

Islamic Law and Human Rights Revisited: Toward a Transformative Framework for Harmonization in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

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The relationship between Islamic law and human rights has long been framed within a polarized discourse of compatibility versus conflict, resulting in analytical stagnation and normative fragmentation. This study challenges such binary frameworks by proposing a transformative paradigm of harmonization that reconceptualizes the interaction between Islamic law and human rights as a dynamic and co-evolutionary process. Drawing on Islamic legal theory, critical human rights scholarship, and socio-legal analysis, this research develops a novel model termed the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF). The findings demonstrate that both Islamic law and human rights are internally plural, interpretive, and historically contingent systems, capable of mutual adaptation and normative transformation. By foregrounding principles such as justice, human dignity, and public welfare, the study argues that Islamic law can function not as an object of compatibility assessment but as an active normative contributor to global human rights discourse. The proposed framework shifts the analytical focus from static comparison to processes of epistemic negotiation, ethical convergence, and institutional adaptation. This study advances a significant theoretical departure from compatibility-based approaches toward co-evolutionary legal transformation, offering a more inclusive and pluralistic foundation for human rights governance in the 21st century.



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Introduction

The relationship between Islamic law and human rights has long been framed within a polarized discourse oscillating between claims of incompatibility and assertions of inherent harmony. Since the emergence of modern international human rights regimes in the mid-twentieth century, debates surrounding Islam and human rights have intensified, often positioning the two as competing normative systems. On one side, critics argue that aspects of Islamic law are fundamentally at odds with universal human rights standards, particularly in areas such as gender equality, freedom of expression, and criminal justice. On the other side, proponents maintain that Islamic law, when properly understood, is inherently compatible with—and even supportive of—human rights principles. While both perspectives have contributed to the discourse, they remain trapped within a binary framework that limits deeper theoretical engagement and constructive dialogue.

This binary framing has significant implications. By reducing the relationship between Islamic law and human rights to a question of compatibility, the discourse tends to overlook the

internal diversity, interpretive dynamism, and historical evolution of both systems. Islamic law is often portrayed as static and monolithic, while human rights are treated as universally fixed and normatively neutral. Such representations obscure the fact that both are complex, evolving traditions shaped by interpretive practices, socio-political contexts, and institutional developments.

In reality, Islamic law (*Shariah*) is not a singular, unchanging code but a dynamic legal and ethical tradition characterized by pluralism and adaptability. Its development has historically involved continuous processes of interpretation (*ijtihad*), contextualization, and engagement with changing social realities. Similarly, the modern human rights framework, despite its claims to universality, has undergone significant transformation since its formalization in instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Debates over cultural relativism, regional interpretations, and the role of non-Western perspectives have highlighted the contested and evolving nature of human rights discourse.

Despite these complexities, much of the existing scholarship continues to rely on static conceptualizations that reinforce dichotomous thinking. The “compatibility approach” seeks to demonstrate alignment between Islamic law and human rights by selectively interpreting religious texts or emphasizing shared values such as justice and dignity. While this approach has been effective in countering claims of incompatibility, it often remains apologetic in tone and limited in scope. It tends to operate within the existing human rights framework without critically examining its underlying assumptions or power dynamics.

Conversely, the “conflict approach” emphasizes tensions between Islamic law and human rights, often highlighting specific legal provisions or practices as evidence of incompatibility. This perspective frequently adopts a universalist stance that privileges certain interpretations of human rights while marginalizing alternative normative frameworks. As a result, it risks reinforcing a hierarchical relationship in which Islamic law is positioned as needing reform or adaptation to meet externally defined standards.

Both approaches, despite their differences, share a common limitation: they treat Islamic law and human rights as fixed entities that can be compared in terms of similarity or difference. This static comparison fails to capture the dynamic processes through which legal norms are interpreted, negotiated, and transformed over time. It also overlooks the possibility that meaningful engagement between Islamic law and human rights may require not just alignment but mutual transformation.

This study argues that a new conceptual framework is needed—one that moves beyond the binary logic of compatibility versus conflict and instead reconceptualizes the relationship between Islamic law and human rights as a process of transformative harmonization. Such an approach recognizes that both systems are internally diverse and capable of reinterpretation, and that their interaction can generate new normative configurations that transcend existing categories.

The need for this reconceptualization is particularly urgent in the context of the twenty-first century, where globalization, transnational legal interactions, and socio-political transformations have reshaped the landscape of legal governance. Muslim-majority societies are increasingly engaged with international human rights norms through constitutional reforms, judicial decisions, and policy frameworks. At the same time, there is a growing demand for these norms to be grounded in culturally and religiously resonant frameworks that enhance their legitimacy and effectiveness.

Within this context, Islamic legal thought has undergone significant renewal, with scholars emphasizing the importance of ethical objectives and contextual interpretation. The concept of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, which focuses on the higher purposes of Islamic law—such as justice, human dignity, and public welfare—has gained prominence as a tool for addressing contemporary challenges. This purposive approach allows for a more flexible and principled engagement with human rights, moving beyond literalist interpretations toward a value-based framework.

At the same time, critical human rights scholarship has questioned the universality and neutrality of existing human rights frameworks, highlighting their historical roots and the influence of Western legal and political traditions. Scholars have called for a more inclusive and pluralistic approach to human rights that incorporates diverse cultural and normative perspectives. This creates an opportunity for Islamic legal thought to contribute to the ongoing evolution of human rights discourse, not as an object of comparison but as an active participant in shaping global norms.

However, despite these developments, there remains a lack of a coherent theoretical model that captures the dynamic interaction between Islamic law and human rights. Existing studies tend to focus either on doctrinal analysis or on specific case studies, without providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how these systems can engage in a process of mutual transformation.

This study addresses this gap by proposing the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF), a conceptual model that reconceptualizes harmonization as a dynamic process involving three key dimensions: epistemic negotiation, ethical convergence, and institutional adaptation. Unlike traditional approaches that seek to reconcile differences through alignment or compromise, the THF model emphasizes the co-evolution of legal systems through interaction and reinterpretation.

Epistemic negotiation refers to the process through which different knowledge systems—Islamic legal tradition and modern human rights discourse—engage in dialogue, challenge each other's assumptions, and generate new understandings. This dimension recognizes that both systems are interpretive and subject to internal debate, allowing for the possibility of transformation from within.

Ethical convergence focuses on the identification and development of shared normative principles, such as justice, dignity, and equality, that can serve as a basis for harmonization. Rather than imposing one system onto another, this approach seeks to build common ground through mutual recognition of values.

Institutional adaptation involves the translation of these shared principles into legal and governance structures, including constitutional provisions, judicial practices, and policy frameworks. This dimension highlights the importance of institutional mechanisms in shaping the practical realization of harmonization.

By integrating these dimensions, the THF model provides a more dynamic and process-oriented understanding of the relationship between Islamic law and human rights. It shifts the focus from static comparison to ongoing interaction, emphasizing the potential for both systems to evolve through engagement.

The central research problem of this study is the inadequacy of existing frameworks in capturing the dynamic and transformative nature of the Islamic law–human rights relationship. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions: How can the relationship between

Islamic law and human rights be reconceptualized beyond binary frameworks of compatibility and conflict? What are the key processes through which these systems interact and influence each other? And how can a transformative approach contribute to more inclusive and effective human rights governance?

To address these questions, this study adopts a qualitative conceptual approach, drawing on Islamic legal theory, critical human rights scholarship, and socio-legal analysis. Rather than focusing on a specific jurisdiction, it develops a generalizable framework that can be applied across diverse contexts, while remaining sensitive to local variations.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it advances the theoretical discourse on Islamic law and human rights by introducing a new framework that emphasizes transformation rather than comparison. Second, it contributes to human rights scholarship by incorporating Islamic legal perspectives into global debates, thereby promoting a more inclusive and pluralistic understanding of human rights. Third, it provides a conceptual foundation for policymakers, legal practitioners, and scholars seeking to develop context-sensitive approaches to human rights governance in Muslim societies.

Ultimately, this study argues that the future of the Islamic law–human rights relationship lies not in proving compatibility or asserting difference, but in fostering a process of co-evolutionary transformation. By moving beyond binary thinking and embracing a dynamic framework of harmonization, it is possible to create a more nuanced and constructive dialogue between these two important normative traditions in the twenty-first century.

Literature Review

The Compatibility Approach: Harmonization through Interpretation

The compatibility approach seeks to demonstrate that Islamic law and human rights are fundamentally aligned, emphasizing shared values such as justice, dignity, and equality. Scholars working within this paradigm argue that apparent tensions arise from misinterpretations of Islamic sources or from culturally contingent practices rather than from the core principles of Shariah itself.

A central strategy within this approach is the reinterpretation of Islamic legal texts through contextual and purposive methodologies. Scholars such as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im advocate for an internal reform of Islamic law that prioritizes universal ethical principles over historically contingent rulings. This perspective often draws on concepts such as *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and *Maqasid al-Shariah* to argue that Islamic law possesses inherent flexibility and can be aligned with contemporary human rights norms.

While the compatibility approach has been influential in promoting dialogue and reducing tensions, it faces several limitations. First, it often adopts a defensive posture, seeking to “prove” compatibility rather than critically engaging with both systems. Second, it tends to operate within the existing human rights framework without questioning its epistemological foundations. As a result, Islamic law is frequently positioned as needing to adapt to external standards, reinforcing an asymmetrical relationship between the two systems.

The Conflict Approach: Incompatibility and Normative Tension

In contrast, the conflict approach emphasizes the structural differences between Islamic law and modern human rights frameworks. Scholars in this tradition argue that certain aspects of Islamic law—particularly those related to gender roles, criminal punishments, and freedom of religion—are fundamentally incompatible with international human rights standards.

This perspective is often grounded in a universalist understanding of human rights, which assumes that these rights are universally applicable and normatively superior. From this viewpoint, deviations from established human rights norms are seen as deficiencies that require reform or correction. Islamic law, in this context, is frequently portrayed as rigid, pre-modern, and resistant to change.

However, the conflict approach has been widely critiqued for its reductionist tendencies. By focusing on specific legal provisions without considering broader interpretive traditions, it risks oversimplifying Islamic law and ignoring its internal diversity. Moreover, it often fails to acknowledge the contested and evolving nature of human rights themselves. Critics argue that this approach reinforces a hierarchical and Eurocentric perspective, marginalizing alternative normative systems and limiting the possibility of meaningful dialogue.

Beyond the Binary: Critical and Pluralist Perspectives

Recognizing the limitations of both compatibility and conflict paradigms, a growing body of scholarship has sought to move beyond this binary framework. These perspectives emphasize the dynamic, interpretive, and socially embedded nature of both Islamic law and human rights.

Critical scholars such as Wael B. Hallaq argue that the relationship between Islamic law and modern legal systems cannot be understood without considering the broader context of state formation, colonial history, and power relations. This perspective highlights how the institutionalization of Islamic law within modern states often transforms its epistemological foundations, raising questions about authenticity and legitimacy.

Similarly, socio-legal approaches focus on how human rights norms are interpreted and applied in different cultural contexts. Rather than treating human rights as fixed and universal, these scholars emphasize processes of translation, negotiation, and adaptation. This perspective opens up space for understanding how Islamic legal principles and human rights norms can interact in practice, producing hybrid forms of legal governance.

These emerging approaches shift the focus from abstract comparison to process-oriented analysis, highlighting the importance of context, agency, and institutional dynamics. However, while they offer valuable insights, they often lack a unified conceptual framework that can systematically explain the interaction between Islamic law and human rights.

The Role of Maqasid al-Shariah in Human Rights Discourse

An important development in contemporary Islamic legal scholarship is the increasing emphasis on *Maqasid al-Shariah* as a framework for engaging with human rights. By focusing on the higher objectives of Islamic law—such as justice, human dignity, and public welfare—Maqasid provides a normative basis for aligning Islamic legal principles with broader ethical concerns.

Scholars such as Jasser Auda have argued that Maqasid offers a systems-oriented approach that is inherently compatible with modern governance and human rights discourse. This approach

emphasizes flexibility, contextualization, and the prioritization of outcomes over formal rules, making it particularly relevant for addressing contemporary challenges.

However, while Maqasid has been widely invoked as a tool for harmonization, its application often remains underdeveloped at the conceptual level. Many studies refer to Maqasid in general terms without articulating how it can be systematically integrated into human rights frameworks. This highlights the need for a more structured approach that moves beyond rhetorical alignment toward operational integration.

Identifying the Gap: From Compatibility to Transformation

The review of existing literature reveals a significant theoretical gap. While compatibility approaches seek alignment and conflict approaches emphasize divergence, both operate within a static framework that treats Islamic law and human rights as fixed entities. Even more recent critical and pluralist perspectives, although more dynamic, lack a comprehensive model for understanding how these systems can engage in a process of mutual transformation.

This study addresses this gap by proposing the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF). Unlike existing approaches, THF conceptualizes harmonization not as a static outcome but as a dynamic process of co-evolution. It emphasizes three key mechanisms: epistemic negotiation, ethical convergence, and institutional adaptation.

By focusing on these processes, THF moves beyond the limitations of existing paradigms and provides a more flexible and inclusive framework for analyzing the relationship between Islamic law and human rights.

Synthesis

In summary, the literature demonstrates that while significant progress has been made in understanding the relationship between Islamic law and human rights, existing approaches remain constrained by binary thinking and static conceptualizations. Compatibility and conflict paradigms offer partial insights but fail to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of legal interaction.

This study builds on emerging critical and pluralist perspectives to propose a new framework that reconceptualizes harmonization as a transformative process. By doing so, it contributes to both Islamic legal studies and human rights scholarship, offering a more nuanced and constructive approach to one of the most important legal debates of the twenty-first century.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative conceptual research design aimed at reconstructing the relationship between Islamic law and human rights through a transformative and process-oriented framework. Rather than relying on empirical data or case-specific analysis, the research focuses on normative inquiry, critical legal analysis, and interdisciplinary synthesis to address the limitations of existing binary paradigms. This methodological approach is appropriate given the theoretical nature of the research problem, which seeks to develop a new conceptual model—namely the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF).

The methodological foundation of this study is structured around three interrelated approaches: normative-legal analysis, critical discourse analysis, and conceptual framework

construction. These approaches are integrated to produce a coherent and innovative theoretical contribution.

First, the study employs normative-legal analysis to examine the foundational principles of both Islamic law and international human rights. This involves engaging with key concepts within Islamic legal theory—such as *Shariah*, *ijtihad*, and *Maqasid al-Shariah*—as well as core principles of human rights, including universality, equality, and human dignity. The purpose of this stage is not to compare specific legal provisions, but to identify underlying normative structures that shape each system. Through this analysis, Islamic law is approached as a dynamic ethical-legal tradition, while human rights are treated as a historically evolving normative framework rather than a fixed universal standard.

Second, the study applies critical discourse analysis to examine how the relationship between Islamic law and human rights has been constructed within existing scholarship. This involves analyzing dominant narratives—particularly the compatibility and conflict paradigms—and identifying their underlying assumptions, epistemological biases, and limitations. The analysis pays particular attention to how power relations, historical contexts, and intellectual traditions influence the framing of the debate. By critically engaging with these discourses, the study seeks to uncover the conceptual constraints that have shaped current understandings and to open space for alternative perspectives.

Third, the research develops a normative-conceptual framework, referred to as the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF). This framework is constructed through a process of abstraction, synthesis, and systematization. Initially, key insights derived from normative analysis and critical discourse are distilled into core analytical dimensions. These dimensions are then organized into a structured model consisting of three interconnected processes: epistemic negotiation, ethical convergence, and institutional adaptation.

The epistemic negotiation process refers to the interaction between different knowledge systems, where assumptions are questioned, and new interpretive possibilities emerge. The ethical convergence process focuses on identifying shared normative principles that can serve as a basis for harmonization. The institutional adaptation process examines how these principles can be translated into legal and governance structures in practice. Together, these processes form a dynamic model that captures the evolving relationship between Islamic law and human rights.

To ensure analytical rigor, the study adopts a critical-analytical stance throughout all stages of the research. Existing frameworks are not treated as neutral or complete but are examined for their conceptual limitations and normative assumptions. This allows the study to move beyond descriptive analysis and to propose a transformative theoretical alternative.

In addition, the study incorporates an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing from Islamic legal studies, international law, political theory, and socio-legal scholarship. This integration is essential for capturing the complexity of the Islamic law–human rights relationship, which cannot be fully understood within a single disciplinary framework. By combining these perspectives, the research provides a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of legal harmonization in contemporary contexts.

It is important to note that this study is positioned as a foundational theoretical inquiry. The THF model is intended to serve as a conceptual basis for future empirical research, policy development, and comparative analysis. As such, the validity of the study lies in its theoretical

coherence, explanatory power, and relevance to contemporary legal challenges rather than in empirical generalization.

In summary, this study employs a qualitative conceptual methodology that integrates normative-legal analysis, critical discourse analysis, and framework construction to develop the Transformative Harmonization Framework. This approach enables the research to move beyond binary debates and to offer a novel, dynamic, and theoretically robust model for understanding the relationship between Islamic law and human rights in the twenty-first century.

Results and Discussion

The Limits of Binary Paradigms: Compatibility vs. Conflict

The first major finding of this study is the inadequacy of the dominant compatibility and conflict approaches in capturing the complexity of the Islamic law–human rights relationship. Both paradigms, despite their differences, share a common structural limitation: they treat Islamic law and human rights as fixed and comparable entities.

The compatibility approach tends to selectively interpret Islamic sources to demonstrate alignment with human rights norms, often resulting in an apologetic stance that reinforces the normative supremacy of existing human rights frameworks. Conversely, the conflict approach emphasizes divergence, frequently portraying Islamic law as incompatible with universal standards and in need of reform. While these approaches provide important insights, they remain confined within a static analytical framework that limits deeper theoretical engagement.

This study finds that such binary thinking obscures the interpretive dynamism of both Islamic law and human rights. It fails to account for the fact that both systems are internally contested, historically contingent, and open to reinterpretation. As a result, the debate becomes reductive, focusing on alignment or divergence rather than on the processes through which legal norms evolve.

Reframing the Relationship: Toward Co-Evolutionary Legal Transformation

The second key finding proposes a shift from binary comparison to co-evolutionary transformation. Instead of asking whether Islamic law is compatible with human rights, this study suggests that both systems should be understood as mutually constitutive and capable of transformation through interaction.

This reframing recognizes that Islamic law is not a monolithic system but a pluralistic tradition shaped by diverse interpretations and methodologies. Similarly, human rights are not static universal norms but evolving constructs influenced by political, cultural, and intellectual developments. The interaction between these systems, therefore, is not a one-way process of adaptation but a reciprocal engagement that can reshape both.

This perspective opens up new possibilities for understanding harmonization—not as a final state of alignment but as an ongoing process of negotiation and transformation.

The Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF)

The central result of this study is the development of the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF), which provides a structured model for understanding the dynamic interaction between Islamic law and human rights. The framework consists of three interrelated processes:

1. *Epistemic Negotiation: Engaging Knowledge Systems*

Epistemic negotiation refers to the interaction between different systems of knowledge and interpretation. In this context, Islamic legal theory and human rights discourse engage in a process of dialogue that challenges underlying assumptions and expands interpretive possibilities.

This study finds that both systems possess internal mechanisms for reinterpretation. In Islamic law, tools such as *ijtihad* and *maqasid* allow for contextual adaptation. In human rights discourse, debates on cultural relativism and pluralism highlight the need for inclusivity and contextual sensitivity. Epistemic negotiation, therefore, enables both systems to move beyond rigid interpretations and to develop more nuanced understandings.

2. Ethical Convergence: Identifying Shared Normative Foundations

The second dimension of the THF is ethical convergence, which focuses on the identification of shared values that can serve as a basis for harmonization. The study finds that key principles such as justice, human dignity, and social welfare are present in both Islamic law and human rights frameworks.

Rather than imposing one system onto the other, ethical convergence emphasizes mutual recognition of these shared values. For example, the concept of human dignity (*karamah*) in Islamic thought aligns closely with the foundational principle of dignity in human rights law. Similarly, the emphasis on justice (*adl*) provides a common normative ground for evaluating legal practices.

This convergence does not eliminate differences but provides a normative bridge that facilitates constructive engagement.

3. Institutional Adaptation: Translating Norms into Practice

The third dimension, institutional adaptation, examines how normative convergence is translated into legal and governance structures. This includes constitutional reforms, judicial interpretations, legislative processes, and policy frameworks.

The study finds that institutional mechanisms play a critical role in shaping the practical outcomes of harmonization. For instance, courts may reinterpret legal provisions to align with both Islamic principles and human rights standards, while policymakers may design laws that reflect hybrid normative frameworks.

Institutional adaptation highlights that harmonization is not purely theoretical but must be embedded in concrete legal practices.

Theoretical Contribution: From Compatibility to Transformation

One of the most significant contributions of this study is the shift from compatibility discourse to transformative harmonization. Traditional approaches focus on whether Islamic law can be aligned with human rights, whereas the THF model emphasizes how both systems can evolve through interaction.

This represents a paradigmatic shift:

- a) From comparison → interaction
- b) From alignment → transformation
- c) From static norms → dynamic processes

By reframing harmonization as a co-evolutionary process, this study expands the scope of both Islamic legal scholarship and human rights theory.

Comparison with Existing Approaches

Compared to existing frameworks, the THF model offers several advantages:

1. **Dynamic Perspective**
Unlike static models, THF captures the evolving nature of legal systems.
2. **Epistemic Inclusivity**
It recognizes multiple knowledge systems and avoids hierarchical assumptions.
3. **Normative Depth**
The framework is grounded in shared ethical principles rather than superficial alignment.
4. **Practical Applicability**
By incorporating institutional adaptation, it connects theory with practice.

At the same time, the model addresses limitations in both compatibility and conflict approaches, offering a more balanced and comprehensive perspective.

Implications for Global Human Rights Governance

The findings of this study have important implications:

1. **Repositioning Islamic Law**
Islamic law can be understood as an active contributor to global human rights discourse, rather than as an object of evaluation.
2. **Promoting Pluralism**
The THF framework supports a more inclusive understanding of human rights that accommodates diverse normative traditions.
3. **Enhancing Legitimacy**
By grounding human rights in culturally and religiously resonant frameworks, the model enhances their acceptance and effectiveness in Muslim societies.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is conceptual and does not include empirical validation. Future research should:

- a) Apply the THF model in specific legal contexts
- b) Conduct comparative case studies across different countries
- c) Explore the role of emerging technologies in shaping legal harmonization

Synthesis

In summary, the results demonstrate that the relationship between Islamic law and human rights cannot be adequately understood through binary paradigms. The Transformative Harmonization Framework provides a dynamic and process-oriented model that captures the complexity of legal interaction in the contemporary world.

Conclusion

This study has revisited the longstanding debate on the relationship between Islamic law and human rights by critically moving beyond the entrenched binary of compatibility versus conflict. It has demonstrated that both dominant paradigms, while influential, are limited in their capacity to capture the dynamic, interpretive, and evolving nature of legal systems. By treating Islamic law and human rights as fixed and comparable entities, these approaches obscure the processes

through which legal norms are negotiated, reinterpreted, and transformed in contemporary contexts.

In response, this study has proposed the Transformative Harmonization Framework (THF) as a new theoretical model that reconceptualizes harmonization as a co-evolutionary process. Through its three core dimensions—epistemic negotiation, ethical convergence, and institutional adaptation—the THF framework offers a more comprehensive and process-oriented understanding of how Islamic law and human rights interact. Rather than seeking to align one system with the other, the framework emphasizes mutual engagement, normative dialogue, and adaptive transformation.

The findings of this study highlight that Islamic law possesses the conceptual flexibility and ethical depth necessary to engage constructively with human rights discourse. Concepts such as justice (*‘adl*), human dignity (*karamah*), and public welfare (*maslahah*) provide a strong normative foundation for bridging the two systems. At the same time, the study underscores that human rights themselves are not static or universally neutral but are subject to ongoing reinterpretation and contextualization. This mutual dynamism creates the possibility for a more inclusive and pluralistic framework of global legal governance.

Theoretically, this research contributes to both Islamic legal studies and human rights scholarship by introducing a shift from compatibility discourse to transformative interaction. It challenges hierarchical and reductionist assumptions, positioning Islamic law not as a passive subject of evaluation but as an active and legitimate contributor to the evolution of human rights norms. In doing so, it expands the analytical scope of legal pluralism and normative theory, offering a new lens for understanding legal harmonization in a globalized world.

Practically, the THF framework has important implications for policymakers, legal practitioners, and scholars. It suggests that efforts to harmonize Islamic law and human rights should focus on fostering dialogue, identifying shared ethical principles, and developing institutional mechanisms that reflect both normative traditions. Such an approach can enhance the legitimacy, acceptance, and effectiveness of human rights frameworks in Muslim societies, while also enriching global human rights discourse with diverse perspectives.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges its limitations. As a conceptual inquiry, the proposed framework has not been empirically tested across specific legal systems or jurisdictions. The operationalization of epistemic negotiation, ethical convergence, and institutional adaptation requires further exploration through case studies, comparative research, and policy analysis. Future research should also examine how emerging global challenges—such as digital governance, migration, and climate justice—affect the interaction between Islamic law and human rights.

In conclusion, this study argues that the future of the Islamic law–human rights relationship lies not in proving compatibility or asserting irreconcilable differences, but in embracing a transformative process of harmonization. By reframing the discourse from static comparison to dynamic interaction, the Transformative Harmonization Framework provides a new pathway for integrating Islamic legal thought into contemporary human rights governance. This approach not only strengthens the relevance of Islamic law in the twenty-first century but also contributes to the development of a more inclusive, dialogical, and ethically grounded global legal order.

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Author Contributions Statement

The author solely contributed to all aspects of this research, including the conceptualization of the study, development of the theoretical framework, literature review, methodological design, analysis and interpretation of findings, and manuscript writing and revision. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

AI Usage Statement

This study acknowledges the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist in language refinement, structural organization, and clarity of expression. The intellectual content of the manuscript, including the research concept, theoretical framework, analysis, and conclusions, was independently developed by the author.

All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed, revised, and validated by the author to ensure originality, accuracy, and adherence to academic standards. No AI tools were used for data generation, empirical analysis, or to replace the author's intellectual contribution. The author takes full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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