



The Ummatics Institute's First Annual Conference

Umma Beyond the Nation-State: Imagination, Solidarity, Praxis

June 2023
Istanbul, Turkey

The Ummatics Institute invites submissions for a conference and a special journal issue on the theme of Ummatic imagination, solidarity, and praxis.

The Muslim Umma today is marked by a paradoxical situation of great possibility and massive dispossession. Muslims are more numerous, educated, connected, and resourceful than ever before—and deeply divided, among other factors, by the borders of the (post-)colonial nation-state. In conventional scholarly approaches, the language of the Umma—as an idiom of international solidarity, as a political affect, and as a theological commitment—competes with other objectified, identitarian categories (e.g., ethnicity, nation, and class). Meanwhile, global interconnections and neoliberal adjustments have weakened state territoriality; and from Euro-America to Israel, India, and China, old-fashioned state nationalisms are being replaced by or recast in civilizational nationalisms that are fundamentally hostile to the Muslim Umma. At this time of transformation and the intensification of global inequities, approaching the middle of the fifteenth hijrī century, we seek to revisit and thematize the Muslim collectivity today.

We especially encourage papers that engage and extend analyses offered in recent literature on the Umma. Although addressing different archives and fields, the varied titles noted below share a concern with enunciating a dialectical, comparative, or subversive relationship between the Islamic political tradition and the contemporary hegemony of Western political modernity. In emphasizing tensions with the theoretical and institutional framework of the nation-state, these works help us center the Islamic Umma as an analytic category by which to consider the Muslim present and future. We invite submissions on these and related themes:

- Political theory and Islamic norms, including descriptive/empirical questions of political science and political economy (the institutions of Ummatic practice),

specific theorizations of the Umma as a political community, and the prescriptive/normative concerns of political philosophy (the imperatives of Ummatic imagination). Works in this genre with which we invite critical engagement include, but are not limited to: Tamim al-Barghouti's *The Umma and the Dawla* (2008), Wael Hallaq's *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (2012), Ovamir Anjum's *Politics, Law, and Community: The Taymiyyan Moment* (2012), Reza Pankhurst's *The Inevitable Caliphate?: A History of the Struggle for Global Islamic Union, 1924 to the Present* (2013), Mona Hassan's *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History* (2016), Andrew March's *The Caliphate of Man: Popular Sovereignty in Modern Islamic Thought* (2019), and Joseph Kaminski's *Islam, Liberalism, and Ontology: A Critical Re-evaluation* (2021).

- Geopolitics, (de)globalization, and universalisms, including renewal of Ummatic language in global imaginaries, humanitarian and revivalist discourses, and broader debates on (de)globalization and universalisms. Rather than the conventional securitized language (e.g., fundamentalism, the clash of civilizations, political Islam and post-Islamism, and modernization and secularization), we encourage scholars to analyze the creative and relational aspects of Ummatic categories. Works in this genre include Salman Sayyid's *Recalling the Caliphate: Decolonisation and World Order* (2014), Darryl Li's *The Universal Enemy: Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity* (2019), and Jonathan Laurence's *Coping with Defeat: Sunni Islam, Roman Catholicism, and the Modern State* (2021).
- Concrete cases exploring the aforementioned theoretical clusters of Islamic political norms and the discontents of the nation-state and globalization through specific case studies (e.g., articles focusing on Palestine, Kashmir, Rohingya, Uyghur, Darfur, Kurdistan, Syria, Yemen, or elsewhere). We especially welcome ethnographic elaborations, comparative theorizations, and/or historical accounts of canonical scriptural texts underpinning Ummatic solidarity, such as the Prophetic hadith that expresses it through the metaphor of a single body; as well as articles that critically theorize failures of Ummatic solidarity.

More specifically, we encourage scholars to explore these and related questions:

- How can Ummatics serve as a means for transcending secularism and the trappings of the nation-state?
- Considering the polarizing times we live in, how can we effectively manage deep intra-Muslim difference and conflict to secure greater Ummatic solidarity?
- How can Ummatic solidarity foster and support economic innovation and redistribution to those who have been shunned by transnational global capitalism?

- How can traditional Sharī'a foundations be rejuvenated to reground Ummatic praxis?
- What are the unique concerns and challenges women face in the larger Ummatic solidarity project, and how might their active contribution be increased?
- How can Ummatics heed the suffering of Muslim and non-Muslim minorities around the world?

Timeline and inquiries

All inquiries and submissions should be sent to jkaminski@ummatix.org. Abstracts of approximately 400 words, with an accompanying author bio, are due by **15 January 2023**. Submission of CV is encouraged but not required. Authors of accepted abstracts will be notified by **31 January 2023**. The conference will be held in person in Istanbul in June 2023, with the exact date and venue to be confirmed. Final draft papers must be submitted by **15 May 2023** and should be between 5000-7000 words long. Selected papers will appear in a special edition of a Scopus-indexed academic journal. Lodging will be provided. Travel grants are available on a need basis on application.