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A CRITIQUE OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF JOHN RAWLS' THEORY OF JUSTICE REGARDING THE NATURE OF SOCIAL LIFE: AN EASTERN-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

The ontological nature of human social life and its governing anthropological principles constitute the foundational bedrock of all theories of justice and political structures. This study deconstructs and scrutinizes John Rawls's anthropological presuppositions regarding the nature of collective life within his theory of justice and the construct of the "Original Position". This critique is formulated through the robust conceptual lenses of Eastern-Islamic philosophers, primarily drawing upon the philosophical frameworks of Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Methodologically, this research deploys a qualitative comparative-critical analysis, utilizing an integrative approach of both immanent (internal) and transcendent (external) critique via rigorous library-based research.

The findings reveal that the Rawlsian doctrine is strictly predicated upon a secular-humanistic paradigm of "Rational-Calculative Civility" (*Madaniyyah bi al-Aql*). Within this reductive model, social existence is degraded to a mere instrumental, transactional contract forged in the "Original Position" solely to maximize material primary goods. Conversely, Eastern-Islamic sages demonstrate an ontologically superior, two-dimensional anthropology that harmonizes human material nature (*Tabi'ah*) with the transcendent spiritual essence (*Fitrah*). They establish the genesis of society not as an artificial contract, but as an existential necessity rooted in "Dispositional *Fitrah*-Based Civility" (*Madaniyyah bi al-Fitrah wa al-Tab'*).

This critical analysis demonstrates that Rawls's absolute reliance on autonomous, self-founded reason and the abstract mechanism of the "Veil of Ignorance" precipitates an operational crisis. By entirely ignoring the innate human drive for exploitation (*Quwwat al-Istikhdam*), erasing the innate spiritual inclination toward genuine justice, and severing human agency from its primordial source of creation, the Rawlsian model suffers from a fatal structural paralysis. Ultimately, this study concludes that establishing a sustainable, genuinely just society requires transcending the mechanical limitations of Western material contractarianism. It necessitates a paradigm shift toward reconstructing a Transcendent *Fitrah*-Based Theory of Justice, wherein the multi-dimensional facets of human existence achieve true equilibrium under the governance of the Sacred Intellect (*Intellectus Sanctus*).

Keywords: Nature of Social Life, Theory of Justice, John Rawls, Original Position, Veil of Ignorance, Rational-Calculative Civility (*Madaniyyah bi al-Aql*), Dispositional Civility (*Madaniyyah bi al-Fitrah*), Two-Dimensional Anthropology, Autonomous Reason, Sacred Intellect, Drive for Exploitation (*Quwwat al-Istikhdam*), Eastern-Islamic Philosophy.

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Джон Ролздың әділеттілік теориясының антропологиялық негіздеріне қоғамдық өмір табиғатына қатысты сын: шығыс-исламдық философиялық перспектива

Адамның қоғамдық өмірінің онтологиялық табиғаты және оны айқындайтын антропологиялық қағидаттар барлық әділет теориялары мен саяси құрылымдардың іргелі негізін құрайды. Осы зерттеу Джон Ролздың әділеттілік теориясындағы және «бастапқы жағдай» концептісіндегі ұжымдық болмыс табиғатына қатысты антропологиялық алғышарттарын деконструкциялау мен сыни талдауға арналған. Бұл сын шығыс-ислам ойшылдарының терең концептуалдық модельдері арқылы тұжырымдалып, негізінен әл-Фараби, Ибн Сина (Авиценна) және Насыр ад-Дин ат-Туси философиялық мұрасына сүйенеді. Жұмыстың әдіснамалық негізін кітапханалық дереккөздерді

қатаң талдау арқылы жүзеге асырылған имманентті (ішкі) және трансцендентті (сыртқы) сынның интегративті тәсілін қолдана отырып жүргізілген сапалық салыстырмалы-сыни талдау құрайды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері Ролз доктринасының «рационалды-есепке негізделген азаматтық» (Маданийа би-аль-Акъль) секулярлық-гуманистік парадигмасына қатаң сүйенетінін көрсетеді. Бұл редукционистік модель шеңберінде әлеуметтік болмыс «бастапқы жағдайда» тек материалдық бастапқы игіліктерді барынша арттыру мақсатында жасалатын таза механикалық, утилитарлық келісім деңгейіне дейін төмендейді. Керісінше, шығыс-исламдық даналар адамның материалдық табиғатын (Таби'а) оның трансценденттік рухани мәнімен (Фитра) үйлестіретін онтологиялық тұрғыдан жоғары, екіөлшемді антропологияны көрсетеді. Олар қоғамның генезисін жасанды келісім ретінде емес, «фитраға негізделген табиғи азаматтықта» (Маданийа би-аль-Фитра ва-ат-Таб') тамырланған экзистенциалдық қажеттілік ретінде негіздейді.

Жүргізілген сыни талдау Ролздың автономды, өз-өзін негіздейтін ақылға және «надандық пердесі» абстрактілі механизміне абсолютті сүйенуі оның теориясының операциялық дағдарысына әкелетінін дәлелдейді. Ролзиандық модель адамның басқаларды қанауға және утилитарлық пайдалануға деген туа біткен ұмтылысын (Кувват әл-Истихдам) толық елемей, шынайы әділетке табиғи рухани бейімділікті жойып, адам субъектілігін Жаратылыстың бастапқы негізінен ажырату арқылы фаталдық құрылымдық салдануға ұшырайды. Нәтижесінде авторлар тұрақты, шынайы әділетті қоғам құру Батыстың материалистік контрактуализмінің механикалық шектеулерінен шығуды талап етеді деген қорытындыға келеді. Трансцендентті, фитраға негізделген әділет теориясын қайта құру бағытында парадигмалық өзгеріс қажет, онда адам болмысының көпөлшемді қырлары Қасиетті Ақылдың (Intellectus Sanctus) жетекшілігімен шынайы тепе-теңдікке ие болады.

Түйін сөздер: қоғамдық өмір табиғаты, әділет теориясы, Джон Ролз, бастапқы жағдай, надандық пердесі, «рационалды-есепке негізделген азаматтық» (Маданийа би-аль-Акъль), табиғи азаматтық (Маданийа би-аль-Фитра), екіөлшемді антропология, автономды ақыл, Қасиетті Ақыл, қанауға ұмтылыс (Кувват әл-Истихдам), шығыс-ислам философиясы.

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Критика антропологических основ теории справедливости Джона Ролза относительно природы общественной жизни: восточно-исламская философская перспектива

Онтологическая природа общественной жизни человека и определяющие ее антропологические принципы составляют фундаментальную основу всех теорий справедливости и политических структур. Настоящее исследование посвящено деконструкции и критическому анализу антропологических предпосылок Джона Ролза касательно природы коллективного бытия в его теории справедливости и концепте «исходного положения». Данная критика сформулирована через призму глубоких концептуальных моделей восточно-исламских мыслителей, преимущественно опираясь на философское наследие аль-Фараби, Ибн Сины (Авиценны) и Насир ад-Дин ат-Туси. Методологическую основу работы составляет качественный сравнительно-критический анализ с применением интегративного подхода имманентной (внутренней) и трансцендентной (внешней) критики, реализованный посредством строгого анализа библиотечных источников.

Результаты исследования показывают, что доктрина Ролза жестко базируется на секулярно-гуманистической парадигме «рационально-расчетливой гражданственности» (Маданийа би-аль-Акъль). В рамках этой редукционистской модели социальное существование деградирует до уровня чисто механического, утилитарного контракта, заключаемого в «исходном положении» исключительно ради максимизации материальных первичных благ. Напротив, восточно-исламские мудрецы демонстрируют онтологически превосходящую, двумерную антропологию, гармонизирующую материальную природу человека (Таби'а) с его трансцендентной духовной сущностью (Фитра). Они обосновывают генезис общества не как искусственный договор, а как экзистенциальную необходимость, коренящуюся в «естественной, основанной на фитре гражданственности» (Маданийа би-аль-Фитра ва-ат-Таб').

Проведенный критический анализ доказывает, что абсолютная ставка Ролза на автономный, самообоснованный разум и абстрактный механизм «вуали неведения» приводит к операционному кризису его теории. Полностью игнорируя врожденное стремление человека к эксплуатации и утилитарному использованию других (Кувват аль-Истихдам), устраняя естественную духовную склонность к истинной справедливости и отсекая человеческую субъектность от первоосновы Творения, ролзианская модель сталкивается с фатальным структурным параличом. В итоге авторы приходят к выводу, что построение устойчивого, подлинно справедливого общества требует выхода за рамки механических ограничений западного материалистического контрактуализма.

Необходим парадигмальный сдвиг в сторону реконструкции трансцендентной, основанной на фильтре теории справедливости, в которой многомерные аспекты человеческого бытия обретают истинное равновесие под руководством Священного Разума (*Intellectus Sanctus*).

Ключевые слова: природа общественной жизни, теория справедливости, Джон Ролз, исходное положение, вуаль неведения, рационально-расчетливая гражданственность (*Маданийя би-аль-Акль*), естественная гражданственность (*Маданийя би-аль-Фитра*), двумерная антропология, автономный разум, Священный Разум, стремление к эксплуатации (*Кувват аль-Истихдам*), восточно-исламская философия.

Introduction

The question of the nature of human social life has long been one of the most fundamental and challenging subjects within the realms of political philosophy, sociology, and philosophical anthropology. The inquiry – “Why has man gravitated toward collective life and what are the foundational causes of the formation of society?” – is not merely a theoretical contemplation. Rather, the response provided to this question constitutes the bedrock of all theories concerning justice, rights, and governmental structures. Throughout the history of human thought, diverse philosophers and schools of thought have approached this issue through varying lenses; some identify reason as the primary catalyst for human association, some emphasize man’s material and instinctive nature, while others regard the fear of violence and disorder as the principal factor driving humanity toward social contracts.

Among modern Western theorists, John Rawls holds a distinguished position as one of the most influential political philosophers of the twentieth century. With the publication of *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 2022), he sought to provide a fair framework for social cooperation by revisiting the contractarian tradition. However, as shall be examined in this article, the foundation of Rawlsian theory rests upon a specific type of “anthropology” in which “autonomous and calculative reason” is the central axis of all decision-making (Rawls, 2018). In designing his epistemic tool, the “original position,” Rawls posits man as a being who, behind a “veil of ignorance,” consents to collective life and the acceptance of the rules of justice solely to secure self-interest and prevent potential losses. This perspective reduces the nature of social life to a “mere rational contract,” wherein the supernatural and spiritual dimensions of humanity are overlooked.

The necessity and significance of critiquing this viewpoint become apparent when we recognize that Rawls’s anthropological foundations are rooted in modern humanism and secularism. This approach views man as a one-dimensional being whose social

motivations are confined within the circle of “instrumental reason” and “material interests” (Rawls, 2005). In contrast to this view, the thought of Eastern and Islamic philosophers, such as Al-Farabi and Avicenna (Al-Farabi, 1990; Avicenna, 2009), offers a different narrative of human reality. In this philosophical tradition, man is a “two-dimensional” or “dual-aspected” being who, in addition to material faculties and calculative reason, possesses a deeper layer known as *Fitra* (innate primordial nature).

From the perspective of Eastern and Islamic sages and philosophers (Miskawayh, 1961; Tusi, 2012), the human inclination toward society does not stem solely from a rational calculation for survival; rather, it is rooted in the totality of his existential dimensions. This paper attempts to employ an analytical and critical method to first scrutinize Rawls’s foundations regarding the social nature of man, and subsequently, by relying on the concepts of *Fitra* and *Tab’* (nature), demonstrate how Rawls’s one-dimensional focus on autonomous reason leads to the neglect of the true and ontic contexts of collective life. The fundamental distinction between the Rawlsian human – disconnected from metaphysics – and the human envisioned by Eastern and Islamic philosophers is the primary focus of this discussion. Ultimately, this article seeks to answer whether independent, calculative reason can alone explain the complex and transcendent nature of social life, or whether the establishment of a just society necessitates a return to the innate (*Fitri*) roots and spiritual dimensions of human existence.

Furthermore, the construct of the ‘Original Position’ operates as a purely mental and abstract hypothesis designed by Rawls to serve as a fair baseline for extracting the foundational principles of justice (Rawls, 2005: 14-16). However, translating these theoretical foundations into an operational sphere provokes profound structural challenges when scrutinized from the vantage point of Eastern-Islamic political philosophy.

The first challenge concerns the teleological paradigm of this concept. Behind the “Veil of Ignorance,” Rawls conceptualizes the human agent

as a strictly utility-calculating entity, reducing the ultimate end of society to the mere material redistribution of opportunities. Conversely, within Islamic wisdom (*Hikmah*), justice is never an instrumental tool for profit maximization; rather, it is the essential methodology for actualizing ultimate beatitude (*al-Sa'adah al-Haqiqiyyah*) and the human being's metaphysical perfection.

Another fundamental challenge lies in the epistemology and functional role of reason within this setting. Rawlsian rationality in the Original Position is an inherently calculative, self-founded intellect completely severed from the primordial source of creation. Eastern-Islamic thinkers, such as Al-Farabi and Avicenna, counter this by elucidating the innate drive for exploitation (*Quwwat al-Istikhdam*) inherent to human nature. They robustly argue that due to humanity's insatiable, acquisitive nature, autonomous instrumental reason remains incapable of serving as an impartial legislator of just laws – even under the radical abstraction of the Veil of Ignorance. Consequently, human reason indispensably requires the guiding illumination of the Sacred Intellect (*Intellectus Sanctus*) and divine legislation.

Furthermore, the consensus-building process within the Original Position relies over-excessively on abstract presuppositions while systematically ignoring human multiplicity, distinct qualitative variations, and genuine existential potentials. This methodological flaw reduces society to a cold, mechanical legalism that fundamentally fails to align with ontic realities and the concrete, objective fabric of social life. Therefore, a critical deconstruction of the challenges inherent to the Original Position demonstrates exactly how reducing the human being to a singular material dimension precipitates an internal operational crisis within the Rawlsian functional model of justice.

Materials and Methods

Based on the theoretical and fundamental nature of the subject, the methodology of the present research is grounded in a descriptive-analytical approach utilizing qualitative analysis tools. This study aims to critique the anthropological foundations of one of the most complex contemporary political theories from the perspective of Eastern and Islamic philosophy. In this research, the library research and documentary methods were employed for data collection. To accurately elucidate John Rawls's perspective, his primary texts – including *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 2022), *Political Liberalism* (Rawls,

2005), and his later work, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Rawls, 2018) – were meticulously annotated and scrutinized. The primary focus at this stage was the extraction of propositions that directly or indirectly refer to the “original position,” the “veil of ignorance,” and “instrumental rationality” in the formation of society.

To critique Rawls's view, insights from various Eastern and Islamic intellectual and philosophical schools were utilized. Key texts from sages such as Al-Farabi (Al-Farabi, 1998), Avicenna (Avicenna, 2009), Miskawayh al-Razi (Miskawayh, 1961), Zakariya al-Razi (Rhazes, 2016), Al-Biruni (Al-Biruni, 1995), and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (Tusi, 2012) were selected to serve as the critical theoretical framework.

Literature Review

A review of the existing literature reveals that, despite the abundance of scholarly work on Rawls, the elucidation of the «nature of social life» based on “dual-aspected anthropology” has received significantly less attention. The innovation of the present research lies in its shift from a purely political focus to an exploration of the underlying philosophical layers – specifically, the juxtaposition between *Civility by Reason* (in the Rawlsian interpretation) and *Civility by Nature and Fitra* (in the interpretation of Eastern and Islamic philosophers). Indeed, by drawing upon the insights of sages such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Miskawayh al-Razi, and Zakariya al-Razi (Al-Farabi, 1990, 1998; Avicenna, 2009; Miskawayh, 1961; Rhazes, 2016; Corbin, 1974), this article seeks to demonstrate that Rawls (Rawls, 2005, 2018, 2022), by reducing man to a secular and material being, has failed to perceive the celestial and innate (*Fitri*) roots of human association. This epistemic gap – the neglect of the role of *Fitra* in the constitution of society – is a subject seldom addressed independently or in detail in previous studies; this article aims to bridge this lacuna.

Furthermore, a profound layer of this literature review involves examining the relationship between John Rawls and Immanuel Kant. Rawls himself admits that he designed the concepts of the «original position» and «rational choice» inspired by the Kantian notion of «autonomy». In this view, justice is built not upon the common good or pleasure (utilitarianism), but upon a moral duty that reason prescribes to itself. However, the fundamental critique raised in this research is that Rawls has reduced Kant's «sacred reason» to «instrumental and mate-

rial reason» (Rawls, 2018). While Kant sought the transcendent roots of morality, Rawls pursues a secular contract for material existence. This deviation from Kantian roots serves as a focal point for this article's critique of Rawlsian materialism.

Data analysis in this article is conducted based on a qualitative content analysis and comparative approach. Initially, the position of reason within Rawls's intellectual system was defined as the axis of human independence. At this stage, the concept of «autonomous reason» was identified as the primary variable in the formation of the Rawlsian society. Subsequently, propositions regarding the one-dimensionality of man (the secular and material outlook) in Rawls's thought were examined in contrast to the «dual-aspected man» in the thought of Eastern and Islamic thinkers. Here, concepts such as the «dialectical tension» between material and spiritual dimensions, as noted in the article, were employed as analytical tools.

Utilizing the arguments of Eastern and Islamic philosophers regarding the “power of utilization” (*Quwwat al-Istikhdam*) and *Fitra*, the weaknesses of Rawls's contractarian theory were scrutinized. In this section, the researcher has endeavored to show how overlooking the “social contexts of human creation” and the «will of the Creator» has led to the creation of an abstract and inauthentic model of society in Western thought. Throughout the writing process, the principle of integrity in citations and references to Rawls's original texts has been strictly observed to ensure the critique remains «internal and fair». Moreover, to enhance academic validity, Rawls's specialized terminology has been cross-referenced with precise equivalents in classical and contemporary Eastern and Islamic philosophical texts to prevent conceptual confusion. This method has allowed the researcher to transcend the level of description and penetrate the underlying layers and hidden anthropological foundations of John Rawls's thought.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the findings in the present study indicates fundamental contradictions between «Rawlsian contractarian anthropology» and the «perfection-seeking anthropology» envisioned by Eastern and Islamic thinkers.”

The research findings demonstrate that within Rawls's intellectual system, society is the product of a «rational choice». In the original position, individuals congregate not out of an innate inclina-

tion of the heart, but due to a precise calculation aimed at escaping deprivation. Rawls maintains that reason, when disconnected from revelation and metaphysics, is independently capable of determining the rules of the social game. This «calculative reason» essentially likens society to a «joint-stock company» in which each individual seeks their fair share (Rawls, 2018: 43). However, our critique of this finding is that a society built solely on calculation collapses with the slightest shift in the balance of power and self-interest.

Rawls adopts a thoroughly materialistic view of man. He perceives the human being as an entity whose needs and ends are entirely encapsulated within the world and the system of distributing material goods and rights (Rawls, 2022: 58). In contrast, Eastern and Islamic philosophers (such as Avicenna and Al-Farabi) believe that man is a being originating from the realm of meaning (the Eternal Creator) and moving toward eternity. The key point in this discussion is that if we consider man a material being (as Rawls does), the objective of society will be limited to «welfare». However, if we view him as a dual-aspected being, the objective of society must be to provide the groundwork for “spiritual felicity” (*Sa'adah*). By eliminating the hereafter and the bond between man and God, Rawls has excluded a vast portion of social motivations – such as altruism, sacrifice, and aiding fellow humans – which play a pivotal role in human life, from his analytical framework (Al-Farabi, 1990: 184; Avicenna, 2009: 241).

In the critique of Rawlsian foundations, the concept of «dialectical tension» between the material and spiritual dimensions is of paramount importance. Eastern and Islamic philosophers posit that man possesses two distinct forces:

- The Faculty of Nature (*Quwwat al-Tab'*): Which inclines toward exploitation (*Istikhdam*), lust, and anger – the animalistic aspect.
- The Faculty of *Fitra*: Which inclines toward benevolence, perfection, and the pursuit of justice – the celestial or divine aspect (Tusi, 2012: 117; Miskawayh, 1961: 92).

Rawls essentially confines man to the level of «nature», positioning reason merely as a tool to manage this nature. However, the findings of this research indicate that without the presence of *Fitra*, reason alone cannot forestall human transgression, such as colonialism and exploitation. The Rawlsian society is one in which «wolves» enter into a contract to refrain from attacking one another; conversely, the society envisioned by Eastern and Islamic thinkers is anchored in *Fitra* (Rawls, 2005: 126).

Another significant finding is the critique of atomistic individualism in Rawls's thought. Rawls conceptualizes man as existing prior to society, isolated and devoid of any ontological link to his Creator. In contrast, within the framework of Eastern and Islamic thought, the human being is defined within the context of the Creator's will and pre-ordained social relations (the ontic contexts of creation). While Rawlsian reason is «autonomous» (*self-legislating*), the reason upheld by Eastern and Islamic thinkers serves as a guide that operates subordinate to (in the longitude of) the Creator's laws, rather than parallel to them. Consequently, man cannot independently legislate for himself, as he lacks comprehensive knowledge of all dimensions of his existence and his true material and spiritual interests.

In elucidating the distinction between Rawlsian «Civility by Reason» and the «Civility by Fitra» upheld by Eastern and Islamic thinkers, referencing the classical texts cited in this research reveals deeper dimensions of the critique.

Al-Farabi, in his works such as *The Principles of the Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City*, offers a stark contrast to Rawls. While Rawls views society merely as the result of a contract for the distribution of goods, Al-Farabi maintains that human perfection is attainable only within the context of society. He notes that humans are created, both physically and spiritually, in such a way that they require mutual assistance for survival and the attainment of «the highest perfection». While Rawls emphasizes individual «calculative reason», Al-Farabi emphasizes the «Active Intellect» (*al-'Aql al-Fa'al*) and the link between the city and the celestial realm. Al-Farabi's paradigm suggests that if reason is severed from its divine source – as occurs in Rawls's «original position» – the city ceases to be «virtuous» (*Fadila*) and is transformed into an «ignorant» (*Jahila*) or «errant» (*Dalla*) city, where justice is reduced to a mere tool for dominance or pleasure (Rawls, 2018: 137-142; Al-Farabi, 1990: 253-261).

In the texts of Avicenna and other Eastern and Islamic philosophers, the concept of «the necessity of society» (*al-Idtirar ila al-Ijtima'*) is introduced, which differs substantially from Rawls's «rational choice». Avicenna argues that man, due to material needs, is compelled toward the «utilization» (*Istikhdam*) of others. In the *Metaphysics* of *The Book of Healing* (*Al-Shifa*), he posits that since no individual can independently provide for all their needs (food, clothing, shelter), collective life is inevitable. How-

ever, unlike Rawls, he deems this material need insufficient. He argues that to prevent the oppression arising from the «power of utilization», there is a need for a Legislator who transcends human power – one who derives no personal benefit from the laws and possesses comprehensive knowledge of the interests of all creatures. Avicenna's argument demonstrates that Rawlsian reason, being inherently self-interested, cannot function as a truly impartial legislator, for by nature, it consistently inclines toward seeking superiority (Rawls, 2022: 64-72; Avicenna, 2009: 175-180).

Furthermore, the analysis of the research findings regarding Rawls's epistemological instruments reveals that the construct of the 'Original Position' and the mechanism of the 'Veil of Ignorance' confront three profound structural crises when scrutinized from the vantage point of Eastern-Islamic wisdom (Hikmah), owing to their reliance on a uni-dimensional anthropology.

The first finding demonstrates that by designing a completely decontextualized and hypothetical scenario, Rawls isolates justice from the authentic fabric of society and moral cultivation. Conversely, thinkers such as Al-Farabi and Al-Tusi demonstrate that justice is not a subjective mental occurrence; rather, it is an objective, lived virtue that must manifest within the concrete matrix of human relations and in cosmic harmony with the order of creation.

The second challenge emergent from the findings targets the very nature of material, calculative reason operationalized within this setting. Utilizing the pivotal concept of the drive for exploitation (*Quwwat al-Istikhdam*), Islamic philosophers argue that reason severed from revelation cannot act as an impartial legislator – even behind the Veil of Ignorance – due to humanity's innate hubristic and self-assertive nature. Because instrumental reason is inherently utility-calculating, it remains utterly impotent in restraining human tyranny without the anchoring presence of primordial nature (*Fitrah*) and the illuminating guidance of the Sacred Intellect (*Intellectus Sanctus*).

Finally, the analytical results prove that instead of actualizing a qualitative justice tailored to genuine human potentials, the Rawlsian formulation of justice in the Original Position degrades into a reductive, abstract egalitarianism. This process systematically ignores the existential capacities and spiritual dimensions of the human being, effectively reducing society to a mere joint-stock company structured solely for the redistribution of material commodities. Consequently, the Original Position

not only fails to culminate in authentic justice, but by severing the human agent's connection to the primordial source of meaning, it ultimately paralyzes society within an impasse of absolute materialism.

A Comparative Analysis of the Anthropological Frameworks of John Rawls and Eastern-Islamic Thinkers

John Rawls operates strictly as a humanist within the domain of anthropological inquiry. Throughout his theoretical framework, he extensively expands the parameters of human agency. From the foundational stage of his theory to its procedural mechanisms, operational strategies, and ultimate teleological ends, Rawls attributes an original, axial role to the human being, his rational faculty, his extracted rules, and the socio-political architecture he constructs. Crucially, within the hypothetical construct of the «Original Position», he entrusts the most vital and foundational legislative decisions entirely to human discretion. In other words, Rawls recognizes no transcendent ontological concept beyond the human sphere for the codification of laws, thereby causing the entire orbit of just decisions to terminate strictly within human boundaries (Rawls, 2018: 57 – 59; Rawls, 2022: 449).

Conversely, from the perspective of Eastern-Islamic thinkers, the anthropological and ontological foundations of the Rawlsian doctrine suffer from a fatal structural flaw. This deficiency stems from the fact that Rawls confines human existence exclusively to a single dimension – the material nature of man (*Tabi'ah*) – while entirely failing to allocate an existential locus for the human being's higher spiritual dimension. The core vulnerability of the Rawlsian perspective lies in its systemic omission: the human agent, in addition to possessing a physical nature and calculative rationality, is endowed with an interior, primordial disposition known as *Fitrah*. This intrinsic spiritual faculty occupies a central, indispensable position in the discourses of Eastern and Islamic philosophers (Al-Farabi, 1990: 264; Al-Razi, 2016: 179).

Furthermore, within Eastern-Islamic philosophy, the human being is conceptualized through a dual-aspected, polar anthropology that simultaneously encompasses both animalistic and angelic attributes. On one hand, the human agent is rebuked and characterized as inherently fragile, avaricious, tyrannical, ignorant, ungrateful, hubristic, contentious, and impetuous. On the other hand, the human being is heralded as an elite, noble entity possessing a celestial soul infused with the Divine Breath (*al-Nafkha al-Ilahiyyah*). This higher dimension

is intrinsically God-conscious, teleologically driven toward absolute perfection, and endowed with a capacity for cognitive and spiritual evolution so profound that the celestial angels are impotent to achieve it. It is precisely due to this sublime ontic status that the angels were commanded to prostrate before the human majesty, culminating in the human being's designation as the Vicegerent of God (*Khalifatullah*) on Earth (Miskawayh, 1961: 142; Al-Biruni, 1995: 257).

It is critical to observe, however, that philosophical theories attributing the genesis of human social life to inherent human nature can be classified into three broad paradigms. The first paradigm posits that the human agent naturally gravitates toward social existence by an intrinsic, self-contained disposition, absent any external stimulus or instrumental compulsion. The second paradigm asserts that human nature is driven toward societal cooperation reactively, compelled by external forces, systemic vulnerabilities, or exogenous threats. The third paradigm maintains that human sociality is born purely out of autonomous intellectual capacity and calculative, material rationality (Motahhari, 1989: 329 – 333).

John Rawls falls squarely within this third paradigm. He operates on the firm presupposition that the human impulse toward societal organization is orchestrated entirely by calculative rationality and instrumental intellectual maneuvering, driven by a pragmatic desire to regulate human coexistence.

Conversely, Eastern-Islamic philosophers have advanced and evolved these models by introducing profound systemic modifications. Unlike the Rawlsian doctrine – which reduces the human agent to a unidimensional, purely calculative entity that orchestrates all vital emotions and life structures through an isolated rational lens – Eastern-Islamic thinkers demonstrate that human existence is not a monolith. Rather, the human ontic architecture is constituted by highly diverse internal faculties (*Quwa*) and multi-layered realities.

Consequently, within the Eastern-Islamic tradition, the human agent is described through a spectrum of highly complex, divergent traits, shifting from the sublime to the base. When investigating the cause of this multi-faceted anthropological description in the works of Eastern-Islamic sages, the philosophical resolution is clear: although the human being is labeled on one hand with avarice, ignorance, and impetuosity, and on the other hand with altruism (*Ithar*), fidelity, love, and benevolence, these descriptions do not imply an ontic contradiction

or a fractured human essence. Rather, they signify that the human architecture possesses an expansive existential capacity (*Zarfiyyah*) and potentiality (*Iste'dad*) to harbor these seemingly antithetical attributes simultaneously. Certain individuals undergo rigorous moral cultivation (*Tarbiyah*), striving to actuate their celestial virtues, while others surrender to and manifest their baseline animalistic drives (Avicenna, 2009: 145; Al-Tusi, 2012: 273).

In other words, the Divine Creator has deposited specific forces, instincts, and attributes within the human architecture that serve as potential mechanisms for actualizing perfection, progression, and ultimate beatitude. Consequently, these innate drives are not inherently malevolent; rather, they constitute the very catalyst for existential completion. However, when these identical attributes are diverted into distorted trajectories and instrumentalized deceptively, they inevitably degenerate into sources of misery, degradation, evil, and systemic corruption.

For instance, avarice (*Hirs*) is fundamentally an internal kinetic force that prevents the human agent from prematurely ceasing his striving or reaching a state of stagnant complacency upon acquiring a singular blessing. If this potency is directed toward the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom – rendering the human agent insatiably avaricious or, more accurately, an unyielding lover of truth – it undeniably serves as a vehicle for his sublimation. Conversely, if it is anchored strictly within the material domain, it becomes a catalyst for profound ruin and existential wretchedness.

It is thus manifest that Eastern-Islamic thinkers conceptualize the human being as an integrated entity possessing both a material-manifest (*Zahir*) dimension and a spiritual-immanent (*Batin*) dimension. This stands in stark juxtaposition to the Rawlsian agent, who is perceived through a unidimensional rational lens dominated entirely by material coordinates. Ultimately, it can be argued that the very nature of human social life possesses a dual aspect; within each sphere of social coexistence, a corresponding facet of the human personality and ontic architecture is activated and operationalized.

Furthermore, beyond merely grounding the genesis of social cooperation in pure reason, John Rawls elevates this autonomous human intellect as the absolute bedrock for every socio-political decision, volition, and legislative act within collective life. He explicitly maintains that institutional justification must anchor itself within the lowest common denominator of public understanding and human rationality. Consequently, the criteria for the legiti-

macy and acceptability of all collective decisions, volitions, and laws terminate in their capacity to be endorsed by the public intellect – ranging from its most rudimentary baseline to its most sophisticated tier. In other words, for any decision or volition to be operationalized within social life, it must attain universal justification and public acceptability (Rawls, 2018: 453 – 455). This specific orientation underscores the absolute, self-contained primacy Rawls accords to the human intellect throughout the procedural and operational execution of his theory of justice.

Contrariwise, contemporary Islamic philosophy deconstructs this limitation, explaining that the human being is deliberately structured to interface holistically with the entire cosmos. To this end, the human architecture is equipped with an integrated network of cognitive and motivational faculties, comprising external senses (sight, hearing, taste, etc.) and internal cognitive faculties (estimation/*Wahm*, memory/*Hifz*, and deliberation/*Mutafakki-rah*, among others). These faculties enable the human agent to comprehend and interface with the past, present, and future dynamics of the natural world.

Thus, unlike Rawls – who reduces the foundation of all socio-political interactions, decisions, and volitions strictly to pure, isolated reason – Eastern-Islamic philosophers demonstrate that an intricate matrix of cognitive faculties, alongside both external and internal senses working in tandem with the intellect, constitutes the authentic criteria for navigating the cosmos within social life. Furthermore, within the Eastern-Islamic worldview, the natural world is teleologically designed to be subjugated (*Musakhkhar*) and accessible to human stewardship. This profound interface between the human agent and the cosmos manifests through two distinct modalities: first, through theoretical contemplation and conceptualization, classified as the ‘Theoretical Sciences’ (*al-Ulum al-Nazariyyah*), and second, through practical, volitional engagement, conceptualized as the ‘Practical Sciences’ (*al-Ulum al-Amaliyyah*) (Javadi, 2010: 138 – 141).

Upon closer examination of the aforementioned Rawlsian anthropological tenets, it becomes evident that the foundational infrastructure of human social life and its institutional architecture are engineered exclusively around the human subject, his immediate desires, his mutual consent, and the metric of his autonomous rational faculty. In other words, the criteria for evaluating the validity, rectitude, or fallacy of any socio-political doctrine within a system

terminate entirely in human volition and subjective preference.

Furthermore, Rawls's heavy reliance on contractarianism – which serves as a primary pillar of his theoretical edifice – substantiates this precise point. For Rawls, the ultimate source of normativity is the contract: a framework of mutual, egalitarian, and universal consensus forged either directly among citizens or mediated via their representatives (Rawls, 2018: 167). Consequently, from the Rawlsian perspective, the human agent and his autonomous, self-founded reason (*al-Aql al-Khudbunyah*) act simultaneously as the generative source of just legislation, the sole arbiter of procedural validity during operational execution, and the final epistemological benchmark against which all concurrent, and occasionally conflicting, comprehensive doctrines – including philosophical traditions and divine religions – must be evaluated and regulated.

A necessary corollary of this Rawlsian orientation is that his materialistic anthropology, which is completely severed from the transcendent realm of meaning, inevitably forces the human agent into a state of radical ontic isolation at the dawn of social life. Rawls operates on the secular presupposition that human beings act with absolute independence when entering social cooperation, completely unaided by any transcendent reality, divine essence, or higher cosmic intellects; the isolated human agent, relying solely on his self-contained rationality, is the exclusive and independent initiator of collective life.

Another profound consequence of this anthropological stance is the absolute hegemony of instrumental reason, through which the entire nature, trajectory, and final teleological end of human social existence are interpreted and validated. Out of the vast spectrum of human senses, existential faculties, and spiritual dimensions, Rawls narrows his focus exclusively to the cognitive calculating intellect. He asserts that humanity initiates social life under the strict custody of this flattened rationality, which remains the sole determinant of all societal parameters.

From the Rawlsian vantage point, the genesis of human social life is strictly subordinate to the sovereignty of this calculative reason. Humans do not gravitate toward collective existence due to an organic, intrinsic disposition (*Tabi'ah* or *Fitrah*); rather, they deduce through instrumental calculation that they must engineer a collective contract. Rawls argues that when individuals seek to establish a cooperative framework, their primary objective is to calculate how to structure society such that the

maximum potential loss for the most disadvantaged members is mitigated (the *maximin* rule), while simultaneously guaranteeing the baseline liberties of all actors.

This entire procedural deliberation is, in essence, a cold arithmetic calculus – a pragmatic balancing of ledger sheets. To put it another way, contemplating the utilitarian ends of social life, balancing aggregate mutual benefits, and managing material risks are purely calculative tasks managed by an autonomous intellect. Humanity enters the social matrix only after executing these precise, self-interested computations. Therefore, according to Rawlsian anthropology, the very essence of human sociality is a purely mechanical, rationalistic construct. Human beings do not enter society driven by higher virtues, but rather revolve strictly around the axis of calculative intellect and transaction-driven strategies.

Conversely, in stark contrast to the Rawlsian framework, Eastern-Islamic thinkers establish that the structural evolution of human creation operates on the principle of mutual exploitation and instrumentalization (*al-Istikhdam al-Mutaqabil*), meaning the systemic necessity of human beings employing and serving one another. The crux of the argument lies here: the human agent, in generating collective life, does not rely exclusively on a singular, calculative rational dimension. Rather, the multi-layered gradations of human existence reveal an entirely different ontic *sūrah* that plays an indispensable role in generating this social matrix.

Specifically, in terms of his primordial spiritual disposition (*Fitrah*), the human being is inherently civically oriented, intrinsically God-conscious, and naturally desirous of social justice and altruistic benevolence toward his fellow humans. However, in terms of his instinctual, appetitive faculties – which map directly onto his physical, material nature (*Tabi'ah*) governed by concupiscence (*Shahwah*) and irascibility (*Ghadhab*) – the human being contemplates nothing short of the unilateral exploitation, subjugation, and enslavement of others. Because his physical nature resides closer to the material, sensory realm, it aggressively seizes the reins of his individual and collective affairs, exerting hegemony over his volition. Consequently, just as the human agent instrumentalizes minerals, vegetation, and various animal species to satiate his own existential deficits, he relentlessly endeavors to bring other human beings under his unilateral subjugation as well.

On one hand, he is ontologically incapable of surviving in isolation; on the other hand, he con-

fronts the identical, competing exploitative expectations of his fellow humans. Caught in this existential deadlock, he reluctantly submits to mutual service and yields to the constraints of social coexistence. Nonetheless, the moment this same human agent attains absolute socio-political power and sovereignty, he unhesitatingly tramples upon all national, regional, and international laws and commitments, violently forcing both theoretical and practical human faculties into his personal servitude or outright captivity (Javadi, 2010: 142 – 146).

Accordingly, the most critical corollary and systemic consequence of the Eastern-Islamic philosophical vision regarding the nature of human social life is its commitment to a profound ontological dualism – the coexistence of matter (*Maddah*) and meaning (*Ma'na*). Consequently, the positive and negative dimensions generated within collective life are bifurcated along these identical lines and remain fiercely dependent upon them. The malevolent, destructive traits of human society – such as systemic savagery, exploitative drives, colonialism, and raw *رامپتس* (*economic subjugation*) – emanate directly from the dark, unchecked impulses of man's material nature. Conversely, the sublime, benevolent, and constructive attributes of social life are organically tethered to the human being's elevated spiritual and luminous dimension.

Another profound critique that must be leveled against the anthropological foundations of Western philosophy, including the doctrine of John Rawls, targets its inherent teleological limitations. Because Western humanism confines human existence strictly to a materialistic and unidimensional boundary, the teleological purpose of human life becomes inherently truncated, bounded entirely by material coordinates and the immediate horizon of the temporal world. Conversely, a foundational pillar of Eastern-Islamic anthropology dictates that human existence – across all its successive thresholds, spanning from primordial creation (*Mabda*) to temporal earthly existence, and ultimately terminating in the eschatological transition to the hereafter (*Ma'ad*) – is systematically anchored within a divinely orchestrated teleological order.

When evaluated through the conceptual lens of Eastern-Islamic sages, Western humanism subjects the human agent to a state of cosmic entrapment and metaphysical isolation, completely severed from his existential origin and perpetually locked within his physical-material boundaries, thereby rendering him incapable of transcending toward his eschatological destination. Eastern-Islamic thinkers, by contrast,

conceptualize the human being as a noble entity brought into existence by an Eternal Creator – an entity destined for immortality, who upon outgrowing his material vestige, transitions from this transient realm to an everlasting celestial abode.

Within this worldview, God is not relegated to the status of a passive deistic watchmaker, who remains functionally dead to the human experience until human discretion selectively and awkwardly resurrects a restricted, crippled facsimile of the divine in the public sphere. On the contrary, if the human agent is to be assigned any role or agency within individual, social, political, or cultural domains, that locus must align seamlessly with the transcendent will and design of his Creator. Because the Almighty is the sole author of human existence, He uniquely possesses the absolute, comprehensive knowledge required to diagnose and prescribe the authentic material and spiritual interests (*Masalih*) of humanity (Al-Farabi, 1998: 238; Miskawayh, 1961: 178).

Furthermore, a critical nuance distinguishing the anthropological matrix of Eastern-Islamic thinkers concerns the nature, scope, and jurisdiction of human intellect (*al-Aql*). While Eastern-Islamic philosophy highly elevates the human intellect as an indispensable and noble source of epistemology and cognition (Al-Tusi, 2012: 257), it firmly rejects the Rawlsian presupposition that the intellect can operate as an autonomous, self-contained legislator independent of its primordial Creator. In reality, the human intellect functions as an executive agent of the laws codified by the Creator – laws designed to govern every facet of individual and collective life in strict accordance with humanity's genuine material and spiritual welfare.

To be sure, while the human intellect possesses the jurisdiction to deduce and enact certain contextual regulations, these subsidiary ordinances must strictly operate in perfect continuity with the overarching Divine Will. The human agent cannot autonomously forge absolute laws for himself using an isolated, self-founded intellect. Stated differently, the jurisdiction, verdicts, and role of human reason must be situated vertically in tandem with (*fi tul*) Divine Law, rather than horizontally eclipsing it (*fi 'ard*). This is because human beings neither possess exhaustive cognitive data regarding their own complex, multi-layered existential architecture, nor do they fulfill the absolute criteria required of a true legislator.

Authentic legislation demands a comprehensive, omniscient understanding of the target society, an

absolute grasp of its objective material and spiritual welfare, and a total immunity from enacting laws that subtly serve the legislator's own covert self-interests (Mesbah, 2019: 152 – 154). Yet, as demonstrated in the Rawlsian framework, autonomous, self-founded reason is crowned as the final arbiter of all societal decisions and legislative necessities. Western liberal thought fundamentally lacks these three indispensable legislative prerequisites. Consequently, the human subject and his self-founded legislative decisions possess legitimacy and operational validity only when they function as a vertical extension of the Creator's transcendent design, rather than masquerading as an independent, autonomous sovereign.

In conclusion, the anthropological matrix formulated by Eastern-Islamic thinkers conceptualizes the human agent as a divinely imbued entity – the celestial vicegerent of God on Earth (*Khalifatullah*) – endowed with genuine volitional autonomy, existential agency, and a rigorous teleological purpose. The human being is not sculpted merely for the ephemeral coordinates of this temporal world; rather, his ultimate duty, responsibility, and existential mission terminate in the actualization of divine ideals. He is charged with manifesting a comprehensive, multi-dimensional system of living that orchestrates every facet of individual and collective life across both the temporal realm (*Dunya*) and the eschatological hereafter (*Akhirah*), thereby steering humanity toward ultimate beatitude (*Sa'adah*) in strict alignment with its objective material and spiritual welfare.

Consequently, through the prism of this detailed anthropological exposition, John Rawls's foundational error becomes starkly transparent: his theory of justice arrives at a drastically reduced, unidimensional caricature of human social life precisely because of his flawed anthropological presuppositions. The root cause of Rawls's analytical reductionism traces back to his fundamental refusal to acknowledge the dual-aspected ontic hierarchy of human existence. Heavily bounded by his underlying materialistic ontology, Rawls interprets the human subject as a flat, unidimensional entity, completely stripping him of his higher metaphysical intellect.

By hyper-rationalizing every successive threshold of social engineering – spanning from the initial construct of the Original Position to the formulation and execution of just institutional choices – Rawls decrees that the sole catalyst for the genesis of human society is the autonomous human intellect. He systematically silences any discourse regarding a

transcendent reality or a higher cosmic presence that might govern or inform these human computations. For Rawls, the human agent – in his immediate, uncultivated state, utilizing only the subjective cognitive resources currently at his disposal – is entirely self-sufficient in executing fair and impartial decisions to engineer 'the good life' within the social matrix.

As a direct consequence of this secular anthropology, Rawls exhibits a profound blindness toward the primordial, divinely designed social matrices of human creation, denying them any organic efficacy within collective life. The Rawlsian agent remains an atomized subject – completely severed from the transcendent realm of meaning, operating under the solitary custody of an autonomous, self-founded reason. Ultimately, this radical, unchecked individualism stands exposed as the inevitable, problematic byproduct of the Rawlsian anthropological paradigm.

The Challenges of John Rawls's Concept of the "Original Position" from the Perspective of Eastern-Islamic Thinkers

From the Rawlsian vantage point, the actualization of justice necessitates that all participating decision-makers interact within a matrix of fair terms of cooperation. This is precisely the foundational premise of the 'Original Position' (*Originale Situation*), or what is alternatively conceptualized as the initial baseline or state. The concept of the Original Position operates as a purely hypothetical, mental construct designed by proponents of the contractarian tradition to investigate the underlying catalysts for humanity's entry into the socio-political sphere, thereby providing a normative justification for the genesis of the state and organized society (Ashouri, 2009: 251).

Historically, this contractarian matrix is dominated by three main paradigms. Thomas Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, conceptualizes this primordial baseline as a predatory state of nature – a war of all against all where man acts as a wolf to man (*homo homini lupus*); thus, his justification for transitioning into organized society and establishing a sovereign state is absolute survival and escape from this mutual destruction. John Locke, conversely, presupposes the state of nature as a domain of natural liberty and reason, yet one that lacks codified positive law. For Locke, the imminent threat of insecurity and disorder arising from the absence of institutionalized adjudication renders the establishment of a formal society and a governing apparatus an ab-

solute necessity. Jean-Jacques Rousseau advances a different orientation, arguing that in the state of nature, the human agent lacks fully realized rational faculties, cognitive discernment, or complex moral sentiments. Consequently, organized society must emerge to cultivate and instantiate these distinct human capacities through a series of social pacts (Alam, 2013: 275; Alam, 2014: 191 – 198; Vaezi, 2007: 178).

Rawls refines this tradition, asserting that the Original Position must be anchored in an egalitarian agreement and mutual contract among citizens, predicated upon reciprocal benefit and the common good. Crucially – and in direct opposition to the utilitarian tradition – Rawls positions this common good as a structural consequence of just rules, rather than the intrinsic essence of the rules themselves. To successfully extract the core principles of justice, the systemic threats of coercion, force, deception, and asymmetrical power dynamics must be entirely eradicated; actors must enter this initial state with absolute liberty and under conditions of strict, fair equality (Bakhshayeshi, 2007: 154; Alam, 2013: 423).

Within this framework, the structural and political legitimacy of the decisions and pacts forged in the Original Position is validated exclusively by the participants' freedom of expression and their absolute equality of status. Furthermore, the universal instrument deployed by these actors to negotiate this consensus is autonomous human reason, which ultimately culminates in a rational contract, a strategic coalition, and the institutionalization of collective life.

According to Rawls, the primary epistemological barriers to actualizing the Original Position are the pre-existing endowments, biases, and asymmetric data that warp an agent's capacity for fair and impartial deliberation. These distorting factors encompass partisan, institutional, and ethno-tribal affiliations, idiosyncratic personal preferences, socio-economic deprivation, historical trauma, and systemic suffering. To neutralize these biases, Rawls introduces the cornerstone mechanism of the «Veil of Ignorance» (*Veil de l'ignorance*). Crucially, the insulation of actors from these socio-political contingencies does not imply absolute empirical amnesia or a lack of experiential knowledge; rather, the participating agents must be fully cognizant of these social dynamics and possess rich historical experiences. Operating behind the Veil of Ignorance simply commands the radical bracketing and exclusion of these subjective vari-

ables from the legislative calculus (Rawls, 2018: 40 – 42).

As Rawls himself concedes, the Original Position appears overtly utopian, counterfactual, highly idealized, and conceptually abstract. Nevertheless, he vigorously defends this construct as the definitive, exemplary heuristic device for engineering real-world, objective institutional justice. He maintains that if 'justice as fairness' is to be actualized within concrete socio-political structures, this idealized matrix of the Original Position – predicated entirely upon pure, autonomous rationality – offers the only viable baseline for institutional engineering (Rawls, 2018: 44).

This specific formulation of the Original Position reveals a critical presupposition within Rawlsian thought: the human agent, from the very dawn of existence, confronts systemic deficits and survival needs that he is ontologically incapable of resolving in isolation – a condition Rawls treats as a baseline feature of human nature. Driven by these material vulnerabilities, humans utilize mutual consent and social pacts to codify positive law. This realization illuminates the true genealogy of legislation; human agents did not seek laws for their own sake, but rather out of an existential necessity to orchestrate their entry into the social sphere – for positive law is functionally obsolete to an isolated, atomized individual. Once this structural necessity for codification was collectively deduced, the qualitative dilemma of just versus unjust laws emerged. It was precisely at this theoretical junction that the Original Position was introduced: a framework ensuring that under highly controlled, equitable conditions, societal laws could be negotiated with absolute procedural fairness.

Consequently, the intersection between the Original Position and the nature of human sociality yields a defining conclusion: within the Rawlsian state of nature, human beings do not transition into collective life fleeing a savage, predatory nature (as in Hobbes), nor out of a pre-institutional fear of structural disorder (as in Locke). Instead, behind closed metaphysical doors, they deploy autonomous rationality to deliberate on the parameters of collective life, weighing every socio-economic variable through a utilitarian ledger before initiating formal society. Ultimately, it is this hyper-rationalism and contractarianism that engender the state.

Rawls is therefore forced to seek systemic rules capable of safeguarding these rational, calculated choices made at the inception of the social matrix. For Rawls, the genesis of collective human life is born neither out of an organic, intrinsic disposition

(*Tabi'ah*) nor out of existential dread; it is orchestrated exclusively by calculative rationality, which defines its very essence. Furthermore, the very conceptualization of 'justice' within this paradigm signals that human coexistence requires an architecture of fair rules – rules that can only be engineered, institutionalized, and operationalized by the self-founded intellect of man.

A profound teleological challenge leveled against John Rawls's construct of the Original Position by Eastern-Islamic thinkers focuses on the ultimate end and purpose (*Ghayah*) of human social life. Within the Original Position, Rawls presupposes that the primary objective of human agents – when regulating social relations and codifying collective laws behind the Veil of Ignorance – is to ensure that all participants enjoy an egalitarian distribution of socio-political privileges and primary goods. This formulation betrays a deeply utilitarian reductionism and an instrumental teleology. Consequently, the ultimate end of social existence within the Rawlsian paradigm terminates strictly in utility maximization and material benefit; Rawls values justice instrumentally, as a tool to guarantee that all individuals can optimally exploit the material dividends of social cooperation.

Conversely, through the prism of Eastern-Islamic philosophy, the final end of social life transcends mere utility or pragmatic transactionalism. Thinkers such as Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Miskawayh, and Al-Razi robustly maintain that the immediate purpose of collective life is the instantiation of true justice, while the ultimate, teleological end of actualizing justice is to guide the human being toward genuine beatitude (*al-Sa'adah al-Haqiqiyyah*) (Avicenna, 2009: 184; Al-Farabi, 1990: 265). Because Rawls operates on a unidimensional anthropology, the absolute horizon of his social teleology remains trapped within these material boundaries. In contrast, since Eastern-Islamic sages conceptualize the human agent as an integrated, dual-aspected entity encompassing both material and spiritual dimensions, justice is never treated as an end in itself. Rather, justice functions as a foundational methodology and a set of cosmic principles designed to actuate human spiritual beatitude, which constitutes the ultimate teleological anchor of human sociality in Eastern-Islamic philosophy.

Furthermore, a stark divergence emerges regarding the conditions under which justice is extracted. Rawls asserts that justice is manufactured behind the Veil of Ignorance through an artificial neutrality that actively brackets out gender, race, and other

social distinctions. However, Al-Farabi and Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi demonstrate that authentic justice must be calibrated in accordance with the primordial harmony binding the cosmos, physical nature (*Tabi'ah*), and the human spiritual disposition (*Fitrah*). True justice must be executed by explicitly recognizing and accommodating the qualitative distinctions, proportional differences, and existential variations among human beings within society (Al-Farabi, 1998: 172; Al-Tusi, 2012: 121).

From the analytical vantage point of Eastern-Islamic sages – particularly Al-Farabi and Al-Tusi – the Rawlsian framework cannot be legitimately classified as justice. Rawls notes that within the Original Position, justice is engineered to ensure that the maximum potential loss for the most disadvantaged members is structurally minimized (the *maximin* rule). Eastern-Islamic thinkers deconstruct this rule, arguing that it represents a sterile, mechanical egalitarianism rather than genuine justice. By enforcing a flat mathematical *عرباب* (*arithmetic equality*) that systematically blinds itself to authentic human variations, qualitative existential capacities, and intrinsic potentialities, the Rawlsian model collapses in certain instances into structural injustice (*Zulm*), completely severing society's connection to cosmic harmony and human *Fitrah* (Al-Tusi, 2012: 121; Al-Farabi, 1998: 172).

Therefore, Eastern-Islamic philosophy dictates that social justice must be actualized through a framework of proportional harmony that meticulously accounts for all authentic distinctions, multi-dimensional capacities, and existential potentialities of the human agent. Operating within this superior framework effectively eliminates the structural crisis inherent to the Rawlsian paradigm, which attempts to regulate justice around a minimalist calculation of minimizing loss for a select few. When the entire spectrum of human existential capacities and qualitative differences is recognized, every human being within the social matrix naturally receives opportunities and resources in direct, proportional symmetry to what his intrinsic potential and cultivated capacities demand.

Another profound and systemic critique leveled against John Rawls's construct of the Original Position from the vantage point of Eastern-Islamic thinkers centers on the structural locus and jurisdiction of the human intellect (*al-Aql*). Within the matrix of the Original Position, human reason is reduced to an inherently calculative, utility-maximizing, and purely instrumental faculty designed exclusively to secure material dividends. Con-

versely, within the framework of Eastern-Islamic sages, the intellect is elevated as the definitive epistemological guide for recognizing and actualizing humanity's authentic beatitude (*al-Sa'adah al-Haqiqiyyah*), with the preservation of justice treated as an absolute, indispensable prerequisite for attaining that beatitude.

Consequently, the localized role Rawls assigns to reason remains fundamentally impotent in fostering genuine justice or ultimate human flourishing. For Eastern-Islamic thinkers, however, the intellect serves as a sublime instrument to decipher true beatitude and map the structural pathways to its realization – namely, the instantiation of justice. The defining divergence here is that Rawls deploys a material, calculative reason completely autonomous and severed from its primordial origin to manufacture justice – which he reduces to a flat, identity-blind equality (*Masaawaat*) that systematically ignores human existential variations and intrinsic potentialities. In stark contrast, Eastern-Islamic philosophers harness an intellect structurally anchored to and illuminated by the primordial Source of creation (*Mabda al-Afrinash*) to actuate authentic justice – not a sterile arithmetic equality – by meticulously accounting for every metaphysical dimension, qualitative capacity, and existential resource of the human agent within collective life (Miskawayh: 104; Al-Tusi, 2012: 125; Al-Farabi, 1990: 271).

Furthermore, a critical methodological critique targeting Rawls's Original Position exposes its radical abstraction and overtly hyper-idealized, counterfactual character, which renders its paradigm of justice practically unworkable within real-world social life. Al-Farabi, by contrast, robustly interrogates and analyzes justice within the concrete, objective fabric of society and lived human relations. By developing a rigorous taxonomy of the unvirtuous or ignorant cities (*al-Mudun al-Ghayr al-Fadilah*), Al-Farabi sociologically demonstrates how the structural absence of moral virtue inevitably precipitates systemic injustice.

Accordingly, Al-Farabi deconstructs the Rawlsian Original Position as an ontological illusion; because justice must be forged in the living fire of social interaction and systematic moral cultivation (*Tarbiyah*), it cannot be manufactured within a vacuum of abstract mental presuppositions. Similarly, Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and Avicenna ground their analysis of justice firmly within the concrete sociological and ethical domains of human existence. They maintain that true justice must manifest within objective interpersonal dynamics and through

a structural harmony balancing the individual with the collective.

They reject Rawls's reliance on a sterile, hyper-abstracted laboratory construct as a flawed methodology. Because it is profoundly detached from ontic realities, such a framework inevitably exhibits an inherent operational paralysis and absolute unworkability when transplanted into actual social life. Ultimately, Avicenna and Al-Tusi conclude that this Western paradigm of radical abstraction is fatally insufficient; authentic justice must be woven directly into the lived texture of existence and the rigorous cultivation of the soul (*Tarbiyat al-Nafs*), rather than being isolated inside a hypothetical mental experiment (Avicenna, 2009: 185; Al-Farabi, 1990: 267).

Conclusion and Summary

The present study, designed to deconstruct and critically analyze the anthropological foundations of John Rawls regarding the nature of human social life and the systemic challenges inherent to his construct of the Original Position, has culminated in comprehensive and foundational findings. Viewed through a macro-analytical lens, this research demonstrates that the divergence between the Rawlsian theoretical framework and Eastern-Islamic wisdom (*Hikmah*) transcends a mere superficial disagreement over nomenclature; rather, it constitutes a profound paradigmatic friction between two antithetical worldviews. The former conceptualizes society as the artificial byproduct of a material contract forged by autonomous, self-founded intellects, whereas the latter articulates it as an ontic, divinely orchestrated, and dispositional matrix designed for the teleological sublimation of humanity. The synthesis of the rigorous critiques and structural challenges leveled against Rawls throughout this manuscript is systematically formulated and explained via the following seven fundamental principles:

Principle I: The Failure of the Paradigm of 'Rational-Calculative Civility' (Madaniyyah bi al-Aql) in the Absence of the Mechanism of 'Primordial Disposition' (Fitrah)

The primary and most fundamental finding of this research unmasks the structural deficit of the Rawlsian model of «*Rational-Calculative Civility*» in explaining the genesis and existential durability of collective life. The findings of this investigation demonstrate that within the Rawlsian conceptual matrix, human society is reduced to the byproduct of an instrumental rational choice – an architec-

ture born out of a meticulous, utility-maximizing calculus aimed at escaping systemic deprivation and securing a fair redistribution of primary goods. However, the paradigmatic critique deployed by Eastern-Islamic philosophers against this premise proves that any society engineered strictly upon a pragmatic balancing of ledger sheets and a fragile equilibrium of material interests will inevitably collapse from within at the slightest mutation in the balance of power and utility. This vulnerability exists because instrumental reason, operating in isolation, completely lacks a sustainable moral-axiological enforcement mechanism capable of compelling the human agent to practice self-sacrifice or respect the rights of others during existential crises.

In sharp juxtaposition, Islamic wisdom replaces this fragile framework with the paradigm of 'Dispositional Fitrah-Based Civility' (*Madaniyyah bi al-Fitrah wa al-Tab'*). Rooted in this transcendent principle, the human inclination toward justice and peaceful coexistence is identified not as an exogenous, accidental pact engineered to mitigate physical vulnerability, but as an intrinsic, primordial, and ontic desire deposited by the Creator within the very fabric of human nature. By entirely erasing this «primordial gravity» toward justice, Rawls practically degrades society to a cold, litigious, and rights-centric legal mechanism.

Conversely, Islamic philosophers demonstrate that the intellect can only serve as a sustainable, stabilizing guide for collective life when it is structurally aligned with the internal motivational vectors of *Fitrah*. Absent this primordial inclination, the autonomous Rawlsian intellect degenerates into a mere tool for optimizing atomized, egoistic self-interests. Consequently, it remains fundamentally impotent to generate or sustain the spirit of solidarity, altruism, and collective benevolence that constitutes the authentic lifeworld of a society. This profound epistemological gap drives the Rawlsian doctrine into an absolute impasse when attempting to formulate or sustain the authentic moral processes of human civilization.

Principle II: The Crisis of Unidimensional Reductionism and Secular Materialism in Defining the Teleological End of Society

The second vital finding of this research illuminates the hazardous ramifications of secular materialism and modern humanism embedded within the roots of Rawlsian theory. By severing the human connection to the metaphysical realm (*Mawara-al-Tabi'ah*) and restricting the ultimate end of social

life to the distributive system of primary goods and temporal, material rights, Rawls systematically ignores the vast majority of human existential reality and the celestial dimensions of mankind. Within this unidimensional approach, the entirety of human social motivations is confined strictly within the perimeter of 'material interests' (*Masalih Maddi*), reducing the ultimate purpose of society to nothing more than securing 'welfare' and managing material conflicts.

In direct defiance of this flattened view, Eastern and Islamic philosophers – relying on a robust dual-aspected anthropology that harmonizes human material nature (*Tabi'ah*) with the transcendent spiritual disposition (*Fitrah*) – articulate the ultimate end and purpose of establishing the Virtuous City (*al-Madina al-Fadila*) as a foundational catalyst for actualizing true beatitude and eschatological perfection (*al-Sa'adah al-Haqiqiyyah wa al-Kamal al-Ukhrawi*). From the vantage point of the sages, while material welfare is absolutely indispensable as a necessary baseline and preamble for collective life, it can never be elevated as the ultimate teleological end of society.

The present critique unmasks that by entirely eliminating eschatology (*Ma'ad*), the immortality of the soul, and the human connection to the primordial Source of meaning, Rawls inadvertently frames a vast spectrum of sublime social behaviors – such as self-sacrifice, altruism, and helping fellow humans without expecting material dividends – as fundamentally irrational or non-philosophical. This paradox occurs because within the Rawlsian materialistic intellect, any action that fails to maximize an individual's temporal utility remains completely devoid of rational justification. Consequently, while the Rawlsian society might achieve an efficient institutional structure for resource distribution, its absolute vacuum of spiritual teleology renders it perpetually incapable of guiding the human being toward internal tranquility and authentic beatitude, ultimately paralyzing society at the level of a glorified, grand joint-stock company.

Principle III: The Impotence of Calculative Reason in Restraining the «Drive for Exploitation» (Quwwat al-Istikhdam) Without the Guidance of the Sacred Intellect

The third principle addresses the deep epistemological crisis regarding the functional capacity of reason in enacting just laws. Rawls awards absolute sovereignty to autonomous, self-founded reason (*al-Aql al-Khudbunyah*) independent of divine

revelation, crowning it as the ultimate author of the principles of justice. However, a deep structural analysis of Islamic philosophy – particularly within the foundational texts of Avicenna and Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi – confronts this assumption with the profound challenge of the drive for exploitation (*Quwwat al-Istikhdam*). Islamic philosophers robustly argue that within his material and instinctual domain (the realm of physical nature), the human agent possesses an unyielding impulse to instrumentalize, exploit, and subjugate others to satisfy his own existential deficits.

The autonomous, instrumental rationality prioritized by Rawls operates, in reality, as a mere servant to this lower physical nature, functioning strictly as a utility-calculating and transaction-driven mechanism. The findings of this research unequivocally demonstrate that absent the presence of an intellect structurally anchored to the primordial Source of creation – the Sacred Intellect (*Intellectus Sanctus*) – and the immutable ordinances of the Divine Legislator, instrumental reason alone is entirely impotent to restrain human hubris, tyranny, and insatiable acquisitiveness.

In the final analysis, the Rawlsian society is reduced to a matrix where predatory actors (resembling a Hobbesian state of nature), driven entirely by the fear of reciprocal harm, forge a fragile contract to refrain from trespassing upon one another's boundaries. Yet, the moment the balance of power shifts asymmetrically in favor of a single actor, the calculative reason of that very individual immediately decrees the violation of the contract to maximize personal utility.

Islamic philosophers prove that an authentic, just legislator must occupy an ontological vantage point entirely beyond the immediate circle of societal stakeholders; an entity inherently free from the drive for exploitation, possessing comprehensive knowledge of both the material and spiritual dimensions of humanity, and capable of diagnosing objective welfare (*Masalih*) with absolute impartiality. By reducing the Sacred Intellect to a flattened, instrumental reason, the Rawlsian doctrine degrades justice from an ontological guarantee of truth into a brittle, volatile legal truce born out of material fear.

Principle IV: A Critique of Hyper-Abstract Individualism and Its Antithetical Contradiction with the Ontic Framework of Creation

The fourth foundational conclusion is dedicated to a rigorous critique of the extreme, atomistic indi-

vidualism inherent to Rawlsian thought. Rawls conceptualizes the human agent prior to the social order as a radically isolated, autonomous entity, stripped of any ontic, historical, or deep-rooted connection to his Creator. Within the blueprint of the Original Position, he presupposes individuals as hyper-abstracted beings – metaphorically operating as if they emerged from independent assembly lines – who are now seeking to interface with one another for the very first time.

The present critique unmasks this individualistic posture as fundamentally incompatible with the ontic realities and true frameworks of human creation. Within the discourse of Eastern-Islamic thinkers, the human being is permanently defined within the matrix of the Divine Will and pre-established interpersonal relationships (the authentic frameworks of creation). The human agent is not an isolated whole that independently generates society; rather, his life is intrinsically and ontically intertwined with collective existence – an existential reality conceptualized as the «existential compulsion toward sociality» (*al-Iftiqar al-Dhati ila al-Ijtima'*) in Avicennian thought.

The immediate corollary of this Rawlsian individualism is the instigation of an epistemic and ontic alienation between the individual and the cosmic totality. Rawls assumes that the human agent possesses the absolute right to autonomously legislate for himself and society, under the secular illusion that the human being is the absolute proprietor of his own existence. Conversely, from the ontological vantage point of Islamic philosophers, because the human being is neither the author of his own existence nor the creator of his multi-layered faculties, and because he lacks comprehensive omniscience regarding his objective, ultimate welfare (*al-Masalih al-Haqiqiyyah*), he entirely lacks the legislative competency to enact independent, horizontal laws that challenge or attempt to eclipse Divine Legislation.

Within Islamic epistemology, human reason functions strictly as an executive and discovery mechanism operating vertically in tandem with (*fi tul*) the Divine Will, rather than as an independent, autonomous sovereign operating horizontally against it (*fi 'ard*). This radical abstraction and individualism ultimately degrades the Rawlsian society from an organic-moral wholeness into a mere mechanical aggregation of atomized, fragmented units.

Principle V: The Crisis of Radical Abstraction and the Absence of Moral Realism in the Construct of the «Original Position»

The fifth principle, emerging directly from the critical challenges scrutinized in the core body of this manuscript, targets the highly idealized, subjective, and hyper-abstract character of Rawls's 'Original Position' and his mechanism of the «Veil of Ignorance». Rawls attempts to deduce the core principles of justice within a counterfactual scenario where agents are systematically blinded to their distinct identity-based, socio-economic, racial, and idiosyncratic preferences, under the illusion that such extreme isolation guarantees absolute impartiality.

However, the critique formulated by Eastern-Islamic philosophers – particularly Al-Farabi – deconstructs this radical abstraction as an unrealizable epistemic vacuum that remains fundamentally sterile. Al-Farabi analyzes justice not within a vacuum of subjective mental presuppositions or behind closed metaphysical doors, but rather within the concrete, objective fabric of actual society (*al-Madina*) and lived interpersonal relationships.

From the ontological vantage point of Islamic wisdom, justice is not a mathematical or mechanical equation that can be engineered inside a sterile mental laboratory by stripping human beings of their authentic, qualitative attributes. Rather, justice is conceptualized as an objective virtue that must manifest within the lived texture of existence, actualized via rigorous moral cultivation (*Tarbiyah*) and objective ethical realism.

The fatal vulnerability of the Rawlsian Original Position lies in the reality that the hypothetical agents operating behind the Veil of Ignorance are utterly denuded of identity and entirely stripped of any authentic, internal moral motivation. Consequently, the legal rules manufactured by these ghost-like actors are inherently cold, dry, and hyper-abstract; when transplanted into the concrete realm of social reality, they inevitably trigger fierce resistance from the uncultivated instincts and predatory nature of the human agent, culminating in total systemic collapse.

Avicenna and Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi similarly reinforce this thesis, demonstrating that authentic justice must be woven directly into the lived matrix of social life and the rigorous cultivation of the soul (*Tarbiyat al-Nafs*), rather than being isolated inside a hypothetical mental experiment. Therefore, due to its over-reliance on radical abstraction, the Rawlsian doctrine suffers from a profound func-

tional paralysis when confronted with the concrete realities of human sociality.

Principle VI: The Reduction of «Authentic Justice» to «Instrumental Egalitarianism» Behind the Veil of Ignorance

The sixth principle undertakes a rigorous, critical re-evaluation within the conceptual domain of justice. Rawls asserts that authentic justice is manufactured behind the Veil of Ignorance through the systematic execution of the «Maximin» rule – the strategic optimization designed to maximize the position of the least advantaged – which he crowns as the ultimate symbol of procedural impartiality.

However, the analytical findings of this research, illuminated by the discourses of Al-Farabi and Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, robustly demonstrate that what Rawls masquerades as justice is fundamentally a counterfeit; it is merely a form of mechanical and instrumental egalitarianism that systematically blinds itself to qualitative human variations and genuine existential potentials.

Within Islamic wisdom (*Hikmah*), justice is defined through the ontological maxim of 'rendering to each holder of a right his due right' (*I'ta' kullidhi haqqin haqqah*) and situating every entity in its naturally appropriate locus. This comprehensive definition demands the explicit recognition and calibration of individual differences, intrinsic talents, cultivated moral virtues, and the distinct existential capacities (*Zarfiyyat*) of human beings. By deliberately homogenizing these vital distinctions within the Original Position, Rawls manufactures an artificial equality. From the vantage point of Islamic thinkers, this forced sameness constitutes a profound ontological injustice (*Zulm*) against elite, perfection-seeking human capacities, violently disrupting the cosmic harmony that binds the order of creation to human primordial nature (*Fitrah*).

Within the Islamic paradigm, when the entire spectrum of human existential capacities and qualitative differences is recognized, every individual within the social matrix naturally accesses resources and structural opportunities in direct, geometric proportionality to what his objective potential and moral cultivation demand. It is precisely this proportional equilibrium (*al-Tanasub al-Handasi*) that steers society toward authentic stability and cosmic balance, rather than the arithmetic, instrumental leveling engineered by Rawls out of mere material fear behind the Veil of Ignorance.

Principle VII: The Metaphysical Impasse of Material Contractarianism and the Imperative of Reconstructing a «Transcendent Fitrah-Based Theory of Justice»

The seventh and final principle, operating as the overarching macro-conclusion and future horizon of this research, establishes the absolute metaphysical impasse of modern Western material contractarianism in securing ultimate human flourishing, while asserting the urgent necessity of pioneering new theoretical vistas anchored in a Transcendent Fitrah-Based Theory of Justice. The synthesis of all critiques leveled against John Rawls throughout this manuscript robustly demonstrates that any attempt to engineer a genuinely just society strictly upon the conventionalist pacts (*I'tibariyyat*) of materialistic agents and autonomous, calculative intellects is a fundamentally flawed project.

To be sure, these secular models may briefly generate a superficial tier of public «welfare» or a functional «legal order». However, because they are structurally severed from the primordial Source of meaning and systematically blind to the celestial dimensions of mankind, they remain chronically impotent to restrain existential crises of morality, systematic de-individuation, and the covert drives

of tyranny – such as modern colonialism and neo-exploitation.

As a definitive research dividend, this study proposes that social and political theorists discard structural mimicry of Western liberal and contractarian models. Instead, they must turn toward the systematic reconstruction and rigorous articulation of a *Fitrah-Based Theory of Justice*.

Humanity requires a model of collective existence predicated upon a dual-aspected social ontology, wherein human material nature (*Tabi'ah*) – designed to secure physical needs and objective welfare – and human primordial disposition (*Fitrah*) – designed to actualize spiritual, ethical, and eschatological perfection – achieve a sustainable equilibrium under the direct stewardship of the Sacred Intellect connected to divine revelation.

It is exclusively through this return to primordial roots and universal divine ordinances that political philosophy can transcend the structural deadlocks of materialistic individualism. Only through this paradigm shift can we actualize a Virtuous City (*al-Madina al-Fadila*) where justice is no longer a fragile truce born out of desperation and the material fear of harm, but the authentic manifestation of objective virtue, intrinsic human dignity, and the existential sublimation of mankind.

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