The International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) promotes interdisciplinary scholarship on social and intellectual trends and issues in the contemporary Muslim societies and communities. It will coordinate and carry out research on Muslim responses to the various challenges and issues that confront them in the context of modernity, modernization, and processes of globalization. The Institute recognizes the relevance of traditional scholarship on Islam (e.g., textual criticism of the Qur’an, hadith and other texts, religious studies, etc.) to the understanding of contemporary processes, and will make optimal use of the available expertise in these fields.

The Institute’s raison d’être, however, is the fact that developments of great intellectual, social and cultural importance in many Third World countries have remained seriously under-researched in the social sciences and humanities. The Institute’s research approaches are to be expressly interdisciplinary: they are to be grounded in social and cultural theory and methodology (which implicitly means a rejection of obsolete essentialist conceptions of Islam) but will attach great importance to solid knowledge of the languages concerned and, where this is relevant, the methodologies and accumulated insights of such disciplines as philology, literary criticism, Islamic studies, religious studies, history, legal studies. Approaches are to be informed by critiques of orientalism and of positivist social science, without dogmatically rejecting the contributions of traditional disciplines.

The Institute will not concentrate its research on any single geographical area in the world of Islam. In the regional specializations of its staff, North Africa and the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, as well as Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, as well as North Africa and the Middle East, in the West will be represented. Research programmes will be comparative in the sense that they will be concerned with more than one region.

Thematic Profile

Some of the most remarkable recent developments in the Muslim world concern the worldwide Islamic resurgence, noticeable first in the wake of the 1976 Israeli–Arab War and increasingly vigorous since the Iranian revolution. Political radicalism in the name of Islam is only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim societies with vigour. The public expression of Islam is no longer primarily associated with the more ‘backward’ segments of society but typically with relatively well-educated, socially rising groups, who do not reject all modernity but who embrace at least its technological aspects along with various conceptions of democratization. Recent developments in the Muslim world seem to show that secularization is not a necessary, inevitable concomitant of modernization.

The appeal of radical Islam to the rapidly growing underclass of marginalized, unemployed or underemployed youth in many Third World cities is more often asserted than actually demonstrated. It is true that numerous Muslim political parties, from the extremist to the moderate, speak in their name, but the underprivileged often prefer quixotic, mystical-magical varieties of Islam','s homelands. The West is not only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim communities. The concern of Muslim thinkers with intellectual challenges faced by these rapidly changing societies. Due to dramatically improved communication, Muslims are regularly confronted with moral and intellectual alternatives to their own convictions and values (i.e. other religious and philosophical systems with which they often cases backed up by economic and military superio-

Thematic Profile

Some of the most remarkable recent developments in the Muslim world concern the worldwide Islamic resurgence, noticeable first in the wake of the 1976 Israeli–Arab War and increasingly vigorous since the Iranian revolution. Political radicalism in the name of Islam is only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim societies with vigour. The public expression of Islam is no longer primarily associated with the more ‘backward’ segments of society but typically with relatively well-educated, socially rising groups, who do not reject all modernity but who embrace at least its technological aspects along with various conceptions of democratization. Recent developments in the Muslim world seem to show that secularization is not a necessary, inevitable concomitant of modernization.

The appeal of radical Islam to the rapidly growing underclass of marginalized, unemployed or underemployed youth in many Third World cities is more often asserted than actually demonstrated. It is true that numerous Muslim political parties, from the extremist to the moderate, speak in their name, but the underprivileged often prefer quixotic, mystical-magical varieties of Islam. The Western World is not only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim communities. The concern of Muslim thinkers with intellectual challenges faced by these rapidly changing societies. Due to dramatically improved communication, Muslims are regularly confronted with moral and intellectual alternatives to their own convictions and values (i.e. other religious and philosophical systems with which they often cases backed up by economic and military superio-

Thematic Profile

Some of the most remarkable recent developments in the Muslim world concern the worldwide Islamic resurgence, noticeable first in the wake of the 1976 Israeli–Arab War and increasingly vigorous since the Iranian revolution. Political radicalism in the name of Islam is only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim societies with vigour. The public expression of Islam is no longer primarily associated with the more ‘backward’ segments of society but typically with relatively well-educated, socially rising groups, who do not reject all modernity but who embrace at least its technological aspects along with various conceptions of democratization. Recent developments in the Muslim world seem to show that secularization is not a necessary, inevitable concomitant of modernization.

The appeal of radical Islam to the rapidly growing underclass of marginalized, unemployed or underemployed youth in many Third World cities is more often asserted than actually demonstrated. It is true that numerous Muslim political parties, from the extremist to the moderate, speak in their name, but the underprivileged often prefer quixotic, mystical-magical varieties of Islam. The Western World is not only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim communities. The concern of Muslim thinkers with intellectual challenges faced by these rapidly changing societies. Due to dramatically improved communication, Muslims are regularly confronted with moral and intellectual alternatives to their own convictions and values (i.e. other religious and philosophical systems with which they often cases backed up by economic and military superio-

Thematic Profile

Some of the most remarkable recent developments in the Muslim world concern the worldwide Islamic resurgence, noticeable first in the wake of the 1976 Israeli–Arab War and increasingly vigorous since the Iranian revolution. Political radicalism in the name of Islam is only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim societies with vigour. The public expression of Islam is no longer primarily associated with the more ‘backward’ segments of society but typically with relatively well-educated, socially rising groups, who do not reject all modernity but who embrace at least its technological aspects along with various conceptions of democratization. Recent developments in the Muslim world seem to show that secularization is not a necessary, inevitable concomitant of modernization.

The appeal of radical Islam to the rapidly growing underclass of marginalized, unemployed or underemployed youth in many Third World cities is more often asserted than actually demonstrated. It is true that numerous Muslim political parties, from the extremist to the moderate, speak in their name, but the underprivileged often prefer quixotic, mystical-magical varieties of Islam. The Western World is not only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim communities. The concern of Muslim thinkers with intellectual challenges faced by these rapidly changing societies. Due to dramatically improved communication, Muslims are regularly confronted with moral and intellectual alternatives to their own convictions and values (i.e. other religious and philosophical systems with which they often cases backed up by economic and military superio-

Thematic Profile

Some of the most remarkable recent developments in the Muslim world concern the worldwide Islamic resurgence, noticeable first in the wake of the 1976 Israeli–Arab War and increasingly vigorous since the Iranian revolution. Political radicalism in the name of Islam is only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim societies with vigour. The public expression of Islam is no longer primarily associated with the more ‘backward’ segments of society but typically with relatively well-educated, socially rising groups, who do not reject all modernity but who embrace at least its technological aspects along with various conceptions of democratization. Recent developments in the Muslim world seem to show that secularization is not a necessary, inevitable concomitant of modernization.

The appeal of radical Islam to the rapidly growing underclass of marginalized, unemployed or underemployed youth in many Third World cities is more often asserted than actually demonstrated. It is true that numerous Muslim political parties, from the extremist to the moderate, speak in their name, but the underprivileged often prefer quixotic, mystical-magical varieties of Islam. The Western World is not only one aspect of this development and not necessarily the most important from the scholarly points of view. Following a period of apparent secularization (which was long believed to be inherent to modernization processes), Islam returned to the public sphere in most Muslim communities. The concern of Muslim thinkers with intellectual challenges faced by these rapidly changing societies. Due to dramatically improved communication, Muslims are regularly confronted with moral and intellectual alternatives to their own convictions and values (i.e. other religious and philosophical systems with which they often cases backed up by economic and military superio-