



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands

**Editorial**  
Douwes, D.

**Citation**

Douwes, D. (2001). Editorial. *Isim Newsletter*, 8(1), 2-2. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/17506>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)  
License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)  
Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/17506>

international institute  
**ISIM**  
for the study of islam  
in the modern world

ISIM Newsletter 8

September 2001

40 pages

ISSN 1 388-9788

**Editorial Office**

Visiting Address  
Rapenburg 71, Leiden  
Postal Address  
ISIM, P.O. Box 11089  
2301 EB Leiden, The Netherlands  
Telephone  
+31-71-527 7905  
Telefax  
+31-71-527 7906  
E-mail  
isimnews@let.leidenuniv.nl  
URL  
www.isim.nl

**Editor**

Dick Douwes  
Copy and language editor  
Gabrielle Constant  
Desk editor  
Noël Lambert  
Design  
De Kreeft, Amsterdam  
Printing  
Dijkman Offset, Diemen

**Coming issues**

ISIM Newsletter 9  
Deadline: 1 November 2001  
Published: January 2002  
ISIM Newsletter 10  
Deadline: 1 February 2002  
Published: May 2002  
ISIM Newsletter 11  
Deadline: June 2002  
Published: September 2002

The ISIM solicits your response to the ISIM Newsletter. If you wish to contribute to the ISIM Newsletter, style sheets may be obtained upon request from the ISIM Secretariat or on the ISIM website. In order to offer updated information on activities concerning the study of Islam and Muslim societies, along with news on vacancies, grants, and fellowships, the ISIM relies on its readers. The information will be made available on the ISIM website.

The ISIM Newsletter is published three times per year by the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM). Responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the authors. Their views do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute or its supporters. The ISIM Newsletter is free of charge.

**Staff ISIM**

- Muhammad Khalid Masud  
Academic Director
- Peter van der Veer  
Co-Director
- Dick Douwes  
Academic Affairs
- Mary Bakker  
Administrative Affairs
- Nathal Dessing  
Education
- Noël Lambert  
Newsletter & Website
- Sandra de Winter  
Administrative Assistant
- Laila Al-Zwaini  
Projects Officer

**Board**

- Drs J.G.F. Veldhuis (Chairperson)  
President of Utrecht University
- Dr S.J. Noorda  
President of University of Amsterdam
- Dr J.R.T.M. Peters  
Vice President of University of Nijmegen
- Drs L.E.H. Vredevoogd  
President of Leiden University

**Academic Committee**

- Prof. Léon Buskens (Chairperson)  
Utrecht University
- Prof. Mamadou Diouf  
CODESRIA, Dakar
- Prof. Dale Eickelman  
Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
- Prof. Gudrun Krämer  
Free University Berlin
- Prof. R. Kruk  
Leiden University
- Prof. Jean-François Leguil-Bayart  
CERI, Paris
- Prof. Frits Staal  
University of California at Berkeley
- Prof. Kees Versteegh  
University of Nijmegen
- Sami Zubeida  
Birkbeck College, University of London

**ISIM Chairs**

- Prof. Muhammad Khalid Masud  
ISIM Chair, Leiden University
- Prof. Martin van Bruinessen  
ISIM Chair, Utrecht University
- Prof. Annelies Moors  
ISIM Chair, University of Amsterdam

Over the last year, a heated debate about the position of Muslims in the Netherlands has evolved around the idea that Islam hampers the integration of Muslim migrants and their children. It was basically argued that Islamic ideology does not accept the separation of state and religion, and fails to confer equal rights to women, making it unfit for a modern European society and a danger to the ideal of multiculturalism (see Meuleman, p.33). The fierceness of the debate must have taken most Muslims in the Netherlands by surprise. Problems that were until recently explained in terms of relative poverty, or failing parental, educational and other institutional support were now being linked to religion. In addition, debates about the high degree of juvenile crime among Moroccans in the large cities were now pointing to religious background as a possible cause. A Moroccan imam exacerbated the debate by a homophobic remark on Dutch television. His views were used to explain violence against gay people by – again – some Moroccan youth gangs. However, the fact that such youths clearly frequent discos and coffeeshops rather than mosques – thus unfamiliar with the imam's views – was simply ignored.

The imam's remarks caused public outrage and within just days, gay pride had become a national pride – naively implying that public demonstrations of homosexuality are fully accepted in Dutch society. Very few pointed to the fact that the violence against gays was not motivated by the queer-bashers' religious beliefs, nor was it limited to a particular ethnic group.

The discussion was complicated by various misconceptions about Islamic institutions. In particular, the position of the imam and his authority over the Muslim community are generally construed as being greater than they actually are. This stems from religion, albeit in a post-Christian society, still being understood in Christian terms. Most people, including policy makers, associate mosque with church, and imam with priest or minister. A formal, church-like structure is projected upon the Muslim communities, which inevitably fails to reflect reality. Combined with the misapprehension of expressions of religiosity and identity among migrants, the debate was highly erratic at times. For instance, the fact that the great majority of youths of Muslim background are hesitant to embarrass their parents and their community by denouncing (certain) practices and beliefs was contrasted with the autochthonous youths' common behaviour of openly criticizing the beliefs of their parents or grandparents. Declaring oneself a Muslim, a believer, is associated with mosque attendance and conformity with the

ideals of the imam as expressed in his preaching. The claims of many Moroccans and Turks that their Islamic identity is important to them, even if outward signs of religiosity seem to be absent, is confusing to many non-Muslims in the Netherlands.

A remarkable aspect of the discussions is that the degree of 'integratedness' was measured by the (post-)migrants' stances on gay and female rights. As was previously the case in the United Kingdom, a paradoxical situation was constructed in which people of Muslim background are asked to publicly accept the right of, for instance, gay people to be different, while at the same time their own right to be different is being questioned. They are pressured to denounce at least certain Islamic codes and to openly criticize traditionalist or Islamist points of view. A number of intellectuals and politicians expressed their regret that the voice of Muslim intellectuals was hardly heard in the debate. Nonetheless, the events forced the Islamic community to openly discuss the issue of homosexuality, and representatives of a Gay Muslim organization (Yusuf Foundation) met with local Muslim leaders. This summer people of Muslim background participated in the public events that have become part of Dutch gay culture over the last decade, like the annual Pink Saturday and the Gay Parade.

The participation in the debates of an organization of practising Muslim gays who argue that the Qur'an and *hadith* do not speak out against homosexuality, illustrates the dynamic nature of religious discourse in the context of post-migration. Of course, this example may not be representative for the religious production among Muslim communities in Western Europe, but it is part of the emergence of local forms and adaptations of Islam in Europe. Over the last decade this complex process has attracted increased scholarly attention. The ISIM has recently launched a project on 'The production of Islamic knowledge in Western Europe', in cooperation with a number of European partners (Van Bruinessen, p. 3). The settings of new scripturalist trends in Europe occupy an important place in this project. In this *ISIM Newsletter* the articles by Bava (p. 7), Jonker (p. 8) and Kehl (p. 9) were produced to inaugurate the project. Of course, these discourses in diasporas are linked to the developments in the home countries and the *umma* as a whole. Both Islamist and liberal intellectual debates in Muslim countries (Salvatore, p. 20; Jahanbakhsh, p. 21; Hamzawy, p. 22) impact the discourses in Europe, although the writings of the latter are less readily available in the West and less known among Muslims in Europe.

## Editorial

DICK DOUWES | Editor

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ISIM Annual Lecture

Professor Barbara Metcalf will deliver this year's ISIM Annual Lecture on 'Piety and Persuasion in the Modern Islamic World'. The lecture will be held in Amsterdam (Agnietenkapel) on 23 November 2001 at 16:00. For further information, please contact the ISIM secretariat.

## ISIM Seminar Key Texts in the Anthropology of Islamic Law

In recent years, anthropologists have shown a renewed interest in Islamic law. New themes, such as the social life of Islamic texts and the relations between law, gender, and property have emerged. This interest in the anthropological study of Islamic law calls for an attempt at a more systematic overview of the field. This seminar aims to present such an overview by discussing basic texts on the anthropological study of Islamic law.

This seminar is intended for advanced M.A. students, Ph.D. students, and faculty in the fields of Islamic studies, anthropology, history, and law. The seminar also constitutes an introduction to the ISIM workshop on 'Current Research in the Anthropology of Islamic Law' to be held in April 2002.

**Dates:**

Fridays from 2 November to 7 December 2001

Time: 10:00 to 12:00

Venue: Leiden

Should you wish to attend, please contact the ISIM secretariat. The final programme of the seminar as well as a list of participants will be sent to all registered participants by 5 October 2001.

A provisional programme is available at the following web address:

<http://www.isim.nl/isim/activities/seminar.html>

## New ISIM Ph.D. Fellows

Two new Ph.D. fellows joined the ISIM on 1 September 2001:

– Mujiburrahman (Indonesia): *Muslim Christian Relations in Indonesia (1967–1998)*.

Mujiburrahman aims to analyse Muslim and Christian responses to the government policy on (1) the Pancasila as the sole basis for all social organizations; (2) the application of Muslim personal law and religious education in public schools; (3) mission; and (4) interreligious dialogue. This study is based, among other things, on documents on government policy, writings of, and interviews with, Muslim and Christian intellectuals and preachers, and newspapers and magazines.

– Joska Samuli Schielke (Finland): *Mawlid Festivals in Egypt: A Study on the Description, Assessment, and Categorization of a Controversial Tradition*.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *mawlid* festivals have represented an epistemic as well as ideological challenge to Islamic reformist and modernist thought. Samuli Schielke intends to analyse the rhetorical conventions, central assumptions, historical roots, and popular reception of this controversy on *mawlids* in contemporary Egypt. Based on written sources and interviews, this study can provide important insight into the nature, commonplaces, and reception of cultural criticism in modern Islamic societies.

## ISIM Publications

The ISIM has launched its ISIM Papers Series with the publication of *Islam, Islamists, and the Electoral Principle in the Middle East*, by James Piscatori, and *Thinking about Secularism and Law in Egypt*, by Talal Asad. The third of this series, John Bowen's *Shari'a, State and Social Norms in France and Indonesia*, is forthcoming. The ISIM has also published the inaugural lecture for the ISIM Chair at Leiden University by Muhammad Khalid Masud: *Muslim Jurists' Quest for the Normative Basis of Shari'a*.

These publications are available at the ISIM and can be ordered through the ISIM secretariat.

## ISIM Fellowships

The ISIM invites applications and research proposals for various programmes. Applications from candidates in the social sciences, humanities, and religious studies will be considered. Applicants should be competent in academic English. The ISIM fellowships and their respective application deadlines include the following:

- *Ph.D. fellowships*  
(1 March 2002 and 1 September 2002)
- *Post-doctoral fellowships*  
(1 March 2002 and 1 September 2002)
- *Visiting fellowships*  
(1 March 2002 and 1 September 2002)
- *Sabbatical fellowships*  
(1 March 2002 and 1 September 2002)

For more information on the various fellowships, please consult the ISIM website:

<http://www.isim.nl/isim/fellowships/>

Application forms may be downloaded from the website or obtained upon request from the ISIM secretariat.

## ISIM Senior Fellows

From September 2001, Michael Gilson (until December 2001) and Rudolph Peters (until February 2002) will join the ISIM as senior fellows with a view to furthering their current research:

- Michael Gilson (Department of Middle Eastern Studies, New York) is working on Hadhrami families' links around the Indian Ocean in the colonial and post-colonial periods. This research includes following a particular family from South Yemen to countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, India and areas of East Africa, so as to establish individual trajectories and networks.
- Rudolph Peters (University of Amsterdam) is writing a volume on Islamic criminal law (ICL) as part of a seven-volume series edited by Wael Hallaq (McGill University) to be published by Cambridge University Press. Apart from a survey of doctrine of the *fiqh*, this project includes an analysis of the enforcement of ICL in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt and the present-day relevance of ICL, particularly its reintroduction in various Muslim countries.