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From Algocracy to Ethical Stewardship: Islamic Ethics and the Moral Reconstruction of Algorithmic Governance

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Abstract

Purpose: The rapid diffusion of algorithmic systems into public decision-making has fundamentally reshaped governance by reallocating moral and cognitive authority from human agents to automated systems. While algorithmic governance promises efficiency and neutrality, it simultaneously generates profound ethical concerns related to legitimacy, justice, accountability, and human responsibility. This study aims to reconstruct the ethical foundations of algorithmic governance through the lens of Islamic ethical philosophy.

Methodology: The research employs a qualitative content analysis of primary Islamic sources, including selected Quranic verses and hadiths. Through systematic coding and thematic interpretation, core ethical principles relevant to governance and decision-making are extracted and analytically mapped onto contemporary challenges of algorithmic governance.

Findings: The analysis identifies nine interrelated ethical principles—autonomy, dignity, justice, trust, honesty, caution, commitment, benevolence, and non-invasiveness—that together constitute a coherent moral framework for guiding algorithmic decision-making. These principles emphasize human moral agency, responsibility, and restraint, challenging purely technocratic or efficiency-driven models of governance.

Contribution: The study demonstrates that Islamic ethics provides both a transcendental normative foundation and an applied moral logic capable of addressing ethical deficits in algorithmic governance. By conceptualizing algorithms as instruments of moral agency rather than substitutes for it, the article advances the notion of ethical stewardship as a corrective governance paradigm.

Keywords

Algorithmic governance; Islamic ethics; Ethical stewardship; Moral legitimacy; Artificial intelligence; Accountability.

Introduction

The rise of algorithmic governance has redefined the moral and institutional landscape of public decision-making. Once envisioned as a pathway toward greater efficiency and objectivity, the embedding of algorithms into governance processes now reveals a deeper transformation in the nature of authority, legitimacy, and accountability. As Blankenship (2019) observes, algorithmic systems have transitioned from being instruments of administrative rationality to becoming active agents that shape political and moral orders. This transformation signifies not merely a technological shift but a profound reconfiguration of how power is exercised and justified in contemporary governance (Davutoğlu, 2025; Gritsenko & Wood, 2022). Early advocates of digital rationalization emphasized precision, scalability, and predictive capability (Henman, 2020), yet these promises have been overshadowed by mounting evidence of opacity, bias, and erosion of human discretion (Bunnell, 2021; Bloch-Wehba, 2020). The resulting condition, often described as algocracy (Danaher, 2020), marks a moment in which decision-making authority is increasingly delegated to autonomous systems rather than to accountable human agents.

The ethical paradox at the heart of algorithmic governance lies in its simultaneous claim to neutrality and its capacity to reproduce structural injustices. Studies across diverse political systems indicate that algorithmic decision-making frequently amplifies discrimination, undermines transparency, and weakens social trust (Festic, 2022; Ghose et al., 2025). The problem, as Volkov (2025) and Chomanski (2022) argue, is not only technical but deeply normative: algorithms encode implicit moral assumptions while concealing them under the guise of data-driven objectivity. Global responses—ranging from algorithmic impact assessments (Monteiro, 2025) to fairness and explainability frameworks (Ződi, 2022)—attempt to restore accountability but remain constrained by secular and procedural ethics that prioritize compliance over moral responsibility. This has given rise to what Innerarity (2024) calls a "legitimacy deficit," in which societies accept algorithmic efficiency at the cost of moral coherence and human dignity.

While much of the existing scholarship has examined the institutional and political implications of algorithmic governance in Western contexts (Calzada, 2018; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022; Mendonça et al., 2023), the moral and spiritual dimensions of this transformation remain underexplored. The global discourse often assumes that ethical reasoning can be standardized through universal procedural norms, overlooking the plural moral traditions that shape conceptions of justice and responsibility.

As D'Iribarne (2008) and Fritzen (2007) suggest, governance models detached from local moral frameworks risk both cultural alienation and institutional fragility. This is particularly evident in societies where governance is deeply intertwined with religious and ethical epistemologies—contexts in which divine accountability and moral intention are integral to public legitimacy.

In the Islamic intellectual tradition, governance is conceived not merely as the management of public affairs but as an act of moral stewardship (amanah). Decision-making (hukm) is bound to the principles of justice (ʿadl), trust (amānah), and human dignity (karāmah), all of which are grounded in divine accountability. Within this worldview, authority is legitimate only insofar as it conforms to moral purpose and serves the common good. Algorithmic systems, when viewed through this lens, are not neutral tools but entrusted mechanisms that must embody ethical intention (niyyah) and moral consciousness (taqwā). Such an orientation stands in contrast to the value-neutral paradigms of global governance, reframing the ethical challenge of algorithmic systems as one of spiritual accountability rather than mere technical optimization (Ames & Mazzotti, 2023; Vredenburgh, 2025).

However, despite the moral richness of Islamic ethical thought, there remains a striking absence of research integrating its principles into the study of algorithmic governance. Existing frameworks seldom address how divine justice could inform automated decision-making or how moral agency might be preserved within computational architectures. The neglect of non-Western ethical systems has produced a normative gap: algorithmic governance is globally pervasive but morally provincial. As a result, the moral imagination guiding AI and governance remains limited to procedural justice, overlooking deeper questions of intention, responsibility, and transcendence (Ghosh et al., 2025; Davutoğlu, 2025).

This paper responds to that gap by developing an ethical framework for algorithmic governance grounded in Islamic moral philosophy. How can the principles of justice, trust, and human dignity derived from Islamic teachings inform the ethical foundations of algorithmic governance? In addressing this question, the study positions Islamic ethics not as a counterpoint but as a complementary moral paradigm that enriches global debates on algorithmic legitimacy. By aligning the technical architectures of governance with the moral architecture of responsibility, this research proposes a spiritually anchored vision of algorithmic ethics—one in which automation serves humanity through justice, transparency, and divine accountability.

1. Literature Review

1-1. Algorithmic Governance

The emergence of algorithms as decision-making instruments in public governance has generated a profound transformation in how authority, knowledge, and legitimacy are distributed in modern societies. This transformation, often referred to as algorithmic governance, marks a paradigmatic shift from human-centered discretion to computational reasoning (Blankenship, 2019; Davutoğlu, 2025). Initially celebrated for its promise of efficiency and precision, algorithmic governance has revealed multiple ethical and institutional challenges, such as algorithmic opacity, the reproduction of inequality, and the concentration of informational power (Bunnell, 2021; Bloch-Wehba, 2020; Kariotis & Mir, 2020). Beyond the functional domain, algorithms have emerged as moral and interpretive actors that shape cognitive patterns, public participation, and legitimacy within governance systems (Festic, 2022; Jin, 2023).

Over the past decade, the discourse has evolved from an instrumental view of algorithms toward a recognition of their structural and normative power. Danaher (2020) conceptualized this transformation as algocracy, the governance of society through algorithms, where authority becomes encoded into automated systems. Gritsenko and Wood (2022) describe this as an "architecture of choice," wherein algorithms regulate behavior by design rather than by law. Similarly, Davutoğlu (2025) observes that algorithmic governance reconstitutes public institutions as computational entities governed by machine logic. From a Foucauldian perspective, these mechanisms reflect a form of algorithmic governmentality that produces new modalities of surveillance and normalization. Volkov (2025) warns that the mechanization of decision-making may erode legitimacy and trust, while Innerarity (2024) highlights the democratic tension between automation and participatory governance. Collectively, these studies suggest that the algorithmization of governance introduces an ethical rupture in the moral fabric of decision-making, shifting accountability away from human agents toward technical systems.

1-2. Ethical Dilemmas and the Islamic Moral Framework

Recent debates have increasingly focused on the moral deficits of algorithmic governance. Scholars argue that intelligent systems, while enhancing efficiency, often conceal biases and structural injustices behind a façade of neutrality (Vredenburgh, 2025). The lack of transparency and explainability jeopardizes both legal legitimacy and the protection of citizens' rights (Ghose et al., 2025; Ghosh et al., 2025; Peng et al., 2024). As Ződi (2022) notes, the

absence of reasoned justification in algorithmic decision-making undermines institutional integrity. Attempts to restore ethical oversight through mechanisms like algorithmic impact assessments (Monteiro, 2025) represent a step toward accountability but remain grounded in secular, Western ethics that neglect metaphysical and spiritual dimensions of responsibility.

By contrast, Islamic teachings provide a deeply moral and theocentric foundation for governance. Within Islamic epistemology, decision-making (hukm) is an act of moral stewardship and divine accountability. Humans, as God's vicegerents (khalifah), are entrusted (amanah) with upholding justice (adl), integrity, and the preservation of human dignity (karamah). From this perspective, algorithms are not morally neutral tools but entrusted mechanisms that must serve social justice and the common good. Justice demands that algorithms avoid discrimination; trust requires transparency and responsible data stewardship; and human dignity mandates that automation not depersonalize moral agency. Moreover, concepts such as niyyah (intent) and taqwa (moral consciousness) introduce a spiritual dimension to decision-making absent in Western frameworks. In Islamic ethics, legitimacy is derived not merely from procedural correctness or efficiency but from moral intention and conformity with divine justice. This ethical orientation reframes algorithmic governance as a moral responsibility rather than a purely technical enterprise.

1-3. Algorithmic Bias, Discrimination, and the Pursuit of Justice

Empirical investigations have consistently revealed that algorithmic systems replicate and amplify existing social inequalities, producing discriminatory outcomes across criminal justice, employment, and social services (Alon-Barkat & Busuioc, 2023). ProPublica's investigation of the COMPAS recidivism algorithm exposed systematic racial bias, with Black defendants disproportionately misclassified as high-risk (Angwin et al., 2016). Similarly, facial recognition technologies exhibit significantly higher error rates for women and minorities, raising concerns about discriminatory enforcement (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). The mechanisms generating bias are multifaceted: historical prejudices embedded in training data perpetuate past injustices; proxy variables inadvertently encode protected characteristics; and feedback loops reinforce discriminatory patterns over time (Barocas & Selbst, 2016; Obermeyer et al., 2019). Moreover, the interaction between human decision-makers and algorithmic recommendations can exacerbate bias through "selective adherence," wherein administrators accept outputs that confirm preexisting stereotypes while overriding counter-stereotypical

predictions (Stevenson, 2018). From an Islamic ethical standpoint, algorithmic discrimination constitutes a violation of adl (justice) and the Qur'anic prohibition against zulm (oppression) (Ramlan & Malkan, 2025). The principle of maslahah (public interest) demands that technological systems advance collective welfare and protect vulnerable populations rather than perpetuating structural injustice (Auda, 2008). Islamic jurisprudence's emphasis on substantive fairness—not merely formal equality—provides a rigorous framework for evaluating whether algorithmic governance serves justice or reproduces oppression.

1-4. Legitimacy, Democratic Accountability, and the Rise of Algocracy

The delegation of consequential decisions to algorithmic systems raises fundamental questions about political legitimacy and the preservation of democratic values (Danaher, 2016). Political theorists have conceptualized this transformation as algocracy—governance by algorithms—wherein traditional accountability structures prove inadequate for overseeing automated decision-making (Aneesh, 2009; Cristianini & Scantamburlo, 2020). Danaher's critique identifies two core legitimacy deficits: the "hiddenness concern," involving covert data collection without informed consent, and the "opacity concern," referring to the inscrutability of algorithmic reasoning. These deficits undermine transparency, public deliberation, and contestability—the foundational pillars of democratic governance .Scharpf's framework distinguishes input legitimacy (democratic participation), throughput legitimacy (procedural fairness), and output legitimacy (effectiveness and public value alignment). Algorithmic governance threatens all three dimensions: it operates with minimal democratic oversight, lacks procedural safeguards for affected individuals, and may optimize narrow efficiency metrics while disregarding broader social values (Scharpf, 2022). From an Islamic perspective, legitimacy derives not from procedural correctness alone but from conformity with divine justice and the fulfillment of moral obligations. The concept of khilafah (stewardship) positions human beings as God's vicegerents entrusted with authority that cannot be abdicated to non-conscious entities (Masoudian et al., 2025).

1-5. Localization, Institutional Challenges, and Cultural Adaptation

Despite growing global attention to algorithmic governance, its localization in non-Western contexts remains limited and fragmented. In Iran and other developing societies, algorithmic systems are gradually entering domains such as education, healthcare, welfare, and social management, yet the lack of systematic understanding and elite-level discourse has hindered the

formulation of coherent, ethical policies (Zhang, 2024). Structural centralization, weak intermediary institutions, and fragmented data infrastructures further complicate the contextualization of global regulatory frameworks (Fritzen, 2007; Ghosh, 2003; Bebbington et al., 2004). The uncritical transplantation of Western governance models often leads to cultural incompatibility and institutional inefficiency (D'Iribarne, 2008). In response, scholars such as Calzada (2018) and Tan et al. (2019) call for the development of participatory and context-sensitive models of ethical digital governance that align technological innovation with local moral traditions and social realities. These arguments resonate strongly with the Islamic philosophy of governance, which links ethical legitimacy to the pursuit of justice, transparency, and communal welfare. Accordingly, embedding Islamic ethical principles into algorithmic governance could bridge the moral gap between global technological systems and culturally grounded governance models.

1-6. Research Gap

The current body of literature highlights several limitations that justify the need for a new theoretical lens. First, existing studies primarily conceptualize algorithmic governance through functional and technocratic perspectives, with limited exploration of its moral and spiritual foundations. Second, the ethical frameworks adopted globally remain largely Western, focusing on procedural fairness while overlooking divine accountability and metaphysical dimensions of justice. Third, non-Western and Islamic contexts are underrepresented, leaving the ethical potential of Islamic governance principles unexplored. Consequently, there exists a clear normative and cultural gap between the prevailing discourse on algorithmic governance and the Islamic ethical worldview centered on justice, trust, and human dignity.

This study therefore seeks to fill that gap by exploring the ethical components of algorithmic governance grounded in Islamic teachings. It proposes a normative framework in which algorithms are viewed as instruments of moral responsibility and divine trust, aimed at advancing social justice, transparency, and the dignity of human agency. In doing so, the research aspires to contribute to the emerging field of value-based technological governance by situating the Islamic moral perspective as both a critique of and a complement to global algorithmic ethics.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and interpretive research design to explore the ethical components of algorithmic governance through the lens of

Islamic teachings. Rather than relying on empirical or statistical measurement, the approach is normative and analytical, aiming to uncover how moral principles embedded in Islamic thought—such as justice (adl), trust (amanah), and human dignity (karamah)—can inform the ethical evaluation of algorithmic systems in governance contexts. The study proceeds through an integrative logic that combines critical synthesis of global scholarship on algorithmic governance with conceptual interpretation of Islamic moral and jurisprudential sources. International academic works addressing the ethical, legal, and political challenges of algorithmic decision-making were reviewed alongside primary and secondary Islamic texts, including Qur'anic exegesis, philosophical reflections, and ethical treatises concerning governance, responsibility, and stewardship. The focus of the analysis is not on quantifiable relationships but on how ideas, values, and principles from these two intellectual traditions intersect to produce a cohesive framework of "Islamic algorithmic ethics."

The analytical process involved a continuous and reflective reading of the texts, emphasizing the extraction of recurring ethical themes and their reinterpretation within contemporary governance debates. This interpretive process combined inductive reasoning—deriving ethical categories emerging from Islamic sources—with deductive reasoning, whereby these categories were examined against existing debates on transparency, fairness, and accountability in algorithmic governance. Through this synthesis, the study identifies a series of moral correspondences and tensions between Islamic ethical paradigms and global algorithmic ethics, leading to the formulation of a value-based framework suitable for culturally grounded governance. The emphasis throughout the analysis was placed on conceptual clarity, internal coherence, and contextual relevance rather than numerical generalizability.

To ensure validity and credibility, interpretive triangulation was applied through the cross-examination of insights from multiple domains—classical Islamic ethics, contemporary literature on governance, and scholarly discourse on technology ethics. The researcher maintained reflexivity throughout the analytical process, critically evaluating interpretive assumptions to prevent bias and preserve fidelity to both the spirit of Islamic moral philosophy and the realities of algorithmic decision-making. Since the research is conceptual and non-empirical, no human participants or personal data were involved; however, ethical rigor was observed through intellectual transparency, accurate citation, and respect for the integrity of both Islamic and academic sources. The methodological stance of this paper is therefore explicitly reflective and value-oriented, seeking not to test hypotheses but to articulate a

normative synthesis that aligns emerging forms of algorithmic governance with enduring Islamic principles of justice, accountability, and human dignity.

3. Results

After examining Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions relevant to justice, trust, dignity, and responsibility, a thematic analysis was conducted to uncover the ethical dimensions of algorithmic governance from an Islamic perspective. Each textual unit—whether a verse or hadith—was carefully interpreted to extract the underlying moral principle that could inform the governance of algorithmic systems. Through this process, foundational ethical ideas were identified and categorized, allowing the gradual emergence of a structured moral framework aligned with Islamic teachings.

The analysis revealed that Islamic sources articulate a comprehensive ethical vision that directly resonates with the moral challenges raised by algorithmic governance. Verses such as "Do not betray God and the Messenger or betray your trusts while you know" (Al-Anfāl, 26) and "We have certainly honored the children of Adam" (Al-Isrā, 70) highlight the moral imperatives of trust, accountability, and human dignity. Similarly, prophetic sayings emphasizing honesty in speech, transparency in trade, and confidentiality in communication reinforce the moral logic of responsibility and integrity that must guide decision-making processes—whether human or algorithmic. Collectively, these teachings underscore the sanctity of trust and the prohibition of betrayal, deception, and intrusion into the private domain of others.

Building upon these textual insights, the analysis progressed from identifying individual moral codes to integrating them into broader ethical themes. The first cluster of themes concerns autonomy, emphasizing human moral agency, free will, and the stewardship of divine blessings. It establishes that individuals—and by extension, algorithmic decision-makers designed by them—are accountable for their choices. The second cluster relates to human dignity, which combines both inherent and acquired aspects of worth. The Qur'anic notion of honoring humanity in creation, alongside the principle that piety constitutes the true criterion of dignity, provides a moral foundation for ensuring that algorithmic systems respect human value and avoid objectifying individuals as mere data points.

The third thematic cluster, justice, represents the central pillar of Islamic governance ethics. It stresses fairness, proportionality, and the protection of social welfare, prohibiting any form of exploitation, bias, or unequal treatment that may result from algorithmic decisions. Closely linked to justice is the principle of commitment, which demands the fulfillment of promises, the observance of consent in using others' resources, and the

acquisition of benefits through legitimate means. The fourth cluster, trust, elaborates on the responsibility to safeguard confidentiality, to maintain honesty in interactions, and to avoid disclosure of information that could cause harm—ethical standards highly relevant to algorithmic transparency and data stewardship.

Another recurring set of themes revolves around caution, highlighting the necessity of verification, precision, and avoidance of harm or assumptions. This moral posture parallels the contemporary emphasis on risk assessment and error prevention in algorithmic design. Similarly, honesty and benevolence emerge as reinforcing virtues: honesty calls for truthfulness, transparency, and avoidance of deception, while benevolence demands goodwill and an orientation toward the collective welfare of society. Finally, the principle of non-invasiveness underscores the prohibition of unwarranted intrusion into the private domain of individuals and the avoidance of actions that cause psychological, social, or informational harm—foundations that align with the ethical imperative of privacy in algorithmic systems.

Together, these interrelated moral dimensions form a coherent framework for evaluating and guiding algorithmic governance through an Islamic ethical lens. They converge on three core imperatives: justice as the structural foundation of decision-making, trust as the moral condition of legitimacy, and human dignity as the spiritual boundary that governs technological power. The analysis demonstrates that Islamic ethics offers not merely a set of religious precepts but a dynamic and contextually relevant framework for addressing the governance challenges posed by algorithmic systems. This framework integrates accountability, transparency, and compassion into a unified vision of moral governance, positioning technology as a means of serving divine justice rather than as an autonomous authority.

The results therefore establish that algorithmic governance, when aligned with the moral principles articulated in Islamic sources, can transcend the limitations of purely procedural ethics. It can evolve into a spiritually grounded system of decision-making that upholds human dignity, prevents harm, and ensures accountability before both society and God. This synthesis reveals how the normative depth of Islamic thought can contribute to the global discourse on responsible algorithmic governance, providing a culturally rooted yet universally resonant ethical framework.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic ethics provides a comprehensive and morally coherent framework for addressing the legitimacy crisis and ethical deficits observed in algorithmic governance. Contemporary scholarship has

extensively discussed the shift from human-centric governance toward automated decision-making (Blankenship, 2019; Davutoğlu, 2025), emphasizing efficiency, scalability, and predictive precision. However, as multiple studies demonstrate, such transformations also generate normative tensions regarding justice, accountability, and transparency (Festic, 2022; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022). The present research contributes to this debate by showing that Islamic moral principles—grounded in divine accountability and social justice—can offer an alternative ethical grounding that complements and extends existing secular frameworks.

In line with the concerns expressed by Chomanski (2022) and Volkov (2025) about the erosion of legitimacy in algocratic systems, the results of this study affirm that technological efficiency alone cannot justify algorithmic authority. Islamic ethics, by contrast, restores the moral link between governance and intention (niyyah), ensuring that algorithmic systems serve human welfare rather than instrumental rationality. This argument resonates with Davutoğlu's (2025) view that algorithmic governance transforms the nature of decision-making, demanding new normative foundations beyond technical optimization. While Mendonça et al. (2023) describe this as the emergence of "algorithmic institutionalism," where code itself becomes a rule-making agent, the Islamic ethical framework re-centers moral agency within human responsibility before God, thus resisting the depersonalization inherent in automated systems.

The emphasis on justice (al-ʿadl) identified in this study parallels the findings of Gritsenko and Wood (2022), who argue that algorithmic systems must be seen as new "modes of governance" rather than neutral tools. Yet, whereas their approach highlights procedural fairness through institutional calibration, the Islamic model advances a more substantive conception of justice: one that integrates moral equity, transparency, and compassion. This conception aligns with Bunnell's (2021) call for decentralized and independent oversight mechanisms to mitigate algorithmic harms, but extends it by embedding justice within a transcendent moral order rather than within administrative checks alone.

Similarly, the principle of trust (al-amānah) elaborated in this study complements Perdana et al. (2025), who propose "algorithmic trust" as a regulatory mechanism in Indonesia's central banking system. Both frameworks emphasize reliability and accountability; however, the Islamic perspective deepens this notion by linking trust not only to compliance but to moral stewardship—where the misuse or concealment of information is regarded as a form of betrayal before both society and God. This

interpretation offers a corrective to the purely institutional models of trust found in Western literature.

The principle of human dignity (al-karāmah) derived from Islamic texts corresponds to the concerns raised by Jin (2023) and Ghose et al. (2025), who note that algorithmic discrimination and bias undermine legitimacy and reinforce existing inequalities. Yet while their analyses remain rooted in policy and governance mechanisms, Islamic ethics frames dignity as an ontological attribute of humanity, mandating that algorithmic systems be designed to protect rather than quantify the human being. This corresponds with the perspective of Innerarity (2024), who cautions that algorithmic governance risks hollowing out the moral content of democratic legitimacy unless anchored in deeper ethical commitments.

Moreover, the results echo findings from Calzada (2018) and Astuti et al. (2025), who emphasize the need to contextualize algorithmic governance within diverse political and cultural systems. In agreement with Fritzen (2007) and D'Iribarne (2008), this study demonstrates that universal governance models are insufficient without adaptation to local moral and institutional contexts. The Islamic framework developed here offers precisely such contextualization: it translates universal ethical imperatives—justice, trust, responsibility, and caution—into a system of governance grounded in local epistemic traditions. This echoes Zhang (2024)'s call for context-sensitive countermeasures to algorithmic uncertainty and aligns with Srikanth's (2025) argument that e-governance and AI must evolve through participatory and culturally resonant designs.

Another area of convergence lies in the principle of caution (al-iḥtiyāt), which aligns with Monteiro's (2025) advocacy of algorithmic impact assessments as instruments of accountability. Both emphasize preventive ethics: anticipating harm before it occurs. Yet, Islamic ethics situates caution within the broader moral duty to prevent injustice and protect collective welfare, expanding Monteiro's institutional approach into a moral obligation. The same applies to the principle of honesty (al-ṣidq), which reinforces the transparency and explicability dimensions of algorithmic governance highlighted by Chenou and Valenzuela (2021) and Bloch-Wehba (2020). While these authors focus on regulatory transparency, the Islamic approach embeds honesty in a moral continuum—linking epistemic truth with ethical intention.

Finally, this research confirms the observations of Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2022) regarding the six legitimacy threats to algorithmic decision-making, including opacity, bias, and lack of accountability. Islamic ethics

directly responds to these threats by introducing a normative vocabulary that encompasses both procedural safeguards and spiritual accountability. It thus provides what Volkov (2025) terms the missing "moral anchor" of algocracy—a framework through which technical systems can be morally adjudicated and socially trusted.

In summary, the comparison of this study's findings with existing literature reveals both convergence and divergence. There is convergence in recognizing that algorithmic governance requires transparent, fair, and accountable systems (Henman, 2020; Ghosh et al., 2025), yet divergence in the source of moral authority that ensures such outcomes. Whereas secular frameworks rely on institutional design and regulatory enforcement, Islamic ethics situates governance within a cosmology of justice and divine responsibility, ensuring that legitimacy is not only procedural but moral. This synthesis enriches global debates on algorithmic ethics by integrating the human, moral, and spiritual dimensions often absent from mainstream governance theories. It reinforces the idea that algorithmic legitimacy, if divorced from moral intention and ethical purpose, remains fragile. Hence, the incorporation of Islamic ethical principles into algorithmic governance offers not only cultural contextualization but also a universal moral orientation—one that reconnects efficiency with justice, transparency with trust, and automation with the preservation of human dignity.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that algorithmic governance, while promising in its capacity to enhance administrative precision and efficiency, remains normatively fragile without a moral foundation rooted in substantive ethical commitments. By drawing upon Islamic ethical principles, justice (ʿadl), trust (amānah), human dignity (karāmah), honesty (ṣidq), and moral responsibility (taqwā), the research provides an alternative framework for conceptualizing legitimacy and accountability in automated decision-making systems. In contrast to secular frameworks that rely primarily on procedural safeguards and institutional calibration (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022; Gritsenko & Wood, 2022), the Islamic model introduces a moral ontology that links governance to divine accountability and the intention behind action (niyyah). This framework transforms algorithmic ethics from a question of regulatory compliance into one of moral purpose and communal responsibility. By situating algorithmic authority within a broader ethical cosmology, it offers what Volkov (2025) describes as the missing "moral anchor" of algocracy and responds to the legitimacy crisis identified by

Innerarity (2024) and Chomanski (2022), who warn that efficiency-driven systems risk hollowing out the moral core of governance.

The findings also align with emerging perspectives that call for contextualized and culturally grounded approaches to AI and governance (Astuti et al., 2025; Calzada, 2018; Srikanth, 2025). Islamic ethics contributes to this discourse by demonstrating that technological rationality and moral transcendence need not be opposites but can be harmonized through a conception of stewardship (khilāfah). This integration highlights that the governance of algorithms is not only a matter of data management or risk mitigation (Peng et al., 2024; Monteiro, 2025) but also a question of moral cultivation—how societies ensure that digital architectures reflect their highest ethical values. In doing so, this research expands the conceptual horizon of algorithmic governance beyond the limits of proceduralism, suggesting that faith-based ethical systems can serve as epistemic resources for global AI governance debates (Davutoğlu, 2025; Ghosh et al., 2025).

Nonetheless, the study acknowledges several limitations. The analysis, being conceptual and text-based, focuses on interpreting Islamic sources rather than empirically evaluating algorithmic systems in practice. While this provides theoretical clarity, it leaves open questions about operationalization—how principles such as trust or justice can be technically encoded within machine-learning pipelines or decision-support algorithms (Henman, 2020; Chenou & Valenzuela, 2021). Furthermore, the focus on Islamic ethics, while deliberate, does not capture the full diversity of ethical reasoning across Muslim societies, where legal schools, cultural traditions, and governance structures vary considerably (D'Iribarne, 2008; Fritzen, 2007). Future research should therefore explore empirical and comparative pathways to integrate Islamic moral precepts into algorithmic design and oversight mechanisms, for example through participatory approaches that involve religious scholars, data scientists, and policy actors in co-developing AI governance frameworks (Kariotis & Mir, 2020; Webb et al., 2018). Longitudinal studies examining how Islamic ethical principles influence public perceptions of algorithmic legitimacy in Muslim-majority societies would also enrich the field. Moreover, interdisciplinary collaborations that bridge theology, computer science, and public administration could advance a pragmatic model of "algorithmic stewardship," aligning technological governance with spiritual responsibility.

Ultimately, the research underscores that algorithmic governance must not only be efficient and transparent but also morally intelligible. Without grounding in ethical intention and divine accountability, governance risks devolving into technocratic control devoid of legitimacy. By recovering the

moral vocabulary of Islamic ethics and situating it within the contemporary discourse on AI and governance, this study contributes to a re-enchantment of the digital public sphere—one that reaffirms the primacy of justice, human dignity, and trust in an age increasingly governed by algorithms.

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