

Reassessing the Political Leadership of Caliph Uthman bin Affan: Between Administrative Reform and Accusations of Nepotism

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Article	Abstract
<p>Article History : Received: June 01, 2026 Reviewed: June 15, 2026 Accepted: June 21, 2026 Published: June 28, 2026</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Caliph Uthman bin Affan; Islamic Leadership; Nepotism; Uthmani Mushaf; Great Fitnah; Islamic Historiography.</i></p>	<p>The leadership of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan was one of the most important and controversial periods in the history of Islamic government. On the one hand, he succeeded in strengthening state administration, expanding the territory of Islamic rule, and codifying the Qur'an through the compilation of the Uthmani Mushaf. On the other hand, the policy of appointing relatives from the Umayyad dynasty to strategic government positions gave rise to accusations of nepotism which later developed into political conflict and culminated in <i>the Great Fitnah</i>. This study aims to analyze the leadership of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan by examining the dynamics of government policies, accusations of nepotism, and the factors behind the political crisis at the end of his caliphate. The study uses a qualitative method with a type of library research <i>through</i> a historical approach and historiographic analysis. Data were obtained from classical Islamic history literature, academic books, and relevant scientific articles, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña which includes data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research findings show that Uthman's administrative policies were a response to the increasingly complex needs of state governance resulting from the expansion of Islamic territory.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Caliph Uthman ibn Affan was one of the important figures in Islamic history who served as the third caliph after Abu Bakr Ash-Siddiq and Umar ibn Khattab. His leadership lasted for 12 years (644–656 AD), a period that marked the massive expansion of Islamic territory as well as significant administrative and economic transformations (Rahmat & Arbi, 2024). As a companion of the Prophet Muhammad and his son-in-law, Uthman was known by the nickname Dzunnurain because he married two of the Prophet's daughters in succession. He is also known for his contribution in codifying the Qur'an into a standardized mushaf, known as the Uthmani Mushaf, to maintain uniformity of reading throughout the Islamic world.

However, his reign was not without controversy. His policy of appointing relatives to strategic government positions sparked accusations of nepotism and discontent among Muslims, ultimately contributing to a rebellion and his assassination (Yani et al., 2023). Recent studies have examined various aspects of Uthman ibn Affan's leadership, including administrative and financial policies, economic development, and the political dynamics that occurred during his reign. This analysis is crucial for understanding the complexity of his leadership and its impact on the development of Islamic civilization (Susanti et al., 2023).

Although the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan was marked by advances in administration and the spread of Islam, his reign was also marked by various complex challenges. One of the most crucial

issues was his policy of appointing family members, particularly from the Umayyad clan, to important government positions (Anita et al., 2024). This policy sparked tension within Muslim society as it was perceived as a form of favoritism or nepotism that did not reflect the spirit of social justice. Although Uthman intended to maintain stability by relying on individuals he trusted, this move instead sparked dissatisfaction among the Prophet's companions and Muslims in general. This tension escalated into a widespread political crisis and ultimately led to a rebellion that culminated in Uthman's assassination in his own home. This tragedy marked the beginning of a phase of internal conflict among Muslims known as *the Great Fitnah* (Hidayat et al., 2025), a period of major division that shook the foundations of unity in early Islamic history.

Based on this background, this study aims to further examine the life of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan and the various important dynamics that characterized his caliphate. The investigation begins with his biography, including his family background, the early days of his conversion to Islam, and his role as a close friend and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Furthermore, the process of Uthman's appointment as the third caliph, which took place through deliberation after the death of Umar ibn al-Khattab, will be discussed, and how this process reflects the principles of *shura* (consultation) in the early Islamic government system. One aspect that is no less important is Uthman's prominent generosity, both in the context of his support for the Islamic struggle and his contributions to the welfare of the people, such as in financing the Battle of Tabuk and the purchase of the Raumah well for public benefit.

Equally important, this study will also examine Uthman's major initiative in unifying the recitation of the Qur'an, a monumental step that prevented divisions caused by differences in *qira'at* (recitation) across Islamic regions. This effort resulted in the codification of a standardized Qur'anic manuscript known as the Uthmani Mushaf, which remains the primary reference for Muslims worldwide. Finally, this paper will highlight the causes of the major *fitnah* (slander) that culminated in Uthman's assassination. Various political and social tensions, including criticism of his administrative policies and slander spread by certain groups, were the main triggers of this tragedy. A thorough analysis of these aspects is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of Uthman ibn Affan, both as a leader of the people and as a historical figure who played a significant role in the development of Islamic civilization.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research method with library research and a historical approach. The historical approach is used to critically examine the leadership journey of Caliph Uthman bin Affan, including the process of his appointment as caliph, government administration policies, his contribution to the codification of the Qur'an, accusations of nepotism, and the political dynamics behind the *Fitnah Kubra*. This approach allows researchers to reconstruct various historical events based on authoritative sources and understand the cause-and-effect relationships of each policy taken during Uthman bin Affan's reign.

The research database consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from various authoritative Islamic historical literature, such as *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* by al-Tabari, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* by Ibn Kathir, *Ath-Thabaqat al-Kubra* by Ibn Sa'd, and the work of Muhammad Husain Haekal on Uthman ibn Affan. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from national and international scientific articles, academic books, and previous research results discussing the leadership of Uthman ibn Affan, Islamic political history, the codification of the Uthmani Mushaf, the development of the Khulafaur Rashidun government, and the *Fitnah Kubra* incident. All sources were selected based on the relevance of the theme, the credibility of the authors, and their contribution to the research discussion.

The data collection technique was carried out through documentation studies by identifying, inventorying, critically reading, and classifying various library sources related to the research focus. Furthermore, each source was analyzed using source criticism to assess the authenticity, credibility, and

consistency of the information before being used as a basis for analysis. The collected data were then grouped into several main themes, namely the biography of Uthman bin Affan, the process of his appointment as caliph, government policies, generosity, the codification of the Qur'an, accusations of nepotism, the causes of the Great Fitnah, and the death of Caliph Uthman bin Affan.

Data analysis used the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes four stages: data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation stage, various information from primary and secondary sources was selected, simplified, and grouped based on research themes. Next, the data was presented descriptively and analytically through the compilation of a chronology of events and interpretation of the policies of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan. The final stage was carried out by drawing conclusions through historiographic analysis, namely comparing the various views of classical historians and contemporary academics regarding the leadership of Uthman ibn Affan, so as to obtain a more objective understanding of the dynamics of politics and government in the early Islamic period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Uthman bin Affan

Uthman bin Affan, whose full name is Uthman bin Affan bin Abil 'Ash bin Umayyah bin Abdusy Shams bin Abdu Manaf bin Qushai bin Kilab bin Murrah bin Ka'ab bin Luwa'i bin Khuzaimah bin Mudrikah bin Ilyas bin Mudhar bin Nizar bin Ma'ad bin 'Adnan, comes from a lineage of noble Quraysh honorable. He is part of the Bani Umayyah, one of the leading tribes in Mecca. From his mother's side, namely Arwa binti Kuraiz bin Rabiah bin Habib bin Abdusy Shams, Uthman also has a blood relationship with the Prophet Muhammad . This is strengthened by the genealogy of his maternal grandmother, Al-Baida` binti Abdul Muttalib, who was the aunt of the Prophet Muhammad and the twin sister of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet Muhammad (Sa'ad, 1990) . Thus, Uthman had family ties both in terms of influential tribes and kinship with the Prophet.

Uthman ibn Affan was born in the sixth year after the Year of the Elephant, making him approximately five to six years younger than the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He came from a distinguished Quraysh family and was known as a successful merchant in the textile trade. Despite his immense wealth, Uthman was known for his humility, shyness, and generosity. These noble qualities earned him the respect of his community (Dalimunthe, 2024) .

Uthman's generosity is reflected in his various contributions to the Muslim community. One example is when he bought the Raumah well from a Jew for 20,000 dirhams and donated it for the benefit of Muslims, so they could have free access to water. Furthermore, during a time of famine in Medina, Uthman donated his entire cargo of merchandise to the needy, even though he was offered a large profit by other traders. In the Battle of Tabuk, he also made a significant contribution by donating 300 camels, 70 horses, and 1,000 dinars to support the Muslim army (Pandu Akram, 2020) .

Uthman's wealth was not only used for personal gain, but also to support the development of the community and elevate the message of Islam. He was known to have owned more livestock than any other Arab of his time (Hawari, 2017) . His generosity and concern for the welfare of the community made Uthman a role model in using wealth for the benefit of religion and society.

After the Prophet Muhammad was appointed as a Messenger by Allah, Uthman ibn Affan was one of the first people to accept Islam. He embraced Islam through the invitation of the Prophet's closest friend, Abu Bakr Ash-Siddiq (Muhammad Husain Haekal, 2007, p. 35) . His sincerity in following the teachings of Islam is reflected in his participation in two important migration events: first, the migration to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to escape the pressure of the Quraysh, and second, the migration to Medina with other Muslims as part of an effort to build an Islamic society.

Uthman's caliphate lasted for eleven years, eleven months, and seventeen days. He was sworn in as caliph at the beginning of Muharram in the year 24 Hijri, and died tragically due to assassination on the 18th of Dzulhijjah in the year 35 Hijri (Kathir & al-Atsari, 2013) . Regarding his age, some narrations state that he died at the age of over eighty years. Salih bin Kasim narrates that his age at the

time of his death was eighty years and a few months, while other narrations state that he died at the age of eighty-four.

Process of Appointing Uthman bin Affan as Caliph

When Umar ibn Khattab suffered a serious stab wound, he did not intend to immediately appoint a successor as caliph. However, concerns arose among Muslims that division would arise after Umar's death if no leadership was established. Therefore, they urged Umar to determine who would succeed him. One narration states that Umar said, "If I appoint a successor, I will follow in the footsteps of Abu Bakr, a man better than me, because he appointed his successor. But if I do not appoint anyone, I will follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who did not appoint a successor directly" (Zauman et al., 2024).

This statement reflects the doubts Umar felt at the time. He felt uncertain because he did not want to bear responsibility for any mistakes his successor might make. On the other hand, Umar also worried that if he did not take action, the Muslim community would fall into chaos (Sucilawati, 2020). Moreover, at that time, almost all Arab tribes had been involved in wars against Persia and Rome, and many of them felt they had the same right as the Muhajirin and Ansar in choosing a caliph. To avoid further conflict, Umar chose a compromise: by not appointing a caliph directly, but also not leaving the matter unaddressed (Salsabila & Fadil, 2025).

Finally, Umar formed a Shura Council consisting of six prominent companions to elect the next caliph from among themselves. These six were Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Thalib, Zubair ibn Awwam, Talhah ibn Ubaidullah, Abdurrahman ibn Auf, and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas, all companions to whom the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had promised Paradise. After naming these companions, Umar said that no one was more worthy of being caliph than them, because the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had approved of them during his lifetime (Gusrizal, 2024).

However, regarding his own son, Abdullah ibn Umar, Umar firmly stated that he did not want his son to be nominated, let alone elected, as caliph. Umar said, "I do not want anyone from my family to hold this position. I do not want it because I do not want any member of my family to be held accountable for the affairs of the Ummah of Muhammad. I have made every effort to ensure that my family does not carry this mandate. I would be very grateful if this hope were truly realized." (Abdul Hafiz, 2024).

After the death of Umar ibn Khattab, the appointed members of the shura gathered at the residence of al-Musawir ibn Mukhirah, except for Talhah, who was absent. After the deadline set by Umar had passed and the time for the morning prayer approached, Abdurrahman ibn Auf, who had spent the night gathering the people's opinions, arrived at the mosque (Anita et al., 2024). There, the companions, the Muhajirin, the Ansar figures, and the military leaders had gathered. Seeing the crowd, Abdurrahman stood up and stated that the people wanted a leader who could unite them.

However, their differences of opinion led to a tense atmosphere, potentially leading to chaos in Medina. To defuse the situation, Abdurrahman took Ali's hand and asked him if he would pledge allegiance, provided he adhered to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the example of the two previous caliphs (Imam Ibn Hajar, 2020). Ali replied that he would strive according to his knowledge and ability. Abdurrahman then took Uthman's hand and asked the same question. Uthman expressed his willingness by swearing by Allah. Abdurrahman then raised his face to the sky and declared that he had handed over the responsibility of leadership to Uthman. Afterward, all those present in the mosque pledged allegiance to Uthman as caliph. Uthman, who was 70 years old at the time, ruled from 644 to 656 AD, and during his reign, the Islamic realm experienced significant expansion (Katsir, 2021).

The generosity of Uthman bin Affan

Uthman ibn Affan, the third caliph in Islam, was known as a very generous figure. His generosity was reflected in various concrete actions that had a major impact on Muslims during his time. For example, during the Battle of Tabuk, Uthman ibn Affan made a major contribution by donating 940 camels, 60 horses, and 10,000 dinars to finance the Muslim troops known as "troops in distress". This

donation demonstrated his commitment to supporting the Islamic struggle (Maharani, 2024) . Or the story of when Muslims had difficulty getting water because the wells were controlled by others, Uthman ibn Affan bought the Ruumah Well for 20,000 dirhams and donated it for the benefit of Muslims. This action provided access to clean water for the people of Medina (Ethis, 2022) .

Uthman bin Affan's generosity was also shown in his decision to give away merchandise during the famine. During the caliphate of Abu Bakar Ash-Siddiq, when there was famine, Uthman bin Affan gave away his entire trading caravan consisting of a thousand camels and their cargo to the poor, even though other traders offered high prices to buy these goods. This step shows his concern for the welfare of society (Muhammad Arif, 2015) .

Uthman ibn Affan's generosity was not limited to the three examples above. He was also known as a successful businessman who used his wealth to support various projects important to the development of the Muslim community. His generosity and contributions to society established his image as a deeply caring person with a strong commitment to Islamic principles (Muharrom, 2024) .

Efforts to Standardize the Reading of the Qur'an

During the caliphate of Uthman ibn 'Affan (644–656 CE), the Islamic world experienced rapid territorial expansion. Islam spread to various regions such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Persia, and North Africa. As Islamic rule expanded, Muslims from diverse ethnicities, nations, and languages embraced Islam. However, this diversity of backgrounds indirectly impacted how Muslims read the Quran (Al-Azami, 2008) .

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the Qur'an was revealed in seven uraphs (different types of Arabic readings or dialects), as a form of convenience for Arab people from various tribes to read and memorize the revelation (Sulaeman, 2023) . The Prophet himself taught his friends to read the Koran in various dialects. After the death of the Prophet, the companions continued to maintain the reading they received from the Prophet SAW, according to their respective dialects.

However, over time, these differences began to cause unrest. The situation reached a head during the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan, when Muslim forces from the Hijaz, Syria, Iraq, and other regions began to dispute how to recite the Quran. The differences in the recitations they inherited from their companions led to claims that one reading was more correct than the others. This was feared to cause division among Muslims, who were still in the process of consolidating after the Prophet's death (Shofiana & Zulfa, 2021) .

His companion, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, who participated in the military expedition to Azerbaijan, witnessed this debate firsthand and became concerned about the potential grave danger to Muslim unity. He immediately returned to Medina and conveyed his concerns to Caliph Uthman. In response, Uthman immediately took decisive and wise action to safeguard the unity of the Ummah and the integrity of the Quranic text (Fudge, 2021) .

Caliph Uthman formed a committee for the codification of the Koran consisting of trusted friends who had high capacity and integrity, especially in memorizing and knowing the Koran. This committee was chaired by Zaid bin Thabit, who was also the author of revelations during the time of the Prophet and was involved in the first codification during the time of Abu Bakar Ash-Siddiq. Other members were Abdullah bin Zubair, Sa'id bin al-'Ash, and Abdurrahman bin al-Harits bin Hisham. They were assigned to copy the Koran from the mushaf compiled during the time of Abu Bakr, which had been kept by Hafshah bint Umar, the wife of the Prophet and daughter of Umar bin Khattab (Sarfi & Fattahizadeh, 2017) .

Zaid and his team copied the mushaf using the Quraysh dialect as the standard, because the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW using the Quraysh dialect, as mentioned in many narrations. The resulting mushaf was called the "*Uthmani Mushaf*", and after it was completed, Caliph Uthman sent it to various important regions such as Kufa, Basrah, Syria, and Mecca, each accompanied by an official qari (Qur'an reader) to teach the correct way to read it (Nubowo, 2014) . Furthermore, Uthman also ordered that all private copies or other copies that did not conform to the official

manuscripts be burned or destroyed. This action, while criticized by a small minority, was crucial in maintaining the purity and consistency of the Quranic recitation to this day.

This standardization measure was not a deviation or elimination of variations in readings, but rather an effort to prevent conflicts in understanding and reciting the words of God. Valid Qur'anic texts were still recognized, but the writing of the Mushaf focused on a single standard system for ease of reading and uniform teaching. This effort by Caliph Uthman ibn 'Affan is considered a monumental step in Islamic history and laid the foundation for the authentic transmission of the Qur'an down to the modern era.

Causes of Slander

Kufa became a major center of resistance against the rule of Caliph Uthman ibn 'Affan. Many of its inhabitants expressed displeasure with his leadership. Some of them were from the ascetic and wara' groups, who felt that the wealth gained from various conquests had distanced Muslims from their orientation towards the afterlife (Whelan, 1998) .

The abundance of ghanimah (spoils of war) encouraged a luxurious lifestyle and fun among the people. On the other hand, there were also officials who were dismissed from their positions, such as 'Amr bin al-'Ash, who then felt disappointed and hurt towards Uthman. Jealousy also began to emerge among those who saw the Umayyad family getting many important positions in government, so that feelings of envy and resentment arose towards Uthman because he was seen as giving too much priority to his relatives (Von Denffer, 1983) .

Not only did his political policies draw criticism, but several of Utsman's religious decisions and personal ijihad (in matters of worship) also sparked controversy. One of the earliest public discussions was when Utsman performed the prayer perfectly (without shortening it) in Mina during the Hajj, contrary to the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who made shortening a prayer a rule for traveling (Anita et al., 2024) .

a also changed the order of the 'Id prayers by prioritizing the sermon, allowing people to pay zakat independently, giving land looted from the state to close friends, standardizing the reading of the Koran with one standard mushaf, designating land as a protected area, and giving property from Baitul Mal to his family (Nubowo, 2014) .

The death of Uthman bin Affan

The accumulation of various forms of dissatisfaction and opposition against Caliph Uthman ibn 'Affan over a long period of time eventually developed into a movement of open defiance against him and his government officials. This process began with the formation of an opposition network that began criticizing the Caliph's policies, which were deemed nepotistic and wasteful in managing state funds. The movement then escalated to demands that Caliph Uthman be forced to resign from office (Alfarizi, 2021) .

Several representatives from opposition groups even approached him to convey their political aspirations. However, because their demands were not met and there was no significant change in government policy, criticism and pressure against the Caliph grew stronger over time (Muhammad Husain Haekal, 2007) .

In 35 AH, the opposition reached a climax in their plans to force Uthman to step down or at least replace officials from his close relatives and to change the distribution of state wealth to favor the poor (Anita et al., 2024) . However, behind these demands lay a hidden intention to overthrow Uthman's rule.

Regarding accusations that Uthman gave state wealth to his family, he actually provided these allowances from his personal wealth, not from the Muslim community. In fact, Uthman's generosity in funding various Muslim needs dates back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and continued through the reigns of Abu Bakr and Umar ibn Khattab (Junaidin, 2020) .

As tensions escalated, several events began to threaten the life of Caliph Uthman. With the help of Ali ibn Abi Thalib, he managed to convince the demonstrators that he would accommodate most of their demands, except for resignation (Karim, 2015) . He agreed to change several policies and remove officials who were unpopular with the people, including replacing the governor of Egypt, Abdullah ibn

Sa'd ibn Abi Sarh, with Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr. This agreement temporarily calmed the situation and allowed the rebels to disperse and return to their respective regions.

However, things changed drastically when the Egyptian delegation returned to Medina in a rage. They brought with them a letter they claimed to have found in the hands of a slave of Uthman who was on his way to Egypt. The letter contained an order to capture and kill the rebels led by Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, and bore the official seal of Caliph Uthman. Ali immediately confirmed the contents of the letter to Uthman, who swore categorically that he had never written or sent the letter. He even challenged his accusers to produce evidence and two witnesses (Tabari, 1983) .

Now, the rebels demanded two things: that Utsman immediately step down from his position, or hand over Marwan bin al-Hakam, his nephew and secretary, to be held accountable for the letter. However, Utsman remained steadfast in his stance of not resigning and refusing to hand over Marwan. After three days and three nights of unanswered ultimatums given to Utsman, several rebels managed to break into his house through the side roof. They killed Utsman while he was reading the Qur'an. This tragic incident occurred in front of his wife, Na'ilah, who tried to protect her husband until several of her fingers were severed by the rebels' weapons (Maimun, 2023) .

Historians differ on who carried out the assassination. Some cite Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr as one, but Na'ilah disputes this, explaining that Muhammad did enter the house but did not participate in the killing. Other sources suggest that the main perpetrators of the assassination were not among the companions who pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, but rather low-ranking soldiers from areas such as Basrah, Kufa, and Egypt, along with Arabs from the interior and some children of the Muhajirin (Muhajirin) (Alfarizi, 2021) .

Analysis and Synthesis of Research Results

Research findings indicate that the leadership of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan represents the complexity of the transition of Islamic governance from a phase of consolidation to a phase of power expansion. Various policies implemented, such as territorial expansion, administrative reform, the codification of the Ottoman Mushaf, and the appointment of officials from the Umayyad dynasty, cannot be understood solely as individual decisions of a caliph, but rather as a response to the increasing complexity of managing an Islamic state whose territory was expanding rapidly. This condition demanded a more structured administrative system, regional leaders with high loyalty, and policies capable of maintaining government stability in new regions.

From the perspective of Islamic historiography, the accusations of nepotism against Uthman ibn Affan need to be understood more proportionately. Several classical works illustrate that the appointment of members of the Umayyad family was based more on considerations of trust, administrative capacity, and the need to maintain political stability than solely on kinship. Conversely, some modern historians believe that the family's dominance in the government structure gave rise to a perception of injustice, which was then exploited by opposition groups to build political movements. These differing views demonstrate that accusations of nepotism cannot be separated from the socio-political context of Islamic society, which was undergoing changes in power structures due to rapid territorial expansion.

This finding aligns with the concept of *Political Legitimacy* , which explains that government legitimacy is not only built through the legality of appointing leaders, but also through public acceptance of every policy taken. Although Utsman gained legitimacy through the shura mechanism, some of his administrative policies led to a decline in social legitimacy among some groups in society because they were perceived as favoring his immediate family. Thus, the crisis that occurred at the end of his reign was not solely caused by administrative factors, but also influenced by changes in public perceptions regarding the fairness of the distribution of power.

On the other hand, this study also shows that Uthman ibn Affan's greatest success lay in his policy of standardizing the Qur'anic manuscripts. This decision demonstrated the capacity of strategic leadership oriented towards the sustainability of Islamic civilization. The codification of the Ottoman manuscripts not only resolved differences in the readings of the Qur'an across Islamic regions but also

served as a key foundation for maintaining the authenticity of the Qur'an to this day. These findings demonstrate that religious and political policies during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs operated simultaneously in fostering the integration of the Muslim community.

Based on the synthesis of all findings, this study shows that the dynamics of Uthman ibn Affan's government were influenced by the interaction between administrative reform, territorial expansion, changes in the social structure of society, and increasing political competition among the Muslim elite. Accusations of government monopoly or nepotism cannot be the sole variable explaining the emergence of *Fitnah Kubra*. Instead, the conflict was the accumulation of various factors, including social changes resulting from the abundance of state wealth, competition between political elites, weak political communication between the government and the public, the spread of provocative information, and increasing dissatisfaction with administrative policies in areas under Islamic rule. Therefore, this study emphasizes that Uthman ibn Affan's leadership must be understood comprehensively as a historical process that shows how the success of government reform can coexist with increasing challenges to political legitimacy in the early development of the Islamic state.

CONCLUSION

Caliph Uthman ibn Affan was a central figure in Islamic history, known not only for his position as the third caliph, but also for the immense contributions he made to the spread and consolidation of Islamic teachings. As a close friend and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Uthman was known as a gentle, shy, and very generous person. His abundant wealth did not make him negligent, but rather used it fully to support the interests of the community, such as financing the Battle of Tabuk and the endowment of the Raumah well for the people of Medina. One of his greatest legacies, still felt today, is the codification of the Qur'an in the form of the Uthmani Mushaf, a monumental step that maintained the unity of reading amidst the diversity of Muslims across various regions.

However, behind this glory, Uthman's reign was also marked by sharp political dynamics. His policy of appointing relatives of the Umayyad dynasty to strategic positions in government sparked a wave of discontent that culminated in accusations of nepotism. Critical voices began to emerge, accusing the policy of violating the principle of justice upheld in Islam. This tension escalated into a major fitnah (fitnah kubra) that shook the foundations of Muslim unity. This accumulation of conflict and dissatisfaction finally culminated in a dark tragedy: the assassination of Caliph Uthman in his own residence while he was reciting the Quran. The life story of Uthman ibn Affan reflects two sides of leadership: the extraordinary success in organizing government and preserving the spiritual heritage of the Muslim community, and the formidable challenges arising from the socio-political complexities of the developing Muslim society. From him, Muslims learned the importance of integrity, social contribution, and prudence in strategic decision-making. The legacy and tragedy he left behind serve as valuable lessons for the future of Islamic civilization.

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