrated with the Ummah’s interest at all levels in a way that does not create conflict among the aforementioned entities. This is possible only if all of the essential virtues are operationalized through an environment aspiring to collective self-reliance and tolerance and placing greater priority on social investment (e.g., education and research), moderation, equality of opportunity, and competition with cooperation at the macro-level.

At the micro-level, basic human rights with an appropriate mix of responsibilities advocated by Islam need to be fostered by encouraging the educated masses to establish civil society. Without creating a sense of mass

participation and confidence in realizing the Ummah's goals, the sense of identity and belonging based upon universal values among its different entities cannot be created. But one has to remember that in the beginning, participatory politics will engender destabilization. For a successful participatory democracy, the goal of civil society can be materialized only by expanding social investment, which, in turn, can create an enlightened class that will fight for orderly and gradual democratization. In order to transition to a democracy that promotes (and does not demote) growth, Islam advocates evolutionary rather than revolutionary reforms in the spheres of civil liberty and political freedom, both of which are to be stimulated by economic freedom. As Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India have shown, achieving greater participatory democracy before attaining a certain level of economic democracy only brings more destabilization (i.e., disorder), which inhibits such growth-promoting factors as domestic and foreign investment.³⁹

The OIC's Future Role

The OIC and the IDB have a tremendous potential to ensure political and economic democracy within the Ummah. However, if they want to realize this potential, the OIC has to formulate policies based upon the member states' human and physical capital resources, and the IDB (the OIC's financial wing) must finance social investment projects (i.e., those related to education, health, and research). Cindoruk mentions that knowledge-intensive and information-based processes have become more important in determining the product composition of output and the material composition of products.⁴⁰ He also claims that the conflicts of interest associated with global economic policy decisions have convinced OIC countries to embark upon and participate in many regional programs geared toward the Ummah's economic integration.

The OIC may use its foreign minister conferences to generate an ongoing debate on how to create a civil society by expanding social investment projects. In order to achieve a common pool of scholars, scientists, researchers, technicians, and other necessary professionals, the richer countries will have to promote research in each member state, depending upon its potentials and requirements. Likewise, existing stocks of skilled and semi-skilled labor and of unused or underused land must be estimated so that effective long-range plans to attain collective self-sufficiency in strategic items (e.g., food and related services) can be designed and implemented.

For example, food security can be built up by pooling the Ummah's food stocks and then, after meeting each member's domestic requirements, distributing the actual surplus as necessary. The share of surplus food items from each country might be estimated on the basis of the use of knowledge, capital, and labor from the common pool. One study showed that just six countries (i.e., Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia, Nigeria, and Mauritania) have the highest potential to produce food for the whole Ummah,⁴¹ and that six other countries have the greater potential to contribute to the common pool of knowledge and technology (i.e., Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, and Egypt). As for contributing the necessary capital, a scarce factor for many Muslim countries, the oil-exporting countries have the greater potential to contribute to the common pool.

To attain the goal of competitive cooperation based upon maximizing social equity along with economic efficiency, the IDB will have to expand its co-financing of development projects that focus primarily on creating human capital through social investment. The resulting co-financing must be devoted to realizing the potentials of surplus land, labor, and financial capital to attain collective self-sufficiency in the strategic items of food and related products by sharing the associated costs according to the ability to finance and the benefits expected. The IDB's existing mode of financing, which is dominated by loan, leasing, and installment sales (these account for more than 80% of all financing, as opposed to only around 5% for equity and profit-sharing during 1396 AH-1420 AH) needs to be changed in favor of equity and profit-sharing. To do justice to the goal of attaining collective self-sufficiency in strategic food items and thereby reducing dependency upon externally financed imports, the share of agriculture and agro-based industry needs to be raised to at least 33%; currently, such investment represents only 14%, as opposed to 43% for infrastructure and 15% for industry.

Conclusion and Policy Suggestions

In terms of economic freedom, economic growth, and human development, Malaysia seems to be doing consistently well. Turkey is doing better by the criteria of economic and political freedom with its human development record. Indonesia, despite having a relatively better record of human development, economic freedom, and economic growth, failed to survive the economic crisis of mid-1997 because of its very poor record on political freedom.

However, Malaysia's continued success will depend upon how successfully its current and future leadership can reduce the gap between the percentage of ideal civil-political rights (CPR/ICPR of .24) and the percentage of human development (SER of .768) already attained. This gap (.53), called the economic-political democracy gap (EPDG), shows the difference between human development (HD), as a proxy for SER, and CPR, expressed as a percentage of ideal civil political rights (CPR/ICPR), with "1" being most free (i.e., Australia, Canada, the US). This gap emerges as a vital determinant of a stable, unified, and harmonious society, such as that of Malaysia, which should be able to withstand any future disintegration of the sociopolitical forces. This is true at both the national and supranational (Ummah) level. This EPDG, which is based upon the average of gaps for the four high-income oil-exporting countries, appears to be the highest (.64), followed by .48 for 18 countries medium-level HD, and .31 for 15 very low-income countries having a low HD.

Low-income countries (e.g., Bangladesh, Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Niger, and Chad) have a very low EPDG and so are more vulnerable to political instability if they have a higher level of CPR when compared to low ER. Countries with a high (only 4) or medium level (only 18) HD status experience more SER and less CPR. OIC member countries can learn a lot from Malaysia, given its track record in ensuring high growth with redistribution in an environment of socially, morally, and ethically oriented policies.

To benefit from the Malaysian model, which is based upon economic democracy and managing political conflict resolution through power-sharing, OIC countries must address the existing imbalance between economic and political democracy.⁴² To reduce this EPDG in order to avert political destabilization and promote democratization, low-income Muslim countries need more socioeconomic reforms, while better-off Muslim countries need more political reforms. Only by attaining a better quality of life with a higher literacy rate will low-income countries be able to promote a civil society that will fight for more political discipline that, in the presence of better governance and economic reforms (as shown by Malaysia) can help them achieve a better quality of life and thus reduce the EPDG.⁴³

On the other hand, those better-off Muslim countries with a better record of literacy rate through a higher SER should further promote civil society through more political power-sharing in order to sustain the already achieved better quality of life (HD). In this process, the OIC's role in promoting social investment (the "SOC path"⁴⁴) in low-income Muslim coun-

tries is instrumental. For better-off Muslim countries, the OIC needs to maintain an ongoing political engagement and intellectual debate to convince them to embrace more political reform (i.e., political power-sharing) in order to promote unity and strength and thereby contribute to the Ummah’s greater economic, social, political, and moral solidarity.

Chart 1. Interrelationships among economic freedom (EF), political freedom (PF), economic growth (EG), and human development (HD) in the Muslim world during the second half of the 1990s.

<i>Quadrants</i>	<i>Association btw. EF & PF Col. 1</i>	<i>Association btw. EF & EG Col. 2</i>	<i>Association btw. EF & HD Col. 3</i>	<i>Association btw. PF & EG Col. 4</i>
A. Positive Association 1. 3rd Quad. (undesirable)	Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen (16)	Afghanistan, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Gambia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen (23)	Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen (15)	Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Uganda, UAE, Yemen (25)
2. 1st Quad. (most desirable)	Benin, Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Turkey, Uganda (9)	Indonesia, Malaysia (2)	Bahrain, Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE (13)	X
B. Poorly Positive or Negative Association 1. 2nd Quad (undesirable)	Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Senegal (7)	Gabon, Morocco, Benin, Uganda, Tunisia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Lebanon, UAE, Kuwait, Turkey (13)	Benin, Uganda (2)	Burkina Faso, Benin, Gabon, Gambia, Jordan, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Turkey (10)
2. 4th Quad. (undesirable)	Bahrain, Brunei, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE (7)	X	Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Oman, Syria (8)	Indonesia, Malaysia (2)

Notes and sources: While the economic freedom score⁴⁵ varies from 1 to 5 (1-1.99: free, 2-2.99: mostly free, 3-3.99: mostly not free, and 4-5: least free) political freedom status based on rank for civil liberties and political rights⁴⁶ varies from 1-7, where the average rank as calculated above of 1-2.49: free, 2.5-3.49: mostly free, 3.5-5.49: mostly not free, and 5.5-7: not free. Economic growth status shows a growth of negative to .99: very low, 1-2.9: very low, 2.9-4.9: moderately high, and 5: high.⁴⁷ Human development score shows the value of index from 0-.25: very low, .26-.50: low, .51-.75: medium, and .76-1: high.⁴⁸

Notes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO), *Islam and a New International Economic Order: The Social Dimension* (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1980), 160.
2. S. Dayf, *The University of Islam*, trans. A. El-Affendi (Rabat, Morocco: ISESCO, 1998), introduction.
3. Ibid., chapter 2.
4. Ibid., chapter 3.
5. M. T. El-Mesawi, *A Muslim Theory of Human Society: An Investigation into the Sociological Thought of Malik Bennabi* (Malaysia: Thinker's Literacy Sdn. Bhd., 1998).
6. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, 1979, 1:89-91.
7. D. J. Leonardis, *Ethical Implication of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa* (The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy: 1998), 8.
8. Ibid., 10.
9. Ibid., 25.
10. Ibid., 137.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 145.
13. Ibid., 445.
14. "There should be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects idol-worship and believes in Allah shall grasp a firm handle that will never break. Allah hears all and knows all" (2:256). This is reinforced in other verses, such as: "Would you then compel humanity, against its will, to believe?" (10:99 and 109:1-6). All Qur'anic references are based on the Qur'an printed by the Saudi Arabia: Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA, 1410 AH.
15. Leonardis, 144.
16. Ibid., 146.
17. Ibid., 179.
18. Ibid., chapter 7.
19. Ibid., 205.
20. M. A. Choudhury, *Islamic Economic Cooperation* (Macmillan: 1989).
21. Dayf, chapter 11.

22. The Qur'an contains several other verses alluding to the importance of holding the rope of God (implying the Qur'an), for success lies in remaining united. They contain repeated warnings for those who are divided on issues of religion based on the tawhidi principles of justice, equality, peace, harmony, cooperation, unity, fraternity and brotherhood.
23. UNDP, 2000, and Human Development Report (various reports).
24. UNDP and World Bank Report (various reports).
25. This is evident from the extremely high enrollment ratios at all levels of education, primarily secondary and higher education, without any gender-bias. These high ratios compare very unfavorably with all of the low income economies, including the high income oil-exporting countries as well for the years 1965 and 1984 (World Bank, WDR, 1987, Table 31). It is no wonder that this higher literacy rate, achieved by promoting civil society, also helped Sri Lanka to enjoy more political freedom until 1983-84, when the civil war, triggered partly by external forces, became very intense.
26. A. H. Pramanik, *Development and Distribution in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur, Pelanduk, Publication (M) Sdn. Bhd. 1993), 26.
27. Ibid., 204. Based on four types of dependencies in 1980s (i.e., food, trade, financial, and social), better-off Muslim countries seem to be relatively more dependent than poorer Muslim countries.
28. S. N. H. Naqvi, *Ethics and Economics: An Islamic Synthesis* (UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1981), chapter 2. Naqvi argues that within the homogeneous whole of the Islamic perspective on life, its various elements must be equilibrated to produce the best social order. The Quran says: "He has created everything and has meted out for it a measure" (25:2 and 54:49). This equilibrium (social harmony) holds true in both the macro-sense (i.e., community or society) and the micro-sense (i.e., individual lives).
29. See Human Rights Watch World Report, 1986 (various reports).
30. UNDP, Human Development Reports (various reports).
31. T. Vanhanen, *The Process of Democratization: A Comparative Study of 147 States: 1980-88* (New York: Crane Sunzak, 1990), chapter 2. This study suggests the highly unstable nature of a political system conditioned by such pre-conditions as a vibrant and dynamic civil society, stable socioeconomic conditions, uncontrollable environmental forces that imply a distribution of power resources, and a balance of other forces between competing groups.
32. Freedom House, 1999 (various reports).
33. This is evident from a very low rate of saving in the Muslim countries, despite the standard of income, with the possible exceptions of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Cameroon during the mid-1960s and 1980s (World Bank, WDR, 1987, Table 5).
34. A. H. Pramanik, *Muslim World Agriculture in Disarray: An Agenda for Collective Self-reliant Development* (Malaysia: International Islamic University-Malaysia Research Center, 1996).

35. H. Mehdi, *Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC): A Review of Its Political and Educational Policies* (Progressive Publishers: 1989).
36. Many experts think that the prowestern Shah's repressive political system, which widened the income gap between the privileged and the underprivileged, failed to maintain a balance between growing economic power (J. Amuzegar, *Iran's Economy under the Islamic Republic* [London: I. B. Taurus, 1993]) and limited political power-sharing by the masses and thus triggered the forces of change through revolution to establish justice, equality, freedom, and human rights based on Islamic order as promised by Imam Khomeini (A. Rahnama and F. Nomani, *The Secular Miracle: Religion, Politics, and Economic Policy in Iran* [London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1990]). But Valla Vakili, in his *Debating Religion and Politics in Iran: The Political Thought of Abdol Karim Soroush* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, 1996), argues that religiously imposed ideology is a distortion of religious values and hinders the pursuit of knowledge and corrupts political power. He challenges the notion that an Islamic state is not necessarily antithetical to western values and interests.
37. Vanhanen, *Democratization*.
38. J. D. Gwartney, *Economic Freedom in the World: 1975-1979* (Canada: The Fraser Institute: 1996) 1996; The Heritage Foundation, 1998.
39. Vanhanen, *Democratization*, especially chapter 2; Z. F. Arat, *Democracy and Human Rights in Developing Countries* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991).
40. S. Cindoruk, "Economic Cooperation among OIC Countries and the Islamic Common Market," *Journal of Economic Cooperation among Islamic Countries* (January-April 1992):13.
41. Pramanik et al., *Muslim World Agriculture*.
42. Z. M. Arif, "Islamic Culture as an Essential Component of a Comprehensive Approach to Development: Some Lessons from the Malaysian 'Miracle,'" *Intellectual Discourse* 3, no. 2 (1995): 123-38.
43. J. D. A. Sachs and A. Warner, in their "Economic Reform and the Process of Global Intergration," *Bookings Papers on Economic Activity* (1995), vol. 1, strongly advocate pursuing economic reform to benefit from the process of global integration with all of its concomitant effects on economic growth in the reforming countries.
44. Based on empirical findings, G. G. Ranis et al, in their "Economic Growth and Human Development," *World Development* 28, no. 2 (2000): 197-219, strongly argue that a strategy based upon social overhead capital (SOC), in terms of expenditures on health and education, notably for women, establishes an important chain from economic growth (EG) to human development (HD) in a broader sense. Countries initially pursuing economic growth through DPA may lapse into the vicious category, while those with good HD (i.e., through SOC path and poor EG) may move into the virtuous category.

Most East Asian countries, as well as Sri Lanka, have followed the virtuous path since the 1970s.

45. B. T. Johnson et al., *Index of Economic Freedom* (The Heritage Foundation: 1999).
46. Freedom House Survey, 1999 (various reports).
47. World Bank, 2000/2001 (various reports).
48. UNDP, 2000 (various reports).