





Administrative Evolution and Economic Policies of the Umayyad Dynasty: Implications for Governance and Society

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Abstract:

Umayyad is one of the most famous clans in Islamic history, and it took the position of caliphate after Ali *ibn* Abi Talib passed away. The Umayyah dynasty was the first Islamic caliphate after the *Khulafāur Rāsyidīn* period, which reigned from 661-750 AD on the Arabian Peninsula centered in Damascus, Syria, and from 756-1031 in Cordoba-Andalusia, Spain- the period of the Umayyad caliphate only lasted 90 years, starting during the rule of Muawiyah *bin* Abi Sufyan, when the Islamic government turned into a generational monarchy. It was after al-Hasan *ibn* Ali *bin* Abi Talib handed over the position of the caliphate to Muawiyah to reconcile the Muslims who were currently being hit by slander due to the murder of Uṣman *ibn* Affan in the war of Jamal and the betrayal of the *Khawārij* and *Syī'a* people. This study used a juridical-normative research approach. The data source was taken from several pieces of literature.

INTRODUCTION

The Umayyad Caliphate, also known as the Umayyad dynasty, was one of the most essential Islamic caliphates after the *Khulafāur Rāsyidīn* era. It ruled from 661 to 750 AD in the Arabian Peninsula, with the main center of power in Damascus, Syria, and then expanded the caliphate to Cordoba, Andalusia, Spain, from 756 to 1031 (Sari et al., 2023). The dynasty was founded by Muawiyah *ibn* Abi Sufyan, who began the transformation of the caliphate from an Islamic system of government to a hereditary kingdom (Zein, 2022). This transition took place after al-Hasan *ibn* Ali *ibn* Abi Talib handed over the leadership to Muawiyah in an attempt to end the conflict and slander that engulfed Muslims after the assassination of Uṣman *ibn* Affan and the clashes with the *Khawārij* and *Syī'a* groups.

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The Umayyad dynasty took its name from their ancestor, Umayyah *ibn* Abdi Syams *ibn* Abdimanaf (Rachman, 2018), who was a prominent figure during the *Jāhiliyyah* period. Umayyah competed with his uncle, Hasyim *bin* Abdimanaf, for political influence in *Quraisy* society, and his wealth and economic influence mainly drove Umayyah's dominance (Shiddiq, 2023). The dynasty produced 14 caliphs who ruled in succession from Muawiyah to Marwan II in 750 CE (Sari et al., 2023). The establishment of the Umayyad dynasty was inseparable from the crisis conditions during the reign of the *Khulafāur Rāsyidīn*, and the peak of its glory occurred during the reign of Uṣman *ibn* Affan. Under Al-Walid *ibn* Abd al-Malik, the Umayyad caliphate's territory expanded, including North Africa and Andalusia (Zaldi et al., 2023). The warlord Musa *ibn* Nusair led the conquest of Andalusia and sent Tariq *ibn* Ziyad, who succeeded in capturing the Strait of Gibraltar in 711 AD.

The success of the Umayyad dynasty was due not only to Muawiyah *ibn* Abu Sufyan's diplomatic victory in the war of *Šiffīn* as part of the first Islamic civil war following the assassination of Uṣman *ibn* Affan, but also to his vision of future development and the support given by the Syrian population. Muawiyah had a solid mindset to expand the caliphate and gain support from various groups in society to strengthen his power. Muawiyah's success in establishing the Umayyad dynasty was not only a result of the victory of *Šiffīn* diplomacy and the killing of Caliph Ali, but he had a solid rational basis for the foundation of his future political development (Meirison & Saharuddin, 2021). The success factors are:

1. Strong support from the people of Syria and the Umayyad family.
2. Muawiyah wisely placed his assistants in essential positions as an administrator.
3. Muawiyah had more ability as a true statesman, even reaching the level of the highest nature possessed by the princes of Mecca in ancient times, where a man like Muawiyah could control himself absolutely and make decisive decisions despite pressure and intimidation.

In the history of human civilization, the Umayyad era stands out as one of the periods that significantly influenced political, economic, and social developments in the early Islamic world (Osim, 2021). The Umayyad dynasty played a crucial role in delineating the administrative structures and economic policies that shaped society at the time (Tillier, 2020). In this context, an in-depth study of the evolution of the Umayyad dynasty's administrative and economic policies provides valuable insights into how political power influenced the economic dynamics and social life of the time.

A deep understanding of how the Umayyad dynasty managed its administrative and economic affairs provides valuable insights into early Islamic history and essential insights into how governance and economic policies can influence the development of society. By studying this period, we can gain a broader perspective on the relationship between government and society in a historical context and evaluate the impact of these policies on social and economic dynamics.

This study explores the Umayyad dynasty's pivotal role in shaping governmental structures and economic policies that impacted governance and society and the implications for contemporary historical and political understanding. Through a careful review of the available historical sources, this article hopes to make a valuable contribution to studying the past and influencing the present. Through careful historical analysis, we can understand how Umayyad political decisions and economic policies

shaped power structures, wealth distribution and social relations in the territories they controlled (Meirison & Saharuddin, 2021). This study stands relevant to comprehending early Islamic history, as it also has far-reaching implications for understanding political and economic dynamics in today's global context. By analyzing how the dynasty practiced and executed economic and administrative policies, we can discover patterns that can provide valuable insights into the relationship between government, economy and society in a broader context.

METHOD

This study uses a historical approach to examine the influence of the Umayyah government management system on the political, social and economic developments of the time. This approach was chosen for its ability to explore and analyze contemporary historical sources and understand the cultural, political and social context of the period under study.

Historical Approach

The historical approach, also known as the historical method, is a research methodology commonly used in various disciplines, including history, anthropology, sociology, and literature. This approach systematically studies past events, societies, cultures, and phenomena to understand their development, significance, and impact on the present. In this historical approach, we use the criticality of historical sources to understand the events, political decisions, and societal dynamics during the Umayyah reign. We pay attention to the cultural and political context of the period to understand how external and internal factors influenced the government management system.

Data Collection

Historical studies rely heavily on primary sources such as documents, artefacts, oral histories, and other contemporary records from the studied period (Syukur et al., 2021). These sources provide firsthand accounts and evidence of past events and allow historians to reconstruct the past as accurately as possible (Munday, 2014). The data for this study were obtained from various primary and secondary historical sources, including historical chronicles, administrative documents, letters, and records from the Umayyah period. We also utilized the works of classical and contemporary historians to gain diverse viewpoints on the governance management system and its impact.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through a critical process of the historical sources obtained. We used historical analysis methods to identify patterns, themes, and trends from the historical narratives. This study involved an in-depth interpretation of the content of historical texts and linking information from different sources to form a coherent understanding of the Umayyah government management system.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, we used the critical method and triangulation of historical sources. Triangulation of historical sources refers to the practice of corroborating historical evidence or findings using multiple, independent sources of information (Campbell et al., 2020). This approach is similar to the concept of triangulation in other research methodologies, such as social sciences, where researchers use multiple methods, data sources, or perspectives to validate their findings (Mathison, 1988) and enhance the reliability and validity of their conclusions (Kelle, 2019). This study involves comparing and confirming various independent sources to verify the validity of our findings.

Research Limitations

Although the historical approach provides deep insights into the period under study, there are limitations in the availability and interpretation of historical sources (Mohajan, 2018; Subagiya, 2023). Some documents may need to be included or completed, and interpretation of ancient texts can be subjective. In addition, the focus of this research is limited to the Umayyah period and does not cover a broader period of history. It is hoped that this research will contribute to our understanding of the Umayyah government management system and its impact on the development of society at that time, as well as provide a foundation for further research in this field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The period of the Madinah state ended with the passing of Caliph Ali *ibn* Abi Talib. Rising to the political stage and governance was Muawiyah *ibn* Abi Sufyan, the governor of the Syrian region since the time of Caliph Umar (Rachman, 2018). Muawiyah *ibn* Abi Sufyan was the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. The establishment of this dynasty and the formal recognition of Muawiyah assuming the caliphate occurred in 661 CE/41 H (Pulungan, 2016, p. 162; Sari et al., 2023). This event took place after Hasan *ibn* Ali, who was appointed caliph by the loyal followers of Ali as his successor, withdrew from the political arena because he did not want to see further bloodshed, thus relinquishing power entirely to Muawiyah (Al-Shaibani, 2022; Morady-Kolkhouran, 1993). Pulungan (2016, p. 163) states that Hasan *ibn* Ali's stance in history is known as the Act of Unification (*'Ām al-Jamā'ah*).

Muawiyah is known as a skilled politician and administrator. Umar *ibn* Khattab once regarded him as proficient in political and governance matters, intelligent, and honest (Alamshah et al., 2022). He is also known as a strategist, adept at managing worldly affairs, and wise, alongside his perseverance, tenacity, and willingness to employ all means to achieve his goals, driven by political considerations and situational demands (Syalabi, 1978, p. 37; Tillier, 2020). In line with Muawiyah's character and principles, as well as his perspective and innovative thinking, he implemented various policies and changes in his governance system, including economy and administration. These efforts were developed and refined by his successors. Upon the mindset above, the discussion in this study revolves around the economic and administrative developments during the reign of the Umayyad dynasty. Before that, we will delve into the social conditions and some political policies of the Umayyad dynasty.

Social Conditions and Political Policies of the Umayyad Dynasty

The society of the Umayyad dynasty, despite its pro-Arabism stance, did not distance itself from non-Muslim groups (Sari et al., 2023). Non-Islamic groups held positions within the government and were trusted by the rulers. At the very least, this attitude contributed to the Umayyad dynasty's advancement in scholarship and the successful translation of books from foreign languages into Arabic. For instance, Muawiyah appointed his physician from among those who translated many medical books into Arabic; that person was *Ibn Asal* (Syalabi, 1978, p. 37).

The problems that emerged during the Umayyad dynasty needed a policy to be anticipated. Pulungan (2016, p. 164) was mentioned some political strategies that were employed in response to emerging these challenges included:

1. Shifting the capital from Madinah to Damascus was a strategic move to mitigate potential conflicts. By relocating away from *Kūfah*, a stronghold of *Syī'a* supporters, and *Hijāz*, home to influential clans, the dynasty aimed to avoid internal strife and consolidate power.
2. Muawiyah incentivized loyalty by rewarding supporters with positions of authority. Notably, figures like Amr *ibn* Asy and Mughirah *ibn* Syu'bah were reinstated or appointed governors, while neutral companions were appeased to secure their backing.
3. Swift suppression of dissent was crucial for maintaining control. Muawiyah quelled rebellions through force and labelled the Kharijites as apostates, neutralizing potential threats to his rule.
4. A formidable military apparatus was established, comprising land, sea, and police forces, generously remunerated to ensure loyalty. This military strength ensured internal stability and facilitated territorial expansion.
5. The dynasty pursued an ambitious territorial expansion, extending Islamic control eastward and westward. Successors like Caliph Abdul Malik and Caliph Al-Walid oversaw conquests in Europe and Asia, consolidating a vast empire spanning multiple regions.
6. Unlike the preceding era, the Umayyads integrated non-Muslims into governance roles. However, under Umar *ibn* Abdul Aziz, this policy was reversed due to concerns about non-Muslim officials undermining Muslim interests. While Quranic principles permit cooperation with non-Muslims, the Umayyads eventually curtailed their involvement in governance.

The Economic and Administrative Development

Economic development is one of the most crucial elements in facilitating the progress of a nation. The decline of a nation's economy will inevitably impact the implementation of its development processes.

According to Brockelmann (1982, p. 82), in 693 AD, Caliph Abdul Malik decisively established the minting of their currency in Damascus. Similarly, the following year, Hajjaj did the same. Consequently, the Arab society began to adopt a standardized system of calculation. This idea was also embraced in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq. The policy issued by Caliph Abdul Malik significantly impacted the dynasty's economy. Prior to the implementation of this policy, the circulating currencies were those of Rome and Persia, namely the dirham and dinar. The absence of a unique currency could diminish

the value of unity among the Muslim community in such vast regions. Therefore, it can be argued that the caliph's policy implicitly holds essential values in realizing unity among the Muslim community within such expansive territories.

The implications of unity values on the economy during that time (Umayyad dynasty) were highly significant. The existence of unity and cohesion among the vast territories of the Islamic community would create assured security and stability. Trade routes would operate smoothly with assured security stability, enhancing the economy.

During the reign of Abdul Malik, the development of trade and economy and the organized management of state revenues supported by guaranteed security and order brought society to a level of prosperity (Fatmawati & Nofrianti, 2020). This condition could be seen from the tax revenue (*Kharaj*) collected in the Syrian region alone, which reached 1,730,000 gold dinars annually. The prosperity of the Umayyad society was also evident during the reign of Umar *ibn* Abdul Aziz. The economic situation during his reign rose to astonishing levels. All existing literature today confirms that poverty, destitution, and scarcity were overcome during his caliphate. Umar *ibn* Abdul Aziz's policies concerning the economy included establishing regulations regarding weights and measures, aiming to eradicate counterfeiting and fraud in using these instrument (Labib & Dhiya'elhaq, 2024).

Administrative Development

During the era of the *Khulafāur Rāsyidīn* (632-661 AD), the apex of central governance comprised solely the caliph, accompanied by an official titled *al-Kātib* (secretary). Alongside the caliph stood an advisory council composed of esteemed companions of Prophet Muhammad. *Al-Kātib's* responsibilities encompassed the meticulous documentation of the state's fiscal inflows and outflows, the facilitation of correspondence with regional dignitaries, and the meticulous registration of military personnel and their incomes.

Amidst the Umayyad dynasty, many dilemmas surfaced, predisposing towards societal instability and sectarian discord. These included the disintegration of a previously cohesive theocratic structure, the onset of anarchism, and the lax discipline among nomadic factions (Sari et al., 2023). Conversely, the territorial hegemony of the Islamic community during the Umayyad reign, as delineated by Annemarie Schimel, extended to the Atlantic, the Byzantine frontier, and the Strait of Gibraltar (*Jabal Tāriq*) in 711. Simultaneously, they asserted dominance over Transoxiana, Sindh, and the Indus Valley (present-day southern Pakistan). The confluence of internal and external exigencies engendered the evolution of governmental administration commensurate with the geographical expansion and the burgeoning intricacies of statecraft.

Administrative oversight within the governance framework of the Umayyad dynasty denoted a refinement of the precedents established by Caliph Umar during the Rashidun epoch. The expansive territories were partitioned into provinces akin to the Medina era (Meirison & Saharuddin, 2021). Each province was presided over by a governor or *Amir* appointed by the caliph. The gubernatorial echelon was complemented by one or several scribes (*Kātib*), a *hajib* (custodian), and other salient functionaries, including the *Syāhib Al-Kharaj* (fiscal overseer), *Syāhib Al-Syurthat* (law enforcement officer), and *Qādi* (judicial magistrate). Fiscal officers and *Qādi's* were commissioned by the caliph and were answerable to him.

A gamut of institutions and departments was instituted at the central administrative echelon, notably *al-Kātib*, *al-Hājib*, and *Diwān* (Akhtar & Rawat, 2018). The bureau of *Al-Kātib* encompassed *Kātib Al-Rasāil* (diplomatic secretary), *Kātib Al-Kharaj* (fiscal secretary), *Kātib Al-Jund* (military secretary), *Kātib Al-Syurṭah* (law enforcement secretary), and *Kātib Al-Qāḍi* (judicial clerk) (Irwan et al., 2023).

These secretarial functionaries were tasked with the judicious orchestration of state administration to undergird the commonwealth. *al-Hājib*, vested with custodial and household oversight, was entrusted with facilitating the audience between the caliph and functionaries or individuals seeking his audience. Notably, this institution was absent during the Medina era, as direct access to the caliph was afforded to all without intermediation. However, three distinct individuals were exempt from this protocol, namely the magazine, charged with apprising the caliph of prayer timings; the *Šāhib al-barīd* (postal functionary) conveying pivotal dispatches; and the *Šāhib at-ṭa`ām*, stewarding the culinary affairs of the palace.

CONCLUSION

The economic development during the Umayyad dynasty increased compared to the previous period. This economic improvement, which in turn contributed to the dynasty's welfare, was basically inseparable from the policies of the previous caliphs and the society's participation, as well as their support for the policies. Furthermore, the administrative developments in this dynasty were more complicated. Nevertheless, the development and policy of the administration in this dynasty was, in principle, a refinement of the previous administration managed by Umar *ibn* Khattab.

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