

Conference Programme

**“Studying Islam in the Public Sphere:
A Critical Reflection on Knowledge Production”**

3 and 4 November 2009

Academy Building, Room “Klein Auditorium”
Rapenburg 73, Leiden
the Netherlands

**Organised by Project Office IRP in collaboration with the Social Development
Department (DSO), Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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“Studying Islam in the Public Sphere: A Critical Reflection on Knowledge Production”

Background Conference

The Project Office Islam Research Programme (Project Office IRP) organises in collaboration with the Social Development Department (DSO) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs a number of conferences as part of the research programme “Strengthening knowledge of and dialogue with the Islamic/Arab world”, in short Islam Research Programme. The first conference of the series takes place on 3 and 4 November 2009 and brings together policy officers, practitioners and researchers from various backgrounds and disciplines, in order to engage in a critical dialogue about knowledge and policy development in the Muslim world.

Conference Aim

The conference aims to provide a platform for knowledge exchange, to facilitate interaction and dialogue between academics, policy officers and practitioners, and to critically reflect upon that interaction and dialogue. To encourage discussion conference participants will be invited to take on active roles during the conference. This will be achieved by inviting the various parties to an open dialogue via plenary sessions and interactive workshops. All themes specifically foreground the relationship between policy and academic research and allow the various parties involved to discuss such issues with each other.

Conference Themes

The theme of the conference is “Studying Islam in the Public Sphere: A Critical Reflection on Knowledge Production”. The Project Office IRP has, therefore, chosen four themes that will appeal to a wide array of policy officers, researchers and practitioners and are of relevance to the various projects within the research programme:

1. Civil Society in the Muslim World

This session stresses the importance of gaining information on the specificities of operating in a public sphere in which religion plays an important role. The concept of civil society in Muslim countries will be addressed.

2. Studying Muslim Societies and Communities: Interaction between Academics and Policy Makers

Part of the first conference day will be dedicated to the interaction between academics and policy officers when studying Muslim societies and communities. The subject of civil society will be taken as an entry point for the discussion.

3. Human Rights and Islam

This session will explore how the human rights debate takes shape in Islamic discourses. How does the debate between universalism versus cultural relativism materialise in the Muslim world?

4. Research Capacity Development in the Muslim World

The last session of the conference will deal with research capacity development in the Muslim world. Ideas and observations regarding research capacity development in the specific context of the Muslim world will be exchanged.

Conference Programme

“Studying Islam in the Public Sphere: A Critical Reflection on Knowledge Production”

3 November

08.30 – 09.30

Registration, coffee and tea

Session 1:

Civil Society in the Muslim World

Chair: Peter Geschiere, Professor at the University of Amsterdam

09.30 – 09.45

Welcome and Introduction of the Programme

Jan Michiel Otto, Director and Professor at the Van Vollenhoven Institute, Leiden University

Annelies Moors, Professor at the University of Amsterdam and Member of the Academic Advisory Board Project Office IRP

Dennis Janssen, Project Coordinator Project Office IRP

09.45 – 10.00

Opening Address

Bram van Ojik, Director of the Social Development Department, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

10.00 – 10.30

Keynote Speech by Jonathan Benthall, Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, University College London

Civil Society in Contemporary Muslim Societies

10.30 – 11.00

Coffee/Tea break, Reception Room

11.00 – 11.30

Panel Discussion

Discussants:

Roel van der Veen, Professor at the University of Amsterdam and Chairman of the Strategy Board, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dawn Chatty, Deputy Director Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

11.30 – 12.15

Plenary Discussion

12.15 – 13.30

Lunch

Session 2:	<i>Studying Muslim Societies and Communities: Interaction between Academics and Policy Makers</i> Chair: Godelieve van Heteren, Senior Consultant at Europa Arena
13.30 – 14.00	Introductory Speech by Nikolaos van Dam Ambassador, Royal Netherlands Embassy Jakarta <i>The Relevance of Academic Research to Foreign Policy Making</i>
14.00 – 15.45	Workshops <i>1. The relevance of academic research to policy making</i> Moderator: Marina de Regt, Coordinator Sefhis, International Institute of Social History; member Academic Advisory Board IRP Rapporteur: Mayke Kaag, African Studies Centre; coordinator IRP research project Senegal Location: <i>Faculty Room Mathematics & Natural Sciences</i> <i>2. Pros and cons of policy involvement in civil society research in the Muslim world</i> Moderator: Thijl Sunier, Professor at the VU University Amsterdam; coordinator IRP research project Turkey Rapporteur: Mujiburrahman, State Institute of Islamic Studies, Antasari, Banjarmasin; researcher IRP research project Indonesia Location: <i>Grachtenkamer</i> <i>3. Interaction between policy makers, researchers and civil society organisations in the Muslim world</i> Moderator: Tanja Gonggrijp, Royal Netherlands Embassy Dakar Rapporteur: Alper Bilgili, researcher IRP research project Turkey Location: <i>Lecture Hall 1</i>
15.45 – 16.15	Tea/coffee break, Faculty Club
16.15 – 17.00	Plenary Discussion: Academics and Policy Officers: Tensions and/or Synergy?
17.00 – 18.00	Drinks reception, Faculty Club

4 November

09.00 – 09.30 **Welcome with Coffee and Tea, Reception Room**

Session 3: ***Human Rights and Islam***

Chair: Jan Michiel Otto, Director and Professor at the Van Vollenhoven Institute, Leiden University

09.30 – 10.00 **Keynote Speech by Abdulkader Tayob**, Professor at the Department of Religious Studies, University of Cape Town

Human Rights and Islam: Discourses, Theologies and Legal Reforms

10.00 – 10.45 **Panel Discussion**

Discussants:

Balghis Badri, Professor at the Ahfad University for Women and Director of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies, Sudan

Arjan Hamburger, Human Rights Ambassador, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Joe Stork, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division

10.45 – 11.15 **Coffee/Tea Break, Reception Room**

11.15 – 12.00 **Plenary Discussion**

12.00 – 12.15 **Introduction workshops afternoon session by Jos Brand**

12.15 – 13.30 **Lunch**

Session 4:

Research Capacity Development in the Muslim World

Chair: Jos Brand, advisor and trainer in capacity development

13.30 – 15.15

Workshops

1. Freedom and the (im-)possibilities of doing (human rights) research in the Muslim world

Moderator: Karin Willemse, Associate Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam; member Academic Advisory Board IRP

Rapporteur: Mamadou Bodian, Mouvement Citoyen; researcher IRP research project Senegal

Location: Lecture Hall 1

2. The challenges of research capacity development in the Muslim world

Moderator: Sylvia Bergh, Lecturer, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague; member Academic Advisory Board IRP

Rapporteur: Ronald Sonnemans, Royal Netherlands Embassy Abuja

Location: Grachtenkamer

3. The need for knowledge networks in the Muslim world

Moderator: Jan Willem Nibbering, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Effectiveness and Quality Department

Rapporteur: Merel Kahmann, PhD researcher IRP research project Morocco

Location: Faculty Room Mathematics & Natural Sciences

15.15 – 15.45

Tea/coffee break, Faculty Club

15.45 – 16.45

Plenary Discussion: Research Capacity Development in the Muslim World

16:45 – 17:00

Closing of the conference

17.00 – 18.00

Drinks reception, Faculty Club

Workshop Outlines

Day 1: Outline of workshops 'Interaction between Academics and Policy makers'

Workshop 1: The relevance of academic research to policy making

Proposition: The outcome of academic research is often not of practical use for policy makers and practitioners.

Moderator: Marina de Regt, Coordinator Sephis, International Institute of Social History; member Academic Advisory Board IRP

Rapporteur: Mayke Kaag, African Studies Centre; coordinator IRP research project Senegal

This workshop will focus on the question how academic research can be applied to policy, while keeping in mind that the actual set-up and choice of methodology is the sole responsibility of the researchers. Firstly, the lack of cooperation between scholars and policy makers will be discussed. Do policy makers and researchers 'live in different worlds' and 'speak a different language', or are they simply interested in different *types* of knowledge? Secondly, this workshop will discuss how research programmes such as the IRP can facilitate cooperation between academics and policy makers. What conditions should academic research meet in order for it to be relevant to policy making in the field of international cooperation?

Location: Faculty Room Mathematics & Natural Sciences

Workshop 2: Pros and cons of policy involvement in civil society research in the Muslim world

Proposition: It is problematic to conduct research on civil society in the Muslim world that is policy oriented, because research might become politicised.

Moderator: Thijl Sunier, Professor VU University Amsterdam; coordinator IRP research project Turkey

Rapporteur: Mujiburrahman, State Institute of Islamic Studies, Antasari, Banjarmasin; researcher IRP research project Indonesia

This workshop will focus on the question how an academic researcher would or would not benefit from conducting policy oriented research into civil society commissioned by an (inter)national governmental institution or NGO. Do questions of independence and integrity of research play a role? What kind of tensions and ethical issues are academic researchers confronted with when conducting policy oriented research, and what are possible strategies for dealing with those? What possible benefits can be derived from the interaction between the policy and academic communities? Does this interaction perhaps increase the relevance or the topicality of research? Could policy makers open certain doors for researchers that would otherwise remain closed?

Location: Grachtenkamer

Workshop 3: Interaction between policy makers, researchers and civil society organisations in the Muslim world

Proposition: Civil society organisations in the Muslim world should be actively involved in policy oriented research.

Moderator: Tanja Gonggrijp, Royal Netherlands Embassy Dakar

Rapporteur: Alper Bilgili, researcher IRP research project Turkey

This workshop will focus on the interaction between policy officers and civil society organisations and the role that research plays in this interaction. For policy officers the aim of researching Islamic civil society organisations might not solely be to gain a better insight into these organisations but also to establish or increase cooperation between them and these organisations. Should civil society organisations be involved in formulating the research agenda in order to facilitate successful cooperation afterwards? What are other ways in which researchers can stimulate or facilitate interaction between policy officers and civil society organisations? Are there any reasons why researchers, policy makers or practitioners would not want to be involved in this interaction?

Location: Lecture Hall 1

Day 2: Outline of workshops 'Research Capacity Development'

Workshop 1: Freedom and the (im-)possibilities of doing (human rights) research in the Muslim world

Proposition: Conducting research into human rights issues is currently too problematic in various Muslim countries.

Moderator: Karin Willemse, Associate Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam; member Academic Advisory Board IRP

Rapporteur: Mamadou Bodian, Mouvement Citoyen; researcher IRP research project Senegal

This workshop focuses on the difficulties researchers encounter when conducting (human rights) research in Muslim societies. The notion of human rights is often presented by governments and Muslim communities as a western agenda that is imposed on them, or, even, as a means to denigrate their religious values. What options are available to researchers who conduct human rights research in Muslim communities that enable them to deal with this topic in an ethical way? When and how is the freedom of research of researchers hindered: how do they deal with the social and political sensitivities of their research topic? How can international researchers, policymakers and civil society organisations support local researchers in their attempt to independently research human rights issues or other potentially sensitive issues such as HIV- Aids, sexual and reproductive rights, etc? What would be the interests of civil society organisations and policymakers?

Location: Lecture Hall 1

Workshop 2: The challenges of research capacity development in the Muslim World

Proposition: Research capacity building should be bottom-up and start at the individual level

Moderator: Sylvia Bergh, Lecturer, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague; member Academic Advisory Board IRP

Rapporteur: Ronald Sonnemans, Royal Netherlands Embassy Abuja

This workshop focuses on the question of what elements are indispensable for successful research capacity development. Should the development of research capacity start with individual (excellent) researchers or with research institutions? In terms of viability and sustainability, is institutional embedding (i.e. a university department) to be preferred or are private, independent research institutions to be encouraged? How to best start capacity building: what are the pitfalls? In what way can junior researchers be reached and/or stimulated to engage in long-term research capacity building? In what way can international researchers, policymakers and civil society organisations support research capacity development? Does it make a difference what the subjects of research are? Are the challenges different in the various Muslim countries that are part of the IRP programme?

Location: Grachtenkamer

Workshop 3: The need for knowledge networks in the Muslim world

Proposition: The investment in knowledge networks is not necessary because of the use of internet

Moderator: Jan Willem Nibbering, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Effectiveness and Quality Department

Rapporteur: Merel Kahmann, PhD researcher IRP research project Morocco

This workshop will focus on how to build knowledge networks in the various countries of the programme. Should research projects funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have an explicit focus on building knowledge networks? What is the added value of knowledge networks in countries with Muslim communities: what should be the tasks/goals of such networks? Should these knowledge networks be national, regional, or even international in order for them to be most effective in the long run? How can one include both senior and junior researchers? What themes should these networks emphasise, and what could be the institutional linkage to programmes such as the IRP programme? What role can international researchers, policymakers and civil society organisations have in promoting these knowledge networks?

Location: Faculty Room Mathematics & Natural Sciences

Chatham House Rule¹

The conference will make use of the *Chatham House Rule*:

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed”.

The *Chatham House Rule* creates an atmosphere of openness and ensures conference participants that they can speak freely without being quoted.

Explanation of the Rule

The Chatham House Rule originated at Chatham House, United Kingdom, with the aim of providing anonymity to speakers and to encourage openness and the sharing of information. It is now used throughout the world as an aid to free discussion. Meetings do not have to take place at Chatham House, or be organized by Chatham House, to be held under the Rule.

As a consequence of this rule, the list of attendees should not be circulated beyond those participating in the meeting.

¹ Source: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/about/chathamhouserule/>

Speakers, Discussants and Session Chairs of the Plenary Sessions

Balghis Badri is Professor at the Ahfad University for Women and Director of the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies, Sudan. Ahfad University promotes women and gender studies within Sudan but also within North Eastern Africa and the Middle East. Balghis Badri mainly works on women's rights, women and Islam and the situation of women in Sudan. She is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Babiker Badri Scientific Association, an NGO dealing with women's issues and peace in Sudan.

Jonathan Benthall is Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Anthropology, University College London. His interests extend on the one hand to the international aid system, and on the other to the growth of new quasi-religious movements and their interactions with traditional religions. At a practical level, he is continuing his studies of Faith Based Organisations with special reference to Islamic charities. He has been retained as an adviser on initiatives relating to Islamic charities by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by a number of legal teams, including the American Civil Liberties Union.

Jos Brand is an adviser and trainer in capacity development. His international experience covers a period of more than 20 years in a large variety of countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Jos Brand works with governmental organisations as well as NGOs and private enterprises, in a multitude of sectors, e.g. education, health, and water. He has also been involved in inter-cultural management projects.

Dawn Chatty is University Reader in Anthropology and Forced Migration and Deputy Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University. She is a social anthropologist whose ethnographic interests lie in the Middle East, particularly with nomadic pastoral tribes and refugee young people. She is both an academic and a practitioner, having carefully developed her career in universities in the United States, Lebanon, Syria and Oman, as well as with a number of development agencies such as the UNDP, UNICEF, FAO and IFAD. Dawn Chatty holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from UCLA. She has come to Oxford from Oman, where she was Associate Professor of Anthropology at Sultan Qaboos University.

Nikolaos van Dam is the Dutch Ambassador at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Jakarta. Ambassador Van Dam Studied Arabic and Political & Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam (cum laude), where he obtained the degree of Doctor in Literature in 1977 and taught Modern Middle Eastern history. Nikolaos van Dam was Ambassador in various Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as Lebanon, Libya and Iraq. He regularly publishes articles in regional and international media.

Peter Geschiere is Professor of African anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. His main interest lies in the dynamics of local cultures in interaction with state formation, impact of the market economy and, more generally, processes of globalization. His main field-work is in West Africa. In 2002 he received the award of "distinguished Africanist of the year" from the African Studies Association in the US. He is fellow of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Sciences and member of the board of the Prince Claus fund.

Arjan Hamburger has been the Human Rights Ambassador of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2007. In this capacity, he is mainly occupied with giving the theme of human rights a visible, recognisable and distinct profile and with strengthening the coherence and influence of the human rights component of Dutch foreign policy. Before becoming Human Rights Ambassador, Mr Hamburger was the Dutch Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York and Director of the Africa Department at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Godelieve van Heteren studied medicine and history in Leiden and London. Until 2006 she was a member of the Dutch parliament and chair of the European Affairs Committee. Subsequently she became director of international aid agency Cordaid. Currently, she is engaged as a senior consultant at Europa Arena.

Annelies Moors is Professor of contemporary Muslim societies at the department of anthropology and sociology, University of Amsterdam, where she directs a research programme on Muslim Cultural Politics. She is also the primary investigator of an international NORFACE research programme on 'The emergence of Islamic fashion in Europe', and of a NWO Cultural Dynamics programme on 'Islamic cultural practices and performances: New youth cultures in Europe'.

Bram van Ojik is Director of the Social Development Department, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1993 and 1994, Van Ojik was a member of the House of Representatives for the Green Left Party. He also helped the government prepare policy to meet the millennium goals for the 4th Balkenende cabinet. Before he became director of the Social Development Department Bram van Ojik was, among others, director of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department and Netherlands Ambassador in Benin.

Jan Michiel Otto is Professor of Law and Governance in Developing Countries and director of the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance, and Development. Having worked for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in various research assignments, he became director of the Van Vollenhoven Institute in 1983. He has published extensively on various topics of law and governance in developing countries, including Indonesia, China and Egypt. In recent years he has published among others on issues of 'good governance', as well as on comparative sharia and national law in the Muslim world.

Joe Stork is the Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa division and he is based in Washington. He is a general expert on human rights issues in the region. Before joining Human Rights Watch in 1996, he co-founded the Middle East Research & Information Project (MERIP) and served as chief editor of *Middle East Report*, its bimonthly magazine. Author of numerous books and widely published articles on the Middle East, he has lectured widely at universities and public forums around the world. Joe Stork served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Turkey and holds an M.A. in International Affairs/Middle East Studies from Columbia University.

Abdulkader Tayob is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town. He has published extensively on the history of religious movements and institutions in South Africa. His current research focuses on issues related to Islam and public life in Africa, and contemporary intellectual trends in modern Islam. Abdulkader Tayob has held visiting positions at the University of Virginia and the University of Hamburg. He gained his PhD from Temple University in 1989.

Roel van der Veen is Professor of International Relations at the University of Amsterdam and Chairman of the Strategy Board of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is an expert on Africa and has written a book and several policy papers on the continent's development problems. In 2004 he received his PhD from the University of Groningen with a dissertation called "The Disintegration of States in Africa: The Interaction of Politics, Economics, Culture and Social Relations". Roel Van der Veen will speak from a personal perspective.

Background information Islam Research Programme

The contemporary Muslim world is in motion, and the revival of 'Islam' as a political, socio-economic, and religious factor in this part of the world receives a great deal of attention. Within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and particularly at a number of Dutch Embassies in the Muslim world a need arose for more knowledge of societal trends and movements in the Muslim world. It was against this background that the research programme 'Strengthening knowledge of and dialogue with the Islamic/Arab world', in short, Islam Research Programme, was initiated.

Investing in Knowledge on Contemporary Developments in the Muslim World

Investing in knowledge of the Muslim world is, considering the developments in relations between Muslim and non-Muslim countries and between Muslims and non-Muslims within countries, of great importance. The growing relevance of religion and development in foreign policy further increases the need for this knowledge. The Islam Research Programme caters for this need by matching scholars and Embassies, whereby the former carry out academic research projects that answer questions relevant to policy formation at the diplomatic missions involved. The research projects are implemented by (Dutch) researchers or research institutions, in cooperation with local researchers from the countries concerned. Participation of researchers from countries that are part of the Programme contributes to capacity development in these countries. Interaction between the diplomatic mission and the researcher(s) are an integral part of the projects.

The Islam Research Programme concentrates on research on contemporary developments in the Muslim world that are relevant to Dutch policy development in the field of international cooperation. Subjects of research fall within the areas of Islamic law, political and socio-economic developments, and culture and religion. The research is to relate closely to the most recent state of affairs of scholarly research on these topics, and is to have an innovative and policy-relevant character. The research is carried out on the basis of qualitative academic methods and analyses.

All research projects are aimed at gaining, sharing and using knowledge of developments in the Muslim world. In this way, the Programme contributes to further strengthening the quality of Dutch policy and to the linking of academic research and policy-making. In addition to the research, knowledge activities are organised, such as discussion meetings and workshops. Currently, the Project Office IRP is setting up and monitoring projects in the following countries: Burkina Faso, Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Senegal.

About Project Office IRP

The Project Office Islam Research Programme (Project Office IRP) conducts the coordination and management of the research programme for the Social Development Department of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DSO/OO).

The Project Office IRP is administered by a consortium of Leiden University and PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisory (PwC) and is hosted by the Van Vollenhoven Institute for Law, Governance, and Development. It is responsible for the coordination and administration of the overall research programme and reviews and monitors the individual research projects at the various Embassies. Furthermore, the Project Office supports the participating Embassies in formulating research questions relevant to policy and solicits qualified researchers to carry out the research projects through tendering procedures or European public tendering.

The research programme's Academic Advisory Board is composed of academics who come from a wide variety of backgrounds in terms of regional and topical expertise. The academics are drawn from a broad range of Dutch universities. The Academic Advisory Board guarantees the academic quality of research proposals, findings and reports.

Staff

Project Coordinator : Dennis Janssen
Project Officer: Roos Meertens
Financial Officer: Veronique Melsert
Controller: Erik ter Haar

Academic Advisory Board:

- Dr Sylvia Bergh, Lecturer at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Dr Jan Breman, Professor Emeritus at the University of Amsterdam;
- Dr Martin van Bruinessen, Professor at Utrecht University;
- Dr Amrita Chhachhi, Senior Lecturer, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Anke van der Kwaak, Senior Advisor and Researcher at the Royal Tropical Institute Amsterdam;
- Dr Annelies Moors, Professor at the University of Amsterdam;
- Dr Marina de Regt, Coordinator Sephis, International Institute of Social History;
- Dr Benjamin Soares, Senior Researcher, African Studies Centre;
- Dr Karin Willemse, Associate Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Contact details Project Office IRP

Project Office IRP
P.O. Box 11089
2301 EB Leiden
+ 31 71-527 7676
info@irp.leidenuniv.nl
www.irp.leidenuniv.nl

Dennis Janssen
+31 6 34827277
Roos Meertens
+ 31 6 14384433