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Article Reviews

A Comparison of Shura and Deliberative Democracy Decision-Making Methods: Similarities and Differences

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Abstract

Shura is a decision-making model in Islamic governance that aims to make the right decisions for society in general and inclusively. While Allah has established the general framework for various issues, particularly administrative matters, the specific details are left to human discretion, to be determined through Shura and consultation. The significance of Shura is underscored in verse 38 of Surah Ash-Shura, where it is mentioned alongside fundamental Islamic principles such as prayer and zakat. Conversely, the democratic management model, a human construct, has evolved since ancient Greece, undergoing transformations resulting in diverse forms such as direct, representative, liberal, social, radical, dialogic, agonistic, and deliberative democracy. This study aims to compare the principles of Islamic governance with those of deliberative democracy. By analyzing their similarities and differences, this research seeks to evaluate the compatibility of these two governance frameworks. The findings provide insights into their potential alignment or divergence, contributing to a broader understanding of decision-making practices in diverse cultural and philosophical contexts.

Keywords *İslamic Political Governance, Shura, Consultation, Democracy, Deliberative Democracy*

INTRODUCTION

Scientists of the 17th and 18th centuries such as René Descartes, Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Baruch Spinoza, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau developed the management approach that emerged in the ancient Greek period (Gerring, 2023). These Western social scientists and philosophers developed a management approach based on human will and thought by supporting the democratic management approach with justice, freedom, fundamental human rights, liberty, reason, and logic. This intellectual development in the Western world enabled the West to progress and develop in every field (Buchanan & Conway, 2002).

The aforementioned advancements in Western societies garnered the interest of the Muslim community, prompting them to examine their systems of governance and comprehend them critically. A group of Muslim intellectuals, including Jamaleddin Afghani, Muhammed Abduh, M. Reşit Rıza, Hayreddin al-Tunusi, Mahmud Tarzi, Chiragh Ali, Ahmed Dahlan, Sayyid Ahmed Khan, and Mohammed Iqbal, embarked on an examination of the initial social governance system of Islam. Their argument posited that Islam bestowed upon individuals more excellent social, political, and rights-based values than those upheld by contemporary rulers. The scholars above posited that by examining early instances of Islamic governance principles and their alignment with modern administrative demands, it would be possible to formulate an Islamic governance approach congruent with the prevailing administrative paradigm and capable of addressing societal needs.

Following the initial four to five decades of the Islamic era, a discernible administrative framework emerged, characterized by the dominance of specific individuals imbued with a sense of Islamic holiness. This arrangement served to safeguard and perpetuate their administrative authority. Furthermore, this comprehension fully subjugated the intellect and volition of the

individual, asserting that individuals ought to approach administrators with a deferential attitude. This was done to enforce the political notion that the unwavering submission of Muslim individuals to their rulers was a religious obligation, thereby seeking to impose this belief on the entire society (Yakup, 2005).

Without a doubt, the transformation and reform in the knowledge of Muslim governance, which has become a self-perpetuating cycle, cannot be achieved alone through studies detached from the Western world's social, political, and administrative advancements. Muslim scholars have thoroughly examined Islamic sources emphasizing the importance of human intellect and will. They have also conducted extensive research to determine how these sources align with contemporary Western governance principles and the potential for harmonization between the two. Muslim scholars initiated their scholarly inquiries by scrutinizing the Islamic administrative principles of Shura (consultation), allegiance, *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), *ijma* (consensus), *qiyas* (analogical reasoning), *Ehli Hal wal Aqd* (people of authority and contract), as well as the practical instances of their implementation by the Prophet Muhammad and the initial four caliphs (Ahmad, 2003). The reformist endeavours and intellectual pursuits of Muslim scholars, initiated toward the conclusion of the 19th century, persistently shape the contemporary comprehension of governance within Muslim communities. Ahmet Raysuni, Raşid Gannuşi, Asef Beyat, and Ahmet Elkatib are recognized as prominent academics and scholars who persistently engage in their endeavours within this particular domain.

Building upon these works, this study aims to contribute to the academic literature by conducting a comparative analysis of the Muslim governance approach and the concept of democratic governance. Recognizing the diversity of democratic governance models, this research focuses specifically on deliberative democracy as a representative paradigm within democratic thought. By examining the principles and practices of deliberative democracy alongside those of Islamic governance, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of their respective approaches to decision-making and governance. Moreover, Shura, which has been mentioned in several verses of Islam Religion's holly book Qur'an and Hadiths of Prophet Muhammed, is the main way of decision-making for Muslim Society (3/Âl-i İmran 159, 27/Neml 32, 42/Şûrâ 38).

The concepts of democracy and Islamic management have been widely studied in academic literature. However, both frameworks are extensive and multifaceted, making it challenging to pinpoint their exact similarities and differences comprehensively. Rather than addressing these approaches in their entirety, this study focuses on their decision-making methods, offering a more granular analysis. By examining these methods at a micro level, this research seeks to identify key similarities and differences, providing a foundation for future scholars to explore the interplay between democratic and Islamic management systems in greater depth.

This study tries to answer questions such as: What are the functions and binding power of these decision-making mechanisms? What are the authority and limits of the individual in decision-making in these two governance understandings? Does the individual have the freedom to make all kinds of decisions regarding life in the decision-making mechanisms of these management models? Do the decisions taken by individuals in these management models have binding power in management, and what is the level of this binding power? These questions aim to assist researchers in achieving the study's objectives by uncovering the fundamental differences and similarities in decision-making mechanisms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study comprises four primary sections; secondary academic sources were examined for this scholarly study. The first section covers decision-making in Islam and the binding of decisions taken by Shura. This section draws upon various academic resources including Ibn

Kathir's "Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya," Ibn Esir's "El-Kamil fit-Tarih," Ibn Kutayba's "al-Imame ve's-Siyase," Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari's "Tarih-i Tabari," Adem Apak's "History of Islam," and İbrahim Sarıçam's "Umayyad-Hashimi Relations." Additionally, the works of Mehmet Azimli, Ahmad al-Raysuni, and Ali Muhammed Sallabi, such as "Reading the Four Caliphs Differently," "Government System and Foundations in Islam," and "Shura," respectively, have been consulted to provide further insights into the background of the Alawite Sunni segregation during the companions' period power struggle.

To provide a more comprehensive analysis, the following section will explore decision-making processes and the binding nature of decisions within the context of deliberative democracy. This section analyzed the perspectives of prominent intellectuals such as John Rawls, Seyla Benhabib, Hannah Arendt, and John Dryzek, as well as theorists such as Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, and Anthony Giddens, who have made significant contributions to the field of theory. A more in-depth analysis is provided in this study, which also incorporates and examines a broader range of scholarly works on the topic, including those by Elstub (2010), Lafont (2015), and Luskin et al. (2002).

The third section of the study covers views arguing that Islam and democracy are not similar and compatible. This section analyzed academic works of social scientists such as Huntington (1993), Karadere (2020), Koyuncu (2015), El-Ganuşi (2017), Tezel and Schönbohm (2004), Kaçer and Erat (2014), Lenaghan (1999) and Fishkin and Lusking (1990). Building on this analysis, the next section provides a more comprehensive discussion, concluding with the fourth and final section of the article, which covers thinkers advocating that the governance understandings of Islam and democracy are similar and compatible. This section will involve the works of social scientists such as Ibn Taymiyya, Bediüzzaman (2022), El-Katip (2016), Sallabi (2010), and El-Cabiri (2019).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research will use a qualitative secondary systematic literature review to collect data and determine results. Inclusion and exclusion criteria will be integral to this systematic literature review, including qualitative secondary research. These criteria will help ensure the review is comprehensive, relevant, and focused on the research question (Shu et al., 2022). To facilitate an in-depth discussion of this topic, this study incorporates a wide range of academic sources, including peer-reviewed articles, book reviews, PhD and Master's theses, and conference papers.

Nonetheless, amongst the abundance of the academic publications in this topic, to ensure the review's trustworthiness, this study also implemented some inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as qualitative studies that address the research question, published in peer-reviewed journals or other reputable sources, using rigorous qualitative research methods, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, or ethnography, and providing rich and detailed data on the research question. Based on this, the materials that involved in this study were sourced from the academic databases such as the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), SCOPUS, CSA, DergiPark, SCIRP, and Google Scholar. The focus of the study is on academic works published from 1950 to the present; however, in exploring the historical context and practical application of Shura, classical Islamic historical writings and other primary sources were also evaluated.

Through the systematic literature review that applied here, this study tries to answer three critical questions: What are the main similarities and differences between Shura and Deliberative democracy? What are the functions and binding power of these decision-making mechanisms? What is the role of Individuals in these two decision-making models? Addressing these three questions with clear and logical answers will provide future researchers with a foundational understanding of the key similarities and differences between Islamic and democratic governance

approaches. This will not only offer a starting point for further exploration in this field but also pave the way for more comprehensive and methodologically rigorous comparative studies on Islamic and democratic governance, as well as broader comparative research in this domain.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Decision-making in Islam and Binding of Decisions Taken by Shura or Consultation

According to Ünal (2023), in Islamic governance and political administration, Shura or consultative refers to gathering authorized and competent people before deciding on any issue, exchanging detailed views on the determined issue, and reaching a shared decision. It is necessary to thoroughly investigate the issues, exchange ideas, and then implement or amend the decision. Therefore, consultation aims to find the best aspect of the issue while consulting on any issue to minimize the possibility of error.

There are four primary sources of decision-making in Islam. These sources are the Qur'an, Sunnah (the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and what he said [Hadith]), *Ijma* (Islamic scholars who have scientific approval and fatwa authority on issues that are not included in the Qur'an and Sunnah, come together to decide on a subject) and *Qiyas* (the Qur'an and the Sunnah). It is not directly involved in the Sunnah, but deciding on a subject by comparing it according to the diseases (connections) in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Alwazna, 2016).

Another study by Bozkurt (2019) highlights that, although consultation is not formally recognized as one of the primary sources of Islamic law, it is intrinsically linked to *Ijma* (consensus) and *Qiyas*, both of which are considered fundamental sources in Islamic jurisprudence. Consensus and qiyas are the two main sources of Islamic law that emerged as a result of scholars' consultation. Therefore, council or consultation is both a decision-making method and a decision-making method that is effective in the formation of two of the basic Islamic laws.

In the Qur'an, the primary sources of Islam are social, political, cultural, and economic. Some general legal frameworks have been determined in all areas of human life. The primary legislative source of Islamic law is the Qur'an. The Prophet, on the other hand, is both an interpreter and practitioner of the Qur'an. Therefore, what the Prophet did and said is one of the primary sources of Islamic law (Schacht, 1967). The Prophet was the interpreter and executor of the Qur'an, and he also had the authority to legislate accordingly. Allah says in the Surah An-Nisa verse 59:

> "*O you who believe! Obey Allah, obey the Prophet, and ulu'l-amr from among you. If you disagree about something - if you truly believe in Allah and the Hereafter - take it to Allah and the Prophet. This is both auspicious and the most beautiful regarding the result to be achieved*".

This means that Allah commands that the decision and opinion of the Messenger of Allah should be evaluated together with his own decision and opinion. Schacht (1967) states that the Surah An-Nisa verse 65 determined the function and significance of the Prophet in Islamic law.

Issues that are explicitly defined in the Qur'an and Sunnah are not open to discussion. However, when the application methods or timing of these matters, as outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah, are not explicitly specified, consultation may be sought to address these aspects. Council consultation can also be held on issues that need to be determined in general terms in the Qur'an and Sunnah, but specific points need to be determined. This is already in the field of ijma and comparison. Experts in the Qur'an and Sunnah typically play a central role in such consultations. New legal frameworks are incorporated into Islamic law by addressing specific issues that fall within the broader principles established by the Qur'an and Sunnah. These decisions, however, may vary based on geographic, societal, and contextual needs – what remains crucial is that no decision contradicts the teachings of the Qur'an or the Sunnah.

The bindingness of the decisions taken by the Shura may vary according to the subject or scope. However, the *Mushawere* or consultation decision on a legal issue at the state level is binding, and everyone, including the head of state, is subject to the decision and is responsible for its implementation. In particular, Qur'an's Surah Ali Imran verse 159 is evident of the mentioned argument. Sayı (1994) argues that the Shura is an absolute obligation by showing the Surah of Ali-Imran as evidence his idea, whereas Ali Imran states in verse 159 that even the Prophet is obliged to implement the decision made in *Mushawere*.

Therefore, based on the previous discussion analysis, we opined that this verse is evidence that the decision of the Shura or Council is binding. Furthermore, the bindingness of the Shura (Council) is based on the *Nass* (evidence), that is the Qur'an. Another event that can be evidence of the finality of the bindingness of the Shura or consultation decision is the example of the decision rendered about Banu Qurayza Jews. For the Banu Qurayza Jews, we know that the decision made by Sad bin Muaz, applied by Prophet Muhammed (S.AW.). When Sad bin Muaz was appointed as the arbitrator upon the request of Bani Qurayza, before making a decision, Sad bin Muaz asked the Prophet Muhammed whether Allah and His Messenger would accept his decision. Prophet Muhammed said that,

"*Allah and His Messenger will accept any decision that Sad bin Muaz will make*".

In other words, they stated that they would abide by the decision of Muaz (Alajmi & El-Sharawy, 2010). Furthermore, it can be seen from the examples of the *Mushawere* (consultation) of the first four caliphs that the decision of the Shura is binding. Hamed (2023), conveys the decision of second caliph Umar bin Hattab regarding the election of the Caliph. Therefore, when we look at the examples of council or consultation during the Prophet and the first four caliphs, we see that the decisions taken in consultation are binding.

Decision-making and Binding of Decisions in Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy is a prominent model of democracy that seeks to engage individuals in the decision-making process by facilitating discussions in which participants negotiate issues under conditions of equality, ensuring that all voices are heard and have equal influence. At its core, deliberative democracy is grounded in two fundamental principles: inclusivity and equality of participation (Bächtiger et al., 2018). As with other democracy models, the deliberative democracy model also differs within itself and has gone through different phases since the 1970s when it started to be discussed. This evolution has generally progressed from theory to partial institutionalization and, thus, to practicalization.

Escobar and Elstub (2015), through their study argue how deliberative democracy argues that it has undergone three and four evolutionary processes to date. According to this study, Habermas (1985, 1991) and Rawls (1999, 2001, 2005) are first-generation representatives of deliberative democracy. These two thinkers were concerned with the normative dimension of deliberative democracy built on Kant's logic of public opinion and the legitimacy of public dialogue and debate. For this reason, they did not touch on the administrative questions, solutions of contemporary societies, and how public debates will be transformed into a decision-making mechanism and passed in practical life (Escobar & Elstub, 2017).

Political scientists such as Bohman (2002) and Gutmann and Thompson (1996) represent the second generation of deliberative democracy advocates, who center the discussion on how Habermas and Rawls' theory of deliberative democracy can be put into practice and partially institutionalized. However, although Escobar and Elstub (2017) did not mention her, Benhabib (2009) is a both first-generation and second-generation deliberative democracy theorist. For the

reason that Benhabib has discussed the administrative legitimacy of the dialogues and negotiations in the public sphere and the participation of women, immigrants, and others.

Furthermore, according to Escobar and Elstub (2017), third-generation deliberative democracy theorists such as Bächtiger et al. (2010) have discussed the decision-making process in institutionalization of deliberative democracy in more detail. On the other hand, Escobar and Elstub (2017) asserts that John Dryzek is a prominent figure in the second and third generations of deliberative democracy theorists, noting in his publication that "Dryzek has helped mold the theory of deliberative democracy to make it more practical."

Additionally, in order to make the decisions taken by ordinary citizens as a result of equal and free negotiations in the public sphere binding on the administration, deliberative democracy theorists developed institutions such as Citizen Forums, Citizen Initiative, "citizens' juries and planning cells, which are generally called Mini- Public (Setälä & Smith, 2018) (both developed in the 1970s), consensus conferences (modeled by the Danish Board of Technology in the 1980s) and deliberative polls (designed by James Fishkin in the 1990s)" (Setälä, 2017). Those who argue that deliberative democracy should be institutionalized think that with the development and active implementation of Mini-Publics, which are a part of the said institutionalization, the idea of deliberative decision-making, which is an abstract and normative theory, will be implemented in a systematic, continuous and effective way (Jacobs & Kaufmann, 2019).

With this, according to Kuyper (2012), deliberative mini-publics are considered to be a legitimate form of decision-making because the open and unconstrained dialogue introduces people to a wide variety of knowledge positions, generates new skills and interests, and fosters relationships. One of the most prominent examples of deliberative mini-publics is public opinion polling, initially introduced by George Gallup in a New England town and subsequently expanded upon by James Fishkin. This method has since been redefined as the Deliberative Public Opinion Poll (Fishkin et al., 2000). According to Luskin et al. (2002), Gallup proposed that public opinion polling could serve to restore the democratic principles of New England town meetings within the context of a large nation-state.

Another study by Jacobs and Kaufmann (2019) highlighted that Deliberative Public Opinion Polling is the most widely recognized and comprehensive form of Deliberative Mini-Public, enabling the participation of a large number of individuals. Unlike other Deliberative Mini-Publics, such as Citizen Forums, Citizen Initiatives, Citizen Juries, Citizens' Assemblies, and Consensus Conferences, which involve only a limited group of participants, the Deliberative Public Opinion Polling model facilitates the engagement of hundreds of individuals in the decision-making process. Despite efforts to institutionalize and operationalize deliberative democracy, progress has been limited in making the decisions directly binding on the governed. Papadopoulos and Warin (2007) argued that governance networks often produce de facto binding decisions, unlike deliberative polls, where the participants, who are not elected representatives accountable to constituencies, lack the authority to make binding decisions. In deliberative democracy, the opinions generated in public sphere meetings and those within mini-public institutions—designed to facilitate deliberation—serve either as recommendations for policymakers or as a means for administrators to gauge public opinion. This process plays a crucial role in informing the public about their circumstances and needs.

Many theorists of deliberative democracy argue that the primary goal of the deliberative democracy model is not merely to ensure that binding decisions are made, but to foster a deliberative approach in decision-making within representative democracy. This model emphasizes the importance of cultivating a deliberative culture, where decisions are shaped by thoughtful discussion and consideration, rather than simply focusing on the outcome of binding decisions. Therefore, the theorists in question believe that deliberative democracy should not

emerge as a stand-alone model but rather act together and in cooperation with other democracy models, such as representative democracy, and enable these models to take their decision-making methods into a deliberative manner. Indeed, according to Lafont (2015), "Deliberative democrats should endorse the use of mini-publics for shaping public opinion, not public policies".

However, the author observes that the exchange of views, discussion, and negotiation activities that take place in the virtual space, which has recently been evaluated within the scope of the fourth-generation deliberative democracy developments in the deliberative democracy literature, are indirectly binding even if they are not directly binding. Discussions about daily or important developments in this field can quickly draw managers' attention to the subject in question and thus lead to rapid results. This situation may become much more important than other mini-publics in terms of deliberative democracy, which is the most discussed term democracy, and in terms of applying deliberative democracy to practice and real life in the coming period (Janssen & Kies, 2005).

Many deliberative democracy theorists find institutionalization in deliberative democracy inadequate and especially criticize mini-publics for having a very narrow-framed participation and decision-making process. However, when it is considered in terms of the capacity of online forms to reach very fast and broad audiences, it seems promising that it can answer the criticisms made against narrow-scoped applications of deliberative democracy. The studies in this way should be well organized, according to the fundamental normative values of deliberative democracy and applied by its function. Otherwise, as in mini-publics, this area will likely go beyond its purpose. It should be known that although social media and online access channels have normative values at the beginning, they may face the danger of being under the control of certain circles by getting into the grip of receiving advertisements due to economic concerns over time (Jackson & Schuler, 2000).

Views Arguing that Islam and Democracy are not Similar and Compatible

Since centuries, comparison debates continue between eastern and western societies, especially in terms of religion and modernity. One of the most popular comparisons is about western and Eastern governance models, in other words comparison of democracy and Islamic Governance Understandings. Moreover, these arguments mainly run around the similarities and differences of these governance models, whether one is more modern or which one is more reliable to the needs and preferences of society. Many Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers argue that islam and democratic governance understandings are not similar and compatible. Furthermore, Huntington (1993), one of the leading thinkers, a Jewish-born social scientist and sociologist, argues that "positive attitudes and values towards democracy are a prerequisite for democratic transitions and such attitudes do not exist in Muslim countries".

Huntington's (1993) analysis offers a valid perspective by comparing the current situation of Muslim countries with democracy, rather than directly contrasting Islamic governance with democratic models. It is important to note that the concept of Islamic governance, as it was practiced during the time of the first four caliphs, ceased to be a definitive framework following their era. Subsequent governance approaches in Muslim countries were shaped by diverse factors, including the influence of various dynasties, cultures, and nationalities, rather than a consistent Islamic governance model. Especially after the battle of Battle of Ṣiffīn (May–July 657 CE) and Hakkem (arbitrator) event, Muslim society's governance understanding has changed from Islamic and Shura Perspective to the Human-based Sultanate System (Karadere, 2020). Therefore, we believe it is impossible to label the political structures and modern nation-states that emerged after the mentioned period as Islamic states.

Moreover, sociologists such as Francis Fukuyama, Bernard Lewis, Ernest Gellner, Nathanael Smith, Charles Rowley, and Daniel Pipes are among other Western thinkers who argue

that Islam and Democracy have opposite understandings. The thought put forward by these Western thinkers which is claiming that Islam and Democracy are opposite understandings is almost the same or similar, and this is the problem of "Islam does not coincide with secular-liberal values, or the values of Islam do not match with secular-liberal values" (Koyuncu, 2015). On the other hand, Tunisian thinker Al-Gannouchi argues that secularism is not a must for Democracy and that Islam has a liberal mindset even though it is not like liberalism, so it is possible to be a Muslim democrat, that is, Islam and Democracy are compatible. Gannouchi presents this claim as evidence that "Christian democrats" in Europe and many religious institutions in the USA act in harmony with the state and that many heads of state and bureaucrats do not need to hide their piety at all (El-Ganuşi, 2017).

Another thinker who advocates the idea that Islam and Democracy are entirely different and that neither an Islamic democracy nor a democratic model of Islam can be mentioned is Bassam Tibi, a German sociologist of Syrian origin. Tibi, Against El-Gannuşi's "religious democrat" thesis, defends the idea that democracy is a management model based on the foundations of modernity and secularism and that no mentality with religious implications can be reconciled with Democracy. Because Tibi, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism have some humanistic and ethical values, as in democracy, due to human nature. However, this does not mean religion or belief-based thoughts can be matched with democracy (Tezel & Schönbohm, 2004).

On the other hand, not only Western sociologists and thinkers argue that democracy is not similar or compatible with Islam. Many Muslim thinkers, social scientists, academics, and opinion groups have the same idea which is democracy and Islamic governance understanding are not similar and no way for them to be compatible. One of the leading Muslim thinkers who argues that democracy and Islam governance understandings are not similar and compatible with each other is Sayyid Qutb. Sayyid Qutb, opposed the understanding of "sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the individual" of the understanding of democracy, With the idea of "The rule belongs to Allah" (Believer: 12). Qutb, fundamentally opposes the motto of "sovereignty/rule unconditionally belongs to Allah" and argues that democracy and Islamic governance models have completely opposite understandings. Bican Şahin, tries to define Qutb's opposition to democracy with the following statement: "[s]etting up the kingdom of God on earth and eliminating the kingdom of man, means taking power from the hands of its usurpers and restoring it to God alone ... and [establishing] the supremacy of the Shari'a alone and the repeal of all man-made laws." (Şahin, 2006).

When one looks at this explanation of Qutb, it will be clearly understood that Qutb fundamentally opposes the understanding of democracy on a philosophical and intellectual level and even attempts to reject Western liberal thought rather than the democracy management model alone. The reason that Qutb perceives that the individual has a say in decision-making is a usurpation of God's decree. While Qutb considers the Parliament and the representatives performing the legislative duties in the Parliament from the perspective of thought, Hasan Elbenna, who is a contemporary of Kutub and with whom (Kutub) he fought in the same field for a while, considers the Parliament as a technique and method. Furthermore, El-Benna evaluates Parliament with more positive thoughts than Qutb. In his memoir, Benna stated that "in addition to the kingdom, the parliamentary system is compatible with the administrative system of Islam" (Güney, 2018).

Moreover, the mentioned thinkers and intellectuals argue that, regarding theoretical background and practical experience, the Council Decision-making method and the democratic model have opposite features. The reason is that the Shura decision-making method has practical experience rather than being based on any systematic theoretical thought. As a matter of fact, in the Qur'an, the implementation of the Shura is ordered, but an implementation system is not

mentioned. The Prophet and the four caliphs who came to power after him applied the Shura in every phase of life rather than putting it on a theoretical basis and tried to benefit from this decision-making method properly.

On the other hand, democracy is a decision-making and management model that is tried to be systematized by the theorists of the 19th century, such as J. Stuart Mill, Joseph M. Bessette, Jürgen Habermas, and Seyla Benhabib (Kaçer & Erat, 2014). As we have stated before, the main reason why the Shura does not have a deep as theoretical, historical, and academic literature as the deliberative democracy, is that the Umayyads, who took over the Islamic rule after the war of Siffin, took over the sultanate by suspending or even abolishing the Shura. It has remained in full swing until today. The reason for this is that there was no need for an in-depth examination of this decision-making method since it could not be applied as a decision-making method. Additionally, there is not yet a very detailed and systematized deliberative decision-making mechanism in a deliberative democracy similar to the Shura. Although the deliberative democracy management approach occasionally shows examples of small-scale applications, it is still at the stage of a normative management theory rather than a detailed and systematic management mechanism (Lenaghan, 1999).

Thinkers Advocating that Islam and Democracy Governance Understandings are similar and Compatible

Today's Muslim thinkers, social scientists, and academics have different conceptions and perceptions about Shura. Some of these Muslim intellectuals argue that democracy is evil or spurious, while others oppose it entirely. On the other hand, a group of Muslim thinkers and social scientists believe that the foundations of democracy are based on Islam. Furthermore, those who kin in the integration of democracy and Islamic Governance systems advocate the view that democracy and Islam have similar characteristics and, therefore, can be adapted to each other. To put it more clearly, these thinkers argue that a democratic understanding of Islam should be developed, which refers to the theory and concept of Democratic Islam. As a result of these ideas, they defend the idea that the democracy management model, which is the product of the Islamic management approach and a Western mentality, has similar characteristics, so a common management approach can be developed by harmonizing them with each other. Some even go further and claim that the real democracy is in Islam and that Islam constitutes the basis of the understanding of democratic governance.

On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyyah is one of the first classical-period Muslim thinkers who have an idea similar to representative democracy in Islam. However, he does not mean exactly today's understanding of democracy or representative democracy. Moreover, Ibn Taymiyya pointed out the importance of the Shura in understanding Islamic governance. İbn-i Teymiye, "Citing Qur" ān and Hadīth, he insists that the ruler must consult not only with the "ulama" and with his political and military officials but also with spokesmen of the general population" (Şahin, 2013).

Additionally, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi is another prominent 20th-century Muslim intellectual and philosopher who defends the idea of the closeness of democracy and Islamic Governance understanding. Although Nursi does not precisely mean a liberal thought and democracy management model in the Western sense, he also cares about the freedom of individuals and believes that individuals should be active in Decision-making and political governance. Additionally, Bediuzzaman thinks that Muslims are free individuals; therefore, they should not worship anyone but Allah. While explaining the importance of the Council for Muslim societies, Bediuzzaman makes a similar defense to the pluralism and participatory principles of democracy and claims that the blessings/mums are in joint decision-making (Bediuzzaman, Hutbe-i Şamiye, 1951). It should be particularly noted that, unlike other contemporary thinkers, Bediuzzaman

attributes the notion of Shura not as an ordinary concept but with a much broader meaning. Bediuzzaman sees the *Mushawere* as one of the main pillars of Islamic governance. Bediuzzaman describes the understanding of Islamic administration in his thought as one of the three foundations of an Islamic republic and "a republic consisting of 'justice, consultation and monopoly power in law (separation of powers in law)'" (Çetin, 2015).

However, all this does not mean that Bediuzzaman adopted the democratic management model in the Western sense. While defending the idea that the individual should be free and active in decision-making, however, Bediuzzaman thinks that such virtues already exist in Islam, so Muslims do not need to turn their faces to the West and thus the Western governance understanding, which is democracy (Bediüzzaman, 2022). Moreover, from this idea of Bediuzzaman, it can be understood that some techniques of Democracy can be helpful to define better the pluralistic, liberal, fair understanding of İslamic Governance, which attaches great importance to the will of individuals and their participation in decision-making mechanisms.

Furthermore, another Muslim thinker who defends the compatibility of Islam and Democracy is Reşit Rıza from Egypt. Reşit Rıza, who was a student of Muhammad Abduh and was seriously influenced by his thoughts, considers the ahl-i Hal Welkad delegation of the Council to elect the Caliph as the key point in harmonizing Islam and democracy (El-Katip, 2016). Rıza saw the functioning of the Ahl-i Hal ve'l-Akd assembly as the Parliament of his time".

Fazlur Rahman, a prominent Muslim thinker, strongly advocated for the integration of Western values with an understanding of Islamic governance. He argued that Islamic concepts such as Shura, Consensus, and *Qiyas* should be more actively employed in decision-making processes to empower individuals in a manner akin to democratic practices. However, following his expulsion from Pakistan by the government and his subsequent relocation to the United States, Fazlur Rahman's views underwent significant evolution (Aydın, 1990). Fazlur Rahman defends the view that many of today's political and jurisprudential Islamic rules are based on the Qur'an, so these *ijtihads* should be renewed with new ijtihad based on the Qur'an, taking into account today's social needs.

Additionally, Ali Muhammed Sallabi (Sallabi, 2010), Iraqi-born Ahmed Al-Katib (El-Katip, 2016), Reformist Muslim thinkers Asef Bayat (Bayat, 2007), Tunisian sociologist and politician Rashid al-Gannouchi (Düzce, 2021), Cemaleddin Afghani, Abdulkerim Soroush (Soroush, 2000), Muhammed Abid El-Cabiri (El-Cabiri, 2019) kind of Muslim Thinkers are among the Muslim İntellectuals who defend the idea that democracy and Islam governance understandings are compatible.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals that the Shura has been determined as a necessary and even one of the most prominent elements of decision-making in the understanding of Islamic governance. The Ali-Imran verse 159 and verses 38 of Shura in the Quran provide an apparent reference to the significance of Shura and its implementation. According to these verses, the concept of Shura is obligatory for people, similar to prayer, fasting, and zakat. Even Prophet Muhammad adhered to this practice and applied it both in his personal life and social affairs as a prophet and also as a leader. Additionally, after Muhammad's passing, the first four caliphs or rulers attempted to incorporate Shura/consultations into their decision-making process.

Moreover, except for a few periods (Sultanate Period of Ömer bin Abdulaziz and Selahaddin Eyyübi El-Kurdis) in Islamic History, the application of the Shura decision-making method in the Islamic decision-making mechanism was almost completely abolished after the Battle of Siffin. The final decision taken by the Shura or consultation was the arbitration decision, which aimed to end the war and to have the Caliph selected by the Shura or consultation decision. Unfortunately,

Muawiyah and his supporters did not implement this decision.

Furthermore, various Muslim scholars such as Ahmed Raysuni, Muhammed Esed, Fazlurrahman, Ali Muhammed Sallabi, Muhammed Abid El-Cabiri, J.L. Esposito, John O. Voll, and Raşid Ganuşi have agreed on the significance of Shura in the Quran regarding its status as a decision-making process. However, it cannot be argued that political administrations governing Muslim societies today are based on Islamic principles. since they do not follow traditional Islamic rules regarding consultative decisions.

Although many Muslim social scientists and intellectuals of the 19th and 20th centuries were to modernize Islamic governance, time and political grounds did not allow them to practice their ideas properly. Jamaleddin Afghani (1838-1897), Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905), M. Rashid Riza (1865 1935), Hayreddin al-Tunusi, Mahmud Tarzi (1895-1933), Chiragh Ali (1844-1895), Ahmed Dahlan (1868) Muslim thinkers such as Seyyid Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) and Muhammed Iqbal (1877-1938) kind of scholars were within those Muslim intellectuals who were try to modernize the Islamic Governance. These thinkers contended that the value of Islam to the individual is neither inferior nor superior to the Western conception of the individual. However, they argued that the sultanate system of administration, which emerged after Muawiya ascended to power, undermined the individual value emphasized by Islam. They believed that the concept of just governance was eroded following Muawiya's rise, leading to the establishment of the sultanate as the dominant governance model in Muslim societies. As a result, these intellectuals called for a reevaluation of Islamic political thought and the development of an Islamic governance model that aligns with contemporary social orders. In their quest for solutions to the administrative challenges facing the Muslim community, they explored the Western democratic model, grounded in human reason and will, and examined its potential applicability and integration within the Islamic framework.

However, Muslim intellectuals did not agree on the same idea. Therefore, there are three different prominent opinions regarding whether Muslims can develop a governance approach compatible with democracy:

1. Radical conservatives (orthodox Muslims) who think such harmony is impossible;
2. Those who argue that Islam and democracy have fundamentally different perspectives but also share common aspects (Islamic democracy);
3. Those who claim to have a democratic governance approach based on Islam alone

Since becoming a standard model of government in Europe and America during the late 19th century, various approaches and models of democratic governance have emerged globally. Different schools of liberal thought emphasizing human freedom emerged. Particularly in geographies such as England, America, France, Canada, and Australia. Recently discussed deliberative democracy exemplifies various democratic models emerging globally, including institutions called "Mini-Publics." This pilot program has been implemented recently in many countries like Canada, Austria, and Denmark with institutions such as Planning Cells, Deliberative Polls, Citizens' Assemblies, Citizen panels, Citizens' Councils, and Randomized Social, Economic, and Environmental Council appointments.

On the other hand, an examination of the practice of deliberative democracy within these institutions reveals the challenges associated with its implementation. Specifically, the establishment of deliberative democracy and its associated institutions, known as Mini-Publics, proves to be complex. This complexity arises from the difficulty of making informed decisions that reflect the diverse interests of all members within a society. Despite this, one of the core principles of deliberative democracy is the inclusivity of decision-making, ensuring that every individual has a voice. However, this principle can, in practice, impose significant constraints on the decision-making process, potentially hindering its efficiency.

This study, aimed at comparing the governance models of Shura and deliberative democracy, concludes that Shura, as a concept rooted in Islamic governance, integrates faith as a practical element in decision-making. In contrast, the deliberative democratic governance model is shaped by human reason, culture, and historical governance experiences. It is essential to recognize that the foundational principles and starting points of these two political management approaches are inherently distinct. Moreover, this study emphasizes that the concept of Shura (or *İstişare*) encompasses a broader and more nuanced meaning than negotiation alone. Specifically, consultation in this context involves not only negotiation but also mutual bargaining, information exchange, persuasion, and various forms of compromise.

According to deliberative democracy, individuals can discuss everything related to human life. However, in understanding Islamic governance, a subject on which a verse has been revealed or whose boundaries have been determined and defined by Islam cannot be consulted. To put it more clearly, in the understanding of Islamic governance, individuals do not have the opportunity to consult on every issue. However, they can consult about the way and time of implementation of an issue for which there is no definite rule, or even though there is a rule, by using the methods of *ijma*, *qiyas*, and *Etihad*. Although Islam has drawn some general frameworks for human life, it has left many issues to people's free will to decide. With this aspect, it has a similar understanding of democratic governance. Concepts such as Shura or consultation, allegiance, *ijtihad*, *ijma*, *qiyas*, and *Ehli Hal wal Aqd* allow people to decide on their own lives freely.

According to another conclusion reached by this study, when we consider it from an Islamic point of view, a "Democratic Islam" style of governance is not possible. To put it more clearly, Islam deals with the world and the hereafter. Islam reminds us that man did not create strays. As a matter of fact, in the 36th verse of the Qur'an's Surah Doomsday, "Does man think that he will be left alone?" It declares that man was not created entirely free. Therefore, according to Islam, a person cannot decide everything about his life. On the other hand, a person can shape his life within the framework of the philosophy of life drawn by the Qur'an and make decisions about his life in this context. Therefore, a governance style and understanding that can be defined as "Islamic Democracy" may be possible by applying some governance methods of Democracy, such as election and Parliament.

Democracy places the individual at the center of life, granting them the freedom to make unlimited decisions about their own existence. From this perspective, the concept of "democratic Islam" becomes problematic, as it is challenging to define an Islamic lifestyle solely based on democratic principles. In contrast, the Islamic philosophy of life offers a more structured approach, where concepts such as Shura (consultation), allegiance, *ijtihad*, *ijma*, *qiyas*, and *ehli hal wal aqd* (the people of authority) can be revitalized to function effectively, as they did during Age of Bliss (*Asr-I Saadet*). This suggests that it is possible to develop a governance model that aligns with the principles of "Islamic Democracy" by integrating democratic governance with the Islamic system of governance, methodology, and institutional framework. Islam provides a general framework for human life, as determined by Allah, yet it also allows for a degree of human free will. Within this framework, individuals are endowed with the right and ability to shape their lives, as long as they remain within the guidelines set forth by the Quran.

On the other hand, similar to Mini-Public negotiation institutions in deliberative Democracy, mosques and foundations in Islamic society can be functionalized similarly. Especially During the period of Muhammad and the first four caliphs, mosques were considered both a place of education and a center for consultation and decision-making. Moreover, the chosen Caliph could not gain legitimacy without being openly and publicly pledged in the Masjid an-Nabawi. On the other hand, mosque institutions should be managed and directed not by the state-appointed religious institutions and imams but by the imams appointed by the people themselves. Then, the

mosques will be able and qualified to be community consultation centers in a free and civil sense.

As a result, the conclusion reached by this study is that a "democratic Islam" governance approach cannot be developed with the harmonization of Islam with Democracy. In contrast, the Islamic governance approach, which can be defined as "Islamic Democracy, might be developed by adapting the governance methods and institutional structures that Democracy has developed based on the general well-being of people. These functions and institutions can only be helpful as technical components instead of adapting them with their Western spirit and thought of governance, which argues that Sovereignty and authority belong unconditionally to the human being.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Studying Shura as a decision-making process in Islamic governance versus deliberative democracy has several limitations. One major limitation is the difficulty in comparing the two systems due to the differences in their fundamental underlying principles and values. Shura is based on Islamic principles and values, while deliberative democracy has its roots in Western political philosophy. In other words, while the shura decision-making method has a religious and superhuman structure, deliberative democracy is a human and reason-centered decision-making mechanism. Therefore, comparing these completely different decision-making mechanisms constitutes a difficulty and obstacle in itself. This makes it challenging to make meaningful comparisons between the two systems. Another limitation is the lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of Shura as a decision-making process in Islamic governance. While there are historical examples of successful implementation of Shura in Islamic societies, there is a lack of rigorous empirical research that evaluates its effectiveness in modern times.

A growing body of research on deliberative democracy provides empirical evidence of its effectiveness in promoting democratic values and improving decision-making outcomes. In contrast, the study of Shura as a decision-making process in Islamic governance presents challenges due to the lack of consensus among Islamic scholars and leaders regarding its interpretation and implementation. This absence of agreement has led to variations in its application across different contexts, making it difficult to draw universally applicable conclusions about its effectiveness. In this study, Shura practices are examined specifically as they were implemented by the Prophet Muhammad and his four caliphs. Given the diversity of democratic models, this research focuses exclusively on the deliberative democracy model, recognizing that covering all forms of democracy would be beyond its scope. For future academic research, centering human beings and the interests of individuals and society will facilitate a more efficient and rational comparison of these distinct decision-making frameworks, which are grounded in fundamentally different traditions.

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