Research Article

Reimagining Global Governance: An Islamic Paradigm for Justice, Peace, and Ethical Diplomacy

Abdul Wahed Jalal Nori[1] , Lee Pei May[2] , Zhilwan Tahir[3]

1. Assistant Professor at the Department of Fundamental and Inter- disciplinary Studies, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of IRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia; wahed@iium.edu.my

2. Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of IRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia; peimay@iium.edu.my

3. PhD candidate (philosophy of History) at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, International Islamic University Malaysia (ISTAC-IIUM); zhelwantahr94@gmail.com

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Abstract. This article argues that the world needs an alternative framework to international relations (IR) that is more inclusive, just and peaceful. The key principles of Islamic IR provide a comprehensive framework that emphasises justice, cooperation, consultation, and peace, forming a potential basis for global governance and the conduct of ethical diplomacy. It also showcases how Islamic principles challenge the dominant paradigms in IR, reinterprets traditional concepts like Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb by framing them within the context of ethical engagement and dialogue, and highlights the

similarities between dominant IR theories and Islamic teachings. Finally, this article argues for the establishment of Islamic global governance in these challenging times in order to promote a more peaceful, just and equitable global order.

Keywords: Justice, Peace, Equitable, Mutual Cooperation, Ethical Diplomacy, Global.

Abstrak. Artikel ini berargumentasi bahwa dunia membutuhkan kerangka alternatif hubungan internasional (IR) yang lebih inklusif, adil dan damai. Prinsip-prinsip utama IR Islam memberikan kerangka komprehensif yang menekankan keadilan, kerja sama, konsultasi, dan perdamaian, yang membentuk landasan potensial bagi tata kelola global dan pelaksanaan diplomasi etis. Hal ini juga menunjukkan bagaimana prinsip-prinsip Islam menantang paradigma dominan dalam HI, menafsirkan kembali konsep-konsep tradisional seperti Dar al-Islam dan Dar al-Harb dengan membingkainya dalam konteks keterlibatan etis dan dialog, dan menyoroti kesamaan antara teori HI yang dominan dan ajaran Islam. Yang terakhir, artikel ini menganjurkan pembentukan pemerintahan global Islam di masa-masa sulit ini untuk mendorong tatanan global yang lebih damai, adil dan merata.

Kata Kunci: Keadilan, Perdamaian, Keadilan Sosial, Kerja Sama Timbal Balik, Diplomasi Etis, Tata Kelola Global, Dar al-Islam, Dar al-Harb, Tatanan Global.

BACKGROUND

Realism, liberalism and constructivism, all concepts with Western roots, have long dominated the field of IR. They offer competing explanations for the nature of global politics. Realists such as Morgenthau (1948) stress the primacy of the pursuit of power and the self-interest of states. Liberalism argues for cooperation through establishment of international institutions in order to promote peace and stability (Keohane, 1984). Constructivism explores the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state interactions (Wendt, 1999). These Western theories of international relations have fundamental differences from Islamic IR theories, as explained by Nuruzzaman (2018). Indeed, their roots are entirely different, with Islamic IR theories forming in the pre-Westphalian era and based on the rich history of the Islamic caliphate, the development of Islamic law and jurisprudence.

To enumerate the differences between Western and Islamic IR theories, for one, the main unit of analysis for Western IR theories is the state. In contrast, in Islam states are not seen as independent units. Rather, Islam regards the world as a single order around the concept of Ummah (Bakir, 2023). Second, Western IR theories emphasise scientific reasoning and positivist approaches to deriving knowledge while Islam relies on the Qur'an and Hadiths as primary sources of knowledge (Nuruzzaman, 2018). In Islam, sovereignty lies in God, while Western IR theories emphasise human sovereignty. Still more important distinctions between Islamic and Western IR theories lie in the ethical and cultural realms.

While Western IR theories have provided valuable insights, they frequently overlook the ethical dimensions and cultural factors that influence global affairs. As the world becomes increasingly multipolar and diverse, there is a greater need for alternative IR frameworks that incorporate moral and ethical considerations. At present, with several ongoing wars and conflicts around the world, it is increasingly vital that we shift away from the chaotic old order to a different global order that

emphasises permanent and lasting peace. This is in line with the aspiration of the great Islamic scholar Abdulhamid Abusulayman, who had long advocated for Pax Islamica (Abusulayman, 1983).

Islamic teachings present a rich repository of principles that can enhance our understanding of international relations. The Qur'an and the Hadiths (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad) outline fundamental values such as justice ('adl), peace (salam), consultation (shura), and mutual cooperation (ta'awun), which provide moral guidance for individual and state interactions (Abdelkader, 2020).

The key concepts of justice and governance in Islam can be understood through the work of classical Islamic scholars, notably Al-Farabi and Ibn Khaldun. These classical ideas were later expanded by modern scholars such as Majid Khadduri, Abusulaiman, and Abdelkader to explore their relevance for contemporary international relations. Khadduri's seminal work, War and Peace in the Law of Islam (1955), offers a comprehensive analysis of Islamic perspectives on conflict and diplomacy. His work sheds light on the importance of justice and ethical engagement in international relations. Similarly, Abdelkader, Adiong, and Mauriello's edited volume, Islam and International Relations: Contributions to Theory and Practice (2019), maintains that it is imperative to develop an Islamic theory of IR that reflects ethical considerations while addressing contemporary global challenges.

This article thoroughly explores the key principles of Islamic international relations. It also compares the principles of Islamic International relations with the Western-derived concepts of realism, liberalism and constructivism. It also aims to analyse the ethical implications of these principles and propose a framework that reinterprets traditional concepts within the context of modern global interactions. Lastly, this article discusses the Islamic framework of International Relations and provides recommendations to manage global affairs within this ethical framework.

Key Principles of International Relations in Islam
a. Justice ('Adl)

Justice is central to all relationships between nations in Islamic teachings. The concept of justice in Islam ensures fairness in treaties, international laws, and diplomacy (Khan, 2016). It emphasises that all parties must uphold their commitments and treat each other equitably. This principle resonates with modern liberal theories that prioritise human rights and global justice (Rawls, 1999). For example, the United Nations Charter's emphasis on the equality of all nations reflects the Islamic commitment to justice as a fundamental aspect of international relations.

b. Peace (Salam)

Islam advocates for peaceful coexistence as the end goal of international relations. This is exemplified by the actions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who prioritises peace over conflict by establishing treaties to resolve conflicts diplomatically (Al-Ghazali, 1997). The approach taken by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) resembles the liberal emphasis on maintaining peace through international institutions and using diplomacy to resolve conflict (Galtung, 1969).

c. Consultation (Shura)

Islam encourages collective decision-making in governance and diplomacy through the principle of consultation (shura). Shura promotes inclusivity in policy formation and aligns with democratic peace theory, which posits that democracies are more peaceful due to their consultative processes (Doyle, 1986). The concept of shura corresponds with the framework of modern multilateralism and is reflected in the structures of international organisations such as the United Nations, where member states engage in dialogue and consensus-building (Badran, 2018).

d. Mutual Cooperation (Ta'awun)

In Islamic teachings, mutual cooperation to promote common good is essential. This includes cooperation in providing humanitarian aid, protecting the environment, and pursuing development efforts which can promote a sense of global solidarity (Norris, 2016). These Islamic ideas resonate with liberalism, which stresses cooperation through international institutions.

Concepts of Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb

The Islamic concepts of Dar al-Islam (abode of Islam) and Dar al-Harb (abode of war) have been frequently misconstrued but can provide valuable insights when reinterpreted in the framework of modern international relations. According to Khadduri (1955) these concepts need to be understood within the context of peaceful coexistence and dialogue. In this reading, Dar al-Harb presents a space for dialogue and diplomacy. While realism traditionally views international relations through the lens of power and conflict, the Islamic perspective encourages a transition from conflict (Dar al-Harb) to peace through dialogue and negotiation (Mawdudi, 1998).

Jihad and International Relations

The concept of jihad is also not without its controversies. Often, the concept has been misinterpreted as unprovoked holy warfare. However, the true meaning of jihad refers the struggle for justice and the defence of the oppressed (Rahman, 2008). Islam prohibits aggression; force is only allowed in defence. This idea aligns closely with just war theory, which establishes ethical guidelines for the use of force (Walzer, 1977). This framework ensures that military actions are conducted within moral and legal boundaries, upholding international law under the UN Charter. By framing jihad in this way, the ethical implications of warfare are clarified, reinforcing the idea that violence should only be a last resort.

Diplomacy and Treaties in Islam

By forming treaties with non-Muslim tribes, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) emphasised the value of diplomacy in Islamic teachings. Islam therefore respects treaties and asserts that the inviolability of treaties is essential to promote lasting and permanent peace, in line with the principles of institutionalism in international relations (D'Agostino, 2019). International treaties and institutions can govern state behaviour, acting as catalyst to foster cooperation and ensure peace. Therefore, Islamic diplomacy stresses the importance of honouring agreements.

Islamic Ethical Framework vs. Modern IR Theories

1. Realism vs. Islam:

According to Waltz (1979), realism posits that the international system is in an anarchic order whereby there is no authority above the state to enforce rules or maintain order. Due to this state of anarchy, realism argues that states must prioritise their own survival by accumulating power and forming alliances. A key figure in classical realism, Morgenthau (1948) posits that it is human nature to pursue power, and this is also reflected in the behaviour of states. As such, states always prioritise power and security over morality and ethics, especially if the latter contradicts with state's pursuit of power. Morgenthau explains that leaders should not regard moral ideals when making decisions, but must only consider the national interest and pragmatic realities. In this view, competition, conflict and war are inevitable in international relations because distrust and rivalry are inevitable among states. Realists also argue that alliances are only ever temporary and contingent upon the national interest rather than being grounded in any long-term ethical or cooperative vision (Morgenthau, 1948).

a. The Ethical Foundations of Islam: Justice and Peace

In sharp contrast to realism's power-centric approach, Islam offers a framework for international relations that is rooted in ethical and moral principles. The values of justice ('adl) and peace (salam) are central to the Islamic view of international relations, not merely as abstract ideals but as deeply integrated in the day-to-day political and diplomatic practices prescribed by Islamic teachings. As outlined in the Qur'an, justice is a key principle in all interactions between humans, and between nations. The Qur'an (5:8) commands believers to "stand firm in justice," even in situations where there are personal biases or animosities. Such a view differs from the realist perspective that would sacrifice justice for the pursuit of national interests. By contrast, justice is seen as a divine mandate in Islam, going beyond national borders and political alliances. Historically, Islamic jurisprudence has established guidelines for entering diplomatic treaties and the conduct of warfare, which includes fairness, proportionality, and non-aggression, as seen in the concept of jihad that stresses the protection of the oppressed and self-defence (Khadduri, 1955). In Islam, peace is considered the natural state of international relations. According to Abdulhamid Abusuylaiman, 'Islam's commitment to peace is absolute, universal, and comprehensive' (Abusuylaiman, 1983, p. xxxvii). Islam's emphasis on peace can be seen in the actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). When dealing with conflicts, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) often sought peaceful resolutions, notably through treaties such as the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, prioritising diplomacy and patience over confrontation (Abdelkader, 2020). Islam shows that peace is attainable if justice is upheld, which contradicts the realist view that conflict and competition are inherent in international politics. The ethical stance emphasised in Islam transforms international relations from a paradigm purely driven by power to one that seeks to balance power with moral accountability.

b. Realism's Amoral Calculus vs. Islam's Ethical Diplomacy

There is a clear distinction between Islam and realism in their approaches to diplomacy. In realism, diplomacy is used to advancing self-interest; realist theorists such as Morgenthau and Machiavelli assert that leaders should use diplomacy strategically, including using diplomacy for deception, manipulation, or even betrayal, as long as state's power and survival are ensured (Gilpin, 1981). This contrasts sharply with Islam, where diplomacy must be practiced in an ethical way. The ethical practice of diplomacy was demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) whereby treaties and agreements were honoured, including those made with non-Muslim tribes. Islam condemns the breaking of treaties or deception in diplomatic affairs. In the Qur'an (9:4), it is explicitly stated that treaties are to be upheld until their terms have ended and Islamist jurists have maintained the same view. According to Khan (2016), adhering to ethical diplomacy can promote peaceful coexistence and build trust among nations, factors often overlooked in realism.

In addition, unlike realism, which seeks to justify aggressive policies, notably pre-emptive strikes or military interventions, Islam is against aggression. In Islam, only defensive actions to restore justice are allowed. In the Qur'an (2:190), Muslims are clearly prohibited from engaging in aggressive warfare: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."

Such a view runs counter to the use of force as understood by realists, and reserves military action only for addressing oppression and injustices.

c. Reconciling Realism and Islamic International Relations

While realism and Islamic international relations appear to be at odds, there is some overlap between the two frameworks, particularly when considering their strategic aspects. Realists argue that international politics is governed by the principle of survival, and in certain cases, Islamic international relations acknowledge the importance of security and strength. However, Islam does not view strength as a goal in itself but as a means to preserve peace and justice. For instance, Islam permits military action under strict conditions, particularly for defence or in response to oppression, but it also calls for restraint, proportionality, and, ultimately, the pursuit of peace. The notion of jihad as self-defence parallels just war theory, where war is morally permissible only under certain conditions. In this sense, Islam's approach to international relations shares some similarities with more ethical variants of realism, which emphasise prudence and restraint in the use of power (Khadduri, 1955).

Moreover, while realism is rooted in a pessimistic view of human nature, assuming that conflict and competition are unavoidable, Islamic teachings hold a more optimistic outlook. Islam assumes that through justice, diplomacy, and ethical governance, nations can achieve peace and mutual respect. Therefore, while realism may justify amoral behaviour in pursuit of power, Islamic ethics offer a counter-narrative that seeks to elevate international relations beyond mere survival to encompass moral responsibility and human dignity (Abdelkader, 2020).

d. Beyond Realism

The Islamic framework of international relations runs in sharp contrast with the power-driven politics of realism. Islam prioritises justice, cooperation, and ethics in the conduct of diplomacy and by doing so, the pursuit of sustainable peace. Such emphasis contrasts sharply with realist views that international politics is inherently competitive. Therefore, Islam presents a holistic approach that could address the political and security needs of states, promoting a just and peaceful global order.

2. Liberalism vs. Islam:
a. Liberalism: The Pursuit of Peace through Cooperation

Liberalism believes that states should cooperate with each other to achieve better outcomes. This is usually done through international institutions or by engaging in multilateral diplomacy (Keohane, 1984). While realism views state relations as fundamentally competitive due to an anarchic international system, liberals believe that states can cooperate to solve common challenges such as economic crises or climate change. One key principle of liberalism is the belief that international institutions have the ability to mediate conflicts and facilitate cooperation. Liberals argue that international organisations like the UN play a fundamental role in promoting dialogue, building trust through information exchanges, and enforcing rules that help maintain global peace and stability (Nye, 2001). As Keohane (1984) famously argued, states are willing to cooperate when there are established mechanisms that ensure compliance and transparency. The existence of international institutions helps reduce the "transaction costs" of international politics by creating rules, providing forums for negotiation, and monitoring the behaviour of states. As such, states can transcend the conditions of anarchy and move towards pursuing mutually beneficial outcomes.

b. Islamic Principles of Shura and Ta'awun

There are clear similarities between Islam and liberalism. Liberalism advocates for multilateralism and institutional cooperation, which is akin to the Islamic principles of shura (consultation) and ta'awun (cooperation) that provide frameworks for collective decision-making and conflict resolution. Shura allows for diverse opinions and collective decision-making as it encouraged rulers to consult with their community when making decisions that could affect them. The Qur'an commands, "And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves..." (Qur'an 42:38). This concept of consultation can also be applied in diplomatic and international relations, where collective decision-making is important to achieve justice and peace (Al-Hamdi, 2015). Similarly, ta'awun, or cooperation, is a key principle in Islam. It stresses the importance of working together for the common good. The Qur'an (5:2) advises, "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression." The spirit of cooperation advocated in Islam aligns with the view of liberalism that global challenges can only be managed collectively. Moreover, Ta'awun emphasises ethical cooperation, akin to liberalism's call for cooperation through institutions like the UN to achieve global peace and development (Afsaruddin, 2011).

c. Multilateralism and Collaboration: Points of Convergence

There are points of convergence between Islam and liberalism, particularly in their emphasis on multilateral diplomacy and collective action. In the view of liberalism, international institutions are essential in establishing interdependency between countries. Through platforms such as the UN, states can come together to address common challenges. Under the liberal international order, dialogue and cooperation between states via international institutions such as IMF and World Bank facilitates beneficial outcomes for all, as exemplified in the global efforts to coordinate economic policies (Keohane, 1984). Similarly, Islam encourages multilateral engagement, specifically through shura and ta'awun. These two key principles promote mutual understanding, communication, and cooperation among nations. Additionally, modern Islamic scholars have argued that international organisations and alliances, as seen today in institutions like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), align with Islamic principles of collective action and mutual assistance. The OIC displays the multilateralism advocated by both Islam and liberalism as a forum for Muslim-majority countries to cooperate on politics, economics and social matters (Al-Hamdi, 2015). Moreover, the OIC works not only to promote Muslim affairs but also works in tandem with other international organisations such as United Nations to address issues that are relevant to both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The two institutions have successfully cooperated on several issues such as terrorism, extreme violence, and religious tolerance (United Nations, 2022)

d. Shared Goals and Collaborative Potential

Liberalism and Islam emphasise building peace through collective action. For liberalism, a peaceful international order can be built through institutions that foster cooperation among nations. Such an idea resonates with Islamic values that equally stress the importance of cooperation, albeit with more emphasis on ethics and morality. This convergence gives latitude for cooperation in addressing global challenges such as environmental deterioration, poverty, and inequality. Therefore, as members of the UN, Islamic countries can utilise both liberal and Islamic principles in peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts (Esposito & Voll, 1996). While these two frameworks may be different in their foundational assumptions, they are similar in advocating for the use of international institutions and their emphasis on cooperation to foster peace and prosperity. Specifically, the Islamic principles of shura and ta'awun align with liberalism's belief in multilateralism. These shared values could allow Islamic states and the broader international community to come together to tackle current and emerging global issues within a shared ethical framework. Indeed, there are good examples of how Islamic states have played a fundamental role in humanitarian aid and refugee assistance in line with the UN charter.

3. Constructivism vs. Islam:

a. Constructivism: The Role of Ideas, Values, and Norms

Constructivism is the ideational theory that challenges the materialist ideas of realism and liberalism. Constructivism believes that everything is socially constructed through ideas, values, and norms, and that includes international system. This runs counter to realism and liberalism, which regard the international system as being

determined solely by material forces (Wendt, 1999). The leading proponent of constructivism, Alexander Wendt (1999), posits that "anarchy is what states make of it". What this means is that anarchy, in the traditional sense, does not necessarily lead to competition between states, but rather states' behaviour is shaped by states' perceptions, interactions, and identities. In other words, shared understandings, norms and collective meanings are important in shaping states' actions rather than those actions being bound to immutable laws of international politics. Unlike realism, which focusses on power and self-interest, constructivism places importance on factors such as beliefs and values that could shape states' interactions. In this view, the behaviour of states is also influenced by how states define themselves in relation to others. Constructivists emphasise the two-way process, in which states and the international system mutually shape one another, asserting that the behaviour of states is influenced by the social and ethical frameworks in which they operate (Adler, 1997).

b. Islam's Ethical and Value-Driven Diplomacy

Islam's approach to international relations shares some similarities with constructivism, particularly on how states' shared norms and identities could influence their behaviour. Islam stresses key principles such as justice (adl) and peace (salam) to guide diplomacy and state conduct within an ethical framework. In the Qur'an, it explicitly stated that: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice" (Qur'an 4:58). Constructivism believes that norms such as justice could be socially constructed, eventually becoming global norms that guide state behaviour. Islam and constructivism are therefore aligned in arguing that states act based not solely on material interests, but also shared norms (Abdelkader, 2020). The idea of maslahah (public interest) in Islam guides state decision-making in both domestic and international affairs to ensure that states' actions serve the broader well-being of the community. This principle shows that Islamic diplomacy stresses the importance of morals and ethics, resonating with constructivism's focus on ideas and norms shaping state behaviour (Kamali, 2008).

c. Shared Values and the Role of Norms in International Cooperation

Constructivism posits that values and norms can shape the behaviour and identity of states. Therefore, when norms that prioritise cooperation and peace in international relations are created and become shared norms, states tend to work together to create peace. This aligns with Islam, which stresses ethical norms in fostering international cooperation. Since values and norms can shape a state's identity, states' identities are not fixed but can change through social interactions and shared understandings. For example, shared norms such as respect for human rights, sovereignty, and non-aggression could become global norms that shape states' actions in the international system. (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). States are influenced by these norms through their interactions with other states, thereby promoting cooperative and peaceful relations.

Similarly, Islam stresses universal values such as justice, peace, and mutual respect, providing an ethical framework for states to engage with one another. Islamic

diplomacy not only focusses on the narrow interest of individual states, but instead looks to fulfil broader moral obligations by promoting peaceful coexistence and protecting the well-being of all humanity. Such an approach corresponds with constructivist beliefs that states' interests are not solely focused on the pursuit of power, can be shaped by socially constructed norms and ethical standards (Al-Hamdi, 2015). The concept of ummah (the global Muslim community) emphasised in Islam encourages Muslims and Islamic states to conduct diplomacy through the lens of shared religious and moral values, promoting unity and cooperation (Esposito, 2003). This resonates with constructivism's view that shared norms and values are essential in shaping state behaviour and building international cooperation.

d.The Ethical Foundation of Diplomacy: Islam and Constructivism

Constructivism argues that everything is socially constructed through ideas, norms and values. In the context of international relations, these ideas, norms, and values are created and shared through states' interactions, which form the identities of individual states. Therefore, states could adopt an identity that prioritises a diplomatic approach based on ethics and values, similar to what is advocated in Islam.

While realism and liberalism are centred on power and institutional frameworks as the basis of states' actions, constructivism and Islam emphasise the importance of norms in shaping the behaviour of states. Islamic diplomacy as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) provides a clear model for ethical diplomacy by establishing and honouring treaties and alliances such as the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, which was based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence (Abdelkader, 2020). Such an Islamic approach in conducting diplomacy that stresses justice, fairness, and cooperation, mirrors constructivist beliefs that shared norms such as human rights, justice, equality shape states' actions, contributing to peaceful outcomes.

Towards an Islamic Approach to International Relations

Western-centric theories such as realism and liberalism continue to shape the field of IR. Though these paradigms do provide valuable insights, they neglect the moral and ethical dimensions of global governance, which are essential in pursuing global peace. On the other hand, an Islamic framework of international relations offers a holistic global governance that stresses ethics, justice and cooperation. An Islamic approach, rooted in values like 'adl (justice), salam (peace), and ta'awun (cooperation) puts moral obligations, fairness, and mutual respect at the forefront of global governance rather than the pursuit of power or self-interest.

A. The Ethical Foundation of Islamic International Relations

The concept of ummah is the belief that humanity forms a single community, highlighting the interconnectedness and interdependency among societies and nations. Such relations must be governed by ethical principles transcending race, religion, or geography. The Qur'an (49:13) states, "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another." This verse stresses the importance of ta'aruf (mutual

understanding) as a basis for global cooperation. Rather than fostering competition and conflict, Islam encourages dialogue and collaboration among nations, regardless of their differences. Unlike realism, which sees conflict as inevitable due to anarchy (Morgenthau, 1948), Islam views peace as the default state of international relations and holds that states should pursue peace through diplomacy. The best example of the practice of Islamic diplomacy is through the establishment of treaties, pacts, and alliances by The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) with neighbouring tribes and states. War is only permissible under strict conditions such as self-defence, and it must be conducted within the ethical guidelines outlined in Islamic teaching, emphasising the protection of civilians and the pursuit of peace (Siddiqui, 2009). These key principles in Islam represent a clear departure from Machiavellian pragmatism, which prioritises the survival of the state and its accumulation of power.

B. Justice and Economic Equity in Islamic IR

Justice ('adl) is a key principle in Islam which can be used to guide all aspects of international relations, including economic relations between states, how resources are distributed, and environmental stewardship. Therefore, an Islamic approach to international relations is an alternative framework that promotes justice by incorporating ethical dimensions which are often overlooked in contemporary IR theories.

C. Shura and Multilateral Diplomacy

Historically, Islamic governance has relied on consultative models, based on the concept of shura (consultation) and collective decision-making, where leaders ask for input from the community and strive to reach consensus when making significant decisions. This approach aligns with contemporary multilateral institutions like the United Nations, where global issues are addressed through collective decision-making (Kamali, 2008). However, while liberalism supports multilateralism based on self-interest (Keohane, 1984), the Islamic framework prioritises moral responsibility and collective well-being, offering a system that seeks not only to avoid conflict but to actively promote peace and justice.

D. A New Paradigm for Global Governance

In today's geopolitical landscape, an Islamic approach to international relations offers a critical re-examination of the normative assumptions of mainstream IR theories. Instead of being confined to power politics and material gain, an Islamic framework envisions a more compassionate and just world order. This approach emphasises ethical diplomacy, peace-building, and justice as core elements of global governance. It also calls for the inclusion of moral and spiritual dimensions in addressing global challenges, areas often neglected in secular IR theories.

The Islamic approach promotes dialogue and collaboration across cultural, religious, and national boundaries, offering pathways toward mutual understanding and cooperation in an increasingly divided world. The principles of ta'aruf (mutual understanding) and ta'awun (cooperation) can help resolve ideological differences and foster global peace. Although this framework emerges from Islamic teachings, its

values can be universally applied, making it relevant not only to Muslim-majority nations but to any society striving for a more equitable and peaceful international system.

E. Policy Recommendations

1. Ethical Diplomacy and Peace-building: It is high time that multilateral institutions such as the UN and the OIC be called upon to integrate ethical considerations into diplomatic practices. They could work to establish ta'aruf-based dialogue platforms to resolve conflicts, where mutual understanding is prioritised over dominance. The United Nations General Assembly was established as a platform for dialogue and deliberations. However, resolutions passed by the UNGA are not binding, which undermines its effectiveness as a collective body. In contrast, resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council, under Chapter VII of the UN charter, are binding. The veto power held by a small number of privileged countries in the Security Council has been used to advance self-interest, including at times through the unilateral use of force. In light of this, reforms of the United Nations Security Council are essential. While the United Kingdom has exercised restraint when using its veto power, having not cast a veto since 1989, other powers do not exercise similar restraint (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2023). Therefore, developing norms that call for the integration of ethical values in collective decision-making are essential.

2. Global Wealth Redistribution: Advocate for a global zakat fund that promotes the redistribution of wealth to alleviate poverty and inequality worldwide. Islamic finance principles, particularly those emphasizing ethical investments and wealth-sharing, could guide economic policies aimed at reducing global disparities. Though the UN Refugee Agency has set up the Refugee Zakat Fund, which aims to disburse funds to those refugee families in need of and eligible for zakat, the coverage remains restricted to refugees. Malaysia has previously led efforts to establish a global zakat fund. In a speech at the thirty-fourth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Honorary Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar expressed Malaysia's intention to set up an international zakat organisation (Kuwait News Agency, 2007). The purpose of the International Zakat Organisation (IZO) is to collect zakat funds to support needy families in OIC countries. The World Zakat Fund would eventually be placed under OIC (Ghafour, 2009). However, it seems that the initiatives led by the Malaysian government to set up a world zakat fund have stalled. Today, with more people facing difficulties due to conflicts and slowing economic growth, a more inclusive and global zakat fund could be a highly effective support for the needy worldwide.

3. Conflict Resolution and Humanitarian Law: Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols have outlined the rules of war, including limiting violence, prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons, and distinguishing between combatants and civilians to limit the destructive effects of war (International Committee of the Red Cross, n.d.). These rules of war are a good start to ensure restraint but they are still lacking in several respects. In particular, these rules allow prioritisation of military gains over civilians' lives in some conditions. Therefore, it is

important to develop international protocols that reflect Islamic ethical guidelines in conflict resolution, emphasising civilian protection, non-violence, and the ethical conduct of war. These could complement existing international humanitarian laws and help reduce the brutality of modern warfare.

4. Promotion of Shura (Consultation) in Global Governance: It is essential to urge for reforms in international governance structures so that decision-making processes are more inclusive and consultative. This could be modelled on Islamic shura practices, where collective decision-making, consensus-building, and accountability are prioritised. This would mean urging the United Nations Security Council to abolish special privileges enjoyed by the permanent members. Only when the reforms are successful could collective decision-making genuinely be applied in addressing global issues.

5. Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice: One of the suggestions is to incorporate the significant Islamic principles of khalifah and 'adl (justice) into addressing global environmental issues. To promote environmental justice, states or international organisations should support initiatives that could ensure equitable distribution of resources and protect vulnerable communities from environmental degradation. For instance, justice in global climate governance has been consistently championed by China. As China believes in building a community with a shared future, China understands that sustainable development must be realised both at home and abroad. Therefore, Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong agreed that the international community should double climate finance for adaptation for developing countries (Fu, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The current international environment, which is characterised by geopolitical tensions and conflict, is in need of a different world order. Islam, which places justice, peace and ethical responsibility at the centre of its international relations philosophy, provides a foundation for a new type of global governance. This approach can offer a more compassionate, just and peaceful world order. Using Islam as a framework in international relations shifts the world away from power struggles, focussing instead on cooperation within the moral and ethical framework outlined in Islamic teachings. Scholars and policymakers continue to explore how to apply the Islamic framework of international relations in the real world, transcending cultural and religious boundaries. It is important that existing and emerging global challenges are addressed based on moral and ethical values so that a more harmonious and just international system can be established.

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