



Prophetic Political Meritocracy: Re-evaluating Prophet Muhammad's Governance Framework for Contemporary Political Leadership

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the prophetic political meritocracy model in the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to evaluate its relevance as a governance framework for contemporary political leadership. The study employs a qualitative approach using a library research design. The findings reveal that Prophetic political meritocracy is constructed through the integration of four prophetic virtues (*ṣidq, amānah, tabligh, and faṭānah*) with a governance system that emphasizes justice, deliberation (*shūrā*), public accountability, the rule of law, social inclusiveness, and the appointment of public officials based on competence and integrity rather than kinship, patronage, or social status. This model demonstrates that political legitimacy in the governance of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was established through a balance between professional competence and moral responsibility in the exercise of public authority. The study proposes prophetic political meritocracy as a conceptual framework for political leadership that integrates ethical, institutional, and professional dimensions. It thereby contributes to enriching the discourse on Islamic political thought while offering an alternative perspective for reforming contemporary public governance toward greater justice, accountability, transparency, and the promotion of the public good.

Keywords: *Political Meritocracy; Leadership; Prophet Muhammad.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis model Prophetic Political Meritocracy dalam kepemimpinan Nabi Muhammad SAW serta mengevaluasi relevansinya sebagai kerangka tata kelola bagi kepemimpinan politik kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kepustakaan (*library research*). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meritokrasi politik kenabian dibangun melalui integrasi empat karakter profetik (*ṣiddiq, amānah, tabligh, dan faṭānah*) dengan mekanisme tata kelola pemerintahan yang menekankan keadilan, musyawarah, akuntabilitas, penegakan hukum, inklusivitas sosial, serta pengangkatan pejabat berdasarkan kompetensi dan integritas, bukan hubungan kekerabatan, patronase, maupun status sosial. Model tersebut memperlihatkan bahwa legitimasi politik dalam pemerintahan Nabi Muhammad SAW dibangun melalui keseimbangan antara kapasitas profesional dan tanggung jawab moral dalam penyelenggaraan kekuasaan publik. Penelitian ini menawarkan konseptual berupa prophetic political meritocracy sebagai kerangka kepemimpinan politik yang mengintegrasikan dimensi etik, institusional, dan profesional, sehingga berkontribusi dalam memperkaya diskursus ilmu politik Islam serta memberikan perspektif alternatif bagi reformasi tata kelola pemerintahan yang lebih adil, akuntabel, transparan, dan berorientasi pada kemaslahatan publik.

Kata Kunci: *Meritokrasi Politik; Kepemimpinan; Nabi Muhammad*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of politics and public governance is facing an increasingly complex crisis of ethical legitimacy amid growing demands for democratization, transparency, and governmental accountability. Across both liberal democracies and hybrid regimes, political systems continue to be characterized by political patronage, nepotism, clientelism, the *spoils system*, and the growing dominance of oligarchic interests in the distribution of public power (Oliveira et al., 2024).

In response to these challenges, contemporary public administration and political science have increasingly advanced political meritocracy as an alternative paradigm for public governance. Political meritocracy places competence, integrity, professional capacity, proven performance, and individual achievement at the center of public recruitment and appointment processes (Mulaphong, 2023). Within this framework, political legitimacy derives not only from electoral procedures or patron–client relationships but also from an individual's demonstrated ability to exercise public authority effectively, responsibly, and in the public interest. Consequently, meritocracy is regarded as a crucial mechanism for promoting a professional bureaucracy, responsive government, and governance systems oriented toward the common good (Suryanto, 2022).

Within this context, the Islamic political tradition offers a significant conceptual resource through the governance practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina. His leadership represented not only prophetic authority in the religious sphere but also an exceptional capacity to establish political institutions, governmental administration, and governance for a pluralistic society (Nabilah et al., 2024). Following the Hijrah to Medina, Prophet Muhammad transformed a society previously fragmented by tribal affiliations into a political community founded upon the rule of law, collective responsibility, and justice. This transformation was achieved not through coercive domination but through the institutionalization of principles that guaranteed equality, respected social diversity, and distributed public authority according to individual capability (Sakdiah, 2016).

The Prophet's governance practices further demonstrate that appointments to public office were not determined by lineage, social status, or personal proximity to the ruler. Historical accounts consistently indicate that Prophet Muhammad entrusted public responsibilities to individuals whose qualifications matched the requirements of their respective positions, regardless of their social background. The appointments of Mu'ādh ibn Jabal as judge and governor in Yemen, Zayd ibn Thābit as state secretary and multilingual administrator, 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ as military commander, and Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ to significant public responsibilities illustrate that professional competence constituted the principal criterion for the delegation of governmental authority. At the same time, Prophet Muhammad rejected

requests for public office motivated by personal ambition, as reflected in Prophetic traditions emphasizing that public office is a trust (*amānah*) for which every leader will ultimately be accountable before God (Sakdiah, 2016).

Beyond professional competence, the Prophet's leadership was firmly grounded in an ethical framework. The four prophetic virtues—*ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *tablīgh* (transparent communication), and *faṭānah* (wisdom and strategic intelligence)—represented not merely personal moral qualities but also normative principles for public governance. These values collectively established a leadership model that integrated moral integrity, strategic competence, transparent governance, and public accountability. Consequently, meritocracy in the Prophetic tradition extends beyond administrative competence, constituting a holistic synthesis of professionalism, ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility.

Previous scholarship has examined the leadership of Prophet Muhammad from diverse perspectives, including transformational leadership, spiritual leadership, educational leadership, military strategy, prophetic communication, and Islamic governance ethics. While some studies have emphasized the Prophet's moral leadership and others have explored his success in establishing a pluralistic society in Medina, most remain primarily normative and descriptive. Existing research has yet to systematically conceptualize political meritocracy as an integrated model of governance. In particular, the mechanisms of merit-based public appointments, the relationship between prophetic ethics and bureaucratic professionalism, and the broader implications of the Prophet's governance for contemporary meritocratic theory have received limited scholarly attention. Accordingly, a significant research gap remains regarding how the governance practices of Prophet Muhammad can be understood as a coherent model of political meritocracy (Aswar & Afifi, 2024).

Addressing this gap, the present study proposes the conceptual framework of Prophetic Political Meritocracy by reconstructing political meritocracy as an integrated model of public governance. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the construction of political meritocracy within the leadership of Prophet Muhammad, identify the fundamental principles that underpin this governance model, and evaluate its conceptual relevance for advancing contemporary public governance characterized by professionalism, accountability, inclusiveness, and ethical leadership.

METHOD

This study employs a library research design to reconstruct the model of Prophetic Political Meritocracy in the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to evaluate its relevance to contemporary political governance. The study draws upon both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data consist of scholarly journal articles, academic books, theses, and authoritative academic websites selected based on their relevance to the research topic.

Data were collected through documentary analysis by identifying, classifying, and selecting literature directly related to the focus of the study. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using a historical-hermeneutic approach combined with qualitative content analysis. The historical approach was employed to examine the socio-political context underlying the governance policies of Prophet Muhammad in Medina, while qualitative content analysis was used to interpret and synthesize the relevant textual evidence. The analytical process consisted of three stages: data reduction, thematic categorization, and conceptual synthesis. During the data reduction stage, literature concerning the Prophet's leadership practices was screened according to its relevance to political meritocracy. Finally, conceptual synthesis was undertaken to reconstruct the Prophetic Political Meritocracy framework as a model of public governance integrating ethical values, professional competence, and political institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Principles

In the Islamic perspective, leadership (*qiyādah*, *imāmah*, or *ri'āyah*) is a public trust (*amānah*) encompassing moral, legal, and spiritual dimensions. Leadership is not conceived as a privilege to exercise power, but rather as a responsibility to realize justice, preserve the public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), and uphold Islamic legal principles within society. Consequently, the legitimacy of a leader in Islam is determined not merely by formal authority, but also by moral integrity, intellectual capacity, and the ability to manage public affairs in a just and accountable manner (al-Qaradawi, 2000). This perspective establishes governance as a form of public trust that must be accounted for both to society and to God Almighty.

The conceptual foundation of Islamic leadership is rooted in the doctrine of *istikhlāf* (vicegerency), which designates human beings as representatives of God on earth to foster societal well-being and maintain social order grounded in justice (*al-'adl*), public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), and responsibility (*mas'ūliyyah*). The concept of *khalīfah* does not solely denote a political position; it further asserts that every form of public authority must be executed as a trust oriented toward collective well-being rather than personal or factional interests. Thus, governance in Islam is built upon principles of accountability, public service, and the rule of law to ensure the protection of societal rights (Fijjar et al., 2026).

In practice, Islamic leadership is intrinsically linked to ethical dimensions. The Quran positions Prophet Muhammad as the exemplary role model (*uswah ḥasanah*, Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 21), rendering his leadership the

ideal archetype for just governance. The prophetic attributes embodied by the Prophet—*ṣiddīq* (integrity and honesty), *amānah* (accountability and responsibility), *tablīgh* (transparency and public communication), and *faṭānah* (wisdom and strategic capability)—are not merely personal virtues, but normative principles that structure Islamic public governance. These four attributes represent ethical standards that establish leadership legitimacy while serving as primary indicators for the responsible execution of power (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025).

Furthermore, classical Islamic literature emphasizes that a leader bears a dual responsibility: to the governed society and to God as the ultimate grantor of trust. The concepts of *imāmah* and *ri'āyah* define leadership as an obligation to enforce justice, protect individual rights, and ensure that all public policies are executed based on the public interest, free from personal bias, nepotism, or tribal loyalty (Sidik et al., 2021). Therefore, political authority in Islam cannot be decoupled from moral and legal accountability.

This conceptual framework served as the foundation for Prophet Muhammad's governance in Medina. In exercising his role as head of state and government, the Prophet did not distribute public offices based on seniority, tribal status, or familial proximity. Instead, he appointed individuals to strategic positions based on integrity, competence, professional capacity, and the demonstrated ability to fulfill public trust. Thus, Prophet Muhammad's leadership demonstrates that political legitimacy is constructed through the synthesis of ethical character and functional capability, rather than formal authority or primordial affiliations (Firdaus & Ichwan, 2025).

Based on these premises, the concept of leadership in Islam constitutes the normative foundation for prophetic political meritocracy. Leadership is viewed not merely as the capacity to influence others, but as a public governance system that integrates moral integrity, professional competence, accountability, transparency, and an orientation toward the public good. This perspective provides the conceptual basis for understanding how Prophet Muhammad constructed a merit-based governance framework (Prophetic Political Meritocracy), rendering it enduringly relevant as an alternative model for contemporary political leadership reform.

Prophetic Leadership as the Foundation of Political Meritocracy

The leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) constitutes both the normative and empirical foundation for the establishment of an Islamic system of governance grounded in justice, accountability, and competence. The Qur'an identifies the Prophet as *uswah ḥasanah* (an excellent exemplar) for humanity, as stated in Q.S. al-Aḥzāb [33]: 21. This exemplary leadership extends beyond the spiritual and moral dimensions to encompass public governance, political decision-making, conflict resolution, and the administration of a pluralistic society. Accordingly, the leadership of Prophet

Muhammad should not be understood solely as religious leadership but rather as a model of public governance that integrates moral legitimacy with administrative effectiveness (Shihab, 2010).

The Prophet's success in establishing the political community of Medina demonstrates that effective political leadership depends not merely on formal authority but also on the ethical principles underpinning public governance. Every political decision was guided by justice, the promotion of the public good (*maṣlaḥah*), the protection of citizens' rights, and the preservation of social cohesion. Consequently, his leadership did not evolve into an authoritarian system of government; instead, it achieved political legitimacy through public trust in the integrity, consistency, and moral credibility of the leader. This governance model illustrates that governmental effectiveness emerges from the integration of ethical character and political capacity in the administration of the state (al-Mubarakfuri, 2002).

From the perspective of political meritocracy, the four prophetic virtues—*ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *tablīgh* (transparent communication), and *faṭānah* (wisdom and strategic intelligence)—constitute the ethical foundation of public leadership. *Ṣidq* represents political integrity, requiring public officials to exercise authority honestly, consistently, and free from manipulation. *Amānah* emphasizes that public office is a trust for which leaders are accountable to both society and God, requiring every public policy to be implemented responsibly and in the public interest. *Tablīgh* reflects the principle of governmental transparency through open communication between leaders and citizens, while *faṭānah* highlights the importance of strategic intelligence, analytical capability, and professional competence in formulating and implementing public policy. Collectively, these four virtues establish the ethical criteria that define the leadership of Prophet Muhammad as a model of political meritocracy in which professional competence is inseparable from moral integrity in the exercise of public authority.

The implementation of these prophetic virtues is clearly reflected in the governance practices of Medina. Prophet Muhammad institutionalized *shūrā* (consultation) as the primary mechanism for political decision-making. Despite possessing both prophetic authority and executive leadership as head of state, he consistently consulted his Companions on strategic matters, including national defense, diplomacy, and public administration. This consultative tradition demonstrates that his leadership was founded upon participation, respect for diverse perspectives, and collective decision-making. Political legitimacy, therefore, was derived not only from the authority of the ruler but also from the meaningful participation of the community in the governance process.

In addition to participatory governance, Prophet Muhammad firmly upheld the principle of equality before the law. The administration of justice was never influenced by social status, tribal affiliation, kinship, or political

position. Every member of society was subject to the same legal standards without discrimination, making the rule of law the cornerstone of public justice. This principle further illustrates the Prophet's rejection of favoritism and inherited privilege, both of which had characterized the tribal political order of pre-Islamic Arabia.

The meritocratic character of the Prophet's leadership is further reflected in his approach to public appointments. Positions of authority were never allocated on the basis of family relationships, seniority, or tribal affiliation. Instead, public offices were entrusted to individuals whose competence, integrity, and professional qualifications corresponded to the responsibilities of the position. The appointments of Mu'adh ibn Jabal as judge and governor of Yemen because of his legal expertise and judicial capability, Zayd ibn Thābit as state secretary due to his administrative skills and multilingual proficiency, and Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ to significant public responsibilities despite his background as a former slave all demonstrate that merit served as the principal criterion for the delegation of governmental authority. These practices reveal that the Prophet's administration institutionalized merit-based governance while rejecting patronage and nepotism that had long characterized Arabian tribal society.

Inclusiveness likewise constituted a defining characteristic of the Prophet's governance framework. Through the Constitution of Medina, Prophet Muhammad established a political community that guaranteed protection for all social groups, including Jewish communities and other non-Muslim populations. Freedom of religion, equal legal protection, and participation in civic life were recognized as integral components of the constitutional agreement binding the inhabitants of Medina. Consequently, the Prophet's government was not founded upon religious exclusivism but upon citizenship, justice, and shared responsibility for maintaining political stability and social order (Prayogo et al., 2023).

Taken together, these characteristics demonstrate that the success of Prophet Muhammad's governance did not rest solely upon personal charisma or prophetic authority but upon his ability to integrate ethical principles with effective mechanisms of public administration. Moral integrity, professional competence, accountability, transparency, consultation, the rule of law, and social inclusiveness collectively formed a comprehensive leadership framework that may be conceptualized as *Prophetic Political Meritocracy*—a governance model in which public authority is distributed according to both moral integrity and professional capability. As such, this model provides a compelling alternative framework for contemporary political leadership reform, particularly in addressing persistent challenges associated with nepotism, clientelism, oligarchic dominance, and the erosion of ethical standards in public governance.

Justice as the Foundation of Prophetic Political Governance

One of the most fundamental characteristics of the Prophetic Political Meritocracy framework is the principle of justice (*al-'adl*), which serves as the cornerstone of Prophet Muhammad's governance. From an Islamic perspective, justice is not merely an individual moral virtue but a constitutional principle that guides political decision-making, the distribution of public authority, the administration of justice, and the protection of citizens' rights. Consequently, the legitimacy of political leadership is determined not only by a leader's administrative competence but also by his or her consistent commitment to upholding justice without being influenced by personal interests, kinship ties, or partisan pressures. The Qur'an explicitly commands justice and benevolence as the foundation of social order (Q.S. al-Nahl [16]: 90), establishing justice as an indispensable normative principle of Islamic governance (Abur Hamdi Usman et al., 2025).

This principle was fully realized in the governance of Prophet Muhammad during the establishment of the Medinan state. As both head of state and head of government, the Prophet placed the rule of law above individual and collective interests. The administration of justice was never influenced by social status, political position, or family relationships. Historical reports indicate that Prophet Muhammad rejected all forms of preferential treatment for offenders, even when violations involved individuals of prominent social standing. Such practices demonstrate that justice functioned both as a mechanism for limiting political power and as an instrument for cultivating public trust in governmental institutions.

Justice in the Prophet's administration was equally reflected in the appointment of public officials. Positions of authority were never allocated on the basis of personal proximity, tribal seniority, or political loyalty. Instead, public responsibilities were entrusted to individuals possessing the integrity, competence, and professional qualifications required to fulfill governmental functions. Accordingly, justice was manifested not only through the impartial enforcement of law but also through a merit-based system of political recruitment that prioritized qualification as the principal criterion for the distribution of public authority. These practices demonstrate that justice and meritocracy functioned as mutually reinforcing principles within the Prophetic system of governance.

The Prophet's statesmanship became particularly evident during the Conquest of Mecca (*Fath Makkah*). Following his political and military victory, which granted him complete authority over the city, Prophet Muhammad refrained from using state power as an instrument of revenge against those who had persecuted him and the Muslim community for many years. Instead, he proclaimed general amnesty, guaranteed public security, and extended protection to the inhabitants of Mecca. This policy illustrates that political authority within the Prophetic paradigm was exercised to restore social order

and promote political reconciliation rather than to consolidate domination or retaliate against former adversaries. From the perspective of public governance, this approach demonstrates that political legitimacy is strengthened through justice, respect for human dignity, and commitment to the public good (Qoriah, 2024).

The Prophet's commitment to justice also received normative reinforcement through the Sunnah. In a hadith narrated by Muslim and al-Nasā'ī, Prophet Muhammad declared that just rulers would occupy an honorable position before Allah on the Day of Judgment. This tradition underscores that justice is not merely an administrative obligation but also a moral and spiritual responsibility inseparable from the exercise of political authority. Consequently, Islamic political leadership consistently links governmental effectiveness with transcendent accountability.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that justice constitutes the primary foundation of Prophetic Political Meritocracy. Within the Prophet's governance framework, justice extends beyond equality before the law to encompass merit-based public appointments, the rejection of nepotism and favoritism, the protection of minority communities, and the administration of government oriented toward the public interest. This model offers a significant conceptual contribution to contemporary political leadership by positioning justice as the essential prerequisite for a meritocratic system characterized by integrity, accountability, and long-term institutional sustainability (Nurma Yunita et al., 2025).

Defense Policy as an Instrument of Public Protection

Within the framework of Prophetic Political Meritocracy, the defense and security policies implemented by Prophet Muhammad cannot be interpreted as expressions of political expansionism. Rather, they constituted instruments for safeguarding state stability, protecting society, and preserving the legal and constitutional order established in Medina. Armed conflict was regarded as an *ultima ratio*—a measure of last resort—only after dialogue, treaties, and reconciliation efforts had failed to halt aggression against the state and the Muslim community. Accordingly, the use of military force formed an integral component of state security governance founded upon the principles of proportionality, justice, and the protection of the public interest (Elamin, 2024).

The normative basis for this policy is found in Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 193, which instructs Muslims to resist oppression until persecution and religious coercion cease. This verse demonstrates that the objective of warfare was neither political domination nor territorial expansion, but the elimination of injustice and the establishment of conditions that allowed individuals to practice their faith freely and securely. Consequently, the Prophet's decisions regarding military engagement were consistently guided by strategic, political,

psychological, and security considerations rather than by vengeance or ambitions for political supremacy (Shihabuddin, 2024).

The governance of Medina further illustrates that military leadership itself was organized according to meritocratic principles. Prophet Muhammad appointed military commanders on the basis of leadership capability, strategic competence, operational experience, and moral integrity rather than kinship or tribal affiliation. This practice demonstrates that the state's defense sector was administered through a merit-based leadership system, ensuring that national security remained aligned with the ethical principles of Islamic governance (Elamin, 2024).

Diplomacy as an Instrument of International Political Governance

Alongside the establishment of a strong defense system, Prophet Muhammad also developed diplomacy as a central instrument of state governance. After political stability had been secured in Medina, he dispatched diplomatic envoys to neighboring rulers and regional powers, including the Byzantine Empire, the Persian Empire, Egypt, Abyssinia, and several Arab polities. These diplomatic initiatives demonstrate that the Medinan state was neither politically isolated nor inward-looking but actively engaged in international relations through political communication, negotiation, and diplomatic recognition (Afifi, 2024).

From the perspective of contemporary public governance, these initiatives represent an early model of diplomatic governance, whereby interstate relations are managed through peaceful engagement, dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation. The Prophet's diplomatic efforts extended beyond conveying the message of Islam; they also sought to promote regional political stability, expand networks of cooperation, and establish an international environment conducive to peace and security. This illustrates that the Prophet successfully integrated spiritual leadership with rational and strategic approaches to international relations (Akhtar & Razaq, 2020).

The appointment of diplomatic envoys likewise demonstrates the implementation of political meritocracy in the allocation of public office. Prophet Muhammad did not select diplomats based on personal relationships or family ties. Instead, he entrusted diplomatic responsibilities to individuals possessing exceptional communication skills, diplomatic judgment, linguistic competence, integrity, and an understanding of the social and political characteristics of the receiving communities. Public appointments were therefore determined by the correspondence between individual competence and institutional needs, enabling diplomatic representatives to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Overall, the defense and diplomatic policies implemented by Prophet Muhammad demonstrate that Prophetic Political Meritocracy extends beyond the moral formation of individual leaders. It represents a comprehensive governance framework integrating ethical integrity, professional competence,

strategic intelligence, and commitment to the public good. This governance model illustrates that political legitimacy is achieved through effective management of national security, international relations, and the merit-based distribution of public authority rather than through patronage, nepotism, or oligarchic domination (Sertkaya & Keskin, 2020). As such, Prophetic Political Meritocracy offers a valuable conceptual framework for contemporary political leadership by integrating administrative effectiveness, public accountability, and ethical governance into a coherent model of public administration.

CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrates that the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) represents a model of Prophetic Political Meritocracy that integrates ethical integrity with professional competence as the foundation of public governance. Unlike contemporary conceptions of meritocracy, which predominantly emphasize technocratic capability, prophetic political meritocracy is constructed through the integration of the four prophetic virtues—*ṣiddīq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *tablīgh* (transparent communication), and *faṭānah* (wisdom and strategic intelligence)—with a governance framework grounded in justice, consultation (*shūrā*), accountability, the rule of law, social inclusivity, and the appointment of public officials based on competence and moral eligibility. The analysis of the governance practices in Madinah reveals that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) consistently rejected nepotism, tribal patronage, and privilege-based distributions of political authority. Instead, political legitimacy was established through a system of governance that prioritized competence, integrity, and public responsibility as the principal criteria for exercising public office. Accordingly, this study argues that the governance model of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) extends beyond its historical significance by offering a robust conceptual framework for re-evaluating political meritocracy within the context of contemporary public governance.

The implications of this study contribute to the advancement of Islamic political thought by introducing Prophetic Political Meritocracy as a conceptual model that integrates ethical, spiritual, and institutional dimensions into political leadership theory. From a practical perspective, the findings provide a normative foundation for public governance reform through the strengthening of merit-based recruitment and promotion systems, the development of leadership founded on integrity and accountability, and the institutionalization of governance practices that uphold justice, transparency, and the public good (*maṣlaḥah*). Consequently, the prophetic model of leadership should be understood not merely as a normative legacy of Islamic civilization but also as a strategic alternative for addressing the persistent challenges of contemporary political leadership,

including nepotism, clientelism, oligarchic domination, and the erosion of ethical standards in public administration.

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