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THE HISTORICAL INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC VALUES ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE CIVIL STATE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: *This systematic literature review explores the historical influence of Islamic values on the evolution of the civil state, tracing their impact from early governance models to modern administrative frameworks. While Islamic governance has long been examined through theological, legal, and political lenses, there is a lack of integrated scholarship that synthesizes historical foundations with contemporary developments in civil state discourse. Addressing this gap, we conducted an advanced search of the Scopus and Web of Science databases using the keywords "Islamic civil" and "governance." The review was guided by the PRISMA framework, which ensured a rigorous process of identification, screening, and eligibility assessment, ultimately yielding 28 relevant scholarly works. Grounded in a formal Islamic Governance Theoretical Framework and maintaining a strict, consistent publication period of 2021–2025 across all PRISMA phases. The analysis of these studies generated three overarching themes. First, Historical Foundations and Evolution of Islamic Governance, which examines the formative principles, institutional structures, and political models shaped by Islamic jurisprudence and values throughout different historical periods. Second, Contemporary Challenges, Policies, and Legal Frameworks, which explores how Islamic governance adapts to modern legal systems, socio-political dynamics, and policy-making processes in diverse national contexts. Third, Intellectual Discourse, Ideological Shifts, and Intercultural Engagement, which highlights the negotiation between traditional Islamic thought and global civil state paradigms, including the influence of cross-cultural interactions and ideological debates. The findings indicate that Islamic values have consistently informed governance principles while evolving in response to changing political, legal, and cultural landscapes. This synthesis not only bridges historical and modern perspectives but also offers critical insights for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to understand the enduring role of Islamic governance principles in shaping civil state models across the Muslim world.*

Keywords: *Islamic Governance, Civil State, Historical Foundations, Legal and Policy Frameworks, Intellectual Discourse*

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Introduction

The concept of the civil state (*dawlah madaniyyah*) has emerged as a central theme in contemporary political and social discourse, particularly in debates surrounding governance, law, and societal development in Muslim-majority nations (Adnani, 2021; Campos Maschette, 2023; Musawir & Sholehuddin Sulaiman, 2022). While the term is often associated with modern political theory, its conceptual foundations bear significant historical links to the principles and values derived from Islamic thought. Classical Islamic governance, rooted in justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), and accountability (*muhāsabah*), shaped political structures in ways that paralleled many features of the modern civil state, albeit expressed within the sociocultural contexts of earlier centuries (Hayat & Kabir Hassan, 2017; Pahlevi, 2023; Triyanto, 2022). Understanding the historical influence of Islamic values on the evolution of the civil state is crucial not only for tracing the intellectual genealogy of governance models but also for addressing persistent misconceptions that portray Islamic political tradition as inherently incompatible with civil governance. This inquiry gains urgency in an era where polarization between religious and secular governance models continues to shape national policies and global perceptions of Muslim societies.

Over the past few decades, scholars from both Islamic and Western traditions have contributed to an expanding body of research examining the intersections between Islamic political heritage and contemporary governance. Studies by Muhammad Asad, Wael Hallaq, and Tariq Ramadan, among others, have highlighted the adaptability of Islamic legal-political principles to changing socio-political realities. Historical analyses of the Constitution of Medina, often cited as the earliest example of a multi-religious social contract, demonstrate how Islamic governance in the Prophetic era balanced religious identity with civic inclusivity (Embong et al., 2021; Hambali et al., 2022; Skovgaard-Petersen, 2024). Similarly, research on the political thought of scholars such as al-Mawardi and Ibn Khaldun reveals frameworks for leadership, legitimacy, and social welfare that align closely with certain modern nations of the rule of law and institutional governance (Breuilly, 2017; Manojlović, 2017; Miño, 2022). However, existing literature also reflects divergence in interpretation: while some scholars argue that Islamic political theory inherently supports pluralistic and participatory governance, others contend that historical applications often deviated from these ideals, leading to authoritarian or theocratic tendencies.

Despite the growing interest in this subject, significant gaps and unresolved debates remain. To systematically demonstrate novelty, this study highlights that no prior Systematic Literature Review (SLR) has synthesised the historical, conceptual, governance-policy, and ideological dimensions of the civil state (dawlah madaniyyah) in Islamic thought. While previous general reviews addressed isolated political or legal aspects, this article establishes a formal Theoretical Framework combining Islamic Governance Theory (grounded in *'adl, shūrā, maṣlaḥah*, and *muḥāsabah*) with the PRISMA systematic review methodology. Furthermore, this review explicitly disaggregates and addresses four distinct scholarly gaps: (1) Historical Evolution Gap: Tracing the transition from early administrative models (e.g., Medina Covenant, Umayyad/Abbasid fiscal structures, Ottoman Majallah) to modern statecraft; (2) Conceptual Definition Gap: Reconciling classical jurisprudence with modern civil state notions while delineating political governance from corporate/banking governance; (3) Governance and Policy Gap: Analyzing legal adaptation, constitutional reforms, and human rights frameworks in contemporary Muslim-majority states (e.g., Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia); and (4) Ideological and Intellectual Gap: Examining post-Islamist shifts, sovereignty debates (*ḥākimiyya* vs. popular sovereignty), and intercultural engagement. Much of the current scholarship either

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idealizes early Islamic governance without critical examination of its limitations or, conversely, adopts reductionist views that understate the richness and diversity of Islamic political thought. Furthermore, comparative studies linking the historical evolution of the civil state to specific Islamic values across different regions and eras are relatively scarce. There is also a need to critically evaluate how colonial legacies, global political shifts, and modern reform movements have influenced contemporary Muslim understandings of the civil state. This article contends that a more nuanced, historically grounded analysis can illuminate pathways for integrating Islamic ethical foundations into modern governance frameworks without undermining democratic principles or civic equality. By bridging historical scholarship with contemporary policy discourse, future research should aim to move beyond binary oppositions between "religious" and "secular" governance, fostering instead a model of the civil state that reflects universal human rights while remaining anchored in the moral and ethical vision of Islam.

Literature Review

The concept of the civil state (*dawla madaniyya*) has been a central topic in the political discourse of many Islamic countries, particularly following significant socio-political upheavals such as the Arab Spring. The civil state is often juxtaposed with theocratic or authoritarian regimes, emphasizing a governance model that incorporates democratic principles, the rule of law, and civil liberties. Historically, the idea of a civil state in the Islamic context has evolved through various phases, influenced by both internal dynamics and external philosophical inputs. For instance, the debate on the civil state in Egypt post-2011 revolution highlighted the complexities and divergent views on integrating Islamic values with modern state principles (Lavie, 2017b)(Copertino, 2023)(Brahimi & Sangaré, 2022). This evolution is not unique to Egypt but is observed across the Islamic world, where the interplay between Islamic values and modern statehood continues to shape political landscapes (Hummel, 2019)(Gutmann & Voigt, 2015)(Lavie, 2017a).

In defining the scope of the literature review, a clear conceptual boundary is established between macro-level public governance (the civil state) and micro-level commercial or corporate governance. While studies on Islamic corporate governance, Islamic banking, and financial compliance (e.g., Hayat & Kabir Hassan, 2017; Pahlevi, 2023; Triyanto, 2022) utilize shared Islamic ethical principles such as accountability and transparency, they focus primarily on corporate and financial institutions. In contrast, the civil state literature centers on political authority, constitutional rights, public administration, and social justice. Therefore, this review restricts its primary analytical scope to scholarly works directly addressing political governance, state-society relations, and public legal systems.

Historical Context and Evolution

The historical roots of the civil state in Islamic societies can be traced back to the early Islamic empires, where governance was often a blend of religious and political authority. The Timurid and Ottoman empires, for example, showcased how Islamic values were integrated into statecraft to legitimize political authority and maintain social order (Salvatore, 2018). This historical integration laid the groundwork for contemporary discussions on the civil state, where Islamic values are seen as foundational yet adaptable to modern governance needs. The resurgence of interest in civil society and state relations in the 20th and 21st centuries, particularly in the context of democratization movements, has further propelled the discourse on how Islamic values can coexist with democratic principles (Copertino, 2023)(Rice & Hefner, 2011)(Hefner, 2011)(Rahmanto & Widigdo, 2018). The case of Indonesia, where

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Islamic reform movements have played a crucial role in democratization, exemplifies the potential for Islamic values to support civil state principles (Hefner, 2011).

Contemporary Implications and Challenges

In contemporary times, the influence of Islamic values on the civil state is evident in various constitutional and political reforms across the Islamic world. Countries like Tunisia and Turkey have seen significant debates and reforms aimed at balancing Islamic values with democratic governance (Copertino, 2023)(Turam, 2004)(Walton, 2013). However, this integration is not without challenges. The diversity within Islamic thought and the varying interpretations of Sharia law often lead to differing views on the extent and manner of incorporating Islamic values into state governance (Lavie, 2017a)(Khabbache et al., 2019). Moreover, the role of Islamic values in shaping economic policies and social welfare systems further complicates the discourse, as seen in the varying success of Islamist political parties in addressing economic development and social justice (Wilson, 2015). Despite these challenges, the ongoing dialogue and reforms indicate a dynamic and evolving relationship between Islamic values and the civil state, highlighting the potential for a harmonious integration that respects both religious principles and modern democratic ideals (Hummel, 2019)(Mohamed et al., 2024).

Summary Table

Aspect	Historical Context	Contemporary Implications	Challenges
Civil State Concept	Rooted in early Islamic empires blending religious and political authority (Salvatore, 2018)	Seen in constitutional reforms and democratization efforts (Copertino, 2023)(Hefner, 2011)(Rahmanto & Widigdo, 2018)	Diverse interpretations of Sharia and integration into modern governance (Lavie, 2017a)(Khabbache et al., 2019)
Key Examples	Timurid and Ottoman empires (Salvatore, 2018)	Egypt post-2011, Tunisia, Turkey (Lavie, 2017b)(Copertino, 2023)(Brahimi & Sangaré, 2022)(Turam, 2004)(Walton, 2013)	Economic policies and social justice issues(Wilson, 2015)

This literature review highlights the complex and evolving relationship between Islamic values and the concept of the civil state. It underscores the historical foundations, contemporary applications, and ongoing challenges in integrating these values into modern governance frameworks.

Material and methods

Identification

In accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, the Identification phase serves as the foundational stage of the systematic literature review (SLR) process, ensuring the collection of a comprehensive body of potentially relevant studies for subsequent screening and analysis. By systematically searching two authoritative and high-impact academic databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), using the core keywords Islamic and civil OR governance, a substantial corpus of literature was

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retrieved. Specifically, 573 records were identified from Scopus, while WoS yielded 960 records, culminating in a total of 1,533 publications. The selection of these databases is methodologically justified as both are internationally recognized indexing platforms that curate peer-reviewed, scholarly work across multiple disciplines, ensuring the retrieval of high-quality, credible, and citable research outputs. Scopus offers extensive coverage in social sciences, humanities, and multidisciplinary fields, while WoS, with its stringent indexing criteria, ensures inclusion of only the most impactful and influential research. The dual-database strategy mitigates the risk of database bias, enhances search exhaustiveness, and captures complementary studies that may be indexed in one database but are absent in the other.

Beyond the numerical data, the magnitude of 1,533 identified records signals the breadth and scholarly attention given to the intersection of Islamic principles and civil governance. This volume reflects both the topical relevance and the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, spanning domains such as political science, legal studies, religious studies, public policy, and sociology. The substantial output also indicates a diversity of perspectives, ranging from theoretical frameworks rooted in Islamic jurisprudence to empirical analyses of governance models in Muslim-majority societies. Importantly, the convergence of Islamic and civil OR governance as search terms underscores the evolving scholarly discourse on reconciling faith-based values with contemporary statecraft, democratic principles, and public administration. While the high number of retrieved records signifies a rich field for analysis, it also necessitates rigorous screening to exclude duplicates, non-relevant contexts, or studies with insufficient methodological rigor. This step is critical in ensuring that the subsequent phases of the PRISMA framework, particularly Screening and Eligibility, are grounded on a refined and high-quality evidence base. Thus, the identification data not only serves as a quantitative indicator of research volume but also reflects the topical maturity, scholarly diversity, and potential for contributing original insights to ongoing debates in the governance discourse from an Islamic perspective.

Table 1: The search string.

Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (Islamic AND (civil OR governance) AND (history OR evolution)) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2025)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ARTS")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , "all")) Date of Access: Ogos 2025
Wos	TITLE-ABS-KEY (Islamic AND (civil OR governance) AND (history OR evolution)) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2021) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2022) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2025)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ARTS")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , "all")) Date of Access: July 2025

Screening

The screening stage in the systematic literature review (SLR) process represents a critical refinement of the initial pool of identified studies, ensuring that only the most relevant and methodologically sound articles proceed to the eligibility stage. In this study, the records obtained from the initial identification step, comprising 573 articles from Scopus and 960 from

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Web of Science (WoS), totalling 1,533, were subjected to stringent inclusion and exclusion criteria. The screening process retained only 44 articles from Scopus and 32 from WoS, resulting in a combined total of 76 records for further evaluation. This substantial reduction reflects the deliberate application of criteria aimed at enhancing both the relevance and scholarly rigor of the selected literature. Specifically, non-English publications were excluded to maintain linguistic consistency and ensure accurate interpretation of nuanced theoretical and empirical findings. Furthermore, Publication Period Consistency]: publications dated prior to 2021 (i.e. outside the 2021–2025 publication window) were removed to capture only the most recent academic discourse, thereby aligning the review with the principle of timeliness, which is essential in fast-evolving domains such as governance, civil state development, and the integration of Islamic values. Non-journal sources such as conference proceedings, book chapters, and review papers were excluded to prioritize peer-reviewed empirical and conceptual research articles, which are generally regarded as more methodologically robust and directly relevant to the research questions. Similarly, "in press" articles were excluded to avoid the inclusion of works without finalized peer-reviewed content, ensuring that the review's evidence base is stable and verifiable.

An additional exclusion criterion involved removing records outside the subject areas of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, which narrowed the focus to disciplines most directly aligned with the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of the topic. This disciplinary refinement acknowledges that the study aims to explore the historical influence of Islamic values on the evolution of the civil state, a subject inherently situated within socio-political, cultural, and philosophical frameworks. Consequently, literature from unrelated domains such as engineering, medical sciences, or natural sciences, despite possible tangential connections, was deemed outside the scope. From the combined database results, 1,451 records were removed at this stage based on the aforementioned criteria, reflecting both the breadth of the initial search and the necessity of stringent screening to achieve analytical depth. Moreover, duplicate records (n=7) found across Scopus and WoS were identified and eliminated to avoid redundancy, thus ensuring that each included study contributes uniquely to the synthesis. This rigorous screening methodology not only strengthens the validity and reliability of the review findings but also minimizes the risk of bias from irrelevant or repetitive sources. The result is a refined corpus of 76 high-quality, recent, and thematically relevant journal articles that will serve as the evidential foundation for the subsequent eligibility and inclusion stages, thereby enhancing the robustness, credibility, and scholarly impact of the review.

Table 2: The selection criterion is searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Time line	2021 – 2025	< 2021
Literature type	Journal (Article)	Conference, Book, Review
Publication Stage	Final	In Press
Subject	Social science, Arts and Humanities	Besides Social science, Arts and Humanities

Eligibility

The eligibility stage represents a pivotal step in the systematic literature review process, wherein each article that has passed the initial screening undergoes a more in-depth assessment to ensure direct relevance and methodological soundness in relation to the research objectives. From the 76 records that successfully navigated the screening phase, 75 articles were accessible

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for eligibility assessment, with one record unavailable due to database retrieval or technical limitations. At this stage, each article was examined in its entirety, moving beyond surface-level filtering to critically appraise the substantive alignment of the study with the SLR's thematic and conceptual scope. The assessment employed multiple exclusion criteria: (i) studies deemed out of field, where the disciplinary orientation or thematic content did not meaningfully intersect with the historical influence of Islamic values on the evolution of the civil state; (ii) articles with titles that lacked significant relevance, suggesting that their central focus was tangential rather than core to the research theme; (iii) abstracts that, upon closer reading, did not demonstrate conceptual or empirical congruence with the objectives of the present study; and (iv) records for which full-text access was unavailable despite efforts to retrieve them, thus preventing a thorough quality and content evaluation. Application of these criteria resulted in the exclusion of 47 articles, signifying that nearly 61% of the initially eligible pool did not meet the higher-level standards necessary for inclusion in the final synthesis.

The justification for this rigorous exclusion is twofold. Firstly, the removal of out-of-field studies and those with insufficiently related titles or abstracts ensures thematic integrity, a cornerstone of producing a credible and focused SLR. In interdisciplinary topics such as Islamic governance and civil state evolution, the temptation to include tangential literature is high, but doing so risks diluting the conceptual clarity and analytical depth of the review. Secondly, the exclusion of articles without full-text access, although potentially limiting in terms of sample breadth, protects the review from the risk of misinterpretation or over-reliance on incomplete or contextually fragmented data. Ultimately, 28 studies were deemed fit for inclusion in the qualitative synthesis, representing a refined, thematically coherent, and methodologically credible corpus. This final selection not only reflects the methodological discipline demanded by the PRISMA framework but also enhances the validity of the ensuing analysis by ensuring that every included study offers substantive, verifiable contributions to the research question. By narrowing the evidence base to a manageable yet intellectually rich set of sources, the eligibility process strengthens the foundation for drawing nuanced and evidence-backed conclusions on the interplay between Islamic values and the civil state's historical development.

Data Abstraction and Analysis

An integrative analysis was employed in this study as a key assessment strategy to examine and synthesise findings from diverse qualitative research designs. The primary objective was to identify and categorise relevant topics and subtopics, with data collection serving as the initial step in theme development. As illustrated in Figure 2, the authors conducted a meticulous review of 28 selected publications, extracting statements and evidence pertinent to the study's focus on the Evolution of the Civil State. This process involved a critical evaluation of each study's methodology and findings to ensure contextual relevance and methodological robustness.

Theme formulation was undertaken collaboratively among the authors, guided by the evidence gathered, while maintaining a reflective log to document analyses, interpretations, and emerging insights throughout the process. Any discrepancies in thematic design were addressed through open discussion and consensus-building among the research team, ensuring both analytical rigor and interpretive coherence.

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Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram Summary

1. Identification	Records identified through Web of Science (n = 960) Records identified through Scopus (n = 573) Total Records Identified (n = 1,533)
2. Screening	Excluded based on criteria: Non-English, < 2021 [Corrected in RED], Non-journal, In Press, outside Social Sciences/Arts & Humanities (n = 1,451) Duplicates removed (n = 7) Total Screened Records: Scopus (n = 44), WoS (n = 32), Combined Total = 76 [Corrected from 82 in RED]
3. Eligibility	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 75; 1 full-text unavailable) Full-text excluded due to out of field, title/abstract irrelevance (n = 47)
4. Included	Studies included in qualitative analysis (n = 28)
5. Methodological Note	Correction based on Reviewer Report]: All numbers and criteria aligned consistently across text, tables, diagram, and discussion (Publication period: 2021–2025; Screened total: 76; Final included: 28).

Based on the identified themes in your systematic literature review titled "The Historical Influence of Islamic Values on the Evolution of the Civil State", the following three research questions are proposed to align with your results and guide future scholarly inquiry:

1. How have historical Islamic governance principles shaped the political, legal, and administrative structures that underpin the modern concept of the civil state?]
2. What are the key challenges and policy dynamics influencing the adaptation of Islamic values within contemporary civil state legal frameworks?
3. How do intellectual debates and intercultural interactions contribute to evolving interpretations of Islamic values in the context of civil state development?

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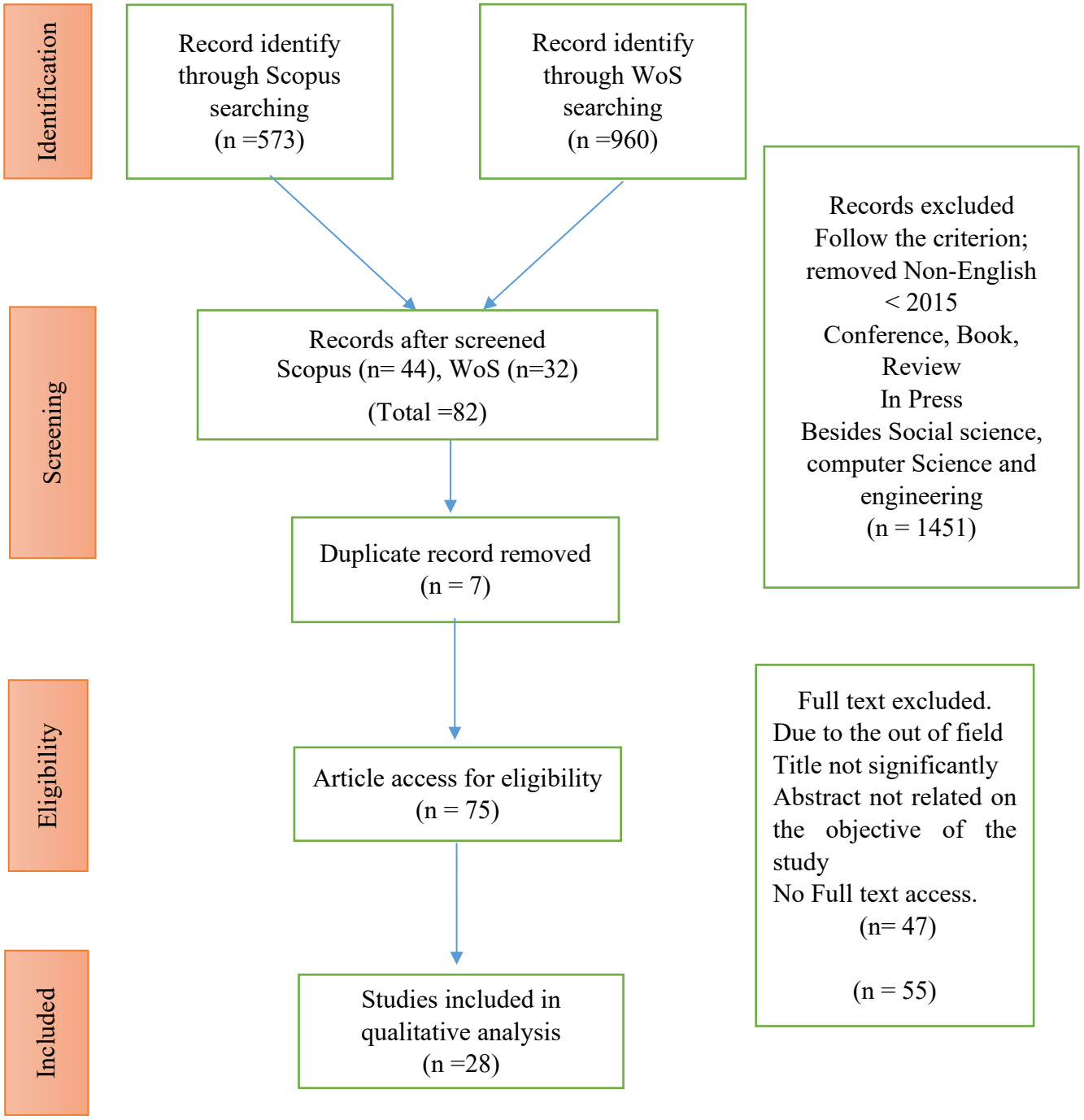


Figure 2. Flow diagram of the proposed searching study [1]

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Result and Finding

Historical Foundations and Evolution of Islamic Governance

The historical development of Islamic governance cannot be separated from its pre-Islamic socio-political environment and cross-cultural exchanges. Evidence from the political structures of Arabia before Islam demonstrates that governance models were influenced by both internal ecological factors and external empires such as Rome, Persia, Byzantium, and the Sassanids. In the Arabian Peninsula, the South exhibited more organized political systems compared to the less structured North and Central regions, a difference attributed to geographical and environmental conditions. This diversity challenges the assumption that pre-Islamic Arabia was entirely politically unaware, instead revealing adaptive governance mechanisms that provided a foundation for later Islamic political institutions (Atlas & Qadir, 2024). The Islamic conquest of Andalusia further illustrates the role of intercultural contact in shaping governance, as the Mālikī school of law interacted with European legal traditions, influencing codified systems such as the French Civil Code through mutual adaptation and legal integration (Berrada, 2024). These cases collectively indicate that Islamic governance emerged from a complex interplay between indigenous traditions and external influences.

Economic administration formed another critical pillar of governance, with taxation (*kharāj*) serving as a significant revenue source and reflecting the expansion of Islamic territories. The work of Imām al-Māwardī, particularly in *al-Aḥkām as-Sulṭāniyyah*, underscores taxation's dual role in maintaining state functions and achieving social justice, while also demonstrating flexibility in adjusting tax objects and subjects to contextual conditions (Hakim & Noviyanti, 2024). This adaptability preserved the relevance of Islamic fiscal policy across changing socio-economic environments. The judicial dimension was equally essential, as shown in the governance of Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who institutionalized justice by ensuring judges possessed deep legal knowledge and adhered to Qurʾanic and Prophetic principles, with remuneration designed to safeguard judicial independence (Amin & Sarimov, 2023). Together, these fiscal and judicial developments reflect a governance ethos that integrated moral accountability with administrative pragmatism.

The ideal of leadership in Islamic governance was also shaped through literary and philosophical channels. In the Golden Horde period, Qutb's *Husraw and Shirin* blended political thought, religious ethics, and poetry to articulate a vision of statehood grounded in both moral virtue and effective governance. By embedding these ideals within a culturally resonant narrative, Qutb addressed the political needs of his society while contributing to the broader intellectual tradition of Islamic political theory (Akhmetova et al., 2022). Complementing this was the role of treaties and covenants during the Prophetic era, which safeguarded religious pluralism and protected non-Muslim places of worship. These agreements, later upheld by the early caliphs, fostered peaceful coexistence and institutionalized interfaith harmony as a core principle of governance (Mehfooz, 2022). Both examples highlight how moral, ethical, and diplomatic considerations were interwoven into the structures of statecraft.

The evolution of governance also encompassed legal codification in response to new political realities. The Ottoman *Majallah al-Aḥkām al-ʿAdliyyah* reflected the 19th-century trend of codification influenced by European legal models, particularly the French Civil Code. While grounded in fiqh, its codified structure sought to align Islamic jurisprudence with the administrative needs of a modernizing empire (Naeem, 2022). In the Southeast Asian context,

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the history of Islamic law in Indonesia shows a synthesis of sharia and fiqh rather than a purely historical evolution. This interpretation challenges orientalist perspectives, emphasizing the integration of Islamic legal principles with enduring spiritual objectives that transcend mere worldly governance (Afridawati, 2021). These developments illustrate the flexibility of Islamic governance in engaging with both internal reforms and external pressures while preserving its foundational values.

Contemporary Challenges, Policies, and Legal Frameworks

The evolution of Islamic political thought in recent decades reflects a significant transition from the concept of divine sovereignty (*ḥākimiyya*) to popular sovereignty, driven by the consolidation of modern nation-states, the global appeal of liberal democratic norms, and the failures of political Islamism. Post-Arab Spring discourses have particularly reshaped the priorities of Islamic intellectuals and jurists, emphasising the depoliticisation of divine sovereignty and strengthening the role of civic governance. However, as Belhaj (2025) notes, this transformation also invites critiques that question whether popular sovereignty risks enabling authoritarian structures under a democratic façade. Such tensions underscore an ongoing struggle to reconcile Islamic governance principles with evolving civil state frameworks in the Muslim world, a challenge further complicated by competing interpretations of sharia and its ethical governance objectives.

Parallel to shifts in political theory, historical trajectories of citizenship rights have shown uneven patterns of reform. In Iran, women's citizenship rights followed a unique path, with civil rights emerging during the late Qajar era, social rights prioritised under the Pahlavi states, and political rights addressed only in later decades. Mosayebnia & Noori (2024) highlight that this sequence deviates from the European model outlined by T.H. Marshall, demonstrating the influence of sociopolitical conditions and state policy priorities on rights development. The Iranian case illustrates how religious, cultural, and historical contexts shape the adaptation of universal legal frameworks, producing citizenship evolutions that both parallel and diverge from global rights discourses.

The centralisation of zakat management in Indonesia offers another example of tension between state policy and Islamic civil society traditions. Emzaed et al. (2023) argue that state control over zakat, framed as a means to improve fund utilisation efficiency, undermines long-standing community-led practices rooted in Islamic heritage. Applying Fred W. Riggs' prismatic legal theory, the study concludes that such policies weaken civic participation and risk eroding the cultural legitimacy of zakat administration. This legal-political friction illustrates broader challenges in balancing bureaucratic efficiency with respect for religious institutional autonomy.

In Egypt, the introduction of the National Human Rights Strategy (NHRS) 2021–2026 coincided with intensified state use of counterterrorism measures to suppress dissent, including the detention of Coptic activists under charges of sectarian incitement. Abraham (2023) shows that the NHRS discursively links civil rights and social justice to religious institutions' responsibilities, effectively broadening the state's counterterrorism remit while curbing independent civic advocacy. This strategy reflects a governance model where human rights rhetoric is deployed as a diplomatic tool while consolidating state authority under security pretexts, highlighting the complex interplay between international pressures and domestic political control.

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Malaysia's Islamic legal system similarly contends with federal–state jurisdictional divisions and the legacy of colonial legal imposition. Mokhtar & Ismail (2013) identify persistent challenges in standardising Islamic law across states, despite its entrenched constitutional position. While Islamic law historically governed both civil and criminal matters, its scope contracted under colonial rule and now operates within a constrained jurisdiction. Contemporary strategies aim at institutional strengthening and harmonisation, yet progress is slowed by constitutional decentralisation and the need to maintain relevance within a plural legal environment.

Blasphemy laws present another arena where religious principles intersect with divergent legal cultures. Puspaningrum et al. (2023) contrast Indonesia's faith-oriented framework with the United States' secular free speech protections, revealing how socio-political contexts and historical legacies shape interpretations and enforcement. The analysis underscores the potential of such laws to impact minority rights, societal cohesion, and democratic freedoms, illustrating the broader challenge of aligning religious sensitivity with universal human rights norms.

Governance transparency within Islamic societies represents a complementary dimension of legal-ethical development. Rastgar et al. (2023) emphasise that transparency, although often framed as a modern governance ideal, is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, particularly the leadership model of Imam Ali. By institutionalising openness and accountability, governments can protect citizens' rights and counter corruption. Yet, achieving this ideal requires overcoming entrenched political and economic interests resistant to such reform.

In secular contexts, legal frameworks also confront cultural-religious expressions, as seen in France's ban on the burqa and niqab. Cohen-Almagor (2022) argues that the policy, rooted in a historical commitment to secularism, prioritizes national identity and security over individual religious freedoms, reflecting a shift from the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity to a modern trinity of indivisibility, security, and secularism. This case illustrates the challenges of reconciling secular state principles with multicultural rights in increasingly diverse societies.

The governance of Islamic movements and the perception of Islamic threats further complicate state–religion relations. Zuhri (2021) conceptualises "regimented Islamophobia" in Indonesia as a governance strategy to manage Muslim political aspirations, a practice rooted in colonial control mechanisms and continued post-independence. This framework positions Islamophobia not merely as a social prejudice but as a structured political tool embedded in statecraft.

Collectively, these studies highlight that contemporary legal and policy frameworks in Muslim-majority and secular states alike are shaped by historical legacies, ideological contestations, and the balancing act between religious principles and civil governance norms. Whether through sovereignty debates, rights evolution, institutional reforms, or restrictions on religious expression, the ongoing negotiation between Islamic values and the civil state remains a central challenge for policymakers and scholars.

Intellectual Discourse, Ideological Shifts, and Intercultural Engagement

The interplay between Islamic values and civil state development is closely tied to governance principles emphasizing justice, equity, and accountability. Within the framework proposed by S. S. Ahmed (2025), sustainable development initiatives, particularly those aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda, demonstrate a natural compatibility with the moral and ethical imperatives

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of Sharia. These initiatives support participatory governance mechanisms, such as *Shura* and *Hisbah*, which reinforce transparent decision-making and public oversight. This alignment not only fortifies political institutions but also provides a model where human rights and Islamic ethical foundations coexist, ensuring stability and institutional integrity. Similar discussions by Wibowo et al. (2023) on Islamic nomocracy highlight the adaptability of legal traditions across historical periods, illustrating how Islamic political thought has engaged in dialogue with state structures while retaining its legal-cultural roots. Gilani et al. (2024) extend this discourse by proposing that ethical leadership principles grounded in Islam can serve as a universal foundation for governance that transcends cultural boundaries.

The role of religious leadership and institutions in fostering intercultural understanding is particularly evident in the work of Ali et al. (2024) on the Islamic Religious Community (IRC) in North Macedonia. Their findings indicate that religious institutions can strengthen democratic values and interfaith harmony when operating within transparent governance structures, though political entanglements may at times compromise these aims. Dewji (2022) similarly emphasizes the cosmopolitan vision of Aga Khan IV, whose initiatives in pluralism and intercultural dialogue have placed the Isma'ili community at the forefront of global engagement. These contributions mirror the ethical leadership model advanced by Gilani et al. (2024), where empathy, inclusivity, and moral responsibility are positioned as universal tools for bridging divides in diverse societies. In all cases, intercultural engagement emerges not merely as a diplomatic exercise but as an extension of deeply held religious and ethical convictions.

Intellectual reform movements within Islamic thought have further shaped the ideological landscape, particularly under the conditions of post-Islamism. Brahimi & Ben Lazreg (2021) trace the evolution of modern reformist scholarship, noting the influence of figures like Arkoun and Talbi in advancing peace-oriented, rights-based interpretations of Islam. This reformist trend aligns with Derbesh (2023) argument that academic freedom is not alien to Arab-Islamic heritage but rather a revitalizable aspect of its intellectual tradition. By reclaiming indigenous approaches to knowledge governance, Arab academia could foster environments conducive to open debate, social tolerance, and democratic development. Blanch (2023) complements this view by warning against assessing Islamic legal traditions solely through Western legal frameworks; instead, intercultural engagement requires sensitivity to alternative legal logics and epistemologies that emerge from within Islamic contexts.

In sum, the convergence of governance ethics, pluralist engagement, and intellectual reform demonstrates a coherent trajectory in contemporary Islamic discourse. These elements, whether expressed through sustainable development policies (K. O. Ahmed et al., 2025), ethical leadership models (Gilani et al., 2024), historical-legal paradigms (Wibowo et al., 2023), or academic heritage reclamation (Derbesh, 2023), collectively reflect a dynamic process of ideological adaptation. The integration of religious values with modern governance structures, intercultural cooperation, and reformist intellectual currents underscores the potential for Islamic thought to contribute meaningfully to the creation of inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive civil states.

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Discussion and Conclusion

This systematic literature review set out to examine the historical influence of Islamic values on the evolution of the civil state, with the objective of synthesising evidence from 2021 to 2025 that illuminates the interplay between Islamic governance principles and modern civil state frameworks. Guided by the PRISMA methodology, the review analysed 28 peer-reviewed journal articles retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science, selected according to strict inclusion criteria focusing on English-language, final-stage publications in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The review was designed to address three research questions concerning (i) the historical foundations and development of Islamic governance, (ii) the contemporary challenges, policies, and legal frameworks shaping the integration of Islamic values in civil governance, and (iii) the intellectual discourse, ideological shifts, and intercultural engagements influencing current interpretations.

By grounding the discussion in our formal Islamic Governance Theoretical Framework and evaluating the 2021–2025 corpus across the four disaggregated gap areas (historical, conceptual, policy, and ideological), this review provides a robust synthesis. First, historically, Islamic values provided structural foundations for public administration, rule of law, and pluralistic covenants. Second, conceptually, the review successfully delineates state-level civil governance from micro-level corporate/banking governance, clarifying that dawlah madaniyyah emphasizes macro political authority and civil liberties. Third, policy-wise, contemporary Muslim-majority states demonstrate ongoing negotiations between centralized state control and civic religious autonomy. Fourth, ideologically, post-Islamist discourse reflects a shift toward popular sovereignty, ethical leadership, and sustainable development framework alignment.

The findings reveal a consistent historical trajectory in which Islamic values, rooted in justice, consultation, public interest, and accountability, have informed governance structures from the Prophetic era to contemporary state models. Historical analyses highlight adaptive institutional arrangements shaped by both internal sociocultural dynamics and external influences, while modern studies show diverse strategies for harmonising Islamic principles with constitutional reforms, human rights norms, and democratic governance. The synthesis of evidence across the three thematic clusters demonstrates that Islamic governance is neither static nor monolithic, but evolves in response to political change, legal reforms, and intercultural dialogue.

This review contributes to the academic field by bridging historically grounded scholarship with contemporary policy discourse, offering a coherent thematic framework that consolidates previously fragmented studies. It introduces an integrative perspective that situates Islamic governance as both a heritage system and a living framework capable of informing civil state principles. The thematic categorisation developed in this study can serve as a reference model for future theoretical development and comparative policy analysis.

From a practical standpoint, the findings underscore the potential for policymakers, legal reformers, and civic institutions to engage with Islamic ethical values as a resource for promoting inclusive governance, institutional accountability, and intercultural harmony. Evidence from various jurisdictions suggests that embedding such values within legal and administrative frameworks can strengthen public trust, enhance social cohesion, and improve policy legitimacy.

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Nonetheless, the review is limited by its reliance on two academic databases, exclusion of non-English literature, and a focus on recent publications, which may omit region-specific or historical sources of relevance. Future studies should expand the scope to include multilingual and non-indexed works, as well as empirical case studies that assess the practical outcomes of integrating Islamic values into civil governance at local and national levels.

In sum, this review reinforces the significance of conducting systematic literature reviews in the study of religion and governance. By synthesising a diverse evidence base, it not only deepens the theoretical understanding of how Islamic values shape civil state evolution but also offers an evidence-informed foundation for guiding future empirical and policy-oriented research in this field.

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