

Editorials

Introductory Note

It is a great honor to introduce myself as the new Co-Editor of the *American Journal of Islam and Society*. Developing the future of this journal is a considerable intellectual trust that I can only envisage as a collective effort to be undertaken with the journal's excellent editorial team. Under Dr. Ovamir Anjum's editorial leadership in the last few years, the journal established a very successful trajectory, combining high academic quality and timely treatment of topics of interest to diverse communities of readers.

In this introductory note, I would like to begin by expressing my commitment to the vision behind the recent name change from the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* to the *American Journal of Islam and Society*. The new name captures the multidisciplinary of the journal's current content. This multidisciplinary is reflected too in the editorial team's varied areas of expertise, to which I bring my primary academic interest in Qur'anic and *tafsir* studies; my work and experiences in developing Islamic Studies as a subject in its own right in Britain, which led to my involvement in founding and launching the British Association for Islamic Studies (BRAIS); and my more recent work on Islam and Muslims in Britain. Some common threads run across these different academic interests and activities, but one mode in which they have significantly intersected for me is through questions of gender, both conceptually and institutionally. It is this last aspect of my work that I am keen to draw upon as Co-Editor of the journal.

Building on the achievements of the current editorial team, I see publishing research on Islam, gender, and sexuality to be an important and strategic area of growth. Scholarship on related topics has exponentially expanded both in quantity and quality. However, a great deal of current research is clustered around narrowly defined approaches and goals, the mapping of which remains a future task. Suffice it to say here that central to

my vision is to see the journal become a platform for rigorous gender-focused research which critically pursues as well as challenges the intellectual agendas and societal concerns on which the study of gender and Islam has turned until today.

This intellectual dimension I see as concomitant with structural changes that allow broader and less siloed representation of women academics in the study of Islam and Muslims. One of my main goals is to work with the editorial team to formulate editorial policies and strategies which lend support to early-career female researchers and facilitate intellectual mentoring through reviewing processes.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have supported the journal throughout the years and helped build it up into a strong publication. I look forward to working with you and to receiving manuscript submissions from scholars across the multitude of fields which study Islam and Muslims.

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