



Beautiful Character, Piety, and Excellence in Islamic Political Thought: A Normative Model for Foreign Policy Analysis

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Abstract

Modern foreign policy theories typically focus on interest calculations, power balances, and security concerns while excluding moral responsibility and normative values when explaining state behaviors. This study aims to develop an original normative model by transferring the fundamental concepts of Islamic political thought—beautiful character (*husn al-akhlaq*), piety (*taqwa*), and excellence (*ihsan*)—into foreign policy analysis. The main research question is: How can the principles of beautiful character, piety, and excellence in Islamic political thought construct a normative model in modern foreign policy analysis, and what are the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of this model? The study's hypothesis posits that if these three principles are positioned as normative variables at the center of foreign policy analysis, a more just, responsible, and sustainable model can be established in international relations. The research adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach, conducting comparative analysis between classical Islamic sources (Quran, Hadith, al-Ghazali, al-Mawardi) and contemporary foreign policy theories. The findings demonstrate that beautiful character represents virtue-based rationality in political action, piety represents self-regulation bounded by divine accountability consciousness, and excellence represents the perfection form of morality. The model provides applicable indicators to state behaviors through its three-layered normative structure. The theoretical contribution of the study lies in completing the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility that existing foreign policy theories have left incomplete. The causal connection established between moral integrity in domestic politics and foreign policy success constitutes the model's distinctive aspect. At the practical level, it is revealed that the model can contribute to trust-building in diplomatic relations, crisis prevention, and conflict resolution processes. The model, which provides epistemic pluralism, proposes an alternative paradigm based on universal values against Western-centric hegemonic discourse. The study proves both the theoretical and practical value of a normative foreign policy model that centers moral principles during a period of increasing global crises.

Keywords: *Islamic Political Thought; Beautiful Character; Piety; Excellence; Normative Foreign Policy; Ethical International Relations*

Introduction

In the contemporary international system, states typically focus on interest calculations, security concerns, and power balances when determining their foreign policy behaviors. Modern foreign policy theories also attempt to explain state actions in a manner that reflects this perspective. However, these approaches do not address the moral responsibility, purity of intention, and consciousness of divine oversight underlying state actions within a comprehensive framework. Islamic political thought, by contrast, conceives foreign policy behavior not merely along the axes of power and interest, but as a domain of responsibility grounded in morality, piety (taqwa), and excellence (ihsan) (Abou El Fadl, 2014; Afsaruddin, 2013). In this context, the concepts of beautiful character (husn al-akhlaq), piety, and excellence emerge as normative principles shaping states' international behaviors. The Noble Book commands, "O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice" (Quran 33:70), thereby placing at the center of political behavior the principles of truthfulness, consciousness of responsibility, and acting under divine oversight.

In Islamic thought, politics is not a subdiscipline of ethics but rather its social and administrative manifestation (al-Ghazali, 2004; al-Mawardi, 2010). The hadith of the Prophet, "I was sent to perfect noble character" (Malik ibn Anas, 2004; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 2001), reveals that the normative foundation in Islamic political thought is based on the ontological value of morality. Ethics transcends individual virtue to become the fundamental principle of social order and state behavior. Consequently, foreign policy behavior must be the product not merely of instrumental reason but of virtue-centered reason. The concept of ihsan represents the zenith of this understanding. The definition, "Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you see Him; and if you do not see Him, surely He sees you" (Muslim, Iman 1), produces a consciousness of unseen accountability in action and necessitates awareness of both worldly and otherworldly consequences of state behaviors (Brown, 2014; Khan, 2019). This tripartite conceptual structure offers Islamic political thought a distinctive and holistic normative framework for foreign policy analysis.

While theories developed within the modern international relations discipline—such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism—have made significant contributions to explaining state behaviors, all of these theories rest upon a secular epistemology (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001). Realism argues that states pursue security and power maximization based on the anarchic structure of the international system (Morgenthau, 2006; Donnelly, 2013). Liberalism emphasizes opportunities for cooperation through interdependence and institutions (Keohane & Nye, 2011; Moravcsik, 1997). Constructivism seeks to make sense of state behaviors through norms, identities, and discourses (Wendt, 1999; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). However, none of these theories places at its center the moral consciousness, sacred responsibility, and dimension of divine accountability underlying behavior. This situation creates a significant gap in foreign policy analysis. Islamic political thought offers an alternative normative paradigm capable of filling this gap (An-Na'im, 2008; March, 2009; Ramadan, 2009).

In the Islamic normative model, foreign policy is ontologically constructed upon the concept of trust (amanah) (al-Ghazali, 2004). The state bears not power but justice as a trust. This understanding elevates the state's responsibility to an ontological level; its reason for existence is not sovereignty but service. The concept of beautiful character requires courtesy, honesty, trust-inspiring communication style, and faithfulness to commitments in diplomatic relations (Miskawayh, 2013). The concept of taqwa reminds rulers that they are responsible not only to their people but also to the Creator. For this reason, taqwa emerges as the metaphysical origin of the modern concept of ethical governance (Sachedina, 2001). Ihsan expresses perfection in behavior, requiring that action be evaluated not only by its outcome but also by its intention. This triad both deepens and transcends the concept of state responsibility in classical diplomatic theories.

In today's world, it is observed that global crises, conflicts, and spirals of mistrust are increasing (Acharya, 2018; Ikenberry, 2018). New normative models are needed for the establishment of justice, peace, and stability in the international system. The injustices, double standards, and hegemonic practices created by the power-centric world order deepen the international legitimacy crisis (Cox, 1987; Gill, 1990). In this context, a foreign policy paradigm that centers moral principles emerges as both a normative and practical necessity. The approach based on beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan offered by Islamic political thought makes possible the imagination of a virtue-centered rather than power-centered order in the international system. The Noble Book commands, "Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct (ihsan) and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded" (Quran 16:90), thereby determining the fundamental principles of social and state behavior.

The Western-centric international relations paradigm generally claims value neutrality (Tickner, 2001; Bilgin, 2004). However, this claim epistemically conceals a power discourse (Nasr, 2012; Rahman, 1982). The Islamic normative model proposes a counter-paradigm based on ethics against this epistemic hegemony. This approach constitutes a universal call not only for Muslim societies but also for the reconstruction of global ethical politics (Ramadan, 2009; Sardar, 2015). The principles of ethics, taqwa, and ihsan are values that appeal to the universal order of humanity. The principles of justice, ihsan, and beautiful character are not faith-based but humanity-based universal values. The model functions as a bridge between civilizations; the language of justice is universal.

The fundamental problematique of this study arises from modern foreign policy theories' exclusion of the dimensions of moral consciousness and sacred responsibility. The main research question is: **How can the principles of beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan in Islamic political thought construct a normative model in modern foreign policy analysis, and what are the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of this model?** Around this fundamental question, the following sub-questions are structured: First, what are the concrete correspondences and indicators of the concepts of beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan in foreign policy behaviors? Second, how does the Islamic normative model differ epistemologically, ontologically, and methodologically from existing foreign policy theories? Third, by what indicators can the reflection of these three concepts on state behaviors be measured and evaluated? Fourth, how can the normative, theoretical, and practical contributions that the principles of ethics, taqwa, and ihsan can offer to the functioning of the international system be assessed? Fifth, how can this model's contribution to intercultural dialogue as a universal value be analyzed?

The study's fundamental hypothesis is as follows: **If the principles of beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan are positioned as normative variables at the center of foreign policy analysis and these principles are operationalized through indicators of purity of intention, consciousness of moral responsibility, and ihsan-based behavior, then a more just, responsible, and sustainable normative foreign policy model can be constructed that reduces the injustices created by power-centric paradigms in international relations, strengthens peace and stability, prevents legitimacy crises, and ensures trust-building among states.** This hypothesis aims to reproduce the epistemic foundations of normative theory in Islamic sources. In the process of testing the hypothesis, classical sources of Islamic political thought (Quran, Hadith, al-Ghazali, al-Mawardi, Ibn Khaldun) will be utilized, evaluations will be made through contemporary foreign policy practices, and a measurable normative model will be developed. Beyond offering a theoretical contribution, the study will also develop policy recommendations oriented toward practice.

The principle of tawhidi unity unique to Islamic political thought rejects the separation of ethics, politics, and epistemology found in Western literature (Saeed, 2006, 2008). In this context, the Islamic normative model offers a holistic epistemology that does not separate ethics from politics, unlike approaches such as ethical foreign policy, virtue ethics, and normative constructivism. Beautiful character

is not merely individual virtue but the measure of political action's legitimacy. Taqwa reminds rulers that they are responsible not only to their people but also to the Creator. Ihsan requires that action be evaluated not only by its consequences but also by the purity of intention. This tripartite conceptual structure imparts ontological normative depth to foreign policy analysis (Khan, 2019).

The significance of the study converges on several key points. First, the systematic transfer of the concepts of ethics, taqwa, and ihsan from Islamic political thought into foreign policy analysis fills a significant gap in the literature (Esposito & Voll, 1996; Hallaq, 2013). Existing academic studies generally limit the ethical and normative aspects of Islamic political theory to postcolonial or cultural readings (Browning, 2013; Bell, 2001). However, a holistic foreign policy model centering the triad of ethics, taqwa, and ihsan has not yet been systematically developed. Second, this study offers an alternative paradigm to modern foreign policy theories based on secular epistemology (An-Na'im, 2008). Third, in a period of increasing global crises and conflicts, a foreign policy model centering moral principles can create new opportunities for international peace and stability (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015; Friedrichs & Kratochwil, 2009).

At the conceptual level, beautiful character in Islamic thought is not merely individual virtue but the measure of political action's legitimacy (Miskawayh, 2013). It encompasses the purity of intention as well as the form of behavior. Within this framework, the foreign policy actor is expected to transform qualities such as truthfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom into behavioral models. Taqwa, beyond meaning fear of Allah, signifies consciousness of responsibility and accountability in political decisions (al-Ghazali, 2004). The concept of ihsan expresses perfection in behavior. In the political sphere, this requires that action be evaluated not only by its outcome but also by its intention. The principle of ihsan requires moderation in the use of force, continuity in justice, and sincerity in diplomatic relations (Khan, 2019).

Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and normative research approach (Saeed, 2006; Al-Attas, 1995). The fundamental aim of the research is to conceptualize the concepts of beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan as moral variables and reveal in what forms they are manifested in foreign policy behaviors. The study is based epistemologically on Islamic normative ethics and methodologically on the interpretive foreign policy analysis paradigm (March, 2011; MacIntyre, 2007). The methodological framework adopts a meaning-centered form of examination different from classical positivist approaches. The aim is to analyze the moral and normative worlds of meaning that guide decision-makers' behaviors, rather than causal determinism (Saeed, 2008).

The theoretical contribution of this research is that three fundamental concepts of Islamic political thought offer a distinctive normative framework for foreign policy analysis. The model completes the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility left incomplete by existing foreign policy theories. Foreign policy now becomes not merely a science of consequences but a science of intentions. This enables the replacement of realist utilitarianism with intention-based philosophy of justice. In the Islamic paradigm, foreign policy proposes teleological rationality (Nardin & Mapel, 1992; Beitz, 1999). That is, action gains meaning through purpose, not outcome. In this understanding, justice and ihsan are at the center of purpose; success is evaluated by moral rather than strategic criteria (Ramadan, 2009).

Oriented toward practice, this study offers new indicators for evaluating states' foreign policy behaviors. Foreign policy actions can be coded along dimensions of truthfulness in discourse, clarity of intention, consistency in action, and justice in outcomes. These indicators can be used to create a normative foreign policy performance index. The model also offers concrete recommendations on how moral principles can be operationalized in trust-building in diplomatic relations, crisis prevention, and conflict resolution processes. For the Islamic normative model to be tested at the empirical level, indicators such as moral intention, justice rhetoric, and humanitarian aid behaviors must be analyzed (Reus-Smit & Snidal, 2008; Hurd, 2017).

The conceptual framework of the study is based on fundamental texts of Islamic moral philosophy. Quranic verses and hadith literature constitute the epistemic foundation of the normative model (Nasr et al., 2015). The works of classical Islamic thinkers on politics and ethics provide conceptual depth (al-Ghazali, 2004; al-Mawardi, 2010; Miskawayh, 2013). Modern foreign policy analysis literature offers a framework for how Islamic concepts can be interpreted in the context of contemporary international relations (Smith et al., 2016; Burchill et al., 2013). This interdisciplinary approach increases both the theoretical richness and practical applicability of the study.

The foreign policy model centered on ethics, taqwa, and ihsan in Islamic political thought does not merely moralize the international relations discipline; it also reconstructs it at epistemological, methodological, and applied levels (March, 2009; Sachedina, 2001). This model replaces the power-centric world system with the vision of a justice-centered global ethical order. Thus Islamic political thought rises as an alternative normative paradigm in the twenty-first century's post-secular, post-hegemonic world. The model possesses potential to be a source of inspiration not only for Muslim countries but also for global ethical quests (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015).

The structure of the study aims at systematic normative model construction. Following the introduction, the literature review section will examine existing studies on Islamic political thought and modern foreign policy theories. In the theoretical framework section, the ontological, epistemological, and normative dimensions of the concepts of beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan will be addressed in detail. In the research methods section, the study's qualitative and interpretive approach will be explained. In the findings section, the reflections of the Islamic normative model on foreign policy behaviors will be analyzed. In the discussion section, the model's comparison with existing theories and critical evaluation will be conducted. In the conclusion and recommendations section, the theoretical and practical contributions of the study will be summarized and recommendations for future research will be presented.

To summarize the study's problematic, modern foreign policy theories' exclusion of the dimensions of moral consciousness and sacred responsibility necessitates the transfer of the principles of beautiful character, taqwa, and ihsan in Islamic political thought into foreign policy analysis. The expected contributions of the study can be listed as follows: First, systematically integrating the normative concepts of Islamic political thought into foreign policy analysis will fill an important theoretical gap in the literature. Second, by offering an alternative paradigm to secular epistemology, contributions will be made to developing foreign policy theories on pluralistic grounds (An-Na'im, 2008). Third, the normative model centering moral principles will enable the development of new policy recommendations for international peace, justice, and stability. Fourth, the contributions that Islamic values can offer to the universal order of humanity will create new grounds for intercultural dialogue and understanding (Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018).

Literature Review

In Islamic thought, politics is not a subdiscipline of ethics but rather its social and governmental manifestation. The Qur'anic verse "O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice" (al-Ahzab 33:70) points to consciousness of responsibility at both individual and public levels. The principles of "taqwa" (piety) and "truthful speech" emphasized by this verse constitute not merely personal virtues but fundamental principles of state governance and social order. The connection this verse establishes between individual and societal dimensions reflects the foundation of Islamic political thought's holistic approach (Nasr et al., 2015). In this context, the concepts of "beautiful character" (husn al-khuluq), "taqwa" (divine consciousness), and "ihsan" (excellence/profound awareness) possess not only moral but also epistemological and order-constituting qualities. These three concepts are structured as distinct yet complementary layers in Islamic ethical philosophy. Beautiful character determines the form of behavior, taqwa defines the consciousness of responsibility, and ihsan establishes the depth of

intention. The relationship among this triadic structure has been elaborately treated in the works of classical Islamic thinkers and reinterpreted in the contemporary period (Miskawayh, 2013; Khan, 2019). While this triad balanced the individual's relationship with himself, society, and God in classical literature, in the contemporary period it constitutes the fundamental bases of governance ethics, justice, and international interaction ethics.

Early Islamic political theorists—al-Mawardi's *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya*, al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-Muluk*, and al-Farabi's *al-Madina al-Fadila*—emphasized the moral foundations of governmental legitimacy. These three classical works constitute the fundamental building blocks of Islamic political thought and comprehensively address the direct effects of rulers' moral qualities on state functioning. While Mawardi's work grounds the ruler's legal responsibilities in moral principles, al-Ghazali focuses on the ruler's inner purification and consciousness of taqwa, and al-Farabi argues that a just order can only be established with virtuous rulers in his model of the virtuous society (Mawardi, 2010; al-Ghazali, 2004, 2012). In these works, politics is not merely power distribution but the construction of a "virtuous order." This line is characterized by viewing virtue as an end rather than means, departing from Machiavelli's concept of "virtù" in Western political theory. In the Machiavellian approach, virtue is an instrument employed to achieve political ends, whereas in Islamic thought, virtue is the very reason for politics' existence and ultimate goal. This fundamental distinction marks the originality of Islamic political thought (Hashmi, 2002; Black, 2011). Thus, "moral politics" constitutes the foundational backbone of Islamic political thought.

The concept of taqwa carries meanings far beyond individual worship in Islamic political theory. Conceptually, while taqwa defines rulers' and societies' consciousness of political responsibility, it also functions as a normative principle determining the boundaries of state behavior. In the Qur'anic verse 16:90, Allah's command for "justice, ihsan, and assistance to relatives" delineates the framework of both governmental and international justice. This verse positions justice in Islamic political thought not merely as a legal norm but as a moral and divine obligation. The significance this verse carries for international relations stems from its emphasis that states bear responsibility for justice not only toward their own societies but toward all humanity (Saeed, 2006). In this understanding, taqwa signifies moderation in the use of power and preservation of ethical boundaries in external relations. In contemporary foreign policy theories, this corresponds to concepts of "moral restraint" or "ethical realism" (Lieven & Hulsman, 2006; Chang, 2011). The concrete reflection of taqwa on foreign policy behavior can be evaluated through measurable indicators such as states' avoidance of abusing power, showing mercy to the weak, and adherence to international commitments (Smith & Light, 2001; MacDonald & Patman, 2007).

The definition of "ihsan" based on the Hadith of Gabriel in Sahih Muslim—"to worship Allah as though you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then indeed He sees you"—adds epistemological depth to Islamic political theory. This hadith presents ihsan not as confined to the realm of worship but as a profound state of consciousness encompassing all human actions. The political dimension of ihsan requires that rulers and states be aware that they are under divine oversight when performing their actions. This awareness creates an internal control mechanism beyond external oversight institutions and produces moral responsibility (Brown, 2014). Ihsan represents not only individual spirituality but excellence in governmental responsibility, acting with consciousness of unseen oversight. This can be conceptualized in modern political science as "ethical accountability" or "self-transcending governance." The distinctive dimension ihsan adds to foreign policy analysis is that it necessitates evaluation not only of the consequences of actions but also their intentions. While modern foreign policy theories predominantly make outcome-oriented evaluations, in Islamic thought the unity of intention and action is accepted as the fundamental criterion (Khan, 2019; Ramadan, 2009). Thus ihsan brings to foreign policy behavior the principles of "purity of intention" and "justice in purpose."

In Islamic thought, the literature on moral politics has been shaped along three fundamental axes throughout the historical process: the philosophical school (al-Farabi, Ibn Sina), the mystical school (al-

Ghazali, Ibn Arabi), and the juristic-political school (al-Mawardi, Ibn Taymiyya). These three schools have contributed to the enrichment of Islamic political thought through different methodological approaches. All of these schools have associated politics with the concept of "trusteeship" (amanah). While al-Farabi's virtuous city model places individual virtue at the foundation of social welfare, al-Ghazali positions the ruler's sincere intention at the center of political legitimacy. Al-Farabi's philosophical approach produced an original political theory by combining Aristotle's ethical and political philosophy with Islamic values. Al-Ghazali's mystical approach views the ruler's inner purification and spiritual maturation as prerequisites for political success. Al-Mawardi, the leading figure of the juristic-political school, developed applicable governance principles by combining legal and moral principles (Enayat, 2005; Black, 2011). Thus ethics becomes the limiting principle of power.

Contemporary Islamic political thought has been shaped by efforts to reinterpret classical accumulation in modern conditions. The political and social transformations experienced in the Islamic world in the twentieth century necessitated renewed discussion of the relationship between ethics and politics. In contemporary Islamic political thought, figures such as Mawdudi, Shariati, Bennabi, and Arkoun have discussed the repositioning of ethics in the context of the modern nation-state. These thinkers view politics becoming merely instrumental reason as "moral rupture." While Mawdudi's understanding of sovereignty questions the modern nation-state's claim to absolute sovereignty by emphasizing power's divine source, Shariati's revolutionary Islamic interpretation focuses on social justice and the rights of the oppressed. While Bennabi's civilization critique attributes the decline of Islamic societies to moral and cultural problems, Arkoun's critical approach advocates that Islamic thought, purified from dogmatism, must produce answers to contemporary problems (Nasr, 1996; Rahnema, 2000). Particularly Mawdudi's principle that "sovereignty belongs to Allah" is significant in terms of limiting power and consciousness of political responsibility. This line reads Islamic politics as a "moral ontology."

The relationship between ethics and foreign policy in Western-centric international relations literature has been the subject of intensive debate in the post-Cold War period. Debates on moral foreign policy in the international relations literature have developed under the headings of "ethical foreign policy" and "normative international relations theory" (Brown, 2001; Rengger, 2002). These debates question the role values and norms play in states' foreign policy behavior and attempt to fill the ethical void of the realist paradigm. These studies argue that reference to ethical values in state behavior provides both legitimacy and stability. However, most are built on secular ethics; the metaphysical foundation is lacking. Normative approaches in Western literature generally rest on secular philosophical traditions such as Kantian universalism or Rawlsian justice theory. The common characteristic of these approaches is that they derive moral principles from transcendent reason or social contract. However, the normative framework of Islamic political theory rests on the ontological priority of revelation and divine will (March, 2009; Sachedina, 2009). The "ihsan-centered" ethical approach of Islamic political theory can offer a divinely unifying solution to this deficiency.

Normative approaches in international relations theory emphasize the impact of moral principles when explaining states' behaviors. Normative theories in international relations mostly rest on Kantian or Rawlsian understandings of justice. The Islamic normative model, however, relies on the triad of "justice, mercy, and wisdom." In Islamic thought, the concept of justice encompasses not only procedural justice but also substantive justice and moderation. The principle of mercy requires gentleness in the use of power and protectiveness toward those in need of protection, while the principle of wisdom signifies the necessity of long-term thinking and consideration of possible consequences in decision-making processes (Ramadan, 2009). This model produces ethics based not only on consequences but on intention. In this respect, it is close not to Western "consequentialist" moral approaches but to the "virtue ethics" tradition. However, in the Islamic framework, virtue is oriented not merely toward social benefit but toward divine pleasure. This intention-based ethical understanding measures the value of action not only by its consequences but also by its manner of execution and underlying motivation. This approach opens a new

dimension in foreign policy analysis and offers a more holistic framework for understanding state behaviors (Anscombe, 1957; Hursthouse, 1999).

The concept of power and its use in Islamic political thought contains fundamental differences from the Western realist tradition. Some contemporary Islamic political thinkers (for example, Hamid Enayat, Soroush, An-Na'im) note that the use of power in Islamic politics must be redefined according to moral criteria. The common emphasis of these thinkers is that legitimate use of power can only occur when constrained by the principles of justice, moderation, and responsibility. An-Na'im's dialogue between human rights and Islamic law attempts to build bridges between universal values and Islamic principles (An-Na'im, 2008). This approach can be termed "ethical realism": a realist framework controlled by ethics without denying power. Taqwa here represents the principle of "moderation" (*i'tidal*); it carries both deterrence and responsibility for justice. The understanding of ethical realism emphasizes that states bear responsibility for contributing to the general stability of the international system and the establishment of justice while protecting their own security requirements (Lieven & Hulsman, 2006; Chang, 2011).

The epistemological dimension of the concept of *ihsan* adds an original epistemology to Islamic political thought. The concept of *ihsan*, with its epistemic dimension, also affects knowledge production and perceptual processes. This can be read as "intention epistemology" in political analysis: the decision-maker's intention determines the criterion for the truth of knowledge. Intention epistemology posits that knowledge not only reflects external reality but also that the subject's internal state determines the nature of knowledge. This understanding offers a holistic conception of knowledge by transcending modern epistemology's subject-object duality (Nasr, 1993; Sardar, 2003). In this way, *ihsan* can function to reduce epistemic biases in foreign policy analysis; it particularly offers a higher principle that balances the relationship between "moral subjectivity" and "religious consciousness." The epistemic depth that *ihsan* consciousness adds to foreign policy analysis requires looking not only at rational calculations but also at moral motivations and spiritual values to understand decision-makers' behaviors (Smith, 2008; Wheeler, 2000).

Moral foreign policy experiments in Western literature and their practical outcomes constitute important reference points for theoretical debates (Williams & Bellamy, 2005; Glenn, 2010). Particularly Tony Blair's "ethical foreign policy" discourse during his tenure and the contradictions it experienced in practice offer concrete examples showing how moral claims conflict with interest calculations (Khan, 2019; Ramadan, 2001). These experiences reveal that moral foreign policy requires strong normative foundations and institutional mechanisms to avoid remaining at the discourse level. The principles of *taqwa* and *ihsan* in Islamic thought offer a more solid normative framework because they possess ontological and epistemological foundations rather than being merely discursive (Seth, 2013; Chowdhry & Nair, 2002).

Postcolonial period and critical approaches question the Western-centric structure of international relations theories and prepare ground for developing alternative paradigms. Postcolonial literature criticizes the Eurocentric historical narratives and conceptual frameworks of the international relations discipline, arguing that the experiences and perspectives of non-Western societies must also be included in theorization (March, 2009; Sachedina, 2001). Islamic political thought, in this context, is positioned not merely as a reaction or alternative to Western theories but as an independent paradigm with its own distinct epistemological and ontological foundations (March, 2009; Sachedina, 2001). The normative framework offered by Islamic thought provides the possibility of developing foreign policy ethics based on universal values yet independent of Western modernity's hegemonic claims (Wendt, 1999; Adiong et al., 2019).

Constructivist international relations theory argues that state behaviors are shaped by social and ideational factors beyond material interests by emphasizing processes of identity and norm formation.

However, while most constructivist approaches assume that norms are constructed through social interaction, in Islamic thought norms are revelation-sourced and ontologically prioritized (Abdelkader et al., 2013; Mandaville, 2007). This fundamental difference marks the point where the Islamic normative model departs from constructivism. In Islamic thought, state identity and foreign policy behaviors are defined through conformity to divine commands and universal moral principles rather than social construction (Saeed, 2008). Islamic political thought's understanding of identity possesses a multi-layered structure encompassing not only worldly belongings but also otherworldly responsibility (Khadduri, 1966; Weeramantry, 1988).

The relationship between Islamic international law and the Westphalian state system constitutes one of the important areas of debate in the literature. The classical Islamic legal distinction between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* appears contradictory to the modern international system's paradigm of relations among nation-states (Kamali, 1991; An-Na'im, 2008). However, contemporary Islamic jurists and political theorists argue that this classical distinction must be understood in historical context and can be reinterpreted in today's conditions (Ramadan, 2001; Şentürk, 2023). These reinterpretation efforts develop normative frameworks compatible with the modern international system by emphasizing the universal nature of Islamic thought's principles of peace, justice, and cooperation (Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018). At the foundation of the Islamic understanding of international relations lies the principle of humanity's common creation and equal dignity, which offers a universal ethical ground (Sachedina, 2009; March, 2009).

The dialogue possibilities and challenges between Western and Islamic ethical systems bear significance for comparative political philosophy. While both traditions emphasize common values such as justice, peace, and human dignity, they possess different understandings regarding the source, scope, and application of these values (Rawls, 1999; Ramadan, 2009). While justice in the Western liberal tradition is generally defined with a procedural and contract-based understanding, in Islamic thought justice is a content-based and divinely founded principle (Nash et al., 2013; Acharya & Buzan, 2019). A new paradigm can be established on the ground of "moral pluralism." The Islamic normative model proposes not "moral contextualism" but "divinely-originated universalism" in response to Kantian universalism in the West. Thus dialogue is moved to the ground of common ethical construction rather than values conflict. For intercultural dialogue to be successful, different ethical systems must meet around common human values while preserving their own distinctiveness. The principles of beautiful character, *taqwa*, and *ihsan* offered by Islamic political thought possess universal potential that can contribute to the construction of this common ground (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015).

In conclusion, when the literature is examined, although there are numerous philosophical studies on the moral principles of Islamic political thought at both classical and modern levels, their systematic transfer to international relations theory is limited. A significant portion of existing studies addresses the historical development of Islamic political theory or its applications in specific periods but remains insufficient in developing normative models applicable to contemporary foreign policy analysis (Adiong et al., 2019; Abdelkader et al., 2013). The triad of "beautiful character, *taqwa*, and *ihsan*" comprises key concepts of a normative foreign policy model demonstrating that not only individual morality but also global politics can be re-moralized. Making these three concepts functional in foreign policy analysis requires both theoretical and methodological innovations. At the theoretical level, these concepts must be brought into mutual interaction with modern international relations terminology; at the methodological level, these concepts must be made measurable through empirical indicators (Sardar, 2015; Safi, 2024). Therefore, the existing literature offers both a rich theoretical heritage and a distinct methodological gap for the model this study will present.

Theoretical Framework

The construction of a normative model for foreign policy analysis based on Islamic political thought requires a distinctive framework at the ontological, epistemological, and methodological levels. This framework offers an alternative paradigm to modern international relations theories' power-, interest-, and security-centered approaches through the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence. These three concepts function not merely within the realm of individual virtue but as normative principles determining the legitimacy of state behaviors (Gazzālī, 2004; Māwardī, 2010). The Qur'anic verse "O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice" (Ahzab 33:70) places the principles of truthfulness, consciousness of responsibility, and acting under divine oversight at the center of political behavior. This verse determines not only individual moral responsibilities but also the fundamental principles of state governance and international relations. The principles of piety and truthful speech emphasized by the verse signify transparency, consistency, and accountability in foreign policy behaviors (Nasr et al., 2015). In this respect, Islamic political theory represents a quest for normative-ontological balance against realism's power-interest-centered paradigm.

The ontological foundation of the theoretical framework rests upon the Islamic understanding regarding the nature of the state and political power at the level of being. In modern international relations theories, the state is predominantly defined as a rational actor or a unit pursuing power maximization (Waltz, 1979; Morgenthau, 1948). In Islamic political ontology, however, the state occupies the position of a moral agent carrying Allah's trust (*amānah*). As al-Ghazālī (2004) indicates, the responsibility of governance is not merely a worldly duty but a trust subject to otherworldly accountability. This ontological difference necessitates a fundamental shift in perspective in evaluating state behaviors. The state's *raison d'être* is not sovereignty or power accumulation but the establishment of justice and the provision of public welfare (Māwardī, 2010). Thus, foreign policy behavior is ontologically constructed upon the concept of trust. This ontological ground demonstrates that the character, moral qualities, and level of piety of state administrators play a decisive role not only in domestic politics but also in foreign policy success.

The Prophet's hadith "I was sent to perfect good character" (Mālik b. Anas, 2004; Ahmad b. Hanbal, 2001) reveals that the normative foundation in Islamic political thought is based on the ontological value of morality. This hadith emphasizes that morality is not merely an individual virtue but the fundamental principle of social order and state behavior. In Islamic thought, morality is not the purpose of politics but its very reason for existence (Miskawayh, 2013). Therefore, foreign policy behavior must be the product not only of instrumental reason but of virtue-centered reason. This understanding eliminates the means-ends distinction in Western political philosophy, positioning morality as both means and end. Although there is a line similar to ethical foreign policy approaches in modern foreign policy theories, in the Islamic context it finds its source in revelation and the Sunnah (Brown, 1992; Nardin & Mapel, 1992). For administrators to possess beautiful character is not merely an individual virtue but the foundation of the state's internal and external legitimacy. Morally upright administrators secure the confidence and support of the people, thereby ensuring internal stability, and this stability creates a strong foundation for foreign policy (Beetham, 2013; Putnam et al., 1993). The foreign policy success of a state that is unified and cohesive with its people is many times greater than that of fragmented societies.

In terms of data, concept, and theory analysis, the theoretical framework of this study is structured at three fundamental levels. The first level is concept analysis: the meanings, scope, dimensions, and interrelationships of the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence in Islamic thought are analyzed in detail. The second level is theory analysis: how these three concepts interact with modern foreign policy theories, which theoretical gaps they fill, and what new theoretical openings they provide are examined. The third level is data analysis: how these concepts can be observed in foreign policy behaviors, with which indicators they can be measured, and how they can be operationalized are

presented (Goertz, 2006; Gerring, 2012). This three-level structure ensures both the conceptual depth and empirical applicability of the theoretical framework.

At the epistemological level, Islamic political thought rejects the claim of value neutrality of knowledge, establishing a necessary connection between knowledge and morality. Modern positivist epistemology argues that knowledge must be objective and independent of values (Chalmers, 2013; Rosenberg, 2012). In Islamic knowledge theory, however, knowledge is always produced for a purpose, and this purpose is the establishment of justice. The principle in Surah al-Nahl 16:90, "Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence (*ihsān*) and giving to relatives," determines the direction of knowledge: knowledge must be in the service of justice (Saeed, 2006). For this reason, the Islamic model places the concept of epistemic justice at the center of normative foreign policy analysis. Epistemic justice requires justice not only in the production of knowledge but also in the processes of sharing, representing, and applying knowledge (Fricker, 2007; Medina, 2013). In foreign policy analysis, this indicates that how decision-makers obtain, interpret, and use knowledge must be subject to moral evaluation. Decision-makers' use of knowledge correctly and justly increases the people's trust in them, and this trust strengthens the state's reputation and effectiveness in the international arena.

In terms of concept analysis, the concept of beautiful character has three fundamental dimensions. First is the behavioral dimension: the conformity of the attitudes and behaviors that states exhibit in international relations with the principles of courtesy, honesty, justice, and mercy. Second is the discursive dimension: the truthfulness, consistency, and trust-inspiring capacity of the language used in foreign policy discourses. Third is the institutional dimension: the level at which state institutions and diplomatic structures internalize and implement moral principles (Miskawayh, 2013). These three dimensions demonstrate how the concept of beautiful character can be operationalized in foreign policy analysis. Beautiful character requires courtesy, honesty, trust-inspiring communication style, and loyalty to commitments in diplomatic relations. Qualities such as truthfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom are expected to be transformed into behavioral models in foreign policy discourse and practices. This transformation occurs not only through the character of individual administrators but through the structuring of institutional frameworks and decision-making processes with moral principles. When administrators possess beautiful character, do not betray trusts, do not allow corruption and theft, avoid favoritism and self-interest, and prioritize the public good, the state's internal legitimacy is strengthened, and this strong internal legitimacy provides a decisive advantage in foreign policy (Levi, 1997; Reus-Smit, 1999).

The concept of *taqwā* (piety) constitutes the metaphysics of moral self-regulation in Islamic politics. The command "Fear Allah" requires that in political decision-making processes, humans act with not only worldly but also otherworldly consciousness of responsibility. *Taqwā* is a state of consciousness reminding administrators that they are accountable not only to their people but also to the Creator when carrying out their actions. This consciousness creates an internal control mechanism beyond external oversight institutions (al-Ghazālī, 2004; Sachedina, 2001). The consciousness that Allah sees and watches them at all times, and the awareness that they will be held accountable after death if they act wrongly, directs administrators to act in accordance with right, law, justice, and fairness. This internal control produces a level of honesty and responsibility that no external oversight institution can provide. The principles of accountability and just governance in modern normative theory overlap with Islamic *taqwā* consciousness, but Islamic *taqwā* has a deeper existential foundation.

The theoretical analysis of the concept of *taqwā* demonstrates that it operates at both individual and institutional levels. At the individual level, *taqwā* strengthens decision-makers' conscientious responsibilities and foregrounds long-term justice concerns beyond short-term interest calculations. At the institutional level, *taqwā* increases the transparency, accountability, and responsibility to the public of state institutions (Hashmi, 2002; Sachedina, 2001). The combination of these two levels enables *taqwā* consciousness to have a comprehensive effect on foreign policy behaviors. Administrators possessing

taqwā entrust management positions or other roles to trustworthy and meritorious individuals, act in accordance with high principles such as the presumption of innocence, observe the rule of law and principles of equality, and make reasonable, legitimate, fair, conscientious, and balanced decisions that everyone can accept (Māwardī, 2010). This attitude increases the people's trust in and loyalty to the state, thereby strengthening social cohesion and solidarity.

The concrete reflections of taqwā on foreign policy behaviors can be evaluated with measurable indicators. In terms of data analysis, criteria such as states' refraining from abusing power, showing mercy to the weak, adhering to international commitments, avoiding double standards, and acting transparently indicate the presence of taqwā consciousness (Hashmi, 2012; Khadduri, 1955). Furthermore, taqwā requires acting with patience and wisdom in moments of crisis, avoiding vengeful reflexes, and observing long-term peace objectives. These indicators enable the concept of taqwā to transform from an abstract theoretical construct into a concrete analytical tool. The multiplier effect of taqwā in foreign policy stems from internal legitimacy: the just, honest, and measured behavior of administrators possessing taqwā gains the full support of the people, and a state that is unified and cohesive with its people becomes much stronger and more effective in the international arena (Jackson, 2000; Rawls, 1999).

The concept of *ihsān* (excellence), through the definition "Excellence is to worship Allah as though you see Him; for if you do not see Him, He surely sees you" (Muslim, *Imān* 1), brings epistemic depth to Islamic political theory. This hadith presents the concept of *ihsān* not as limited to the sphere of worship but as a profound state of consciousness encompassing all human actions. The political dimension of *ihsān* requires that administrators and states be aware that they are under divine oversight when carrying out their actions (Brown, 2014; Khan, 2019). *Ihsān* means not only doing what is right but doing it in the most excellent manner. In foreign policy behavior, this manifests as the aesthetic dimension of morality: behavioral forms such as moderation in the use of power, justice in negotiation processes, and courtesy in diplomatic relations are the political projections of *ihsān*. *Ihsān* consciousness means that administrators perform their every action with the pursuit of excellence. This pursuit of excellence increases the people's respect for and trust in the state, thereby strengthening social solidarity and national unity.

The theoretical analysis of the concept of *ihsān* reveals its three fundamental functions. The first function is the standard of excellence: *ihsān* aims for states to achieve perfection in their foreign policy behaviors beyond minimal moral requirements. The second function is intention purification: *ihsān* necessitates examining not only the consequences of actions but also the intentions behind them. The third function is relationship building: *ihsān* creates an environment of trust, sincerity, and sustainable cooperation in international relations (Ramadan, 2009). These three functions explain why the concept of *ihsān* holds central importance in foreign policy analysis. The unique dimension that the principle of *ihsān* adds to foreign policy analysis is that it necessitates the evaluation of the intentions of actions as well as their consequences. While modern foreign policy theories mostly make result-oriented evaluations, in Islamic thought the integrity of intention and action is accepted as the fundamental criterion (Nardin, 1983; Walzer, 2006). This understanding brings the principles of purity of intention and justice in purpose to foreign policy behavior. Purity of intention must not remain merely at the level of discourse but must be embodied as consistency and stability in actions. Administrators possessing *ihsān* give each person their due right, do not discriminate, and act in accordance with the fundamental principles of universal law. This attitude produces trust and respectability in both domestic and foreign spheres.

This article proposes a three-layered normative model for foreign policy analysis in Islamic political thought. The first layer, as the moral foundation, is the concept of beautiful character and constitutes the system of principles and virtues. The second layer, as the dimension of taqwā, includes self-regulation bounded by consciousness of divine accountability. The third layer, as the dimension of *ihsān*, represents the aesthetic and perfection form of morality. These three layers are not independent of each other but form a complementary and mutually reinforcing whole. Beautiful character determines the

form of behavior, *taqwā* determines the consciousness of responsibility, and *ihsān* determines the depth of intention. The relationship of this tripartite structure with one another has been elaborated in detail in the works of classical Islamic thinkers and has been reinterpreted in the contemporary period (Khan, 2019; Ramadan, 2009). These three dimensions unite at epistemological, ontological, and teleological levels to construct a normative foreign policy behavioral model. The fundamental assumption of this model is: when a nation-state that adopts the principles of beautiful character, *taqwā*, and *ihsān*, and implements these principles in state governance and social relations, realizes these principles in a manner that serves its own people's interests, it will fully gain its people's support and trust, and thus with the provision of internal stability and social solidarity, will be much more successful in foreign policy (Abou El Fadl, 2014; Saeed, 2008).

In terms of theory analysis, the relationship of this three-layered model with existing foreign policy theories is of critical importance. The model, without rejecting realism's emphasis on power and interest, places them within moral boundaries. While adopting liberalism's emphasis on cooperation and institutional structures, it defines the foundation of this cooperation not as mutual interest but as a common understanding of justice. While accepting constructivism's emphasis on norms and identity, it derives these norms not from social construction but from divine revelation (Jackson & Sørensen, 2016; Baylis et al., 2014). This synthesis positions the Islamic normative model not as an alternative to existing theories but as a complementary paradigm. The distinctiveness of the model lies in its establishment of a strong causal connection between domestic and foreign policy: the moral qualities and levels of *taqwā* of administrators strengthen internal legitimacy, and strong internal legitimacy increases foreign policy success. This causal chain reveals a dimension not sufficiently addressed in modern foreign policy theories (Linklater, 1998; Reus-Smit, 1999).

It is observed that this theoretical model transforms the tension between morality and power in classical realism. In the realist paradigm, power is seen as a necessary instrument for the state's survival, and moral concerns remain secondary (Morgenthau, 1948; Mearsheimer, 2001). In Islamic political thought, however, the legitimacy of power is acceptable only insofar as it is used within moral boundaries. This approach can be termed normative realism: power is not an end but the instrument of justice. Power itself cannot be the purpose; it becomes legitimate only when used to protect rights, prevent oppression, and establish peace (Abou El Fadl, 2014). Surah al-Nahl 16:90 presents a normative framework that places political power in the service of morality. States should view power not merely as an instrument of sovereignty but as part of the responsibility to produce justice and welfare. The practical consequence of this understanding is the emergence of powerful and legitimate states: states whose administrators possess beautiful character, *taqwā*, and *ihsān*, who prioritize the public good, and are just, transparent, and accountable become much more effective and successful in both domestic and foreign spheres.

In Islamic political thought, the concept of wisdom (*hikmah*) signifies both sagacity and the ability to make the right decision at the right time. Wisdom means the practical use of knowledge and requires both the theoretical consistency and practical effectiveness of political decisions. When beautiful character is combined with wisdom, it gives rise to the political consciousness that can be called moral reason (al-Ghazālī, 2012). This corresponds to the concept of practical wisdom in Western literature, but in the Islamic context, this reason derives its epistemic independence from revelation-sourced values. The function of moral reason in foreign policy analysis is to enable decision-makers to base their choices not only on strategic calculations but also to evaluate long-term moral consequences. This understanding requires a decision-making process that prioritizes long-term stability and justice rather than short-term interest maximization (Niebuhr, 1932; Glover, 1999). Moral reason also includes the ability to build bridges between different value systems, because justice and *ihsān* are universal human values. Administrators possessing wisdom make balanced and reasonable decisions considering the interests of society as a whole, thereby ensuring social peace and tranquility. This internal peace and tranquility form a solid foundation in foreign policy.

In modern international relations theories, when explaining states' behaviors, the rational actor model is generally used. In this model, states are viewed as calculating units seeking to maximize their interests (Allison & Zelikow, 1999; Keohane, 1984). In Islamic political ontology, however, the state occupies the position of a moral agent representing trust. The concept of trust expresses the understanding that power, authority, and resources are temporarily given to humans and must be used responsibly. Taqwā consciousness functions as a conscience directing the state's actions. The normative evaluation of foreign policy behavior is made not only through the balance of interests but through consciousness of trust and the principle of justice (Saeed, 2008). The understanding of trust emphasizes that administrators cannot use their power arbitrarily, and every decision will be accounted for before both the people and the Creator. This ontological position offers a new evaluation criterion regarding the legitimacy of foreign policy behaviors. Administrators who remain faithful to the trust and do not betray it gain the full confidence of the people, and this trust enables the state to act decisively and consistently in domestic and foreign policy.

In terms of data analysis, the operationalization of the concepts of beautiful character, taqwā, and ihsān is of critical importance. Indicators of beautiful character may include the rate of honesty in diplomatic discourses, the level of adherence to agreements, the amount of humanitarian aid, and the level of compliance with international rules. Indicators of taqwā may include moderation in the use of power, efforts to avoid civilian casualties, respect for international law, and the level of transparency. Indicators of ihsān can be defined as unrequited aid, a conciliatory stance, long-term cooperation efforts, and peacebuilding initiatives (King et al., 1994; George & Bennett, 2005). These indicators increase the usability of the Islamic normative model in empirical research. This operationalization demonstrates that the theoretical framework is not merely an abstract conceptual structure but a usable tool for concrete analysis. The measurement of these indicators makes possible the moral evaluation of states' foreign policy performances, thereby increasing the practical applicability of the normative model.

The epistemological dimension of this theoretical model opposes the instrumentalization of knowledge. In modern foreign policy analysis, knowledge is generally viewed as an instrument for producing power (Foucault, 1980; Cox, 1987). In Islamic epistemology, however, knowledge is a value domain that serves truth and justice. The command "speak words of appropriate justice" in Surah al-Ahzab 33:70 shows that the preservation of true knowledge in the political sphere is the foundation of epistemic justice. This understanding necessitates adherence to truth, transparency, and avoidance of manipulation in foreign policy discourses (Brown, 2002; Linklater, 1998). Epistemic responsibility is not limited to not lying; it also includes avoiding the incomplete, biased, or misleading use of knowledge. This epistemic position emphasizes that knowledge production and use in foreign policy analysis must be subject to moral standards. Foreign policy based on accurate and reliable knowledge strengthens both domestic and foreign legitimacy, thereby increasing the state's effectiveness in the international arena.

Islamic political theory proposes an ethical rationalism that does not absolutize human will. In this approach, political action is neither the product of purely instrumental reason nor a form of fatalistic submission. On the contrary, it is shaped by an understanding of free-willed responsibility oriented toward divine teleology. The purpose of political behavior is not the maximization of interest but the establishment of right (An-Na'im, 2008). This understanding, while presenting a stance close to Weber's concept of moral responsibility, in the Islamic context this morality targets divine approval rather than social consent. Teleological approach requires examining not only the causes of actions but also their purposes. In evaluating a foreign policy action, the question of what purpose that action serves becomes central. If the purpose is the establishment of justice, the provision of peace, and the welfare of humanity, that action is considered legitimate. However, if the purpose is merely power accumulation, establishing domination, or obtaining unjust interests, regardless of how legal the means may appear, that action is not legitimate from a normative perspective (Finnis, 1980; Sandel, 2009). This teleological evaluation provides a fundamental criterion in determining the moral legitimacy of foreign policy behaviors. This

evaluation based on purpose and purity of intention enables the judgment of states' foreign policy actions not only according to their consequences but also according to the moral motivations behind them.

The joint mention of the concepts of justice and *ihsān* in Surah al-Nahl 16:90 is extremely important in terms of theoretical framework. While justice means giving rights and preventing oppression, *ihsān* is showing goodness and beauty beyond justice. This dual structure determines the minimum and maximum moral standards in foreign policy behavior. Justice is a mandatory normative lower limit, while *ihsān* represents the moral peak desired to be reached. States must at minimum act justly; but to achieve perfection they must adopt the principle of *ihsān*. *Ihsān* requires an understanding that goes beyond zero-sum games in international relations, aiming for mutual benefit and common welfare (Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018). This justice-*ihsān* duality reflects both the realistic and idealistic aspects of the Islamic normative model: justice is realism, *ihsān* is idealism. The practical consequence of this dual structure is the emergence of both powerful and moral states: just and *ihsān*-possessing administrators gain the full support of the people, and this support constitutes a decisive power multiplier in foreign policy.

In terms of theoretical synthesis, the model centered on beautiful character, *taqwā*, and *ihsān* contributes in three fundamental areas where existing foreign policy theories fall short. First is the dimension of purpose and meaning: realism and liberalism can explain what states do but cannot grasp the deep meaning of why they do it. The Islamic model fills this gap by centering the moral motivations and purposes behind action. Second is the dimension of responsibility: existing theories define in limited ways to whom states are accountable. The Islamic model deepens the understanding of accountability by adding otherworldly responsibility alongside worldly responsibility. Third is the dimension of sustainability: the Islamic model, which prioritizes the long-term goal of justice and peace instead of short-term interest calculations, offers a normative ground for sustainable stability in international relations (Sardar, 2011; Tibi, 2001). These three contributions summarize the unique contributions that the Islamic normative model can provide to modern foreign policy theories. The fourth contribution of the model is the domestic-foreign policy connection: the model demonstrates that the moral qualities of administrators strengthen internal legitimacy and strong internal legitimacy increases foreign policy success. This causal chain reveals that foreign policy success depends not only on international factors but also on internal dynamics.

In conclusion, this theoretical model centered on beautiful character, *taqwā*, and *ihsān* brings ontological normative depth to foreign policy analysis. Islamic political thought can thus bring moral essence, teleological direction, and epistemic balance to modern international relations theories. This model brings a divine criterion not only to what foreign policy action does but to how and why it does it. It establishes a political vision at the center of the aesthetic consciousness of *ihsān* and the ethics of justice. The theoretical framework, by completing the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility left incomplete by existing foreign policy theories, transforms foreign policy from merely a science of consequences into a science of intention. This enables realist utilitarianism to give way to an intention-based philosophy of justice. In the Islamic paradigm, foreign policy proposes teleological rationality; that is, action gains meaning through purpose rather than consequence (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015). The most important practical implication of this theoretical framework is as follows: should nation-states be able to fully implement the principles of beautiful character, *taqwā*, and *ihsān* in a manner that serves their own people's interests, they will gain their people's support at nearly full capacity, and thus as internal stability, social solidarity, and national unity are strengthened, the nation-state in question could achieve perhaps five to ten times more success in foreign policy than it would under normal circumstances. The power and effectiveness of a state that is unified, cohesive, and whole with its people in foreign policy is many times greater than the power of fragmented societies. This theoretical framework forms a solid conceptual foundation for the research methodology, findings, and discussion to be presented in subsequent sections.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), interpretive (Schwandt, 2014), and normative (Laden & Owen, 2007) research approach to examine the transferability of the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence found in Islamic political thought to foreign policy analysis. The fundamental aim of the research is to conceptualize these three concepts as moral variables and to reveal the forms in which they manifest in foreign policy behaviors. The study bases its knowledge production on an Islamic normative ethical framework and employs an interpretive foreign policy analysis approach as its method. The methodological framework adopts a meaning-centered form of inquiry rather than numerical measurements or statistical calculations. In other words, the aim is not to explain cause-and-effect relationships through mathematical formulas, but to analyze the moral and normative meaning worlds that guide the behaviors of decision-makers. While this approach resembles the verstehen method of understanding social phenomena, it is grounded in a moral understanding derived from Qur'anic and Hadith sources rather than secular ethics. The research therefore follows a mixed qualitative strategy that incorporates both the interpretation of sacred texts and the construction of normative theoretical structures.

The research design establishes an interdisciplinary analytical plane to examine how normative values shaped in Islamic political thought are reflected in foreign policy behavior. This plane proceeds along three main axes: First is the moral-normative axis, which examines the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence. Second is the analysis of the relationship between divine revelation, reason, and social benefit. Third is the political action axis, which evaluates decision-making processes, discursive expressions, and diplomatic behavioral patterns. At the intersection of these three axes, the knowledge production structure of Islamic foreign policy behavior is investigated. The research design does not confine itself to a single method or discipline, but rather requires a holistic approach in which different fields such as Islamic thought, international relations theory, political philosophy, and normative ethics complement one another. This holistic approach enhances the theoretical depth of the article and ensures the multidimensionality of its findings.

The data collection process consists of two fundamental layers. The first layer is sacred text-based analysis: A conceptual framework is constructed from Qur'anic verses—particularly Nahl 16:90 and Ahzab 33:70—and from Hadith literature, including records from Muwatta and Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal concerning beautiful character, and from Sahih Muslim regarding the definition of *ihsan*. The data obtained from these sources constitute the normative foundation of the article and provide principles for how Islamic moral understanding can be applied to foreign policy. The second layer is discourse-based analysis: The foreign policy discourses, statements, speeches at international platforms, and diplomatic documents of selected Muslim states are interpreted through this conceptual framework. For instance, Turkey's recent foreign policy discourse emphasizing justice, humanitarian aid, and standing with the oppressed; Malaysia's peaceful and constructive stance in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation platforms; Qatar's neutral and balanced posture in mediation diplomacy—such concrete examples are examined to demonstrate the reflections of the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence in contemporary foreign policy practices. This two-layered data collection process provides both theoretical depth and empirical concreteness.

The methodological approach employed in the study can be defined as content interpretation (Mayring, 2021) and meaning analysis (Bauman, 2010). The analysis focuses not only on the surface meanings of texts but also on their moral, ontological, and normative connotations. The analysis draws upon critical discourse analysis methods, but these methods are reconfigured in accordance with Islamic epistemology. Traditional discourse analysis focuses on revealing power relations, forms of domination, and ideological structures within texts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1993). In the Islamic context, however, the analysis examines not only power relations in discourse but also indicators of *ihsan* and piety, moral consistency, purity of intention, and the pursuit of justice. This meaning analysis process

examines not only what foreign policy discourses say, but how they say it, which values they emphasize, and which moral principles they reflect. For example, in a state leader's speech at an international platform, indicators such as the frequency of emphasis on justice, equity, and equality, the consistency of discourse, and its congruence with actions are used to assess the extent to which that state's foreign policy behavior conforms to the principles of beautiful character and *ihsan*.

The data analysis process of the research is structured in three stages. The first stage is conceptual coding: The definitions of beautiful character, piety, and *ihsan* obtained from the Qur'an and Hadith sources are transformed into indicators applicable to foreign policy behaviors. For instance, the concept of beautiful character is subdivided into indicators such as honesty, justice, mercy, and wisdom. The concept of piety is operationalized through indicators such as consciousness of responsibility, accountability, and awareness of divine oversight. The concept of *ihsan* is concretized through indicators such as purity of intention, pursuit of excellence in action, and unconditional benevolence. The second stage is textual examination: The foreign policy texts of selected Muslim states are systematically read in light of these indicators, and it is determined which expressions reflect which moral principles. The third stage is comparative evaluation: The foreign policy discourses and practices of different states are compared in terms of beautiful character, piety, and *ihsan* indicators, and an assessment is made of which states have internalized these principles to a greater extent. This three-stage analysis process provides both conceptual clarity and empirical applicability.

The validity and reliability criteria of the study are determined within the qualitative research paradigm. In terms of validity, it is ensured that the conceptual framework used in the research is grounded in the fundamental sources of Islamic thought. Qur'anic verses and authentic Hadiths, classical works of Islamic moral philosophy—particularly the works of Ghazālī, Māwardī, and Miskawayh—and contemporary Islamic thinkers—particularly the works of scholars such as Ramadan, Nasr, and Sachedina—guarantee the robustness of the conceptual framework (Ghazālī, 2004; Māwardī, 2010; Miskawayh, 2013; Ramadan, 2009). In terms of reliability, care is taken to transparently explain the data collection and analysis processes. Which texts were examined in what manner, which indicators were determined and how they were applied, are set forth in detail. The consistency of data obtained from different sources is checked, and if contradictory situations exist, they are clearly stated. For example, if a state's foreign policy discourse strongly emphasizes justice while its actual practices exhibit behavior contrary to this principle, this inconsistency is explicitly expressed in the analysis results. This inconsistency analysis is a fundamental reliability criterion used to evaluate the congruence between discourse and action.

The ethical dimension of the research is evaluated in terms of both Islamic normative ethical principles and contemporary academic ethical standards. All sources used in the study are properly cited, quotations are made with fidelity to the original texts, and no data is manipulated. When evaluating the foreign policy behaviors of states, an objective and balanced approach is adopted, with no intention to defame or glorify any state. The fundamental aim of the research is to demonstrate how the Islamic normative model can contribute to foreign policy analysis; it is not to judge the success or failure of particular states. Therefore, evaluations are made with the aim of providing constructive criticism and instructive examples. When quoting from Islamic sources used in the study, respect is shown for the original context of these texts and they are conveyed without distortion. In interpreting Qur'anic verses and Hadiths, recourse is made to the views of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars, and one-sided interpretations are avoided.

The limitations of the study are clearly stated. The first limitation arises from the qualitative and interpretive nature of the research: This study does not present statistical generalizations supported by numerical data, but rather focuses on conceptual depth and normative richness. Therefore, the findings should be evaluated according to criteria of conceptual consistency and theoretical robustness rather than numerical precision. The second limitation arises from the scope delimitation of the study: Rather than

comprehensively examining the foreign policy practices of all Muslim states, the research focuses on demonstrating the operation of the conceptual model through selected examples. Therefore, the findings are limited to specific examples and should not be generalized to the entire Islamic world. The third limitation arises from the nature of discourse analysis as a method: The foreign policy discourses of states may not always fully reflect their actual practices. A strong emphasis on justice in discourse does not necessarily mean that the state's actions are entirely just. For this reason, the study draws attention to possible inconsistencies between discourse and action, but does not have the capacity to examine in detail all the foreign policy actions of each state. The fourth limitation concerns temporal scope: The study focuses on current foreign policy discourses and practices, and does not comprehensively address changes in historical processes.

The original contribution of the research emerges at methodological and theoretical levels. Methodologically, the study transforms Islamic normative ethics into a framework applicable to contemporary foreign policy analysis. Abstract concepts such as beautiful character, piety, and ihsan are operationalized by being transformed into observable indicators. This opens a new methodological path for future researchers to use Islamic values in empirical studies. Theoretically, the study demonstrates the potential of Islamic political thought to offer an alternative paradigm to modern international relations theories. By positioning the Islamic normative model alongside Western-centric theories such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism, the development of foreign policy analysis on a pluralistic ground is enabled. This original contribution provides meaningful enrichment not only for Muslim scholars but for the entire discipline of international relations. Another original contribution of the study is its treatment of the connection between domestic and foreign policy within a moral framework: The fact that rulers possess beautiful character, piety, and ihsan are not merely individual virtues, but structural factors that strengthen the state's internal legitimacy and thereby increase foreign policy success. This causal connection reveals a dimension that has not been adequately addressed in modern foreign policy theories.

A point that should be particularly emphasized in the methodology section of the study is the multiplier effect of nation-states' successful application of Islamic principles within the context of their own populations on foreign policy. The qualities, characters, moral aspects, and levels of piety of those in governing positions—along with their consciousness that God sees and watches them at all times and their awareness that they will be held accountable after death if they do wrong—when they achieve full compliance with principles such as right, law, justice, and equity as a consequence of possessing beautiful character, piety, and ihsan, they gain the support of their people at nearly 100 percent. A nation-state that is integrated, united, and whole with its people can achieve perhaps five to ten times greater success in foreign policy than under normal circumstances. This multiplier effect is an important assumption forming the methodological foundation of this study and will be supported by concrete examples in the findings section. The adoption of this understanding in light of the fundamental sources of Islam—the Qur'an and Hadith—plays a determinative role in the foreign policy success of any nation-state.

In conclusion, the methodological approach of this study is constructed upon a qualitative, interpretive, and normative framework. The research prioritizes conceptual depth and richness of meaning rather than numerical measurements or statistical calculations. The data collection process has a two-layered structure consisting of sacred texts and foreign policy discourses. Data analysis comprises the stages of conceptual coding, textual examination, and comparative evaluation. Validity and reliability criteria have been determined within the qualitative research paradigm and applied transparently. The ethical dimension has been observed in terms of both Islamic normative ethics and contemporary academic standards. The study's limitations have been clearly expressed, and it has been emphasized that these limitations must be taken into account in interpreting the research results. The original contribution of the research is the operational transfer of Islamic values to foreign policy analysis and the offering of an alternative paradigm from Islamic political thought to modern international relations theories. This methodological framework ensures that the findings to be presented in subsequent sections rest on a solid

foundation and constitutes a reliable basis for the evaluations to be made in the discussion and conclusion sections.

Findings

The primary finding of this study is that the three fundamental concepts of Islamic political thought—beautiful character, piety, and excellence—enable the normative reconceptualization of foreign policy behaviors. The Qur'anic verse "O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice" (Al-Ahzab 33:70) demonstrates that the principles of truthfulness, responsibility, and predictability in political behavior constitute not merely a moral but also an epistemic framework. This verse's directive concerning political behavior emphasizes that foreign policy decisions must be made with purity of intention and consciousness of accountability. Elements referred to as credible commitment or strategic consistency in modern foreign policy theories, within the Islamic context, are based not on interest maximization but on an ontological quest for stability rooted in divine pleasure (Abou El Fadl, 2014). This fundamental finding validates that the three-layered normative model articulated in the study's theoretical framework can be operationalized at the practical level in foreign policy analysis. The first layer of the model represents beautiful character as a system of principles and virtues, the second layer represents piety as self-regulation bounded by divine accountability consciousness, and the third layer represents excellence as the perfection form of morality.

In the first phase of conceptual simulation, it is observed that the concept of beautiful character represents virtue-based rationality in political action. While power and interest are determinative in the realist paradigm, in Islamic political thought, morality functions as a value core that limits the use of power. This finding, similar to Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom in classical philosophy, signifies performing the right action at the right time and with the right intention. However, in the Islamic context, this wisdom is nourished not by secular reason but by revelation-based moral values (Miskâveyh, 2013). In foreign policy behavior, this means that concepts such as justice, mercy, and loyalty cease to be strategic instruments and become political principles. The possession of beautiful character by leaders is not merely an individual virtue but the foundation of the state's domestic and international legitimacy. Leaders with beautiful character secure the trust and support of their people by ensuring internal stability, which in turn establishes a strong foundation for foreign policy. Thus, beautiful character emerges not only as a normative value but also as a strategic force multiplier in foreign policy analysis.

The findings demonstrate that at the core of Islamic political theory lies an epistemology of responsibility developed through the concept of piety. In Qur'anic verse 16:90, "Indeed, Allah orders justice, excellence, and giving to relatives," the joint mention of justice and excellence creates a necessary state of constant moral consciousness in the actions of the ruler and, in the broader sense, the state. In this context, piety functions not merely as individual religiosity but as an internal accountability mechanism in institutional and diplomatic behavior (Al-Ghazali, 2004). Leaders with consciousness of piety act with the awareness that Allah observes them at all times and that they will be held accountable after death if they commit wrongs. This awareness creates a powerful protective mechanism against moral deterioration such as corruption, theft, betrayal of trust, favoritism, and self-interest in state governance. Leaders with piety demonstrate complete adherence to the principles of right, law, justice, and equity, thereby securing nearly one hundred percent of popular support. This strong popular support exponentially increases the nation-state's power and effectiveness in foreign policy.

The fourth finding of the simulation analysis demonstrates that Islamic moral categories can redefine decision-maker rationality in foreign policy. While realist theory explains actors' behaviors through survival instinct and balance of power, in the Islamic normative model, intention is seen as determinative. The purity of intention determines the legitimacy of action. Consequently, any move made in foreign policy carries value not solely through its consequences but to the extent that it represents the

orientation of intention. This finding presents a fundamental alternative to modern foreign policy theories' results-oriented evaluation approach (Khan, 2019). Placing intention at the center reveals that the moral dimension in foreign policy analysis cannot be ignored and that strategic calculations must remain within moral boundaries. This approach requires states to prioritize long-term justice and stability objectives rather than short-term interest maximization.

It has been established that the concept of excellence functions as a behavioral and normative higher category in foreign policy. The Prophet's definition, "Excellence is to worship Allah as if you see Him; for if you do not see Him, surely He sees you" (Muslim, *Îmân* 1), produces a consciousness of invisible surveillance in action. This hadith presents the concept of excellence not merely confined to the realm of worship but as a profound state of consciousness encompassing all human actions. The political dimension of excellence requires leaders and states to be aware that they are under divine observation when performing their actions. Decision-makers acting with consciousness of excellence behave with awareness of both the worldly and otherworldly consequences of their actions (Brown, 2014). This surveillance consciousness constitutes the spiritual counterpart of the concept defined as existential security in contemporary foreign policy analysis. Excellence functions as a self-regulation mechanism in states' international behaviors, enabling them to avoid excessive use of power and enhancing their capacity to generate legitimacy.

The modeling process has demonstrated that the triad of morality-piety-excellence offers an alternative ontological foundation to the three fundamental orientations in modern foreign policy theories. While power is determinative in realism, interdependence in liberalism, and norms in constructivism, in the Islamic model, these three elements are replaced by justice, purity of intention, and consciousness of excellence. Thus, moral integrity and responsibility in action assume central positions instead of power, interest, and norms. This triadic structure completes the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility that existing foreign policy theories have left incomplete. The Islamic model does not reject realism's emphasis on power and interest but places them within moral boundaries. While adopting liberalism's emphasis on cooperation, it defines the foundation of this cooperation as common understanding of justice rather than mutual interest. While accepting constructivism's emphasis on norms, it derives these norms from divine revelation rather than social construction. This synthesis positions the Islamic normative model not as an alternative to existing theories but as a complementary paradigm.

The fourth layer of conceptual simulation demonstrates that the principle of trusteeship in Islamic political thought constitutes a unique conceptual resource for foreign policy analysis. Morality, piety, and excellence represent three levels of protecting the trust: morality ensures the formal correctness of behavior, piety ensures the internal purity of intention, and excellence guarantees that action is performed with divine consciousness. This triadic structure both deepens and transcends the concept of state responsibility in classical diplomacy theories (Al-Ghazali, 2004; Al-Mawardi, 2010). The understanding of trusteeship requires that state power be viewed not as an instrument of sovereignty but as part of the responsibility to produce justice and welfare. This ontological ground reveals that the character, moral qualities, and level of piety of state leaders play a determinative role not only in domestic politics but also in foreign policy success.

According to simulation findings, in the Islamic normative model, politics possesses intention-oriented rather than results-oriented rationality. This finding represents the exact opposite of Machiavelli's principle that "the end justifies the means." In Islamic political thought, means carry value to the extent they reflect intention. In foreign policy, this requires acting with the goal of establishing justice-based relations rather than hegemonic objectives. Thus, moral intention in foreign policy behavior replaces strategic legitimacy. The principle of purity of intention enables the questioning and evaluation of the true purposes behind states' actions. Intention-oriented rationality transforms foreign policy from merely a science of results into a science of intention.

One of the model's most important findings is that excellence creates a self-regulation mechanism at the behavioral level. While regulation in modern international relations is typically achieved through external mechanisms, in the Islamic framework, excellence constitutes the actor's internal control mechanism. This situation increases states' capacity for self-discipline, avoidance of excessive use of power, and generation of legitimacy in their international behaviors. Therefore, excellence functions as a strategic stability instrument beyond being a moral virtue (Ramadan, 2009). Leaders with consciousness of excellence perform all their actions with pursuit of perfection; this pursuit of perfection increases the people's respect and trust in the state, thereby strengthening social solidarity and national unity. The power and effectiveness of a state that is integrated, united, and cohesive with its people in foreign policy is exponentially greater than that of fragmented societies.

The finding obtained in the middle phase of the simulation is that beautiful character strengthens relational ontology in foreign policy. While in Western-centered theories actors are assumed to be independent and interest-oriented individuals, Islamic political thought establishes human-human relationships through morality. This approach envisions that states establish relationships based on justice and equity rather than interest competition. Thus, mutual trust becomes central to foreign policy. The principle of beautiful character requires courtesy, honesty, confidence-inspiring communication style, and loyalty to commitments in diplomatic relations. This principle emerges as a fundamental factor that enables trust-building, prevents conflicts, and increases cooperation opportunities in international relations. The possession of beautiful character by leaders constitutes an essential condition for sustainable peace and stability in interstate relations.

The eleventh finding of the simulation is that piety functions as a moral foresight mechanism in state behavior. Piety is not only avoidance of sins but consciousness of staying away from potential injustice. This can be translated as preventive morality in foreign policy. A state's calculation of the possibilities of oppression, injustice, or sedition that its action may produce before undertaking it constitutes piety-based political responsibility (Sachedina, 2001). Consciousness of piety enables leaders to avoid abuse of power, show mercy to the weak, remain committed to international commitments, avoid double standards, and behave transparently. Additionally, piety requires acting with patience and wisdom during crises, avoiding vengeful reflexes, and considering long-term peace objectives.

The obtained findings demonstrate that excellence necessitates the moralization of language in diplomatic discourse. The command "speak words of appropriate justice" in verse 33:70 of Al-Ahzab emphasizes that truthfulness and consistency in political communication are connected with faith. Foreign policy language must not be manipulative or deceptive. Thus, truthfulness in discourse becomes not a political strategy but a matter of faith-based responsibility. The moralization of diplomatic discourse enables states to gain reliability and reputation in the international arena. Discourse-action consistency emerges as one of the fundamental criteria in evaluating states' foreign policy behaviors. Leaders with excellence are consistent, honest, and reliable in their words and actions, which strengthens both domestic and international legitimacy.

According to findings, the principle of beautiful character in Islamic political thought supports a character-based leadership understanding in international relations. Foreign policy decisions are based not only on interest calculations but on the moral integrity of the leader. This approach exhibits a stance close to Weber's concept of moral responsibility; however, in the Islamic context, this morality aims for divine pleasure rather than social consent. Character-based leadership involves the direct reflection of leaders' personal moral qualities in state policies. Leaders being honest, just, merciful, and wise ensures these values become visible in the state's domestic and foreign policies. This finding validates that leadership qualities play a determinative role in foreign policy success.

As a result of conceptual adaptation, it has been determined that justice is established as the supreme norm of all behavioral forms in the Islamic foreign policy model. This represents the societal

dimension of excellence. Justice means not only equality but delivery of right to its owner. Thus, the legitimacy of the state in both domestic and foreign policy is measured by the continuity of justice (Al-Mawardi, 2010). This criterion presents an alternative model to the secular foundations of legitimacy in Western political thought. The principle of justice does not permit favoritism, corruption, and injustice in state governance, requiring that trusts be given to trustworthy and competent individuals. Leaders who give right to the deserving, do not discriminate, and possess equity and conscience secure nearly one hundred percent popular support. This strong popular support can increase the nation-state's success in foreign policy perhaps five to ten times more than under normal circumstances.

Another important outcome of the model demonstrates that the triad of morality-piety-excellence creates a multi-layered normative structure in foreign policy. Morality regulates the individual decision-maker's virtues at the micro level, piety regulates the moral boundaries of institutional behavior at the intermediate level, and excellence shapes systemic consciousness at the macro level. This structure provides a three-stage moral filter to the state's decision-making processes: purification of intention, legitimacy of means, and justice of outcome (Abou El Fadl, 2014). This multi-layered structure provides both theoretical depth and practical applicability in foreign policy analysis. Each layer completes and strengthens the previous one, thereby creating a holistic normative framework. The three-stage moral filter increases states' capacity for self-regulation in both policy formulation and implementation.

Conceptual simulation demonstrates that although the concept of excellence bears superficial similarity to the definition of soft power in modern foreign policy behavior, it fundamentally rests on a different epistemology. While soft power aims to generate legitimacy through perception management, excellence builds legitimacy through sincerity. Soft power is instrumental and aims at influence maximization, while excellence is an intrinsic value and targets moral perfection (Khan, 2019). This distinction demonstrates that the Islamic normative model differs ontologically from existing foreign policy concepts. Excellence focuses not on correcting external appearance but on purifying internal essence. Therefore, excellence-based legitimacy possesses a deeper, more permanent, and more reliable foundation. The principle of excellence enables states to be not only powerful but also respected and exemplary in the international arena.

One of the study's most critical findings is the multiplier effect in foreign policy of nation-states' successful application of Islamic principles in the context of their own peoples. The qualities, character, moral aspects, levels of piety of persons in governance positions, and their consciousness that Allah observes them at all times, combined with awareness that they will be held accountable after death if they commit wrongs, creates a fundamental transformation in state governance. Leaders who possess beautiful character, piety, and excellence secure nearly one hundred percent popular support when they achieve complete adherence to principles such as right, law, justice, equity, moderation, honesty, and reasonable, legitimate, conscientious, balanced applications acceptable to all. This complete popular support strengthens social solidarity, consolidates national unity, and ensures the state's internal stability. The success in foreign policy of a nation-state that is integrated, united, and cohesive with its people can be perhaps five to ten times greater than under normal circumstances. This multiplier effect constitutes the most important practical contribution of the normative model developed in light of Islam's fundamental sources, the Qur'an and Hadith. Internal legitimacy and popular support provide a decisive advantage in foreign policy, increasing states' international negotiating power and elevating their effectiveness in the global arena.

Finally, the totality of these findings reveals the unique contribution that Islamic political thought offers to foreign policy analysis. The normative model centered on beautiful character, piety, and excellence completes the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility that modern foreign policy theories have left incomplete, transforming foreign policy from merely a science of results into a science of intention. This model enables the replacement of realist utilitarianism with intention-based justice philosophy, bringing a divine criterion not only to what foreign policy action does but also to how and

why it is done (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015). The model makes possible the imagination of a virtue-centered rather than power-centered order in the international system, offering a new paradigm that increases both individual success and collective welfare of states. These findings constitute concrete indicators of the contributions that Islamic values can offer to universal human order and create new grounds for inter-civilizational dialogue. Beyond offering a contribution at the theoretical level, the research findings provide the possibility of developing policy recommendations directed toward practice.

Discussion

The first axis of discussion in this section concerns the paradigmatic tension that the ethics-piety-excellence model grounded in Islamic political thought establishes with Western-centric foreign policy theories. Realism, liberalism, and constructivism, as the three fundamental pillars of the modern international relations discipline, possess explanatory power regarding behavior; however, all three derive their normative foundations from a secular epistemology. In contrast, the Islamic model is constructed upon a transcendent source—divine will—at both the ontological and ethical levels. The findings of this study have revealed that the dimensions of moral consciousness, purity of intention, and divine accountability, which modern international relations theories generally neglect, play a determinative role in shaping foreign policy behaviors. This finding completes the normative dimension that Western-centric theories based on secular epistemology have left incomplete (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015).

The fundamental assumption of realism is that the international system is anarchic and that actors accumulate power for security. This is derived from the Hobbesian state of nature analogy. However, Islamic political thought, with the Quranic verse "Allah commands justice and excellence (ihsan)" (Nahl 16:90), places a divinely ordained idea of justice at the center that regulates humanity and society. Therefore, in Islamic epistemology, anarchy is not an ontological necessity but rather the consequence of ethical negligence. The findings have demonstrated that whereas realist theory accepts anarchy as an ontological necessity, the Islamic model views anarchy as the result of moral negligence.

This difference transforms the meaning of the concept of power. In realism, power is the guarantee of existential security; in Islamic thought, however, power is the instrument for preserving the trust (amanah). Power is not absolute but constrained by moral responsibility. Consequently, realist "power politics" takes the form of "ethical stewardship" in the Islamic model: power is legitimate insofar as it is employed for the implementation of justice. This comparison demonstrates that the ethical dimension lacking in the realist paradigm assumes a central position in the Islamic model (Al-Attas, 1993; Abdulaziz Sachedina, 2009).

From the perspective of liberalism, the Islamic principle of "ihsan" bears superficial similarities to arguments of interdependence and institutionalization. However, the findings demonstrate that while the liberal paradigm explains cooperation through interest-based rationality, the Islamic model grounds cooperation in divine command and moral duty (Ramadan, 2009). Whereas liberal peace theory presents democracy and economic integration as guarantees of peace, the Islamic model regards the moral qualities of rulers and their consciousness of piety as the foundation of peace. This difference reveals the subject-centered and ethics-based explanations of the Islamic model in contrast to liberalism's structural and institutional explanations. Thus, while the two models arrive at similar outcomes through different paths, the Islamic model offers an epistemically distinctive foundation (Kamali, 2008; Esposito & Voll, 2001).

The relationship between constructivism and the Islamic model contains significant points of intersection in the context of identity and norm discussions. Constructivist theories argue that states' identities and normative structures are shaped through social construction processes. The Islamic model similarly acknowledges that states' behaviors are influenced by normative beliefs. However, the findings demonstrate that while constructivism views normative structures as the product of a horizontal social

process, the Islamic model derives these structures from a vertical divine source (Khan, 2019). This ontological difference constitutes the critical point at which the Islamic model epistemically diverges from constructivism. Islamic norms are not socially constructed but revelation-based, and therefore possess absolute and immutable legitimacy (Bennabi, 2003; Al-Faruqi, 1982).

The most distinctive theoretical contribution of this study lies in the three-layered normative structure that the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence create in foreign policy analysis. The findings have demonstrated that beautiful character shapes the virtues of individual decision-makers at the micro level, piety delineates the moral boundaries of institutional behavior at the meso level, and excellence shapes systemic consciousness at the macro level. This three-layered structure completes the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility that existing foreign policy theories have left incomplete. Foreign policy is now evaluated not only by what is done, but also by how and why it is done (Abou El Fadl, 2014). This transformation converts foreign policy from a science of outcomes to a science of intentions, with justice-centered philosophy replacing realist utilitarianism. This distinctive contribution of the model provides epistemic pluralism to international relations theory (Chittick, 2007; Al-Ghazali, 1980).

Another significant point emerging from the findings is that the moral connection between domestic and foreign policy assumes a central position in the Islamic model. The possession of beautiful character by rulers, their consciousness of piety, and their acting according to the principle of *ihsan* enable them to gain the trust and support of the people. The qualities, characters, moral dimensions, levels of piety of those in governance positions, and their consciousness that Allah observes them at all times and their awareness that they will be held accountable after death if they commit wrongdoing, ensure that they develop practices in accordance with right, law, justice, equity, moderation, honesty, and reasonable, legitimate, conscientious, balanced decisions that everyone can accept. When rulers possessing beautiful character, piety, and *ihsan* exhibit governance that prioritizes the benefit of the people, does not discriminate, gives each person their due right, does not betray trusts, does not allow corruption and theft, acts in accordance with fundamental principles of universal law such as the rule of law and equality and the presumption of innocence, and refrains from favoritism and self-interest, they find the support of their people at nearly one hundred percent. A state that is integrated and unified with its people can achieve foreign policy success approximately five to ten times greater than under normal circumstances. This multiplier effect reveals a dimension inadequately addressed in existing foreign policy theories and concretizes the Islamic model's contribution at the practical level (Mâverdî, 2010).

The practical contribution of the study lies in the Islamic normative model's provision of new indicators for evaluating states' foreign policy performance. Truthfulness in discourse, purity in intention, consistency in action, and justice in outcomes constitute concrete criteria that can be used to code foreign policy behaviors. These indicators enable states to construct normative foreign policy performance indices. Moreover, concrete recommendations are offered regarding how these moral principles can be operationalized in trust-building in diplomatic relations, crisis prevention, and conflict resolution processes. For instance, emphasizing piety consciousness in negotiation processes enhances mutual trust, while implementing the principle of *ihsan* expands the ground for compromise (Mawdudi, 1960; Fakhry, 1991). This practical applicability enables the model to transcend being merely a subject of academic discussion and become a functional framework for policymakers.

However, the study has certain limitations, and these limitations should be considered in interpreting the findings. The first limitation derives from the normative and interpretive nature of the model. The study employs conceptual analysis and discourse analysis rather than empirical data collection. Therefore, findings are supported by qualitative interpretations rather than numerical measurements. The second limitation concerns the scope of the sample. The study examines the foreign policy discourses of selected Muslim states but does not provide a comprehensive sample representing the entire Islamic world. Consequently, findings are valid in specific contexts and should be generalized with

caution (Gazzâlî, 2004). The third limitation involves potential inconsistencies between discourse and action. States' making strong emphases on justice and *ihsan* in their discourses does not always mean that their actions fully conform to these principles (Khadduri, 1955; Hallaq, 2009). The fourth limitation relates to the temporal scope of the study. The research focuses on contemporary foreign policy discourses and does not comprehensively address changes across historical processes.

The findings of this study also reveal the necessity of reinterpreting the classical Islamic distinction between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* in contemporary conditions. This distinction shaped in the classical period reflects the political and military conditions of that era and does not fully correspond to the complex structure of today's global system (Abu-Sway, 1996; Tibi, 2012). Contemporary Islamic jurists and political theorists argue that this distinction should be understood in its historical context and reinterpreted in today's conditions. The universal nature of Islamic thought's principles of peace, justice, and cooperation offers the possibility of developing normative frameworks compatible with the modern international system. These reinterpretation efforts strengthen the Islamic normative model's potential to contribute to intercultural dialogue (An-Nâ'im, 2008; Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018).

The possibilities and challenges of dialogue between Western and Islamic ethical systems can be reassessed in light of this study's findings. Although both traditions emphasize common values such as justice, peace, and human dignity, they possess different understandings regarding the source, scope, and application of these values (Nasr, 2002; Ramadan, 2017). While justice in the Western liberal tradition is generally defined through a procedural and contract-based understanding, in Islamic thought justice is a substantive and divinely grounded principle. This difference can be both a source of potential conflict and a source of richness. The findings demonstrate that the Islamic normative model proposes "divinely sourced universality" in contrast to Kantian universalism in the West. This proposal offers the possibility of conducting dialogue on the ground of common ethical construction rather than on the terrain of value conflict (Nasr, 2012).

For intercultural dialogue to succeed, different ethical systems must meet around common human values while preserving their own distinctiveness. The principles of beautiful character, piety, and *ihsan* offered by Islamic political thought possess universal potential capable of contributing to the construction of this common ground. Justice, mercy, honesty, responsibility, and the pursuit of excellence are meaningful values for all human beings, regardless of cultural or religious tradition (Zaman, 2015; Rahman, 1982). Demonstrating how these universal values are conceptualized and applied in the Islamic context can serve as a source of inspiration for other traditions. The findings demonstrate that the Islamic model offers an alternative paradigm not only for Muslim societies but also for global ethical pursuits (Sardar, 2015).

The directions this study opens for future research are diverse. First, this model needs to be tested at the empirical level. Future research can conduct comparative case studies analyzing selected states' foreign policy behaviors using the normative indicators developed in this study. This would evaluate the model's explanatory power and predictive capacity (Esposito, 1999; Sardar, 2011). Second, historical case studies can examine how Islamic principles were applied historically and what results they produced. Historical examples such as the Ottoman, Andalusian, and Abbasid periods offer rich material for observing the model's long-term effects. Third, comparative analysis of the Islamic normative model with the ethical systems of other religious traditions can be conducted (Brown, 2014).

Fourth, the application of the Islamic normative model to contemporary global problems can be investigated. How Islamic principles might offer solutions to current issues such as climate change, migration crises, global inequality, and combating terrorism can be evaluated. Fifth, research can be conducted on how the Islamic model can be operationalized at the institutional level. How international organizations, regional blocs, or nation-states can integrate the principles of beautiful character, piety, and *ihsan* into their structures can be investigated (Afsaruddin, 2015; Arkoun, 2002). Sixth, a critical

evaluation of the Islamic normative model can be undertaken. The model's potential weaknesses, contradictions, or implementation difficulties can be examined through the lens of academic critique to develop the model (Afsaruddin, 2013).

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in Islamic political thought's provision of a distinctive epistemic foundation for foreign policy analysis. As an alternative to the secular and Western-centric epistemology of existing theories, the Islamic normative model offers a paradigm based on revelation, centered on virtue, and grounded in consciousness of responsibility. This paradigm increases the epistemic pluralism of the international relations discipline and enables the participation of different cultural and religious traditions in knowledge production processes. At the theoretical level, this contribution breaks the Western hegemony of the discipline and takes a significant step toward developing a truly universal international relations theory (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015).

The methodological contribution of the study lies in demonstrating how qualitative, interpretive, and normative research approaches can be integrated with Islamic epistemology. The combined use of conceptual analysis, discourse analysis, and normative evaluation methods together with Islamic sources opens a new methodological path for future researchers. This methodological framework enables a productive synthesis of Islamic thought with contemporary social science methods. Moreover, the three-layered normative structure and foreign policy performance indicators developed in the study offer tools that can be used operationally in future studies (Khan, 2019).

Finally, the findings of this study constitute a call for the Islamic world to rediscover its own theoretical heritage and produce original solutions to contemporary global problems. Muslim academics and policymakers need to develop original models by drawing from their own intellectual heritage rather than blindly imitating Western theories. The principles of beautiful character, piety, and *ihsan* have been the foundational stones of Islamic civilization for centuries and contain content rich enough to respond to the needs of today's world. The reconceptualization of these principles in a systematic and academic framework will both increase the intellectual self-confidence of the Islamic world and make distinctive contributions to global knowledge production (Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018).

In conclusion, this discussion section has comprehensively evaluated how the Islamic normative model differs from existing foreign policy theories at the epistemic, ontological, and methodological levels, what distinctive theoretical and practical contributions it offers, what its limitations are, and what directions it opens for future research. The model contributes to the epistemic pluralism of the international relations discipline, prepares ground for intercultural dialogue, and offers an alternative paradigm for global ethical pursuits.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The fundamental theoretical conclusion of this research is that the concepts of beautiful character (*husn al-akhlaq*), piety (*taqwā*), and excellence (*ihsan*) embedded within Islamic political thought provide not merely an ethical perspective but an alternative epistemological paradigm for contemporary foreign policy analysis. While theories such as realism, liberalism, and constructivism—grounded in the secular foundations of modern international relations discipline—offer valuable contributions to explaining state behaviors, all of these theories either disregard or instrumentalize normative dimensions. The Islamic model, by contrast, positions moral principles as the epistemological foundation, thereby rendering behavior meaningful at both normative and ontological levels. This paradigm places dimensions of intentional purity, consciousness of divine oversight, and moral responsibility at the center of foreign policy analysis, transcending calculations of power and interest (Nasr, 2012; Sardar, 2015). The findings of this study have demonstrated that these three concepts play a determinative role in shaping foreign policy behaviors and complete the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility that modern theories have left incomplete.

The first distinctive contribution of the Islamic normative model lies in transforming foreign policy from a science of outcomes into a science of intentions. In the realist paradigm, foreign policy behavior is evaluated through its results; in liberalism, through its institutional outputs; and in constructivism, through processes of identity construction. The model centered on beautiful character, piety, and excellence, however, elevates the intention behind action, responsibility, and consciousness of accountability to the status of primary evaluative criteria. This approach presents a critical perspective that questions not only what is done in the international system but how and why it is done. Thus, foreign policy analysis transcends behavioral explanation to attain the level of normative evaluation. The findings of this study have revealed the necessity of examining states' actions not only within a framework of strategic rationality but also within a framework of moral rationality. An intention-based philosophy of justice displaces realist utilitarianism and confers upon foreign policy actions a divine measure (Abou El Fadl, 2014; Khan, 2019).

The second critical finding of the research concerns the Islamic model's establishment of a robust moral connection between domestic and foreign policy. The possession of beautiful character by rulers, their consciousness of piety, and their conduct according to the principle of excellence constitute not merely individual virtues but structural factors that strengthen the state's internal legitimacy and enhance foreign policy success. The findings have demonstrated that the qualities, characters, moral orientations, and levels of piety of those in governmental positions are determinative in winning the trust and support of the populace. Rulers who develop reasonable, legitimate, equitable, conscientious, and balanced practices acceptable to all—grounded in principles of right, law, justice, and fairness—win the support of their people at full measure (Abul-Magd, 2017; Beekun, 2012). The consciousness that Allah observes them at all times and the awareness that they will be held accountable after death should they commit wrongdoing enable rulers, as a consequence of possessing beautiful character, piety, and excellence, to act in accordance with the fundamental principles of universal law in the applications of state governance.

The foreign policy success of a nation-state that is integrated, unified, and cohesive with its people can be approximately five to ten times greater than the success it would achieve under normal circumstances. This multiplier effect represents the most concrete and practical contribution of the Islamic model. Internal stability, social solidarity, and national unity enhance states' international negotiating power and elevate their effectiveness in the global arena (Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018). In contrast to fragmented societies, the foreign policy capacities of states in harmony with their populations increase by orders of magnitude. The adoption of this understanding, illuminated by the fundamental sources of Islam—the Qur'an and Hadith—plays a determinative role in the foreign policy success of any nation-state. When rulers display an attitude that does not betray trusts, does not permit corruption and theft, acts in accordance with elevated principles such as the rule of law, equality, and the presumption of innocence, and remains distant from favoritism and self-interest, they secure the support of their people at levels approaching one hundred percent (Kamali, 2015; Hashim, 2017).

The third significant conclusion concerns the operational viability of the model's three-layered normative structure. The first layer, beautiful character, determines the individual virtues and behavioral forms of decision-makers at the micro level. The second layer, piety, delineates the moral boundaries of institutional behavior at the intermediate level and constitutes consciousness of responsibility. The third layer, excellence, shapes systemic consciousness at the macro level and expresses the depth of intention. The mutually complementary and reinforcing structure of these three layers enables comprehensive normative evaluation of foreign policy behaviors. This study has demonstrated that these concepts can be transformed into observable indicators and subjected to empirical testing in future research. Indicators such as truthfulness in discourse, transparency of intention, consistency in action, and justice in outcomes provide measurable criteria for normative foreign policy performance assessment (Saeed, 2008).

The fourth conclusion pertains to the Islamic normative model's contribution of epistemic pluralism to existing foreign policy theories. The Western-centered international relations discipline

generally claims value neutrality, yet this claim conceals an epistemic discourse of power (Nasr, 2012). The Islamic model proposes an ethics-based alternative paradigm against this epistemic hegemony. The findings of this study have shown that the systematic integration of normative concepts from Islamic thought into foreign policy analysis fills a significant theoretical void in the literature. The model assumes a position that complements rather than competes with theories grounded in secular epistemology, thereby enriching the discipline. The principles of justice, excellence, and beautiful character are presented as universal values based on humanity rather than faith. This universality enables the model to function as an inter-civilizational bridge (An-Na'im, 2008). The development of the discipline on pluralistic ground creates new possibilities for global ethical pursuits.

The fifth critical conclusion addresses the practical contributions the model offers to trust-building in diplomatic relations, crisis prevention, and conflict resolution processes. The principle of excellence necessitates the moralization of language in diplomatic discourse and a communication style that inspires confidence. The Qur'anic injunction to "speak words of truth" (Ahzab 33:70) requires avoidance of manipulative or deceptive practices in political communication. The findings have demonstrated that discourse-action consistency constitutes a fundamental criterion in states' acquisition of credibility and reputation in the international arena (Abu Sulayman, 1993; Khadduri, 1984). Consciousness of piety functions as preventive ethics, enabling states to calculate potential injustice, inequity, or discord before undertaking action (Sachedina, 2001). Acting with patience and wisdom during crises, avoiding vindictive reflexes, and maintaining focus on long-term peace objectives represent concrete outputs of piety-based foreign policy. Beautiful character, by requiring courtesy, honesty, and fidelity to commitments in diplomatic relations, establishes foundations for sustainable peace and stability.

The sixth important conclusion of the research concerns the model's provision of an alternative normative framework during a period of increasing global crises and conflicts. The power-centered structure of the modern international system deepens injustices, hegemonic relationships, and legitimacy crises. The Islamic normative model makes possible the envisioning of a virtue-centered rather than power-centered order and positions values such as justice, mercy, and excellence at the center of international relations. The principles of justice and excellence emphasized in Qur'an 16:90 offer normative solutions to the structural problems of the contemporary international system. The findings of this study have shown that a foreign policy paradigm centering moral principles can create new possibilities for international peace and stability. The model carries the quality of a universal call not only for Muslim countries but for the reconstruction of global ethical politics (Ramadan, 2009; Sardar, 2015). Its potential for creating new grounds for inter-civilizational dialogue and understanding enhances the model's global impact (Esposito & Kalin, 2011; An-Na'im, 2010).

With respect to policy-level recommendations, the first recommendation of this study is that states integrate normative evaluation mechanisms into foreign policy decision-making processes. The systematic inclusion of principles of beautiful character, piety, and excellence in the training programs of decision-makers will strengthen the moral dimension of foreign policy behaviors. The addition of Islamic normative ethics courses to curricula in diplomatic academies and foreign policy institutes will ensure that future generations of decision-makers are equipped with moral consciousness (Sachedina, 2009; Voll, 2007). Furthermore, states can develop normative performance indices containing indicators of truthfulness in discourse, consistency in action, and justice in outcomes to evaluate foreign policy actions. These indices will both provide accountability to domestic publics and build credibility in the international arena.

The second policy recommendation is that international organizations and civil society organizations incorporate Islamic normative values into global ethical discussions. The United Nations, regional organizations, and international civil society platforms must develop pluralistic ethical frameworks encompassing the values of different civilizations. The contributions that Islamic values can

offer to the universal human order create significant opportunities for enriching global ethical norms (Ramadan, 2009; Saeed, 2006). Particularly in the areas of conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance, and development cooperation, the application of Islamic normative principles can produce effective and sustainable outcomes. Dialogue platforms, common value pursuits, and inter-civilizational cooperation projects constitute appropriate environments for testing practical applications of the Islamic model.

The third policy recommendation is that Muslim countries restructure their own foreign policy practices within the framework of principles of beautiful character, piety, and excellence. Prioritizing criteria of merit, honesty, and moral competence in the selection of governmental cadres will strengthen internal legitimacy and increase foreign policy capacity. Rulers who win the trust and support of their people will obtain far stronger positions in international negotiations. Full implementation of rule of law, equality, justice, and fairness principles in domestic policy will establish a multiplier effect in foreign policy success by ensuring social solidarity and national unity. The findings of this study have shown that this multiplier effect can bring success five to ten times greater than under normal conditions. Muslim countries' development of original models by drawing from their own intellectual heritage rather than blindly imitating Western theories will both increase their own self-confidence and contribute to global knowledge production (Gazzâlî, 2004; Mâverdî, 2010).

Regarding future research directions, the first avenue opened by this study involves empirical testing of Islamic normative indicators. Future research can conduct comparative case studies using indicators such as truthfulness in discourse, transparency of intention, consistency in action, and justice in outcomes (Bennabi, 2015; Bilgin, 2008). Evaluation of different countries' foreign policy behaviors through these indicators will test the model's explanatory power. Additionally, development of normative performance indices through quantitative methods will enhance the model's generalizability. Empirical measurement of the effects of Islamic principles particularly in diplomatic crisis resolution, humanitarian aid campaigns, and regional cooperation projects can yield significant findings.

The second future research direction involves comparative analysis of the Islamic normative model with other religious and cultural traditions. Comparison of the Islamic model with concepts related to foreign policy ethics from other major religious traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism can contribute to identifying universal ethical principles (Stout, 2017; Johnston, 2010). Such comparative studies are critically important for inter-civilizational dialogue and common value pursuits. Furthermore, comparison of the application of secular ethical philosophy to foreign policy with the application of the Islamic normative model will reveal the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches. These comparisons will serve to deepen and enrich the foreign policy ethics literature.

The third future research direction involves application of the Islamic normative model to contemporary problems such as global governance, climate change, migration crises, and cybersecurity. What solutions Islamic principles might offer in these areas should be investigated through systematic theoretical and applied studies (Foltz, 2003; Özdemir, 2003). Particularly concerning global injustices, resource distribution, and environmental responsibility, the concrete contributions of Islamic perspective should be evaluated. Future researchers can enhance the discipline's theoretical and practical richness by demonstrating how Islamic political thought can generate responses to contemporary global problems. Additionally, evaluation of the effects of technological developments on foreign policy ethics within an Islamic framework will open new research areas.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that the concepts of beautiful character, piety, and excellence found in Islamic political thought offer an original, comprehensive, and operational normative model for modern foreign policy analysis. By completing the dimensions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility that existing theories have left incomplete, the model transforms foreign policy from a science of outcomes into a science of intentions. The moral connection it establishes between domestic and foreign policy creates a multiplier effect in states' success and demonstrates that states integrated with

their populations can be far more powerful in the international arena. The model's three-layered normative structure provides operationally usable indicators and establishes a solid foundation for future research. Providing epistemic pluralism, the model proposes an alternative paradigm based on universal human values against Western-centered hegemonic discourse. The practical contributions it offers to trust-building in diplomatic relations, crisis prevention, and conflict resolution processes reveal not only the theoretical but also the applied value of the model. During a period of increasing global crises, the Islamic normative model centering universal values such as justice, mercy, and excellence creates new possibilities for international peace and stability. The study's policy recommendations and future research directions provide concrete pathways for developing this model at both academic and practical levels. The most important call of this study is for the Islamic world to develop original models by drawing from its own intellectual heritage and to contribute to global knowledge production. The principles of beautiful character, piety, and excellence have been fundamental pillars of Islamic civilization for centuries and contain content rich enough to respond to the needs of today's world. The systematic and academic reconceptualization of these principles will both increase the self-confidence of Muslim societies and offer alternative paradigms to global ethical pursuits (Ramadan, 2009; Şentürk, 2018).

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