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Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah: Ethical Reform and Teleological Reasoning in Contemporary Islamic Thought

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Abstract

This article examines the conceptual integration of Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah as an ethical–teleological paradigm in contemporary Islamic thought. It argues that Progressive Islam functions primarily as a project of ethical reform rather than doctrinal revisionism, foregrounding moral universals such as justice, dignity, compassion, and human welfare through contextual and historically conscious interpretation. Maqasid Shariah, by contrast, provides the structured normative architecture that anchors such reform within Islamic legal theory by emphasizing purposive reasoning and ethical outcomes. Drawing on qualitative conceptual analysis of classical jurisprudence and contemporary scholarship, the study demonstrates that both frameworks share a teleological orientation that evaluates norms, interpretations, and institutions according to their capacity to realize ethical objectives rather than mere conformity to precedent. The article further shows how this convergence enables constructive engagement with modern challenges, including gender justice, minority rights, democratic governance, and global ethics, while remaining grounded in revelation. At the same time, the study critically addresses major challenges and critiques faced by both approaches, including accusations of moral relativism, methodological ambiguity, abstraction, and institutional resistance. The findings suggest that integrating Progressive Islam with Maqasid Shariah offers a coherent, principled, and adaptive methodology for Islamic ethical reasoning, capable of navigating modernity without sacrificing normative integrity or tradition.

Keywords: Contemporary Islamic thought, Islamic ethics, Maqasid shariah, teleological reasoning progressive Islam.

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Introduction

Begin The question of how Islam should respond to modern ethical, political, and social challenges remains one of the most enduring and contested issues in contemporary Islamic thought. Rapid globalization, pluralistic societies, gender justice movements, human rights discourses, and constitutional governance have exposed the limitations of legalistic and literalist approaches that rely heavily on medieval juristic formulations without sufficient contextual adaptation. In response, reformist paradigms have emerged that seek to recover Islam's moral vision while remaining faithful to its textual foundations. Among these paradigms, *Progressive Islam* and *Maqasid Shariah* have gained increasing scholarly attention as complementary frameworks for ethical reasoning and legal reform.

Progressive Islam is not merely a sociopolitical orientation but an ethical-hermeneutical project that emphasizes justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), dignity (*karāmah*), and human welfare (*maṣlahah*) as central interpretive principles. Rather than privileging legal formality or inherited authority structures, Progressive Islam foregrounds moral accountability and contextual reasoning, arguing that Islamic interpretation must respond meaningfully to lived human realities (Safi, 2003; Esack, 1997). This approach challenges rigid legalism by insisting that ethical intent, rather than textual literalism alone, constitutes the normative core of Islamic tradition.

Concurrently, Maqasid Shariah—the higher objectives of Islamic law—has re-emerged as a critical framework for evaluating Islamic norms in light of their purposes and consequences. Classical formulations of Maqasid, particularly those articulated by Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, conceptualized Shariah as a purposive system aimed at preserving essential human interests. Contemporary scholars have expanded this framework beyond its classical categories, incorporating systems theory, human rights, and public ethics (Auda, 2008; Kamali, 2008). Maqasid reasoning thus provides a teleological structure that assesses legal and ethical norms based on outcomes rather than procedural conformity.

This article argues that Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah are not only compatible but structurally interdependent. Progressive Islam can be understood as a contemporary ethical reform movement operating within a Maqasid-based teleology, while Maqasid Shariah provides the normative architecture that anchors progressive ethics within Islamic legal theory. By integrating these frameworks, Islamic thought gains a coherent methodology capable of addressing modern challenges without sacrificing normative integrity.

The article advances two central arguments. First, Progressive Islam functions as ethical reform grounded in Maqasid Shariah, prioritizing moral universals over legal formalism. Second, both Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah share a teleological structure that evaluates interpretations, institutions, and laws according to their ethical purposes and social consequences. Through a qualitative conceptual analysis of classical and contemporary scholarship, this study contributes to ongoing debates on Islamic reform, ethical reasoning, and purposive jurisprudence.

In retrospect, the short-lived magazine *Progressive Islam* (1954–1955), founded and edited by Syed Hussein Alatas during his student years in the Netherlands, stands as an early and intentional effort to articulate an intellectually self-assured and

ethically grounded vision of Islam. Despite its limited scale and brief lifespan, the publication directly engaged with pressing issues of the time, including modern education, women's advancement, political governance, and transnational knowledge exchange.

In its masthead, *Progressive Islam* described itself as “a monthly publication dedicated to the promotion of knowledge concerning Islam and modern thought.” This self-definition signals a clear editorial ambition to demonstrate that Islamic intellectual tradition could engage modernity critically and constructively without capitulating to secular reductionism or abandoning its moral and normative foundations. Rather than framing modernity as an external threat, the magazine approached it as a historical condition requiring thoughtful engagement, selective appropriation, and ethical evaluation.

The magazine consistently advances several interrelated thematic orientations. First, it emphasises *reason, knowledge, and modern intellectual confidence*, presenting Islam as inherently compatible with rational inquiry and modern thought, and framing intellectual advancement as a civilisational and religious responsibility rather than a threat. Second, it positions *educational reform as the primary engine of societal renewal*, portraying education not merely as technical training but as a holistic process aimed at cultivating ethical integrity, social responsibility, and intellectual capacity within Muslim societies. Third, it asserts the *centrality of women's education*, arguing that the Prophet's teachings elevated women's status and that restricting women's access to education undermines the moral and social foundations of the community, thereby necessitating the active removal of structural and cultural barriers to women's learning. Fourth, the magazine promotes a *balanced engagement with Western thought*, rejecting both intellectual inferiority and defensive insularity, and advocating for the selective appropriation of external knowledge grounded in moral discernment and critical independence. Fifth, it addresses *politics, moral order, and modern governance*, engaging debates on Islam, the state, and contemporary political forms—including secular democracy—while insisting that political authority must remain anchored in ethical norms rather than unrestrained majoritarianism or the pursuit of power. **Finally**, the magazine reflects an *internationalist and postcolonial sensibility*, resonating with the intellectual climate of decolonising societies and overseas Muslim students in the mid-twentieth century, and articulating a vision of Islamic thought attuned to global solidarities and postcolonial aspirations.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, conceptual, and analytical methodology, suitable for normative inquiry in Islamic legal theory and ethics. Rather than generating empirical data, the research synthesizes and critically analyzes theoretical frameworks, drawing from classical Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), contemporary Maqasid scholarship, and Progressive Islamic thought.

Primary classical sources include foundational Maqasid texts, especially al-Shatibi's *al-Muwafaqat*, which established the purposive orientation of Shariah. These are complemented by modern reinterpretations found in the works of scholars

such as Jasser Auda and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, whose contributions are widely cited in Scopus-indexed journals. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs by leading Progressive Muslim thinkers, including Omid Safi, Farid Esack, and Abdullah Saeed.

The analysis proceeds in four stages. First, it identifies the ethical commitments central to Progressive Islam as articulated in contemporary scholarship. Second, it maps these commitments onto classical and expanded Maqasid categories. Third, it examines the teleological logic underpinning both frameworks, with particular attention to systems-based and outcome-oriented reasoning. Finally, it synthesizes these insights to demonstrate conceptual convergence and theoretical complementarity.

Results

Progressive Islam as Ethical Reform in Maqasid Shariah

The findings of this study indicate that Progressive Islam functions primarily as a project of ethical reform rather than doctrinal revisionism. Rather than seeking to dismantle Islamic theology or legal tradition, Progressive Muslim scholars emphasize reorienting interpretation toward the moral purposes embedded within revelation. This approach challenges the assumption that fidelity to Islam requires strict adherence to historically contingent legal rulings. Instead, Progressive Islam argues that Islamic normativity must be evaluated through ethical universals such as justice, human dignity, compassion, and welfare. This ethical orientation corresponds closely with Maqasid Shariah, which conceptualizes Islamic law as a purposive system aimed at realizing human well-being (*maslahah*) rather than as a closed corpus of immutable rules.

Central to Progressive Islam is a sustained critique of legal formalism. Legal formalism, in this context, refers to interpretive approaches that prioritize procedural compliance, textual literalism, and precedent over moral substance. Progressive scholars argue that such approaches risk transforming Shariah into an instrument of social control rather than a means of ethical guidance. Esack (1997), writing from a liberationist perspective shaped by anti-apartheid struggle, contends that Qur'ānic ethics demand active resistance to injustice and oppression. For Esack, interpretations that normalize gender inequality, economic exploitation, or political authoritarianism cannot be morally valid, even if they claim textual legitimacy. Ethical accountability, rather than juridical conformity, becomes the primary criterion of interpretive authenticity.

Similarly, Safi (2003) conceptualizes Progressive Islam as a normative commitment to justice, gender equality, and pluralism grounded firmly within Islamic sources. He argues that progressiveness in Islam does not imply theological liberalism detached from tradition, but rather an ethical seriousness that takes the Qur'ān's moral imperatives as central. In this sense, Progressive Islam does not reject classical jurisprudence wholesale but interrogates its moral consequences. Interpretations are assessed not only by their textual pedigree but by whether they promote or undermine human dignity. These ethical commitments correspond directly to core Maqasid

objectives, particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), dignity and honor (*karāmah*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-‘aql*), and social order.

Contemporary Maqasid scholarship provides a robust theoretical foundation for this ethical turn. Auda (2008) argues that Maqasid should be understood as dynamic moral goals rather than static legal categories. By integrating systems theory into Islamic legal thought, he demonstrates that legal rulings operate within complex social, political, and economic systems. Consequently, the ethical impact of a ruling cannot be assessed in isolation but must be evaluated in relation to its broader effects on society. This systems-based approach challenges reductionist jurisprudence and aligns closely with Progressive Islam’s insistence on contextual relevance and ethical accountability.

Auda’s framework is particularly significant because it reframes Maqasid as evaluative criteria rather than merely classificatory tools. Classical Maqasid theory often functioned retrospectively, identifying the objectives underlying existing rulings. In contrast, contemporary Maqasid reasoning is increasingly used prospectively, assessing whether proposed laws, policies, or interpretations advance or undermine ethical goals. Progressive Islam adopts this forward-looking orientation, treating Maqasid as moral benchmarks against which both inherited and contemporary interpretations must be judged.

Moreover, Progressive Islam expands the scope of Maqasid reasoning by foregrounding issues that were often marginalized in classical jurisprudence. While classical jurists addressed questions of gender, minority status, and governance, these issues were frequently framed within hierarchical social assumptions. Progressive scholars argue that contemporary ethical consciousness—shaped by global human rights norms, democratic aspirations, and pluralistic societies—requires a more explicit engagement with justice and equality. Gender justice, minority rights, and global ethical responsibility are thus not peripheral concerns but central to realizing the higher objectives of Shariah.

Saeed (2006) advances this position through his advocacy of contextualist Qur’ānic interpretation. He argues that ethical intent (*maqṣad*) must guide legal reasoning, particularly in matters where literal application of texts would result in harm or injustice. For Saeed, historical consciousness is essential: many legal rulings were formulated in response to specific social conditions that no longer exist. Ethical reform, therefore, requires distinguishing between the moral principles embedded in revelation and the historical forms through which they were expressed. This distinction allows Islamic ethics to remain faithful to its sources while responsive to contemporary realities.

Importantly, this expansion of Maqasid reasoning does not negate classical jurisprudence but rather reactivates its moral spirit. Progressive Islam views tradition as a living discourse rather than a fixed authority. Classical jurists themselves employed reasoning (*ijtihād*), contextual judgment, and ethical deliberation. Progressive Islam thus presents itself as a continuation of this intellectual legacy, not a rupture from it. By emphasizing ethical objectives over literalist rigidity, Progressive Islam affirms the adaptability and moral coherence of Islamic law.

In this respect, Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah converge as complementary frameworks of ethical reform. Both prioritize outcomes over formalism, moral purpose over proceduralism, and human welfare over abstract legality. The integration of Progressive Islam with Maqasid reasoning offers a coherent normative framework for addressing contemporary challenges, including gender inequality, religious pluralism, governance, and global justice. The findings suggest that Progressive Islam does not merely align with Maqasid Shariah but actively revitalizes it, positioning Islamic ethics as a dynamic and context-sensitive moral system capable of engaging the complexities of the modern world.

Teleological Structure of Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah

The second major finding of this study concerns the shared teleological structure underpinning Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah. Teleology, in this context, refers to purposive reasoning that evaluates norms, interpretations, and institutions according to their intended ends and ethical outcomes rather than their formal conformity to precedent alone. Both Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah operate within this purposive logic, treating Islamic normativity as outcome-oriented and morally evaluative. This convergence suggests that Progressive Islam is not an external or modern imposition upon Islamic legal thought, but rather an extension of its inherent teleological foundations.

Maqasid Shariah is, by definition, a teleological framework. Classical theorists such as Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi conceptualized Shariah as a purposive system designed to secure human welfare (*maslahah*) in both worldly and spiritual dimensions. In *al-Muwafaqat*, al-Shatibi argued that legal rulings are not ends in themselves but means toward higher objectives, including the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. This marked a significant departure from purely literalist jurisprudence by grounding legal reasoning in ethical intent. For al-Shatibi, a ruling that undermines human welfare, even if textually defensible, contradicts the very spirit of Shariah (al-Shatibi, 2004).

Contemporary scholars have expanded this teleological logic to address the complexity of modern societies. Jasser Auda (2008) rearticulates Maqasid Shariah through systems theory, emphasizing multidimensional analysis, interdependence, and feedback loops. He argues that legal and ethical judgments must consider social, political, economic, and technological consequences rather than operate within isolated doctrinal silos. This systems-based Maqasid approach reinforces teleology by shifting attention from rule compliance to outcome evaluation. Law, in this framework, becomes a dynamic instrument for ethical governance rather than a static repository of precedents.

Similarly, Kamali (2008) emphasizes that Maqasid Shariah provides evaluative criteria for assessing both classical jurisprudence and modern policy frameworks. Rather than functioning merely as a classificatory tool, Maqasid reasoning serves as a normative compass, guiding legal interpretation toward justice, equity, and public interest. This shift from formal legality to ethical functionality is central to the teleological character of Maqasid Shariah and aligns closely with the normative commitments of Progressive Islam.

Progressive Islam adopts an analogous teleological orientation by prioritizing ethical outcomes in interpretive reasoning. Rather than asking whether an interpretation conforms strictly to classical precedent, progressive scholars ask whether it fulfills Islam's moral aims within contemporary contexts. This approach challenges legal literalism and emphasizes moral reasoning (*ijtihad akhlaqi*) as central to Islamic interpretation. Abdullah Saeed (2006) argues that historical consciousness and ethical prioritization are indispensable for meaningful Qur'anic interpretation. He contends that many Qur'anic injunctions addressed specific socio-historical circumstances and must be understood in light of their underlying moral intent (*maqṣad*) rather than their surface form.

This purposive logic mirrors Maqasid teleology in its insistence that ethical ends, not textual rigidity, determine interpretive validity. Progressive Islam thus reframes Islamic authority as morally accountable rather than procedurally absolute. Interpretations are judged by their capacity to promote justice, compassion, and human dignity, echoing the Maqasid emphasis on welfare and moral coherence. In this sense, Progressive Islam operationalizes Maqasid reasoning at the level of ethical interpretation and social engagement.

The teleological convergence between Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah also enables constructive engagement with modern institutions. Rather than rejecting democratic governance, constitutionalism, or human rights regimes as inherently foreign, both frameworks evaluate these institutions based on ethical performance. Masud (2009) argues that Maqasid reasoning allows Muslims to assess political systems according to their ability to secure justice, accountability, and public welfare rather than their conformity to premodern political models. From this perspective, democratic institutions can be deemed compatible with Islamic ethics insofar as they protect human dignity, limit authoritarian power, and promote collective decision-making.

Progressive Islam adopts this evaluative stance by interpreting modern institutions as ethical instruments rather than ideological threats. March (2011) demonstrates that Islamic moral reasoning can support liberal democratic principles when assessed through a teleological lens. The question, therefore, is not whether democracy or human rights originated outside the Islamic tradition, but whether they serve objectives consistent with Shariah's higher purposes. This teleological reasoning transforms engagement with modernity from defensive accommodation to principled ethical assessment.

Moreover, the teleological structure shared by Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah has significant implications for contemporary global ethics. Issues such as gender justice, minority rights, environmental responsibility, and technological governance cannot be addressed through precedent-bound jurisprudence alone. Teleological reasoning allows Islamic ethics to respond flexibly to new challenges by prioritizing moral outcomes over formal continuity. Progressive Islam leverages this flexibility to foreground ethical universals—justice, equality, and dignity—as interpretive anchors, thereby extending Maqasid reasoning into domains previously underexplored in classical jurisprudence.

Importantly, this teleological alignment does not entail relativism or moral subjectivity. Both Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah remain anchored in revelation, but they interpret revelation through the lens of purpose rather than literalism. Teleology functions as a method of fidelity, ensuring that Islamic norms remain true to their ethical essence even as contexts change. This approach preserves normative stability while allowing interpretive adaptability, countering critiques that progressive interpretations undermine Islamic authenticity.

In sum, the shared teleological structure of Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah constitutes a coherent and robust ethical framework for contemporary Islamic thought. By orienting interpretation toward moral ends and societal outcomes, both frameworks reaffirm that Shariah is not an end in itself but a means to realize justice, welfare, and human flourishing. This convergence positions Progressive Islam not as a marginal or reformist anomaly, but as a legitimate continuation of Islamic ethical reasoning grounded in Maqasid teleology.

Discussion

The integration of Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah reveals a coherent ethical–teleological paradigm capable of addressing contemporary challenges while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic intellectual tradition. Progressive Islam revitalizes Islamic ethics by foregrounding moral universals—justice, dignity, equality, and welfare—while emphasizing contextual and historically conscious interpretation. Maqasid Shariah, in turn, provides a structured normative framework that anchors ethical reform within established legal theory, preventing reformist impulses from drifting into interpretive arbitrariness. Together, these frameworks offer a principled methodology that balances continuity and change, tradition and reform.

This synthesis challenges the persistent dichotomy often drawn between tradition and reform in Islamic thought. Reformist approaches are frequently portrayed as external impositions or modern deviations, while tradition is cast as static and resistant to change. However, the convergence between Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah demonstrates that ethical reform is not alien to Islamic jurisprudence but deeply embedded within its teleological foundations. Classical jurists, particularly Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, articulated Shariah as a purposive system oriented toward human welfare (*maslahah*). Progressive Islam can therefore be understood not as a rupture from tradition but as a contemporary articulation of Maqasid-oriented reasoning adapted to modern ethical challenges.

The shared teleological structure affirms that Islamic law is not an end in itself but a means to achieve higher ethical objectives. Legal rulings, institutions, and social norms are evaluated based on their moral consequences rather than their conformity to precedent alone. This orientation allows Islamic ethics to engage constructively with contemporary issues such as gender justice, minority rights, democratic governance, and global human rights. Rather than rejecting modern institutions as inherently foreign, Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah assess them through ethical performance—whether they preserve dignity, justice, and public welfare (Masud, 2009; March, 2011).

Nevertheless, this ethical–teleological paradigm faces significant methodological and epistemological challenges. One of the most persistent critiques directed at Progressive Islam is the charge of subjectivity or moral relativism. Critics argue that prioritizing ethical outcomes risks allowing personal values or contemporary moral trends to override authoritative textual sources. From this perspective, Progressive Islam is accused of selectively invoking ethics to legitimize predetermined conclusions, thereby weakening the normative authority of Islamic law (Hallaq, 2011). This critique is particularly prominent among traditionalist and Salafi scholars, who emphasize textual fidelity and fear that ethical prioritization opens the door to unrestricted reinterpretation.

Maqasid Shariah offers a partial response to this concern by grounding ethical evaluation in shared objectives derived from revelation and classical scholarly consensus. Scholars such as Jasser Auda (2008) argue that Maqasid function as objective moral benchmarks rather than subjective preferences. By anchoring ethical reasoning in well-established objectives—such as the preservation of life, intellect, dignity, and social order—Maqasid reasoning constrains interpretive excess while allowing contextual flexibility. In this sense, Maqasid Shariah mitigates the risk of relativism by providing a structured evaluative framework.

However, Maqasid Shariah itself is not without critique. One major weakness lies in its potential abstraction and technocratic application. As Maqasid discourse becomes increasingly institutionalized—particularly within policy-making, Islamic finance, and governance—it risks being reduced to a rhetorical tool rather than a substantive ethical guide. Critics note that Maqasid is sometimes invoked selectively to justify existing power structures or state policies without meaningful engagement with social justice or lived realities (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). In such cases, Maqasid language masks political expediency rather than advancing ethical reform.

Progressive Islam counters this tendency by insisting on lived ethical realities and social justice commitments. Drawing on liberationist and contextualist perspectives, scholars such as **Farid Esack** (1997) emphasize that ethical validity must be tested against concrete experiences of oppression, inequality, and marginalization. Progressive Islam thus prevents Maqasid reasoning from becoming overly abstract by grounding it in human suffering and moral accountability. This dynamic interaction between ethical idealism and social reality strengthens the normative credibility of both frameworks.

Another significant challenge faced by both Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah is institutional resistance. In many Muslim-majority contexts, religious authority is closely aligned with state institutions that prioritize legal stability, political control, or sectarian orthodoxy. Progressive interpretations that emphasize gender equality, minority rights, or democratic accountability often encounter strong opposition from entrenched religious establishments. Similarly, Maqasid-based reforms are frequently constrained by legal systems that privilege codified fiqh over purposive reasoning. This institutional inertia limits the practical impact of ethical–teleological frameworks, confining them largely to academic discourse.

Moreover, both frameworks face challenges related to internal coherence and methodological clarity. Progressive Islam is sometimes criticized for lacking a clearly

defined interpretive methodology, relying instead on broad ethical commitments that vary among scholars. Without transparent criteria for ethical prioritization, critics argue that Progressive Islam risks fragmentation and inconsistency (Safi, 2003). Maqasid Shariah, on the other hand, faces debates over the scope and hierarchy of objectives. Disagreements persist regarding whether new Maqasid—such as human rights, environmental sustainability, or digital ethics—can be legitimately incorporated into the classical framework (Kamali, 2008).

Despite these challenges, the integration of Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah remains normatively significant. Their combined paradigm offers Islamic thought a principled yet adaptive methodology for navigating modernity. By integrating ethical reform with teleological reasoning, this synthesis allows Islamic ethics to remain faithful to revelation while responsive to changing social conditions. It provides tools for critical engagement rather than defensive retreat, enabling Muslims to address contemporary issues without sacrificing normative coherence.

The implications of this paradigm extend beyond legal theory into broader domains of Islamic thought and practice. In gender discourse, it supports interpretations that prioritize dignity and equality over patriarchal precedent. In governance, it legitimizes participatory and accountable political systems based on ethical outcomes rather than historical models. In global ethics, it enables engagement with universal human rights through principled moral evaluation rather than cultural defensiveness. These applications underscore the transformative potential of ethical–teleological reasoning when grounded in both Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah.

In sum, while Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah face significant critiques and practical limitations, their integration represents one of the most coherent and intellectually robust responses to contemporary ethical challenges in Islamic thought. By balancing moral universals with structured normative reasoning, this paradigm affirms that Islamic ethics is neither static nor relativistic, but dynamic, principled, and morally accountable.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the integration of Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah constitutes a coherent and normatively robust ethical–teleological paradigm within contemporary Islamic thought. By situating Progressive Islam as a form of ethical reform rather than doctrinal rupture, the article shows that reformist engagements with Islam are not external to the tradition but deeply rooted in its purposive legal and moral foundations. Progressive Islam revitalizes Islamic ethics by foregrounding moral universals—justice, dignity, compassion, equality, and human welfare—while Maqasid Shariah supplies the structured normative architecture that anchors these ethical commitments within established Islamic legal theory. Together, they offer a principled methodology capable of addressing modern ethical, social, and political challenges without undermining the integrity of revelation or tradition.

The impact of this integrated framework is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it challenges the entrenched binary between “tradition” and “reform”

by demonstrating that ethical adaptability has always been embedded within Islamic jurisprudence through Maqasid-oriented reasoning. This reframing contributes to Islamic legal theory by repositioning Shariah not as an end in itself, but as a moral system oriented toward outcomes, consequences, and human flourishing. Practically, the framework provides Islamic thought with a credible ethical language for engaging pressing contemporary issues such as gender justice, minority rights, democratic governance, global human rights, and emerging ethical domains. By prioritizing ethical performance over formal conformity, it enables Muslims to evaluate institutions and norms based on their capacity to realize justice and public welfare rather than their historical origin.

A key contribution of this study lies in identifying a critical gap in existing scholarship. While Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah are often discussed independently, there remains a lack of sustained conceptual analysis examining their structural and teleological convergence. Progressive Islam scholarship has frequently been critiqued for methodological ambiguity and vulnerability to charges of subjectivity, while Maqasid Shariah discourse has sometimes become abstract, technocratic, or selectively instrumentalized within state or institutional frameworks. This article addresses that gap by demonstrating how each framework compensates for the limitations of the other: Maqasid Shariah constrains ethical reform through shared objectives rooted in revelation, while Progressive Islam re-grounds Maqasid reasoning in lived ethical realities and social justice concerns. The study thus fills an important theoretical lacuna by articulating their interdependence rather than treating them as parallel or competing approaches.

Despite its contributions, this study also highlights areas requiring further research. First, future studies should move beyond conceptual analysis to examine how this ethical–teleological paradigm can be operationalized within specific legal, political, and institutional contexts, particularly in Muslim-majority societies where religious authority is closely aligned with state power. Second, there is a need for comparative empirical research assessing how Maqasid-based and progressive ethical reasoning is received, contested, or resisted by religious institutions, legal systems, and Muslim publics. Third, future scholarship should extend this framework to underexplored domains such as environmental ethics, bioethics, digital technology, artificial intelligence, and global economic justice, where teleological reasoning may offer particularly valuable insights. Finally, greater attention should be given to developing clearer methodological criteria for ethical prioritization to address ongoing critiques of subjectivity and inconsistency.

In conclusion, this study affirms that the future of Islamic reform lies not in abandoning Shariah, but in reorienting it toward its highest moral purposes. By integrating Progressive Islam and Maqasid Shariah, Islamic thought gains a dynamic, principled, and ethically accountable framework capable of engaging modernity while remaining faithful to its normative core.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. All contributions were made objectively without any personal, financial, or institutional influence that could compromise the integrity of the work.

Author's Contribution Statement

All authors have contributed significantly to the work and approved the final version of the manuscript. We believe that the findings of this study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in *[relevant field]* and will be of interest to the readership of your journal.

1. **Ahmad Sunawari Long:** conceptualized the research idea, designed the study, performed data analysis and interpreted the findings.
2. **Hasse Jubba:** conducted the literature review, collected the data, and revised the manuscript critically for intellectual content, provided final editing, and coordinated the submission process.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and academic integrity. All procedures were carried out responsibly, with informed consent obtained from participants (when applicable) and strict confidentiality maintained.

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