Editorial

Although thematically very different and dealing with completely different contexts, there are intriguing parallels between the contributions to this issue. They all deal with legal principles and arrangements, and how they work out in actual situations in specific political contexts. All the authors demonstrate the complexities that emerge when clearly formulated legal principles are put into practice. Bekkin analyses how administrative religious bodies of Muslims in Russia (muftiates) are organised and argues that the way these bodies are perceived by the Russian authorities does not concur with the perspectives of Muslims. By analysing experiences of Muslim women in the UK, Bi argues that the white middle-class gatekeepers of the law are unaware of, and even ignore, the Muslim experience of the structural inequalities in society, despite the existence of formal equality in law. Brandt takes critical issue with the totalising and generalising perception of “Muslim women”, especially the way in which their token use in gendered, racialised and sexualised discourses on Islam and Muslim minorities in Western Europe. Her analysis demonstrates the clash between seemingly clear, but nevertheless conflicting, principles of equality.

In his analysis of Sufi revivalist movements in Albania, Bria argues that the established and formally recognised Muslim organisational structures tend to marginalise alternative forms of religiosity in that country. Shavit takes a fatwa issued by the European Council for Fatwa and Research in 1999 that legitimised mortgages for Muslims in Europe who are not homeowners as a starting point to argue that Islamic law is dynamic and is shaped through practice and through the knowledge of local Muslims. Zal, in a case-study on Muslims in the UK, shows that rights and opportunities may be clearly and unambiguously written down, but to implement them and to negotiate positions, collective actors need sufficient social capital and bargaining power.

Taken together, the contributions to this issue make clear that, in order to understand the complex interplay between “principles on paper” and “facts on the ground”, solid research is crucial and indispensable. This links in with one of the main aims of the *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, namely to publish articles that are the result of research on Islam and Muslims in the wider European realm. Only in this way it is possible to go beyond generalisations about “Muslims in Europe” and to debunk fact-free assumptions and images.

With this issue, *JOME* successfully ends the second year since the transition from two to three issues annually in 2017, and a steady supply of good manuscripts continues to arrive. If we receive more high-quality articles than we can publish within a reasonable time, it can cause a logistical question. A waiting list can be problematic, particularly in cases where potential authors need to meet publication requirements to establish their academic record. We have already for some years been publishing accepted articles immediately online with a DOI-number on the website of publishers, Brill, and these articles are then published in a print issue of *JOME* as soon as space becomes available. Today, most universities recognise peer-reviewed online publications, so we continue to invite researchers working in the field of Islam in Europe, in the broadest sense of that topic, to submit the results of their work to *JOME*.

Thijl Sunier

Executive editor *JOME*

On behalf of the team