

EDITORIAL COMMENT

For some time now I have been looking for an opportunity to edit an issue of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEGAL INFORMATION (IJLI) that focused specifically on Islamic law. This seemed like it ought to be easy enough, but I have encountered frustration after frustration in this endeavor. Sometimes there was not enough material to make a full issue; sometimes the material was not of consistently high quality, or maybe the articles were not a good fit for the IJLI; and sometimes there was just bad timing.

There always seemed to be some reason that an Islamic law issue for the IJLI would not work. Recently, however, the stars aligned just right and I found myself with enough suitable material for the IJLI to create a terrific issue on Islamic legal issues.

Despite the presence of many millions of Muslims living peacefully around the world, and billions of dollars of funds flowing to, from, among and between these individuals, corporations, and governments, the subject of Islamic law has too often been considered through the prism of regional antagonisms. Rather, I hope to bring forward a discussion of the merits - or problems - with more mundane aspects of Islamic law, to further the academic discourse of Islamic law and legal matters in the US and abroad. There is no other agenda beyond that, and I believe this issue of the IJLI achieves that goal. While it provides in-depth, even critical analyses of some aspects of Islamic legal matters, the articles remain respectful of Islamic faith traditions and respectful of Muslim countries, when they are mentioned, upon which the articles focus.

There is a good deal of variety in this issue of the IJLI, though a number of the articles take some kind of comparative law perspective. There are six articles: three discuss business or finance topics in distinctly Islamic legal systems; one article compares Islamic and non-Islamic domestic relations models, one focuses on media incitement laws in Iraq, and there is a research pathfinder on an issue that should appeal to those interested in feminist issues in majority Muslim countries.

The issue opens with **Jacqueline McCormack's** article, *Commercial Contracts in Muslim Countries of the Middle East: A Comparison with the United States*. This article will be extremely helpful to anyone wanting a primer on contracting with a firm or a country that follows Islamic law. McCormack is followed by an important article by **Rafel Mahmood's**,

Islamic Governance, Capital Structure, and Equity Finance: Examining the Possibilities of American Financial Sharī'ah Boards. Mahmood makes a compelling case for increasing potential for improved flow of finances between Islamic and non-Islamic banks, governmental, and private institutions. This is accomplished through the establishment of financial Sharī'ah boards. These boards are common in Islamic communities, though they are relatively rare in Western countries. Some Western countries have recently established Sharī'ah boards. The United States, however, lags behind, and is losing out on the billions of dollars of commerce made possible with such boards. Georgetown Law professor **Lama Abu-Odeh's** *On Law and the Transition to Market: The Case of Egypt* is the third article with a business or finance topic. As its title suggests, its focus is on Egypt. Abu-Odeh provides a social, political and historic overview of Egypt's route to a market economy.

The next three articles are more diverse in style and substance. They begin with **Ryan Riegg's** *Behavioral Economic Issues in American and Islamic Marriage and Divorce Law*. This article is a comparative analysis suggesting possibilities for Western legal systems to take cognizance of and accommodate Islamic marriage laws within their existing non-Islamic domestic relations legal regimes. **Erica Smith's** piece, *Adding Fuel to the Fire: Justifying Iraq's Media Incitement Laws*, is an examination of the balance of liberty and security in the context of Iraq's evolving press freedoms. The articles conclude with *The Rights of Muslim Women in the Middle East: A Pathfinder*, by law librarian **Lauren Schroeder**.

This issue of the IJLI contains, of course, book reviews edited by Thomas Mills, and the International Calendar, edited by Aslihan Bulut. Aside from these standard features, this issue is a bit, well, different. That difference, however, is a good one. I am very excited to bring this issue of the IJLI to you. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did editing it.

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