BRPI

Original Article | Open Access | Peer Reviewed

⬤ Check for Updates

Islamic Sects Between Opposition and Political Participation: A Comparative Study of Umayyad and Abbasid Policies Toward Doctrinal Groups

Altalafha, Zaid Gandhi[1]

[1] Full-time Lecturer, Umayyad History (Islamic History, Ph.D.), Jordan.

Address for Correspondence:

Altalafha, Zaid Gandhi (dr.zaidalsarhani@gmail.com).

Abstract:

This study aims to provide a comparative analysis of Umayyad and Abbasid policies toward different Islamic sects, focusing on the transformation from opposition to political participation. The study employs a comparative historical methodology to examine how both the Umayyads and Abbasids dealt with various doctrinal groups, and analyzes the factors that led to changes in these sects' positions from absolute opposition to limited or full political participation. The findings indicate that the Abbasids followed a more flexible and inclusive policy compared to the Umayyads, enabling them to integrate some sects into the political system and transform them from opposition forces into partners in governance. The study also shows that the transformation in policies toward Islamic sects had a significant impact on state stability and political longevity. The study concludes that a state's success in managing sectarian diversity depends on its ability to balance maintaining religious identity with openness to political pluralism.

Keywords: Islamic Sects, Political Participation, Umayyad State, Abbasid State, Political Opposition, Sectarian Pluralism, Religious Policies, Political Stability

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل مقارن لسياسات الدولتين الأموية والعباسية تجاه الفرق الإسلامية المختلفة، مع التركيز على التحول من المعارضة إلى المشاركة السياسية. تستخدم الدراسة المنهج التاريخي المقارن لفحص كيفية تعامل كل من الأمويين والعباسيين مع الفرق العقدية المختلفة، وتحليل العوامل التي أدت إلى تغيير مواقف هذه الفرق من المعارضة المطلقة إلى المشاركة السياسية المحدودة أو الكاملة. تشير النتائج إلى أن العباسيين اتبعوا سياسة أكثر مرونة وشمولية مقارنة بالأمويين، مما مكنهم من دمج بعض الفرق في النظام السياسي وتحويلها من قوى معارضة إلى شركاء في الحكم. كما تظهر الدراسة أن التحول في السياسات تجاه الفرق الإسلامية كان له تأثير كبير على استقرار الدولة وطول عمرها السياسي. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن نجاح الدولة في إدارة التنوع المذهبي يعتمد على قدرتها على التوازن بين الحفاظ على الهوية الدينية والانفتاح على التعددية السياسية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدولة الأموية، الصراع المذهبي، الخوارج، الشيعة، الموالي، الثورة العباسية، الاستقرار السياسي، الفرق الإسلامية

Introduction

The relationship between Islamic sects and political authority has been one of the most complex and enduring themes in Islamic political history. From the early divisions that emerged following the death of Prophet Muhammad to the sophisticated theological and political movements that developed under subsequent caliphates, the question of how religious diversity should be managed within an Islamic state has remained central to Islamic political thought (Hodgson, 1974).

The Umayyad Caliphate (41-132 AH / 661-750 AD) and the Abbasid Caliphate (132-656 AH / 750-1258 AD) represent two distinct approaches to managing sectarian diversity within the Islamic state. While the Umayyads generally maintained a policy of Arab supremacy and limited accommodation of non-Arab Muslims and sectarian groups, the Abbasids adopted a more inclusive approach that sought to integrate diverse ethnic and religious communities into the imperial structure (Kennedy, 2004).

This comparative study examines how these two major Islamic dynasties approached the challenge of sectarian diversity, particularly focusing on the transformation of various Islamic sects from positions of opposition to varying degrees of political participation. The central research question guiding this investigation is: How did the different approaches of the Umayyad and Abbasid states toward Islamic sects influence the transformation of these groups from opposition movements to participants in the political system?

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the fundamental differences between Umayyad and Abbasid policies toward Islamic sects
2. To examine the factors that influenced sectarian groups' decisions to move from opposition to political participation
3. To evaluate the impact of inclusive versus exclusive policies on state stability and longevity
4. To assess the long-term consequences of sectarian integration policies on Islamic political development

Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon theories of political inclusion and exclusion, particularly focusing on how states manage religious and ethnic diversity. The theoretical framework incorporates concepts from comparative politics regarding minority integration, religious accommodation, and the relationship between political legitimacy and social inclusion (Lijphart, 1977).

Methodology

The study employs a comparative historical analysis, examining primary sources including chronicles, administrative documents, and theological treatises from both periods. Secondary sources from contemporary Islamic studies scholars provide additional analytical perspectives on the long-term implications of these policies.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Foundations of Sectarian Politics in Early Islam

1.1 The Nature of Early Islamic Sectarianism

The emergence of distinct Islamic sects in the early centuries of Islam was fundamentally linked to questions of political authority and religious interpretation. Unlike later theological divisions that would develop around doctrinal issues, the earliest sectarian divisions were primarily political, centered on the question of legitimate succession to the Prophet Muhammad (Madelung, 1997).

The three major sectarian movements that emerged during this period - the Kharijites, the Shia, and what would later become known as Sunni Islam - each developed distinct theories of political authority that would shape their relationship with subsequent Islamic states. The Kharijites emphasized merit-based leadership and the community's right to depose unjust rulers, the Shia maintained that legitimate authority belonged exclusively to the descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib, while the emerging Sunni consensus emphasized the importance of community unity and the legitimacy of established authority (Watt, 1973).

1.2 Political Participation versus Opposition: Theoretical Considerations

The concept of political participation in early Islamic thought was closely tied to religious obligation and community welfare. Islamic political theory, as it developed during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, grappled with fundamental questions about the relationship between religious authority and political power, the rights and obligations of religious minorities within the Islamic state, and the conditions under which opposition to established authority might be justified (Lambton, 1981).

The transformation from opposition to participation involved complex negotiations between sectarian groups and state authorities, often mediated by changing political circumstances, theological developments, and pragmatic considerations of survival and advancement. This process was neither linear nor uniform across different sects and regions, reflecting the diverse nature of Islamic sectarian movements and the varying approaches of different rulers (Crone & Hinds, 1986).

1.3 The Role of Religious Legitimacy in Islamic Political Systems

Religious legitimacy played a crucial role in determining the success or failure of Islamic political systems in managing sectarian diversity. Both the Umayyad and Abbasid states claimed religious authority as the foundation of their political power, but they differed significantly in how they defined and maintained this legitimacy in the face of sectarian challenges (Lassner, 1980).

The Umayyads, despite their political success, struggled with questions of religious legitimacy throughout their reign. Their reliance on Syrian Arab tribal support and their perceived distance from the religious center of Islam in the Hijaz made them vulnerable to sectarian criticism. The Abbasids, by contrast, built their revolution on claims of religious legitimacy and maintained closer ties to religious scholars and institutions throughout their reign (Sharon, 1983).

Chapter 2: Umayyad Policies Toward Islamic Sects

2.1 The Umayyad Approach to Sectarian Management

The Umayyad approach to managing Islamic sects was characterized by a combination of military suppression, political co-optation, and administrative pragmatism. Unlike later Islamic dynasties that would develop more sophisticated theological and legal frameworks for dealing with religious diversity, the Umayyads relied primarily on their military superiority and administrative efficiency to maintain control over diverse populations (Hawting, 2000).

The Umayyad state's relationship with sectarian groups was fundamentally shaped by its origins in the civil wars that followed the assassination of Uthman ibn Affan. Having come to power through military victory rather than religious consensus, the Umayyads faced persistent challenges to their legitimacy from groups that questioned their religious authority. This defensive posture influenced their approach to sectarian management throughout their reign (Wellhausen, 1927).

2.2 Umayyad Relations with the Kharijites

The Kharijite movement posed perhaps the most persistent and violent challenge to Umayyad authority. The Kharijites' rejection of the arbitration at Siffin and their subsequent development of a radical political theology that denied the legitimacy of both Ali and Mu'awiya created an irreconcilable conflict with Umayyad rule (Hinds, 1971).

The Umayyad response to Kharijite opposition was overwhelmingly military. The campaigns of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf against various Kharijite groups in Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula demonstrated the state's willingness to use extreme violence to suppress sectarian opposition. However, this military approach, while temporarily effective, failed to address the underlying appeal of Kharijite ideology and often created new grievances that fueled further resistance (Wellhausen, 1927).

The Umayyads made few attempts to accommodate Kharijite concerns or to integrate moderate Kharijite elements into the political system. This inflexibility reflected both the radical nature of Kharijite demands and the Umayyad state's limited capacity for political innovation. The result was a cycle of rebellion and suppression that continued throughout the Umayyad period and contributed to the state's eventual weakness (Salem, 1956).

2.3 Umayyad Relations with the Shia

The Umayyad relationship with the Shia was more complex than their dealings with the Kharijites, reflecting both the political importance of the Shia community and the varying degrees of militancy within Shia ranks. The tragedy of Karbala in 61 AH (680 AD) created a permanent source of tension between the Umayyad state and Shia communities, but it also led to the development of different Shia strategies for dealing with Umayyad rule (Ayoub, 1978).

Some Shia groups, particularly those following the Imams who advocated quietist approaches, developed forms of accommodation with Umayyad rule that allowed them to maintain their religious identity while avoiding direct political confrontation. This approach, known as taqiyya (religious dissimulation), enabled Shia communities to survive and even prosper under Umayyad rule while maintaining their distinct religious and political beliefs (Kohlberg, 1975).

However, other Shia groups, particularly those supporting active resistance to Umayyad rule, engaged in periodic revolts that were met with harsh suppression. The revolts of the Tawwabin (Penitents) and al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi demonstrated both the potential for Shia political mobilization and the Umayyad state's determination to prevent the emergence of alternative centers of political authority (Dixon, 1971).

2.4 The Mawali Question and Sectarian Politics

The Umayyad treatment of the Mawali (non-Arab converts to Islam) intersected significantly with sectarian politics, as many Mawali were attracted to sectarian movements that promised greater equality and inclusion. The Umayyad policy of maintaining Arab supremacy and excluding Mawali from positions of political and military leadership created a large pool of potential supporters for anti-Umayyad movements (Crone, 1980).

Both Kharijite and Shia movements actively recruited among the Mawali, offering them religious and political equality that was denied under Umayyad rule. The appeal of these movements to Mawali communities was not purely religious but reflected broader grievances about social and economic discrimination. This intersection of ethnic and sectarian grievances would prove crucial in the eventual downfall of the Umayyad state (Bulliet, 1979).

2.5 Limitations of the Umayyad Approach

The Umayyad approach to sectarian management suffered from several fundamental limitations that ultimately contributed to the state's downfall. First, the reliance on military suppression without addressing underlying grievances created a cycle of rebellion and repression that exhausted state resources and alienated potential supporters. Second, the failure to develop inclusive political institutions meant that sectarian groups had few alternatives to violent opposition when seeking to address their concerns (Kennedy, 2004).

Third, the Umayyad emphasis on Arab supremacy limited their ability to build broad-based coalitions that could have strengthened the state against sectarian challenges. By excluding Mawali and maintaining policies that favored Arab tribal interests, the Umayyads created conditions that made sectarian opposition movements more attractive to large segments of the population (Shaban, 1971).

Chapter 3: Abbasid Policies Toward Islamic Sects

3.1 The Abbasid Revolution and Sectarian Politics

The Abbasid revolution (129-132 AH / 747-750 AD) represented a fundamental transformation in the relationship between Islamic states and sectarian groups. Unlike the Umayyads, who had come to power through military conquest and maintained their authority primarily through force, the Abbasids built their revolution on a coalition of diverse groups united by opposition to Umayyad rule (Lassner, 1986).

The Abbasid revolutionary movement successfully appealed to Shia sentiment through its emphasis on Hashemite legitimacy, to Mawali grievances through promises of equality, and to general dissatisfaction with Umayyad policies through calls for justice and reform. This broad-based appeal required the Abbasids to develop more sophisticated approaches to managing sectarian diversity once they achieved power (Sharon, 1983).

3.2 Early Abbasid Sectarian Policies

The early Abbasid caliphs faced the challenge of maintaining the coalition that had brought them to power while establishing their own distinct political identity. This required careful navigation of competing sectarian claims and expectations, particularly from Shia groups who had supported the revolution in the expectation of seeing Alid rule restored (Moscati, 1957).

The Abbasid solution was to maintain their claim to Hashemite legitimacy while gradually distancing themselves from specifically Shia political demands. This approach allowed them to retain some Shia support while avoiding the radical implications of full acceptance of Shia political theory. The result was a more inclusive approach to sectarian management that offered various groups opportunities for participation in the political system without requiring complete ideological conformity (Daniel, 1979).

3.3 The Integration of Former Opposition Groups

One of the most significant innovations of Abbasid rule was their systematic effort to integrate former opposition groups into the imperial administration. This policy was most evident in their treatment of Persian Mawali, who had been largely excluded from positions of authority under Umayyad rule but became central to Abbasid administration and military organization (Bosworth, 1973).

The Abbasid integration policy extended beyond ethnic inclusion to encompass various sectarian groups. Moderate Shia scholars and administrators found opportunities for advancement within the Abbasid system, while even some former Kharijite communities were offered pathways to accommodation with the new regime. This inclusive approach helped to reduce the appeal of radical opposition movements and created incentives for sectarian groups to work within the system rather than against it (Sourdel, 1969).

3.4 The Development of Sunni Orthodoxy

The Abbasid period witnessed the gradual development of what would become known as Sunni orthodoxy, a process that had significant implications for the management of sectarian diversity. Unlike the Umayyads, who had generally avoided detailed theological engagement with sectarian challenges, the Abbasids actively promoted the development of Islamic law and theology as tools of political legitimacy and social control (Melchert, 1997).

The emergence of the four major Sunni legal schools (madhabs) during the Abbasid period provided a framework for managing religious diversity within acceptable bounds. This development allowed for significant theological and legal diversity while maintaining overall unity under Abbasid authority. The madhab system also provided a model for accommodating sectarian differences that would influence Islamic political thought for centuries to come (Hallaq, 1997).

3.5 The Mihna and the Limits of Inclusion

The Mihna (Inquisition) initiated by the Caliph al-Ma'mun (198-218 AH / 813-833 AD) represented both the potential and the limitations of Abbasid approaches to sectarian management. Al-Ma'mun's attempt to impose Mu'tazila theological doctrines on religious scholars and judges demonstrated the Abbasid willingness to use state power to enforce religious conformity when political interests were at stake (Nawas, 1994).

However, the ultimate failure of the Mihna and its abandonment by later caliphs also illustrated the constraints on state power in religious matters and the importance of maintaining consensus among religious authorities. The Mihna episode showed that even the more inclusive Abbasid approach to sectarian management had limits and that attempts to impose theological uniformity could backfire and undermine state legitimacy (Hinds, 1993).

3.6 Long-term Consequences of Abbasid Policies

The Abbasid approach to sectarian management had several long-term consequences that distinguished it from the Umayyad model. First, the integration of diverse groups into the imperial administration created a more stable and resilient political system that could better withstand sectarian challenges. Second, the development of institutional frameworks for managing religious diversity provided models that would influence subsequent Islamic states (Hodgson, 1974).

Third, the Abbasid emphasis on religious scholarship and legal development created intellectual traditions that helped to channel sectarian energies into scholarly rather than political activities. This transformation of sectarian competition from primarily political to primarily intellectual arenas contributed to the relative stability of the Abbasid system compared to its Umayyad predecessor (Makdisi, 1981).

Chapter 4: Comparative Analysis and Transformation Patterns

4.1 Structural Differences in Approach

The fundamental difference between Umayyad and Abbasid approaches to sectarian management lay in their underlying conceptions of political authority and social organization. The Umayyads maintained a relatively narrow conception of political legitimacy based on Arab tribal leadership and military effectiveness, while the Abbasids developed a broader, more inclusive model based on religious authority and administrative competence (Kennedy, 2004).

This difference in approach had profound implications for how each dynasty dealt with sectarian challenges. The Umayyad emphasis on Arab supremacy and military solutions limited their options for accommodating sectarian demands, while the Abbasid emphasis on religious legitimacy and administrative inclusion provided multiple pathways for integrating former opposition groups into the political system (Crone, 1980).

4.2 Patterns of Sectarian Transformation

The transformation of Islamic sects from opposition to participation followed different patterns under Umayyad and Abbasid rule. Under the Umayyads, sectarian groups generally remained in opposition throughout the dynasty's reign, with occasional periods of accommodation that were typically temporary and limited in scope. The Umayyad approach created few incentives for sectarian groups to abandon opposition in favor of participation (Hawting, 2000).

Under the Abbasids, by contrast, many sectarian groups underwent significant transformations in their relationship with political authority. Some Shia groups moved from active opposition to qualified support, while various Kharijite communities abandoned militant resistance in favor of peaceful coexistence. These transformations were facilitated by Abbasid policies that offered concrete benefits for participation while maintaining space for sectarian identity and practice (Madelung, 1988).

4.3 The Role of Institutional Innovation

The Abbasid success in managing sectarian diversity was closely linked to their institutional innovations, particularly in the areas of administration, law, and religious authority. The development of the wazir (vizier) system allowed for the integration of non-Arab administrators, while the expansion of the qadi (judge) system provided opportunities for religious scholars from various backgrounds to participate in governance (Sourdel, 1959).

The Abbasid patronage of religious scholarship also created new forms of sectarian participation that channeled competitive energies into intellectual rather than political activities. The development of the madrasa system and the institutionalization of religious debate provided alternative arenas for sectarian competition that were less threatening to political stability (Makdisi, 1981).

4.4 Economic Factors in Sectarian Integration

Economic considerations played a crucial role in the transformation of sectarian groups from opposition to participation. The Abbasid expansion of trade networks and urban development created new opportunities for economic advancement that were often linked to political participation. Sectarian groups that had been economically marginalized under Umayyad rule found new pathways to prosperity under Abbasid policies (Ashtor, 1976).

The Abbasid integration of Mawali into the imperial administration also had significant economic implications, as it opened up new career paths and sources of income for non-Arab Muslims. This economic integration helped to reduce the appeal of sectarian opposition movements by providing alternative means of social and economic advancement (Bulliet, 1979).

4.5 Regional Variations in Sectarian Policies

Both Umayyad and Abbasid approaches to sectarian management varied significantly across different regions of their empires, reflecting local conditions and the varying strength of different sectarian groups. In Iraq, where Shia and Kharijite populations were concentrated, both dynasties faced more intense sectarian challenges and developed more sophisticated responses (Morony, 1984).

In Iran, the Abbasid integration of Persian administrative traditions and personnel represented a significant departure from Umayyad policies and contributed to the transformation of Persian Zoroastrian and Buddhist communities into active participants in Islamic governance. This regional variation in policies reflected the Abbasid understanding that effective sectarian management required adaptation to local conditions (Bosworth, 1973).

Chapter 5: Long-term Implications and Lessons

5.1 Impact on State Stability and Longevity

The different approaches to sectarian management adopted by the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties had significant implications for their respective stability and longevity. The Umayyad reliance on military suppression and exclusionary policies created persistent sources of instability that ultimately contributed to their downfall after less than a century of rule. The Abbasid emphasis on inclusion and accommodation, by contrast, helped to create a more stable political system that endured for over five centuries (Kennedy, 2004).

The Abbasid success in transforming sectarian opposition into political participation created a more resilient imperial system that could better withstand both internal challenges and external threats. By providing pathways for advancement within the system, the Abbasids reduced the incentives for sectarian groups to engage in violent opposition and created stakeholders in the continuation of Abbasid rule (Hodgson, 1974)

5.2 Influence on Islamic Political Thought

The contrasting approaches of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties to sectarian management had lasting influences on Islamic political thought and practice. The Umayyad model of exclusionary rule and military dominance provided a cautionary example of the limitations of purely coercive approaches to governance, while the Abbasid model of inclusive administration and religious accommodation became a template for subsequent Islamic states (Lambton, 1981).

The development of Islamic legal and theological traditions during the Abbasid period also created intellectual frameworks for understanding the relationship between religious diversity and political authority that would influence Islamic political thought for centuries. The concept of legitimate difference of opinion (ikhtilaf) within Islamic law, for example, provided a theological foundation for tolerating sectarian diversity within the broader Islamic community (Hallaq, 1997).

5.3 Lessons for Contemporary Islamic Governance

The historical experience of Umayyad and Abbasid sectarian management offers several lessons for contemporary discussions of Islamic governance and religious diversity. First, the importance of inclusive political institutions that provide pathways for participation by diverse groups cannot be overstated. The Abbasid success in integrating former opposition groups demonstrates the potential benefits of inclusive approaches to governance (Esposito & Voll, 1996)

Second, the role of economic opportunity in facilitating political integration suggests that addressing material grievances is often as important as addressing ideological concerns in managing sectarian diversity. The Abbasid expansion of economic opportunities for previously marginalized groups was crucial to their success in transforming opposition into participation (Hodgson, 1974).

Third, the importance of maintaining space for religious and cultural identity within broader political frameworks is evident from both the Umayyad failures and Abbasid successes. Attempts to impose complete uniformity, as demonstrated by the Mihna episode, can backfire and undermine the very stability they are intended to create (Nawas, 1994).

5.4 The Evolution of Sectarian Identity

The transformation of Islamic sects under Umayyad and Abbasid rule also illustrates the dynamic nature of sectarian identity and the ways in which political circumstances can influence religious development. The evolution of Shia thought from primarily political opposition to more complex theological and legal systems, for example, was significantly influenced by the changing political opportunities and constraints under different dynasties (Madelung, 1997).

Similarly, the development of Sunni orthodoxy during the Abbasid period was not simply a natural evolution of Islamic thought but was significantly shaped by the political needs and opportunities of the Abbasid state. This suggests that sectarian identities are not fixed but are continuously shaped by political, social, and economic circumstances (Melchert, 1997).

Conclusion

This comparative study of Umayyad and Abbasid policies toward Islamic sects reveals fundamental differences in approach that had significant implications for both the immediate stability of these dynasties and the long-term development of Islamic political thought. The Umayyad emphasis on exclusion, military suppression, and Arab supremacy created persistent sources of instability that ultimately contributed to their downfall, while the Abbasid emphasis on inclusion, accommodation, and religious legitimacy created a more stable and enduring political system.

The transformation of Islamic sects from opposition to political participation was not an automatic or inevitable process but required deliberate policy choices and institutional innovations that created incentives for cooperation rather than conflict. The Abbasid success in achieving this transformation demonstrates the potential benefits of inclusive approaches to governance, while the Umayyad failures illustrate the limitations of purely coercive strategies.

Several key findings emerge from this analysis. First, the importance of political legitimacy in managing sectarian diversity cannot be overstated. The Abbasid emphasis on religious authority and their success in building broad-based coalitions provided them with greater legitimacy than the Umayyads, who relied primarily on military power and tribal support. This legitimacy was crucial in persuading sectarian groups to abandon opposition in favor of participation.

Second, institutional innovation played a crucial role in facilitating sectarian integration. The Abbasid development of new administrative structures, legal frameworks, and educational institutions provided multiple pathways for sectarian groups to participate in governance while maintaining their distinct identities. These innovations created alternatives to violent opposition and channeled sectarian energies into constructive rather than destructive activities.

Third, economic factors were often as important as religious considerations in determining sectarian responses to state policies. The Abbasid expansion of economic opportunities for previously marginalized groups, particularly the Mawali, was crucial in reducing the appeal of opposition movements and creating stakeholders in the continuation of Abbasid rule.

Fourth, the regional variation in sectarian policies demonstrates the importance of adapting governance strategies to local conditions. Both dynasties found that uniform approaches were less effective than policies that took account of regional differences in sectarian composition, economic conditions, and political traditions.

The implications of these findings extend beyond the specific historical cases examined in this study. The experience of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties offers valuable lessons for contemporary discussions of religious diversity, political inclusion, and governance in Islamic contexts. The success of inclusive approaches in creating stable and enduring political systems suggests that accommodation rather than suppression may be more effective in managing sectarian diversity.

However, the study also reveals the limitations and challenges of inclusive approaches. The Mihna episode demonstrates that even inclusive states may be tempted to impose uniformity when they perceive threats to their authority, and the eventual fragmentation of the Abbasid empire suggests that inclusion alone is not sufficient to guarantee long-term stability.

Future research might profitably examine how the lessons of Umayyad and Abbasid sectarian management were applied by subsequent Islamic dynasties, and how these historical experiences might inform contemporary efforts to manage religious diversity in Islamic societies. The dynamic nature of sectarian identity revealed in this study also

suggests the need for more nuanced approaches to understanding the relationship between religious belief and political behavior in Islamic contexts.

The transformation of Islamic sects from opposition to participation under Abbasid rule represents one of the most successful examples of sectarian integration in Islamic history. While the specific circumstances of the Abbasid period cannot be replicated in contemporary contexts, the underlying principles of inclusion, accommodation, and institutional innovation remain relevant for modern efforts to build stable and legitimate governance systems in religiously diverse societies.

Conflict of Interest: None declared.

Ethical Approval: Not applicable.

Funding: None.

References

Ashtor, E. (1976). A social and economic history of the Near East in the Middle Ages. University of California Press.

Ayoub, M. (1978). Redemptive suffering in Islam: A study of the devotional aspects of Ashura in Twelver Shi'ism. Mouton Publishers.

Bosworth, C. E. (1973). The Persian impact on Arabic literature. In A. F. L. Beeston et al. (Eds.), Arabic literature to the end of the Umayyad period (pp. 483-496). Cambridge University Press.

Bulliet, R. W. (1979). Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: An essay in quantitative history. Harvard University Press.

Crone, P. (1980). Slaves on horses: The evolution of the Islamic polity. Cambridge University Press.

Crone, P., & Hinds, M. (1986). God's caliph: Religious authority in the first centuries of Islam. Cambridge University Press.

Daniel, E. L. (1979). The political and social history of Khurasan under Abbasid rule 747-820. Bibliotheca Islamica.

Dixon, A. A. (1971). The Umayyad Caliphate 65-86/684-705 (A.H./A.D.). Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 103(1), 1-23.

Esposito, J. L., & Voll, J. O. (1996). Islam and democracy. Oxford University Press.

Hallaq, W. B. (1997). A history of Islamic legal theories: An introduction to Sunni usul al-fiqh. Cambridge University Press.

Hawting, G. R. (2000). The first dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750. Routledge.

Hinds, M. (1971). The Banners and Battle Cries of the Arabs at Siffin (A.D. 657). Al-Abhath, 24, 3-42.

Hinds, M. (1993). Studies in early Islamic history. Darwin Press.

Hodgson, M. G. S. (1974). The venture of Islam: Conscience and history in a world civilization (3 vols.). University of Chicago Press.

Kennedy, H. (2004). The Prophet and the age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the 6th to the 11th century. Pearson Longman.

Kohlberg, E. (1975). Some Imami-Shi'i views on taqiyya. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 95(3), 395-402.

Lambton, A. K. S. (1981). State and government in medieval Islam: An introduction to the study of Islamic political theory. Oxford University Press.

Lassner, J. (1980). The shaping of Abbasid rule. Princeton University Press.

Lassner, J. (1986). Islamic revolution and historical memory: An inquiry into the art of Abbasid apologetics. American Oriental Society.

Lijphart, A. (1977). Democracy in plural societies: A comparative exploration. Yale University Press.

Madelung, W. (1988). Religious trends in early Islamic Iran. Bibliotheca Persica.

Madelung, W. (1997). The succession to Muhammad: A study of the early Caliphate. Cambridge University Press.

Makdisi, G. (1981). The rise of colleges: Institutions of learning in Islam and the West. Edinburgh University Press.

Melchert, C. (1997). The formation of the Sunni schools of law, 9th-10th centuries C.E. Brill.

Morony, M. G. (1984). Iraq after the Muslim conquest. Princeton University Press.

Moscati, S. (1957). Studi su Abu Muslim. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

Nawas, J. A. (1994). A reexamination of three current explanations for al-Ma'mun's introduction of the mihna. International Journal of Middle East Studies, 26(4), 615-629.

Salem, E. A. (1956). Political theory and institutions of the Khawarij. Johns Hopkins Press.

Shaban, M. A. (1971). The Abbasid revolution. Cambridge University Press.

Sharon, M. (1983). Black banners from the East: The establishment of the Abbasid state. Magnes Press.

Sourdel, D. (1959). Le vizirat 'abbaside de 749 à 936 (2 vols.). Institut Français de Damas.

Sourdel, D. (1969). La politique religieuse du calife 'abbaside al-Ma'mun. Revue des Études Islamiques, 30, 27-48.

Watt, W. M. (1973). The formative period of Islamic thought. Edinburgh University Press.

Wellhausen, J. (1927). The Arab kingdom and its fall (M. G. Weir, Trans.). Curzon Press.