

The Ethics of Islamic Leadership: A Cross-Cultural Approach for Public Administration

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes bridging the gap between Muslims' espoused and practiced values by teaching Islamic work ethics and Islamic leadership in administration and leadership professional programs. The argument for this is constructed in four stages: an overview of Islamic principles for building a good community; proposing a leadership model from an Islamic perspective that builds on the work of other management and administration scholars; a response to many scholars who have called for balancing Islamic religious values with Western leadership practices and scholarship by comparing the principles of Islamic leadership with servant and transformational theories of leadership, and public sector traditional values, all of which are close valuationally to Islamic conceptions; and the importance of teaching Islamic ethics, using national case studies and biographical materials of great Muslim leaders, as well as the Arabic 'mirror of princes' tradition, as teaching pedagogies. An important feature of Islamic and Arab literature relevant to this discussion is that it spans many centuries, has been contributed to from many countries, it is not unitary, consisting of a lively set of traditions, interpretive schools, debates, disagreements, and controversies that are often lost in the discussion of this intellectual heritage.

Keywords: Islamic leadership; Islamic work ethics; public administration ethics

1. Introduction

Public administration has gone through significant changes since 1981, when the Thatcher, Reagan and Mulroney governments came to power, introducing neoliberalism and its administrative ideology, the New Public Management (see Aucoin 1995; Cooper 1990; Denhardt 1988; Gruening 2001; Hood 1995). Even though a retrenchment has been underway in many states, shifting back to a "neo-Weberian state model" (Christensen and Lægrid 2006, 2007; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011), private-sector-style management still has a deep and pervasive influence interna-

tionally. Other movements have also had a significant impact on the role, nature and structure of public administration, some contrary to the NPM, like the professional ethics movement (e.g., Adams and Balfour 1998; Garofalo and Geuras 1999; Haque 1999), and some that have advanced the NPM agenda, like globalization in developing parts of the world like the Arabian Gulf (see Fox, Mourtada-Sabbah and al-Mutawa 2006).

A number of authors have argued for the expansion of public administration from a largely ethnocentric American-European view (e.g. Cooper et al. 1998; Farazmand 1999), one that is built on the principle of applying Islamic theory to new contexts (Hashmi 2002) that include modernizing countries and those gaining independence as nation states. One of the areas that is most important in a more inclusive and diversified view is the area of public-administration ethics. Even very recent texts, like Dutelle's *Ethics for the Public Service Professional* (2011), Lawton, Rayner and Lasthuizen (2013) as well as Geuras and Garofalo (2011) assume a largely "Western" view, overlooking the multicultural nature of many Western states, including the ones for which they are writing. Cooper's *The Responsible Administrator* (2012), a central and influential text in the field, now in its sixth edition, has not addressed multicultural and religious values. Management-education texts like French and Grey (1996) and Wankel and DeFillippi (2002) do not address interculturality or an international scope, with relatively little on ethics generally. While admirable for its inclusion of a much broader international scope than most texts in the field, such as Continental European experience and the Chinese administrative tradition, Hood's (1998) *The Art of the State* has no coverage of the Middle East, historical or contemporary, or African states and other generally marginalized parts of the world (even though many of these were administered under UK colonial governments). Overlooked, also, are sources in English that have incorporated an Islamic perspective such as Ali's (1975) *Administrative Ethics in a Muslim State*, Asad's (1999) *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*, Al-Buraey's (1985) *Administrative Development: An Islamic Perspective*. However, there are a number of scholars attempting to give a broader international view that reflects a range of ethical systems, including Islam, that have value for public-service ethics, such as De Vries and Kim (2011) and Jordan and Gray (2011).

The Islamic work ethic and Islamic leadership have received little attention in administration and management literature although they were the driving force behind the sophisticated and flourishing Islamic states established during the first six centuries of Islam (Ali and Al-Owaihian 2008, 6). While Ali and Al-Owaihian only refer to scholars' limited access to Islamic literature, Beekun and Badawi (2005) provide the explanation that it is due to the large diversity of the Islamic population, which resulted in applying Islamic principles and ethics differently in each country. Faris and Parry (2011) also take this view by explaining that "Muslims come from distinct cultural background and are heterogeneous in many ways" (134). However, there is a consensus among these scholars on the significant role that the Islamic work ethic and Islamic leadership could play in enhancing work quality and organizational effectiveness, which contribute to well-developed and stable societies and economic growth, barring other significant factors, like social strife and war, that can intervene.

Currently, one of the most important crises that have placed Islamic countries behind developed nations is the gap between Islamic beliefs and work practices, which has resulted in unproductive communities. Beekun and Badawi (2005) claim that “there is a wide gap” between Islamic values and work practices in some Muslim countries where “bribery and corruption” have become part of business operations (141), including public-sector organizations. Abdalla and Al-Hamoud (2001) refer to problems of current work practices such as injustice, corruption, abuse of power and over-centralization that produce the gap between what managers believe in and what they really do (524). Another example comes from Ali and Al-Shakhis’s study (1989), in which Saudi and Iraqi managers scored higher in work ethics than Western managers although they were less effective. Ali and Al-Shakhis regard these results as indicative that managers’ Islamic beliefs may not be necessarily reflected in their work practices (181). Similar results are found by Swailes and Al Fahdi (2011) in their study of the Omani public sector, and by Jreisat (2009) in his work on the public administration of Arab states. Al-Wardi (1913) suggested that the internal struggle between Bedouin values that emphasize pride, sib networks and power on the one hand and Islamic values that emphasize submission to God, equality, justice and being humble on the other has led to a dual system in Arab countries where there is a gap between what Muslims believe in and actually do. He claims that Muslims have Bedouin hearts while they speak with an Islamic tongue (19-28).

Several factors have actually contributed to the emergence of this gap. The first is the long colonization of Islamic countries, which divided the Islamic Empire into small states and weakened Islamic teachings and communication among Muslims, eventually resulting in applying Islamic principles and values differently in many countries. A second factor is authoritarian political systems that followed the colonization period and were influenced, on the one hand, by colonial authoritarian practices that ensured people’s submission to their policies (Ali 1990, 16), and, on the other, by tribal values that give preference to family and friends over others (Branine and Pollard 2010, 712; see also Ali 1975). Both influences have led to authoritative leadership, centralization of work practices, and unfair recruitment and reward systems. Under these work practices, talented and hard-working people lack the spirit to work freely and creatively, which encourages the immigration of many brilliant and gifted Arabs to Western countries, where their talents and skills have been recognized and appreciated (Abdalla and Al-Homoud 2001, 512). A third factor, according to Ali (2005), is the promotion of Ibn Timiya’s writings on leadership. Ibn Timiya is a Muslim scholar, who witnessed an era of fragmentation and foreign invasion of Muslim lands in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. In order to unite the Muslim community and to protect it from foreign invasion, he asked Muslims to obey the leader even if he is unjust. This was a deviation from the Islamic values advised by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) “Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it” (40 Hadith Nawawi 34) and “The deen (religion) is naseehah (advice, sincerity)” (40 Hadith Nawawi 7, Hadith 7).¹ Unfortunately, Ibn Timiya’s writings, while driven by a noble intention, have been misused by rulers who widely pro-

¹ All hadith from the website <http://www.sunnah.com/> (last accessed 2 July 2012)

moted and used them to ensure followers' submission, which eventually weakened the *shura* (consultation) process (Ali 2005, 143; see also Ali 1975). A fourth factor is the lack of leadership theories that are built on Islamic principles and their applicability to current administrative and life situations. Metcalfe and Murfin (2011) argue that the deviation from Islamic principles and following a Western secular path resulted in a "failure of Muslim societies". They believe that societal renewal "requires a return to Islam" (10).

There is a strong tendency toward importing and applying Western management practices and models in both private-sector management and public administration despite the clear contradiction between Islamic thought, which emphasizes cooperation and working for the well-being of society, and Western thought, which emphasizes individualism and a strong profit maximization that infiltrated public administration through neoliberalism and the New Public Management ideology (see Samier 2001 for an overview). This contradiction has led to great confusion in management practices (Ali 1990). Branine and Pollard (2010) suggest that the lack of progress in Arab countries comes from "the mismatch between global integration and local responsiveness because of an excess forward diffusion of Western management and business practices" (712). We would argue here, as well, that in much of the Middle East, globalization has subjected Arab and Islamic countries to an intellectual imperialism causing a further division between Islam and administration (see also Samier 2013).

This paper proposes bridging the gap between Muslims' espoused and practiced values by teaching Islamic work ethics and Islamic leadership in administration and leadership professional programmes. The argument for this begins with an overview of Islamic principles for building a good community. Then, it proposes a leadership model from an Islamic perspective that builds on the work of other management and administration scholars. The third section responds to Faris and Parry's (2011, 136) call for balancing Islamic religious values with Western leadership practices and scholarship by comparing the principles of Islamic leadership with servant and transformational theories of leadership and public-sector traditional values, all of which are close valuationally to Islamic conceptions. Finally, the paper discusses the importance of teaching Islamic ethics and using national case studies and biographical materials of great Muslim leaders, as well as the Arabic "mirror of princes" tradition, as teaching pedagogies. An important feature of the Islamic literature relevant to this discussion, a literature that spans many centuries, and which has been contributed to from many countries and regions of the world, is that it is not unitary – Islamic, and Arab, scholarship has a lively set of traditions and interpretive schools, debates, disagreements and controversies that are often lost in the discussion of this intellectual heritage. These features are no less evident in the Islamic scholarship of statecraft and governance (Boroujerdi 2013), readily evident in the edited collection by Boroujerdi, *Mirror for the Muslim Prince* (2013). This paper, however, does not trace through the differences among these traditions, but provides an introductory framework on the general principles and guidelines for public administration from an Islamic perspective.

There are at least four main bodies of literature relevant to examining Islamic ethics in administration: modern writings on principles of Islamic administration; the

traditional mirrors of princes and some related arts of war texts; Islamic political philosophy; and the empirical studies of how government has been and is carried out in a number of Muslim states, regardless of whether or not core Islamic principles in the Qur'an and Hadith are followed. This paper is centred on the first body of literature, identified in some detail above, although the others are very important to an overall discussion of Islamic ethics in public administration on theoretical and applied levels. The general purpose of this literature is to apply Islamic principles that issue from the Qur'an and Hadith to developing guidelines for practice in an administrative context. Mostly, these texts do not get into doctrinal differences between sunni and shia (or other Islamic traditions); instead they focus on the application of these fundamental values and principles as they inform character, professional ethics and the design and implementation of an administrative system that is considered right and good in Islamic terms.

The second literature, the mirrors of princes, situated in particular cities, caliphates and regions, contribute to the complex and changing circumstances in which Islamic ethics is applied, such as the following: the eleventh-century *Qābūs-nāma* (translated as *A Mirror for Princes*) by Kai ibn Qābūs ibn Washmgīr that passes on wisdom from ruling father to succeeding son on the perils of rulership and guidance in all aspects of life at this political level, although not necessarily always guided by Islamic principle; the eleventh-century *The Ordinances of Government (al-Ahkam as-Sultaniyyah)* by Abu'l-Hasan al-Mawardi, designed as a handbook for the Khalifah, amirs wazirs and deputies on their rights, duties and activities under Islamic principles; the eleventh-century *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings (Siyar al-Mulūk or Siyāsāt-nāma)* by Nizām al-Mulk, as senior administrator to the Saljuq Empire providing advice on practical and spiritual matters; the eleventh-century Turko-Islamic *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig)* by Yusuf Khass Hajib; the anonymously authored mid-twelfth-century Persian *The Sea of Precious Virtues (Bahār al-Favā'id)*, focused on the moral fitness of the ruler; and ibn Zafar al-Siqilli's twelfth-century *Consolation for the Ruler During the Hostility of Subjects (Sulwan al-Muta'fi "Udwan al-Atba")* in *The Just Prince* that examines the role of rulership through Islamic principles. These texts require a considerable hermeneutic historical-cultural study within which to discuss and evaluate their value as texts of Islamic ethics for rulership and administration containing both principles of practice and details of governance and administrative practices of the regimes they reflect, well beyond the scope of this paper, but a topic that deserves much more attention in non-Western public administration.

Islamic political philosophy is also relevant to a broader discussion of Islam and public administration, ranging from sources that examine the early historical context, like Reynolds' *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context* (2008), informing the hermeneutic understanding of language and central concepts, and works by Crone (2005) and Black (2001) that cover political constructions of the state, rulership and law in the early Islamic period that provide foundations for administrative practices. This literature continues up to present-day discussion of contemporary Islamic thinking about the state reflecting differences in intellectual tradition, Islamic interpretation and degree of politicization (e.g. Abu-Rabi' 2010; Belkeziz 2009; March 2009), with implications not only for the type of government and rulership but the fundamental

principles of the public sector. Also related to this literature are contemporary conceptions and values associated with the Caliphate as an ideal Islamic form of government but also embedded in many political movements and employed by political leaders (Al-Rasheed, Kersten and Shterin 2013). To carry out a comprehensive study of political, social and moral theory that grounds Islamic administration necessitates the inclusion of classical scholars who laid a considerable foundation for modern scholarship, for example Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* (1969), Al-Farabi's *On the Perfect State* (1997), Ibn Rushd's *The Distinguished Jurist's Primer* (2000), Ibn Taymiyya's *Al-Siyasah al-Shariyyah* (Rapoport and Ahmed 2010) and Al-Ghazali's *Al-Tibr Al-Masbuk fi Nasihat Al-Muluk* (Book of Counsel for Kings 1964).

Empirical studies of how Muslim (actual and nominal) states conduct themselves are a far-ranging and far-reaching literature that has many subsections. Imamuddin's *Arab Muslim Administration* (622-1258) (1984) is one source that provides an overview of administrative systems in Arab territories. One is the historical study of former caliphates and city states. Notable examples of these are Duri's *Early Islamic Institutions* (2011), Johns' *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily* (2007), Majdalawi's *Islamic Administration under Omar Ibn Al-Khattab* (2003) and Ayubi's (1995) comparative discussion of bureaucratic growth in Arab states. This literature also includes studies on particular societal traditions like Bedouin structures and practices since they have served as a contributing influence to governmental characteristics in a number of Arab Muslim states: Jabbur's (1995) *The Bedouins and the Desert*, Kurpershoek's (2001) *Arabia of the Bedouins* and Lienhardt's (2001) *Shaikhdoms of Eastern Arabia* include valuable information on how Islamic principles are expressed. In addition to these there are empirical studies of states that call themselves Muslim, but do not in fact base their law and practice on Islamic principles, a condition that is represented in the Middle East and North Africa region as well as Europe, states that operate to varying degrees on other political principles and are not the subject of this paper. This literature is complemented by biographical literature, such as Eddé's (2011) biography of Saladin, which includes a description of his reorganization of the administration of Egypt and of cities that he conquered, and Lev's (1999) more detailed study of his work in Egypt as well as Algosai's (1999) mandarin memoir from Saudi Arabia.

Sunni and shi'a differences play a role more in societal divisions and the selection of rulership than in administrative practices that may be more affected by the juridical traditions within Islam and by economic and political conditions that arise from civil war, revolution and decolonization. Many states still carry structures and practices established by colonizers who had little regard for religion or culture. For public-administration practices, it is quite often other factors that play a role in change, development or contrast than sunni/shi'a differences. For example, Pioppi's (2007) discussion of changes in social services that provide a welfare system through endowments (Awqaf) is affected by changes in state control of services and a general "Islamicization" of society in contrast to a secular modernization model. In other words, the determining factors are a state-operated rather than a private endowment system according to Qur'anic principles in Islamic law. Valeri's (2007) examination of state-building in Oman identifies as significant factors the changes in political structure, changes from tribal to national identity and a general Islamicization. What

may, in fact, hold more relevance and more insight into Islamic administration is a study of legal principles of Shari'ah such as Kamali's (2008) *The Right to Life, Security, Privacy and Ownership in Islam*, and the main schools of jurisprudence – four major schools in sunni Islam (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali) and two major branches in shia (Ja'fari, Batini) (see Abdal-Haqq 2002, although he recognizes only Ja'fari as the main recognized shia school), the two largest that have developed to interpret these and which, in turn, affect both the structure and practice of public administration. Not only do culture and political conditions as well as a broad range of legal traditions complicate study in this area, but the manner in which legal scholars can produce a legal ruling, and several forms of reasoning, creates an interpretive context of complexity (see Abdal-Haqq 2002; Huff 2007). In terms of actual legislative frameworks, though, much of the Muslim world has adopted various "hybrids of Islamic and European law" – "anglo-Mohammedan" or "franco-Mohammedan" systems (Abdal-Haqq 2002, 68-69). Islam is embedded in a Quranic tradition that was highly legislative for many historical, religious and cultural reasons (see Hallaq 2005, 22-25). All of these influences and factors deserve much more detailed study, which would require an intellectual programme in Islamic administration resting upon a broad range of literature and disciplines.

2. Islamic principles for building a good community

Islam is a way of life. It is a "system of belief and law that governs both spiritual and material conditions" (Metcalf and Murfin 2011, 10). Thus, unlike Christianity, Islam does not recognize a separation between religion and secular aspects of life. It provides Muslims with detailed guidelines on how to conduct and manage their personal and professional affairs. Work in Islam is considered a virtue, a form of worship and an obligatory activity for each Muslim to pursue, and great emphasis is placed on work because it leads to self-respect and satisfaction, happiness and fulfilment, while providing for the disadvantaged and disabled not able to participate at this level. Thus, Islam bans begging, laziness and reliance on others. This basic distinction can be seen in Algosaibi's memoirs of administrative life in Saudi Arabia. He distinguishes between "aggressive" and "defensive" administrators, where the former anticipates decision, takes care of problems immediately, is actively involved with staff and projects, reforms the system and is not intimidated by conflict or opposition, while the latter is passive and avoids action and change as much as possible, in other words, turns a blind eye and rarely emerges from behind his desk (1999, 73-74). The head of the organization must have three qualities: mental, i.e. the wisdom to discern correct decisions; psychological in having the courage to adopt the right decision; and a mixture of the two in having the skills to execute the decision (1999, 99-101).

Muslims are obliged to pursue any type of work that enables them to be independent and effective participants in the well-being of their community. The Prophet emphasized the importance of work by preaching that "No food is better to man than that which he earns through his manual work" (Al-Bukhari, Book 1, Hadith 543). This perception during the early years of Islam was novel and different from prevailing perceptions of work in other cultures at that time. For example, while merchants

and craftsmen were highly respected and admired in Islam, slaves and lower-class citizens were the people who worked and conducted business affairs in Greece (Ali and Al-Owaidan 2008, 8).

Seeking knowledge is also considered a religious duty in Islam. Seeking knowledge and involvement in intellectual endeavours has been encouraged in both the Qur'an, "My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (20:114), and Hadith, "He who goes forth in search of knowledge is considered as struggling in the Cause of Allah until he returns" (At-Tirmidhi, Book 13, Hadith 10) and "Allah makes the way to Jannah easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge" (Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 7).

Islam also calls for building communitarian/collective communities through its emphasis on developing brotherly relations among Muslims: "No one of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 183) and "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim" (Al-Bukhari & Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 233). These basic values of working hard and perfecting one's job, seeking knowledge and advancing one's intellectual capabilities, and finally replacing blood with faith in building brotherly relationships were the main factors that led to establishing a great and flourished Islamic empire within a few years. Thus, Muslim leaders, while being competent and knowledge seekers, should work toward establishing a community where brotherly relations, hard work, perfection, dedication and seeking knowledge and being involved in intellectual endeavours are promoted and highly supported.

3. Leadership in Islam

Leadership in Islam is both a trust (*amanah*) and a responsibility (Ahmed 2009; Ali 2009; Beekun and Badawi 2009; Faris and Parry 2001) rather than a privilege. Metcalfe and Murfin (2011, 22) describe Islamic leadership as involving "a psychological contract" in which the leader dedicates himself to protecting, guiding and serving his followers. What distinguishes Islamic leadership from other theories of leadership is that it is "a social exchange" (Beekun and Badawi 2009, 7) and "a shared influence" (Ali 2009, 163) process where leaders, while working for "the collective well-being of the society" (Mir 2010, 69), seek advice and insights from followers through *shura* (consultation). This can be seen clearly in the early years of Islam through the interaction between the Prophet and his companions, where the relationship among them was characterized by trust and mutual engagement (Metcalfe and Murfin 2011, 16-22). God has emphasized the importance of *shura* by asking the Prophet to "consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah" (3:159). So, a Muslim leader should seek followers' advice, ask for God's inspiration, and trust that God will inspire him to do the right things. A second distinction is that leadership in Islam is not self- or profit-oriented. It is more concerned with the development of a just, moral and prosperous society. Economic gains should come as a result of Muslims' hard work, self-denial and dedication to their community. Metcalfe and Murfin (2011, 26) also view Muslim leaders as expected to be more humane and ethically oriented, a characteristic of early Islamic empires that were well known for tolerance of other religions and cultural practices

in lands they governed. A third distinction for Islamic leadership is that it requires followers' approval and is based on building brotherly relations between followers. And finally ethics and moral values such as justice, kindness, empathy, patience, compassion, tolerance and honesty are key components of Islamic leadership.

Leaders in Islam are inspired by God to do good deeds, promote Islamic principles and values and help followers grow as Muslims and individuals: "And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us" (Qur'an 21:73). Thus, leadership in Islam is a means to attain God's love through leaders' self-denial and dedication in serving and helping other Muslims and through establishing a well-developed society that is guided by Islamic principles and values. Ali (2005) argues that "the ideal society is based on justice and compassion" and can only be achieved through effective leadership. He explains that the early years of Islam (622-661) were the "most just, compassionate and ideal in Islamic history" and this state occurred again only during the era of Khalifa Omer ibn Abdel Aziz (717-20), who was well-known for this, and for some years during the Abbasid Empire (Ali 2005, 133-134). He suggests a third important pillar of Islamic leadership – in addition to justice and compassion – which is *shura*. The Qur'an defines Muslims as those "who conduct their affairs through mutual consultation" (42:38), thus, leaders must seek feedback and insights from followers through *shura*.

The model proposed here is derived from the work of a number of scholars in Islamic leadership literature, including that of Ali (1975), Ali (2005), Beekun and Badawi (2009), Jabnoun (2008) and Metcalfe and Murfin (2011). This model aligns with servant and transforming theories of leadership and can be taught in administration and leadership programmes along with these Western theories (see Figure 1). The model suggests that Islamic leadership has two primary components: servant leadership, which is similar to Greenleaf's servant theory of leadership (1998, 2002, 2008); and guardian leadership, which is similar to Burns' (1978) transforming theory. These two components are embedded in and driven by some basic Islamic principles and values such as: justice (*adl*; or *insaf* in the sense of fairness), consultation (*shura*), tolerance, honesty, kindness (*ihsan*), empathy, patience and compassion. According to this model, Muslim leaders, while fulfilling the obligations of servant and guardian roles, must be inspired and guided by these basic principles.

Servant Muslim leaders, as described by Beekun and Badawi (2009, 15), must ensure that people's basic needs are met, work with passion and dedication for the welfare of followers and society, and inspire followers to grow as individuals and as professionals. These leaders find their own value and happiness in serving and helping others. They believe that their leadership role is a means to attain God's blessing and love. The Prophet emphasized the servant aspect of Islamic leadership by preaching that:

A ruler who, having obtained control over the affairs of the Muslims, does not strive for their betterment and does not serve them sincerely shall not enter Paradise with them. (Sahih Muslim, Book 20, Hadith 4502).

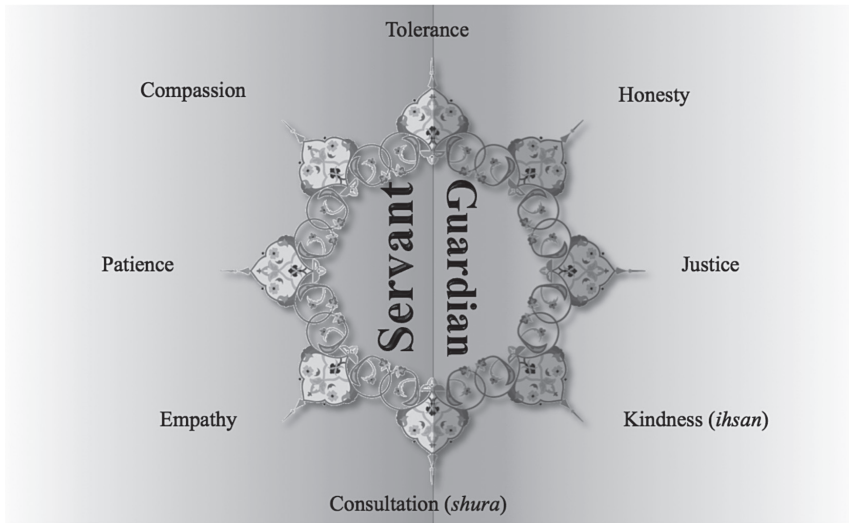


Figure 1: Islamic Leadership Model

The role of the guardian leader (Beekun and Badawi 2009, 15) is to protect followers from oppression and tyranny, promote justice and encourage God-consciousness by helping followers develop their spiritual levels, consisting of four in Islam: *islam*, *iman*, *taqwa* and *ihsan* (see Figure 2).

Islam is the submission to God's will. A Muslim in *islam*'s level will "submit his ego to Allah, and will never see himself as supreme" (Beekun and Badawi 2009, 21). *Iman* is to believe in God and his oneness. Hasan Al Baseri, one of the most famous Muslim scholars, advised that *iman* is what settles in the heart and is reflected in one's actions. Thus, a Muslim with strong *iman* will strive to put Islamic principles into practice, help others and do good deeds. *Iman* and *amal saleh* (good deeds) were linked together in Qur'an almost sixty times (Beekun and Badawi 2009, 20). *Taqwa* is the fear of God. It prevents a Muslim from behaving immorally or in a manner that is inconsistent with Islamic teaching. Muslims with *taqwa* will put Islamic principles and values into practice in their daily life because they know that God will question them on every deed: "And fear a Day when you will be returned to God. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged" (Qur'an, 2:281). However, they do not perform any additional tasks or go beyond the call. *Ihsan* is the love of God and striving to attain his love. A Muslim who is in *ihsan*'s level pursues every work to attain God's love, thus, "goes beyond his normal duties and is willing to serve others and make sacrifices to please God."

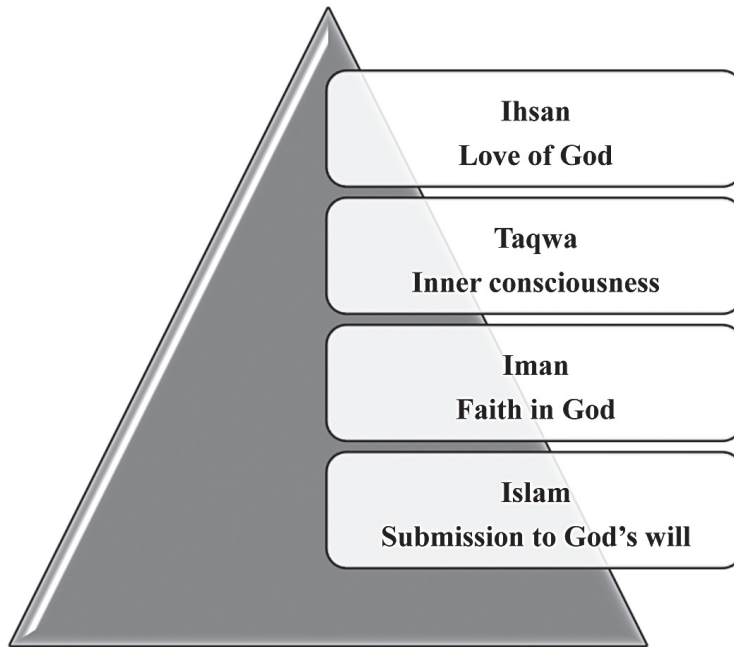


Figure 2: **Spiritual levels in Islam**

A guardian leader will help followers become better Muslims by inspiring them to develop their faith and spiritual level from *islam* to *ihsan*. The leader in this role is like a shepherd or mentor who guards, protects, cares for, develops and guides followers. The Prophet emphasized the guardian aspect of Islamic leadership by preaching that:

All of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. The ruler is a guardian of his subjects, the man is a guardian of his family, the woman is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your subjects. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 283).

The fundamental values associated with servant and guardian leadership have a high correspondence to the traditional values of the public sector “mandarin” tradition, an “extra-patrimonial traditionalism” consisting of loyalty, anonymity, responsibility and accountability to the public interest, expertise in policy matters, moral courage, and “speaking truth to power” (see Samier 2001 for an overview), that fundamentally influence how one shapes and implements public policy. These values are still evident in many “mandarin”-level civil servants, like Ruth Hubbard, whose professional memoir contains the essence of this tradition, integrating both servant and guardian values into one synthesized role:

Conscious of the burden of office as a professional public servant and later a deputy minister, I sought, through ideals and a strong sense of duty, to uphold some key principles (e.g. safeguarding the fabric of society, speaking truth to power, loyalty to the public interest, and loyalty to the public trust) on behalf of citizens. (2009, ix)

Even though this tradition has suffered an eclipse for the last 35 years by the New Public Management public-manager ideal, it is still believed and followed by many public servants – in fact, its resurgence or, perhaps a better metaphor, rising from the ashes, has been noted by a number of scholars in public administration (e.g. Politt and Bouckaert 2011).

4. Islamic versus Western theories of leadership

Greenleaf (2002) explains that the “servant-leader is servant first” and servant leadership “begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (15). He further describes them as showing the way for others, responding to problems by listening first, taking unusual approaches to solve problems and making sure that their people’s high-priority needs are met. The effectiveness of a servant leader can be tested by examining if those who have been served grow as persons, become healthier, wiser and are more likely to become servants themselves. One of the important characteristics of servant leaders is that they are great dreamers: “behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams” (18). They also accept, empathize and never reject. They help disqualified team members to grow and reach their full potential instead of rejecting them. They find “their wholeness through their contributions” (46) in making a good society. Greenleaf’s servant leadership is similar in many aspects to the servant component of Islamic leadership. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of Greenleaf’s model compared with those of leaders identified by Beekun and Badawi (2009), Ali (2009) and Mir (2010).

Transforming leadership is one of the most popular and well-received Western theories. Burns (1978) explains that it is the process where “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (20). Northouse (2004) indicates that transformational leadership “occupies a central place in leadership research” due to its focus on how the leader inspires and supports followers to reach their full potential (169). He further explains that the theory incorporates “charismatic and visionary leadership” and places a great emphasis on emotions, values, ethics and long-term goals. Bass and Avolio (1994, 2) claim that transformational leadership takes place when leaders inspire followers to think of their work from new perspectives, communicate and explain their vision to followers, help followers to grow and reach higher levels of potential, and motivate followers to work beyond their own interests and for the well-being of the group.

Transforming leadership is similar to the guardian aspect of Islamic leadership in terms of providing individual consideration to followers and protecting and inspiring them to grow and reach their full potential as individuals and professionals. Both models place a great emphasis on morals and values and on “achieving higher and

Table 1: **Characteristics of Islamic Leaders versus Servant Leaders**

Islamic leadership	Characteristics of Leaders	Servant Leadership
Responsibility	Looking after followers, commitment to followers' growth, leadership is a trust	Stewardship Commitment to people's growth
Competence Strength of character	Able to build a community, role model, seek knowledge, competent in his field	Building Community
Having a vision	Thinking beyond current situations, dream great dreams	Conceptualization
Inspiration	Predict possible consequences, inspire followers to think positively	Foresight
Patience	Listen carefully to followers, able to heal oneself and others, endure calmly and without losing faith	Listening Healing
Humility Kindness&magnanimity	Humble, accept all people as they are, never reject anyone	Empathy
Self-understanding	Self awareness	Awareness
Seeking consultation	Reliance on persuasion instead of using authority	Persuasion
Honest Equity and impartiality	Live out one's values Treat all people equally	Integrity
Modesty and simplicity Being good follower	Maintain low power distance with followers Willingness to change roles	
Passion	Take time to think and reflect how he relates to the community Unfailing dedication to an ideal	Reflection Passion

noble goals contributing to societal betterment, going beyond the self-interest of the individual” (Mir 2010, 72). Table 2 demonstrates the similarities between transforming leadership and the guardian aspect of Islamic leadership.

When reviewing servant and transforming leadership theories, one can conclude that both complement each other. For example, while transforming leadership focuses on “transforming followers’ self-interest into collective values and interdependent goals that support organizational interests”, servant leadership focuses on serving “followers’ highest priority needs”. Also, transforming leaders are motivated by achieving organizational success and overcoming environmental challenges while servant leaders are motivated by achieving egalitarianism and individual growth. Finally, transforming leaders use their charisma to influence followers while servant leaders influence followers through their devotion in serving them (Paronlini, Patterson and Winston 2009, 275-279). Thus, Islamic leadership with its guardian and servant components represents a comprehensive theory of leadership

that focuses on both achieving organizational goals and success while supporting followers' growth and serving their personal needs. Its moral and ethical components and its focus on followers' growth overcome the potential shortcomings of either leadership theory.

Table 2: Characteristics of Islamic Leaders versus Transformational Leaders

Islamic leadership	Characteristics of Leaders	Transformational Leadership
Strength of character Honesty	Reflect role modelling and leading with integrity	Charismatic influence
Responsibility	Support individual needs, act as coaches, delegate responsibilities to support followers' growth.	Individualized consideration
Having a vision	Encourage the exploration of new ideas. Motivate subordinates to go beyond the normal and achieve the set vision	Inspirational motivation
Inspiration	Questioning the status quo and thinking outside the box	Intellectual stimulation

5. Teaching the ethics of Islamic leadership in management programmes

Many scholars (e.g. Abeng 1997; Beekun and Basawi 2005; Kumar and Rose 2010; Ryan 2000; Yousef 2000b) view ethics as important in creating effective working environments and a well-developed society. For example, Abeng (1997) argues that since ethics guides human behaviour, organizations need an ethical framework "to function effectively and efficiently" (47). Many influential authors see the need for a strong ethical system. Adam Smith, whose work on economics in the 18th century is foundational to the field, argues that ignoring the moral basis of business would create an immoral society (in Ryan 2000, 112). Martin Luther King argued that while a leader may possess all the qualities and techniques that make him an effective leader, he will not go far if equipped with poor ideals because moral values enable the leader to speak to people's souls and give him power and respect (see Temes 1996, 181-182). Ciulla (2004) calls for moral leaders who are trustworthy and reputable of doing the good things. John Stuart Mill argued that the consequences of a person's act inform us of its morality while the intention and the means of achieving the act inform us of the morality of the person (in Temes 1996, 198).

Currently, most business and public-management schools in Arab countries develop their curricula and programmes by copying Western models and theories (both of which are important for public administration since many hired into the public sector have business-management degrees). These theories have been developed based on research studies conducted in and for developed countries and may not be applicable in Islamic developing countries where Muslims get their culture roots and practices from Islam (Ali 1995, 12-14). Thus, this paper argues for a reduction in the gap between Islamic beliefs and work practices by teaching Islamic professional ethics and Islamic leadership in management and professional development

programmes. Shah (2006) believes that an Islamic education develops people and enables them “to follow the path of righteousness and to become useful members of Ummah and society” (367). Teaching Western theories such as servant and transforming leadership as well as public administration that is grounded in a non-managerial model makes more sense and becomes more applicable when they are linked to and supported by Islamic principles and practices because this will allow Muslims to understand the applications of these theories within their own context. Greenleaf (2008) claims that “nothing is meaningful until it is related to the hearer’s own experience,” arguing that leadership is situational, it is “a fresh creative response to here-and-now opportunities” (19, 35). The curriculum needs to be expanded, adjusted and aligned to the principles, experiences and cultures of Arab and Islamic states. An additional consideration here is that a mandarin-type tradition, where such values are core to the role, is more suitable than the New Public Management public-manager style for Arab countries undergoing a building or re-building of the state.

Hartman (2006) argues that people often do wrong things not because they possess bad principles but mainly because they cannot “apprehend the situation under the right principles” (77), thus, when designing and teaching management and administration-ethics courses, we should think carefully about the best method to deliver them. He recommends case studies for helping students develop their “moral imagination” and effectively teaching them the “warning signs of rationalization and ethical anesthesia” (78). Thus it is argued in this paper that to teach Islamic ethics and Islamic leadership, case studies, role-playing, biography and story-telling methods can provide an important link between theory and practice. The case-study method has played a significant role in administrative teaching and has been a very effective tool in applying knowledge and concepts to real-life situations. It stimulates students’ thinking and encourages them to take responsibility for their education (Garvin 2007; Hartman 2006; Klimoski 2006; Liang and Wang 2004). It also “gives participants first-hand experience” (Liang and Wang 2004, 398). Using case studies in ethics teaching helps students develop their moral imagination and stimulates their thinking while using life experience to help them develop character and see the relationship between character and professionalism.

Sources that provide a more realistic context within which public-administration ethics can be taught are biographical materials (e.g, biographies, memoirs, diaries, speeches), providing a number of advantages in conveying the complexities and difficulties of administrative life (see Samier 2007). Islam is also a religion for which historical figures deserving of role-model status are palpably alive in Muslim daily consciousness. By its very nature, Islam presents a role model, an ideal pattern of thinking and acting in life circumstances through the Qur’an, the record of the Prophet’s sayings and actions in the *sunnah* and records of early Islamic society in which the character of loyalty, obligation and leadership, grounded in the principles discussed earlier are evident (see Mottahedeh 2001 and Adair 2010). Jabnoun (2008), for example, includes a section in his *Islam and Management* on ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second successor to the Prophet Muhammad who is credited with establishing a “modern” and highly effective system of administration. Two other books of note, particularly for public administration, are Ali’s *Administrative Ethics in a Muslim State* (1975) and Al-Buraey’s *Administrative Development: An Islamic*

Perspective (1985), which illustrate this point – the references on the Qur'an and the Hadith to values and decisions of consequence to this discussion are infused and integrated throughout the texts.

The biographies of great Muslim leaders such as Abu Bakr, Omar ibn Al Khatab, Omar ibn Abdel Aziz, Salah ad-Din (Saladin) and Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates are easily available in English and Arabic for teaching ethics in a realistic manner. Klimoski (2006, 66) argues that life experiences are important opportunities for “dialectic” learning that is suitable for dealing with the complexities of external and internal forces and principles and their application, which are typical particularly of the senior administrator. Garvin (2007) argues that people who work are more interested in learning things that can be reflected into their work practices and lead to better performance; cases introduce practical and relevant examples that can be linked to prior experiences and provide analogous settings and stories that enhance class participation and stimulate thinking. Floyd and Bodur (2005) take the same view by arguing that case discussions “serve as catalysts for changes in thinking even when no disagreement or conflict exists” (50). There are also biographies of public administrators in Arab countries, like Algosaibi's *Yes, (Saudi) Minister!* (1999), that are readily available for teaching purposes.

A related body of literature is the “mirror of princes” tradition that is at least equally important in the Arab tradition as it is in the ‘West.’ Ibn Zafar's *The Just Prince* (2005), originally written in the 12th century, still resonates well as a guide for carrying out rulership and senior administration from a Muslim perspective, providing an application of Islamic ethics in a government context, as well as criteria for character and principles of Realpolitik that are modulated through these lenses. Ali (1975), Al-Buraey (1985) and Boroujerdi (2013) provide important overviews of this literature, “mirrors” that negotiate the tension between the Islamic ideal and the pressures, problems and dilemmas of actual governmental decision-making and action.

6. Conclusion

Islam is a way of living. It provides detailed guidelines and instructions for conducting business and personal affairs. Islamic values and work ethics that were the driving force behind the intellectual and economic development during the first six centuries of Islam have a great potential still for achieving economic growth and well-developed societies in today's world. The Prophet Muhammad advised that “Religion is found in the way of dealing with other people” (see Ali and Al-Owaihah 2008, 13), thus, putting Islamic work ethics and values into practice is much more important than just believing in them.

Leadership in Islam is considered a trust (*amanah*) and a responsibility rather than a privilege. Leaders in Islam are inspired by God to promote Islamic principles and God-consciousness. Islamic leadership is distinction in many aspects. First, it is a collective and shared influence process where the relationship between the leader and followers is characterized by trust and mutual engagement through *shura* (consultation) and where both leaders and followers inspire each other to reach higher levels of faith and potential, and work for the collective well-being of *Ummah* (Muslim community). Second, Islamic leadership is not profit- or self-oriented. It is

more concerned with developing just, moral and prosperous societies. Thus, moral values and ethics are critical components of Islamic leadership. Finally, Islamic leadership is based on replacing blood with faith in building brotherly relations among followers.

However, the Islamic view of leadership is not remote from some of the traditions already known in non-Muslim countries. In contrast with a “Clash of Civilizations” view professed by Huntington (2003), a number of authors in the realm of “Western” ethics have explored the correspondences that exist, such as Tampio in *Kantian Courage* (2012) and Küng in *Islam* (2009), which both attempt to lay a basis for mutual understanding between the “Western,” and predominantly Christian, and Muslim worlds and as potential partners in addressing socio-political and economic problems of the present day. Islamic leadership involves servant and guardian leadership and administrative responsibilities that are embedded in and guided by core principle values such as honesty, justice, compassion, consultation, tolerance, kindness, empathy and patience, and by two roles that are not remote from the “Western” mind, but which do need to be expressed in forms and cultural and religious language that can be understood and internalized in Arab countries. Servant leaders ensure that people’s needs are met, inspire others to grow and reach higher levels of performance, and work for the welfare of followers and society, whereas guardian leaders protect followers, promote justice and encourage God consciousness. Put together as an Islamic model they present a comprehensive theory for administration, management and leadership. Thus, teaching this model may help in overcoming current work practices that hinder the development of Muslim countries.

Copying international models will not solve the work quality-problems in any form of management, including the public sector in Muslim countries. For these theories to be effective, relevant and applicable, it is essential to link them to Islamic core principles and people’s own culture. Islamic teaching is crucial for the new generations who possess a limited and shallow knowledge of Islam. It will help them develop their *taqwa* (the fear of Allah) and *ihsan* (the love of Allah), and will provide non-Muslims in these contexts a means of understanding how to practice public administration in a manner necessary for Islamic states, particularly in contexts where state-building is still underway. Shah (2006) explains that Islamic education develops humans and allows them to “become useful members of the *Ummah* and society” (367).

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