

Editorial Note

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This issue of the *American Journal of Islam and Society* comprises four main research articles, each of which engage themes of Muslim collectivity, community, and *umma* from different vantage points. We begin with Rezart Beka's contribution, "The Reconceptualization of the *Umma* and *Ummatic* action in Abdullah Bin Bayyah's Discourse." The Mauritanian Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah is arguably among the most well-known members of the Sunni Muslim scholarly elite, the *ulama*, alive today. Beka explores this scholar's discourse of reform and the kind of Islamic politics he has argued for in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring, which Bin Bayyah articulates by way of rethinking the role and function of the Muslim *umma* in the modern context. Important elements of this discourse include Bin Bayyah's view of how an understanding of the global Muslim *umma* fits into the global community and global challenges, be they in the realm of interfaith relations or international politics. This discourse is particularly significant in the light of Bin Bayyah's close relationship with the Emirati state and the role of the United Arab Emirates in supporting counter-revolutionary forces during the Arab Spring, and since.

We then turn to Ossama Abdelgawwad's work, "An Egyptian Ethicist: Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Drāz (1894-1958) and His Qur'ān-Based Moral Theory." In this article, we see Abdelgawwad take a comparative

ethics approach to this major thinker from the early twentieth century, his key text *La Morale du Koran*, and his theory of “moral obligation” in society. In the article, we see Abdelgawwad distinguish between different forms of ethical reasoning, ranging from societal command to divine command, and navigate a range of European thinkers and philosophers including Kant, Rauh, and Bergson. Abdelgawwad then argues that Draz adapts Western ethical theories while reinterpreting specific Qur’anic passages and Islamic literature to arrive at a sophisticated and original contribution to Muslim ethics.

As our third research article for this issue, we then have a co-authored study by Mujtaba A. Isani, Daniel Silverman, and Joseph J. Kaminski, “The Other Legitimate Game in Town? Understanding Public Support for the Caliphate in the Islamic World.” The authors’ point of departure is to consider the fact that, while old claims about apparent incompatibilities between Islam and democracy have been largely swept away as a result of public polling showing continued desire for democracy across Muslim-majority countries, Muslim public support for the Caliphate has yet to be explored in great detail at the quantitative level of public surveys. To address this question, the authors make use of existing cross-national surveys, as well as their own, to argue that the merits of both democracy and the Caliphate (conceptualized in different ways), are generally judged on their respective abilities to potentially provide services, welfare, and justice. That is, in instrumental terms.

The fourth and final research article in this issue is Ashwak Hauter’s, “The Reparative Work of the Imagination: Yemen, ‘Afiya, and Politics of the *Umma*.” Here, Hauter examines the work of Yemeni artists and filmmakers in reaction to a context of mental health crises, war, and displacement. Hauter’s interviews and analysis highlight the ways that her interlocutors use their art to explore new imaginings of Yemeni history and identity. Notably, Hauter analyzes this reimagining as an act of repair, which considers Yemen and Yemenis’ place within the wider Muslim *umma* above and beyond the modern world of nation-states.

This issue of the *American Journal of Islam and Society* also includes a number of insightful book reviews, including editor Ovamir Anjum’s

review essay engaging Joel Hayward's recent work *The Warrior Prophet: Muhammad and War* and Celene Ibrahim's author response to a review authored in a previous issue on her book, *Women and Gender in the Qur'an*.

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