

Editor's Note

Islamic Politics and Today's Questions

Mansour Mirahmadi^{ID}

Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relation, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. m_mirahmadi@sbu.ac.ir



Abstract

This paper aims to explain the position of Islamic political thought in the face of contemporary challenges by re-examining the conceptual network of the articles featured in the present issue. In the current intellectual climate, Islamic political thought is caught between two epistemological dilemmas: rigidity within tradition on the one hand, and submission to borrowed paradigms on the other. Relying on the necessity of a third way, this issue attempts to formulate the new questions of the present era from within the Islamic political tradition itself. The main axes of this issue revolve around concepts such as Islamic governance, political participation, religious activism in times of crisis, communicative rationality, resistance, and defensive jihad. By linking theoretical foundations with concrete experiences, the articles in this issue seek to demonstrate how a dynamic connection, attuned to emerging realities, can be established between political theory and the practice of governance through the reconstruction of concepts and strategic approaches.

Keywords

Islamic political thought, Islamic governance, religious activism, political participation, third way, tradition and modernity.

Cite this article: Mirahmadi, M. (2026). Islamic Politics and Today's Questions. *Journal of Islamic Political Studies*, 8(2), pp. 7-10. <https://doi.org/10.22081/jips.2026.80180>

Received: 2025/12/04 ; **Received in revised form:** 2026/02/28 ; **Accepted:** 2026/03/19 ; **Published online:** 2026/07/10

Article type: Research Article

Publisher: Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy

©2026/authors retain the copyright and full publishing rights



<http://jips.isca.ac.ir/>

The journal *Islamic Political Studies* is published to raise and examine questions that emerge at the intersection of religion, politics, power, and society. The mission of this journal is not merely to collect articles. Its primary aim is to demonstrate how the Islamic political tradition can contribute to understanding contemporary issues. Yet this contribution is fruitful only when we view the tradition not as a set of ready-made answers, but as a living field for thought and dialogue.

In today's intellectual climate, Islamic political thought sometimes finds itself caught between two epistemological dead ends: one view confines tradition within the bounds of the past and deems it incapable of addressing emerging exigencies; the other, disregarding our intellectual and historical heritage, seeks to explain everything through borrowed models without paying due attention to the foundational principles and historical roots of this tradition. This journal stands against both of these oversimplified paths and insists on the necessity of a third way—a way that neither stagnates in the rigidity of tradition nor, in the eagerness to transcend it, auctions off its own authenticities. The articles in this issue all revolve around the idea that one can, from within the Islamic political tradition, formulate today's questions and, by reconstructing the system of concepts, arrive at a language that is precise, dynamic, and attuned to emerging realities.

What ties this issue together is a shared concern. All the articles, in various ways, address the relationship between religion and the political—but they examine this relationship not at the level of slogans, but at the level of experience, institutions, behavior, and meaning. For this reason, this issue can be seen as an attempt to re-read the conceptual network of Islamic politics—a network in which consultation (*shūrā*), participation, communicative rationality, religious agency, crisis, resistance, and defensive jihad each have their own place, and together form a clearer picture of politics in the Islamic world.

In one of the articles, the concept of *shūrā* (consultation) is placed at the center of discussion. This concept is not merely a jurisprudential or historical term. In Islamic political thought, *shūrā* represents one of the most important ways of connecting religion with collective decision-making. The significance of this discussion lies in the fact that it demonstrates that public participation is not necessarily a concept external to the Islamic tradition. On the contrary, in many Islamic readings, participation and consultation are considered part of the logic of administering public affairs. When this concept is re-examined within the context of Iran's Sunni community, it becomes clear that traditional

concepts can retain political and social functionality even under new circumstances.

The article on voter behavior can be understood along the same lines. This article does not merely speak of declining electoral participation. At a deeper level, it addresses the relationship between trust, the sense of efficacy, and the connection between the people and the institutions of power. This issue is important for Islamic political studies because it shows that political participation is not merely an administrative matter. Participation is an indicator of the state of the relationship between society and the political order. Wherever this relationship weakens, one must rethink the meaning of representation, trust, and political effectiveness.

Another major theme of this issue is communicative rationality. This reminds us that religious discourse is effective only when it speaks in an appropriate language. If religious speech cannot connect with today's audience, it remains weak at the social level. Hence, the issue is not merely about transmitting content; it is about how to articulate religion in a language that is clear, precise, and attuned to the contemporary social field. At this point, Islamic political studies intersects with the issues of communication, persuasion, and public understanding.

Alongside these discussions, the article on religious agency in times of crisis holds particular significance. This article shows that in moments of crisis, religious institutions are not mere observers; at times, they themselves become one of the main factors in maintaining social cohesion and reconstructing meaning. This point is important in Islamic political studies because it moves our perspective beyond politics under normal conditions. Islamic politics must also be viewed in difficult moments—where society faces collapse, threat, or a power vacuum, and religious institutions are compelled to take on new roles.

The article on the relationship between resistance and defensive jihad also fits within this same semantic network. This article carefully distinguishes between a broad strategy and an executive tactic. Resistance here is not merely a military reaction; rather, it is a general logic for preserving the independence, identity, and security of the Islamic community. Defensive jihad, in this context, is considered one of its more specific and practical forms. This distinction is important for Islamic political studies because it prevents us from reducing broad political concepts to purely military or reactive behaviors.

In addition to these themes, several other articles in this issue address the theoretical foundations of political thought and the ethics of governance. On

the one hand, these articles examine the place of religion in political system-building; on the other, they explain the relationship between moral teachings and the structure of power. Alongside these, other contributions in the issue also engage with topics such as religious policy-making, the relationship between religion and public administration, and how to connect religious foundations with political decision-making and action. These articles add further depth to this issue and demonstrate that Islamic political studies are not limited to describing political reality, but also attend to understanding its foundational principles and orientations.

Taken together, the articles in this issue should be read in connection with one another. Each article illuminates a part of a larger question. The central question is: how can Islamic political thought remain faithful to its own principles while also engaging with the complex social and political realities of today's world? The answer to this question lies not in reiterating generalities, but in a careful re-reading of concepts and historical experiences.

That is precisely the mission of the *Journal of Islamic Political Studies*. This journal seeks to provide a space for such a re-reading—a space in which the researcher can, from within the tradition, understand today's questions, and from within today's realities, establish a new relationship with the tradition. Our hope is that this issue represents a step along that very path—a step toward a more precise understanding of Islamic politics, participation, religious agency, and the relationship between religion and power in the contemporary world.