

The Dakota Access Pipeline Analyzed Through Islam

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Abstract

At the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, Native Americans--as well as many others--are protesting Energy Transfer Partners and the Dakota Access Pipeline. Using the book *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering* written by Sherman Jackson as an interpretive lens, this paper provides an in-depth view of the moral and legal aspects of the protest. While Jackson primarily focuses on black suffering in his book, his approach of analyzing the situation using Islamic schools of thought can be applied to any suffering experienced by a group of people. This paper examines arguments from the protesters at Standing Rock as well as proponents for the Dakota Access Pipeline using a religious point of view informed by four Islamic schools of thought: Maturidism, Mu'tazilism, Traditionalism, and Asharism. Each school explores God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence in relation to the prolonged suffering of certain groups of people, and each comes to a conclusion about the significance of protest and resistance. Through these theological lenses, this paper concludes that although the proponents for the Dakota Access Pipeline claim the protesters have no legal grounds for their actions, there are moral grounds for protesting the pipeline.