

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISLAMIC ETHICS AND WESTERN SOCIAL ETHICS: FOUNDATIONS, VALUES, AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Ethics is a central foundation of human civilization because it provides moral guidance for individual conduct, social responsibility, justice, dignity, and the common good. This paper presents a comparative analysis of Islamic ethics and Western social ethics with special focus on their foundations, values, and contemporary social applications. Islamic ethics is primarily grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, divine accountability, justice, mercy, human dignity, moral character, and the higher objectives of Sharī'ah. Western social ethics, on the other hand, is a plural intellectual tradition shaped by Greek philosophy, Christian moral thought, Enlightenment rationalism, virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism, liberalism, human rights discourse, and modern theories of justice. The study adopts a qualitative and conceptual research method based on comparative textual analysis. It argues that both Islamic and Western ethical traditions share major moral concerns, including justice, human dignity, social welfare, responsibility, moral character, and protection from harm. However, they differ in their sources of moral authority, concepts of accountability, and understanding of the relationship between religion, reason, law, society, and public life. Islamic ethics connects morality with divine command and spiritual responsibility, whereas modern Western social ethics often emphasizes rational autonomy, rights, utility, social contract, and democratic justice. The paper concludes that comparative ethical study can contribute to global moral discourse by identifying shared values while respecting theological, philosophical, and cultural differences.

KEYWORDS: Islamic ethics; Western social ethics; comparative ethics; justice; human dignity; social responsibility; moral philosophy; contemporary society

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethics has always been central to human life because every society requires moral principles to regulate conduct, protect human dignity, promote justice, and maintain social order. Without ethical values, social life becomes vulnerable to selfishness, exploitation, injustice, corruption, violence, and moral disorder. Ethics helps human beings understand what is right and wrong, what duties they owe to others, and how individuals and communities should live together in a just and peaceful manner.

In the contemporary world, ethical questions have become even more important because societies are facing new and complex challenges. Globalization, technological change, economic inequality, political conflict, climate change, migration, digital communication, consumerism, and cultural pluralism have created moral problems that cannot be solved by law and technology alone. These problems require ethical reflection and moral guidance. Therefore, the comparative study of major ethical traditions is important for developing a deeper understanding of how different civilizations respond to moral questions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Islamic ethics and Western social ethics are two influential traditions in world moral thought. Islamic ethics is grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic theology, jurisprudence, spirituality, and moral philosophy. It presents a holistic moral framework that connects faith, worship, personal character, family life, economic conduct, social justice, governance, environmental responsibility, and accountability before Allah [1]. In Islamic thought, morality is not separated from religion or social responsibility. It is part of the total way of life through which human beings fulfill their duties to Allah, themselves, their families, society, and humanity.

Western social ethics is not a single unified system. It is a diverse tradition that includes classical Greek ethics, Christian moral thought, Enlightenment rationalism, Kantian deontology, utilitarian consequentialism, liberal rights theory, social contract theory, democratic ethics, and modern theories of justice. Western social ethics has developed through long philosophical debates about virtue, duty, happiness, autonomy, rights, justice, equality, and the common good [2].

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the foundational sources of Islamic ethics and Western social ethics.
2. To compare the major moral values of both traditions.
3. To analyze their concepts of justice, dignity, rights, duties, and social responsibility.
4. To explore their relevance to contemporary social issues.
5. To identify areas of convergence and divergence between Islamic and Western ethical thought.
6. To evaluate how comparative ethical study can support global moral dialogue.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to compare Islamic ethics and Western social ethics in terms of their foundations, values, and social applications. The paper does not aim to prove that one tradition is superior to the other. Rather, it seeks to understand how both traditions approach moral life, where they converge, where they differ, and how they can contribute to contemporary ethical debates.

1.5 Structure of the Paper

The central argument of the paper is that Islamic ethics and Western social ethics share several important concerns, including justice, human dignity, moral responsibility, social welfare, and character formation. However, they differ in their sources of moral authority and their understanding of accountability. Islamic ethics is theocentric and revelation-based, while much of modern Western social ethics is rational, humanistic, secular, or rights-based. These differences are significant, but they do not prevent meaningful dialogue between the two traditions.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This paper uses a qualitative comparative research method. It is based on textual, conceptual, and analytical review of Islamic ethical thought and selected Western ethical theories. The Islamic side of the study is based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic moral philosophy, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and contemporary scholarship on Islamic social ethics. The Western side is based on classical and modern ethical theories, including virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism, liberal rights theory, and theories of justice.

2.2 Method of Data Collection

The study is conceptual rather than empirical. It does not use surveys, interviews, or statistical data. Instead, it compares ethical systems at the level of ideas, values, principles, and applications. This method is suitable because the aim of the paper is to understand moral frameworks rather than measure social behavior.

2.3 Method of Analysis

The paper follows three levels of comparison. First, it compares the foundations of moral authority in both traditions. Second, it compares their major values, including justice, dignity, rights, duties, welfare, and virtue. Third, it examines their application to contemporary issues such as family, economy, human rights, technology, environment, and plural society.

2.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study is conceptual rather than empirical. It does not use surveys, interviews, or statistical data. Instead, it compares ethical systems at the level of ideas, values, principles, and applications.

3. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Conceptual Framework of Islamic Ethics

Islamic ethics refers to the moral system derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, Islamic law, theology, spirituality, and philosophical reflection. The Arabic term commonly associated with ethics is *akhlāq*, which refers to character, moral conduct, disposition, and virtuous behavior. Islamic ethics is not limited to private morality. It includes personal conduct, family relations, economic transactions, political responsibility, social justice, environmental care, and relations with wider humanity.

The foundation of Islamic ethics is *tawḥīd*, the belief in the oneness of Allah. *Tawḥīd* gives Islamic ethics a theocentric foundation because moral life is understood in relation to divine command, divine wisdom, and human accountability. Human beings are not viewed as morally independent creatures who decide good and

evil only according to personal desire. Rather, they are servants and vicegerents of Allah who must act with justice, honesty, compassion, and responsibility.

Scholars of Islamic ethics explain that morality in Islam is comprehensive because it connects belief, action, intention, law, and social conduct [3]. Islamic ethics is concerned not only with external actions but also with inner intention. A morally good action should be lawful, sincere, beneficial, and directed toward the pleasure of Allah. Therefore, Islamic ethics combines external behavior with spiritual purification.

Hashi describes Islamic ethics as a system formed by the teachings of the Qur'an and explained through the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [4]. This means that Islamic ethics is both textual and practical. It is textual because it is based on revelation, and it is practical because it is embodied in the Prophetic model. The Prophet ﷺ is regarded as the highest example of moral excellence, mercy, patience, justice, humility, truthfulness, and social responsibility.

A central value in Islamic ethics is 'adl, or justice. Justice is not only a legal principle but also a moral and spiritual duty. It applies to family life, trade, governance, legal judgment, social relations, and treatment of the weak. Islam requires justice even when it is difficult or when it goes against personal interest. Justice prevents oppression and maintains social balance.

Another important value is ihsān, which means excellence, benevolence, and doing good beyond the minimum requirement. While justice gives people their rights, ihsān encourages generosity, kindness, mercy, and forgiveness. A society based only on law may become formal and rigid, but a society based on justice and ihsān can develop compassion, trust, and moral beauty.

Islamic ethics also emphasizes social harmony. Bensaid and Machouche argue that Muslim morality functions as a foundation for social harmony because it connects individual moral character with collective social well-being [5]. In this sense, Islamic ethics does not view morality as merely private. The moral reform of the individual is directly connected with the moral health of society.

Islamic moral thought also has a strong spiritual dimension. Nasr explains that Islamic values are connected with enduring principles such as mercy, justice, balance, and responsibility before God [6]. These values make Islamic ethics more than a system of legal rules; they make it a spiritual and social framework for human life.

Rahman's discussion of Islam and modernity is also important because it shows that Islamic moral thought must respond to changing social conditions while remaining connected to its revealed foundations [7]. This makes Islamic ethics relevant not only to classical Muslim societies but also to contemporary social, political, and cultural contexts.

3.2 Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and Social Ethics

A major concept in Islamic social ethics is maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, meaning the higher objectives of Islamic law. The maqāṣid approach emphasizes that Islamic law aims to protect essential human interests and promote welfare. Classical discussions usually identify the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage or family, and property as essential objectives. Contemporary scholars have expanded maqāṣid discussions to include dignity, freedom, justice, human rights, development, and environmental responsibility [8].

The maqāṣid framework is important because it shows that Islamic ethics is not merely rule-based. It also considers purposes, benefits, harms, and social consequences within the limits of revelation. For example, the prohibition of theft protects property, the prohibition of murder protects life, the prohibition of intoxicants protects intellect, and the protection of family safeguards social continuity and moral upbringing.

Kamali explains that Sharī'ah is not only a legal code but also a moral and ethical framework that aims to promote justice, mercy, wisdom, and public welfare [9]. This understanding is important for contemporary Islamic ethics because modern societies face new problems that require moral reasoning. Issues such as artificial intelligence, bioethics, financial systems, environmental damage, and digital privacy require ethical interpretation based on both textual sources and higher moral objectives.

Al-Attas argues that Islamic thought cannot be properly understood if religion is separated from knowledge, morality, and civilization [10]. This view is significant for social ethics because it shows that Islamic moral reasoning links knowledge, faith, human responsibility, and social order.

Therefore, Islamic ethics can be described as a combination of revelation, reason, virtue, law, and public welfare. It is rooted in divine guidance, but it also allows moral reflection on changing social circumstances.

3.3 Conceptual Framework of Western Social Ethics

Western social ethics is a broad and diverse tradition that has developed through different historical periods. It includes Greek philosophy, Roman law, Christian theology, Enlightenment thought, liberalism, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, social contract theory, human rights discourse, and modern political philosophy. Unlike Islamic ethics, Western social ethics does not have one single source of authority. It includes religious, philosophical, secular, rationalist, and humanistic approaches.

Western moral theory includes several major approaches, especially virtue ethics, deontological ethics, utilitarianism, and rights theory. These approaches ask different questions about morality. Virtue ethics asks what kind of person one should become. Deontology asks what duties and rules one must follow. Utilitarianism asks what consequences produce the greatest benefit. Rights theory asks what claims individuals possess by virtue of their dignity, freedom, or personhood.

3.4 Major Western Ethical Theories

3.4.1 Virtue Ethics

One of the earliest and most influential Western ethical traditions is virtue ethics, especially associated with Aristotle. Aristotle's ethics focuses on character, habit, reason, and human flourishing. For Aristotle, moral virtue is developed through practice and moderation. A good person is not simply one who follows rules but one whose character has been trained to choose wisely and act nobly [11].

3.4.2 Deontological Ethics

Another major tradition is deontological ethics, especially associated with Immanuel Kant. Kantian ethics emphasizes duty, rational will, universal moral law, and respect for persons. According to this approach, an action is morally right not merely because it produces good consequences but because it is performed from duty and can be universalized as a moral law [12].

3.4.3 Utilitarian Ethics

A third major tradition is utilitarianism, especially associated with Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism evaluates actions according to their consequences. The morally right action is often understood as the one that produces the greatest happiness or welfare for the greatest number of people [13]. This approach has influenced modern policy, economics, law, and public welfare debates.

3.4.4 Liberal and Rights-Based Ethics

Modern Western social ethics also includes theories of justice. John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness is one of the most influential modern theories. Rawls argues that a just society should protect equal basic liberties and arrange social and economic inequalities so that they benefit the least advantaged members of society [14]. His theory has strongly influenced modern debates on equality, fairness, social institutions, and distributive justice.

Western ethics also includes criticism of modern individualism and moral fragmentation. MacIntyre argues that modern moral discourse often suffers from fragmentation because contemporary societies have inherited moral concepts from older traditions while losing their shared moral foundations [15]. This critique is important for comparative ethics because it shows that Western ethics itself is internally diverse and contested.

4. Comparative Analysis of Islamic Ethics and Western Social Ethics

4.1 Sources of Moral Authority

The first major difference between Islamic ethics and Western social ethics concerns the source of moral authority. Islamic ethics is grounded in divine revelation. The Qur'an and Sunnah provide the primary moral framework, while reason, juristic interpretation, scholarly consensus, and public interest operate within that framework. In Islam, moral values are not merely social agreements or personal preferences. They are connected to divine wisdom and human accountability before Allah.

In Islamic ethics, reason has an important role, but reason is not isolated from revelation. Muslim scholars use reason to understand, interpret, and apply moral principles, but revelation remains the highest source of guidance. This gives Islamic ethics a transcendent foundation. Moral actions are evaluated not only by social effects but also by intention, obedience to Allah, and accountability in the Hereafter.

Western social ethics, especially in its modern secular forms, often grounds morality in human reason, autonomy, utility, rights, social agreement, or human dignity. Kantian ethics emphasizes rational duty. Utilitarian ethics emphasizes consequences and welfare. Liberal ethics emphasizes autonomy and rights. Rawlsian ethics emphasizes fairness in social cooperation.

This difference does not mean that Western ethics lacks seriousness or that Islamic ethics rejects reason. Rather, it means that the two traditions justify morality differently. Islamic ethics is primarily theocentric, while much of modern Western ethics is rational-humanistic or anthropocentric. Islamic ethics asks, "What does Allah command, and what fulfills moral responsibility before Him?" Western ethics often asks, "What is rational, fair, beneficial, autonomous, or rights-respecting?"

4.2 Human Dignity

Human dignity is a central value in both Islamic ethics and Western social ethics. In Islam, human dignity is rooted in the belief that human beings are honored creations of Allah. Human beings possess dignity because they are created with moral responsibility, intellect, conscience, and spiritual capacity. Dignity is not based on race, wealth, nationality, gender, or social status. It belongs to human beings as moral creatures accountable before Allah.

In Islamic ethics, dignity is closely connected with responsibility. A human being is dignified not only because of rights but also because of moral purpose. The dignity of human life requires justice, protection from oppression, respect for family, care for the poor, honesty in dealings, and prohibition of humiliation and abuse. Western ethics also places strong emphasis on human dignity, especially through modern human rights discourse. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights [16]. This idea has become one of the most influential moral principles in modern international law and political ethics.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also describes human rights as rights that belong to human beings simply because they exist as human beings [17]. The similarity between Islamic

and Western ethics is clear: both traditions affirm that human beings should not be treated as objects, tools, or property. Both reject oppression, humiliation, exploitation, unjust discrimination, and violence. Donnelly's work on universal human rights is useful for understanding how dignity, rights, and legal protection became central to modern Western and international moral discourse [18]. From this perspective, dignity is connected with legal equality, freedom, and protection from domination. Nussbaum's capabilities approach also expands the meaning of justice and dignity by emphasizing what human beings are actually able to do and to be in real social conditions [19]. This is relevant to the comparative study because Islamic and Western ethics both require practical concern for human welfare, not only abstract claims about dignity.

4.3 Justice and Social Responsibility

Justice is one of the strongest points of convergence between Islamic and Western social ethics. In Islam, justice is a divine command and a social obligation. It must be practiced in personal conduct, family relations, business, governance, legal judgment, and treatment of others. Justice applies not only to Muslims but to all human beings. Islamic ethics rejects oppression, cheating, bribery, favoritism, exploitation, and abuse of power.

Islamic justice is also connected with social welfare. Wealth is not viewed as an absolute possession without responsibility. It is a trust that must be used ethically. Zakāt, charity, fair trade, debt relief, prohibition of fraud, and protection of the poor are all part of Islamic social ethics. This means that economic activity is not morally neutral. It must be guided by justice, honesty, and compassion.

Western social ethics also gives great importance to justice. Theories of justice as fairness argue that social institutions should protect equal basic liberties and arrange inequalities in a way that benefits the least advantaged. Utilitarian approaches also address social welfare, although they approach justice through consequences and collective benefit.

The major difference lies in the foundation. Islamic justice is connected with divine command and accountability before Allah. Western theories often justify justice through rational fairness, rights, utility, or social contract. Despite this difference, both traditions provide important resources for addressing poverty, inequality, corruption, racism, discrimination, and oppression.

4.4 Rights and Duties

A major distinction between Islamic and Western ethics concerns the balance between rights and duties. Modern Western social ethics often begins with the language of individual rights. Rights protect individuals from oppression, arbitrary authority, discrimination, and violation of personal freedom. This rights-based approach has played an important role in the development of democracy, constitutional law, civil liberties, and international human rights.

Islamic ethics also recognizes rights, but it places rights within a broader framework of duties and accountability. In Islam, individuals have rights, but they also have duties toward Allah, parents, spouses, children, neighbors, the poor, society, animals, and the environment. Moral life is not only about claiming rights but also about fulfilling obligations.

This does not mean that Islamic ethics ignores individual dignity. Rather, it means that dignity is understood relationally. Human beings live within families, communities, and moral networks. Social harmony requires both rights and responsibilities. A society that focuses only on rights may become excessively individualistic, while a society that focuses only on duties may become oppressive if rights are ignored. A balanced ethical model requires both rights and duties.

4.5 Moral Character and Virtue

Both Islamic ethics and Western virtue ethics emphasize the importance of moral character. In Islamic ethics, the development of good character is one of the main purposes of religious and moral life. Virtues such as honesty, patience, humility, courage, generosity, forgiveness, modesty, trustworthiness, compassion, and justice are central to Islamic moral teaching.

Islamic ethics does not define moral success only through external compliance. It also emphasizes sincerity, intention, humility, self-discipline, and purification of the heart. A person may perform an outwardly good action, but if the intention is pride, hypocrisy, or selfishness, the moral value of the action is weakened.

Western virtue ethics also focuses on character. Virtue ethics asks not only "What should I do?" but also "What kind of person should I become?" This question is very close to the Islamic concern with *akhlāq*.

However, the ultimate purpose differs. In Islamic ethics, moral character is connected to obedience to Allah, spiritual purification, and success in the Hereafter. In Western virtue ethics, virtue is often connected to human flourishing, rational excellence, civic life, or personal development. Despite this difference, virtue ethics provides one of the strongest areas of dialogue between Islamic and Western moral thought.

5. Contemporary Social Applications

5.1 Family and Social Relationships

Family is an important area of social ethics. Islamic ethics views the family as a moral institution that protects love, responsibility, care, modesty, intergenerational support, and social stability. Duties toward parents,

spouses, children, relatives, and neighbors are central to Islamic moral teaching. The family is not merely a private arrangement but a foundation of moral society.

Islamic ethics emphasizes respect for parents, kindness to spouses, care for children, maintenance of family ties, and responsibility toward relatives. These duties create a moral network that protects individuals from isolation and social neglect. In Islamic social thought, a healthy family contributes to a healthy society.

Western social ethics also values family life, but modern Western discussions often emphasize consent, equality, individual choice, and protection from abuse. These concerns are important because family structures can sometimes become sites of injustice, especially when power is misused. Western rights-based ethics has contributed to debates on domestic violence, child protection, gender equality, and personal autonomy.

A comparative approach shows that Islamic ethics contributes a strong model of duty, care, and intergenerational responsibility, while Western social ethics contributes important discussions on equality, consent, and individual protection. Together, these perspectives can enrich contemporary family ethics.

5.2 Economic Ethics and Social Welfare

Economic life is a major field of ethical concern. Islamic ethics rejects fraud, bribery, exploitation, hoarding, cheating, and unjust enrichment. Business must be conducted with honesty, transparency, fairness, and responsibility. The Islamic economic vision also includes zakāt, ṣadaqah, debt relief, fair wages, social welfare, and care for the poor.

Fakhry's work on Islamic ethical theories shows that Islamic moral thought has historically engaged questions of obligation, virtue, justice, and human responsibility [20]. These concerns are directly relevant to economic life because economic behavior affects human welfare. A person's wealth, trade, and financial power must be governed by moral limits.

Chapra argues that Islamic economics is connected with justice, moral responsibility, and social welfare rather than unlimited profit-seeking [21]. This is important because modern economic systems often create inequality, consumerism, and exploitation when they are separated from ethical values.

Hassan's study of Islamic ethical responsibilities for business and sustainable development argues that Islamic business ethics is connected not only with commercial honesty but also with environmental and social responsibility [22]. This shows that Islamic economic ethics can contribute to modern debates on sustainability, corporate responsibility, and ethical development.

Both Islamic and Western social ethics reject the idea that economic life is morally neutral. Both insist that wealth, labor, trade, and business must be governed by ethical values. The difference lies in the foundation: Islamic ethics grounds economic morality in divine accountability and social trust, while Western ethics often grounds it in fairness, rights, welfare, or public interest.

5.3 Human Rights and Plural Society

Human rights are one of the most important areas of comparison between Islamic ethics and Western social ethics. Modern Western ethics has strongly influenced international human rights law. Human rights discourse emphasizes equality, dignity, freedom, legal protection, and protection from discrimination.

Islamic ethics also affirms dignity, justice, protection of life, protection of property, protection of religion, protection of intellect, family protection, and social welfare. These values are often discussed under the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah framework. Therefore, there are important areas of overlap between Islamic ethical principles and modern human rights.

However, the relationship between Islamic ethics and modern human rights discourse is complex. There are areas of agreement, such as protection of life, dignity, justice, welfare, and opposition to oppression. There are also areas of debate, especially concerning secularism, religious freedom, gender roles, family law, and public morality.

A serious comparative study should not ignore these differences, but it should also avoid simplistic claims that the two traditions are completely opposed. Islamic ethics and Western human rights discourse use different moral languages, but both are concerned with protecting human beings from oppression and injustice.

5.4 Environmental and Technological Ethics

Contemporary society faces new ethical challenges that were not present in the same form in classical times. These include climate change, environmental destruction, artificial intelligence, digital privacy, misinformation, cyberbullying, surveillance, consumerism, biotechnology, and social media harm.

Applied ethical frameworks are useful for analyzing these new challenges because they provide principles such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, responsibility, and protection from harm [23]. These principles can be applied to medical ethics, technological ethics, digital privacy, and social responsibility.

Islamic ethics provides important principles for environmental responsibility, including stewardship, accountability, prohibition of harm, moderation, truthfulness, public welfare, and protection of human dignity. Wersal argues that Islamic environmental ethics can respond to contemporary ecological challenges by drawing on traditional moral resources [24].

Izzi Dien's work on the environmental dimensions of Islam also shows that environmental responsibility is not separate from Islamic moral thought but belongs to a wider vision of creation, trust, moderation, and accountability [25]. Therefore, environmental ethics is an important field where Islamic and Western social ethics can engage constructively.

Digital ethics is another area where both traditions can contribute. Islamic ethics warns against lying, slander, spying, humiliation, false accusation, and spreading harm. Western ethics provides legal and philosophical tools for privacy, consent, transparency, fairness, and accountability. Comparative ethical dialogue can therefore help address modern technological challenges.

5.5 Applied Ethics and Contemporary Moral Challenges

Applied ethics examines how moral principles should guide practical decisions in real social contexts. Contemporary societies face ethical problems in medicine, business, politics, education, media, technology, and international relations. These problems require more than abstract theory; they require practical ethical judgment.

Singer's work in practical ethics shows how moral reasoning can be applied to real issues such as poverty, animal welfare, life and death, and global responsibility [26]. Although Singer's approach is largely consequentialist and secular, his work demonstrates the importance of applying ethical theory to real-life problems.

Islamic ethics also emphasizes practical moral responsibility. It does not treat ethics as merely theoretical. Moral principles must be applied in trade, speech, family life, leadership, charity, conflict resolution, and treatment of others. A person's ethical value is shown through action.

Sandel's discussion of justice also shows that moral questions are deeply connected with public life, citizenship, rights, markets, and the common good [27]. This is relevant to both Islamic and Western ethics because both traditions must address real social problems, not only abstract philosophical debates.

In contemporary society, ethical challenges include corruption, poverty, discrimination, family breakdown, consumerism, environmental destruction, digital addiction, hate speech, and political polarization. Islamic ethics can contribute spiritual accountability, moral discipline, and community responsibility. Western ethics can contribute institutional analysis, rights-based protection, democratic fairness, and public reasoning.

6. Areas of Convergence and Divergence

6.1 Areas of Convergence

Islamic ethics and Western social ethics share several important moral concerns. First, both value justice. Whether grounded in divine command or rational fairness, justice is essential for social order and human dignity. Second, both traditions affirm that human beings possess moral worth. Islamic ethics grounds this worth in divine creation, while Western ethics often grounds it in dignity, autonomy, or rights.

Third, both traditions recognize that individuals have responsibilities toward others. Islamic ethics emphasizes duties toward Allah and creation, while Western ethics emphasizes duties toward persons, society, and institutions. Fourth, both traditions value moral character. Islamic *akhlāq* and Western virtue ethics both focus on the formation of a good person.

Fifth, both traditions reject oppression, dishonesty, exploitation, and unnecessary harm. This shared rejection provides common ground for addressing global problems such as poverty, corruption, violence, racism, environmental damage, and abuse of power.

These areas of convergence show that Islamic and Western ethics can engage in meaningful dialogue. Their differences should not prevent cooperation on common moral challenges.

6.2 Areas of Divergence

Despite these similarities, Islamic ethics and Western social ethics differ in several major ways. The first difference is the source of moral authority. Islamic ethics is grounded in revelation, while Western ethics often relies on reason, autonomy, consequences, social agreement, or human rights.

The second difference is the concept of accountability. Islamic ethics includes accountability before Allah and the Hereafter. Secular Western ethics usually limits accountability to conscience, law, society, rational duty, or consequences.

The third difference concerns the relationship between religion and public life. Islamic ethics integrates religion, morality, law, and society. Modern Western ethics, especially liberal secular ethics, often separates religion from public moral reasoning.

The fourth difference concerns the balance between rights and duties. Western ethics often emphasizes individual rights, while Islamic ethics emphasizes both rights and obligations. The fifth difference concerns the purpose of moral life. Islamic ethics connects morality with spiritual success and divine pleasure, while Western ethics may connect morality with happiness, autonomy, social cooperation, welfare, or human flourishing.

These differences are significant, but they do not make dialogue impossible. Rather, they show the need for careful and respectful comparative analysis.

7. DISCUSSION

The comparison shows that Islamic ethics and Western social ethics are both rich moral traditions with deep concern for human life and social order. Islamic ethics offers a comprehensive framework that unites faith, morality, law, spirituality, and social responsibility. Western social ethics offers diverse theories that analyze virtue, duty, consequences, rights, justice, autonomy, and social institutions.

One of the strengths of Islamic ethics is its integration of personal morality and social responsibility. It does not separate the inner self from public conduct. Sincerity, intention, worship, family responsibility, economic justice, and social welfare are connected. This holistic approach can help address modern moral fragmentation.

One of the strengths of Western social ethics is its systematic philosophical analysis of moral problems. Western theories have developed sophisticated discussions of rights, justice, autonomy, democracy, public reason, and institutional fairness. Taylor's analysis of the modern self is useful here because it explains how modern identity, morality, and individual agency developed in Western thought [28].

Habermas's work is also relevant because it examines the relationship between religion, reason, democracy, and public discourse in modern plural societies [29]. This supports the argument that religious and secular ethical traditions can still participate in public moral dialogue.

The growth of Islamic ethics as a modern academic field also shows that Islamic moral thought is increasingly being studied in relation to contemporary issues, global ethics, and interdisciplinary research [30]. This strengthens the importance of comparative research between Islamic and Western ethical traditions.

However, both traditions also face challenges. Islamic ethics must respond to contemporary issues in ways that are faithful to revelation while intellectually relevant to modern life. Western ethics must address the problem of moral relativism, excessive individualism, consumerism, and the weakening of shared moral foundations.

A comparative approach can help both traditions. Islamic ethics can contribute spiritual depth, accountability, moral discipline, and community responsibility. Western ethics can contribute institutional analysis, rights-based protections, and public reasoning. Together, they can enrich global moral discourse.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper has presented a comparative analysis of Islamic ethics and Western social ethics by examining their foundations, values, and contemporary social applications. Islamic ethics is grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, divine accountability, justice, mercy, human dignity, and the moral formation of individuals and communities. Western social ethics is a plural tradition shaped by virtue ethics, deontology, consequentialism, liberal rights theory, and theories of justice.

The study found that both traditions share important ethical concerns, including justice, dignity, welfare, responsibility, and moral character. However, they differ in their sources of moral authority, concepts of accountability, and understanding of the relationship between religion, reason, law, and public life. Islamic ethics is theocentric and revelation-based, while much of modern Western ethics is rational, secular, rights-based, or humanistic.

The paper concludes that Islamic ethics and Western social ethics should not be studied only as opposing systems. They should be examined as major moral traditions that can engage one another critically and constructively. Their comparison can help scholars and societies develop more balanced responses to contemporary moral challenges.

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