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**ABSTRACT**

**Faith and Sovereignty in Islamic Jurisprudence**

*الدولة و السيادة في الفقه الإسلامي*

The valuable comparative study compares the theory of sovereignty and the theory of political authority in Islamic constitutional jurisprudence.

The author discusses the theory of sovereignty in Western thought before looking at the Islamic perspective. He explains that this theory was founded in France during the sixteenth century, in defence of royal authority which had to struggle against the feudal lords within the state and with papal authorities outside of the state. ‘Abd al-Karim presents two conflicting concepts of theocracy and democracy. In theocracy, the source of authority originates with God; in democracy, authority derives from the people. ‘Abd al- Karim examines whether the theory of sovereignty and its basis correspond with Islamic theory, with regards to the authority of the state and its foundations. He states that the Islamic legal system has specific theories about state authority and public authority.

According to the Islamic theory, Public authority has a legal and legislative basis derived from sharia; it is not a product of imagination or supposition, but it is in the Qur’an. ‘Abd al-Karim then briefly explains that this authority is based upon the community which elects its leaders and representatives. He states that sharia predates all other forms of law through its establishment of legal representation. He also explains that authority can be divided between legislative and executive authorities.

In the final chapter ‘Abd al-Karim compares the theory of sovereignty with the Islamic theory of state authority. He observes the limits and guarantees both systems apply to “authority”.

Political theory from the perspective of Islamic civilisation deserves continued attention and research. ‘Abd al-Karim’s work is a rare analysis of a subject which has not captured the interest of Arab and Muslim scholars or previously. ‘Abd al-Karim has employed a unique initiative by comparing Islamic and Western political theories while revisiting the Western thought on political authority.

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Translated by Hugh Lovatt