

THE LEADERSHIP OF GENGHIS KHAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL UNITY

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ABSTRACT

The leadership of Genghis Khan has been a topic that continues to captivate the attention of historians and social scientists due to his success in transforming fragmented nomadic tribes across the Central Asian plains into one of the largest and most influential empires in world history. This study aims to examine the leadership values implemented by Genghis Khan in building the Mongol Empire, as well as to understand the implications of these values on the formation and strengthening of national unity. While the Mongol Empire is often remembered for its brutality and widespread conquest wars, history also shows that under Genghis Khan's rule, a period of extraordinary stability emerged, known as Pax Mongolica. This stability brought security along the Silk Road, connecting the East and the West, as well as the North and the South, thus supporting the exchange of goods through trade, the spread of religion and ideologies, and the development of technology and knowledge across civilizations. This research uses a qualitative approach with a historical method, through a literature study of various secondary sources. The analysis is conducted in a descriptive-analytical manner to trace the dynamics of power, military strategy, and the social-political values that formed the foundation of Genghis Khan's leadership. The findings show that Genghis Khan's success was not solely driven by military power, but also by the application of visionary and adaptive leadership principles. He implemented a meritocratic system in the appointment of officials and military commanders, enforced laws through the Yasa, which functioned as the empire's constitution, and established an inclusive governance structure that involved various ethnicities and religions in the administration. These values created social stability, strengthened the legitimacy of power, and fostered loyalty that transcended tribal and racial boundaries. The findings affirm that Genghis Khan's leadership had a strong implication for the formation of national unity because he placed justice, competence, and legal order as the main pillars of governance. In a contemporary context, these values are relevant as inspiration for building a multicultural and democratic nation, where social justice, openness, and meritocracy serve as the foundation for creating sustainable national cohesion.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Genghis Khan's leadership cannot be understood merely as a story of military conquest, but also as a process of social and political transformation that reshaped the face of Eurasian civilization. In the 12th and early 13th centuries, the Mongolian region was a remote area inhabited by various nomadic tribes living in conflict and competition over resources. This condition created high social fragmentation, where each clan had its own leader and value system. It was in this context that Temüjin—who later became known as Genghis Khan—emerged as a unifying figure capable of building social, political, and cultural cohesion through a leadership vision rooted in discipline, justice, and loyalty.

Although the Mongol Empire is often remembered for the violence that accompanied it, much historical evidence shows that Genghis Khan was also the architect of the first global order in history. Under his rule, a system of stability known as Pax Mongolica was established—an order that guaranteed the safety of travel, trade, and cultural exchange along the Silk Road. The trade routes, which were previously dangerous, were now open to merchants from Persia, India, China, and Eastern Europe. This security not only supported the exchange of goods but also encouraged the exchange of ideas, technology, and the spread of religions such as Islam, Nestorian Christianity, and Buddhism (Weatherford, 2005; Komaroff, 2006). Thus, Mongol power not only created economic stability but also expanded interaction between civilizations in the pre-modern world.

Problem and Urgency of the Study For centuries, Genghis Khan has been perceived ambivalently—as both a "great conqueror" and a "destroyer of civilizations." Classical historians like Juvaini depicted him as a symbol of destruction, while modern scholars such as McLynn (2015) and Turnbull (2003) emphasized the complexity of his leadership, which was rooted in strategic ability, legal morality, and efficient social structures. Much previous research has focused on the militaristic aspects—such as battle strategies, war tactics, and territorial expansion—yet few have delved into the leadership values and governance principles that underpinned the success of the Mongol Empire. However, beneath the expansionist policies was a strong value foundation: meritocracy, the supremacy of law, and ethnic inclusivity.

This study is important not only for understanding the historical success of Genghis Khan but also for drawing lessons for the modern context, particularly for multicultural nations like Indonesia. In complex social situations, leadership that prioritizes justice, openness, and respect for competence serves as the foundation for the unity of a nation. Therefore, this research places Genghis Khan not merely as a military figure, but as a transformational leader who built a system of governance based on moral values and social integration.

Research Questions

To clarify the direction of the analysis, this study is formulated in three main research questions:

1. What is the social-political background and context that shaped Genghis Khan's leadership?
2. What strategies and values did Genghis Khan implement in building and maintaining the Mongol Empire?
3. How do these values impact the formation of national unity and social cohesion?

Objectives and Significance of the Research This research aims to:

1. Describe the background and factors that led to the emergence of Genghis Khan's leadership.
2. Analyze the military, legal, and social strategies used to build power and stability in the empire.
3. Identify Genghis Khan's leadership values that can be translated into the context of modern nation-building.

Academically, this research is expected to contribute to the fields of history and political science, particularly in understanding the relationship between leadership, moral values, and social integration. Practically, the findings could reflect on the development of national leadership paradigms that place justice and meritocracy at the core of building national unity.

Theoretical Framework and Analytical Perspective In analyzing Genghis Khan's leadership, this research adopts a transformational and inclusive leadership theory approach. Transformational leadership (Bass, 1990)

emphasizes the role of leaders in shaping vision, collective motivation, and social change. Genghis Khan can be understood as a leader who not only relied on physical power or authority but also created a new social structure based on justice and solidarity.

Additionally, this research uses the "leadership as unifier" perspective, where the leader functions as a unifier of values and collective identity. In the case of Genghis Khan, this role is evident in his ability to unite various tribes and ethnicities through a common set of rules (Yasa), equitable division of roles, and the integration of military and bureaucratic systems. This made his leadership not only militarily effective but also served as a foundation for national unity.

This article is divided into several main sections. The first section discusses the background and social-political context that gave rise to Genghis Khan's leadership. The second section outlines the military strategies and power organization that formed the foundation of the empire's expansion. The third section analyzes leadership values such as meritocracy, the supremacy of law, and inclusivity that form the core of Mongol governance. The fourth section examines the implications of Genghis Khan's leadership on the formation of national unity, both historically and in modern relevance. The article concludes with a summary of the main findings and conceptual reflections for the development of just and inclusive national leadership.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a historical research method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of the research is not on quantitative measurement or statistical generalization, but rather on understanding the leadership values embedded in the actions, policies, and governance systems of Genghis Khan. Meanwhile, the historical method is employed to trace the social, political, and cultural dynamics surrounding the Mongol Empire's reign during the 12th to 13th centuries.

Historical research places past events as sources of scientific reflection to understand universal principles relevant to contemporary contexts. In this case, Genghis Khan's leadership is analyzed not merely as a story of conquest, but as a process of creating a value system, institutions, and social structures that supported the integration of the empire. Thus, this study falls under the category of descriptive-analytical research, aiming to describe historical phenomena in detail, while also interpreting their meaning based on social and cultural contexts.

The data used in this study are entirely secondary, focusing on academic literature and historical documents that have undergone academic verification. The use of secondary sources aligns with the nature of library research, where analysis is carried out on written texts as representations of historical knowledge.

The primary conceptual reference source is the 13th-century chronicle titled *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which is considered the most authentic document regarding the origins, struggles, and value system of Genghis Khan. This manuscript contains biographical, social, and normative narratives reflecting the Mongols' internal views on leadership and societal structure. Academic Secondary Sources The analysis also uses modern works that reinterpret Genghis Khan's leadership through interdisciplinary writings, including:

1. Turnbull (2003), *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Conquests 1190–1400*, which examines military strategy and war organization innovations.
2. Sverdrup (2017), *The Mongol Conquests*, which highlights the dynamics of military operations and imperial logistics.
3. McLynn (2015), *His Conquests, His Empire, His Legacy*, which describes the character and philosophy of Genghis Khan's governance.
4. Komaroff (2006), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, which explains the social-cultural impact and religious tolerance in the Mongol power structure.
5. Jackson (2024), *From Genghis Khan to Tamerlane*, which explores the continuity of Mongol governance systems in the Islamic world and Central Asia.

6. De Hartog (2004), *Genghis Khan: Conqueror of the World*, which explains the administrative and legal aspects through the Yasa system.

All these sources serve to build an interpretative framework balancing empirical description with conceptual analysis, so that the understanding of leadership values goes beyond historical narration and can be contextualized in modern discourses on governance and nation-building.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Social and Political Conditions in Central Asia Before Unification

In the latter half of the 12th century, the Mongolian region was a barren area in Central Asia dominated by various nomadic tribes such as the Tayichi'ud, Kereit, Tatars, Merkits, and Naimans. Each tribe had its own leadership system, based on blood ties, patronage, and fragile political alliances. The social structure was hierarchical and tribal, while resources such as pastures and livestock were the main factors driving inter-tribal conflict. This created a politically unstable environment, with power relying on military strength and temporary alliances.

In this context, Mongol society lacked a strong collective identity as a "nation." They were fragmented into tribal loyalties, where each tribal chief or khan focused more on the survival of his clan than on the collective interests of the people. According to Turnbull (2003), this fragmentation made the Mongol people a frequent target of domination by external powers such as the Jin dynasty in northern China and the Khwarazmian Empire in Central Asia. The social tensions and uncertainty created a need for leadership that could transcend tribal boundaries. This is where Temüjin, the son of a small tribe leader named Yesügei, emerged as a unifying figure, later known as Genghis Khan.

B. The Transformation of Temüjin into Genghis Khan

Temüjin's life represents the transformation from a marginal individual to a visionary leader. After his father's death, Temüjin and his family lived in isolation, growing up in harsh conditions that required survival skills and social sensitivity to inter-tribal dynamics. According to *The Secret History of the Mongols*, his early experiences shaped his character with discipline and a strong determination to build a new order based on justice and loyalty, rather than lineage.

Temüjin's first step toward power was to build political alliances through marriage to Börte and diplomatic relations with the more powerful Kereit tribe. His strategy combined diplomacy, negotiation, and military strength to create stable coalition-building. Within a few years, he successfully united major tribes such as the Kereit, Tatars, and Merkits under one command.

According to McLynn (2015), Temüjin's success lay in his ability to build personal loyalty based on the principle of meritocracy. He promoted his followers based on ability and loyalty, not social status. Jebe and Subotai, two great Mongol generals, came from humble backgrounds and had once been enemies. However, Genghis Khan appointed them because he saw their strategic potential. This pattern became the foundation of the meritocratic system that would later underpin the governance of the Mongol Empire.

C. The Title of "Genghis Khan" and Power Consolidation

In 1206, at a grand inter-tribal meeting (kurultai) in the Onon River valley, Temüjin was officially proclaimed Genghis Khan, meaning "Universal Ruler" or "Master of All Humans." This event was not just a political appointment but also a symbol of spiritual and social legitimacy from the entire Mongol people. According to De Hartog (2004), this moment marked the birth of a new Mongol identity as a politically and culturally organized entity under centralized leadership.

After his coronation, Genghis Khan immediately carried out a series of structural reforms. He established an administrative system emphasizing discipline, loyalty, and law. One of his fundamental steps was the creation of the Yasa law code, which served as the empire's highest norm. Yasa was not just a collection of war regulations but also

covered social, economic, and ethical aspects of behavior. This law symbolized the transformation from a chaotic nomadic society to a structured legal entity.

Additionally, Genghis Khan formed a military organization based on a decimal structure: units of ten (arban), one hundred (zuun), one thousand (mingghan), and ten thousand (tumen). This system not only increased military efficiency but also served as a social tool to diminish tribal loyalties. In every unit, soldiers came from different tribes, so new bonds were formed based on military solidarity, not blood affiliation. Sverdrup (2017) calls this system the most important social innovation in Central Asian history, as it transformed a tribal-based social structure into one that was cross-ethnic.

D. Leadership Strategy: A Combination of Power and Justice

Genghis Khan's success was not only due to his military acumen but also his political vision that integrated power with justice. In every campaign, he emphasized discipline and fairness in war. Violations of the rules of war, such as looting or mistreating prisoners without permission, were severely punished. McLynn (2015) notes that this strict discipline was one of the reasons the Mongol forces were considered the most effective military power of their time.

In addition to maintaining internal order, Genghis Khan used law as a tool for legitimizing his rule. He created an administrative system that ensured tax flow, oversight of officials, and protection for merchants. According to Jackson (2024), this became the foundation of Pax Mongolica, a system of political and economic stability that guaranteed safe travel across Eurasia. Thus, Genghis Khan's power was not just military domination but an effective governance system adaptable to vast geographic and social conditions.

E. Formation of Collective Identity and National Loyalty

One of Genghis Khan's most significant achievements was his ability to create a new collective identity that transcended tribal affiliations. The identity of "Mongol" no longer referred to a specific ethnicity but to loyalty to the leader and the law. This concept reinforced political and social awareness among his people, creating a functional national loyalty rather than one based on genealogy.

Komaroff (2006) notes that, in the multi-ethnic context of Central Asia, Genghis Khan's policies were inclusive and pragmatic. He did not distinguish between ethnic Mongols and conquered peoples as long as they demonstrated loyalty and competence. This policy fostered a sense of social justice while also expanding political support. In modern terms, this can be seen as the embryo of inclusive governance—a government that opens space for participation by all groups, regardless of background.

In conclusion, the foundation of Genghis Khan's power was not solely based on military prowess but also on the transformation of values and social structures. He succeeded in turning a fragmented society into a united nation through a legal system, meritocracy, and loyalty to a common order. The birth of the Mongol Empire in 1206 was not just a political victory, but a symbol of a paradigm shift from tribalism to nationalism; from blood-based power to legitimacy based on values and law.

Military Strategy and Power Organization

1. Concept of Strategy and Military Structure

The success of the Mongol expansion under Genghis Khan was not solely due to the size of the army but to the application of highly organized, flexible, and adaptive military strategies to the conditions of the battlefield. Military historian David Nicolle (1990) notes that the Mongol advantage lay in the combination of high mobility, a decimal command system, and strict collective discipline—a military rationalization that far exceeded the standards of contemporary civilizations.

The decimal organization system divided the army into fixed units: arban (10 men), zuun (100), mingghan (1,000), and tumen (10,000). Each level had a leader who was directly accountable to superiors in a vertical command

chain. According to Sverdrup (2017), this structure not only improved tactical efficiency in battle but also served as a political tool to restructure traditional tribal-based social hierarchies. In every unit, members came from different tribes, so their loyalty shifted from tribal allegiance to loyalty to the Khan and the state.

This military structure laid the foundation for the creation of an integrated military-bureaucratic administration. De Hartog (2004) emphasizes that Genghis Khan applied the principle of meritocracy in selecting military leaders: bravery, skill, and discipline were the key criteria, not bloodline or aristocratic status. This policy created vertical social mobility, which was rare in 13th-century feudal societies where social status was typically inherited.

2. Mobility and War Logistics

The key to the Mongol advantage was mobility. Every soldier had at least four to five horses, allowing them to cover over 100 kilometers per day (Turnbull, 2003). This speed enabled Genghis Khan to apply a strategy of deep penetration—striking at the heart of enemy defenses quickly and unexpectedly.

According to McLynn (2015), the mobility of the Mongol army was also supported by a highly advanced communication system for its time, the Yam System. The Yam posts served a dual purpose: as logistics hubs, information centers, and resting points. Each post provided fresh horses and food supplies, enabling couriers to travel thousands of kilometers with minimal downtime. This system became the backbone of the empire, ensuring effective communication between the central government and conquered territories.

Sverdrup (2017) outlines that the success of the Mongol military strategy also relied on their intelligence operations. Genghis Khan placed spies in every target area before the invasion began. Information about terrain, enemy strength, and the social condition of the populace formed the basis for planning operations. Even in cases like the Khwarazm conquest (1219–1221), Genghis Khan leveraged internal conflicts within the enemy to weaken their morale and solidarity before his army moved in.

3. Psychological Warfare and Information Warfare

One of the most prominent aspects of Genghis Khan's strategy was the use of psychological warfare. Turnbull (2003) calls it propaganda of fear—spreading terror through a controlled reputation for brutality. After conquering a city, Genghis Khan often allowed a small number of the population to escape to carry news of the Mongol force's devastation. This tactic proved effective, as many cities in Central Asia and Eastern Europe surrendered without resistance, panicked by the image of total destruction.

However, McLynn (2015) asserts that this cruelty was not aimless but a rational military policy. Its purpose was to create fear and minimize the costs of prolonged war. In many cases, after a territory submitted, the people were granted full protection under the Yasa law. The “harsh at first, then fair” policy became an effective strategy for securing conquered lands.

In addition to spreading terror, Genghis Khan used diplomatic and ideological warfare. Nicolle (1990) notes that before attacking a kingdom, he often sent envoys with two options: surrender peacefully and join the empire, or refuse and face total destruction. With this strategy, many regions—especially in Central Asia—chose to submit without major battles, saving resources and expanding power at minimal cost.

4. Integration of Military and Civil Administration

Unlike other conquerors who tended to separate military and civil structures, Genghis Khan integrated both into a single hierarchical system. Jackson (2024) emphasizes that the Mongol army not only served as a military force but also as administrative agents. After a region was conquered, military officers were tasked with ensuring the enforcement of law, tax distribution, and social stability. This created an efficient bureaucracy in a vast territory.

It was in this context that figures like Yelu Chucai, a Khitan scholar who became Genghis Khan's chief advisor, emerged. He introduced a census-based tax system and administrative accountability that replaced the practice of plundering. According to Komaroff (2006), Yelu Chucai's policies shifted the empire's economy from one focused on expansion to one based on production and trade, making the Mongol Empire a center of Eurasian economic growth.

In addition to the tax system, Genghis Khan expanded the functions of the Yam System to serve as a civilian communication network. This postal system connected Karakorum with major cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khanbalik (Beijing). The system ensured that political and legal decisions from the central government could be implemented quickly across the empire, strengthening territorial control and administrative cohesion.

5. **Technology, Adaptation, and Multicultural Collaboration**

One often overlooked factor in Mongol success was their ability to adapt to local technologies and cultures. Turnbull (2003) notes that Mongol forces utilized Chinese engineers to operate siege weapons such as catapults and trebuchets, and used Islamic architectural knowledge in building defensive fortifications. This integration shows that Genghis Khan did not reject foreign innovations; instead, he actively assimilated technical skills from various peoples.

Komaroff (2006) adds that this openness also applied to culture and religion. Engineers, scientists, and clergy from diverse backgrounds were given special protection under the Yasa. This inclusiveness fostered massive knowledge exchange under Pax Mongolica, encompassing astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and navigational arts. In the context of power strategy, this policy not only enhanced military technological capacity but also built moral legitimacy in the eyes of a multi-ethnic populace.

6. **Discipline and War Ethics**

De Hartog (2004) describes how Genghis Khan instilled strict discipline in his troops. Severe penalties were imposed for looting without permission, killing prisoners, and insulting enemy envoys. Violations of the laws of war were punishable by death, regardless of the status of the offender. The principle of "no privilege in law" made the Mongol army a relatively orderly institution amid the chaos of war.

Sverdrup (2017) links this discipline to the concept of collective responsibility within military units. If one member broke the law, the entire unit was held accountable. This system reinforced solidarity and prevented individual actions that could undermine the effectiveness of operations. This model of collective responsibility was later adopted by several East Asian kingdoms, including the Ming Dynasty, as an example of efficient military management.

7. **Impact on Power Structure and Unity**

This efficient military system had a significant impact on the formation of the political power structure. First, the decimal structure created social integration across ethnicities, strengthening the "Mongol" identity as a new political concept beyond bloodlines. Second, the military meritocracy reinforced the Khan's legitimacy because the people judged leaders based on competence, not birthright. Third, collective discipline fostered loyalty based on belief in the system, not fear of individuals.

McLynn (2015) asserts that the combination of military innovation, bureaucratic integration, and social meritocracy was the foundation of Genghis Khan's success in building a global empire. He didn't just conquer lands; he created a governance system that could maintain stability in the long term. Turnbull (2003) emphasizes that the effectiveness of the Mongol army reflects a rational government structure—where every military action was linked to clear political and economic goals.

In sociological terms, Genghis Khan's military strategy can also be seen as a form of social engineering. Nicolle (1990) and Komaroff (2006) agree that these military reforms abolished the narrow patriarchal structure and replaced it with a more inclusive identity. This change directly impacted the formation of national unity, as people began to see themselves as part of a collective political entity.

8. Reflection: Power That Creates Order

Conceptually, Genghis Khan's military strategy reflects a dialectic between violence and order. Power was used not just to conquer but to create a stable, measured, and law-abiding system. Yasa became the normative framework governing relations between power and society. This shows that behind his brutal image, Genghis Khan developed an early form of rule of law in the nomadic context.

Jackson (2024) writes that Genghis Khan's success in conquering and maintaining vast territories cannot be understood without considering his effective organizational structure. The Yam system, military meritocracy, and administrative integration are proof that the Mongol Empire was not just an expansionist entity but a modern governance system for its time.

Genghis Khan's military strategy marked the evolution from traditional power to rational power. Innovations such as decimal organization, high mobility, legal discipline, and integration of military with civilian administration made the Mongol Empire not just a product of conquest but a complex socio-political construct. Thus, the foundation of Mongol unity was not built solely through violence but through a system, values, and structures that were measured. This represents a form of rationalized authority that existed even before the concept of the modern state.

C. Leadership Values Applied by Genghis Khan

1. Meritocracy as the Basis of Leadership

One of the key foundations of Genghis Khan's leadership system was meritocracy—awarding positions based on ability and achievement, not lineage or social status. Before Genghis Khan, the Mongol social structure relied heavily on genealogical hierarchy. Tribe leaders gained power based on ancestry, and positions were inherited within family circles. Temüjin rejected this system with a simple principle: "A true leader is one who deserves to be followed" (*The Secret History of the Mongols*).

According to McLynn (2015), the meritocracy applied by Genghis Khan was the most radical social innovation in 13th-century Central Asia. He appointed officials and commanders based on competence, bravery, and loyalty. One prominent example was the appointment of Jebe and Subotai—two great Mongol generals who were not from noble families and had even been enemies. Genghis Khan forgave them after they demonstrated courage and ingenuity on the battlefield and gave them high-ranking positions in the military structure. Practices like this fostered social justice and opened vertical mobility opportunities for the entire population.

Sverdrup (2017) notes that this meritocratic system strengthened discipline and morale within the army. Because every position was earned through performance, soldiers were motivated to demonstrate their best abilities. Socially, this policy broke the dominance of the traditional aristocracy, which often caused inter-clan conflicts. Instead, a new solidarity formed based on collective competence and dedication to the state.

Politically, meritocracy also served as a means of legitimizing authority. Jackson (2024) argues that in the vast territories conquered by the Mongols, meritocracy symbolized universal justice. Conquered peoples could participate in governance as long as they demonstrated competence and loyalty. Thus, meritocracy played a dual role—as an efficient governance tool and a means of social integration across ethnic groups.

2. Supremacy of Law and Ethics Code: Yasa as a Moral Constitution

Genghis Khan's power was not only based on military strength but also on his ability to build a legal governance system that upheld social order. The highest law in his empire was known as *Yasa* (or *Jasaq*), which means "rule" or "decree."

According to De Hartog (2004), *Yasa* functioned as a moral constitution covering all aspects of life: war laws, social relations, protection for women and children, as well as trade and tax regulations. Historical sources such

as Rashid al-Din and *The Secret History of the Mongols* indicate that Genghis Khan wrote Yasa not to glorify himself but to establish justice for everyone, including his own family.

The hallmark of Yasa was its application of the law without discrimination. There were no exceptions based on status or ethnicity. Violations of the rules were punished equally, whether committed by nobility or commoners. Weatherford (2005) believes that this principle became the foundation for the first rule of law in the nomadic world of Asia. According to him, under Genghis Khan's leadership, the law replaced lineage as the highest authority.

Functionally, Yasa also served as a tool for political integration. In the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Mongol Empire, law became the binding force uniting various groups under a shared moral standard. McLynn (2015) calls Yasa a form of "nomadic social contract," where every individual had a moral obligation to obey the law as an expression of loyalty to the Khan and the state.

Interestingly, Yasa not only regulated harsh matters such as war and punishment but also emphasized humanitarian values. Komaroff (2006) shows that Genghis Khan banned the torture of war prisoners, guaranteed the safety of diplomatic envoys, and provided protection for merchants. Protection for traders was a visionary policy that strengthened the economic stability of the Silk Road and paved the way for Pax Mongolica.

In a modern social context, Yasa can be seen as the embryo of national law based on justice and order. De Hartog (2004) even argues that the Mongol legal system was more consistent than some medieval European kingdoms that were still based on royal will.

3. Inclusivity and Tolerance for Diversity

Another leadership value that stood out in Genghis Khan's rule was inclusivity. As a ruler governing a vast and multicultural region, Genghis Khan understood that the sustainability of his power could only be achieved by respecting ethnic, religious, and cultural differences.

Komaroff (2006) emphasizes that Genghis Khan's inclusive policy was not rhetorical but systematic. He protected all major religions under his empire—Islam, Nestorian Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, and local beliefs—and granted tax exemptions to religious institutions. At the Karakorum palace, Genghis Khan even appointed Muslim imams, Christian priests, and Buddhist monks as spiritual advisors. This policy created an unprecedented interfaith dialogue in Central Asia.

Inclusivity also extended to the bureaucracy. Many high officials came from non-Mongol backgrounds. For example, Yelu Chucai, from the Khitan ethnic group, served as Genghis Khan's chief advisor on economic and legal matters; Mahmud Yalavach from Khwarazm oversaw the tax administration; and several Persian officials managed the empire's finances. Jackson (2024) views this policy as smart political pragmatism: by involving local elites, Genghis Khan gained legitimacy from the conquered peoples while also strengthening the efficiency of his government.

Inclusivity also appeared in the protection of women. *The Secret History of the Mongols* notes that Genghis Khan respected the role of women in political decision-making. His wife Börte often advised him on diplomatic matters. He also appointed his daughter Alakhai Beki as governor of the Uighur region—a very rare move at the time. Weatherford (2005) describes this policy as a form of "proto-egalitarianism," which placed women in important positions in social and economic affairs.

Such inclusive policies not only strengthened the legitimacy of Genghis Khan's power but also expanded the collective Mongol identity as a political concept that was inclusive. McLynn (2015) explains that under Genghis Khan, the Mongol identity was no longer defined by blood or tribe but by loyalty to the law and the leader. In the context of modern theory, this can be seen as an early form of civic nationalism—national identity based on values and political loyalty, not ethnicity.

4. Discipline, Work Ethic, and Transformational Leadership

In addition to the values of meritocracy, law, and inclusivity, Genghis Khan also instilled discipline and collective work ethics as moral values. He led by example on the battlefield. According to Sverdrup (2017), Genghis Khan never placed himself behind his troops; he was always at the front line, sharing the risks with his soldiers. This action fostered genuine respect and loyalty among his followers.

This discipline was collective and regulated through a mechanism of shared responsibility. If one member of a unit violated the law, the entire unit was punished. This collective responsibility system created high solidarity and eliminated individualism. In organizational terms, this policy strengthened social stability because everyone felt they had a role and responsibility within their group.

McLynn (2015) describes Genghis Khan's leadership style as transformational leadership, which doesn't only rely on formal power but also inspires followers to achieve a shared vision. That vision was to build an orderly world governed by law and collective loyalty—a world ruled by order, not chaos.

Weatherford (2005) writes that Genghis Khan understood the importance of stability as the most valuable legacy of his power. He didn't just conquer territories; he created a system that ensured the continuation of social and economic life. By enforcing law, valuing competence, and opening space for cross-cultural participation, he succeeded in achieving long-term peace known as Pax Mongolica.

5. Relevance of Leadership Values for National Unity

The leadership values implemented by Genghis Khan strongly correlate with modern concepts of national unity. Meritocracy teaches that social justice should be based on competence, not lineage; the supremacy of law emphasizes the importance of certainty and equality before the law; while inclusivity strengthens social cohesion amidst diversity.

In contemporary contexts, these values have strategic meaning. In multicultural countries like Indonesia, the principle of meritocracy can foster professional bureaucracy; the supremacy of law becomes the foundation for social justice; and inclusivity ensures participation of all groups without discrimination. Thus, Genghis Khan's leadership provides a historical lesson that a nation's true strength lies in its ability to manage diversity as a source of strength, not division.

Genghis Khan's leadership was a unique blend of rationality and morality. He enforced laws to create order, implemented meritocracy to build justice, and practiced inclusivity to sustain power. These values played a significant role in creating social stability and political integration across Eurasia.

D. Implications of Genghis Khan's Leadership for National Unity

1. Leadership as the Glue of Collective Identity

Genghis Khan's leadership shows that lasting power cannot solely rely on military dominance but must be built upon values and collective identity. In the Mongol Empire, this collective identity was not ethnic but political and moral: being "Mongol" meant loyalty to the law (Yasa), to the Khan, and to a just social order.

Jackson (2024) asserts that Genghis Khan's policies succeeded in transforming the Mongol people from a fragmented tribal community into a unified political entity. Loyalty to the Khan and the law replaced loyalty to the clan and bloodlines. This process gave birth to the early form of civic nationalism, where unity is built on shared values and loyalty to a common order, not ethnicity or religion.

This paradigm shift is highly relevant to the formation of modern states. Many multicultural nations, including Indonesia, struggle with managing differences in ethnic, religious, and cultural identities. Genghis Khan's experience shows that unity cannot be imposed through force but must be cultivated through shared values that are perceived as just and inclusive.

As Komaroff (2006) notes, Genghis Khan's system introduced a model of political inclusiveness that placed loyalty as the primary measure of membership in the state. All people—whether Mongol or non-Mongol—had equal rights and responsibilities as long as they obeyed the law. This pattern removed primordial divisions and opened the way for cross-cultural solidarity.

2. Justice and Law as the Foundation of Unity

National unity in the Mongol Empire was not based on absolute power but on justice institutionalized through law. Yasa served as an instrument of equality, where everyone—including the Khan's family—was subject to the same law. De Hartog (2004) writes that in some cases, even members of the royal family were punished for violating Yasa, a principle that reinforced the idea that law was above the individual.

McLynn (2015) views Yasa as an early form of the rule of law, or proto-rule of law, in the pre-modern world. In the 13th-century feudal political landscape, when many kingdoms in Asia and Europe were still ruled by the will of kings, the Mongol legal system emphasized order and universal justice. This provided strong moral legitimacy for Genghis Khan's power and made law a symbol of national unity.

The consistent application of law also created public trust. Merchants, farmers, and officials felt secure in a stable system. The Silk Road became a safe space for cross-continental trade due to the firm legal protection by the Mongols. Historian Weatherford (2005) refers to this phenomenon as Pax Mongolica, a peaceful and stable order that enabled economic and social integration across Eurasia.

In the modern context, this principle underscores that the supremacy of law is the foundation for national unity. Consistent and fair laws create trust and attachment to the state. Conversely, when laws are discriminatory or easily manipulated, national solidarity weakens.

3. Political and Social Inclusivity as a Strategy for Unity

Genghis Khan's leadership also demonstrated that inclusivity is a vital strategy in maintaining national unity. He understood that a multicultural society could not be governed with a one-size-fits-all approach. Therefore, Genghis Khan built a government that opened space for participation from various ethnicities, religions, and professions.

Komaroff (2006) explains that the Mongol government structure reflected the principle of governance through diversity. In this system, officials from various ethnic backgrounds—Turkish, Persian, Khitan, and Chinese—held significant positions. This practice was not just a form of tolerance but a political strategy to maintain stability. By involving local elites, Genghis Khan gained legitimacy from the conquered peoples while strengthening government efficiency.

Meanwhile, Weatherford (2005) highlights the spiritual dimension of Mongol inclusivity. Genghis Khan acknowledged the existence of many religions and protected their followers. Priests, monks, and clerics were not only allowed to live in peace but were also involved in discussions on the ethics of governance. At the Karakorum palace, interfaith meetings were held to discuss universal moral principles.

These values are highly relevant in the modern context of increasingly plural societies. Amid rising social and political fragmentation based on identity, inclusive leadership can be a balance between differences and social cohesion. In the Indonesian context, for example, inclusivity means ensuring that all groups—whether majorities or minorities—feel recognized and have an equal space in national development.

4. Meritocracy and Loyalty to the State

Meritocracy in Genghis Khan's leadership not only enhanced bureaucratic efficiency but also fostered loyalty to the state rather than to individuals. By opening opportunities for talented people, he created a system focused on achievement and responsibility.

According to Turnbull (2003), the Mongol meritocratic system fostered a high work ethic among officials and the military. Regional leaders, commanders, and administrators were expected to demonstrate integrity and managerial skills. Every success was recognized, but every failure was evaluated objectively. This system created trust that positions in government were the result of service, not political rewards.

Jackson (2024) calls Genghis Khan's meritocracy an early model of bureaucratic professionalism in the pre-modern world. He writes: "The Mongol administration was governed not by blood, but by competence—a rare innovation in medieval politics." This principle not only maintained governmental efficiency but also strengthened national cohesion because every citizen felt they had an equal opportunity to contribute.

In the context of modern nation-building, meritocracy is a strategic value that promotes social justice and prevents political exclusivity. A merit-based bureaucracy can be a national bond because it gives citizens confidence that anyone, regardless of background, can be part of the state system.

5. Stability and Peace as Political Legacy

Genghis Khan's greatest legacy was not just the vast empire but the political stability and international peace it created. The phenomenon of Pax Mongolica (1206–1368) is proof that strong, law-based, and inclusive leadership can create a stable global order.

Weatherford (2005) explains that under the Mongol system, cross-continent travel became possible. Merchants from Venice to Chang'an could travel safely without fear of robbery. The government provided security guarantees and post facilities (the Yam system) along trade routes. This stability not only strengthened the economy but also brought together various civilizations. Here, Genghis Khan laid the groundwork for early globalization: the exchange of ideas, technologies, and cultures crossing geographical and ideological boundaries.

Komaroff (2006) adds that the stability Genghis Khan created was inclusive and sustainable. He built a system of trust based on law and collective morality, not just military power. Thus, the Mongol Empire stands as an example that power based on values can generate longer-lasting peace than power based solely on violence.

In the context of contemporary global affairs, this principle highlights the importance of leadership oriented towards justice and cross-border cooperation. Just as Pax Mongolica opened space for Eurasian economic integration, modern leadership must also open space for international cooperation based on trust and equality.

6. Lessons for Modern Nations

The leadership values of Genghis Khan offer valuable lessons for the formation and strengthening of national unity, especially in the context of Indonesia. First, justice and the supremacy of law are the main pillars that maintain public trust in the state. Just as Yasa enforced legal equality, the national legal system must ensure fair treatment for all citizens without discrimination.

Second, meritocracy and bureaucratic professionalism are key to effective governance. Genghis Khan proved that leaders who create space for competent people build long-lasting stability.

Third, social and political inclusivity must be a central principle in managing diversity. The multi-ethnic Mongol power endured because of leadership that respected differences and involved all groups in the governance system.

Fourth, transformational leadership and moral exemplification became the symbolic strength that united the people. Genghis Khan was not just a ruler but a symbol of justice and order. His leadership in battle and his firmness in law strengthened the people's respect for the state.

Genghis Khan's leadership has profound implications for the concept of national unity. In this context, Genghis Khan's leadership teaches that the true strength of a leader lies not in his ability to conquer but in his wisdom in building a just, inclusive, and sustainable order. Values like meritocracy, the supremacy of law, and inclusivity made the Mongol Empire not only militarily powerful but also socially and politically stable. These principles remain

relevant today—both in the context of national governance and the global order—as the foundation for achieving unity, justice, and peace.

CONCLUSION

The leadership of Genghis Khan represents one of the most monumental phenomena in the history of human civilization. He was not only a military leader who succeeded in conquering the largest territory in the pre-modern world, but also a social architect capable of building a governance system based on values, law, and inclusivity. His success in uniting the fragmented nomadic tribes of Central Asia into a stable and influential empire for over a century proves that the true strength of a nation does not lie solely in military power, but in the ability to create order, justice, and social trust.

The findings of this study show that there are three main pillars in Genghis Khan's leadership system that form the foundation for national unity. First, meritocracy as the basis for political legitimacy. Appointing officials and generals based on ability and loyalty created a sense of social justice and fostered collective motivation. This system overthrew the old aristocratic structure based on lineage, replacing it with an open system that provided opportunities for all individuals to contribute to the state.

Second, the supremacy of law through Yasa became an instrument for social and political integration. The law served as a moral binding force that transcended ethnic and cultural boundaries, providing safety and certainty for all the people. By placing law above individual power, Genghis Khan upheld the principle of universal justice, which laid the groundwork for the concept of the rule of law in the pre-modern world. The firm and consistent enforcement of law resulted in social stability and strengthened the legitimacy of power.

Third, inclusivity and tolerance were key to the sustainability of the empire. Genghis Khan understood that in a multicultural society, stability could only be achieved if all groups felt recognized and involved. Therefore, he opened space for participation from various ethnicities, religions, and professions in the government structure. This policy not only strengthened political loyalty but also expanded the intellectual and administrative capacity of the empire.

The combination of meritocracy, law, and inclusivity made Genghis Khan's leadership a model of transformational leadership that transcended his time. He successfully created Pax Mongolica—a peaceful order across Eurasia—that enabled trade, science, and culture to flourish without hindrance. In this context, Genghis Khan can be seen as a pioneer of early global integration, where security, order, and openness were the prerequisites for the advancement of civilization.

From a contemporary perspective, the leadership values of Genghis Khan are of significant relevance to the process of modern nation-building. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, the principle of meritocracy can serve as the foundation for strengthening bureaucratic professionalism and social justice; the supremacy of law becomes the pillar for enforcing public trust in the state; while inclusivity becomes an effective strategy for maintaining unity in diversity. All three principles emphasize that sustainable power must be rooted in moral values and a just social structure. Genghis Khan's leadership can be viewed not merely as a symbol of violence, but as a paradigm of how power, law, and human values can be united to build a sovereign and just nation. The most fundamental lesson from Genghis Khan's legacy is that national unity does not arise from conquest, but from justice that is felt collectively.

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