

Exploring the Unilateral Nationalism According to Allama Iqbal's Thoughts

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Abstract

The political ideologies and theologies are revived over time. Since the emergence of globalization, the concept of multilateralism has become more complex. Compared to the Western idea of global governance, Allama Iqbal's philosophical emphasis was upon the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*. Allama Iqbal's concept of 'Unilateral Nationalism for the Islamic *Ummah*' is projected in his written work. This article attempts to explore the idea of unity and its implications according to Allama Iqbal's guidelines for the Muslim *Ummah*. This paper focuses on the Islamic ideologies present in the written work of Allama Iqbal. A qualitative method using content analysis was used to achieve the objective of this study. The study concludes that Allama Iqbal's ideology of Muslim unity is highly relevant and urgently needed in the contemporary age. His vision of "Unilateral Nationalism" provides a framework for dealing with the challenges of the Muslim *Ummah* in an era of globalization. It reflects solidarity beyond the divisions of nationalism, which is built upon common Islamic values; the model here is the practical unity of Islam. The strength of this vision must be collective and based on religious, cultural, and intellectual bindings, not on divisions based on nationality. Allama Iqbal's philosophy thus addresses all areas of political instability, economic disparity, and the fragmentation of the Muslim world to find pathways toward political and social unity. Recognizing that the modern world is culturally and politically fragmented, his thought is an antidote to disunity. It advocates solidarity as both an idealistic proposition and a practical method for overcoming structural challenges in unifying the Muslim *Ummah*. Through this vision, Allama Iqbal offers an all-embracing framework for the moral and intellectual rejuvenation of the Muslim world to better confront contemporary challenges.

Keywords: Allama Iqbal, Multilateralism, Unilateral Nationalism, Muslim *Ummah*, Unity

Introduction

In today's globalizing context, the theory of multilateralism has become multidimensional enough to encourage gradual changes in the political ideologies of the world at large (Ikenberry, 2020). Globalization, looking into interdependence and linkage, has brought forth new challenges in managing interaction between states, which emphasizes fragmented identities and geopolitical alignments (Castells, 2010). Western thinking of global governance emphasizes cooperation from different states and cultures, and mostly is in the framework of democracy and international law, as identified by Ikenberry (1998).

Allam Iqbal's philosophical vision was developed in the early 20th century. He focused on Muslim *Ummah*'s unity and its collective identity beyond national identity. His

concept was based on the fact that real power for the Muslim nation cannot be achieved by division based on ethnic and geographical background but only on a shared, transcendent spiritual and intellectual bond. The *Bang-e-Dara* (The Call of the Marching Bell) by Allama Iqbal indicates that collective strength can only be attained through a united Muslim *Ummah* instead of a divided and broken nationalist perspective (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). The Muslims need to come under a singular and integrated concept that would elevate the common interest and destiny of the *Ummah* over individualist national considerations (Ahmad, 2018).

Allama Iqbal's call to unity was revolutionary as colonialism, political fragmentation, and the rising nationalist movements were changing the nature of global politics. His philosophy challenges all the contemporary ideas of political sovereignty through a model derived from shared values of the Islamic world system and collective action (Abbasi, 2021). This paper aims to discuss Allama Iqbal's vision of unity, specifically in light of its relevance in the contemporary context of globalization and its implications for the Muslim *Ummah*. In a world in which the lines between people are growing hazy, Allama Iqbal's ideas provide an essential perspective on how Muslims can address the divisiveness within their communities, how they can overcome geopolitical challenges posed by external forces, and in what ways they can reassert collective identity on the world (Eayaz, 2024). In the light of ever-dissolving national frontiers and clashing cultural identities, Allama Iqbal's thought stands more than relevant for exploring the potential for Muslim *Ummah* in this world of globalization complexity. Thus, he might serve to interpret this complex dynamic (Sardar, 2012).

Objectives

1. This paper revolves around Allama Iqbal's philosophy regarding Muslim unity through his written works and the avenues through which his concept of "Unilateral Nationalism" for the Muslim *Ummah* may resolve the present world problems.
2. This paper also analyzes how important Allama Iqbal's thoughts are to the context of modern geopolitics in relation to the Muslim community's role within the globalized world.

Research Questions

1. What is the relevance of Allama Iqbal's concept of Muslim unity in the context of contemporary globalization?
2. How does Allama Iqbal's "Unilateral Nationalism" philosophy uphold the unity of the Muslim *Ummah*?
3. What are the practical implications of Allama Iqbal's thoughts for the political and social amalgamation of Muslims worldwide?
4. How can Allama Iqbal's ideology be applied today to face the challenges of the Muslim community?

Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative research approach using content analysis to analyze Allama Iqbal's philosophical works, such as his poetry, lectures, and essays. The main texts for this analysis include *Bang-e-Dra* (The Call of the Marching Bell) (Iqbal, 2010), *Bal-e-Jibreel* (Gabriel's Wing) (Iqbal, 2002), and *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Iqbal, 2013), among others. This is where the content analysis approach has been applied to discuss Allama Iqbal's ideas for the unity of the Muslim Ummah and how these ideas relate to the politics of his day and our reality today.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have been conducted on Allama Iqbal's philosophy and political thoughts, including his theories on how to unite the Muslim *Ummah*. According to Saeed (2013), Allama Iqbal's approach favoured Muslims' spiritual and intellectual unity. The political ideology he presented goes beyond geographical and political differences. According to Christensen (2007), "Unilateral Nationalism" is an ideological concept. This concept describes the cohesive identity of a community through shared values and mutual support.

Unlike Western liberal concepts of multiculturalism and internationalism, Allama Iqbal's philosophy is founded on an "Islamic nationalism" that brings Muslims together under one banner yet does not eliminate cultural or national identities (Hassan, 2014). According to Majeed (2015), Allama Iqbal's ideas on unity were an answer to colonialism and the disintegration of the Muslim world, offering a vision of collective empowerment through solidarity.

Indeed, as Nasr (2017) opines, Allama Iqbal's thought remains more relevant to the Muslim world today because of the political, economic, and ideological challenges it is increasingly facing. His calls for unity against global power structures, which often sideline the Muslim community, resonate with modern struggles about Muslim identity and sovereignty in the age of globalization (Latif, 2023).

Allama Iqbal's Idea of Muslim Unity

Allama Iqbal's thought of Muslim unity is most strongly presented in his writings *Bang-e-Dara* and *Bal-e-Jibreel*. In *Bang-e-Dara*, Allama Iqbal focuses on the necessity of the Muslim *Ummah* uniting as one entity to meet the needs of modern times. He denounces fragmentation within the Muslim world by arguing that political and ideological fragmentation can damage the power of Muslims at large (Mishra, 2023). Consequently, Allama Iqbal urges Muslims to move toward Islamic values of oneness and fraternity, which he insists can rescue the Muslim world from its dysfunctional situation (Khan & Islam, 2024). (Schimmel, 2003) notes that there is greater depth in the call for unity, Allama Iqbal provides, given that such unity depends on intellectual and spiritual revival instead of only political alliances. Allama Iqbal's concept of unity is not just abstract; it closely relates to his ideas about reform and intellectual revival amongst Muslims. In his book *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Allama Iqbal urges his fellow Muslims to seek a reform of Muslim philosophy while being in touch with their religious spirit (Maruf, 2024). The appeal of unity is embedded in a request for mental emancipation: he would view this as the key to

developing the kind of unity envisioned—that being the revival of Islamic thought and the rejuvenation of Muslims' concern with contemporary scientific and philosophical achievements (Pirbhai, 2009). Scholars argue that Allama Iqbal's focus on intellectual renewal and social reform makes his philosophy particularly relevant in the contemporary context, where many Muslim-majority countries face challenges integrating modernity with traditional Islamic principles (Sevea, 2012). This is in close resonance with Tariq (2016), who believes that the reconstituting of Islamic learning is what the Muslim Ummah needs to take both inter and extra-mural struggles in a fast globalising world.

Allama Iqbal's Criticism towards Western-style Nationalism

Through his criticism towards Western-style Nationalism, Allama Iqbal expresses very important aspects of his thought. In *Bal-e-Jibreel*, Allama Iqbal criticized the nature of Western nationalism. He projected an alternative vision of "Unilateral Nationalism", which brings forward the unity of the Muslim *Ummah* above nationalistic identities. "Unilateral Nationalism" for Allama Iqbal means a pan-Islamic identity that cuts across the modern nation-state system, focusing on shared Islamic values, religious principles, and cultural heritage (Iqbal, 1998). Unlike Western nationalism, which tends to divide people in rival camps, Allama Iqbal's vision of a collective identity unites Muslims across national and cultural divides (Naz, 2024). As (bin Junid, 2002) rightly comments, Allama Iqbal's theology of unity as "Unilateral Nationalism" offers a meaningful paradigm to be applied toward enhancing unity in a globalized world where national boundaries and competing political ideologies tend to undermine cooperation among peoples.

Allama Iqbal's idea of Muslim Unity, which is "Unilateral Nationalism", is especially difficult for the modern political landscape in which nationalism mostly makes a case for division and warfare. Moreover, the critique (Ullah, 2016) argues that Allama Iqbal's philosophical thought on nationalism not only critiques the divisiveness of the Western nation-state model but also calls for a reimagining of the Muslim world's political identity in terms of spiritual and moral unity.

Intellectual and Social Cohesion

These constitute another vital area of thought about Allama Iqbal's vision of unity among the Muslim Ummah, which cannot be seen separate from his other philosophical contributions. In his book, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he again demands an intellectual revolution on Islamic thought that should enable them to respond effectively to modern needs and demands (Saeed, 2015). Allama Iqbal, therefore, argued that Muslims must not retreat from the intellect but interpret it from contemporary standpoints. This intellectual rebirth, Allama Iqbal believes, will allow for social and political harmony by providing a platform for common grounds on which Muslims of any background can meet and harmonize (Shah, 2016). Ahmad (2018) have emphasized that, in Allama Iqbal's notion of a unified Muslim Ummah, intellectual empowerment is crucial in answering internal and external problems. Allama Iqbal's work also has practical implications for social and political cohesion. His ideas of self-reliance and education constitute part of his call to unity. He underlines that Muslims must make themselves strong through education, economic freedom,

and intellectual activity in dealing with modern ideas. In this respect, therefore, the call of Allama Iqbal is not merely an appeal to political unity but also to social and intellectual consolidation capable of resisting external strain and fragmentation within itself (Diagne, 2011). According to Quintanilla (2011), Allama Iqbal's thought could be a starting point for collective action by Muslims in the values they share that could address most of the issues that affect the world today, including political instability, economic inequality, and the exclusion of countries with Muslim majorities in the international scene. Hussain (2019) elucidates that Allama Iqbal's advocacy for a holistic educational and spiritual framework is crucial in building a unified Muslim identity that can respond to modern geopolitical realities.

Relevance in Contemporary Times

Allama Iqbal's concept of unity and his philosophy related to unity can be related to "Unilateral Nationalism" and hold extreme significance in the modern challenges facing the Muslim world. Directly, his ideology speaks to issues concerning the rise of political instability, sectarianism, and economic marginalization of Muslim-majority countries (Satti, 2014). Scholars have particularly focused on the enduring importance of Allama Iqbal's thoughts in the direction of political unity and social cohesion for the Muslim community (Popp, 2019). This shared Islamic identity that Allama Iqbal stressed would be a possible antidote to the fragmentation that national movements and geopolitical conflicts can cause in the Muslim world. As (Mujahid, 2024) pointed out, "Allama Iqbal's philosophy of unity continues to offer a cohesive vision for Muslim political and social revival in a world increasingly defined by cultural and political divides".

Muslim Unity, Modern Globalization and Allama Iqbal

The call by Allama Iqbal for unity gives the direction in handling the issues posed by globalization. In this new world of rapid globalization, the vision provided by Allama Iqbal shows an alternative to national and cultural divisions (Ali, 2022). His philosophy allows the Muslim *Ummah* to respond cohesively to the urgent issues of this age - economic inequality, political instability, cultural isolation, intellectual empowerment, and collective action. Allama Iqbal's ideas provide the roadmap to navigate all the intricate complexities of modernity without losing oneself in them (Khan & Ahmad, 2021).

Tajuddin (2014) further emphasizes this by saying that Allama Iqbal's thoughts offer not only a critique of Western political ideologies but also an overall framework that may foster unity in the Muslim world. In this way, the *Ummah* can face modernity's challenges while being loyal to the core religious principles.

Harmonizing Innovation and Ideologies

In the modern context of geopolitical battles, Allama Iqbal's notion of Muslim solidarity emphasizes a united, cogent response to the perceived external threat and internal fractures (Iqbal, 2021). His call for a united response to international issues, like those from Western hegemony and fragmentation that derives from nationalism, still is the basis of how political and social issues are framed by and for Muslims today (Raja, 2008).

Table 1

Allama Iqbal's vision in the context of "Unilateral Nationalism"

S. No	Aspect of Allama Iqbal's Philosophy	Description
1	Contradiction of Western Nationalism	Allama Iqbal condemns Western nationalism for being divisive and against the principle of unity (Khan, 2021).
2	Muslim Ummah Unity	Allama Iqbal proposes a model of unity for the Muslim Ummah that transcends national boundaries, focusing on a collective identity (Iqbal, 2013).
3	Anti-Fragmentation	Allama Iqbal is against the fragmentation of the Muslim world into smaller, conflicting national units (Ali, 2004).
4	National Identities in a Larger Framework	Allama Iqbal does not reject national identities but places them within a larger framework of Islamic unity (Mohomed, 2014).
5	Antidote to Fragmentation	Allama Iqbal presents an alternative model to the fragmentation of nation-states by promoting a transnational identity for Muslims (Hassan, 2014).
6	Transnational Identity	The focus is on a broader, transnational identity for Muslims rather than on national borders (Iqbal, 2013). Common values and purposes are the basis for Muslim Ummah unity.
7	Shared Values and Goals	The unity of the Muslim Ummah is based on shared religious, intellectual, and cultural values (Abbasi, 2021).
8	Applicability to Global Issues	Allama Iqbal's vision is quite relevant today as well for solving some of the current global problems like terrorism and Islamophobia (Rehman, 2021).

This table organizes the key concepts and theology of Allama Iqbal's philosophy of "Unilateral Nationalism"

Allama Iqbal's approach can be visualized as "Unilateral Nationalism," pointing out the contradiction of Western nationalism as divisive, contrary to the ideals of unity connoted by the word. In this regard, he proposes a model of nationalism for the Muslim Ummah, going beyond national boundaries and focusing on an essence that goes into a collective Islamic identity (Arshad, 2023). This vision goes directly against the modern comprehension of the nation-state and its mission of fragmenting the Muslim world into smaller, oftentimes conflicting, national structures. Allama Iqbal does not reject national identities but rearranges them within a bigger framework of Muslim unity focused on common religious, intellectual, and cultural values. In the modern politics of the world, where nationalism has a propensity to create and increase divisions, Allama Iqbal's model presents an alternative that contests the divisive impact of nationalism. Koshul (2015) states that Allama Iqbal's vision presents an antidote to the fragmentation of nation-states by offering a broader transnational identity to Muslims. This structure finds strength in the unity of the Muslim Ummah not through nationalistic pursuits but in values shared and goals sought together (Butt & Aijaz, 2023). This is probably the most relevant aspect of Allama Iqbal's ideas today: when global challenges - terrorism, for instance - and growing Islamophobia require a collective Muslim response based on shared ideals and solidarity.

Practical Implications of Allama Iqbal's Thoughts for Political and Social Cohesion

The concept of unity given by Allama Iqbal far transcends a philosophical approach. It has strong practical implications for the political and social amalgamation of Muslims worldwide. His work, especially in his book *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, calls for renovating intellectual traditions in Islam that can be used to heal modern global issues (Ansari, 1961). Allama Iqbal underlines how education, intellectual empowerment, and self-reliance are essential in attaining unity with the Muslim world. His call for reforming the thought of Islam encourages Muslims to grow with modernity but not to lose their religious core.

Allama's views of political and social cohesion have an element of collective action. His call to Muslim Ummah's unity raises a platform through which Muslim nations can collaborate on political, economic, and social issues affecting them all, such as poverty, education, and geopolitical instability. (Mohomed, 2014) argues that such a vision needs to be brought into action, including the cooperative political and economic system that will make his unity work. This vision stresses the twin necessity of intellectual rejuvenation and collective political action of the Muslim people to meet the challenges from within and the outside.

Applying Allama Iqbal's Ideology to Contemptuous Challenges

Allama Iqbal's philosophy strongly resonates with the concerns about the current problems in the Muslim world. Political instability, sectarianism, inequality in economic activities, and the marginalization of the Muslim world in international matters are all problems that Allama Iqbal foresaw and addressed through his philosophical thought of unity (Malook, 2022). In the 21st century, the Muslim world is more polarized by regional conflict and socio-economic inequality, making Allama Iqbal's call for unity so valid today.

His thoughts can offer such a framework to bridge the differences and promote more cooperation by Muslims worldwide. According to (Khan & Islam, 2024), Allama Iqbal demands a reconciliation of modern knowledge and Islamic values, calling for an appropriate response to practical challenges yet rooted in tradition. Allama Iqbal's vision is a blend of modern scientific knowledge and traditional Islamic teachings to bridge the two so that it may be possible to confront the problems of modernity without undermining Islamic principles. It can be a good instrument for finding solutions to current geopolitical problems, including extremism, sectarian violence, and the economic underdevelopment of most nations that have Muslim majorities. Junid (2002) argues that Allama Iqbal's call for a unified response to global challenges remains an important tool in Muslims' struggle for political and social justice worldwide. In this sense, Allama Iqbal's philosophy does not provide merely an intellectual critique of the contemporary Muslim condition. However, it offers a practical framework for collective action that will help Muslims navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Discussion

There is, therefore, much in this vision of Muslim unity offered by Allama Iqbal in the context of modern globalization, where cultural, political and economic fragmentation is gaining momentum. He has philosophized a global Muslim Ummah as cohesive. Allama

Iqbal's idea, therefore, represents, at a time of globalized interrelations, an alternative to the segmented and sometimes exclusionary character of contemporary geopolitics: It is his exhortation toward unity in the light of shared Islamic principles, culture, and values in which he tries to create collective strength among Muslims (Amir, 2012). This would thus be an answer to internal fragmentation and the forces of pressure from the external world to which the Muslim world has to respond.

Allama Iqbal's idea of Muslim unity is an ideal and a call to action in response to the fragmentation within the Muslim world. In *Bang-e-Dara*, or *The Call of the Marching Bell*, Allama Iqbal underscores the rejuvenation of the Muslim Ummah based on common faith rather than nationalism or political differences (Nix, 2007). It resonates much in today's context as globalization has intensified both cultural and political exchange while deepening political cleavage and breaking up the Muslim world. The increasing geopolitical challenges Muslims face—such as regional conflicts, economic disparities, and the marginalization of Muslim-majority countries—underline the relevance of Allama Iqbal's emphasis on solidarity and collective action. As Noorani (2014) would say Allama Iqbal's call for the unity of the Muslim world addresses the very challenges that have left it vulnerable to external powers and internal divisions.

Findings

Table 2

Key Findings

S. No	Key Findings	Description
1	Allama Iqbal's Focus on Transcending National Barriers	Allama Iqbal's thought emphasizes creating an Islamic identity with commonality among Muslims which is supra-nation with a unified culture of goals, values, and power.
2	Unilateral Nationalism	Allama Iqbal's term for "Unilateral Nationalism" has Muslim unification in such a manner that one can remain an integral part of a particular national identity as distinguished from Western multiculturalism.
3	Contemporary Relevance	Allama Iqbal's thoughts are relevant enough today in the justifying handling of current political, economic, and social woes for countries at large within the geopolitical order of the world.
4	Urgency Due to Fragmentation	As the Muslim world is fragmented, worsened through colonial legacies and ongoing conflicts, so there is a need for Allama Iqbal's vision of unity in and through collective action.
5	Practical Applications	Modern initiatives, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, represent practical manifestations of Allama Iqbal's thought as an instrument of regional cooperation between Muslim states.

This table summarizes the main points discussed about Allama Iqbal's philosophy of unity and its application in today's context.

This research study presents the central findings of how Allama Iqbal's philosophical views on Muslim unity become relevant in the modern context and have practical applications in life. The first thing Allama Iqbal makes relates to transcending national barriers, challenging Muslims to present an identity with some unifying force grounded on

values and goals. His "Unilateral Nationalism" concept advocates for the unification of Muslim nations through national identity and is an alternative to Western ideas of multiculturalism and globalization. The philosophy is relevant in contemporary society, particularly regarding the political, economic, and social challenges Muslim-majority countries face in the global geopolitical order. Also, the disintegration of the Muslim world and the continuation of the colonial legacy with wars makes Allama Iqbal's idea of collective power highly relevant. Finally, Allama Iqbal's ideas can be used in regional cooperation and solidarity. Organizations such as OIC, for instance, try to work in unison to present solutions to the common problems that Muslim nations face. These findings demonstrate that Allama Iqbal's vision of unity offers a rich framework for Muslims negotiating globalization challenges and, through that process, strengthening their collective identity.

Conclusion

The time and need are relevant to a framework that this vision of Muslim unity through Allama Iqbal's "Unilateral Nationalism" presents towards the challenges of the Muslim Ummah in this globalized age points toward the concept of solidarity in common Islamic values, rising above nationalistic division and presenting a practical and ideal model of unity. His vision calls for collective strength based on common religious, cultural, and intellectual foundations and not based on fragmented national identities. This emphasis on a united Muslim Ummah is not merely in response to the pressures imposed from outside; it also represents a positive posture for the rebirth of moral and intellectual vigour of the Muslim world, gearing up to face current challenges. Applying Allama Iqbal's philosophy to current issues like political instability, economic disparity, and the fragmentation of the Muslim world could help illuminate how the Muslim community can bring political and social cohesion to the modern world. Allama Iqbal realized that the modern world was characterized by immense cultural and political fragmentation, and his philosophy gives a potential antidote to this disunity. Allama Iqbal's thought advocates unity in Islamic values as a framework through which Muslims can defeat the divisive forces of nationalism, sectarianism, and external pressures. His thought focuses on solidarity not as an idealistic proposition but as a practical method of dealing with structural issues that may hinder the advancement and unification of the Muslim Ummah.

Additionally, his vision emphasizes intellectual rebirth and cultural rebirth. He thought the Muslim Ummah must be intellectually awakened, which meant that the ancient scholarship of Islam had to merge with modern knowledge and moralities to bind together the Muslim community as one. During its involvement with modernity, in this case, as conceptualized in his reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, this group will be concerned not to fall even one step behind in such rapid transformation. Therefore, the interpretation of new challenges in a light suited to Islamic thoughts requires that Allama Iqbal make the necessary appeals so that the social-political coherency of Ummah may be there. This intellectual empowerment becomes the nucleus from which all the unity develops toward solving the complex and gigantic problems in the Islamic world today. In short, Allama Iqbal's concepts are seminal ones through which well-rounded issues that Muslims face today is covered. The call for mass action, intellectual renewal, and the integration of

modernity with tradition create a holistic framework within which the Muslim Ummah can aspire collectively to grapple with global issues. Moreover, everywhere, there is a strong need for unity to be met by fragmentation- from the fragmentation within the Muslim world to the larger context of global politics. Allama Iqbal's thought offers a way forward for the Muslim community in the present intricacies of globalization. That is to say, a united and revived Muslim Ummah, under a shared future vision, would be able to transcend the present divisions and calamities afflicting the Muslim world. His thoughts remain pertinent, challenging and inspiring the Muslim community to rediscover their collective potential and chart their future in an increasingly interconnected world.

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