



ISLAM & LIBERTY
NETWORK

CALL FOR PAPERS

11th International Islam and Liberty Conference

Istanbul, 18th-19th October 2024

The role of civil values and institutions in Muslim societies

Introduction

The Islam and Liberty Network (ILN) Foundation is a network of researchers, academics and public intellectuals committed to demonstrating the consistency of universal values of freedoms with Islam, through scholarly research and public dialogue. Founded in 2011, and governed by an international council, ILN is registered as a Labuan foundation in Malaysia. The mission of the Foundation is “to advance the understanding of religious, political and economic freedom for peace and prosperity in Muslim majority countries and beyond.”

Our work has particularly remained focused on Muslim majority countries, but it has also intellectually engaged other societies particularly where Islam and Muslim communities have been criticised and perceived as a threat to liberalism and a free society, as well as where the civil and individual rights of Muslims have been challenged.

The Islam and Liberty International Conference is our flagship event which offers scholars and researchers around the world the opportunity to present original work on these themes. The 11th International Conference of the Islam and Liberty Network (ILN) Foundation seeks to find intellectual and academic arguments for building civil and political institutions for a free society in the Muslim world and beyond.

Building Hypotheses

Statism is an idea where a state, as a central authority, defines the standards, institutions and rules which govern the collective manifestations of a society in economic, political and social domains. In contrast, a civil society can be loosely described as collective expression of voluntary associations amongst individuals, in the form of markets, mosques, political associations, labour unions and neighbourhood associations. Centralized economic planning is an example of statism whereas free markets represent voluntary association. Dictatorship is an example of statism whereas democracy is linked with civil society. A hierarchical religious organization with enforcement powers is an example of a statist institution whereas religious freedom enjoyed by citizens is an example of civil freedom.

While illiberalism and populism are mostly threats to western democracies, Muslim countries suffer from oligarchic and statist establishments that are incompatible with pluralist liberal democracies, freedom of expression and free enterprise. It is posited that one of the fundamental challenges to liberal democracies in many Muslim majority countries is the resistance of established military bureaucratic organizations to democratic and civil society institutions.

At its inception in the 7th Century, Islam embraced free trade and open markets and limited government. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established a marketplace with no tariffs after establishing a masjid. Later generations of Muslims expanded global trade and developed new instruments to promote commerce. Many of these instruments remain in use in different forms today. Early Islamic history also saw the emergence and adoption of voluntary charitable institutions such as Waqf, which played a central role in socio-economic development in Islamic civilization until the occupation of these lands by colonial regimes.

Call for Submissions

The Islam and Liberty Network (ILN) Foundation opens its call for submission of papers for its 11th International Conference to be convened in Istanbul on 18th-19th October 2024. The call is open to researchers, scholars, academics and others with a demonstrated interest in the subjects and themes related to religious, political and economic freedoms particularly in Muslim societies, but not necessarily limited to them. Indicative questions include:

1. What are characteristics of civil society organizations? How are they able to operate in a statist society?
2. What is the historical experience of Muslim majority countries with respect to free trade and open economy?
3. How can we build and promote civil society institutions to support freer societies in Muslim majority countries?
4. How are Muslim societies navigating democratization and modernization?
5. What is the future of endogenous (largely driven by local factors such as Tunisia) and exogenous (largely sponsored by US, such as Iraq and until recently in Afghanistan) forms of democratization in the Middle East?
6. Why are Muslim-majority countries not liberal democracies? Are there any principles of Islam that explain the lack of liberal democracy in Muslim majority countries?
7. Can we find evidence of classical liberal traditions/interpretations in the Islamic history of thought and literature?

Prospective authors and speakers are invited to submit their expression of interest in the form of an abstract or a short article while considering the following instructions:

1. Abstract/Article should be between 600 to 800 words, using Arial, font size 11, 1.25 space.
2. Abstract should explain the problem statement/research question, methodology, arguments, indicative literature sources, outline of conference paper and potential contribution in relevant debate.
3. Abstract should be written in English language using British spellings.
4. The abstract should be based on an original work not published elsewhere but we encourage submissions based on the on-going research projects.

5. Submissions should be based on an academic discipline and theoretical framework can be with application on a case study.

If a paper is accepted, authors will be asked to expand their abstract or article into a conference paper.

Administrative Instructions

- Authors should also submit a brief biography, profile picture, email address, institutional affiliation, and country of residence.
- Please email your abstract and other information to ILNConference11@islamandlibertynetwork.org by 30th June 2024.
- An academic committee will review the abstracts.
- Selected authors will be required to submit full conference papers (around 5000 words) by 30th September 2024.
- Travel grants will be available to selected authors subject to budget constraints.
- The 11th International Conference is scheduled on 18th-19th October 2024 in Istanbul.

For any inquiries, please write to ali@islamandlibertynetwork.org.