Muslims in
Amsterdam

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At Home in Europe Project

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Open Society Foundations Mission Statement

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working with local communities in more than 70 countries, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression, and access to public health and education.

Acknowledgements

This city report was prepared as part of a series of monitoring reports titled 'Muslims in EU cities'. The series focuses on eleven cities in the European Union (EU) with significant Muslim populations. Each report focuses on the following neighbourhoods within each city: Slotervaart, Amsterdam; Borgerhout, Antwerp; Kreuzberg, Berlin; Nørrebro, Copenhagen; Hamburg-Mitte, Hamburg; Evington, Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Leicester; 3rd Arrondissement, Marseille; 18th Arrondissement, Paris; Feijenoord, Rotterdam; Järvafältet, Stockholm; the London Borough of Waltham Forest, London.

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The At Home in Europe Project has final responsibility for the content of the report including any errors or misrepresentations.

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Preface

A central belief of the Open Society Foundations (Foundations) is that all people in an open society count equally and should enjoy equal opportunities. The Foundations works to mitigate discrimination, in particular harm done to minorities through discriminatory treatment, and to ensure that access to equal opportunities for all is an integral part of social inclusion policies of governments.

The At Home in Europe project of the Open Society Foundations focuses on monitoring and advocacy activities that examine the position of minorities in a changing Europe. Through its research and engagement with policymakers and communities, the project explores issues involving the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims and other marginalized groups at the local, national, and European levels.

Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with one of its greatest challenges: how to ensure equal rights in an environment of rapidly expanding diversity. Europe is no longer – if it ever was – a mono-cultural and mono-faith continent; its emerging minority groups and their identities as Europeans are an essential part of the political agenda and discourse.

Through its reports on Muslims in EU cities, the At Home in Europe project examines city and municipal policies that have actively sought to understand Muslim communities and their specific needs. Furthermore, the project aims to capture the type and degree of engagement policymakers have initiated with their Muslim and minority constituents by highlighting best practices in select western European cities. An underlying theme is how Muslim communities have themselves actively participated in tackling discrimination and whether the needs of specific groups warrant individual policy approaches in order to overcome barriers to equal opportunities.

The city reports build upon Foundations' earlier work on minority protection, in particular the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program reports on the situation of Muslims in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. All of these studies make it clear that further research is needed. The limited data currently available on Europe's Muslim populations are extrapolated from ethnic and country of origin background. This lack of precise data limits the possibilities for creating nuanced, specific polices on the most relevant issues for Muslims, and developing sensitive and integrated social inclusion policies.

The At Home in Europe report series includes an overview and individual reports on 11 cities in seven European countries. The project selected the cities on the basis of literature reviews conducted in 2006, taking into account population size, diversity, and the local political context. All 11 city reports were prepared by teams of local experts on the basis of the same methodology to allow for comparative analysis.

Each city report includes detailed recommendations for improving the opportunities for full participation and inclusion of Muslims in wider society while enabling them to preserve cultural, linguistic, religious, and other community characteristics important to their identities. These recommendations, directed primarily at specific local actors, will form the basis for the Foundations advocacy activities.

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List of Abbreviations

ADB   Anti-discrimination Bureau (Antidiscriminatiebureau)

CBPs   EU Common Basic Principles

CBS   Central Statistical Agency (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek)

CGB   Equal Treatment Commission (Commissie Gelijke Behandeling)

CCM   Collaborative Council of Moroccans in the Netherlands
           (Samenwerkingsverband Marokkanen in Nederland)

CDA   Christian-Democratic Appeal (Christen-Democratisch Appel) Party

CP / CP86 Center Party (Centrum Partij)

CWI   Centre for Work and Income (Centrum voor Werk en Inkomen)

D66   Democrats '66 (Democraten '66)

DMO   Service for Social Development (Dienst Maatschappelijke
           Ontwikkeling)

Foundations Open Society Foundations

GGD   Municipal Health Service (Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst)

GL   Green Left (Groen Links)

HAVO   Higher General Secondary Education (Hoger Algemeen Vormend
           Onderwijs)

HVO   Humanist Education (Humanistisch Vormingsonderwijs)

IKOS   Inter-ecclesiastic Consultation in School Affairs (Interkerkerlijk
           Overleg in Schoolzaken)

IMES   Amsterdam Institute of Migration and Ethnic Studies

LN   Liveable Netherlands (Leefbaar Nederland)

LPF   List Pim Fortuyn (Lijst Pim Fortuyn)

MBO   Middle Vocational Education (Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs)

MTNL   Netherlands Multicultural Television

NMO	Netherlands Muslim Broadcasting Organisation
NT2	Dutch as Second Language (Nederlands als Tweede Taal)
NVU	Dutch People's Union (Nederlandse Volksunie)
PAS	Amsterdam Together Platform (Platform Amsterdam Samen)
PvdA	Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid)
PVV	Freedom Party (Partij voor de Vrijheid)
RIAGG	Regional Institute for Ambulatory Mental Health Care (Regionaal Instituut voor Ambulante Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg)
SCP	Social and Cultural Planning Office (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau)
SIP	Social Investment Programme (Sociaal Investeringsprogramma)
SIZIN	Foundation for Intercultural Care Counsellors in the Netherlands (Stichting Interculturele Zorgconsulenten Nederland)
SP	Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij)
VMBO	Preparatory Middle Vocational Education (Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs)
VVD	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie)
VVE	Pre- and Early School (Voor- en Vroegschoolse Educatie)
VWO	Pre-university Education (Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs)

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Allochtoon (plural Allochtonen): Semantically, the word derives from the classical Greek words *allos* ("other") and *chthonos* ("land"). Originally, the term was only used in geology and only entered the Dutch dictionary in 1961. Referring to immigrants, the term was first used in 1971 by the sociologist Hilde Verweij Jonker, to offer a neutral alternative to the terms "guest worker", "foreigner" or "immigrant". The Central Statistical Agency's (CBS) definition of "allochtoon" is "a person of whom at least one of the parents was born abroad". A distinction is made between persons who are born abroad (first generation) and persons who were born in the Netherlands (second generation) of people who are first-generation immigrants. This definition is very broad and many people in the Netherlands fit into this category. Therefore, a further distinction is made between "western" and "non-western".

Autochtoon (plural Autochtonen): This term is the opposite of *allochtoon*. Over time, this term has become most commonly used to refer to a person or people of the indigenous population of a country or area.

Discrimination: The term "discrimination" is used throughout this report; it includes harassment and direct and indirect discrimination. Articles 1 and 2 of the EU Race Directive expressly prohibit both "direct" and "indirect" discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs "where one person has been treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin". According to the Directive, indirect discrimination occurs "where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage when compared with other persons unless that provision, criterion, or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary".

Ethnic or racial profiling: Describes the use by law enforcement officers of race, ethnicity, religion or national origin rather than individual behaviour as the basis for making decisions about who has been or may be involved in criminal activity.

Ethnicity: Membership of a group which may share language, cultural practices, religion or common identity based on a shared history. In the Netherlands, ethnicity is strongly related to societal and cultural contexts. Data on the size of ethnic groups are usually unavailable in the Netherlands. Therefore, the CBS uses data on *allochtonen* instead.

Harassment is conduct which creates "an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment".

Integration: The definition used in this report is "a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the European Union" as stated in the Common Basic Principles. The Explanation to the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration 2004 (CBPs) states: "Integration is a dynamic long-term and

continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation, not a static outcome. It demands the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants but of every resident. The integration process involves adaptation by immigrants, both men and women, who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence. It also involves the receiving society, which should create opportunities for the immigrants' full economic, social, cultural and political participation. Accordingly, Member States are encouraged to consider and involve both immigrants and national citizens in integration policy, and to communicate clearly their mutual rights and responsibilities."

Islamophobia: Irrational hostility, fear and hatred of Islam, Muslims and Islamic culture, and active discrimination towards this group as individuals or collectively.

Marginalised: Marginalised groups can be part of an ethnic or racial minority and a sub-category of minority groups. They can also be characterised and distinguished from other groups by suffering socio-economic disadvantage and a powerless position in society or in a group. This report defines marginalised groups as those who experience social exclusion, be they part of a minority or majority group in society.

Migrant: The United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definition refers to a "person who has moved temporarily or permanently to a country where he or she was not born and has acquired significant social ties to this country". This includes students, children and family dependants. A distinction is made in which this term does not include asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons. However, in some countries "migrant" also refers to a person born in the country to which their parents migrated.

Minority: Under international law, there is no agreed definition of this term. Some countries define a minority as that which is recognised as such by national laws. In this report, the term refers to ethnic and religious groups which are not the dominant group in society.

Muslim: This group is diverse and although there are a common belief system and possibly experiences as Muslims, this report relies on its Muslim respondents' identification of themselves as Muslims. Furthermore, this term includes Muslims who view themselves in a cultural rather than a religious context.

Nationality: Country of citizenship.

Native Dutch: In this report, the term "native Dutch" is used as the English translation of the Dutch term *autochtoon*, meaning a person born of Dutch parents.

Non-Muslim: For the purpose of this report, a non-Muslim is anyone who does not define himself or herself as belonging to the Islamic faith.

Race: The term "race" is used in the content of discrimination on the grounds of race, which occurs where people face discrimination because of their presumed membership of groups identified by physical features such as skin colour, hair or physical

appearance. References to race in this report should not be taken to suggest that there are distinct human races.

Racism: Where used in this report, "racism" will be defined as "racial discrimination" which according to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination "shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction of preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social or cultural or any other field of public life". Racial discrimination can also be based on markers of visible difference due to membership of a cultural group.

Social inclusion: The provision and promotion of equal rights and access in the field of education, employment and decision-making. Overcoming discrimination is implicit throughout policies and practices to realise inclusion.

Third-country national: An individual who is not a national of an EU Member State.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muslims in Amsterdam made up approximately 12 per cent of the population or 90,000 people in 2008. Most are of Moroccan and Turkish descent. Others are from Surinamese, Egyptian and Pakistani communities. Amsterdam's Muslim population is relatively young, reflecting immigration patterns to the Netherlands, which started in the 1960s and peaked between the 1980s and 1990s. Slightly more than 50 per cent are first-generation immigrants, and slightly less than 50 per cent belong to the second generation.

Some Muslims are highly educated while others lack basic educational qualifications. Their incomes range from those of households living on minimum wages to those of wealthy two-income families. The role of Islam in the lives and identities of Muslims also differs. This overall diversity among Muslims means that they cannot be viewed as one homogeneous group with a shared culture, ethnicity and social background.

Before 11 September 2001 (9/11), policymakers and the public did not identify Muslims as a separate and important social category, viewing them instead primarily as members of different ethnic minorities. The situation changed rapidly after the attacks of 11 September 2001. National politicians such as Pim Fortuijn, Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Rita Verdonk fanned the flames of a growing negative and openly hostile attitude towards Muslims. In Amsterdam, the murder of the film-maker Theo van Gogh by a young Muslim man in November 2004 convulsed public opinion and created pressure for local policies for Muslims. The Amsterdam municipality drafted the "Wij Amsterdammers" (We are Amsterdam people) action programme, which continues to inform the city's policies on integration, participation and diversity. In contrast to the polarising, confrontational public debates and policies at the national level, the Amsterdam policy is one of dialogue with communities and the local government, seeking to keep the city's population united. With the election in 2006 of Ahmed Marcouch as president of the submunicipality of Slotervaart, Islam became an important focus of policymaking. Muslim imams and mosque boards are now important partners, and values important to Muslims are often cited by policymakers in public statements.[1]

Policy debates concerning Muslims at the local level focus on how to interpret the separation between church and state and involve collaborations of the municipality, Islamic organisations and other Muslim religious actors. Debates also centre on the tension between protecting freedom of speech and fighting discrimination and preserving what some believe are non-negotiable elements of Dutch culture that should be followed by Muslims as well as everyone else living in the Netherlands.

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[1] As of March 2010, Marcouch is no longer the President of the sub-municipality of Slotervaart. He has been succeeded by Achmed Baâdoud, also of Moroccan descent. As of June 2010, Marcouch is now a Member of the Dutch Parliament.

The research for this report finds that many Muslims in Slotervaart have a greater sense of belonging and attachment to the city of Amsterdam than to the Netherlands.[2] Their attachment to their neighbourhood is quite strong, especially when compared with non-Muslims from their neighbourhood. Muslims also have more confidence in their municipal administration than in the national government.

Despite these positive facts, many Muslims in Slotervaart face problems of socio-economic exclusion, non-acceptance and difficulties with communicating.

Socio-economic Exclusion

Muslims live in all areas of the city of Amsterdam, but are concentrated in the old neighbourhoods close to the city centre, such as De Pijp and De Baarsjes, and increasingly in the western suburbs, such as Slotervaart. Parts of the western suburbs can be viewed as residentially segregated. The findings suggest that some Muslims may appreciate living among residents with the same cultural and/or ethnic background, but most perceive residential segregation to be undesirable.

Residential concentration contributes to the problem of educational segregation. Many Muslim children in Slotervaart attend primary schools where the majority of pupils are non-ethnic Dutch. In secondary schools, segregation has a different cause: many pupils from non-western ethnic-minority groups enter vocational training and many ethnic Dutch pupils follow a more academic path. Second-generation Muslims have made important progress in education: whereas most parents were illiterate or semiliterate, many of their children have obtained secondary or higher education. A number of young people, however, do not stay in school, dropping out early and running the risk of becoming so-called problem youths.

More than 30 per cent of Muslim households in Amsterdam live on a minimum wage. With second-generation Muslims improving their education and employment positions, the percentage is likely to diminish, but the fact remains that, owing to prejudices against them, Muslims still face more difficulties entering the labour market than ethnic Dutch. It is encouraging that generally, once Muslims are in a job, discrimination against them because of their ethnic or religious background becomes much less of an issue. This underscores the importance of Muslims and non-Muslims getting to know each other to shatter stereotypes and diminish prejudice. Though a large number of Muslims frequently interact with people of a different ethnic and/or religious background, more could be done to support and facilitate further interactions.

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[2]   Since completion of this report, there has been a change in the administrative boundaries of the city of Amsterdam. As of May 2010, 15 *stadsdelen* (boroughs or submuncipalities) have now been amalgamated to form eight administrative *stadsdelen* of the city. As such the districts referred to in the report are no longer valid and Slotervaart, the focus of this report, is now part of the larger submunicipality/borough of Amsterdam Nieuw-West. This, however, is an administrative matter and does not have an impact on the substantive findings.

Factors affecting opportunities for interaction include residential segregation, economic inactivity, employment in places where one religious/ethnic group dominates and lack of mobility outside one's own local area.

Non-acceptance

While socio-economic exclusion is a problem that groups of Muslims share with other groups in society, Muslims experience particular problems of acceptance of their identity because they have become scapegoats for public anxieties over security in the Netherlands. This is to a large degree due to the polarised public debate at the national level and stigmatising media coverage. Indications from the Foundations survey suggest that even among highly educated Muslims with good jobs, there is a feeling that such prejudice inhibits their meaningful integration.

Communication and cultural sensitivity

Not being understood is a problem for many Muslims in health care, social counselling, education and other settings in which they have to communicate with professional people such as doctors and teachers from different cultural backgrounds. These communication problems are largely due to the fact that groups of Muslims, especially first-generation migrant women, cannot speak Dutch, but also because non-Muslim professionals do not know how to accommodate their practices to the cultural values of individual Muslims.

Policy responses

To tackle socio-economic exclusion, Amsterdam city authorities are fighting residential segregation through a large-scale urban renewal plan and stimulating participation in the labour market through a range of measures, including personal supervision and language schooling. Segregation in education, however, is receiving very little attention.

A shared Amsterdam identity is an important means to enhance social cohesion between different groups in the city. The ideal, integrated Amsterdam identity finds a place for other identities, including an individual's religious, ethnic, and sexual identities. The "Wij Amsterdammers" public campaigns portrayed a large variety of Amsterdam citizens. Such campaigns, however, struggled against the negative tone of national public debates and media coverage about Muslims, as well as expressions of discrimination by citizens.

Since 2006 faith – Islam in particular – has become an important focus of policymaking in Slotervaart and is considered one of the tools the community could use for better relations. In a number of cases, this faith-based approach to cohesion has worked well, but Ahmed Marcouch, who is of ethnic Moroccan descent, had met resistance and scepticism from various groups, including a segment of the ethnic Moroccan population, for his public airing of culturally-sensitive issues among the

Moroccan community members and his refusal to automatically side with them in public debates. His faith-based approach to policymaking had also been criticised by secular-minded ethnic Turks, with some feeling that he favours ethnic Moroccans over them. These arguments highlight the divergent opinions in Muslim communities and the need for any faith-based approach in policy circles to understand and reflect this diversity.

The most important initiatives to promote communication and intercultural dialogue have been undertaken by migrant, faith-based and private organisations. Examples of such activities include the White Tulip Foundation in education and I-Psy and SIZIN in health care. The municipality and the police have tried to diversify their staff, recognising that a diverse workforce improves communication with the varied local communities they serve. However, there remains a need for improvement. Key challenges include the retention of experienced and skilled staff from diverse backgrounds, as well as the training of organisations to accommodate the needs of specific ethnic groups, knowing that to do so the organisations must change their policies and approaches. The report highlights the distance between different groups that do not know each other, but records the strides that are and can be made if interaction takes place in a mutually respectful, friendly environment.

Examples of good practice exist throughout the various public and private sectors of the city of Amsterdam. The case of Slotervaart may be instructive for other cities and serve as an example of how to build policies with a positive approach and understanding of faith identities. Slotervaart also demonstrates that municipal policies do not exist in a vacuum but instead are influenced by attitudes towards specific groups such as Muslims and particular issues such as Islam, in particular negative attitudes that may be circulating at the national level and expressed through mass media. The effectiveness of local policies and of strategies seeking to integrate communities and facilitate the belonging and participation of all groups is hampered by a national political climate in which anti-Muslim discourse sets the tone.

A positive approach towards Islam and policymaking based on dialogue is not sufficient in itself. Tackling other key barriers to the participation and engagement of many Muslims in Slotervaart and the Netherlands is vital and rests on the key areas of integrating education, ensuring equal and fair access to the labour market and combating discrimination in all areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out to understand the everyday experiences of ordinary Muslims living in the Slotervaart submunicipality in Amsterdam, with a particular focus on the impact of public policies aimed at improving integration and social inclusion. Integration here is understood as a two-way process that requires engagement by individuals as well as opportunities for participation.

A report that places its focus on Muslims as a group faces the challenge that Muslims are not a fixed group with defined boundaries, but rather a diverse set of individuals with different religious practices and attachments, who are currently defined and marked as such mainly from outside. Thus, it can include those who adhere to the religion of Islam as well as those who, because of their cultural or ethnic background, are perceived as Muslims by others in society, even though they may follow other faiths or none at all.

The identification of a person, whether by self- or external ascription, as Muslim is not a neutral matter, as it can entail identification with a group that is at times stigmatised and demonised in public discourse. In social and public policy Muslims are increasingly viewed as a potential security threat or a group that is unwilling or unable to integrate.

In the context of this report the identification of a person as Muslim has been left to the self-perception of the interviewee and has not been associated with any prefixed religious or cultural definition. In part this is because the primary focus of this report is not on issues of religious practice or belief but instead on the everyday experiences of those who define themselves as Muslim, in four areas of life that are crucial for social integration: education, employment, health, and civic and political participation. The report examines the effects of marginalisation and discrimination and explores the different ways in which local policies address issues of integration.

A focus on action at the local level allows for a closer examination of the interaction between residents and policymakers and politicians in areas such as Slotervaart where Muslims form a higher proportion of the population than in the city or state as a whole.[3] Through local monitoring the report also examines whether the population's concentrations of Muslims at the district and neighbourhood level have encouraged the development of practical solutions to social policies that respond to the needs and views of this Muslim population. While the research at the local level is meant to be comparable with other districts in Dutch cities and in other countries, the specific context of Slotervaart has nevertheless to be kept in mind.

1.1 Methodology

The research in Amsterdam was carried out from January to June 2008. In addition to the review of existing research and policy literature, fieldwork to gather new primary evidence was carried out in the district of Slotervaart. The fieldwork consisted of 200 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with local residents (107 Muslims and 93 non-Muslims) living in Slotervaart. Interviews were carried out in Dutch, Turkish and Moroccan. The issues were also explored in six focus-group discussions held with Muslim residents. Interviews were conducted with local officials, practitioners such as teachers and health workers, community representatives, non-governmental organisations and experts engaged on anti-discrimination and integration issues. A list of those interviewed is contained in Annex 2. A draft version of this report was discussed with professionals in the field, representatives of municipal bodies, Muslim and non-Muslim civil-society organisations and academics during a meeting held in Amsterdam in June 2009. Their constructive criticism and the information gathered during this meeting have been included in this report as much as possible.

As the main aim of this comparative research was to point out the chief concerns of Muslims in European Union cities and point out the similarities and differences between Muslims and non-Muslims living in the same local areas, the questionnaire was conducted with a non-random cross-selection of individuals chosen from specified subgroups within Slotervaart, a submunicipality of Amsterdam: 107 Muslims and 93 non-Muslims were interviewed. The characteristics (age, ethnicity and gender) of the selected respondents were extrapolated from the available national population figures for the city.

The composition of the Muslim and of the non-Muslim respondents is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Composition of the Muslim sample of the survey, by sex, country of birth and age

Sex	Country of birth	Age group						Total
		<20	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
Male	Afghanistan	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Morocco	1	3	4	7	3	11	29
	Netherlands	5	9	1	1	0	0	16
	Pakistan	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Suriname	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Turkey	1	1	3	2	1	1	9
	Turkish Cyprus					1		1
Total male		8	14	9	11	5	12	59
Female	Iraq	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Morocco	2	1	6	9	2	0	20
	Netherlands	7	8	1	0	0	0	16
	Pakistan	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Suriname	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Turkey	1	1	4	3	0	0	9
Total female		11	10	11	14	2		48
Total		19	24	20	25	7	12	107

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 2. Composition of the non-Muslim sample of the survey, by sex, country of birth and age

Sex	Country of birth	Age group						Total
		<20	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
Male	Italy	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
	Netherlands	7	8	7	4	5	7	38
	Suriname	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total male	**7**	**8**	**7**	**5**	**5**	**9**	**41**
Female	Argentina	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Czech Republic	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Former Yugoslavia	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Germany	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Morocco	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Netherlands	6	8	2	4	14	8	42
	Nigeria	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Poland	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Suriname	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
	Total female	**6**	**8**	**6**	**6**	**15**	**10**	**51**
Blank	Netherlands						1	1
	Total blank						**1**	**1**
Total		**13**	**16**	**13**	**11**	**20**	**20**	**93**

Source: Open Society Foundations

One of the methodological choices made in order to work with the social category of Muslims but not to use the term as a predefined label was to take people's self-definition of being a Muslim or non-Muslim as a point of departure. This has on the whole worked well, although there are some problems connected with the decision.

First of all, many data that are accessible in the Netherlands and in other European countries do not take religious affiliation into account but rely on information on ethnicity and country of origin. As this report partly draws on secondary literature and research to contextualise the findings of the survey and to provide the necessary

background information on the Netherlands, it should be noted that most secondary literature on Muslims is mainly concerned with Turkish and Moroccan immigrants and their offspring. So while the Muslim part of the respondents to this survey defined themselves as Muslim, in this report the allocated definition (defined as Muslim by allocation and not by self-definition) has been sometimes used as well, in order to deal with the limitations of the literature.

Being a Muslim is first of all a religious identity. Thus, the selection was made on the basis of religious identity. As a second step, however, this religiously defined group was further approached as local residents of a certain neighbourhood. In many issues relevant to living in a city neighbourhood and thus to the study, people's religious identity of being a Muslim does not inform their behaviour, experiences and concerns. Many of the results from this report are thus not exclusive to the Muslims interviewed, in that other minority groups in the selected countries may face similar problems.

Finally, the choice to do research among Muslims in Slotervaart and in the neighbourhood of Overtoomse Veld in particular has offered the opportunity to learn in detail about the experiences of a part of the Muslim population in Amsterdam and about the interesting policy and other initiatives to foster integration that have been taken there in the last few years. It should, however, also be stressed that this choice has its limitations in the sense that the case is not representative of all Muslims in Amsterdam and even less so of Muslims in the Netherlands. It will be important to have studies initiated on the experiences of Muslims in other contexts, such as middle-class neighbourhoods, as well. Care is therefore needed before findings can be transferred to different contexts.

2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

This chapter begins with an outline of the population and demographic data for Amsterdam, including the age structure and ethnic diversity of the population. It then focuses on the settlement history, demographic and population data that exist in relation to Muslims in Amsterdam before finally outlining the data for Slotervaart, the area of Amsterdam that was the primary focus of fieldwork for this research.

Amsterdam is the largest city in the Netherlands with a population of 747,290 in 2008, as Table 3. shows, divided into age groups.

Table 3. Population of Amsterdam according to age group, 1 January 2008[4]

Age group	No. of people
0–4 years	45,288
5–19 years	110,148
20–34 years	195,934
35–49 years	186,552
50–64 years	125,758
Over 65 years	83610

Source: Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics, available at
http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/12057/

The population of Amsterdam is atypical of the Dutch population in many ways. According to data from the municipality statistical service, 15 per cent of the population in Amsterdam lives in a two-parent household with children (compared with 25 per cent in the Netherlands as a whole) while 10 per cent of households are single parents with children (compared with 3 per cent in the Netherlands).[5] At the same time, half the population in Amsterdam is single, compared with 15 per cent in the general population.[6]

A large proportion of the population in Amsterdam lives on a low income: approximately 20 per cent of households in Amsterdam live on an income of only 105

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[4] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/12057/ (accessed August 2009).

[5] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/xls/2008_jaarboek_214.xls (accessed August 2009).

[6] Available on the website of Statistics Netherlands at http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=71488ned&D1=a&D2=0&D3=0 &D4=0,5-16&D5=0,5,7-8&HDR=T&STB=G1,G2,G3,G4&VW=T (accessed August 2009).

per cent of the legal social minimum, which is twice as high as the national average.[7] Almost 75 per cent of these households have lived on this minimum income for the last three years.[8]

The inhabitants of Amsterdam are also characterised by great cultural diversity. The city contains 177 nationalities. Half of the city's population is identified as native Dutch (*autochtoon*), meaning a person born in the Netherlands, whose parents were also born in the Netherlands. Approximately 40 per cent of the population belongs to ethnic minorities, most originating from Suriname, the Dutch Antilles, Turkey, and Morocco.[9] Table 4. shows the population of Amsterdam according to their group of origin.

Table 4. Population of Amsterdam according to group of origin, 1 January 2008[10]

Group of origin	No. of people
Antilleans	11,440
Dutch	381,374
Moroccans	67,153
Other non-western ethnic minorities	72,175
Surinamese	68,813
Total non-western ethnic minorities	258,494
Turks	38,913
Western ethnic minorities	107,422

Source: Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics

Approximately 75 per cent of the non-native Dutch residents of Amsterdam (*allochtonen*, meaning people born in the Netherlands but with one parent born outside the Netherlands) hold Dutch citizenship.[11] Many are dual nationals, which is

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[7] SCP/CBS (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau/Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek), "Armoedebericht 2008" (Poverty Brief 2008) Available at http://www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/ 36D737E0-56E3-4EA8-8109-350F5CA19ADB/0/2008v55pub.pdf (accessed August 2009).

[8] GGD Amsterdam, "Alle Amsterdammers gezond! Kadernota volksgezondheidsbeleid 2008–2011" (Municipal Health Service, All inhabitants of Amsterdam healthy! Framework Policy Document for Amsterdam's Public Health Policy 2008–2011), p. 11. Available at http://www.gezond.amsterdam.nl/GetDocument.aspx?DocumentID=2440&name=Alle-amsterda mmers-gezond-:-kadernota-volksgezondheidsbeleid-Amsterdam-2008-2011 (accessed August 2009).

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/7549/ (accessed August 2009).

[11] "Driekwart allochtonen in Amsterdam heeft Nederlandse nationaliteit" ("75 per cent of Amsterdam non-natives hold Dutch nationality"), available on I Amsterdam portal, http://amsterdam.nl/?ActItmIdt=122657 (accessed August 2009).

particularly common among Turks and Moroccans. Moroccan law, in particular, does not allow its citizens to give up their Moroccan nationality. In 2007–08, there was a fall in the number of Moroccans and Turks in Amsterdam holding only their original nationality and an increase in the number of dual nationals (see Table 5.).

Table 5. Nationality of the Amsterdam population of Moroccan and Turkish background, 1 January 2007 and 1 January 2008

	Foreign nationality, 1 Jan 2007	Foreign nationality, 1 Jan 2008	Dual nationality, 1 Jan 2007	Dual nationality, 1 Jan 2008
Moroccan	18,104	16,975	46,484	48,361
Turk	10,295	10,128	26,946	27,511

Source: I Amsterdam portal, available at http://amsterdam.nl/?ActItmIdt=122657

There are no official statistics available for the religious affiliations of the people of Amsterdam. In order to estimate the number of Muslims in Amsterdam, indirect methods have been used based on data on ethnic background. Moroccans and Turks are the two largest Muslim communities in Amsterdam: 90 per cent of the people of Moroccan descent and 70 per cent of the people of Turkish descent say that they feel affiliated to Islam.[12] Smaller Muslim communities are to be found among the Surinamese, and among the other non-western ethnic minorities (for instance among the 5,000 Egyptians and the 5,000 Pakistanis living in Amsterdam). These data provide an estimate that there are approximately 90,000 Muslims living in Amsterdam. This is confirmed by a study by the Amsterdam Municipality, based on a survey among 3,000 inhabitants of Amsterdam, which states that approximately 12 per cent of the city's population is Muslim.[13]

Due to the absence of direct data on Muslims, this report will rely on literature which focuses on the Moroccan and Turkish communities for describing the position of Muslims in Amsterdam, as well as on the Open Society Foundations (Foundations) field research. The Foundations data do distinguish between non-Muslim and Muslim representatives, as all participants were asked to identify which faith group they belonged to.[14]

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[12] M. Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam? Stedelijk beleid, voorzieningen, organisaties (Room for Islam? Urban policy, services, organisations),* Spinhuis, Apeldoorn/Antwerpen, 2006, p. 67 (hereafter Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?*).

[13] Gemeente Amsterdam, Dienst Onderzoek en Statistiek, *De Amsterdamse Burgermonitor 2007* (Amsterdam Citizenship Monitor 2007), p. 41.

[14] The categories included atheism and humanism.

Just over half the population of Turkish (55 per cent) and Moroccan (52 per cent) descent are first-generation migrants. Thus, 44 per cent of Turks and 48 per cent of Moroccans are second-generation.[15] The third generation remains small.[16] The population of Turkish and Moroccan descent has a young age profile, as shown in Table 6. Of the total population, 47 per cent are less than 34 years old; among people of Turkish descent, this proportion is higher, at 63 per cent, and it is 67 per cent among people of Moroccan descent.[17]

Table 6. Age structure of the Amsterdam population of Turkish and Moroccan descent[18]

Age group	Turkish descent	Moroccan descent
0–4 years	3,192	7,602
5–19 years	10,610	19,168
20–34 years	10,976	18,017
35–49 years	8,920	12,940
50–64 years	3,600	6,052
Over 65 years	1,267	2,477

Source: Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics

2.1   Settlement History of Muslims in Amsterdam

In the mid-1960s, Moroccan and Turkish male migrant workers began arriving in the Netherlands and many settled in Amsterdam. From the 1970s onwards, Moroccan and Turkish migrant workers were joined by their wives and children under family reunification legislation. These families mainly settled in the old districts close to the city centre, such as De Baarsjes and De Pijp. From the 1980s, however, more migrant families progressively moved to the western suburbs (*Westelijke Tuinsteden*) of Amsterdam that were built in the 1950s and 1960s to address the housing shortage faced by young middle-class families. These suburbs formed part of the General

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[15] First generation is defined as an immigrant who has arrived in a new country and in some cases can include naturalisation. Second generation refers to the first generation of children born to migrants who have settled in a new country.

[16] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department of Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/feitenencijfers/25079/ (accessed August 2009).

[17] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department of Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/7700/ (accessed August 2009).

[18] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department of Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/7700/ (accessed August 2009).

Extension Plan (Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan), and were built to create modern spacious living areas with greenery and communal space between the housing blocks.

By the 1980s, native Dutch middle-class families started to move out of these suburbs and the city of Amsterdam and into outer areas. The houses in the western suburbs, of which Slotervaart is part, were attractive to the migrant workers and their families due to low rental prices and the generous size of the accommodation compared with the old 19th-century houses where they used to live. In this way, the native Dutch population was gradually replaced by families of Moroccan, and to a lesser extent, Turkish descent. Currently, in parts of Slotervaart, a majority of the population consists of non-western ethnic minorities. The clearest example is Overtoomse Veld, where there is a large majority of people of Moroccan descent.[19]

2.2   Muslims in Slotervaart[20]

On 1 January 2008 the population of Slotervaart was 44,185, of whom 3,803 were of Turkish descent and 7,692 of Moroccan descent. Table 7. shows the age structure of these two groups as well as of the native Dutch population.

Table 7. Age structure of the Slotervaart population, showing Turkish, Moroccan and native Dutch descent, 1 January 2008[21]

Age group	Turkish descent	Moroccan descent	Native Dutch descent
0–4 years	295	834	787
5–19 years	1,255	2,509	2,701
20–34 years	665	1,910	3,365
35–49 years	929	1,458	4,714
50–64 years	279	707	3,853
Over 65 years	80	274	4,412

Source: Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics

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[19]   J.-D. de Jong, *Kapot Moeilijk. Een etnografisch onderzoek naar opvallend delinquent groepsgedrag van "Marokkaanse" jongens (Ethnographic research into striking delinquent group behaviour of "Moroccan" boys),* Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Aksant, 2007, pp. 57–58 (hereafter De Jong, Etnografisch onderzoek).

[20]   As noted in footnote 2, since May 2010, the number of boroughs has been reduced.

[21]   Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/11616/ (accessed August 2009).

Slotervaart is divided into four neighbourhood clusters, altogether consisting of 28 neighbourhoods. The four clusters are Slotervaart, Overtoomse Veld, Westlandgracht and Sloter-Riekerpolder. The majority of the population of Moroccan and Turkish descent lives in the clusters of Slotervaart and Overtoomse Veld. These are the older parts of the submunicipality of Slotervaart, which is largely made up of social housing. The other parts were built more recently, with quite a large number of more expensive rental and owner-occupied houses.

Table 8 shows the diversity of the population in each Slotervaart neighbourhood cluster, and illustrates that Overtoomse Veld and Slotervaart, in particular, house a large number of Muslims. Muslims account for half the population in Overtoomse Veld and 27 per cent of the population in Slotervaart.

Table 8. Population structure per Slotervaart neighbourhood cluster, 1 January 2007[22]

	Neighbourhood clusters				
	Slotervaart	Overtoomse Veld	Westlandgracht	Sloter-Riekerpolder	Slotervaart submunicipality
Total population	16,407	9,693	4,505	13,308	43,913
Men	7,796	4,798	2,330	6,590	21,514
Women	8,611	4,895	2,175	6,718	22,399
Population by generation					
First-generation ethnic minorities	4,988	3,857	1,506	2,451	12,802
Second-generation ethnic minorities	4,263	3,305	939	2,364	10,871
Native Dutch	7,156	2,531	2,060	8,493	20,240
Population by descent group					
Surinamese	1,307	661	306	1,077	3,351

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[22] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/3670 (accessed August 2009).

Antilleans	125	85	56	128	394
Turks	1,513	1,334	371	468	3,686
Moroccans	3,041	3,220	559	491	7,311
Other non-western minorities	1,456	1,028	508	814	3,806
Total non-western minorities	7,442	6,328	1,800	2,978	18,548
Western minorities	1,809	834	645	1,837	5,125
Native Dutch	7,156	2,531	2,060	8,493	20,240
Total	**16,407**	**9,693**	**4,505**	**13,308**	**43,913**

Source: Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics

3. CITY POLICY

3.1 Structure of the Administration

The City of Amsterdam is governed centrally by the City Council. The 45 members of this council are elected every four years by the residents of Amsterdam.[23] The day-to-day administration of the city is the responsibility of the mayor and a managing committee of six aldermen and alderwomen. This committee is elected from and by the City Council. The mayor is not elected but is appointed for six years by the Minister of the Interior. The city council is supported by a professional apparatus of services and (project) agencies with their own mandates and areas of expertise. For example, health care is supported by the Municipal Health Service, while the Service for Social Development (DMO, Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling) initiates policy on education, integration, youth, arts and sports. The Amsterdam Together Platform (PAS, Platform Amsterdam Samen) is a project agency specifically geared towards promoting cohesion.

Many of the policy competencies are further delegated to the submunicipal level. Amsterdam is divided into 15 submunicipalities (*stadsdelen*), with their own councils and managing committees, led by a submunicipality president (*stadsdeelvoorzitter*) elected every four years. The number of council members is stipulated on the basis of the number of residents of the submunicipality. At the submunicipality level the council is supported by a staff of professionals, responsible for policy preparation and implementation.

The submunicipalities are responsible for policy on all issues including infrastructure, housing, employment, education, health and social care, integration and cohesion, in as far as the mandate of the submunicipality level allows. For instance, the primary-road network of the city is the responsibility of the municipality, while the secondary roads are the responsibility of the submunicipalities. In the same way, the primary schools are the responsibility of the submunicipality, as they have a function for the submunicipality only; the secondary schools are the responsibility of the central city, as the secondary schools not only enrol pupils from the submunicipality in which they are located, but also have a larger catchment area.

The submunicipalities therefore have a fairly wide scope in determining their own policies. They do not, however, have a direct relationship with the national government. This means that the national government deals with the central city council only, and not with the submunicipalities. Money coming from the national

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[23] In 1986, the right to vote in local elections or to be elected for public office at the local level was extended to people who are residents but who do not have Dutch nationality. See FORUM, *Fact Book 2008, The Position of Muslims in the Netherlands: Facts and Figures*, Utrecht, FORUM, 2008, p. 19, available at http://www.forum.nl/pdf/factbook-islam-en.pdf (accessed August 2009) (hereafter FORUM, *Fact Book 2008*).

administration budgets destined for projects at the submunicipality level, for instance, is not directly given to the submunicipalities but is channelled through the central city council.

Although the submunicipalities have a degree of independence, there is harmonisation between the central city and the lower levels of administration. The most important instrument for agreement between the city and the submunicipalities is the 2006–2010 Accord (Bestuursakkoord stad en stadsdelen 2006–2010). In this Accord, the city council and the submunicipality councils consented to collaborate on a number of functions that are considered to be of utmost importance for the whole of Amsterdam, including youth, combating domestic violence, reduction in school drop-out rates; economic growth, and the issuance and enforcement of regulations.[24]

3.2   Policies on Diversity, Integration and Cohesion

National level

When attempting to understand municipal policies on diversity and integration and towards Islam and Muslims in particular, it is important to be aware of how policies concerning minorities and diversity have developed in the Netherlands over the last few decades.

The response of policymakers to the increasing migration of workers from Morocco and Turkey built on the approach to religious plurality developed in the 19th century. The separation between church and state has taken a specific form in the Netherlands, influenced by history and politics. In contrast to France, for instance, where the public sphere is considered to be neutral and religion is considered to be within the private domain, in the Netherlands, of old, the public sphere is not considered to be neutral but pluralistic. Differing religions, ideological and cultural groupings are considered as social pillars that have equal rights to practise their culture and convictions both individually and collectively. These ideas about the nature and structure of society have influenced policies on diversity, integration and cohesion over time.

The existence of a number of Christian denominations and the desire to offer them equal space underpinned the creation of the pillar system. Society came to be organised around these pillars, with each faith group having its own schools, social and leisure organisations, and more. When the first non-western minorities and workers arrived in the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s, the government tried to integrate them into this system, with Islam as a new pillar. The foundation of Moroccan and Turkish organisations was encouraged. It was assumed that they could practise their culture and

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[24]   Gemeente Amsterdam, *Bestuursakkoord stad en stadsdelen 2006–2010 (Administrative agreement between the municipality and the submunicipalities 2006–2010),* Amsterdam, 2006, available at http://www.amsterdam.nl/gemeente/volg_het_beleid_0/bestuursakkoord/volledig/bestuursakkoor d_stad (accessed August 2009).

religion among themselves (*in eigen kring*), and through these organisations, integrate in Dutch society, just as the Catholics, the Reformists and others had done.[25]

The integration of new migrant groups into the pillar system took place at a time when the system itself was becoming less significant because of the increasing secularisation of Dutch society. This also had an influence on the policies concerning ethnic and religious minorities. While through the 1990s the pluralistic perspective remained important, progressively an alternative perspective developed, which required that ethnic minorities should integrate as individuals.[26] Policies centred on emancipation through ethnic self-organisations were replaced by policies centred on individual tracks or pathways towards integration.

While in the 1980s and 1990s some policies were formed for Islam and Muslims, such as for the building of mosques, the main focus of minority policies was directed towards ethnic minorities. After the attacks in New York and Washington, DC on 9 September 2001 (9/11), Muslims became an important focus for policymakers. Maussen contends that both a marginalisation perspective and an assimilation perspective became strongly dominant in national policy debates on Muslims: Muslims should adapt to Dutch society and Dutch norms and culture, starting from the basic idea that Islam and Dutch culture do not match.[27] The marginalisation model is less radical than the assimilation model in that it tolerates minorities retaining their cultural practices, but to a very limited extent in order not to become a threat to the majority culture, and in the expectation that over time the minority culture will disappear and merge with the majority culture. The assimilation model requires from minorities that they entirely give up their original identity and cultural practices and wholly adapt to the majority culture.

Amsterdam

The evolution of integration policies in Amsterdam mirrored the national tendency. The initial pluralistic perspective exemplified by the support of ethnic migrant organisations was followed by a turn towards dialogue. The effect of this change in policy approach meant that ethnic organisations could no longer rely on permanent government funding. Instead, funding was provided for projects directed towards integration. It also allowed organisations other than those based on ethnicity to apply for funds. The migrant advisory councils that had been the interlocutors between migrant organisations and policymakers were abolished.

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[25] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?*; J. Rath, R. Penninx, K. Groenendijk and A. Meijer (eds), *Western Europe and its Islam*, Leiden, Brill, 2001; S. V. Monsma and C. J. Soper, *The Challenge of Multiculturalism: Church and State in Five Democracies*, New York, Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.

[26] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?*, p. 63.

[27] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?*, pp. 54–64.

However, at the municipal level in Amsterdam the marginalisation and assimilation perspectives were not very influential. Instead of polarisation, emphasis was placed on the promotion of cohesion, pulling together in times of crises or problems. Instead of calls for adaptation to Dutch culture or for isolation of radical elements, weight was put on a shared democracy and living situation (in Amsterdam); on a shared urban culture and livelihood; and on the importance of dialogue between people with differing ideas.

This was explicitly taken up as a policy strategy after the murder of the film-maker Theo van Gogh in November 2004 by a radicalised Dutch youth of Moroccan origin. This event shocked the whole of the Netherlands. Some national politicians and other opinion-formers tried to play on growing feelings of fear and hate and called for anti-Muslim measures, but this was counterbalanced by the mayor of Amsterdam and the committee of aldermen, who emphasised the need for peace and processes for dialogue.[28]

In the period after the incident, the municipality launched an action programme called Wij Amsterdammers, based on sharing and dialogue. This action plan is still in place, although some adaptations and changes have been made over time. "Wij Amsterdammers II: Investeren in mensen en het stellen van grenzen" (Investing in people and calling a halt) includes further promotion of cohesion but has the added important element of checking and countering radicalisation[29] and polarisation. An action plan directed towards fighting radicalisation is part of the Wij Amsterdammers programme. More information on the action programme and concrete policy initiatives taken in this framework can be found in Chapter 10.3.

In 2008, the mayor and City Council of Amsterdam issued a note articulating their views on the relationship between government and religion. The note concluded that in the Netherlands, this relationship is guided by the following four principles: the separation between church and state, freedom of religion, the principle of equality and the neutrality of the government. In particular the last issue is central in the vision of the mayor and the aldermen. In the note, three forms of neutrality are distinguished: first, exclusive neutrality, meaning that religion is private and has to stay out of the public sphere (more commonly the French understanding); second, inclusive neutrality, meaning that the government is allowed to support and to collaborate with religious actors (including organisations), but has to ensure that the other principles are applied, as well. This means that all (religious) actors must be treated on an equal footing, for instance. The third form of neutrality is compensating neutrality. Under this approach the government may favour some religious actors over others, because

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[28] At the time, the Dutch Labour Party (PVDA), Green Left (*Groen Links*) and the Liberal Party (VVD) were represented in the municipality council; after the local elections in 2006, the council came to be composed of the Dutch Labour Party and Green Left.

[29] Radicalisation among other categories, such as right-wing groups, is also a focus of the programme, not only radicalisation among Muslims.

they are in a less favourable position, in order to enable them to catch up. The mayor and aldermen take the view that in certain situations compensating neutrality is useful and acceptable, as well.

The explicit recognition in 2003 that religious organisations can be partners of the municipality marked a break with the policies of the 1980s.[30] The recent elaboration of the concept of compensating neutrality means that the mayor and aldermen take a firm stance against anti-Muslim and anti-religious sentiments and currents in Amsterdam society and public debates.

Slotervaart

In many respects, Slotervaart serves as an experimental field for the municipality's cohesion and integration policies directed towards Muslims. The submunicipality president, Ahmed Marcouch, a practising Muslim himself and in office since 2006, is a very important stimulator in this.[31]

In the history of Slotervaart, the riots in 1998 were a significant turning point. These riots broke out after a police officer arrested a 12-year-old child. Many residents questioned the legality of the arrest and challenged the behaviour of the policeman. Youngsters and adults blockaded the area and a special patrol group was sent to remove the protesters.[32] The incident brought Slotervaart national attention, and at the level of the municipality and the submunicipality it was realised that there were real problems in Slotervaart that called for intervention. In the period after the riots policies were developed to promote integration. However, the fact that many inhabitants of Slotervaart Overtoomse Veld are Muslims appeared to present an additional challenge to policymakers and was considered by some to be part of the problem, particularly after 9/11.[33] The election of Marcouch in 2006 led to a significant change in policy. The new administration has incorporated references to religious Islamic values in its policies and is explicitly involving religious actors as a means of reaching out to the population.[34]

3.3   The Perception of Muslims in Amsterdam and Slotervaart

The perceptions of the native Dutch concerning Muslims are generally rather negative. A study of the Social and Cultural Planning Office revealed, for instance, that in 2006,

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[30] Gemeente Amsterdam, "Erbij horen en meedoen. Uitgangspunten voor integratie in de gemeente Amsterdam" (Belonging and participating. Starting points for integration in the municipality of Amsterdam), *Gemeenteblad* 1 1, no. 214, Amsterdam, 2003.

[31] The research for this report was undertaken from 2008–2009. As of March 2010, Marcouch has been replaced by Achmed Baadoud.

[32] De Jong, *Etnografisch onderzoek,* p. 65.

[33] Interview with the Slotervaart submunicipality secretary, Slotervaart, February 2008.

[34] Interview with the Slotervaart submunicipality secretary, Slotervaart, February 2008.

52 per cent of native Dutch adults thought that western European and the Islamic way of life were incompatible.[35] The same study showed that a majority of Turks (60 per cent) and Moroccans (70 per cent) thought that the native Dutch perceived Islam very negatively.[36] A large majority of the population (both native Dutch and ethnic minorities) think that tensions between different groups have increased over the last years.[37] 9/11 has evidently had an influence in the upsurge of anti-Muslim sentiments.[38] Politicians such as Frits Bolkestein in the 1990s and later on Pim Fortuijn created an atmosphere in which it was no longer taboo to express these sentiments in a direct and uncompromising way.

The 2004 murder of Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam Oost by a radicalised Dutch Muslim youth marked the atmosphere and set the tone of public discussion, helped at the national level by politicians such as Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders, who appear to play on anti-western and anti-migrant sentiments and fears.

At the central city authority level the current mayor, Job Cohen (in office since 2001), strongly influences how the city and its policies are perceived: he is in favour of a flexible, open attitude and peaceful negotiation, and aims "to keep the population together".[39] This has led to frequent criticism that he is too indulgent, particularly with Muslims, even within his own party, the Dutch Labour Party. The Labour Party is associated with the multicultural policies of the 1970s and 1980s, which current public opinion suggests have failed.[40] Partly as a reaction, a section of the present Labour Party calls for stringent policies towards ethnic minorities.[41]

The perceptions of Muslims in Slotervaart are influenced by national media and politics, but also by the experiences of people in their own neighbourhood, and policies

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[35] J. Dagevos and M. Gijsberts, *Jaarrapport integratie (Yearly Integration Report),* SCP, The Hague, 2007, p. 294 (hereafter *Jaarrapport integratie 2007*).

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 296.

[37] FORUM, *Fact Book 2008.*

[38] See, for instance, EUMC, "Anti-Islamic reactions in the EU after the terrorist acts against the USA, the Netherlands", Amsterdam, EUMC, 2002; IHF, "Intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the EU, developments since 9/11", Vienna, IHF, 2005,available at http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewdocument.php?download=1&doc_id=6237 (accessed August 2009).

[39] See, for instance, transcript of the mayor's news conference at http://amsterdam.nl/gemeente/college/burgemeester_cohen/toespraken/overig/toespraak_2 (accessed August 2009).

[40] The debate and opinions on the failure of multicultural policies associated with the Labour Party have been highly influenced by the critical essay, "Het multiculturele drama", by Paul Scheffer, published in 2000.

[41] See the Labour Party's concept resolution, "Verdeeld Verleden, Gedeelde Toekomst" (Divided History, Shared Future), available at http://pvda.nl/binaries/content/assets/pvda/Publicaties/2009/03/PvdA_Partijbestuur_Verdeeld+verleden+gedeelde+toekomst.pdf/PvdA_Partijbestuur_Verdeeld+verleden+gedeelde+toekomst.pdf (accessed August 2009).

and politics at the level of Slotervaart. The Foundations survey suggests that people tend to have extremely negative ideas about Muslims or, on the contrary, try to counter these negative images by propagating very positive ideas about Muslims. In such a polarised debate it is difficult to take a nuanced perspective. As shown in Chapter 4.2., there is quite a large group of citizens who frequently have contacts with people from a different religion, but there is also a rather large group who do not. This would imply, therefore, that the media – and certainly the national media – are likely to have an important impact on people's perceptions of Muslims. What happens in Amsterdam and Slotervaart is taken up at the national level by national media and politicians and it is inevitable that this has an influence on the perceptions of local citizens as well.

4. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: IDENTITY, BELONGING AND INTERACTION

A sense of belonging, evaluation of the surroundings and environment, and the depth and nature of the interactions with others are important indicators of the degree people feel at home in a given society. This section begins by examining the views of participants in the Foundations research towards their neighbourhood and local area. It looks at the positive and negative aspects of the areas identified by respondents. It then examines the responses to questions aimed at measuring social cohesion. This includes questions on whether respondents felt that people in the neighbourhood were willing to help each other, felt that this was a neighbourhood with a strong community, and shared values and norms. The chapter then looks at evidence of the levels of meaningful interactions respondents had with people outside their own ethnic and religious group. Finally, the chapter examines the responses to questions on a sense of belonging, to Slotervaart, Amsterdam and the Netherlands, and on identity.

4.1 Appreciation of the Neighbourhood

More than half of the respondents to the Foundations questionnaire stated that they liked the neighbourhood[42] in which they lived (55 per cent), while another 37 per cent stated that they liked the neighbourhood to a certain extent. Only 8 per cent responded that they did not like the neighbourhood. In this respect, there is hardly any difference between Muslims and non-Muslims: 58 per cent of the Muslims liked the neighbourhood and 36 per cent to some extent, while 6 per cent did not like the neighbourhood.

There is also little difference between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in the positive aspects of the neighbourhoods people value. People who like the neighbourhood do so because of the fact that it is close to public transport, shops and other facilities; because of the layout and the character of the neighbourhood (it is green, quiet, with large avenues and much public space, the houses are large compared with other neighbourhoods while not so expensive, both to rent and buy); because they like the people living in the neighbourhood (because it is mixed; because they get along well with their neighbours). Muslims sometimes explicitly mention access to Islamic facilities (such as mosques or halal butchers) as an asset. A participant in a focus group, for instance, remarked: "In the municipality of Amstelveen where I lived before there was no Islamic butcher." Some Muslims stressed that they liked the neighbourhood because it is a mixed neighbourhood, while other Muslims liked it because of the large Moroccan or Turkish community. One respondent said: "I do not feel like a foreigner here."

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[42] Someone's neighbourhood was defined as the area within 15–20 minutes' walking distance from home.

When asked what people did not like about their neighbourhood, the issues most frequently mentioned were youths causing trouble (loitering, vandalism), criminality and dirtiness. This corresponds with the Quality of Life Monitor for Slotervaart (Leefbaarheidsmonitor Slotervaart),[43] in which these aspects were mentioned as the most prevalent annoyances. In addition, the social composition of the population was mentioned by some respondents as a negative aspect of their neighbourhood. Some people found the composition of the neighbourhood to be too uniform. There were also respondents with Moroccan backgrounds who stated that there were too many Moroccans in the neighbourhood, while there was a small number of people of native Dutch descent who complained that there were "too many headscarves arriving", which in their view was leading to a degeneration of the neighbourhood.

In the Foundations survey, respondents were asked about the degree to which they agreed to a number of questions on the character of the neighbourhood's population as a measure of social cohesion. These statements are presented in Tables 9–12.

Table 9. Are people in this neighbourhood willing to help each other?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Muslim, %	17.9	50.0	22.6	3.8	5.7	100.0
Non-Muslim, %	12.8	44.7	24.5	6.4	11.7	100.0
Average	15.5	47.5	23.5	5.0	8.5	100.0
Total number	**31**	**95**	**47**	**10**	**17**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

It appears that Muslims are slightly more positive (67.9 per cent) in their evaluation of the willingness of people in their neighbourhood to help each other than non-Muslims (57.5 per cent).[44] In the Muslim sample, however, people born in Morocco are more positive (71 per cent) than people born in Turkey (50 per cent), who more often say that they do not know (22 per cent), than the Moroccan-born respondents, at 2 per cent. The same tendency can be discerned for the following statement, in Table 10.

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[43] Available on the submunicipality website at http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/stadsdeel_in_beeld/cijfers/leefbaarheidsmonitor?ActItmIdt=92725 (accessed August 2009).

[44] The options "agree strongly" and "agree" taken together.

Table 10. Is this a close-knit neighbourhood?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Muslim, %	10.4	39.6	41.5	2.8	5.7	100.0
Non-Muslim, %	7.4	21.3	45.7	19.1	6.4	100.0
Average	9.0	31.0	43.5	10.5	6.0	100.0
Total number	**18**	**62**	**87**	**21**	**12**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

There is a significant difference in the views of Muslims and non-Muslims over whether the people in their neighbourhood form a strong community. While half of Muslims agreed (50 per cent), less than one-third of non-Muslims (28.7 per cent) did so. It appears, however, that in the Muslim sample, people from Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds strongly differed in their appreciation of the cohesion of the neighbourhood: Moroccans agreed far more often with the statement that the people in the neighbourhood form a strong community (55.1 per cent) than did Muslims with Turkish backgrounds (22.3 per cent).[45] This may reflect the stronger Moroccan presence in the neighbourhood.

Table 11. Do people in this neighbourhood share the same values?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Muslim, %	5.7	39.6	36.8	9.4	8.5	100.0
Non-Muslim, %	3.2	27.7	39.4	19.1	10.6	100.0
Average	4.5	34.0	38.0	14.0	9.5	100.0
Total number	**9**	**68**	**76**	**28**	**19**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Muslims were also more likely (45.3 per cent) than non-Muslims (30.9 per cent) to agree that the people in the neighbourhood share the same norms and values (Table

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[45] The options "agree strongly" and "agree" taken together. The category of Dutch-born Muslims is omitted here because it consists of people of both Moroccan and Turkish descent.

11.). In the Muslim sample, there was no significant difference between people born in Morocco, Turkey and the Netherlands.

Table 12. Do people work together to improve the neighbourhood?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Muslim, %	8.5	36.8	34.0	8.5	12.3	100.0
Non-Muslim, %	4.3	28.7	36.2	17.0	13.8	100.0
Average	6.5	33.0	35.0	12.5	13.0	100.0
Total number	13	66	70	25	26	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

Finally, Muslims were more likely (45.3 per cent) than non-Muslims (33 per cent) to believe that people in their neighbourhood work together to improve the neighbourhood (Table 12). It appears that in the Muslim sample, people born in Morocco agreed more often (59.1 per cent)[46] with the statement that "the people in this neighbourhood are working together to improve the neighbourhood" than do people born in Turkey (33.4 per cent), who more often indicated that they did not know (27.8 per cent).

It can be concluded that on the average people in Slotervaart like the neighbourhood in which they live. Muslims were more positive than non-Muslims about the social aspects and the degree of cohesion of the neighbourhood. In the Muslim sample, people born in Morocco were more positive than people born in Turkey.

4.2 Social Interaction

Social interaction can be generally defined as a dynamic, changing sequence of social actions between individuals or groups. But people may adapt not only their actions, but also their ideas. Studies have shown that interaction between groups does not always lead to a decrease of prejudice; on the contrary, when interaction is superficial, prejudices often tend to be confirmed. Prejudices tend to diminish in situations in which there is more than superficial personal contact, and when a representative of

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[46] The categories "agree strongly" and "agree" have been taken together.

another group is indeed considered as a normal member of that group and not only as a person, or as an exception to the rule.[47]

A study by the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) has analysed the influence of ethnic concentration in certain neighbourhoods on the processes of integration. It concluded that the social distance observed between different groups in several cities has a great deal to do with the residential segregation of different population groups. Contact with the indigenous population is lowest in neighbourhoods containing large numbers of ethnic minorities. Homogeneous neighbourhoods thus reinforce ethnically homogeneous contacts. Also, in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, contact is not self-evident. The findings of the study suggest that if more than half the residents are members of non-western ethnic minorities, contact of the native population with the ethnic population in fact generally declines.[48]

The SCP study suggests that a rapid influx of non-western ethnic minorities is also a challenge for social cohesion. If the presence of these categories in a neighbourhood increases in a short period, contacts between the ethnic Dutch population and the residents belonging to ethnic minorities in the neighbourhood diminish. This suggests that an over-visible presence of ethnic minorities in a neighbourhood is perceived as threatening by ethnic Dutch residents, causing them to withdraw more and more into their own ethnic group. In this respect the growing concentration of ethnic minorities in large cities has a negative impact, since it will lead to even fewer contacts. The SCP study also suggests that contact with native Dutch co-residents is important for the acquisition of the Dutch language by ethnic minorities. Turkish people in the Netherlands have on the average the fewest contacts with native Dutch people. Compared with other non-western ethnic minorities they have the strongest orientation towards their own ethnic community, and their mastery of the Dutch language is least good. Finally, the SCP study shows that contacts between the ethnic and indigenous population are also important in promoting mutual acceptance.[49]

The Foundations questionnaire asked respondents how frequently they interact with people from a different ethnic background in a meaningful manner (understood as contacts which imply more than a mere greeting), and in what contexts.

The results suggest that a majority of respondents interact with people from a different ethnic background on a daily basis: 63.3 per cent of the men and 62.2 per cent of the

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[47] See, among others, R. Islam and M. Hewstone, "Dimension of contact as predictors of intergroup anxiety, perceived outgroup variability and outgroup attitudes: an integrative model", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 19 (1993), pp. 700–710; T. F. Pettigrew and L. R. Tropp, "Does intergroup contact reduce prejudice? Recent meta-analytical findings", in S. Oskamp (ed.), *Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination*, Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000.

[48] SCP, Uit elkaars buurt. De invloed van etnische concentratie op integratie en beeldvorming (The Influence of Ethnic Concentration on Integration and Imagination), The Hague, SCP, 2005

[49] SCP, Uit elkaars buurt. De invloed van etnische concentratie op integratie en beeldvorming (The Influence of Ethnic Concentration on Integration and Imagination), The Hague, SCP, 2005.

women have daily contact with people from a different ethnic background during work or in school, while around 20 per cent of men and women said they never interact with people of a different ethnic background in the context of school or work. Work and schools emerge as the most significant spaces in which this interaction takes place. Muslim men do not significantly differ from the average. More Muslim women (68.8 per cent) appear to be in daily contact with other ethnic backgrounds in work or school than the female average, while the percentage of Muslim women who never have contact with people from a different ethnic background is slightly lower than the female average, at 16.7 per cent.

There is less contact with people from different backgrounds during leisure time than during working hours, but it is still substantial: 38.8 per cent of the men and 46.3 per cent of the women indicated that they meet people from other ethnic backgrounds at least once a week during leisure and sport activities. Both Muslim men and women were slightly more likely than the average to respond affirmatively to this question. On the other hand, 34 per cent of the men and 41 per cent of the women indicated that they never met people from other ethnic backgrounds during leisure and sport activities, and this figure is slightly lower for Muslim men and women.

There are also frequent inter-ethnic contacts in social encounters that do not take place during working hours or leisure activities: 28.3 per cent of the male respondents on a daily basis, 19.2 per cent on a weekly basis and 14.1 per cent on a monthly basis, while 29.3 per cent do not have such contacts at all. For the women, the percentages are: 19.4 per cent (daily), 21.4 per cent (weekly), 12.2 per cent (monthly) and 39.8 per cent (not at all). More Muslim men and women than the average have such social contacts, and especially Muslim women (29.1 per cent daily, 25 per cent weekly, 10.4 per cent monthly and 27.1 per cent not at all).

The same question was asked about interaction between people with different religions or beliefs. In this case as well, work and school appear to be the contexts in which such interaction is most frequent. Among male respondents 50.5 per cent and of the female respondents 52.5 per cent meet people of another religion on a daily basis during working or school hours, while 27.3 per cent of the men and 22.2 per cent of the women stated that they never meet people from a different religion in these contexts. The percentages for the Muslims do not differ significantly from this general picture.

Interaction with people from a different religion is less during leisure and sports activities, but still quite sizeable. Over 34 per cent of the men and 34 per cent of the women meet people adhering to another religion at least once a week in this context, while 39.8 per cent of the men and 42.7 per cent of the women state that they meet no people from another religion here. Slightly more Muslim men than the average meet people from another religion in this context (41.4 per cent); Muslim women do not differ from the average.

People frequently interact with people adhering to another religion during social contact outside working hours and leisure activities. However, 37.4 per cent of the

men state that they never have such contacts, while the others do have such contacts on a daily (22.2 per cent), weekly (22.2 per cent) or monthly basis (9 per cent). Among the women, 46.9 per cent do not have such contacts, while the others do have such contacts on a daily (17.3 per cent), weekly (12.2 per cent) or monthly basis (14.3 per cent). More Muslim women than the average have social contacts with people from a different religion outside working hours or leisure activities, on a daily (27.1 per cent) or weekly basis (18.8 per cent).

It can be concluded that a majority of the respondents have frequent to very frequent contacts with people from other ethnic backgrounds and religions, although contacts with people adhering to another religion are less frequent than with people from a different ethnic background. Work and school are the contexts in which most interaction occurs, but more than half of the respondents also interact with people from a different ethnic background and religion during leisure activities and other social occasions. The findings for Muslim women challenge the popular idea that Muslim women are most often isolated and only interact with their own ethnic and religious group.

However, 75.9 per cent of the respondents think that initiatives should be taken to stimulate people to interact more with people from different backgrounds; just 24.1 per cent are not in favour of this. There is no significant difference between the sexes in this respect. Disaggregating for religion and sex shows that Muslim women (85.4 per cent) are more in favour of initiatives to stimulate people to interact with people from a different background than the average, while non-Muslim women appear to be less in favour of this than the average (64.7 per cent). In the male category there is no significant difference between Muslims (76.3 per cent) and non-Muslims (78 per cent).

When age is taken into account, it appears that in all age groups Muslims are more in favour of initiatives to stimulate people to interact more with people from different backgrounds than non-Muslims, and that in general, people in the age group 30–39 years of age are most in favour, while the younger and older age groups see less use in them. This is shown in Tables 13a and 13b.

Table 13a. Initiatives should be taken to stimulate people to interact more with people from different backgrounds: Muslim responses

		Age						Total
		<20	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60 +	
Yes, %		73.7	65.2	100.0	84.0	85.7	83.3	81.1
No, %		26.3	34.8	0.0	16.0	14.3	16.7	18.9
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	19	23	20	25	7	12	106

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 13b. Initiatives should be taken to stimulate people to interact more with people from different backgrounds: non-Muslim responses

		Age						Total
		<20	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60 +	
Did not answer, %		0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1%
Yes, %		61.5	52.9	69.2	81.8	75.0	75.0	69.1%
No, %		38.5	41.2	30.8	18.2	25.0	25.0	29.8
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	13	17	13	11	20	20	94

Source: Open Society Foundations

4.3 Questions of Identity and Belonging

Respondents also indicated the degree to which they feel at home in their neighbourhood, Amsterdam and the Netherlands, as shown below in Tables 14–16.

Table 14. To what degree do you feel you belong in your local area?

	Very strongly	Fairly strongly	Not very strongly	Not at all strongly	Don't know	Total
Muslim, %	38.7	41.5	11.3	7.5	0.9	100.0
Non-Muslim, %	34.4	35.5	18.3	11.8	0.0	100.0
Average	36.7	38.7	14.6	9.5	0.5	100.0
Total number	**73**	**77**	**29**	**19**	**1**	**199**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 15. To what degree do you feel you belong in your city?

	Very strongly	Fairly strongly	Not very strongly	Not at all strongly	Don't know	Total
Muslim	48.1	35.8	10.4	0.9	4.7	100.0
Non-Muslim	58.5	28.7	8.5	4.3	0.0	100.0
Average	53.0	32.5	9.5	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total number	**106**	**65**	**19**	**5**	**5**	**200**

Source: Open Society Foundations

Table 16. To what degree do you feel you belong in this country?

	Very strongly	Fairly strongly	Not very strongly	Not at all strongly	Don't know	Total
Muslim, %	48.1	31.1	17.0	1.9	1.9	100.0
Non-Muslim, %	61.7	26.6	7.4	4.3	0.0	100.0
Average	54.5	29.0	12.5	3.0	1.0	100.0
Total number	109	58	25	6	2	200

Source: Open Society Foundations

The responses show that a majority of respondents feel at home in the neighbourhood in which they live, Muslims slightly more so than non-Muslims. The sense of belonging to the city is greater than that to the neighbourhood, although here the sense of belonging among Muslims is slightly less than among non-Muslims. The difference between Muslims and non-Muslims is much greater when asked about feelings of belonging to the Netherlands, in the sense that Muslims feel less often at home in the Netherlands than non-Muslims.

People who stated that they do not belong or feel at home in Amsterdam were asked the reason(s) for this. Of the 59 Muslims who answered this question, 13 referred to racism and discrimination, and a few of them explicitly stated that the situation has worsened in the last few years. Others indicated they do not feel at home in the city for a variety of other reasons, such as crime, the cold and the bustle of a large city.

Of the 42 non-Muslims who answered this question, three stated that they do not feel at home in the city because of the many people from ethnic minorities and two stated that they were discriminated against. The others did not feel at home in the city for a variety of other reasons, such as crime and the city bustle.

When asked whether one considers oneself Dutch (that is whether one identifies culturally with the Netherlands, not whether one has a Dutch passport), 59.4 per cent of the Muslim sample and 91.4 per cent of the non-Muslim sample replied positively. There are important variations in the Muslim sample. Muslims born in the Netherlands (77.4 per cent) are far more likely than those born abroad to feel Dutch. Of respondents born in Morocco, 53 per cent replied positively, while only 38.9 per cent of the respondents born in Turkey did so.

When disaggregating the data for age, there appears to be some difference between those born in the Netherlands and those abroad. In particular, the age group of people aged 30–39 years were least likely to consider themselves Dutch (Table 17.).

Table 17. Do you consider yourself Dutch?

		Age						Total
		<20	20–29	30–39	40–49	50– 9	60 +	
Yes, %		68.4	68.2	45.0	60.0	57.1	50.0	59.0
No, %		31.6	31.8	55.0	40.0	42.9	50.0	41.0
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	19	22	20	25	7	12	105

Source: Open Society Foundations

Among Muslims who wear visible religious identifiers, 82 per cent feel a "very strong" or "fairly strong" sense of belonging to the Netherlands. For Muslims who do not visibly show their religious allegiance, this figure is 78 per cent, indicating that visible religious identity does not have a negative effect on a person's sense of belonging to the Netherlands.

When looking at the relationship between the sense of belonging and experiences of discrimination, it appear that of the 20 Muslims who did not feel a strong sense of belonging to the Netherlands, 15 said they had experienced a lot or a fair amount of racism. Of the 11 non-Muslims who did not feel they belonged, three had experienced a lot of racism, two had experienced a fair amount and four had experienced a little. Out of all of those respondents who did not feel they belonged, only one Muslim and two non-Muslims had not experienced any racism. Although most Muslims and non-Muslims who felt a sense of belonging to the country also experienced racism, the majority did not experience it a lot of the time. The above confirms the natural assumption that repeated experiences of racism have a bad effect on people's sense of belonging to a country.

Of the Muslims who consider themselves Dutch, 41 per cent think that others consider them Dutch as well, while 59 per cent think that others do not consider them Dutch. This disparity can be a source of frustration for people if their self-perception does not match the perception of others. By contrast, 90.7 per cent of those Muslims who do not consider themselves Dutch think that others do not consider them Dutch either.

Most people who think that others do not consider them Dutch think that this is because of their ethnic appearance: "Because I look like a Moroccan/Turk." Two women indicated that they are not considered Dutch because they wear a headscarf. Many people complained that they do not want to be categorised because "we are all

humans" and some said that at times they feel Moroccan and other times they feel Dutch. A couple of people said that they feel first and foremost Muslim.

4.4   Conclusion

People's expression of their attachment to a place is situation-specific and layered, as is illustrated by people's answers to the Foundations questionnaire and their statements during the focus groups.

It seems that because of negative press and public opinion, people in Slotervaart – and especially Muslims – feel the urge to defend their neighbourhood and to firmly state that their neighbourhood is good, and that they like living there. This is especially so because in public opinion the negative issues are particularly linked to the fact that there are many Muslims living in Slotervaart (and especially Moroccans); this means that the negative image concerns them directly and their expression of attachment to the neighbourhood is a direct defence.

This does not preclude the possibility that at another moment people may state that they think that there are too many ethnic minorities living in their neighbourhood. They may think that this is not good for the image of the neighbourhood, the opportunities for their children, the level of facilities, etc. But they may like the feeling of being at home, among themselves, and this may also influence their evaluation of the rest of the city and the country. There are quite a number of Muslims who state that they do not feel at ease in the city centre or elsewhere, because they feel discriminated against, or simply because people stare at them "thinking that I will steal their bag".

At the level of the submunicipality of Slotervaart, people's attachment to the neighbourhood and the submunicipality is a strong asset and collective capital on which to build. The submunicipality could do more to use this asset. The importance of turning the characteristics of Slotervaart and its population into something positive was clearly understood by a member of the Slotervaart Think-tank,[50] who proposed a project called "Parisian conditions" (*Parijse toestanden*),[51] referring to a public and much debated statement of the head of police of Amsterdam who compared the riots in Slotervaart at the end of 2007 with the riots in the Parisian suburbs. The member of the think-tank encouraged Slotervaart to create "Parisian conditions", but interpreted in a positive sense, namely by making a summer beach in Slotervaart[52] like the summer beach, the Paris Plage, on the banks of the Seine.

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[50]   This is an advisory body to the submunicipality and a kind of volunteer organisation consisting of prominent citizens of Slotervaart. It was established at the end of 2007.

[51]   Interview, February 2008.

[52]   Slotervaart has an artificial lake, the Sloterplas.

At the level of the city, this analysis means that the city would have to ensure that Muslims (Turks and Moroccans) also feel at home in the city outside their own neighbourhood or submunicipality. The "Wij Amsterdammers" action programme is strongly directed towards enhancing people's identities as citizens of Amsterdam. In this context, it is important to recognise that people's attachment to their neighbourhood and living area may already be strong, but that further efforts are needed to increase attachment and belonging to the city, to fight discrimination and to allow people to conquer the rest of the city, as well. The Slotervaart submunicipality president appears to have understood this well, when he encouraged young people in Slotervaart not to stay there and complain that nothing happens, but to go to the Leidseplein (one of the most well-known squares in the city centre) to watch beautiful girls walking by. "Lots of tourists come here to enjoy Amsterdam, and you live here and say that it is so boring? That is not possible!"[53]

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[53] See http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/actueel/nieuwsbrieven_en/nieuwsbrieven/nieuws_van _dagelijks/1_september_2006_0 (accessed June 2008).

5. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EDUCATION

The education system provides individuals with the skills and qualifications for participation in the labour market and is a key driver of social mobility. It also plays a formative role in the socialisation of young people in the unspoken rules and values of society and is the first public institution that young people have contact with. The ways in which schools respond to and respect the needs of Muslims are therefore likely to shape their feelings of acceptance in and belonging to the wider society. Schools also contribute to integration by providing opportunities for interaction between pupils, parents and teachers of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

This section looks at the key issues that have emerged in relation to education. It begins with an outline of the structure of education provision in Amsterdam and the available data on educational achievement. It then looks at the experiences of education and schools that have emerged during the Foundations research and the response to the needs of Muslim pupils in both Islamic and other schools. It also highlights some of the initiatives that have been taken to improve education services in Slotervaart.

Amsterdam has 190 schools for primary education and 28 schools for special primary education (schools for children with special needs because of mental, behavioural and/or physical disabilities). Six of the primary schools are Islamic primary schools, one of them in Slotervaart. Among the 66 schools for secondary education, one is Islamic. This Islamic College of Amsterdam (Islamitisch College Amsterdam, ICA) is located in Slotervaart. Furthermore, the Vrije Universiteit, a Protestant faith-based university, has very recently started the first professional training course for Islamic counsellors in the Netherlands.

There are no data on the number of Muslim pupils attending school in Amsterdam, therefore the number of pupils of Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds must be extrapolated and taken as an indicator of the number of Muslim pupils. In Amsterdam, there are 101,592 children between four and 17 years old. Of this total, 18,128 are of Moroccan and 9,819 are of Turkish background.[54]

In Slotervaart itself there are 7,985 children in the age bracket 5–17 years. Of this total, 2,041 are of Moroccan and 1,024 are of Turkish background.[55] The number of pupils attending school in Slotervaart, however, is 10,059, because many pupils from

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[54] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/7696/ (accessed August 2009).

[55] Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/tabel/7528/ (accessed August 2009). To establish the number of children 15–17 years old, the number in the category 15–19 has been halved.

outside the submunicipality are attending school there.[56] The submunicipality has 13 primary schools, eight schools for secondary education, six schools for advanced vocational training (MBO) and three schools for higher vocational training (HBO).[57]

5.1 Education Achievement Levels

In the Netherlands, compulsory education begins on the first day of the month following a child's fifth birthday. From 16, there is partial compulsory education of one or two days a week. Compulsory education ends at the age of 17. Most children start primary education at age four. At the age of 12 children complete primary education and continue into different levels of secondary education.

Secondary education is divided into three levels. The highest levels of secondary education are HAVO (higher general preparatory education) and VWO (preparatory scientific education) which are normally finished at age 17 or 18. A diploma at these levels provides the opportunity to enter into higher education, HBO (higher vocational education) after having completed HAVO, or university, after having completed VWO. The lower level of secondary school is VMBO (preparatory secondary vocational education), which is also divided into different levels: a practical level, a more advanced level and a theoretical level. It is normally finished at the age of 16. The higher levels of the VMBO prepare for middle vocational education (MBO). Pupils who follow the vocational track can, after having completed MBO, proceed to HBO.[58]

Statistical data for the municipality show that in 2006, of all pupils who were in their fourth year of secondary education, 20 per cent were at the lowest level (mostly the practical level of the VMBO), more than one-third were in a higher-level track of the VMBO, and 43 per cent of the pupils were in HAVO or VWO. This overall figure, however, conceals significant differences between native Dutch and ethnic-minority pupils. Of the native Dutch pupils, 60 per cent were in HAVO or VWO; of the non-western ethnic minorities, only 30 per cent followed these higher-level tracks. In 2006, 16 per cent of the young people between 17 and 22 years of age had neither a basic qualification[59] nor were at school. This amounts to some 7,500 young people.[60]

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[56] This is because schools, in particular those for secondary education, may have a regional function, that is, they serve a pupil population beyond the borders of the submunicipality.

[57] See the website of the submunicipality at www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl (accessed August 2009).

[58] M. Crul and L. Heering, *Onderzoeksverslag TIES survey in Amsterdam en Rotterdam (Research report of the TIES Survey in Amsterdam and Rotterdam),* IMES and NIDI, November 2007, pp. 43–44.

[59] This means that they had no diploma at MBO-II, HAVO or VWO level, which would give them a basic qualification in the labour market.

[60] See the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/feitenencijfers/24099/ (accessed August 2009).

A study of the second-generation migrants of Moroccan and Turkish background in Amsterdam and Rotterdam between 18 and 35 years of age suggested that a lack of qualifications is not an absolute barrier to the labour market. Among Turkish men, 60 per cent of those without basic qualifications were, nevertheless, employed or self employed while 30 per cent were unemployed or declared unfit for work; the other 10 per cent were not looking for employment.[61]

Labour market participation of women differs significantly from that of men. Almost half of young Turkish and Moroccan women marry at a very young age and are at home to care for their family. Only one-third is in employment, and only half of these are in full-time employment.[62]

The study also shows a large and increasing number of people of the second generation of Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds who are highly educated: 29 per cent of the Moroccan and 27 per cent of the Turkish youngsters have completed their education at the HBO or university level. In fact, this group is even larger in number than the group without basic qualifications.[63] The findings from this study therefore challenge the representation of second-generation Moroccan and Turkish young people in the media as a problem group.

The study analysed how the life opportunities of the second generation have been influenced by their background, the school system and the education choices made (for them and/or by them). Children from this group often have parents with very little or no education and begin their primary education already behind in many areas, particularly in the Dutch language. They appear to make up for some of this deficit during primary school. The majority of the second generation follows the VMBO at secondary school. Some leave school without a diploma, but the majority finishes school. Three-quarters enter the MBO although some leave school during the MBO and thus leave without qualification and become part of the risk group. Half of the men indicated that they did not finish school because they wanted to start working in order to earn money; one out of five men indicated that they no longer wanted to go to school.[64] Among the women, marriage is a particularly important reason for not finishing school.[65] While some enter the labour market after completion of the MBO, others go on to the HBO, and then become part of the successful higher educated group.

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[61] M. Crul. A. Pasztor and F. Lelie, "De tweede generatie. Last of kansen voor de stad?", Rapport kennisatelier (The second generation. Trouble or chances for the city? Report of a knowledge seminar), 13 May 2008, The Hague, Amsterdam, IMES, 2008, p. 5 (hereafter Crul et al., "De tweede generatie").

[62] Crul et al., "De tweede generatie", p. 5.

[63] Crul et al., "De tweede generatie", p. 12.

[64] *Ibid.,* pp. 5–10.

[65] *Ibid.,* p. 7.

Almost half of the highly educated youngsters of Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds in the study reached this high level by moving up from one level of education to another; this is the long route (for instance via VMBO to MBO to HBO instead from HAVO to HBO). Among the comparison group of native Dutch, this was only one in five. At the same time, almost half of the youngsters of the risk group (that is without having acquired any qualifications) started with the same level of preparatory training (the more advanced tracks of the MBO).[66] This suggests that either primary schools are failing to recognise the talents of many second-generation children, advising them towards an educational path that does not match their talents, or that the point at which crucial educational decisions are made comes too early for this group. In addition, pupils appear to have the capacities to follow secondary education at the middle level, despite dropping out of school, which raises questions about the fit between the school system and the needs of this group of pupils, as well.[67]

The help and support of parents and siblings appear to be crucial to persistence and eventual educational success. Even if parents cannot help their children with their homework, they can stimulate their children about their school career. The help and support of brothers and sisters is equally important, particularly from those already pursuing higher education themselves. Good and warm relationships with teachers and co-pupils appear to be important, as well. Finally, successful youngsters from the second generation say twice as much as others that they are able to stand by their objectives and to solve problems, so it appears to be an issue of character and self-confidence, as well.[68] The youngsters who drop out of school are indeed more often deviated from the objective to finish school. The desire to earn money and get married are the two main intervening factors. They are more likely to report problems with teachers, co-pupils or at home, and they feel less helped and supported by their family. Girls who drop out of school early appear to have less self-confidence than others, and say that they have difficulties keeping to their objectives. They generally have more conservative views on gender roles, and are strongly embedded in their family network. They more often only have Turkish or Moroccan friends in secondary school, while highly educated girls more often say that they have a Dutch girl as best friend at secondary school (and this could very well have been the same school or class).[69]

5.2   Experiences of Muslim Pupils and Parents

The Foundations questionnaire suggests reasonable satisfaction with education services: 53.7 per cent of Muslim respondents and 42.2 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of primary education. A

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[66] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

[67] *Ibid.,* p. 2.

[68] *Ibid.,* p. 19.

[69] *Ibid.,* p. 19.

greater proportion of Muslims (18 per cent) than non-Muslims (5 per cent) are dissatisfied to very dissatisfied. Concerning secondary education, 52.7 per cent of the Muslims and 30.5 per cent of the non-Muslims are satisfied or very satisfied, while 12.1 per cent of the Muslims and 15.8 per cent of the non-Muslims are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The question elicited a high proportion of answers in the category "do not know". This may be due to respondents not having children attending primary or secondary school, or not attending or having recently finished secondary school themselves. The findings of the questionnaire appear to be consistent with the outcome of the Quality of Life Monitor for Slotervaart 2007[70] in which the inhabitants of different neighbourhoods in Slotervaart were asked to grade the quality of primary-school education in their area on a scale of 1–10. The average grade was seven. The people in the neighbourhood that houses the largest number of inhabitants belonging to ethnic minorities, Overtoomse Veld, however, gave the lowest score for the quality of primary education, 6.4. This category is also less satisfied with the facilities for pre-school child care that are available than inhabitants of the other neighbourhoods in Slotervaart.

The Foundations survey also asked whether respondents think that schools respect the religious customs of people belonging to different religions: 69.8 per cent of the Muslims and 44.1 per cent of the non-Muslims think this is correct. Only a small number of Muslims (1.9 per cent) and non-Muslims (8.6 per cent) believed that the religious customs of people belonging to different religions are too much respected (see Figure 1.).

Figure 1. To what extent do you think that schools respect different religious customs?

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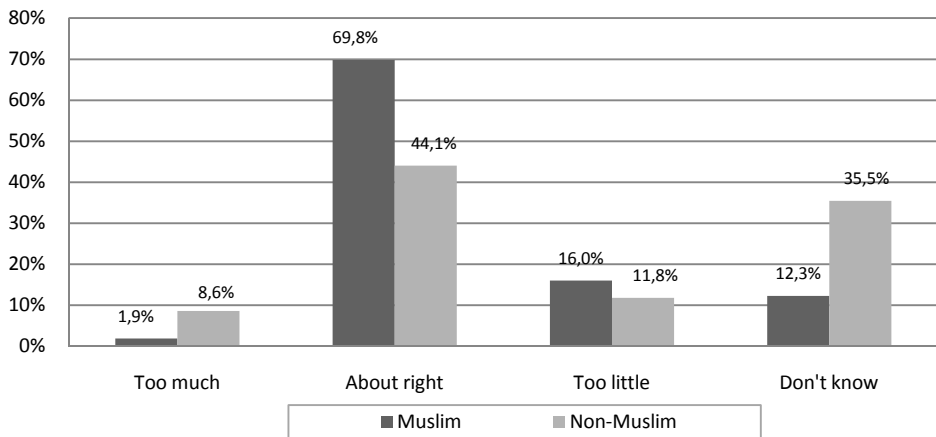
[70] *Leefbaarheidsmonitor Slotervaart*, a two-yearly survey among the inhabitants of Slotervaart on issues that are important for living conditions in the submunicipality, such as housing, education, health services and security.

Source: Open Society Foundations

The respondents to the questionnaire reported a few cases of discrimination in schools for religious reasons. Examples cited were: advising a low level of secondary education for a daughter at the end of primary school; a son not admitted to a Christian school because he is Muslim; and an accusation of plagiarism during an exam.

During the focus group discussions, students were positive about their schools and teachers. They said the teachers were relaxed and had an open mind towards them. The majority were in a so-called "black school",[71] but they did not consider this a real problem. Some of them thought that a ratio of 25 per cent ethnic minorities and 75 per cent ethnic Dutch would be better, but another stated: "Even if it was 100 per cent Moroccan or 100 per cent Turkish, I would not care."

Parents in the focus groups, however, expressed concern about the impact of ethnic segregation on the education of young Muslims. They thought that the education in a "black school" was inferior to other schools. One mother said, "The problem with black schools is that they hamper integration " It was felt that segregation led to worse schools – "We get all the bad teachers here who cannot work elsewhere" – referring in particular to one school, which did receive a very negative evaluation from the Dutch Inspectorate for Education and has been put under intensive supervision.[72] Some focus group participants considered it the responsibility of the government and the municipality to take measures to ensure a good ethnic mix of pupils across the schools. Others believed that parents needed to take a more proactive stance:

> But it is about our kids. It is our kids who make the school "black" and we should not take up the role of victim here. We have to stimulate diversity ourselves. There are sufficiently mixed schools, as well, two tram stops away in Osdorp,[73] for example, there is already one."

The mothers interviewed said that they were involved with the education of their children and that they visited their schools during consulting hours. It was suggested that active involvement in education has increased recently. One mother said that four years ago this was not the case, but that nowadays she goes whenever it is required.

It appeared that the mothers are involved with the school careers of their children and are capable of intervening where there are problems with teachers in school. While moving children to better schools is an option open to individual parents, structural solutions that are more drastic, such as sending children to a mixed school in another

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[71] This is a term commonly used in the Netherlands for a school where a majority of the pupils are from a non-western ethnic-minority background.

[72] As a result, in 2008, a new team of directors changed the teaching team by dismissing 18 and hiring 25 new staff.

[73] Osdorp is an adjacent submunicipality.

neighbourhood or submunicipality,[74] or having their grievances collectively heard in the school or by the officers of the submunicipality, appear to be more difficult for them to organise. They identify these as significant problems but they seem to find it hard to adopt strategies for structurally improving the situation.

5.3 Muslim Faith-based Schools and Facilities for Muslim Pupils in Other Schools

There are seven Muslim faith-based schools in Amsterdam, six for primary education and one for secondary education. Muslim faith-based schools are financed by the government, just like Christian denominational schools. Since the 1980s but particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, Muslim schools have been the object of political debate and of extensive studies by the Inspectorate for Education.[75] In 2003, it was concluded that education in Islamic schools "is not opposed to the central values of the democratic constitutional State, and (that) the schools under examination foster more or less the conditions for integration of the pupils".[76] The study observed that, in addition to the Inspectorate of Education, other regional and local actors could take more responsibility to "keep the conversation going with Islamic schools" and to promote the integration of Muslim pupils with emigrant origins into Dutch society.[77] The municipal authorities were therefore urged to begin a dialogue with Islamic schools and to give them a proper status in local society. Recent investigations by the Inspectorate of Education have concluded that almost all the Islamic schools have an open attitude towards Dutch society, and play a positive role in creating conditions for social cohesion.[78]

In Amsterdam, all Islamic primary schools except for one received a positive evaluation. The only one which received a negative evaluation was the As Siddieq School in the Amsterdam submunicipality of De Baarsjes in 2003.[79] There was significant local and

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[74] In the submunicipality there are neighbourhoods that are predominantly "white", so it would not be so difficult to improve the "mixture" of pupils, in particular of primary-school age, at the level of the submunicipality.

[75] See, for instance, Inspectorate of Education, "Inspectierapport Islamitische basisscholen in Nederland" (Inspection report on Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands), 1999; "Islamitische scholen en sociale cohesie" (Islamic schools and social cohesion), 2002.

[76] Inspectorate of Education, "Islamitische scholen nader onderzocht" (Further research into Islamic schools), 2003, p. 2.

[77] Inspectorate of Education, "Islamitische scholen nader onderzocht" (Further research into Islamic schools), 2003, p. 2.

[78] OSI, EUMAP, "Muslims in the EU: Cities Report. Preliminary research report and literature survey: the Netherlands", Budapest, Open Society Institute, 2007, pp. 20–21, available at http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/eumuslims/background_reports/download/nether lands/netherlands.pdf (accessed March 2009.)

[79] The reports are available on the Inspectorate's website at http://tkrt.owinsp.nl/zoekscholen/?qualitycardview=searchresults&brincode=23HR&sector=PO (accessed August 2009).

national political concern about this, in particular because the president of the board was at the same time the president of the Al Tawheed Mosque in Amsterdam, which was considered a radical mosque. National politicians asked for an investigation by the Office of Public Prosecution, but the mayor and council of Amsterdam decided to set up a committee of investigation themselves. The committee came up with its own positive report on the As Siddieq School at the end of 2003, and concluded that the school did not hamper the integration of the pupils into Dutch society, and in its approach propagated respect, tolerance and equality.[80] The committee was rather negative about the attitude of the submunicipality in the whole matter, and stated that Islamic schools have the right to receive support when they are unjustly receiving bad publicity.[81]

Slotervaart has two Muslim faith-based schools. The first of them, the primary school El Khadisia, is a school of 255 pupils, most of whom have a Moroccan background. Under the per head funding scheme, 90 per cent of the pupils have been ascribed an additional weight of 0.90, which means that for the city administration they count as 1.9 per cent. This is important when it comes to the distribution of money and facilities to the school. Pupils get this score when their parents have very little or no education and the pupils need additional support.[82] The school has been positively evaluated by the Dutch Inspectorate for Education.[83]

This is not the case for the second Muslim faith-based school in Slotervaart, which is the ICA, the only Muslim faith-based school for secondary education in Amsterdam. The ICA offers the academic track of the VMBO, HAVO and VWO. It received a negative evaluation by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education and was put under intensive supervision in December 2006. The evaluation was held after questions were raised in Parliament about whether the ICA was hampering its pupils' integration. The inspection concluded that this was not the case; however, it found that the school did not have a statement or policy about how it would support integration in any of its plans; furthermore, the management of the school, including the financial management, did not meet the minimum standard.[84] There were also problems about the Dutch-language competence of teachers at the school; a divergence of views and interpretation of Islam among the staff, and mistrust in and between the different stakeholders such as the

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[80] Gemeente Amsterdam, "Onderzoek naar integratiebevorderende en -belemmerende factoren op de Amsterdamse Islamitische basisschool As Siddieq" (Research into factors that promote and inhibit integration at the As Siddieq Islamic Primary School in Amsterdam), 2003.

[81] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?*, pp. 87–88.

[82] With the additional means obtained, schools have the possibility to invest in remedial teaching, special projects, additional class assistants, etc.

[83] Inspectorate for Education, "Rapport periodiek kwaliteitsonderzoek Islamitische basisschool El Kadisia" (Periodic report on the quality of el Kadisia Primary School), 2006.

[84] Inspectorate for Education, evaluation results, available on the Inspectorate's website at http://tkrt.owinsp.nl/zoekscholen/?qualitycardview=searchresults&brincode=27LL&sector=VO (accessed August 2009).

board, the staff and the parents' committee, and between Moroccans and Turks.[85] The inspectorate, however, also showed an understanding of the difficult situation of the ICA. At the time of the inspection the school was still fairly new, it was only founded in 2001 and was struggling to develop its Islamic identity in a rather hostile political and social environment; this often led to opposition to innovations, as it was feared that these could have a negative consequence for its identity. This has had repercussions on the atmosphere and synergy in the team; the students were mostly identified as special-needs pupils because of their ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds; a number of the staff lacked experience in teaching and education; and there had been a considerable turnover of staff in preceding years.[86] In a later report to evaluate the progress made, the inspectorate acknowledged that the political and external pressure for rapid reorganisation placed significant pressure on the school board, management and teachers. Despite the progress made, the number of pupils decreased significantly, from 800 pupils in 2006–2007 to 670 pupils in 2007–2008. The number of pupils in the first year dropped from 160 to 65 pupils in 2007–2008.[87]

Focus group participants expressed a diverse range of views about Muslim faith-based schools.[88] On the one hand, there was a perception that the quality of education was inferior in Muslim faith-based schools and that sending children to such schools would restrict their opportunities. Some were hesitant to send their children to Muslim schools as they viewed them as having very strict rules. On the other hand, there was a general consensus that religious and moral education, the teaching of respect and how to behave towards parents and others would be much better in Muslim faith-based schools than in other schools.

In spring 2008, the submunicipality president stated that there should be more attention paid to religion, and particularly to Islam, in public schools. He said that for many Muslims, public schools are not an option as they feel that their customs (religious feasts, wearing of headscarves and fasting, for example) are not taken seriously and that is why Islamic faith-based schools have come into existence. This view was not adopted by the other governors in Amsterdam nor at the national level. The results of the Foundations survey do not lend credence to his view either, as only 16 per cent of Muslim respondents said that schools did not do enough to respect the faith of their pupils (Figure 1.). The Comenius Lyceum in Slotervaart, for instance,

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[85] NRC *Handelsblad*, "De pubers en de profeet" (The adolescents and the prophet), available at http://www.nrc.nl/binnenland/article568702.ece/De_pubers_en_de_profeet (accessed August 2009).

[86] Report from December 2006, available on the Inspectorate's website at http://tkrt.owinsp.nl/zoekscholen/?qualitycardview=searchresults&brincode=27LL&sector=VO (accessed August 2009).

[87] Report from December 2007, available on the Inspectorate's website at http://tkrt.owinsp.nl/zoekscholen/?qualitycardview=searchresults&brincode=27LL&sector=VO (accessed August 2009).

[88] There was one focus group participant attending the Islamic College of Amsterdam; none of the parents had a child in a Muslim faith-based school.

teaches Arabic as an optional subject. In most schools, Islamic holidays are not incorporated in the year's planning, but parents of pupils have the opportunity to ask for additional days off, for instance to perform religious duties.

Many Muslim pupils in Slotervaart attend Qur'an and Arabic lessons during the weekend, but there are no precise data available. In June 2008, Marcouch called for an investigation of the teaching circumstances in these weekend classes, because of indications that pupils are physically punished. These practices are not helping integration, Marcouch argued, and pupils get confused by the different approaches used by the weekday and weekend schools.[89] He therefore supported the delivery of religious education and instruction in public schools. Parents of the pupils, however, thought that talk of abuse in the weekend schools was exaggerated.[90]

In public schools it is possible to have facilities or lessons especially geared for Muslim pupils (or other faith groups) if there is sufficient demand. The Laws on Primary Education (Article 50) and on Secondary Education (Article 46) state that children can have religious or philosophy of life education in school within or after school hours. Most of the time, however, religious education in state schools is informative and not confessional. In an investigation among primary schools in Slotervaart in spring 2008, it was found that all schools but one organised lessons centred on the connections between different religions and philosophies of life, and with attention to diversity, respect and tolerance.[91] While Marcouch's suggestion of organising Islamic confessional education in public schools initially met with scepticism, in October 2008, two public elementary schools in Slotervaart announced that they aimed to offer this from January 2009, after having investigated the opinions of the parents and found that a large majority were in favour.[92,93]

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[89] See http://archief.nrc.nl/?modus=l&text=Marcouch&hit=6&set=2 (online archives of the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad,* accessed March 2009).

[90] "Ouders laken kritiek van Marcouch" (Parents condemn Marcouch's criticism), available on the AT5 website at http://www.at5.nl/nieuwsartikel.asp?newsid=35862 (accessed August 2009).

[91] "Ontmoetingsonderwijs: basisscholen zijn al voorzien" ("Encounter education: primary schools are already equipped"), available at
http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/actueel/nieuwsberichten?ActItmIdt=134640 (accessed August 2009).

[92] "Godsdienstles openbare school: schooldirecteuren willen behoefte ouders honoreren" (Religious education in public schools: school directors are willing to honour parents' needs), available at http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/?ActItmIdt=143633 (accessed August 2009).

[93] Later, however, it was decided by the Stichting Openbaar Basisonderwijs Westelijke Tuinsteden (Western Suburb Foundation of Public Schools for Primary Education), to which the concerned schools belong, that a citywide approach would be pursued, which means that the desirability and the modalities of the introduction of Islamic education would be explored for the whole of Amsterdam, before individual schools start to develop and offer such courses. In the meantime, Marcouch has taken the initiative of doing a survey into the desires of Islamic education in public schools among parents in Slotervaart. See also "Over Onderwijs" (About education), *Vos abb* magazine 11(4) (9 October 2009), pp. 10–11.

Finally, in Slotervaart, there are also two Islamic faith-based boys' boarding schools, where pupils attend classes during the day in one of the submunicipality's schools. They live at the boarding school's residence where they receive supervision and assistance with homework. At the weekend, they usually go home. These boarding schools are attended by pupils mostly from a Turkish background from all over the Netherlands, with the majority from greater Amsterdam.[94]

5.4 Initiatives to Improve Education in Slotervaart

The book *Onzichtbare ouders; de buurt van Mohammed B*[95] (Invisible Parents; the Neighbourhood of Mohammed B) was an investigation into the lives of pupils in Slotervaart by the journalist Margalith Kleijweg that appeared in 2005. Kleijweg followed the pupils of a VMBO class in Slotervaart for a year and visited their families. She observed that most Moroccan and Turkish parents had limited involvement in their children's school careers, because of their isolation from Dutch society. She argued for better connections between the schools, youth welfare organisations and services, and the pupils' parents. She suggested that teachers and welfare workers should pay home visits, and parents should be required to attend parents' meetings at school.

There are indications that these recommendations have been taken seriously, as initiatives have been developed to reach pupils and their parents outside the school gates. Compulsory education officers no longer sit in the office of the submunicipality but in the schools and pay home visits when children are absent without a clear reason. In 2008, a pilot project called "8-to-8 coaches" started offering mentors whose job was to coach 144 at-risk youths on daily discipline. They tutor and supervise their pupils from 8 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock at night. The 144 youths in the pilot include 100 from Moroccan backgrounds and seven native Dutch youngsters; ten are girls.[96] The costs are about €8,000 per pupil per year.[97] The first results are promising; boys and girls report that they feel more in control of their lives and their future, and all parents but two support the project. It is anticipated that in 2009, 250 youngsters would get an 8-to-8 coach, including some in other submunicipalities.[98]

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[94] A tutor of one of the boarding schools agreed to be interviewed for the At Home in Europe Project research, but was stopped by one of his principals. The tutor explained that because of negative experiences with the press in recent years, the school had closed itself off from researchers and journalists.

[95] Mohammed B. was convicted of killing the film-maker Theo van Gogh in 2004. He was born in Slotervaart Overtoomse Veld.

[96] See http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/actueel/nieuwsbrieven_en/nieuwsbrieven/nieuws_van_ dagelijks_1/3_juli_2008?ActItmIdt=134529 [[accessed March 2009).

[97] See http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/actueel/nieuwsbrieven_en/nieuwsbrieven/nieuws_van_ dagelijks_1/10_juli_2008?ActItmIdt=135359 (accessed March 2009).

[98] See http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/actueel/nieuwsbrieven_en/nieuwsbrieven/nieuws_van_ dagelijks_1/3_juli_2008?ActItmIdt=134529 [[accessed March 2009).

The SIP (Social Investment Programme) is a more general welfare programme of the submunicipality that focuses on social problems in the neighbourhood of Overtoomse Veld, but has the same philosophy: the officers visit families at home, investigate what the problems are and try to help people to find solutions, by just listening, by referring them to the right services, or by stimulating them to take up schooling or a job. Helping families with upbringing and educational problems is part of their work.

There are also some interesting initiatives that aim to help pupils from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to widen their perspectives. In Slotervaart, the Weekend Academy organises activities such as homework supervision, social skills training and leisure activities for students aged 9–16 years old. The project Campus New West (the project does not only run in Slotervaart but also in the other submunicipalities that together form the *Westelijke Tuinsteden*, the western suburbs) brings pupils aged 8–16 years old into contact with the business sector. The objective is to show pupils the variety of occupations they can choose from, and make them aware of the qualifications needed for different professions. The aim is to enable them to make better informed education choices, and in so doing have greater opportunities in the labour market. More than 200 companies participate in the project, for instance by offering one-day internships, practical assignments, or mentors and coaches. In 2007, more than 6,000 pupils were reached.[99]

The White Tulip Foundation (Stichting de Witte Tulp) is a private initiative. It was founded in 1997 by a group of university students from ethnic minorities. The foundation aims to support and stimulate pupils in difficult socio-economic circumstances and their families and teachers by offering pedagogical counselling to help enhance their problem-solving capacities. The volunteers belong to the target group (mostly students from ethnic minorities) and this appears to work very well: they understand the problems, and act as inspiring role models for the pupils involved.[100]

Finally, Marcouch himself has been very active in stimulating pupils to take their chances and in encouraging parents to actively engage in their children's educational careers, for instance by attending consulting hours at school.[101]

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[99] Campus nieuw west" (Campus New West), available at http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/wonen_en/onderwijs/campus_nieuw_west (accessed June 2008).

[100] See also M. Crul, *Succes maakt succesvol. Leerlingbegeleiding in het voortgezet onderwijs door Turkse en Marokkaanse studenten (Success breeds success. Moroccan and Turkish Student Mentors in Dutch secondary education),* Amsterdam, Spinhuis, 2001, on the importance of this approach.

[101] See http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/actueel/nieuwsbrieven_en/nieuwsbrieven/nieuws_van_ dagelijks_1/16_mei_2008?ActItmIdt=127831(accessed March 2009).

6. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EMPLOYMENT

Participation in the labour market remains at the core of economic integration, which requires opportunities not only for employment, but employment in the mainstream labour market and in jobs that are commensurate with an individual's skills and qualifications.

This chapter begins with an overview of the labour market conditions in Amsterdam in general and Slotervaart in particular. It then examines evidence from the Foundations and other research about the labour market experiences of Muslims in terms of employment rates and unemployment levels before looking at experiences of discrimination as one potential barrier to such participation. The final section highlights some of the policies that aim to promote improved labour market participation by women and young people.

In Amsterdam, the numbers of those in employment have increased enormously in the last few years, particularly from 2005.[102] In 2007, Amsterdam's economic growth was 3 per cent, similar to the national average.[103] Employment particularly increased in the commercial services sector, such as the legal profession, the cleaning sector and employment recruitment services. Other growth sectors were education, financial services, and the hotel and catering industry. However, the first effects of the global financial and economic crisis became visible soon afterwards. The Netherlands has an open economy, meaning that global changes have a significant impact. This holds also for the city of Amsterdam, which because of the port, the international airport of Schiphol and international companies is all the more vulnerable.[104] The portion of non-working people looking for employment rose from 6.7 per cent to 7.1 per cent in the first half of 2008.[105] Throughout the whole of 2008, however, employment particularly in the hotel and catering sector, education and commercial services still increased. Even in the financial sector, employment rose slightly in 2008. Only in the last quarter of 2008 did employment rates start to fall. It was expected that employed numbers in Amsterdam in 2009 would decrease by 12,500 jobs and that in 2010

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[102] Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics, Factsheet economic recession June 2009, available at http://www.amsterdamconjunctuur.nl/OS.Conjunctuur/upload/Fact%20sheets/920-0352FactSheetDEF2.pdf, p. 11 (accessed August 2009).

[103] Available on the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/feitenencijfers/24089/ (accessed August 2009).

[104] Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics, Factsheet economic recession June 2009, http://www.amsterdamconjunctuur.nl/OS.Conjunctuur/upload/Fact%20sheets/920-0352FactSh eetDEF2.pdf, p. 4 (accessed August 2009).

[105] http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/themas/werkinkomeneneconomie/werkeninkomen/inleiding/70409

another 20,000 jobs would be lost. The industrial, transport and building sector, and the financial and commercial services are expected to be most severely affected.[106]

Despite its good economic development until quite recently, the Amsterdam purchasing power income is below the national average. In 2006, 19 per cent of the households in Amsterdam had to live on the minimum income (this is 110 per cent of the "absolute socially tolerable minimum" stipulated by law). The number of households that have to live on a minimum income for a prolonged period of time is still on the increase. These households often have debts (in 2002, 12 per cent of such households, in 2006 21 per cent). There are variations in the types of households at the greatest risk of having only a minimum income. In 2006 32 per cent of the Turkish households and 37 per cent of Moroccan households in Amsterdam lived on the minimum income compared with 13 per cent of native Dutch households.[107]

6.1   Muslims in the Labour Market

In the working-age population of Amsterdam (15–64-year-olds) the economic activity rate of people of Turkish (53 per cent) and Moroccan (51 per cent) backgrounds is significantly lower than that of the native Dutch (78 per cent) and people from Surinamese and Antillean backgrounds (67 per cent). When disaggregated for gender (Figure 2.), it becomes clear that women in the Turkish and Moroccan categories in particular have a low participation rate.

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[106] Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics, Factsheet economic recession June 2009, http://www.amsterdamconjunctuur.nl/OS.Conjunctuur/upload/Fact%20sheets/920-0352FactSheetDEF2.pdf, pp. 11–12 (accessed August 2009).

[107] Amsterdamse Armoedemonitor (Amsterdam Poverty Monitor) no. 10, December 2007, p. 5, table 1.3.4. Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/pdf/2007_armoedemonitor.pdf (accessed March 2009).

**Figure 2. Gross participation in the labour force,
by descent groups and gender, 2007**[108]
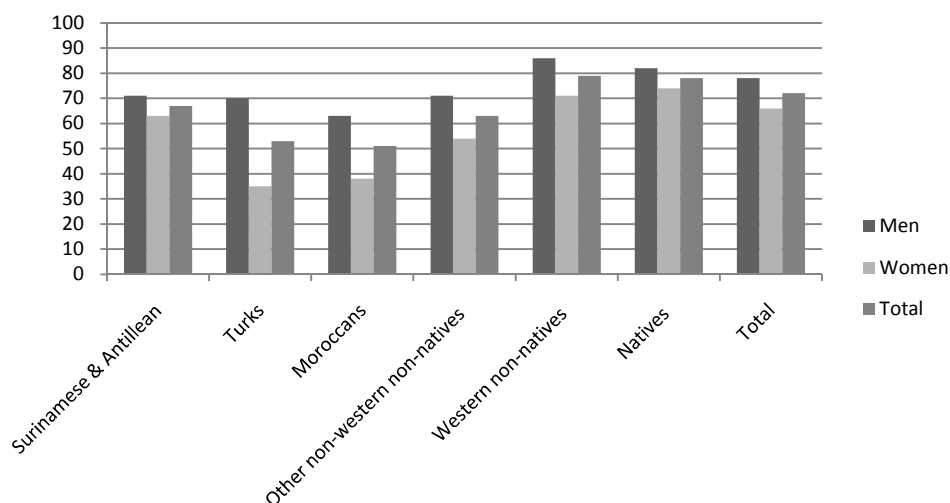
Source: Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics[109]

Of the unemployed labour force, 15 per cent is of Turkish background and 20 per cent is of Moroccan. The percentage is slightly higher for women than for men: 20 per cent of unemployed women are of Turkish background and 23 per cent are of Moroccan background.

In 2007 Slotervaart had just over 30,000 economically active residents. There were 1,789 unemployed job-seekers, the largest groups being Moroccan (495), native Dutch (385) and Turkish (280). Unemployment correlates strongly with lack of educational qualifications. Of the 1,789 unemployed job-seekers 1,181 had no basic qualifications, meaning that they only had education at primary school or preparatory vocational training level (VMBO).

Perhaps in recognition of the importance of qualifications and education as a prerequisite for labour-market participation, young people from Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds are more likely than native Dutch to take courses that have a more direct connection to employment. The second-generation Turkish and Moroccan

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[108]   Available on the website of the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/grafiek/7424/ (accessed October 2009).

[109]   Available at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/pdf/2010_ob_arbeid_6.pdf under table 1.2.

students living in Amsterdam and Rotterdam are over-represented in economics and law courses, and under-represented in the arts and languages.[110]

A significant number of Dutch Turks and increasing numbers of Moroccans choose to be entrepreneurs.[111] There are no data available for Amsterdam, but in the Netherlands in 2006 13.5 per cent of people of Turkish background in the labour force were entrepreneurs.[112] For the native Dutch, this percentage was 11.5 per cent, and for the people of Moroccan descent, 7 per cent. While the first generation was and is mainly active in the retail trade, second-generation entrepreneurs more often start a business offering commercial services, and increasingly so in more technologically advanced and modern sectors, such as the management, communication and software services sectors. In these respects, second-generation entrepreneurs are more comparable with native entrepreneurs than with the first generation.[113] Another study revealed that entrepreneurs belonging to second-generation ethnic minorities use formal networks for obtaining funding, information and/or personnel more often than the first generation. Formal networks do not replace informal ones, however, but overlap and complement each other. These entrepreneurs, depending on what they are looking for, choose those networks and contacts that are most able to meet their needs, and in this way they profit from both types of networks. The study concludes that such a mixed affiliation leads to greater chances of succeeding as an entrepreneur.[114]

A national study considering discrimination in the labour market revealed that members of ethnic minorities sometimes avoid sectors or enterprises in which they think ethnic minorities have difficulties entering or in which they expect more discrimination than elsewhere. These may include sectors in which there is direct contact with mostly Dutch clients.[115]

6.2   Discrimination in the Labour Market

In 2007, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research published the *Discrimination Monitor*,[116] a study of the character and scope of discrimination against non-western minorities in the Dutch labour market, covering instances of both discrimination and the perception of discrimination. It found that discrimination (from potential

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[110]   Crul et al., "De tweede generatie".

[111]   *Jaarrapport integratie 2007.*

[112]   *Jaarrapport integratie 2007.*

[113]   *Jaarrapport integratie 2007.*

[114]   R. Kloosterman, J. van der Leun and J. Rath, "Inleiding" (Introduction), *Migrantenstudies* 23(3) (2007), pp. 72–75.

[115]   Iris Andriessen, Jaco Dagevos, Eline Nievers and Igor Boog, *Discriminatiemonitor niet westerse allochtonen op de arbeidsmarkt (Discrimination Monitor on non-western ethnic minorities in the labour market),* The Hague, SCP, 2007 (hereafter Andriessen et al., *Discriminatiemonitor*).

[116]   Andriessen et al., *Discriminatiemonitor.*

employers) impedes the access of minorities to the labour market and their ability to secure permanent employment. Moroccans were identified as the group facing the greatest levels of discrimination. This phenomenon has not arisen in the last few years; in the 1980s Moroccans were systematically in the lowest bracket of employees sought by employers. However, discrimination seems less of a barrier to the labour market for women than men. It also seems to have less influence on the opportunities of non-western ethnic minorities when they are already in employment: they generally have equal opportunities for promotion and have salaries equal to native Dutch employees in the same positions.[117]

Looking at the perception of discrimination among people of non-western ethnic minorities, the *Discrimination Monitor* reported that approximately 20 per cent of Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans without a job believed that they had less chance of finding work than their indigenous counterparts. Thus, 80 per cent believed that there were equal opportunities in the labour market. Employees belonging to non-western minorities, however, often indicated that they had to do more to prove themselves and that they were watched more closely than their native Dutch colleagues. They felt that they constantly had to demonstrate that they did not fit the (unfavourable) stereotypical image of their group. These results are consistent with the result from the Foundations questionnaire in which 25 per cent of Muslim respondents who faced discrimination in employment said this was because of their ethnicity, while a smaller proportion, of 12.5 per cent, said the discrimination was based on their religion. The survey results are further consistent with the SCP findings that those in employment are less likely to report discrimination than those looking for employment. In the Foundations survey only 6.5 per cent of the Muslims and 4.2 per cent of the non-Muslims felt that they had been discriminated against. For those in employment, ethnicity was more relevant than religion, while most Muslims concerned thought that they had been discriminated against for other reasons.

Discrimination, when looking for employment or in the workplace, was raised in a focus group discussion with a small sample of young Muslim men from Slotervaart. Most had heard about instances of discrimination suffered by others, yet believed that if one presented oneself with pride and self-respect and if one respected the other then there should not be a problem finding a job. A young female, who was a certified accountant, said that she was not hired time and again because she wore a headscarf; she stated that she was not able to find employment even after she offered to take off her scarf during work. Others thought that they were not invited for job interviews because of their home address. One mother said that she had two sons, one of whom was living in an affluent neighbourhood in Amsterdam, while the other one lived with her in Slotervaart. She said that the one living in the affluent neighbourhood had no problems finding a job, whereas the son living with her was rarely invited for a job interview. In spite of this, most participants were not in favour of applying for jobs

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[117] Andriessen et al., *Discriminatiemonitor.*

anonymously: It was felt that people should be accepted as they are and because of their capabilities without being judged on the basis of their name or address.

The Anti-discrimination Bureaux (ADBs) and the Equal Treatment Commission (Commissie Gelijke Behandeling, CGB) are the main agencies in the Netherlands where citizens can take complaints about discrimination. In 2007, 10 per cent of the discrimination cases related to wearing a headscarf. Other cases, in which religious discrimination was cited, were based on visible signs of faith such as the presence of a beard and the refusal to shake hands with people of the opposite sex.[118] Complaints to the Anti-Discrimination Bureau or the Equal Treatment Commission appear to be quite effective. In many cases, candidates for a job who complained that they had been discriminated against, for instance because of wearing a headscarf, were offered employment after mediation by the Bureau or the Commission.[119]

The Foundations questionnaire asked respondents about the extent to which they thought that employers respected the religious customs of their employees. Most respondents, both Muslim (53.3 per cent) and non-Muslim (58.5 per cent), felt that there was sufficient respect for different religious customs in the workplace. There is, however, also a relatively large percentage of people who answered that they do not know (Figure 3.).

Figure 3. To what extent do you think employers respect different religious customs?
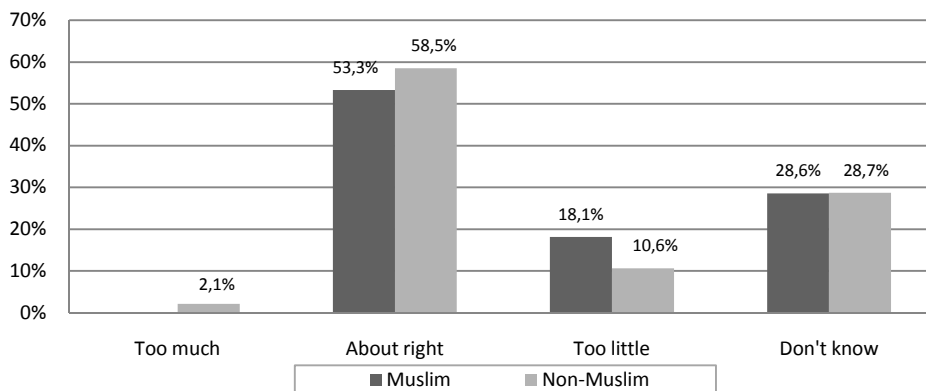
Source: Open Society Foundations

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[118] Stichting Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam, *Jaarverslag 2006/2007* (*Annual Report 2006/2007*), Amsterdam, Stichting Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam, 2007, available at http://www.meldpunt-amsterdam.nl/docs/Jaarverslag%2006-07.pdf (accessed August 2009).

[119] *Ibid.*

6.3 Local Policies to Promote Employment Opportunities for Muslims

There is no local policy that explicitly focuses on the promotion of employment opportunities for Muslims as a group, but policies that are directed towards youth labour market participation or aim to promote opportunities for women may target categories of the Muslim population, as well.

Fighting youth unemployment is a priority of the Amsterdam city council and it has signed a contract with the submunicipalities to take action together.[120] In Slotervaart, this has resulted in an innovative project consisting of personal coaching of at-risk youths[121] by the 8-to-8 coaches mentioned in Chapter 5.4. Other initiatives set up to fight youth unemployment include the promotion of networking between schools and (local) businesses, in order to enhance students' chances to obtain apprenticeships and jobs. The sports company Nike, for instance, is involved in a marketing project with a group of pupils of the Calvijn Met Junior College. The initiative enabled the pupils to gain knowledge about working for such a company as well as providing Nike with an opportunity to have contact with a group of potential employees and collaborators.[122]

In Slotervaart, a women's centre called Vlam (Flame) opened in 2008, which aims to support women in their search for education and/or a job by offering information, empowerment courses and individual career counselling. In spring 2008, the submunicipality organised a job market in collaboration with Nisa for Nisa, a local women's organisation founded by a Dutch Moroccan woman in 2000. Over the years it has become an important partner for the submunicipality because of its network among Moroccan (and to a lesser extent Turkish) women in Slotervaart. The job market was held in the Nisa for Nisa headquarters where potential employers such as the police and the municipal transport company were present. While the idea to approach the target group as closely as possible was undoubtedly good, the attendance rate was not very high.[123] This may reflect that fact that the job market was beyond the reach of Moroccan women who have little experience of the labour market, while others who are closer to the labour market do not need this kind of initiative as they are able to find their own way into employment.

Another initiative by the submunicipality that takes a personal approach and contacts the target group in their living environment is the SIP. This programme is especially designed for the neighbourhood of Overtoomse Veld. All families in this

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[120] The text is available at http://www.amsterdam.nl/aspx/download.aspx?file=/contents/pages/ 10580/definitievetekstpa11april2006.pdf (accessed August 2009).

[121] For instance because they have dropped out of school, have no job and have been involved in vandalism or petty crime.

[122] http://www.calvijnmetjuniorcollege.nl/nieuws/nieuws_algemeen/conceptnieuws_algemeen /archief_2009/archief_2009_jan_maart.php (accessed August 2009).

[123] Researcher's personal observation.

neighbourhood are approached by a team of two counsellors who try to analyse the nature of the problems faced by these families. If necessary, they are referred to other services, such as the Centre for Work and Income (CWI), the Child Welfare Service or a housing association. The SIP has contracts with different services, so that people do not have to wait to be helped. Problems related to work and income are among the most prominent encountered. A common barrier for accessing employment is that the requirements for even some basic jobs are currently quite high. A cleaning job, for instance, requires education at MBO level, and fairly advanced Dutch language competence is required for much work even where there is in fact almost no contact with other people,. The lack of child care is also identified as a problem. Day-care centres for children often have long waiting lists, which make it difficult for many women to accept paid work.[124]

For those who want to follow a Dutch language course or who are required by law to learn Dutch,[125] each submunicipality has a centre (*Taalpunt*) that offers information and organises course enrolment. As the Service for Social Development (DMO) is also involved in the placing of candidates and there are several organisations that actually offer the language courses, the organisation is quite bureaucratic and slow. In focus groups, participants complained that the proficiency levels of the people taking a course in one class were not sufficiently homogeneous or that the level of the course in which they had been enrolled had been too advanced or not advanced enough.

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[124] Interview Social Investment Programme (SIP) Overtoomse Veld, March 2008.

[125] Dutch law requires that all new immigrants between 17 and 65 years old from outside the EU take Dutch language courses and pass an integration exam. Since a change of law in 2006, people who have lived in the Netherlands for a long time already, but do not have a certificate demonstrating that they have sufficient mastery of the Dutch language and a sufficient knowledge of Dutch society, have to take a language course and an integration exam. The third category obliged to take a course are religious professionals, such as imams and priests.

7. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HOUSING

Housing is a critical problem in Amsterdam. There are long waiting lists for social housing; in 2006, the average qualifying period for social housing was nine years,[126] and house prices are among the highest in the Netherlands. This has consequences for the movement of different groups of urban residents and has contributed to the characteristics of the Amsterdam housing stock and policies which have led to the current situation of segregation in certain parts of Amsterdam, such as Slotervaart.

This chapter begins by looking at the perception of Muslim respondents in the Foundations research of their housing situation: this includes the nature of their housing tenure, the length of time they have lived in their local area and reasons given for living there. It also draws on other local research on housing satisfaction. The chapter then focuses on policies of urban renewal that have been a significant feature of housing and urban policy in Amsterdam for the past few years. There is a focus on respondents' perceptions and experiences of these policies.

7.1 Muslims' Perceptions of Their Housing Situation

Figure 4. shows that the majority of the respondents to the Foundations questionnaire, 50 per cent of non-Muslims and 65.1 per cent of Muslims, rent their houses from a social housing arrangement. Non-Muslims more often than Muslims own their house (with a mortgage) or rent from a private landlord. The difference between the percentage of non-Muslims and Muslims renting from a private landlord is quite large (13.8 per cent compared with 3.8 per cent). The reasons for this are unexplored and this area would benefit from further research. It could, for instance, be that this is because private landlords may not want Muslims or ethnic minorities as their tenants, or because Muslims or ethnic minorities do not form part of the network in which these houses are distributed.

Most respondents have lived in Slotervaart between 11 and 20 years and no Muslims have lived in Slotervaart for more than 30 years (Figure 5), which confirms the general pattern of migration and settlement described above. An important reason for both Muslims and non-Muslims moving here was the availability of social housing, while for non-Muslims the closeness to their work was an important reason, too, as is shown by Figure 6.

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[126] Available on the Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics website at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/feitenencijfers/24134/ (accessed August 2009).

Figure 4. Do you own or rent your home, or have another arrangement?
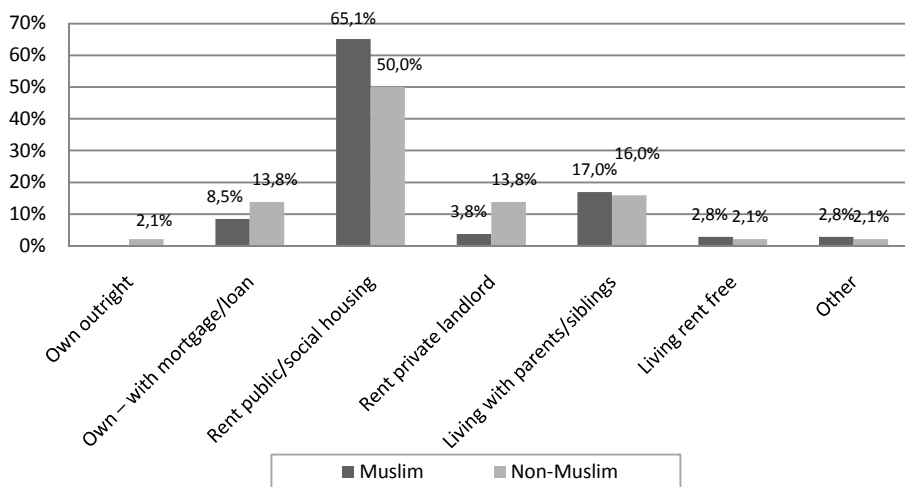
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 5. How many years have you lived in this local area?
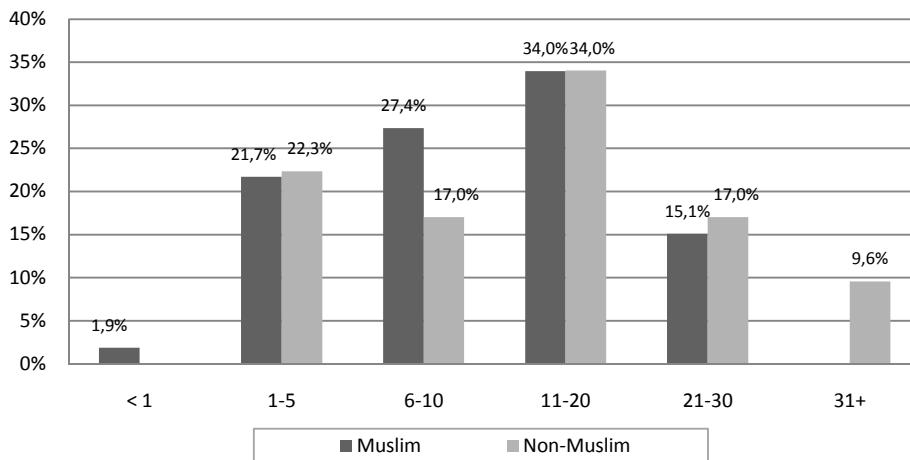
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 6. What is your main reason for moving to or living in this area?

Source: Open Society Foundations

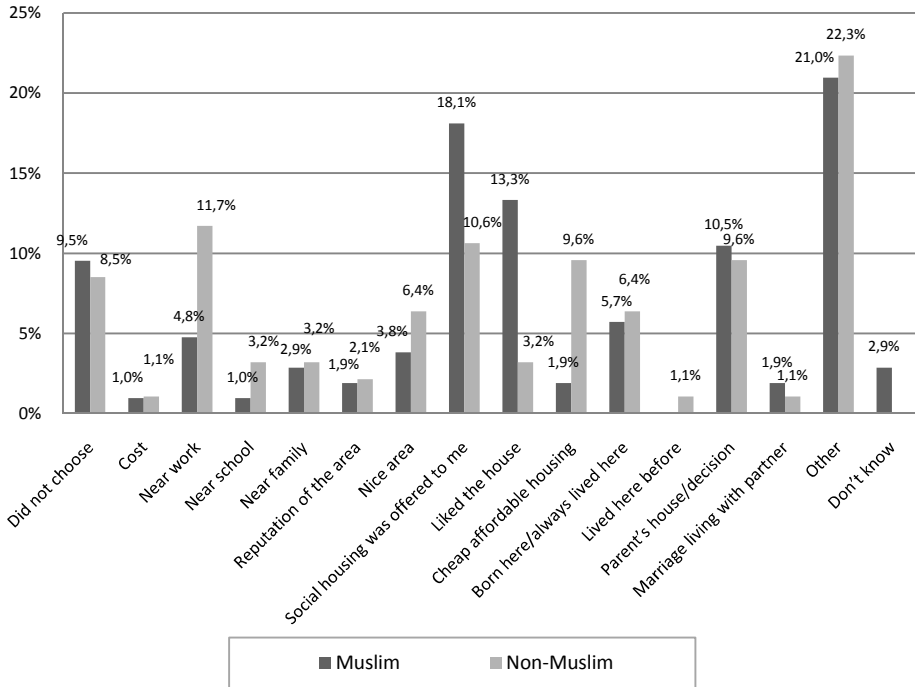A survey by the Housing Service of the Municipality (Dienst Wonen) showed that inhabitants of Slotervaart were satisfied with their house more than the average (score 7.4 compared with the average of 7.2, on a scale from 0 to 10), while they were below average satisfied with their neighbourhood (6.4 compared with the average of 7.1).[127] Participants in the Foundations focus groups showed themselves to be fairly satisfied with their homes. What they did not like, however, was the ethnic concentration, the fact that the majority of them lived in a neighbourhood with almost no Dutch people. This holds true for both men and women, and young and older residents. The reasons for this dissatisfaction may differ. Men, for instance, said that there were virtually no Dutch people around with whom to communicate about problems of security, for instance, while women were mainly concerned with the consequences for the future of their children. People said that they had seen the neighbourhood changing when the Dutch moved out, and thought that this was not a good development. The overall

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[127] See the yearbook of the Amsterdam Research and Statistics Department, *Amsterdam in cijfers 2007* (Amsterdam in figures 2007), chapter 14, p. 384, available at http://www.os.amsterdam.nl/pdf/2007_jaarboek_hoofdstuk_14.pdf (accessed August 2009) (hereafter Jaarboek 2007).

sentiment was that people felt less connected to Dutch society by the progressive segregation.

7.2   Policies of Urban Renewal in Slotervaart

To counter, among other things, the process of segregation described above, at the end of the 1990s a large programme for urban renewal was started in the *Westelijke Tuinsteden* (the western suburbs).

The municipality has delegated the responsibility of this programme to the four submunicipalities concerned – Osdorp, Geuzenveld, Bos en Lommer and Slotervaart – in collaboration with agencies of the central city and the housing corporations concerned. Since 2007 the housing corporations have taken on more responsibilities for addressing the renewal plans. They must adhere to strict rules concerning the participation of inhabitants in the process and this includes a requirement that inhabitants should be consulted about renewal plans. The submunicipality council has to approve of every part of every plan, and it does not do so before the inhabitants and other parties concerned have had their say.[128]

The programme aims to improve the housing and living conditions in the western suburbs by implementing infrastructural, social and economic measures. The infrastructural measures include the demolition or renovation of apartment buildings and the construction of new houses. One of the objectives is to diversify the social composition of the population by diversifying the housing stock, to attract middle-class (Dutch) households. Such diversification implies that after the renewal programme has been accomplished, not all households currently living in cheap social housing schemes in these areas can return, first, because the rent becomes higher after renovation; and second, because often there will be less social housing, as part will be high-rent housing and part will be for sale. People who have to move because of urban renewal are given priority when applying for housing elsewhere in Amsterdam. However, there are growing numbers of people in this position in Amsterdam. The evidence of earlier urban renewal schemes elsewhere in Amsterdam suggests that these programmes lead to a relocation of very poor households, mainly belonging to ethnic minorities, from one submunicipality to another. They usually leave the submunicipality where urban renewal is taking place to go to another submunicipality where this is not yet the case, and are obliged to move on when urban renewal programmes are reaching their new area of residence.[129] In this way, a migration current of very poor groups can be seen from Watergraafsmeer, to the Indische Buurt, to Bos en Lommer and from there to Slotervaart. Those leaving Slotervaart may yet move on to Geuzenveld.[130] Officials in

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[128]   See the Notitie Bewonersparticipatie (Inhabitants' Participation Policy document), available at http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/stedelijke/notitie (accessed August 2009).

[129]   Foundations interview, February 2008.

[130]   Foundations interview, February 2008.

the municipalities and submunicipalities are aware of this problem. A long-term perspective is required to solve this problem. Education will be a very important tool to help these very poor groups improve their position.[131]

The urban renewal projects in Slotervaart centre on three neighbourhoods: Overtoomse Veld, Lelylaan and its vicinity, and Delflandplein/Staalmanplein. These are all in the area of current ethnic concentration. The high media and public profile of Slotervaart has led to the start date for the programme being brought forward and the renewal programme is due to be completed by 2013.[132]

The urban renewal programme is accompanied by an entire programme of information dissemination: inhabitants are personally approached to make an inventory of their needs and priorities; public meetings are held in which inhabitants can give their opinion; and the process of renovation is monitored by the housing corporations. However, many participants in the Foundations focus groups appeared dissatisfied by the consultation process and the urban renewal programme. Some did not understand the need for the renovation or demolition of their homes: they thought the quality was still good. Others expressed concern about their treatment in the regeneration process. One participant stated that the housing corporation and the contractors acted at will, renovating a floor and a ceiling in some homes while in his house they only renovated the floor. He interpreted this as an act of discrimination against him because he is Moroccan.

The discussions in the focus groups suggest poor communication between the Muslim residents, the housing corporations and the contractors. Some of this may be due to difficulties in communication in the Dutch language and a lack of understanding of the housing system. The evidence from the focus groups, however, also suggests tensions between the multiple aims of this renewal programme. For the housing corporations and the contractors concerned, this is primarily an infrastructural project, where good communication with the inhabitants is not a priority. For the submunicipality, however, this is also a programme with a social objective, and in order to achieve positive social effects, good communication with the inhabitants is crucial.

[131] Foundations interview, February 2008.
[132] Foundations interview with submunicipality, February 2008.

8. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HEALTH

Access to adequate health care is important for social inclusion. Long-term illness affects people's opportunities for economic and social participation, reducing employment opportunities and income levels which in turn affect people's opportunities for social and leisure activities. This chapter begins with an overview of the data on the health status of residents of Amsterdam, noting areas where health problems of those of Moroccan or Turkish descent differ significantly from the general Amsterdam population. It then focuses on the health care that is available in Amsterdam and particularly in Slotervaart, before exploring the experiences of health and social care reported by Muslim respondents to the Foundations survey. The final section highlights some of the initiatives that have been developed to improve the health-care services delivered in areas with significant Muslim populations in Amsterdam.

8.1 The Health Status of Muslims in Amsterdam

The Amsterdam Health Monitor[133] is a four-yearly survey into the health status of the Amsterdam population, the last one in 2004. It says that Amsterdam citizens of Turkish and Moroccan descent suffer from diabetes, obesity and mental depression more than native Dutch. By contrast, Turkish and Moroccan residents of Amsterdam have a lower risk than others of suffering high blood pressure or elevated cholesterol levels. While 3.5 per cent of the general population is diagnosed with diabetes, the figure for people of Turkish descent is 6.1 per cent and for people of Moroccan descent 8.7 per cent. While 45 per cent of all Amsterdam residents are overweight, for Moroccans this rises to 57 per cent and for people from Turkish descent 66 per cent. The incidence of being overweight and obesity is particularly high for women of Turkish and Moroccan descent.

The Amsterdam Health Monitor reports that almost one-third of the adult population in Amsterdam suffers from depression or anxiety disorders. People of Turkish and Moroccan descent suffer particularly from serious depression and/or anxiety disorders compared with the native Dutch.[134] Despite this they are less likely to use anti-depressant medication. The report raises the question of why such modern medications, when they are relatively cheap and effective, are prescribed less frequently

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[133] Gemeente Amsterdam, *Amsterdamse Gezondheidsmonitor 2004 (Amsterdam Health Monitor 2004)*, Amsterdam, 2004, available at http://www.gezond.amsterdam.nl/GetDocument.aspx?DocumentID=2423&name=Gezond-zijn-en-gezond-leven-in-Amsterdam (accessed August 2009) (hereafter Amsterdam Health Monitor 2004).

[134] Amsterdam Health Monitor 2004, p. 10.

for these groups. It suggests that this may be a sign that the health-care system does not adequately function for these groups.[135]

Health problems common to older people, such as heart diseases and problems related to mobility, occur at the same rate among native Dutch and people of Moroccan and Turkish descent. The latter, however, are more likely than native Dutch to say that they are hampered in their daily functioning by these diseases. The Amsterdam Health Monitor states that the reasons for this difference should be further investigated, and suggests that it may be because people of Turkish and Moroccan descent may not make the best use of support services, for instance because of ignorance about the existence of facilities, or because of misunderstanding or the lack of communication between the clients and service providers.

8.2 Health Facilities in Amsterdam and Slotervaart and Their Use by Muslims

There are 5.7 family doctors per 10,000 inhabitants in Amsterdam (in Slotervaart 3.9), and 1.1 dispensaries per 10,000 inhabitants in both Amsterdam and Slotervaart.[136] It appears that people of Turkish (47 per cent) and Moroccan (51 per cent) descent visit their family doctor more frequently than native Dutch (37 per cent). There are no significant differences between the categories in visits paid to medical specialists.[137]

Amsterdam has seven hospitals, two of which are academic medical centres. In Slotervaart, there are two general hospitals which serve Amsterdam West as a whole. The Sint Lucas Andreas hospital is an inter-confessional hospital, created from a merger between the Catholic Sint Lucas hospital and the Protestant Andreas hospital. Here 40 per cent of the patients and a significant percentage of the staff are Muslim. In 2005 the hospital became the first in the Netherlands to serve certified halal meals. The hospital has a Christian chapel and an Islamic prayer room. None of the seven spiritual counsellors is Muslim. However, if a patient wants to see an imam, one is brought in from outside the hospital.[138]

The other general hospital is the Slotervaart hospital. When the hospital was on the verge of bankruptcy in 2006, it was taken over by Meromi Holding BV and became the first privatised, commercially owned hospital in the Netherlands. The director is a woman of Turkish descent, Aysel Erbudak. The hospital has a prayer room with washing facilities for Muslims. The hospital employs a humanist counsellor, a Roman Catholic priest and a Protestant pastor. An imam was dismissed in 2007 in a bid to reduce costs. It seems, however, that the polarised atmosphere of the current public

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[135] Amsterdam Health Monitor 2004, p. 16.

[136] See http://www.stadstat.osamsterdam.nl/monitor.mpl?thema=zo&cache_version=5 (hereafter *Jaarrapport integratie 2007*).

[137] Amsterdam Health Monitor 2004.

[138] The hospital's website is at http://www.lucasandreasziekenhuis.nl/ (accessed August 2009).

debate on Islam in the Netherlands was also a contributing factor, since the management did not want to run the risk of the hospital being labelled an Islamic or a Muslim hospital.[139] On the positive side, serious attention is paid to cultural and language barriers that clients of non-western ethnic minorities may face in their contact with doctors and nurses. For instance, there are special consulting hours for Moroccan diabetes patients, led by a Moroccan nurse and during Ramadan Muslim patients are not simply told that they should not fast. Because it is recognised that fasting with the family is very important to many Muslims, which means that patients will not follow recommendations not to fast, advice is given on how to participate in Ramadan in a responsible way.[140]

Aside from the regular centres for mental health care (Regional Institute for Ambulatory Mental Health Care, RIAGG) with six branches in Amsterdam, a recent initiative called I-Psy merits attention. I-Psy is a centre for intercultural psychiatry whose Amsterdam branch is situated in Slotervaart. It offers specialised and easily accessible help to people with psychological and/or psychiatric problems that often are related to migration and changes in culture, social relations and living circumstances. The specialists often belong to ethnic minorities themselves and clients have the opportunity to receive services in their mother tongue, such as Turkish, Arab, Berber, English or French. The treatments aim to be respectful of the cultural background and religious convictions of the clients, for instance if people do not want to be assisted by specialists from the opposite sex for religious reasons. Group sessions are often single-sex for the same reason. There is special attention given to the specific psychological issues faced by Moroccan and Turkish people who come to the Netherlands to marry someone of Moroccan or Turkish descent who was been born and/or raised in the Netherlands, and subsequent problems related to raising children in a bicultural setting.[141]

8.3   Experiences of Muslims in Using Health Care and Social Services

The Foundations questionnaire asked about the extent to which respondents were satisfied by the health services they use. The results (Figure 7.) indicate that a large majority of both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents are satisfied to very satisfied.

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[139] Foundations interview, March 2008.

[140] http://www.slotervaartziekenhuis.nl/diabetes/DiabetesenRamadan/tabid/1472/language/nl-NL/Default.aspx (accessed August 2009).

[141] The initiative maintains a website at http://www.i-psy.nl (accessed August 2009).

Figure 7. How satisfied are you with health services?
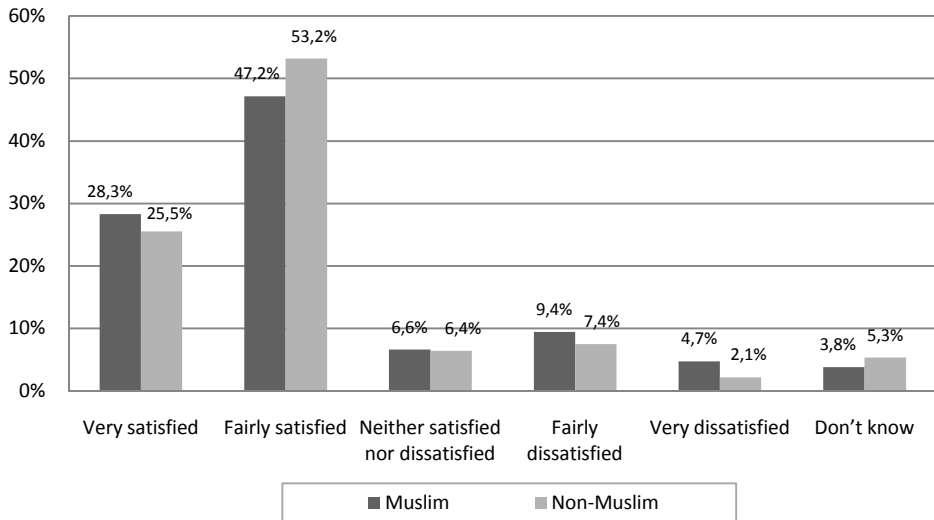
Source: Open Society Foundations

Most people (67 per cent of the Muslims and 55.3 per cent of the non-Muslims) also feel that hospitals do enough to respect the customs of people belonging to different religions (Figure 8). Only a small number (5.7 per cent of the Muslims and 4.3 per cent of the non-Muslims) think they do too little.

Figure 8. To what extent do you think that hospitals and medical clinics respect different religious customs?
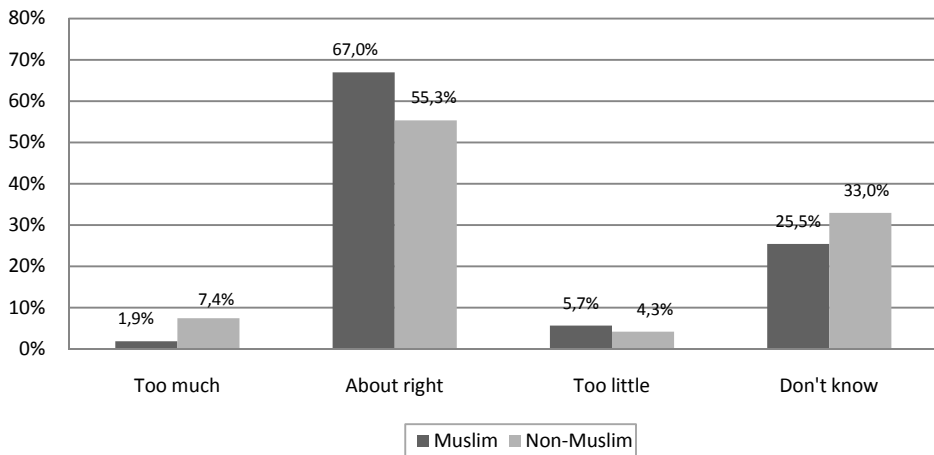
Source: Open Society Foundations

Notwithstanding this generally positive appreciation of the health services by Muslims, people belonging to ethnic minorities do experience difficulties in accessing appropriate treatment, in particular for diagnosis, or in having underlying problems recognised. Thus, while older people in particular responded that they are satisfied by Dutch health care, because the facilities they have here would not be available to them in Morocco or Turkey, further questions about whether they feel understood and taken seriously can reveal other stories. Language problems and cultural aspects of health and illness appear to cause much misunderstanding between clients of Turkish and Moroccan descent and the doctors.[142] This could be one of the reasons why ethnic minorities pay a greater number of visits to family doctors compared with native Dutch: patients unable to get the care they are looking for during their first visit may need to return several times as they continue to struggle with the same symptoms, but this issue has not yet been researched. The fact that many family doctors are overburdened with clients does not help resolve communication problems. Even when people have lived in the Netherlands for a long time and speak Dutch very well, in times of serious illness, birth and death, they may prefer information in their mother tongue, an embedding of their experiences in the culture in which they grew up, and an understanding of their religious convictions and customs by the medical staff. These are all issues to be considered when evaluating the accessibility of Dutch health care to Muslims.

8.4   Local Policies to Improve Muslims' Access to Health Care

The current health-care policy of the municipality of Amsterdam is presented in "The Framework for Public Health Policy Amsterdam 2008–2011", entitled "All Amsterdam Citizens Healthy. Signals for a Vital City" (*Kadernota volksgezondheids-beleid Amsterdam 2008–2011, Alle Amsterdammers gezond. Signalen voor een vitale stad*).[143] The analysis of public-health problems in this report centres on people's socio-economic status, characterised by low incomes and bad living conditions, which is not favourable for developing and maintaining good health. Public-health policy in the coming years will therefore focus on these people.

In addition, there will be a focus on specific groups who are at particular risk. Concern about smoking has led to the targeting of Amsterdam citizens of Turkish descent in particular. Overweight and obese women of Turkish, Moroccan and Afro-Surinamese descent are also a specific target and efforts to tackle diabetes focus on people of Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese origin. Policies and activities on the prevention of psycho-social problems focus on youth and people from Turkish and Moroccan

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[142]   See also SCP, *Gezondheid en welzijn van allochtone ouderen* (Health and wellbeing of foreign-born elderly people), The Hague, SCP, 2004, p. 225: 61 per cent of Turkish elderly people and 53 per cent of Moroccan elderly people require language assistance when visiting their home doctor, most often provided by one of their children or their partner.

[143]   Amsterdam Health Monitor 2004.

backgrounds. For this, the GGD aims to collaborate with migrants' and religious organisations. The policy document also clearly states that the health and health-related behaviour and patterns of ethnic minorities should not be considered worse than those of other groups. Health policies directed towards different ethnic groups should be limited to specific diseases and to cases where there is a significant difference between those groups and the majority.

The Amsterdam Health Monitor takes a slightly broader perspective and calls for more made-to-measure work in the health-care sector, taking experience in diabetes, mental health care (Turkish and Moroccan people using less anti-depressant medication) and diseases of the elderly (Turkish and Moroccan people reporting more problems on that account because of their diagnoses) as a sign that the there may be inequalities in the Dutch health-care system that make it less effective for non-native Dutch patients.

The problem of language and culture is acknowledged by many in the regular health-care system, and some projects have been designed by the Municipal Health Service to counter it,[144] but it seems that organisations founded to work interculturally have important approaches to contribute. One of these is the Dutch Intercultural Care Counsellors' Foundation (Stichting Interculturele Zorgconsulenten Nederland, SIZIN). This organisation was founded in 2003 by a doctor of Turkish origin who previously worked for the Municipal Health Service. He observed, however, that the bureaucratic and formal approach of the health service did not work well for many migrant organisations, certainly not for those of the first generation. For instance, organisations had to pay for the information meetings the Municipal Health Service set up, which appeared a major hindrance, as they were not used to it and often did not know where and how to secure funding. SIZIN offers its information free to the migrant organisations, with sponsorship from organisations such as the Dutch Diabetes Association, the Heart Foundation and the Dutch Asthma Fund. Their meetings are low-profile, in a setting familiar to the target group, and refreshments are offered. People are approached in their mother tongue and with examples that are culturally relevant to them. SIZIN consultants may also act as an intermediary between family doctors and clients, and also organise information meetings for family doctors and other medical professionals working with people from ethnic minorities. SIZIN has explicitly chosen to directly support the clients who risk falling out of the regular Dutch health-care system because of cultural and/or language barriers by offering information to them, and this appears to be a highly effective and much needed approach in many instances.[145]

Another organisation is I-Psy, mentioned above. Although it only began its activities in Amsterdam in 2007, it has already received significant praise. The counsellors in the

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[144] For instance, an information film about diabetes directed at different ethnic minorities. The film's dialogue was spoken in the target groups' mother tongues, and much attention was devoted to the cultural background of the clients.

[145] Foundations interview, March 2008.

SIP of the Slotervaart submunicipality, for instance, have good contacts with I-Psy and prefer to send their clients there rather than to the regular RIAGG. In the latter case, a person would be placed on a long waiting list and once an appointment was set, a translator would often not be available. When SIP counsellors refer clients to I-Psy, they can be helped immediately and talk to the specialist in their mother tongue. As one women said, the service meant that she was finally able "to share her problems".

9.   EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: POLICING AND SECURITY

At the municipal level there are few data available on the presence of Muslims or ethnic minorities in the police force, nor on their sense of security and their views of policing, nor on their experiences as victims of crime or of the criminal justice system. Most of the available data do not differentiate between social categories and groups.

Amsterdam has the largest number of crimes per 1,000 inhabitants in the Netherlands.[146] From 2002 onwards, however, crime rates have fallen. The most frequent crimes are car break-ins (19 per cent), bicycle theft and vandalism (both 10 per cent). In 2006, security began to improve mainly as a consequence of the decrease of crime related to drug use and the drug trade, traffic incidents and violent crimes.[147] In Slotervaart, petty crime such as car break-ins and street theft are among the most frequent crimes, as is trouble caused by youth groups. Since 2006, however, both trouble and criminality have been on the decrease. This is, to a large extent, due to the heightened surveillance by the police and by street coaches (see below).[148]

9.1   Muslims in the Police Force

In 2007 and 2008, 12 per cent of the police force of Amsterdam Amstelland[149] consisted of people from ethnic minorities. This is an increase compared with the previous years: from 2003 to 2005, the proportion was 10 per cent; in 2006 the percentage rose to 11 per cent.[150] The fact remains, however, that ethnic minorities are over-represented in the lower echelons of the police force. The Minister of the Interior, which is responsible for the police, aims to have 30 per cent of vacancies in the higher ranks of the force filled by women and ethnic minorities by 2011.[151] At the national level, it is reported that compared with native Dutch police officers, officers belonging to ethnic minorities perceive more discrimination and limitations on career

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[146]   *Het Parool*, "Amsterdam meest crimineel" ("Amsterdam most criminal city"), available at http://www.parool.nl/parool/nl/7/Misdaad/article/detail/23654/2008/07/21/Amsterdam-meest-crimineel.dhtml (accessed August 2009).

[147]   See Jaarboek 2007, Samenvatting (Summary), p. 1.

[148]   See http://www.eenveiligamsterdam.nl/thema's/thema's/stadsdelen/slotervaart/nieuws_achtergron den/@194171/stadsdeel_5/ (accessed August 2009).

[149]   Besides Amsterdam, this police team covers five smaller municipalities in the region.

[150]   Politie Regio Amsterdam Amstelland, Jaarverslag 2008, available at http://www.jaarverslagpolitieaa.nl/jaarverslag_2008/Doelgroep.Bestuurders/Intern.diversiteit/aD U1583_Cijfers_-_Personeel.aspx (accessed August 2009).

[151]   "Ter Horst: meer vrouwen en allochtonen bij politie" (Ter Horst: more women and non-native Dutch in the police force), available at http://www.inoverheid.nl/artikel/nieuws/1101493/ter-horst-meer-vrouwen-en-allochtonen-bij-politie.html (accessed August 2009).

development and promotion. One in five are considering leaving the police force altogether.[152]

In neighbourhoods where a major part of the population belongs to non-western ethnic minorities, police officers from similar backgrounds can play an important role as bridge-builders.[153] They are able to instruct their colleagues about cultural and social aspects that are important for understanding and interacting with the local population, and assist in building trust with the population. They may also act as role models for local youths in the neighbourhood.

An aspect of the Dutch national policing policy is a focus on community policing.[154] In Amsterdam, the police work with appointed neighbourhood directors to implement area policy.[155] They work alongside ordinary police officers who are trained to concentrate on incidents. In contrast to their colleagues, neighbourhood directors not only have a security mandate, but also a social brief in respect of living conditions in their neighbourhood and the maintenance and enforcement of peace. This requires them to be in constant contact with the neighbourhood – inhabitants, businesses and organisations – and to be aware of what is going on, even behind closed doors. Investing in building relations of trust is therefore essential.[156] In Slotervaart, two of the nine neighbourhood directors belong to non-western ethnic minorities.[157]

In addition to the police, in Slotervaart, street coaches have been active since November 2006 in combating conflict and maintaining order. These street coaches patrol on their bicycles in selected neighbourhoods and report problems to "home teams" who make home visits to individuals and to the family of those perceived as being "trouble-makers". A significant proportion of those employed in the "home teams" are of Moroccan descent. This system of increased surveillance appears to have helped to reduce trouble caused by youngsters in Slotervaart.[158] As a result, two other submunicipalities have adopted this scheme as well. The street coaches and home teams do not form part of the police force, but fall under the responsibility of the

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[152] "Allochtone agenten twijfelen over baan" (Non-native Dutch police officers in doubt about their job), available at http://www.inoverheid.nl/artikel/nieuws/1105430/allochtone-agenten-twijfelen-over-baan.html (accessed August 2009).

[153] "De politie, mooi alternatief voor de AH kassa" (The police force, a nice alternative to the supermarket checkout), *Contrast* no. 15 (April 2008), pp. 26–29.

[154] In the sense of a neighbourhood-oriented working policy.

[155] Foundations interview, April 2008.

[156] Foundations interview, April 2008.

[157] See the Amsterdam Police website at http://www.politie-amsterdam-amstelland.nl/get.cfm?id=500 (accessed August 2009).

[158] See http://www.eenveiligamsterdam.nl/thema's/thema's/jeugd/straatcoaches (accessed August 2009).

Stichting Aanpak Overlast Amsterdam, a foundation for fighting anti-social behaviour subsidised by the municipality.[159]

9.2 Muslims' Sense of Security and Their Experiences as Clients of the Police and Criminal Justice System

Data collected by the municipality suggest that people's sense of security has increased over the last few years. Overtoomse Veld in Slotervaart is, however, among the Amsterdam neighbourhoods in which perceptions of security are the lowest. In 2006, the SCP investigated the main causes for this. It found that perceptions of insecurity are to a large extent determined by factors that increase individual vulnerability. Women, people with a low socio-economic status and people who have been victims of crime experience feelings of insecurity more often than others. Characteristics of the living environment play a role as well. In particular, the presence of a large number of non-western ethnic minorities, especially when this number has increased over a short period of time, appears to contribute to feelings of insecurity.[160]

Following the Liveability Monitor for Slotervaart, in 2007 inhabitants of the submunicipality rated the security in their neighbourhood a 6.2 (on a scale from 0 to 10); there was no difference in comparison with 2005. The inhabitants of Overtoomse Vaart, however, rated the security in their neighbourhood at 5.8, compared with 6.0 in 2005. Residents of Slotervaart who thought that the security had improved cited increased surveillance by both police and street coaches as a factor. They claimed that the neighbourhood had become quieter and that crime and trouble from youngsters had decreased. Those who believed that security has deteriorated blamed this on an increase in petty crime and problems caused by youths. Of these 10 per cent of them mentioned that the composition of the population contributed to their sense of insecurity.[161]

A relatively large part of the Moroccan participants in the Foundations focus groups declared that security in their neighbourhood was not that bad and that the negative image was largely created by the media. However, some (Moroccan) mothers expressed their worries about the possible bad influence of troublesome youth gangs on their own children. Some older men of Turkish background expressed their concerns over their safety from young people of Moroccan descent. In the Foundations focus groups, Muslim participants also highlighted their feelings of insecurity as a result of anti-Muslim sentiments in the media.

A minority, 17 per cent of the Muslims and 26.6 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents to the Foundations questionnaire, stated that they had been a victim of

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[159] See http://www.eenveiligamsterdam.nl/thema's/thema's/jeugd/straatcoaches (accessed August 2009).

[160] See Jaarboek 2007, pp. 91–92.

[161] Gemeente Amsterdam, *Leefbaarheidsmonitor Slotervaart 2007 (Liveability Monitor Slotervaart 2007),* Amsterdam, Dienst Onderzoek en Statistiek, pp. 51–52 (hereafter *Leefbaarheidsmonitor Slotervaart 2007*).
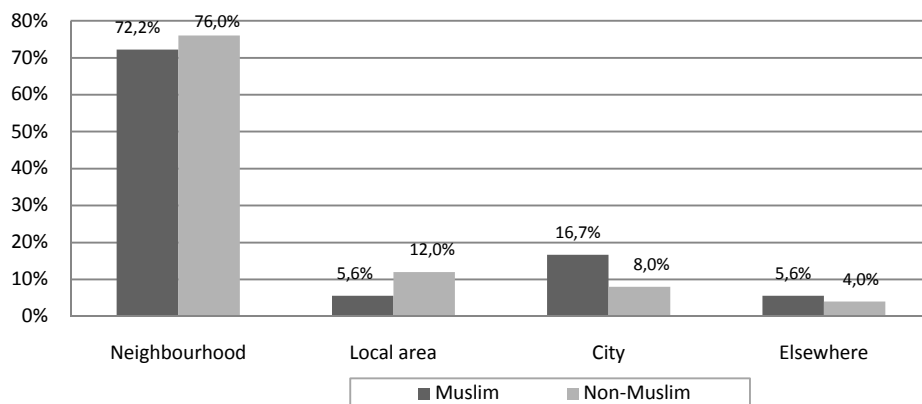
crime in the last 12 months (see Figure 9.). Figure 10. shows that most of these crimes occurred in their own neighbourhood (72.2 per cent for the Muslims, and 76 per cent for the non-Muslims).

Figure 9. Have you been a victim of crime in the last 12 months?
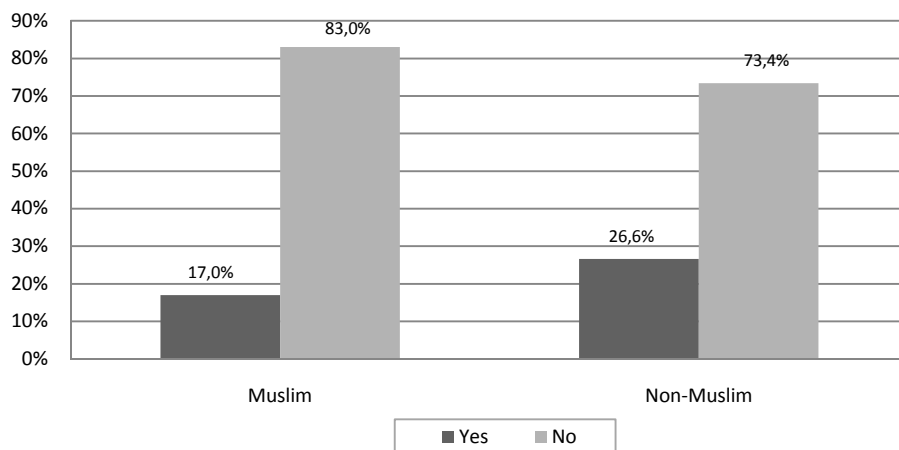
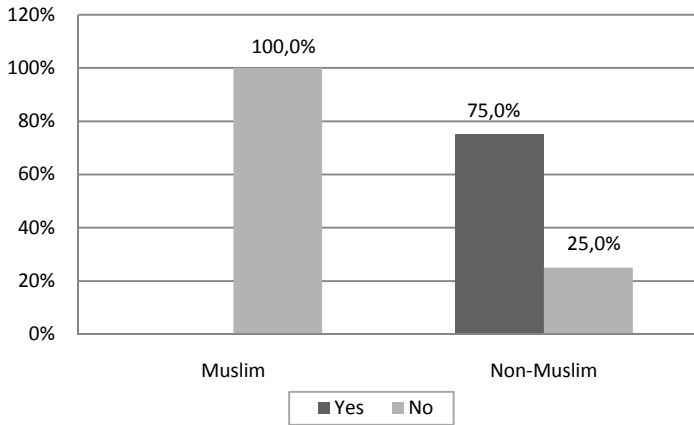**Source:** Open Society Foundations

Figure 10. If you were a victim of crime, where did this happen?
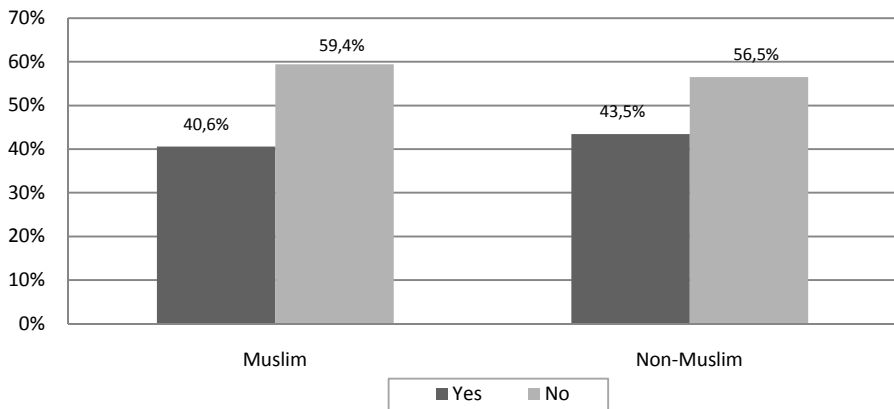

Source: Open Society Foundations

In focus groups older people complained that when they called the police due to a burglary or other similar crimes the police were slow in responding and showing up at the crime scene. At times, they did not turn up. It could be important to investigate this further.

Figure 11. If you were a victim of crime, did you report it to the police?

Source: Open Society Foundations

The Foundations questionnaire also asked whether respondents had been in contact with the police (about any issue) in the previous 12 months. Of the Muslims 40.6 per cent and of the non-Muslims 43.5 per cent answered this question positively (Figure 12.). In the majority of the cases, the respondents had initiated contact, as is presented in Figure 13.

Figure 12. Have you had contact with the police (about any issue) in the last 12 months?

Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 13. If you had contact with the police, who initiated the contact?
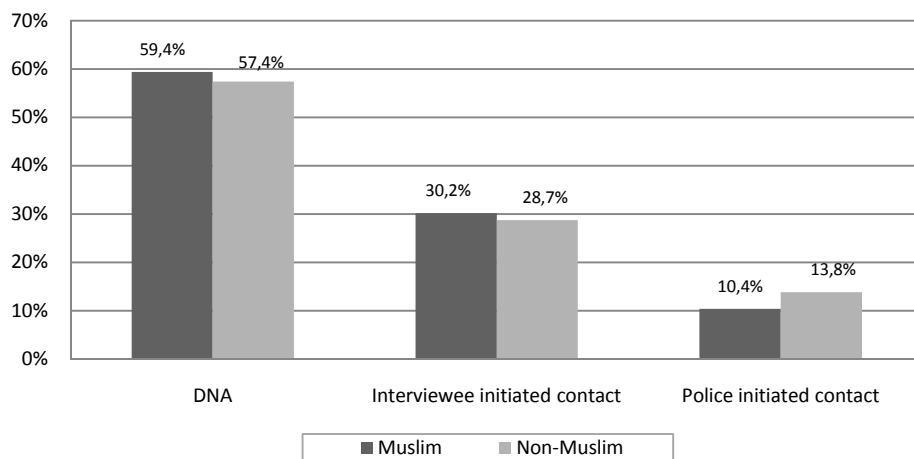
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 14. Were you satisfied with the conduct and outcome of that encounter?
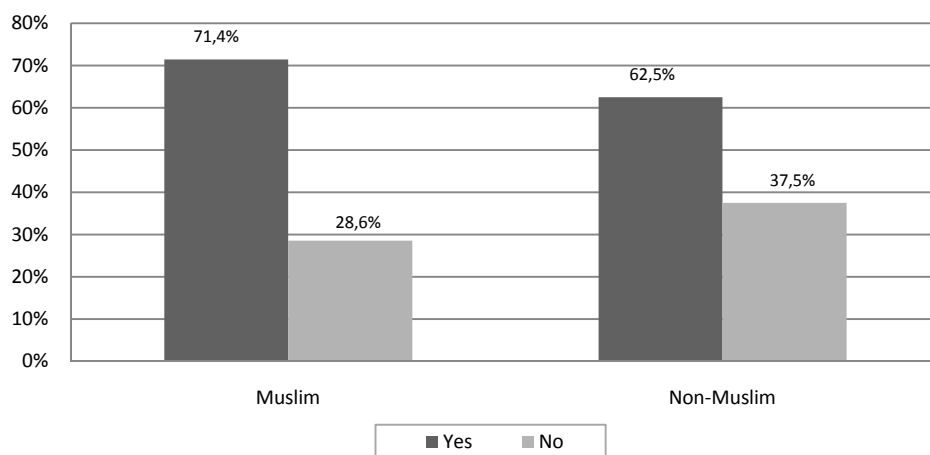
Source: Open Society Foundations

It is noteworthy that the majority of both the Muslims (71.4 per cent) and the non-Muslims (62.5 per cent) were satisfied with the conduct and outcome of that encounter (Figure 14.). People who were not satisfied often reported that they had been treated rudely by the police officers or that they had not been taken seriously.

The results correspond to a great extent to the results of the question whether the respondents were satisfied with the police, as seen in Figure 15.

Figure 15. How satisfied are you with the police?
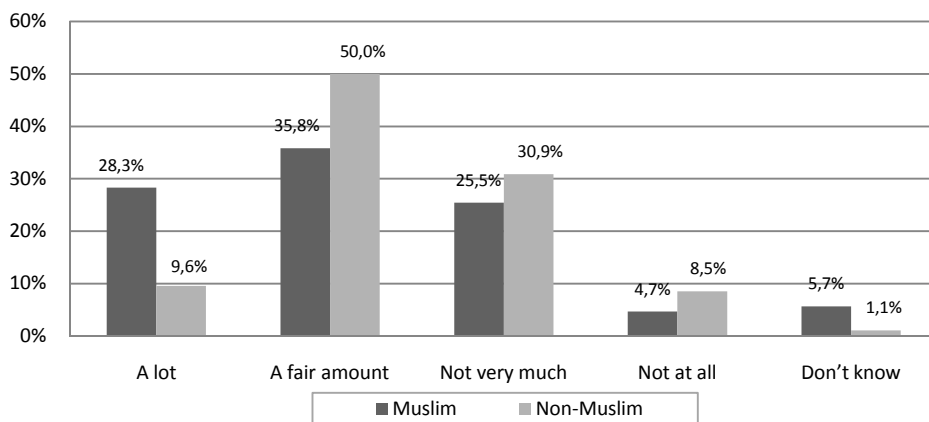
Youngsters who participated in the focus groups complained that there were too many places where it was forbidden to pass time in their neighbourhood, while some stated that the police officers were eager to impose fines, "just to enhance their careers".

Effective representatives were held to be crucial for fostering a good climate between the police and residents. One participant attributed a significant role to the neighbourhood director. The current director compared particularly well with the community police officer who had worked there in 1998. In the participant's view the previous officer was a significant cause of the trouble at the time because of his authoritarian, inflexible and at times provocative behaviour. Other focus group participants did not mention the neighbourhood directors. They focused on the incident-oriented police officers.

9.3 Policies to Enhance Muslims' Relationships with the Police and Their Sense of Security

In Slotervaart much effort is put into building relationships between the police and residents and developing trust in the police force among the local population. This is the direct consequence of the rather turbulent recent history of the submunicipality. The neighbourhood directors try to build good relationships with key persons in the area. These may be influential public figures, but might also be, for instance, a mother who feels attached to her neighbourhood and responsible for what happens in her living environment. These important persons can provide information on what

happens in the neighbourhood to the police, but also can explain police actions to the people in their own environment.[162]

In addition to the police and the street coaches, there is support for private initiatives, such as the neighbourhood fathers (*buurtvaders*), that increase security and bring order to the streets. The neighbourhood fathers were established after the 1998 riots between residents of Overtoomse Veld and the police. A group of resident Moroccan fathers decided to patrol the streets every night to keep an eye on the youngsters. This worked very well, because of their dedication and because they knew many of the young people. Despite the initial scepticism of the police and the submunicipality, a good partnership between the three parties developed. It became a real project and received two prestigious awards for the best citizens' initiative at national and European levels.[163] This led to further professional involvement and the creation of a methodology description to enable the initiative to be replicated elsewhere. However, it seems that the élan and the effectiveness of the neighbourhood fathers have diminished in recent years. Rivalry and conflict between different groups of neighbourhood fathers have been reported.

Since the election of Marcouch as the submunicipality president, collaboration between the submunicipality, the police and the mosque has increased. The police station and the mosque are direct neighbours at the August Allebéplein. The mosque is used by the police to disseminate information about actions and measures taken by them, particularly in crises, such as an incident in the police offices in 2007, when a young Muslim tried to attack a police officer with a knife and was then shot dead. For the police and the submunicipality the priority was to make sure that the real and full facts circulated in the neighbourhood, and not the partial story that a young Moroccan had been shot by the police. Therefore, immediately after the incident, they started to personally contact their networks and contact persons; an information meeting was organised in the mosque and the imams had an active role in maintaining the peace.

The appearance of "Fitna", an anti-Muslim film by the national politician Geert Wilders, provides another example of the police handling of relationships with local communities. The film appeared in March 2008, but dominated the media for months beforehand (see also Chapter 11.). There was wild speculation about the contents of the film, and about the ways in which Muslims in the Netherlands and elsewhere would react. The debate about the film caused much uneasiness among many Muslims

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[162] Foundations interview, April 2008. See also E. Bervoets, *Tussen respect en doorpakken. Een onderzoek naar de politiële aanpak van Marokkaanse jongeren in Gouda, Utrecht en Amsterdam (Between Respect and Crackdowns. Research into the Policing of Moroccan Youngsters in Gouda, Utrecht and Amsterdam),* Proefschrift Universiteit Twente, Enschede, 2006, in which the importance for the police of social capital consisting of other organisations and experts is stressed.

[163] See the digital archives of the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant*, available at http://www.volkskrant.nl/archief_gratis/article870908.ece/Europa_beloont_buurtvaders_met_pre ventieprijs (Europe awards prevention prize to neighbourhood fathers) (accessed August 2009).

in the Netherlands. The police team in Slotervaart organised meetings before the release of the film. They ensured that people understood the legal issues concerning incitement to hatred and free speech, explaining that while Wilders had the right to express himself, they had the right to report the film to the police. They gave information on how people could do this. The police in fact established a central point in Amsterdam for receiving complaints about the film to ensure that police stations in the different submunicipalities would not be hampered in their daily work. The meeting received positive responses from the local residents. After the release of the film, the police contact officers immediately and on their own initiative went into the street to discuss the issues with people. It appears that in both these cases, networking and direct action had a positive impact and contributed to a peaceful course of events.[164]

Finally, the Amsterdam police took the initiative to enable police officers to buy the Dutch Qur'an translation by the Dutch-Iranian writer Kader Abdolah with 50 per cent discount, so as to help the police officers understand Islam and Islamic culture. Some 40 police officers made use of this offer.

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[164] Foundations interview, April 2008.

10. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Civic and political participation can be a further measure of social inclusion. Participation in society and its institutions as well as the claiming of minority rights are to a considerable extent influenced by access to citizenship. This chapter therefore begins with an overview of access to political participation for Dutch citizens and foreign nationals and goes on to examine evidence of levels of political participation. It also looks at the evidence of the extent to which people feel that they can influence local and national decisions as well as levels of trust in key political institutions. The chapter also looks at civic participation, particularly where this is through organisations that are constituted on the basis of a Muslim identity. The final section highlights examples of initiatives taken to engage and increase the civic and political participation of Muslims in Amsterdam.

10.1 Political Participation of Muslims

In the Netherlands, people who have Dutch nationality and are over 18 years old have the right to vote for the national government, the provincial council and the local government, which in larger cities such as Amsterdam consists of elections for the municipal council and the submunicipal council. Dutch nationals are also eligible for election from the age of 18. Furthermore, since 1986 the right to vote or to be elected for public office at the local level has been awarded to residents who are not Dutch nationals, but who have lived legally in the Netherlands for over five years. This policy aimed to improve the integration of minorities into Dutch society, by offering them the opportunity to share responsibility for local government.[165] Non-Dutch with an EU nationality also have the right to vote for municipal elections but do not need to meet the five years' residency criterion.[166]

The Amsterdam Citizen Monitor (Amsterdamse Burgermonitor) is an annual survey into people's engagement with the city, their political participation and their political confidence. The Amsterdam Citizen Monitor 2007[167] asked whether a person would vote if there were elections. This intention to vote was higher among native Dutch (82 per cent) than respondents of Moroccan (63 per cent) or Turkish background (53 per cent). This may reflect the fact that in general participation in voting correlates with higher levels of education and older age demographics. Young people under 24 years were less inclined to vote: 57 per cent said they would do so. Disaggregation by

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[165] See FORUM, *Factbook 2008*, p. 19.

[166] See http://www.parlement.com/9291000/modulesf/g6af7h7t (accessed August 2009).

[167] Available at http://www.amsterdam.nl/bm2007/ (accessed August 2009) (hereafter Amsterdamse Burgermonitor 2007).

submunicipalities revealed that 72 per cent of the inhabitants of Slotervaart said they would vote, which is consistent with the city average.

In terms of eligibility, 39.8 per cent of the Muslim respondents and 21 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents to the Foundations survey said that they were eligible to vote in national elections. Of these, 76.8 per cent of the Muslims and 70.6 per cent of the non-Muslims voted in the last national election (2006). Many more were eligible to vote in local elections: 83.8 per cent and 89.4 per cent respectively (see Figure 16.). Of these, 57.5 per cent of the Muslims and 51.1 per cent of the non-Muslims voted in the last local council election (2006) (see Figure 17.).

Figure 16. Are you eligible to vote in local elections?
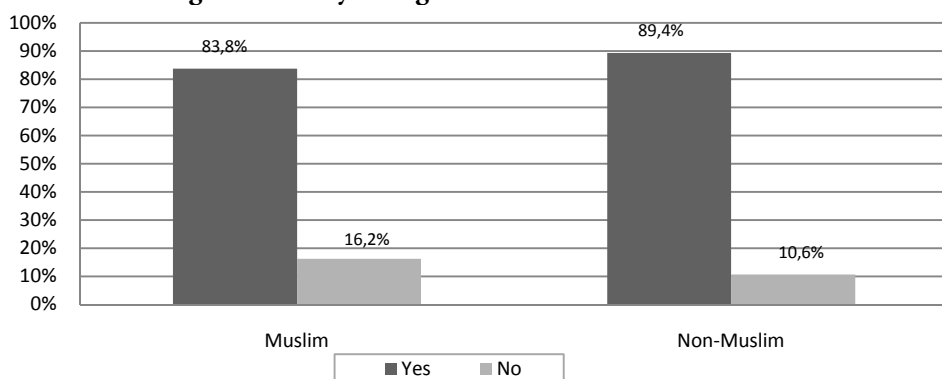
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 17. Did you vote in the last local council election?
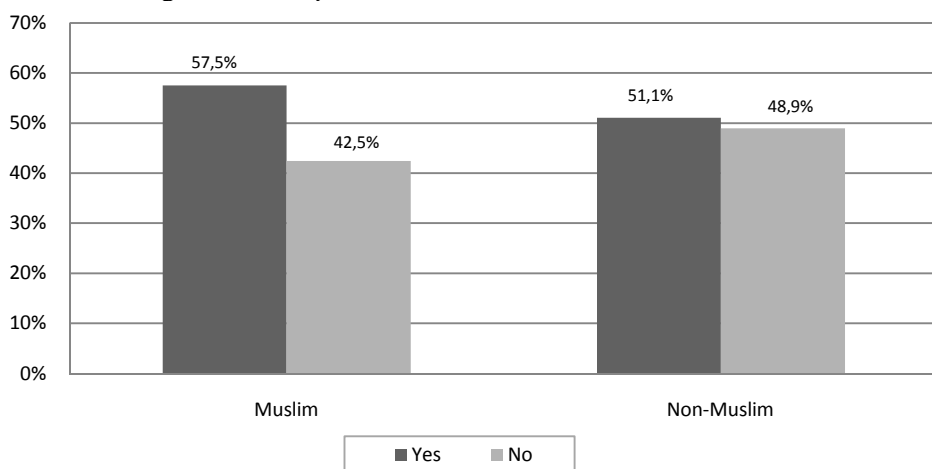
Source: Open Society Foundations

Muslim elected officials can be found at the national as well as local level. At the national level, two Secretaries of State, both from the Labour Party, are Muslims.[168] There are also eight MPs in the national Parliament (out of 150) who are Muslims.[169] In the Amsterdam municipal council, five out of 45 councillors are Muslims, all of them representatives of the Labour Party.[170] At the submunicipal level in Slotervaart, the president and four of the 21 councillors are Muslims; the president and three councillors are Labour Party representatives, the other councillor belongs to the Groen Links (Green Left) party. Political representation of Muslims can be taken as an indicator of integration, but should be considered with caution. It is a common observation that political representatives, certainly those in national bodies, are taken from the elite stratum of society.[171] The fact that Muslims are among political representatives at the national level indicates their integration into the elite, but it does not say very much about whether they represent the views of Muslim citizens. There are indications that Muslims use the instrument of preferential voting in order to support the election of Muslim candidates,[172] but that they often do not feel well represented by them during their mandate.

Political participation is not limited to voting. A greater proportion of Muslim respondents (40.6 per cent) than non-Muslim (19.4 per cent) have taken part in a consultation or a meeting about local services or problems in their area in the previous 12 months. This is much higher than the percentage for Amsterdam as a whole (13 per cent) reported in the 2007 Amsterdam Citizen Monitor.[173] The questionnaire indicates that Muslims particularly attended meetings about living conditions and social problems in the neighbourhood, for instance meetings organised after the incident in the police station in 2007, or a meeting on raising children, organised after trouble caused by youth groups. They also attended meetings about housing and parking. Non-Muslims particularly attended meetings about housing and the introduction of paid parking, but less often about living conditions and social problems (see Figure 18.).

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[168] In February 2009, one of them became the mayor of Rotterdam.

[169] FORUM, *Factbook 2008*, p. 18.

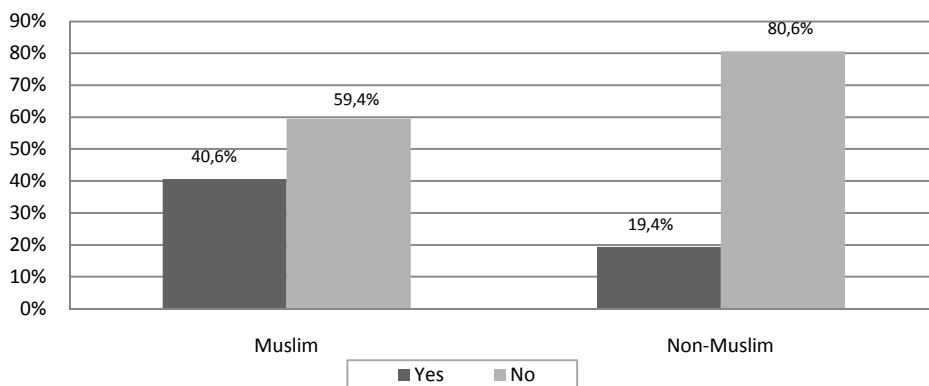[170] A list of councillors is available at http://www.amsterdam.nl/gemeente/gemeenteraad/navigatie/raadsleden_en (accessed August 2009).

[171] K. Bird, "The Political Representation of Women and Ethnic Minorities", in *Established Democracies: A Framework for Comparative Research*, Aalborg, AMID Working Paper, 2003.

[172] FORUM, *Factbook 2008*, p. 18.

[173] Amsterdamse Burgermonitor 2007, p. 8.

Figure 18. In the last 12 months have you taken part in a consultation about local services or problems?

Apart from political participation and representation, the issues of political engagement and of political confidence are important areas of investigation. The Amsterdam Citizen Monitor 2007 suggests that more than half of all residents of Amsterdam (52 per cent) have a high level of interest in the politics of their submunicipality. The level of interest is lower for Slotervaart (45 per cent) as well as for people of Turkish background (33 per cent) and young people (37 per cent). In addition, education appears to play a role: higher levels of education correlate with higher levels of interest. On average, 18 per cent of Amsterdam residents know the name of the president of their submunicipality. In Slotervaart, this percentage is higher, at 34 per cent,[174] reflecting perhaps the higher national and local media profile of Marcouch.

Concerning political confidence, 41 per cent of Amsterdam residents think that municipal councillors are concerned about the municipality, while 32 per cent of the residents think that political parties are interested in their opinion and that they have political influence. Native Dutch and western ethnic minorities are more confident that they can exert an influence than non-western minorities. People who are more educated are more confident than others, while young and elderly people are less confident than those between 24 and 65 years of age. Fairly consistent with the foregoing is the fact that 39 per cent of the Amsterdam residents think the municipal council functions well or very well and 31 per cent think that the submunicipality council functions well or very well. The views of the residents of Slotervaart correspond to the city average.[175]

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[174] Amsterdamse Burgermonitor 2007, p. 14.

[175] Amsterdamse Burgermonitor 2007, pp. 19–20.

The Foundations survey shows that a similar proportion of Muslims (41 per cent) and non-Muslim (43.6 per cent) think they can influence decisions at the local level (Figure 19.). A more pronounced difference emerges in relation to national politics, with Muslims (22.6 per cent) less likely than non-Muslims (35.5 per cent) to believe they can influence national decision-making (Figure 20.).

Figure 19. Do you agree that you can influence decisions affecting your city?
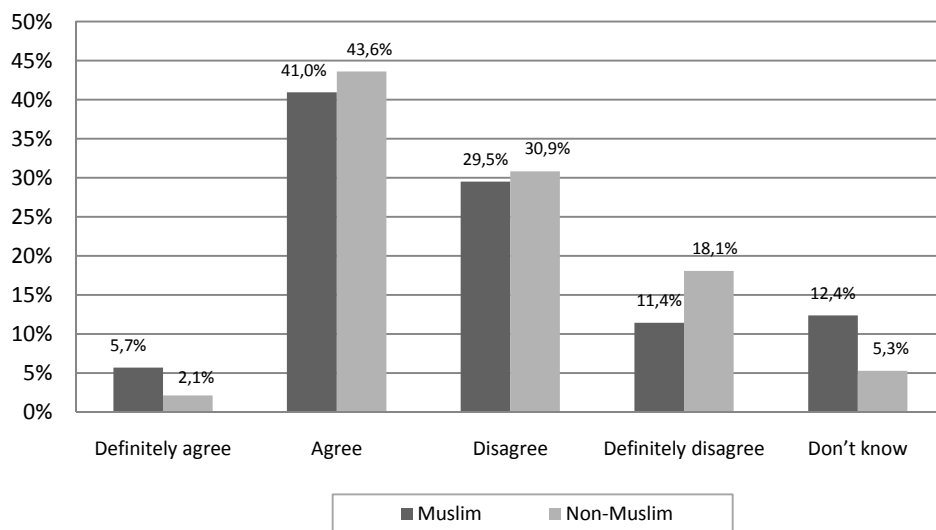
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 20. Do you agree that you can influence decisions affecting this country?
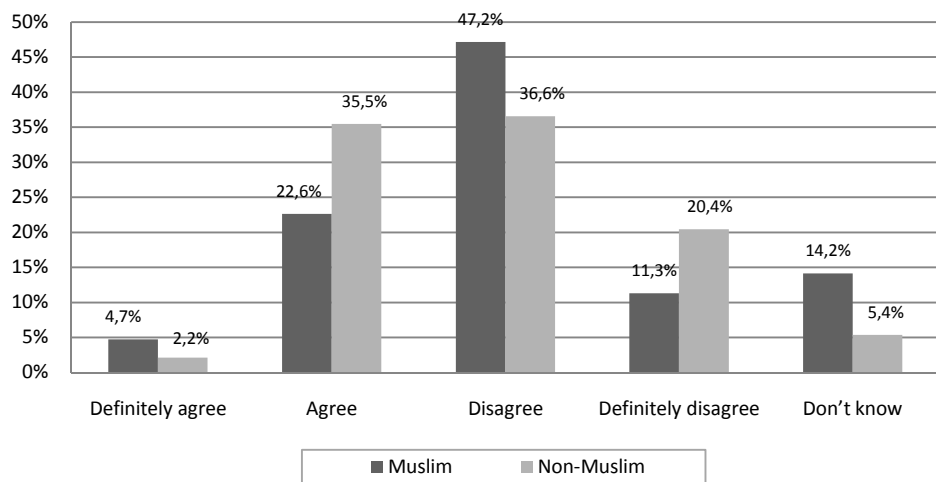
Source: Open Society Foundations

In view of this, it is important to investigate people's confidence in the basic pillars of Dutch democracy: the courts, Parliament and the government. Both Muslims and non-Muslims have a greater level of confidence in the courts compared with the national government or Parliament. Over two-thirds (69.8 per cent) of the Muslim respondents had "a lot" to "a fair amount" of confidence in the courts, while for the non-Muslims the figure was 55.3 per cent (Figure 21). In fact Muslim respondents indicated a stronger sense of confidence in the courts than non-Muslims, with over one-third of Muslims saying they had a lot of confidence in the courts compared with one-fifth of non-Muslims. By contrast, a majority of both Muslims and non-Muslims lacked confidence in Parliament (Figure 22) and the government (Figure 23). There is greater confidence in local administration. In particular, 54.8 per cent of the Muslim respondents had "a lot" of confidence in the city council, while for the non-Muslim respondents the figure was only 37.7 per cent (Figure 24.).

Figure 21. How satisfied are you with the courts?
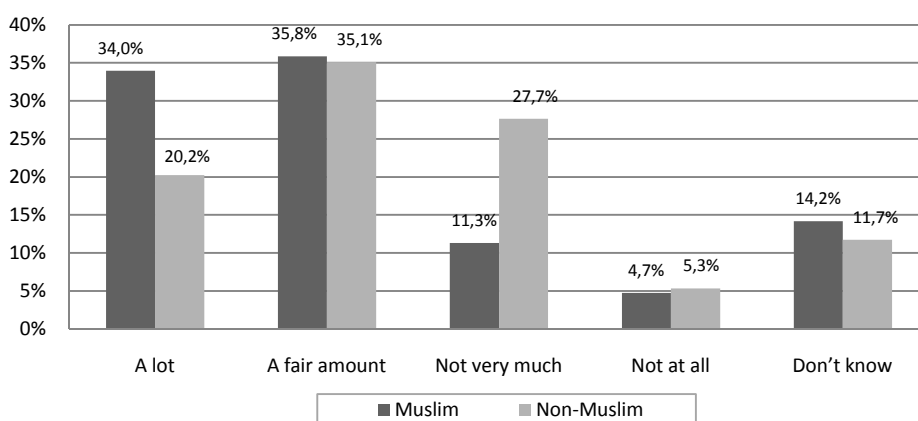
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 22. How satisfied are you with the national parliament?
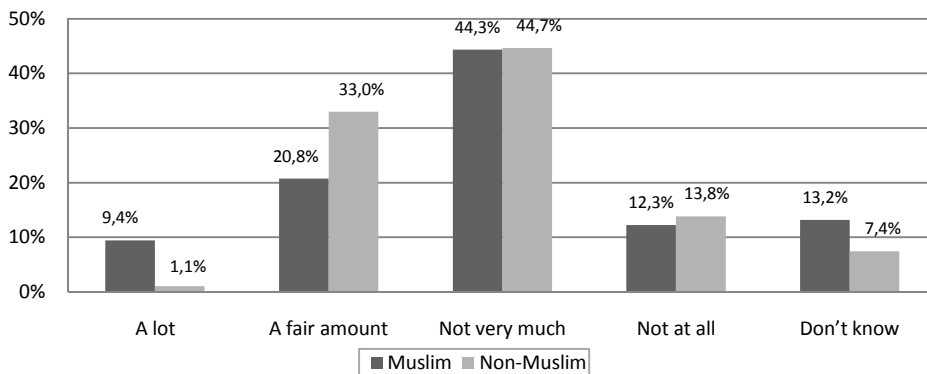
Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 23. How satisfied are you with the government?

Source: Open Society Foundations

Figure 24. How satisfied are you with your city council?

Bar chart showing satisfaction with city council, comparing Muslim and Non-Muslim responses:
- A lot: Muslim 14,2%, Non-Muslim 6,5%
- A fair amount: Muslim 40,6%, Non-Muslim 31,2%
- Not very much: Muslim 26,4%, Non-Muslim 28,0%
- Not at all: Muslim 8,5%, Non-Muslim 16,1%
- Don't know: Muslim 10,4%, Non-Muslim 18,3%

Source: Open Society Foundations

It is important to note that critical remarks about the submunicipality were made during the focus group discussions. Some older Turkish men were afraid of speaking up in public meetings organised by the administration, as they feared that it would be used against them, t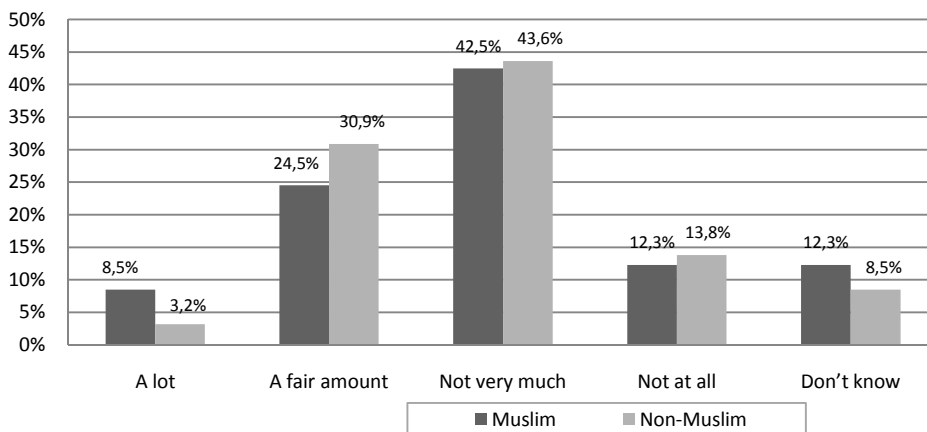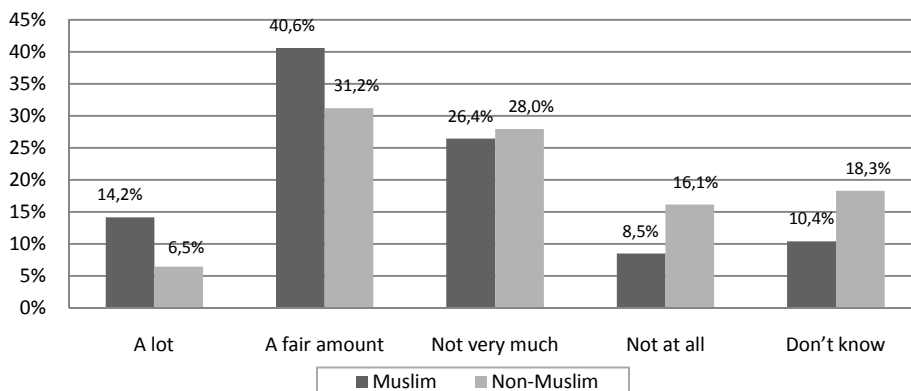hough they did not specify in what way. Others expressed their frustration that they had held a demonstration to prevent the demolition of their house in the framework of the city renovation project, but that it had had no effect. In their view, these kinds of meetings were solely intended to give the air of participation, when in fact all the decisions had been made beforehand.

Among some Moroccans, in particular, there appears to be a feeling that they have been betrayed by Marcouch. They believe that a large number of Moroccans voted for him because, as an older Moroccan woman stated, "We thought that because he is from the same blood, he will always remain sensitive to his fellow country people." But in their view, he did the opposite and chose the side of "them", the Dutch. In particular the fact that Marcouch has publicly stated that Moroccan criminal youths should be severely punished, and even sent back to Morocco,[176] has caused feelings of frustration and anger among many Moroccans in Slotervaart. A woman related that she had taken part in an anti-discrimination demonstration as a reaction to the publicity around Wilders' film "Fitna", and she was bitter that "those we voted for" had not been present to speak. Some Turkish people, by contrast, felt that the current submunicipality council and Marcouch, in particular, were giving preferential treatment to Moroccan organisations and initiatives.

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[176] See, for instance, *De Pers*, "Marcouch wil lastpakken het land uit" (Marcouch wants troublemakers to leave the country), available at
http://www.depers.nl/binnenland/170630/Marcouch-lastpakken-het-land-uit.html (accessed August 2009).

10.2 Islamic Civil-society Organisations and Muslims' Participation in Civil Society

In the 1980s and early 1990s migrant organisations were important partners for the Amsterdam municipality in the framework of its minorities policy. It was believed that ethnic organisations would contribute to the development of identity, to emancipation and to the protection of their community's (political) interests. Religious organisations were not eligible for support because of the separation between church and state, but they were encouraged to found socio-cultural organisations that could be supported. In the 1990s, however, the policy framework shifted from minority policy towards diversity policy, underpinned by the idea of individual citizen participation. Structural subsidies for organisations were abolished and replaced by municipal subsidies for projects and activities.[177]

There are currently many kinds of Islamic organisations in Amsterdam: mosque, women's, youth, umbrella and Islamic cultural. In 2000, there were 20 Turkish religious organisations in Amsterdam. Seven of them were linked to the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), ten were part of the Milli Görüs movement, three were Alevi Turkish organisations and three were attached to the Netherlands Islamic Centre Foundation (Stichting Islamitisch Centrum Nederland). In 2001, there were 30 Moroccan Islamic organisations in Amsterdam. They were often attached to umbrella organisations as well: the Union of Moroccan Muslim Organisations in the Netherlands (UMMON), the City Moroccan Council or the Union of Moroccan Mosques in Amsterdam and Surroundings (UMMAO).[178]

In Slotervaart today there are a couple of community organisations as well. For women, there are, for instance, Nisa for Nisa (mainly for women of Moroccan background) and el Noer (mainly for women of Turkish background). Both women's groups are active in Dutch-language education and leisure and sports activities. Nisa for Nisa concentrates also on information activities concerning health care, the raising of children and participation in Dutch society. The Turkish men's organisation, el Mohammedia, shares a building with el Noer; the building houses a prayer room as well. The Foundation Al Mawadda is known for the neighbourhood fathers' project, but it also organises Dutch-language lessons, and sports and leisure activities for men, women and children. The Turkish Education Centre (STOC) is a Turkish lay organisation concerned with educational support; it also organises Dutch and Turkish language lessons and computer courses.

The most important Moroccan mosque is El Oumma at the August Allebeplein and the most important Turkish mosque is the Aya Sofia mosque, situated just outside

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[177] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?,* p. 91.

[178] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?*, pp. 91–92.

Slotervaart in the submunicipality of De Baarsjes.[179] Both mosques also organise social activities for men, women and youngsters. The Poldermosque (De Poldermoskee) opened in 2008 and makes arrangements for young Dutch Muslims who are often second-generation migrants, such as having sermons in Dutch, debates between young Muslims and non-Muslims, and courses on the history of Palestine. The mosque identifies its policy as being founded on the idea that a mosque can be a safe place for young Muslim citizens to develop into active Muslim citizens in the Netherlands, and to feed their self-respect, their capacities for critical reflection and their knowledge of Islam and the world around them.[180]

During the Foundations focus group discussions, some Turkish men complained about the segregation in the Turkish community along the lines of the various sects. They stated that this hampered the circulation of information and the organisation of social activities, but also prevented the Turkish community from taking joint political action. Therefore, they thought it better that the submunicipality, as a neutral party, should organise things such as social activities. Some older Turkish men thought that Moroccans were better able to organise themselves because they did not have this problem of the different sects. The interviewers who had conducted the survey remarked in a feedback meeting that according to the conversations during the interviews they felt that among people of Moroccan descent trust was often a problem: they seemed to have internalised negative stereotypes about Moroccans, while also the precarious socio-economic situation of families of Moroccan descent perhaps made them distrustful of others. Despite these apparent difficulties organising themselves, Amsterdam Muslims are quite active in organisations and clubs, as became clear from the Foundations questionnaire. Responses to the survey indicated that Muslims are more active in the fields of education, and social and cultural work than non-Muslims, but less active in politics and less often have a management or board position. None of the respondents were active in the human rights movement.

10.3 Local Policies and Initiatives to Promote the Civil Participation of Muslims

The murder of van Gogh in 2004 caused strong feelings of both anger and fear in the Amsterdam population. In order to prevent progressive polarisation between different categories of the population (in particular between Muslims and non-Muslims) and to stimulate social cohesion and integration, the Amsterdam municipality initiated the action programme "Wij Amsterdammers" ("We the citizens of Amsterdam"). The aims of this initiative have been described previously in this report and this section will outline some of its key actions.

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[179] In addition, there are some smaller private mosques. At the end of 2008, the Poldermoskee was opened in Slotervaart.

[180] See also the mosque's website at http://www.poldermoskee.nl (accessed August 2009).

The programme stresses the development of a stronger shared identity and emphasises the local identity of citizens of a large city over the national identity. The Amsterdam identity promoted by the municipality was not only socially defined but had a political connotation, as well, in the sense that "We Amsterdam people" are supposed to form a political community based on shared democratic norms and citizenship and on a rejection of violence.[181] Public campaigns depicting the Amsterdam population in all its diversity while being at the same time members of the Amsterdam community have been central in this approach. In addition, initiatives have been taken to promote dialogue between different groups, especially at the level of the submunicipalities and neighbourhoods. In Slotervaart in 2007–2008 a Religious Secular Circle was organised, consisting of a series of meetings during which people of various religious convictions as well as non-religious people debated issues related to religion and society in order to enhance mutual understanding and tolerance. The meetings were well attended with around 100 participants at each session. In fact the last session attracted over 300 people.

Second, the programme aims to encourage debate on Islam within the Muslim community and between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Slotervaart submunicipality president, Marcouch, is very active in stimulating debate in the mosque and among Muslim youngsters, in order to fight radicalisation. For instance, six meetings were held in the Oumma mosque in Slotervaart Overtoomse Veld under the guidance of a youth imam, in which 60 young Muslims learned about Islamic sources, and were taught to think independently and to critically reflect on themselves and others.

The third pillar of the programme aims at equal treatment and inclusion, in recognition of the fact that feelings of discrimination, especially among Muslims, have been growing in the last few years. Visible forms of anti-discrimination policy may contribute to an enhanced feeling among Muslim youths that they are also protected by the constitution and taken seriously by the state and the municipality. After years of financial cuts in anti-discrimination policies, it has become an important issue again. The Anti-Discrimination Bureau has been revitalised, and public campaigns to encourage people to report discrimination have been organised.[182] Fighting radicalisation is an integral objective of the programme. The committee of major and aldermen instituted research into the reasons for radicalisation among Muslim youths in Amsterdam. The research report[183] recommended following an approach which was directed not only towards fighting radicalisation, but also towards eliminating its breeding ground. This means that measures to promote integration and social

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[181] Maussen, *Ruimte voor de Islam?,* p. 72.

[182] Foundations interview, August 2008.

[183] M. Slootman and J. Tillie, *Processen van radicalisering, waarom sommige Amsterdamse moslims radicaal worden (Processes of Radicalisation. Why some Amsterdam Muslims become radicals),* Amsterdam, IMES, 2006.

cohesion, such as the ones described above, are also important for fighting radicalisation.

The submunicipality of Slotervaart has been following an anti-radicalisation policy from 2007. If it works well, it will be adopted by the central city and other submunicipalities. An initial evaluation made as part of a larger study into extreme-right and Islamic radicalisation has been fairly positive.[184] The accent is on the prevention of radicalisation by supporting parents with problems in child upbringing and religion in collaboration with the parent and child centres, and by stimulating young Muslims to think independently and critically so that they become less vulnerable to radical Islamic messages. They are trained to think critically and learn how to react to criticism during debates in the mosque; sermons are also translated into Dutch (see Chapter 10.2). Particular attention is paid to radicalisation and the internet: young people are encouraged to use the debating skills they have learned on the internet in the democratic process, both on the internet and elsewhere. At the same time, schoolteachers and social workers are targeted in order to enhance their knowledge of these issues, so that they know how to differentiate between (ultra)orthodoxy and radicalism, are able to recognise the signs of radicalisation and know how to react.[185]

Finally, two kinds of grants are available for initiatives in participation and integration and are considered important tools for enhancing the participation of the various categories of the population. During the 1990s, there was a change from structural grants to project grants which lasted one year only. This has been corrected and from 2008 it has become possible to have a grant for several years, in order to enhance the stability and continuity of civil-society organisations. This policy change is the result of the insight that: "Networks of people and organisations are very important for creating trust in society and social capital. In particular on the basis of a familiar network, people are able to feel at home in Amsterdam, and to integrate. That is why the municipality invests in the development of such organisations and in their activities."[186]

Thus from 2008 onwards, the importance of civil society has become more readily acknowledged, as has the importance of investing in durable, strong organisations and

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[184] A.-J. Gielen, *Radicalisering en identiteit. Radicale rechtse en moslimjongeren vergeleken* (*Radicalisation and identity. Radical righ-wing youth and radical Muslim youth compared*), Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Aksant, 2008.

[185] PAS, *Amsterdam tegen radicalisering* (Amsterdam against radicalisation). Gemeente Amsterdam, Platform Amsterdam Samen. See also
http://www.slotervaart.amsterdam.nl/wonen_en/zorg_en_welzijn_0/tegengaan_van, the website of the Slotervaart submunicipality devoted to its anti-radicalisation policies (accessed March 2009).

[186] Gemeente Amsterdam, *Op weg naar verbinding. Jaarplan 2008, Unit Diversiteit en Integratie* (Towards connection. Year Plan 2008, Diversity and Integration Unit), Gemeente Amsterdam, DMO, p. 13 (hereafter Gemeente Amsterdam, Jaarplan 2008).

networks; hence also the research into the state of civil society in Amsterdam, carried out by the Amsterdam Institute of Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES). Within this subsidy framework, mono-ethnic and religious organisations can be supported, which should not only meet and organise things among themselves but also invest in encountering other social groups.

The second grant tool is called Meldpunt Goede Ideeën (Notification Desk for Good Ideas), which is a flexible fund where decisions on funding proposals are taken within a short period of time after submission (for instance six weeks or so), meant for the support of small-scale initiatives by citizens, groups of citizens and organisations in the field of integration and diversity. The aim is empowerment and promoting the creativity and responsibility of the citizens.

11. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Over the past few years, Muslims in Amsterdam in general and in Slotervaart in particular have frequently been the subjects of the international, national and local media. There are two national Muslim broadcasting corporations that deserve a specific mention. The first is NIO, the Netherlands Islamic Broadcasting Organisation, which is the voice of the Netherlands consultative structure called Muslims and Government (Overlegorgaan Moslims en Overheid). The second is NMO, the Netherlands Muslim Broadcasting Organisation, which is an independent progressive broadcasting organisation which aims to represent the diversity in the Muslim community and to fuel debate and dialogue in the Netherlands, both among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims.

At the local level, AT5, the local Amsterdam television channel, is important. MTNL (Netherlands Multicultural Television) broadcasts in the large cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague. Its programmes are produced in conjunction with regional and local broadcasting organisations and are directed towards a multicultural urban audience. It is aimed at promoting inclusion and a positive attitude towards diversity and is supplemented by local news.

National newspapers range from the popular and right-wing newspaper *De Telegraaf* to the left-wing *De Volkskrant* and the more intellectually oriented *NRC. De Telegraaf* is the largest newspaper in the Netherlands. Amsterdam has its own local daily newspaper, *Het Parool.* Aside from these newspapers, free daily newspapers such as *Spits* (associated with the Telegraaf company), *Metro* and *De Pers* have become important in the last few years due to its distribution at all Dutch railway stations and large readership.

The internet is an important medium, as well, in terms of both circulating and influencing opinions about Muslims and of Muslims.

11.1 Media Use by Muslims

The media use of non-western ethnic minorities in the large Dutch cities has recently been investigated by the SCP in the framework of a study into the daily life of urban non-natives.[187] The study concluded that non-western ethnic minorities were avid consumers of Dutch media, although the many dish aerials in ethnic-minority neighbourhoods would suggest otherwise. For instance, a larger percentage of the city-dwellers of Moroccan descent watch Dutch television on a daily basis than native

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[187] See A. van den Broek and S. Keuzenkamp (eds), *Het dagelijks leven van allochtone stedelingen (The daily life of urban dwellers of a non-western ethnic background),* The Hague, SCP, 2008 (hereafter Broek and Keuzenkamp, *Het dagelijks leven*).

Dutch city-dwellers do; the percentage of city-dwellers from Turkish descent who watch Dutch channels daily is slightly lower, but not much.[188]

Alongside the consumption of Dutch media, the survey found that a greater proportion of those of Turkish descent (69 per cent) than Moroccan descent (39 per cent) watch channels from their country of origin. Women, the elderly, people with little education and people who have difficulties speaking and understanding Dutch watch channels from their countries of origin often. Even among the second generation the majority of those of Turkish descent (52 per cent) watch Turkish channels; by contrast only 15 per cent of the second generation of Moroccan descent watch Moroccan channels. This reflects in part the wider choice and range of channels that are available from Turkey compared with Morocco.[189]

The SCP study reveals differences across different groups in their newspaper reading. While 80 per cent of native Dutch people read a Dutch newspaper once a week, the figure is 60 per cent Moroccans and 39 per cent for Turks. Among the Turkish community 8 per cent read only Turkish newspapers, and 19 per cent read both Dutch and Turkish newspapers.[190]

The SCP study looked into the use of the internet among ethnic-minority city-dwellers and concluded that people from Turkish and Moroccan descent use the computer less frequently than native Dutch, which reflects the fact that these groups are less likely to own a computer. Concerning the use of computers (rather than ownership) the digital gap tends to diminish, as non-native Dutch use email, chat and surf the internet frequently. Between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of people communicate with persons with a Dutch or other European background. A smaller number mainly communicates with persons from the same ethnic background, and more so among people of Turkish descent than among people of Moroccan descent.

Among young Moroccans, their own Dutch-language websites, such as maroc.nl, are very popular.[191]

The Foundations focus groups generally confirmed the data of the SCP study. They indicated also that many second-generation Turkish and Moroccan migrants indeed read Dutch newspapers, including *De Telegraaf*, whose coverage of Islam and Muslims is largely negative. For the readers this may lead to more hostile opinions about the media and negative feelings towards acceptance by Dutch society. In the light of this, schools play a potentially large role in teaching students how to assess and interact with the media and their messages. Adults should also be offered the opportunities as media

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[188] Broek and Keuzenkamp, *Het dagelijks leven*, pp. 132–137.

[189] *Ibid.*

[190] Broek and Keuzenkamp, *Het dagelijks leven*, pp. 128–132.

[191] Broek an Keuzenkamp, *Het dagelijks leven*, pp. 137–144.

users to acquire skills which allow then to interact and engage with the producers of media.

11.2 Media Coverage of Muslims in Amsterdam and Slotervaart

Although there were examples of anti-Muslim sentiments in the media in the 1990s, after 9/11 Muslims clearly became a more pronounced topic, helped by politicians such as Pim Fortuijn and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. In particular, the Van Gogh murder intensified media coverage. Debates in the media centred on the compatibility of Muslim culture with western values; the integration of Muslims and their willingness to integrate; and Islam as a threat to security. Freedom of speech was viewed as coming under threat from Muslims.[192] The direct importance of freedom of speech to the media and journalists may have contributed to the polarised character of the debates.

The immediate media coverage of the assassination of Van Gogh was one of shock and sensation and the headlines of the major newspapers illustrated the fear-inducing character of the coverage: "Hatred and anxiety in Amsterdam" (*deVolkskrant*), "Searching the link with Al Qaeda – suspect of murder van Gogh is Mohammed B." (*Algemeen Dagblad*), "Holy War in Holland" (*Algemeen Dagblad*), "Moroccans spit on image of Van Gogh"(*De Telegraaf*), "We are at War", referring to a statement of the Dutch Minister of Finance (*Algemeen Dagblad*).[193] Hatred, anxiety and anti-Muslim feeling were very strong in the immediate aftermath of the event, fuelled by media and politicians. Boomgaarden and de Vreese contend, however, that the media coverage in the weeks following the assassination became much more nuanced and it de-escalated as it began to focus on socio-economic issues and reasons other than religion or cultural incompatibility for the problems of integration of Muslim minorities.[194] This may be rather too optimistic. While some media provided more nuanced analysis, others such as *De Telegraaf* did not. A poll conducted a year after the Van Gogh murder by TNS-NIPO found that the proportion of Dutch people with a hostile opinion of Muslims had not increased, but the feelings of those who already had negative feelings had become more intense.[195]

In November 2007 Wilders used *De Telegraaf* to announce his intention to release his film "Fitna" in early 2008.The announcement led to an intense media-led public debate on the potential impact of the film on community relations as well as on the

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[192] This was, for instance, influenced by the fact that the reason for the attack on Van Gogh was the film "Submission" that he had made in collaboration with the politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Among other things, the film shows a naked woman with Qur'an texts written on her body.

[193] H. G. Boomgaarden and Claes H. de Vreese, "Dramatic real-world events and public opinion dynamics: media coverage and its impact on public reactions to an assassination", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 19(3), 2007, pp. 354–366 (hereafter Boomgaarden and Vreese, "Dramatic real-world events and public opinion dynamics").

[194] Boomgaarden and Vreese, "Dramatic real-world events and public opinion dynamics", p. 358.

[195] Boomgaarden and Vreese, "Dramatic real-world events and public opinion dynamics", p. 363.

international reputation of the Netherlands.[196] In the *Telegraaf* headlines, the term "*Moslimwoede*" (Muslim Rage) frequently appeared,[197] as it was speculated that there would be violent protests from Muslims nationally and internationally.

Muslim youths in Amsterdam were a major focus of the media coverage during this period, particularly as relations with the police were tense following the death of Bilal B, who had been shot by a police officer after having attacked her and two colleagues with a knife at a police station in Slotervaart Overtoomse Veld. Journalists came to Amsterdam to investigate Muslims' sentiments in advance of the film's release. The government wrote to all mayors calling for preparations against possible riots afterwards. The mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, was critical of what he saw as a media circus surrounding the film and warned against being taken hostage by the hype.[198] In fact, after the film was finally released on the internet in March 2008, the fervour subsided as there was no public unrest among Muslims. It is important to recognise that this positive outcome was in part the result of careful networking at the local level, in which it was recognised that Wilders would be a beneficiary of any disorder in response to the film (see also Chapter 9.3).

In addition to these national events, there has also been important media coverage of events that struck Slotervaart and Slotervaart Muslims in particular. In October 2007, in a Slotervaart college, a boy of Turkish descent living in Osdorp (a neighbouring submunicipality) stabbed to death a boy of Moroccan descent living in Slotervaart. The media coverage by *De Volkskrant* and *Het Parool* was fairly low-key (after a first sensational headline by *Het Parool*). Many articles took the perspective of the students, focusing on how they digested the death of their friend and the fact that this awful incident happened at their school. The ethnic background of the boys concerned was not mentioned,[199] in conformity with the Manual of the Journalists' Council (Leidraad van de Raad voor de Journalistiek), which states that a journalist mentions ethnic descent, nationality, race, religion and sexual inclination only if this is necessary in the context of the news event.[200]

There was a very different tone from the media in its coverage of the incident involving Bilal B. In the days after his death, there was rioting in Slotervaart in which cars were set on fire by youngsters. This led to increased controls by the police. Bilal B had been under psychiatric treatment and earlier had been in contact with the terrorist Hofstad

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[196] For an overview, see the file at http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/dossiers/wildersfilm/index.html (accessed March 2009).

[197] See http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/3560701/_Angst_voor_moslimwoede__.html (accessed August 2008).

[198] See http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/dossiers/wildersfilm/030308wildersfilmchronolgie.html (accessed March 2009).

[199] Although the first names of the boys concerned were mentioned, which made them recognisable as belonging to non-western ethnic minorities.

[200] Broek and Keuzenkamp, *Het dagelijks leven*, p. 146.

group. In the first few days after the incident it was not clear whether this would become the story of failings of the Dutch psychiatric system in dealing with clients of non-western minorities,[201] or of Bilal B's connections with the Hofstad group. In the end the riots shifted the media agenda on to whether this meant the development of "Parisian situations" in Slotervaart. Media coverage also focused on the comments of the Amsterdam head of police's description of the young people involved in the riots as vermin "coming out of the sewer".[202] The media also focused on the comments of Marcouch about the problems created by youngsters in Slotervaart while giving little space to his advice to parents and young people not to be provoked and to stay calm and dignified. Although reporters from both SBS6 (a national commercial channel) and the Multicultural local channel MNTV went into the neighbourhood of Overtoomse Veld to speak to the local population during the days and nights after the event, the ways in which the reportages were shaped and the questions with which the reporters arrived in place determined the final outlook and tone of the media coverage.[203]

In general, it appears that apart from newspapers such as *De Telegraaf*, and commercial television channels such as SBS6, news coverage of Dutch Muslims and of issues related to Islam in the Netherlands is not particularly negative or one-dimensional, although sensation very often plays a role in direct news coverage, often corrected in further coverage and background reports. The challenge appears when some politicians are seen to utilise news about Muslims in the media to further their own agenda and discourse.

11.3 Reactions and Opinions of Muslims

The murder of Van Gogh, the film "Fitna" and the media coverage and political turmoil surrounding these events caused a great deal of anxiety among Muslims in the Netherlands. After the murder, Muslims were struck by the strong manifestations of hate against Muslims and Islam in the Amsterdam community. This is not to say that there were no manifestations of support for Muslims. But there was less coverage of this in the media. The media hype before the release of Wilders' movie caused unrest and uneasiness well as incomprehension among Muslims. Concerns focused on why the Dutch government would tolerate such a manifestation of hate against a group of Dutch citizens. The anxiety about the film was also expressed during the Foundations focus groups. Participants said that there was too much media focus on Slotervaart.

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[201] The parents of Bilal B had insisted on the seriousness of his illness but this had apparently not received the attention required.

[202] See http://www.nu.nl/algemeen/1278026/welten-alert-op-parijse-toestanden-in-slotervaart-video.html (accessed March 2009).

[203] Public debate about media coverage of the events in Slotervaart in the Argan youth centre, Amsterdam., November 2007.

Many wished to be left alone to live their lives without being constantly bothered by journalists.

Most of the media coverage during this period of waiting for the premiere of Wilders' movie was on Muslims' anxiety and incomprehension. The light-hearted campaign "A Hug for Wilders" (Knuffel voor Wilders), for instance, got much less attention. This campaign had been initiated by a website group at marokko.nl and Academica Islamica,[204] stating tongue-in-cheek that Wilders "most probably has had too little love and caring during his childhood". The MP Samira Bouchtibi symbolically offered her colleague a teddy bear during a public meeting and a website was opened on which people could leave their virtual hug for Wilders.

Before and after the film, some 40 complaints were received by the judiciary about Wilders, for instance from the Collaborative Council of Moroccans in the Netherlands (Samenwerkingsverband Marokkanen in Nederland) and the anti-discrimination movement Nederland bekent kleur. However, the judiciary declared the complaints unfounded as Wilders' criticisms were not directed at Muslims but at Islam.[205]

It is worth noting that while many Muslims of Moroccan descent feel discriminated against by media coverage, of the 34 complaints of media-related discrimination reported to the Amsterdam Discrimination Office in 2007, none was submitted by people of Moroccan descent. Two were put forward by people of Turkish descent. The large majority, however, were from native Dutch (27).[206]

11.4 Local Policies and Initiatives to Improve Media Coverage of Muslims

The municipality, through its various action programmes, aims to contribute to a realistic and more positive representation of the various population groups among Amsterdam citizens, and to show that the city council works with people and society towards a city that is tolerant of and inhabitable by all citizens. It does so by showing diversity in its public campaigns; the sponsoring of a multicultural soap series called "Westside" on the local TV broadcasting organisation AT5; the support of a project in which young Muslims carry out a media scan on the ways in which Muslims and/or Islam are portrayed in the media. For journalists, a workshop was organised as well.[207]

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[204] Academica Islamica is a Dutch Foundation that aims to contribute to a better knowledge about Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands, in order to contribute to their fully-fledged acceptance and participation in Dutch society. See http://www.cheppih.nl/ (accessed August 2009).

[205] See http://www.nos.nl/nosjournaal/artikelen/2008/6/30/300608_wilders.html (accessed August 2009).

[206] Stichting Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam, *Jaarverslag 2006/2007* (*Annual Report 2006/2007*).

[207] PAS, *Amsterdam tegen radicalisering* (Amsterdam against radicalisation). Gemeente Amsterdam, Platform Amsterdam Samen, Amsterdam, 2007.

Grants have been awarded for activities that aim to enhance the representation of different groups in the media as well, via the Desk for the Notification of Good Ideas (see Chapter 10.3).

In AT5 a journalist created a project to improve media coverage of diversity and to make AT5 more attuned to the wishes and needs of minorities in Amsterdam. The journalist was successful in that contacts and networking by representatives of these groups have been greatly improved, but the challenge still remains in mainstreaming diversity and to embed a diversity perspective more structurally and durably in the organisation.[208]

Finally, statements such as that made by the mayor about the media circus surrounding "Fitna", mentioned above, can also be considered as part of efforts to promote a more balanced news coverage for Amsterdam citizens and particularly Muslim citizens.

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[208] Foundations interview, January 2009.

12. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF MUSLIMS

12.1 Identity, Belonging and Interaction

For many Amsterdam Muslims, being Muslim is an important part of their identity but it is not the only or most crucial aspect of their identity. Muslims are citizens of Amsterdam, youths and adults, male and female, students and professionals, appreciative of art, fans of sports and members of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Whilst it is important that the Islamic component of their identity is taken seriously, it is equally important that they are not only addressed as Muslims. All other parts of their identity are considered equally relevant. Muslims themselves indicate that they do not want to be categorised in any one fixed category. The Amsterdam municipality focuses on people's identity as Amsterdam citizens as an integrated identity in which other identities, such as religious, ethnic and sexual identity, can find a place as well. This is also visible in the many public campaigns dotted around the city. While this is an effective policy approach, it only works if it is supplemented by other initiatives that are geared towards fighting discrimination in Amsterdam society. This is done, among other things, by the Amsterdam Anti-discrimination Bureau and by educational programmes. Local municipal policies, however, are not only thwarted by the discriminating behaviour of local social actors – citizens, enterprises, etc – but also by the categorisations in the national media and political debates. Local administrators sometimes publicly take a stance against these practices, but could do so more strongly.

Many Muslims surveyed frequently interact with people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, but this happens mainly during work and school hours. During leisure activities, interaction is still substantive, but much less. People indicate that they feel the need for greater interaction. Funds granted under the campaign "Wij Amsterdammers" require that activities should include people from different backgrounds, which can promote this objective. Enhancing interaction is further targeted by initiatives to counter residential segregation. In other areas, such as in education (active promoting of mixed schools) and leisure, more initiatives could be taken.

12.2 Education

There is concern among Muslims about segregation in schools. In primary schools the segregation is the consequence of patterns of residential settlement, and it is here that the municipality tries to fight segregation. In 2003, it published research into the possibilities of formulating policy to counter educational segregation, illustrating the intention to do something about it, but up till now no clear policies have emerged. It has mostly been left up to schools and individual parents to take action.

Other initiatives, be it by the municipality, submunicipality, schools or civil-society actors, to enhance the educational careers of pupils of non western ethnic-minority

backgrounds have been more visible and successful, such as creating different types of mentoring and role models to stimulate these pupils, initiatives to broaden pupils' perspectives and efforts to increase parents' involvement in their children's school careers. In contrast to these mostly local policies and initiatives, at the national level legislation for education has often been to the disadvantage of non-native pupils.

The law in several ways supports the provision of Muslims' religious education. Besides Muslim faith-based schools, in which Muslim religious education is integrated, the law stipulates that religious education should be provided in public schools, a fact which up till now maybe largely unknown to Muslim parents. Muslim religious education outside the regular school context is mostly outside the scope of local policies. Both issues have recently been put on the agenda by Slotervaart's submunicipality president. The way in which they have been debated, however, has not left much room for the wishes and needs of ordinary Muslim parents and pupils to be considered.

It is important to stress that, contrary to public opinion, many Muslim pupils do very well in education. Successful educational careers could be made more visible by local policymakers and the media, not as an exception, but as an evident social process taking place within Muslim communities in the Netherlands.

12.3 Employment

More than 30 per cent of Muslim households in Amsterdam have to live on the minimum income. This should change as second-generation Muslim migrants successfully enter the labour market. The main problems, however, remain discrimination in entry to the labour market and the lack of language proficiency of many first-generation Muslim migrants, which seriously hampers their chances of finding employment. The Amsterdam Anti-discrimination Bureau and the National Equal Treatment Commission are quite successful in settling cases of discrimination in the labour market, but it seems that the municipality is doing less well in language training. There seems to be more concern with the numbers of people taking courses than with the quality of the courses and their suitability for different categories of migrants.

12.4 Housing

Many Muslims in Slotervaart complain about levels of residential segregation. The municipal plan for urban renewal can be seen as part of the response to this, and is thus a positive development. The way in which this plan is executed, however, raises many questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of the communication between the residents, the (sub)municipality and the housing corporations. It seems that communication is interpreted as following procedures, and does not centre on the readiness to inform people and to be informed by them. However, other (most often small-scale) projects, such as an elderly home for Muslims, seem to be developed more in dialogue with Muslim stakeholders.

12.5 Health and Social Protection

In the past few years many hospitals in Amsterdam have improved their facilities for Muslims, such as prayer rooms and the serving of halal food. Some hospitals, especially those in areas with a large population of ethnic minorities, organise special consultancy hours for Moroccan or Turkish diabetes patients run by a Moroccan or Turkish nurse. But research nevertheless suggests that for diabetes (Turkish and Moroccan diabetes patients are not as well informed as native Dutch patients), mental health (Turkish and Moroccan people use less anti-depressant medication) and health problems encountered by older people (Turkish and Moroccan people report more limitations to their lifestyles because of their diseases than native Dutch patients), the Dutch health-care system may not work effectively for non-native Dutch patients. The problem of language and culture is acknowledged by many in the regular health-care system and some projects have been designed by the Municipal Health Service to counter this. Family doctors, in particular, may experience the barrier of language and culture quite strongly, but they are often overburdened with patients and have little time to search for structural solutions. Organisations that have been founded to work interculturally, such as I-Psy and SIZIN, appear to have important approaches to contribute. As these initiatives are quite recent, it is to be hoped that their experiences and insights will progressively extend to other actors in the field of health and social protection as well.

12.6 Policing and Security

The police in Amsterdam and in Slotervaart, in particular, have invested time and effort into improving the relationships with local residents and building trust in the police force among the population. The neighbourhood directors have worked to build good relationships with key individuals in the area and they may provide information on what happens in the neighbourhood to the police, and explain police action to people in their own environments. In Slotervaart, particularly since Marcouch became the submunicipality president, active collaboration exists between the submunicipality, the police and the mosque. The mosque is being engaged by the police to give information about actions and measures taken by them. In several recent instances of perceived crisis, this has worked well.

Although the neighbourhood directors are appreciated, many Muslims report that the police do not react properly when a person contacts them to report a crime or disorder.

The police have started a campaign in order to attract more members of ethnic minorities to the force, among other things in order to enhance trust and to be able to work more effectively. It appears, however, that for minorities the atmosphere and the career opportunities within the police force are still not very favourable, and there is a large turnover in non-native staff. Some progress is being made: Marcouch himself left the Amsterdam police force a couple of years ago, when he could not become a spokesperson for the police because, it was said, the time was not yet ready for a non-native in such a position. Recently, a police officer of Moroccan background was hired.

12.7 Participation and Citizenship

Muslims who are Dutch citizens have the same rights as other Dutch citizens to fully participate in Dutch society, but recently, with the growth of a polarised atmosphere in society and politics, many feel that they are not considered equal citizens and are being denied their place in society. In Amsterdam, the murder of the film-maker Theo van Gogh by a young Muslim in 2004 brought tension in the city to a head. In the face of the threat of a progressive polarisation between different groups and particularly between Muslims and non-Muslims, the Amsterdam municipality drafted the action plan Wij Amsterdammers. While at the municipal level policies for inclusion are still very much directed towards ethnic minorities and other minority groups, in Slotervaart policies have been formulated that are explicitly directed towards Muslims. The diversity of the Muslim communities means that it is often difficult to find consensus across Muslim communities on the actions that should be taken; as a consequence many of them perceive these policies as enforced on them.

The municipality has recently begun to rethink the role of civil-society organisations. Whereas from the 1990s onwards structural subsidies for migrant and other organisations had been replaced by subsidies for projects directed towards the inclusion of individual citizens, it is being realised now that investing in stable and sustainable civil-society organisations is important, and that for this more structural subsidies are needed. A more flexible fund to support small-scale initiatives by citizens, groups of citizens and organisations in the fields of integration, inclusion and diversity has been set up. These forms of subsidy offer more diverse opportunities for groups of Muslims to shape their participation in society than has been the case for the last ten years, but it remains to be seen whether these initiatives will be used by different categories of Muslims.

12.8 Role of the Media

At present in the Netherlands, where straight talking has progressively become more common, national and local administrators face the difficult task of reconciling their obligations to ensure the freedom of press and to protect citizens from discrimination. In this context, Amsterdam municipality's involvement with the media is at least threefold: first, it tries to ensure that the media reflects the diversity in the city and depicts Muslims as normal citizens, and that minority groups have the opportunity to express themselves in the media. Second, it also uses the media for getting its message of tolerance across, for instance by the sponsoring of a multicultural soap series. Third, it tries to help citizens to develop a critical attitude towards the media and their messages, through a project for Muslim youth to make them media-wise. However, in view of the crucial role the media play in influencing feelings of inclusion and exclusion among Muslims, the projects developed appear to be qualitatively good but quantitatively still marginal.

13. CONCLUSION

This study confirms first and foremost that there is great diversity among the Muslims in Amsterdam and Slotervaart: different ethnic backgrounds; experiences as first- or second-generation migrants; adherence to different Islamic sects; and an urban or rural upbringing. Some are highly educated people while others do not have basic qualifications; some households live on minimum wages while others are wealthy two-income households. For some, Islam is the most important part of their identity, and there are others for whom their dominant identity is as a Dutch citizen, a Moroccan or an Amsterdammer. Muslims are social workers, cleaners, police officers, housewives or computer specialists; some bear visible signs of their faith while others do not. Generalisations of Muslims as one homogeneous group with a shared culture, ethnicity and social background cannot be made.

The data also suggest that, in addition to this diversity, a division within the Muslim communities in Amsterdam can be discerned between a group that is successfully participating in Dutch society on the one hand, and on the other a deprived group that is often only marginally taking part in Dutch society.

Despite this divergence, Muslims in Slotervaart generally feel at home in their neighbourhood, and their attachment to their neighbourhood is quite strong, especially when compared with non-Muslims. Further, many Muslims in Amsterdam feel they belong in the city, and more so than in the Netherlands as a country. In addition, Muslims have a relatively strong confidence in the municipality administration, in contrast to their confidence in national politics. This makes it all the more clear that for questions of inclusion, participation and citizenship, the local level is a crucial one, as it is here where identification primarily takes place and where essential social bonds are established.

Socio-economic exclusion remains a central obstacle to the participation and integration of Muslims in Slotervaart, including residential and educational segregation and problems connected to income levels and entrance to the labour market. Despite the fact that many Muslims appreciate living among residents with the same religious or ethnic background, most Muslims consider residential segregation undesirable, because they feel it hampers their integration into Dutch society and their access to services and opportunities.

While socio-economic exclusion is a problem that groups of Muslims share with other groups in society, problems of acceptance of important parts of their identity are experienced particularly strongly by many Muslims, and are very much due to the polarised public debate at the national level and stigmatising media coverage. Even Muslims who are highly educated and have a good job may feel this as something inhibiting their real integration.

Muslims have started to formulate responses to the anti-Muslim and anti-Islam discourse, varying from playful campaigns and initiatives to registering complaints; at

various levels in the Muslim communities steps have been taken to encourage defences against felt provocations in the press and politics. Attacks on Islam and on Muslims are felt as hurtful. Muslims react in a variety of ways to this; some Muslims become politically active and enter into dialogue among themselves and with others in Dutch society, while others retreat and become isolated.

Important initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue in Slotervaart have been taken by migrant, Muslim and other private organisations. The municipality and the police force have also understood the need for a heterogeneous workforce and are trying to diversify their staff. Much remains to be done in this field, however.

In general, the Amsterdam Slotervaart case may be instructive for other cities and serve as an example of how to build policies embodying a positive approach to Islam, the religion of some of its citizens and residents. It also shows, however, that municipal policies do not exist in a vacuum but that their effects are influenced by attitudes towards Islam circulating at the national level and ventilated in the media. The effectiveness of local policies based on acceptance is thus hampered by a national political climate in which anti-Muslim discourse sets the tone.

Furthermore, a positive approach to Islam and a policy attitude geared towards dialogue is not sufficient in itself. Tackling other concerns of Muslims in Slotervaart, such as educational segregation, access to work opportunities and discrimination, are equally important. Not Islam per se, but socio-economic exclusion and stigmatisation, are among the most important barriers to integration. The municipality appears to have understood the first; now it is time to work hard on the latter.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are aimed at local and national policymakers, Muslim communities and civil society organisations. They reflect key findings from the report and address the need for further engagement by Amsterdam City Council with its myriad and growing communities. At the same time, responsibility lies with communities to initiate actions and efforts which bring about change in policy, practice and behaviour. While recognising that Amsterdam offers a number of very positive practices on inclusion of its diverse communities, the report calls for policies to tackle socio-economic disadvantage and minority inclusion, so as to ensure that all groups that make up the diverse population of the city are consulted and that their specific needs are understood and accommodated.

14.1 Identity, Belonging and Interaction

1. The municipality of Amsterdam should undertake steps to address the experiences and perception of exclusion of Muslims in the social, economic and political spheres. Evidence based policy responses require capturing the specific experiences of Muslims through frequent and comprehensive monitoring and data collection.

2. The use of particular language by politicians and public figures about minority groups in society does have an impact on how these groups are viewed. Local government administrators in Amsterdam and across the Netherlands should challenge the often distorted images and negative labels applied to its Muslim and minority residents in the public sphere.

3. The municipality of Amsterdam should continue to support opportunities for better engagement and greater interaction among its diverse populations. For example, submunicipalities of Amsterdam should work with other actors, such as sports clubs and social centres, to develop projects which promote and stimulate inter-faith and inter-ethnic engagement through the use of sports, exchange visits and other leisure activities.

4. The Amsterdam authorities, both municipal and submunicipal, should also encourage Muslims to report cases of discrimination, by working with minority and Muslim civil society groups to raise awareness of existing complaints procedures.

14.2 Education

5. The municipality and submunicipality in Amsterdam should develop specific programmes to counter ethnic segregation in education. The municipality and submunicipality should stimulate and support schools and parents to develop initiatives to counter educational segregation. Furthermore, Schools should

organise exchange programmes with other schools, such as joint sports lessons or educational projects, as a means to stimulate contacts between pupils of different backgrounds. This should include pupils from comprehensive and private schools as well as from faith-based educational establishments.

6. In order to improve educational achievement the municipal authorities should to collect reliable, up-to-date and comprehensive data on the educational needs of and specific challenges for Muslim pupils. There should be specific training and strategies on raising the achievement levels among minority groups. Educational agencies should work with Muslim organisations in developing guidance and training opportunities for teachers in schools with large numbers of Muslim students, in order to better equip them meet their specific needs.

7. Schools with a large percentage of children from an immigrant background should establish a mentoring/role model programme with older pupils, university students and professionals.

8. The Ministry of Education should examine the education structure to ensure that there are different routes to reach higher levels of education. There should be a good connection between the VMBO and the MBO (preferably continuous), in order to lower the risk of pupils dropping out. It should also look at ways of restoring the MAVO-HAVO-HBO-WO route.

9. Schools and publishers should develop teaching materials (such as textbooks) in which the ethnic and religious diversity of Dutch society is well represented, and in which Muslims appear as ordinary Dutch citizens.

10. The national and local government should better inform schools and parents about the legal rules and regulations on religious and Islamic education in state schools.

14.3 Employment

11. Dutch-language training is essential for certain groups of minorities, including Muslims, in Amsterdam who currently have difficulties in accessing the labour market. Language courses should offer training adapted to people's levels of proficiency, needs and aspirations, and personal situations. Such an integral approach may be more costly and difficult to organise, but in the end it will be more effective. The municipality, in collaboration with the Centre for Work and Income (CWI), should integrate language training for unemployed people into a comprehensive approach to help them find work, so as to offer them an incentive for learning.

12. The municipality should continue to develop and enlarge its programmes for young people with immigrant backgrounds who currently have difficulties entering the labour market, by offering orientation on possible employment

careers, opportunities for internships, and facilitating positive contacts between businesses and young people.

13. Municipalities should plan and budget for long-term programmes to advance Muslim women's opportunities over successive years which should include activities that include engagement with stakeholders in Muslim communities such as mosques and Muslim organisations.

14. The government and national and local anti-discrimination offices should enhance their outreach to Muslim women to better inform them about the mechanisms and possibilities for reporting discrimination especially for those wearing a headscarf.

14.4 Housing

15. The municipal authorities should monitor policies which target neighbourhoods which are part of physical rehabilitation or urban renewal plans. The planning and implementation process should consider the social, economic and cultural demands of the neighbourhood and strive to be influenced by the residents. Particular attention is needed for effective communication between local housing corporations and contractors during the process of urban renewal in which reliable and up-to-date information on the policies and plans are available to local residents.

16. The municipal authorities and housing corporations should ensure that up-to-date and better information about housing schemes and opportunities are widely available and easily accessible to populations living in deprived and/or isolated circumstances. Information should be made available in different languages and in suitable spots, like religious and cultural places such as the mosque or local immigrant organisations' venues.

14.5 Health

17. Health-care professionals and policymakers should conduct further research on the health needs of those with poorest health and evaluate existing communications strategies. Such strategies will ensure that pre-emptive measures are taken on serious health issues which require long term care and planning.

18. The health service, local and national, should explore various entry points to improve health services for non-native Dutch communities: approaches using cultural and religious avenues should be especially considered including the offering of culturally adapted information to patients, and intermediation between patients and health providers if the need arises.

14.6   Policing and Security

19. The Amsterdam police should maintain and further schemes and projects in other areas of the city based on the Slotervaart model which builds trust between the police and communities. This model fosters dialogue and involves Muslim actors, such as the mosque, in their communications with the neighbourhood. Involving Muslim actors should not be instrumental for reaching goals predefined by the municipality, police, and other decision makers but should be done with the intention of building greater understanding for all concerned.

20. The police should further engage with communities to proactively raise awareness and discussions of sensitive aspects of policing, such as stop-and-search and anti –terror raids, and should clarify guidelines for these procedures. Mechanisms for informing communities of police operations would enhance the impact of the police force's good practice in building community links, helping to build police trust and giving communities more of a stake in policing.

21. The Anti-Discrimination Bureau and police should develop a concerted awareness and information campaign which encourages people who have experienced discrimination by police officers to report their concerns. The police should establish a reasonable period within which a complaint will be dealt with, as the current procedure taking between one and a half and three years is unreasonably long.

22. Muslim civil-society organisations should support individuals by offering advice and guidance to those who need assistance on understanding the procedures for filing a complaint with the police in the event of being a victim of a crime.

14.7   Participation and Citizenship

23. The Amsterdam approach of focusing on a shared local identity is an effective strategy to stimulate inclusion and participation and could be an example of best practice for other municipalities and cities. However, in order to fight discrimination and polarisation in society, public campaigns should be supported by concrete policies and actions.

24. Policies geared towards promoting and protecting diversity in a city should not only focus on diversity concerning different ethnic and religious groups but also recognise diversity within ethnic and religious communities.

25. Local policymakers should recognise that community cohesion is inclusive and not limited to relations between minority groups and the majority population. For example, work on cohesion may involve building trust and interactions

across different Muslim communities such as the Turkish and Moroccan communities.

26. Muslim organisations, mosques and leaders should promote the importance of citizenship more strongly and encourage individuals to take up more roles in civic forums and platforms in the city, for instance as parent governors, and have greater engagement with agencies such as museums, libraries and neighbourhood groups.

14.8   Media

27. Journalists should explore ways of improving networking with Muslim communities in order to enhance their reporting of and for Muslims. Initiatives to be encouraged could include co-production efforts between mainstream and Muslim or minority journalists and outlets, cooperative reporting projects between professional journalists and citizens from Muslim communities, the production of high quality information about Muslim communities and a directory of Muslim related organisations and experts.

28. Media should consider Muslims not as mere objects of media coverage but also as media users. This means that they should not only develop programmes reporting about Muslims, but also take Muslims seriously as target groups for programmes, journals, etc. Muslims should, for instance, be included in media consumer panels as well as support offered for media audience research for Muslim communities.

29. Balanced and fair media coverage of Muslim issues should be recognised, promoted and supported. A best reporting practices prize or establishment of good coverage should be considered.

30. Broadcasting organisations, newspapers and publishing houses should take steps to ensure their boards are representative of the diversity of Dutch society.

31. Journalism schools should pay more attention to societal diversity in their curriculum, and include reflection on the ethical sides of reporting and anti-discrimination training, as well.

32. Muslim organisations and representatives of Muslim communities should invest in media training and strategic communication in order to be able to express their points of view clearly, and to make more efficient use of possibilities offered by the media.

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Stichting Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam The Foundation for the Reporting of
Discrimination Amsterdam. *Jaarverslag 2006/2007 (Yearly Report 2006/2007)*.
Amsterdam: Stichting Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam, 2007, available at
http://www.meldpunt-amsterdam.nl/docs/Jaarverslag%2006-07.pdf

ANNEX 2. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Esma Çürük	Social Investment Programme (SIP)
Ahmet Danburaci	Imam, Aya Sofia mosque
Yassin Elforkani	Youth imam, El Umma mosque
Ismael Ercan	Director/President, STOC (Foundation Turkish Education Centre)
Ouafila Essayah	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Fatima el Houfi	Social Investment Programme (SIP)
Atusa Lalizadeh	Women's Work and Empowerment Centre (Vlam)
Marcel Maussen	Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES), University of Amsterdam
Margreet Muller	Director for Wellbeing and Education, submunicipality of Slotervaart
Mehmet Okuducu	Deputy Principal HAVO/VWO Islamic College, Amsterdam
Zoe Papaikonomou	Journalist, AT5
Moustafa Rahali,	Neighbourhood director (Buurtregisseur), Overtoomse Veld Noord
Sjaak Ruiter	Submunicipality Secretary (Stadsdeel secretaries), Slotervaart
John Schuster	Member, Slotervaart Think-tank
Jessica Silversmith	Director Anti-Discrimination Bureau, Amsterdam
Judith Suurmond	Service for Social Development (Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, DMO), Amsterdam
Raci Topal	Foundation of Intercultural Care Counsellors in the Netherlands (Stichting Interculturele zorgconsulenten Nederland, SIZIN)

ANNEX 3. LIST OF RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS[209]

Key Muslim and non Muslim civil-society organisations, policymakers, opinion-formers and others of importance

Amsterdam

Municipality

Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling (DMO)
Postbus 1840
1000BV Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 552 2222
Fax: 020 552 3393
Email: info@dmo.amsterdam.nl

Platform Amsterdam Samen (PAS)
Postbus 1158
1000 BD Amsterdam
Tel.: (020) 251 8622
Fax: 020 251 8630
Email: pas@pas.amsterdam.nl

Miscellaneous

I-Psy Amsterdam
Jan van Galenstraat 335
1061 AZ Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 589 49 99

MTNL (Multiculturele Televisie Nederland)
Weteringschans 84/C
1017 XR Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 535 35 35
Fax: 020 330 40 80

Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders, afdeling Amsterdam
Rijswijkstraat 175
1062 EV Amsterdam

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[209] The listed organisations and individuals do not constitute all Muslim and non-discrimination organisations and individuals based in Amsterdam. These have been chosen either due to their involvement or consultation during the research process of this report or because of their public profile. The omission of other organisations does not point to an absence of relevance of their work.

Tel.: 020 610 3212
Email: ncbamsterdam@ncbnet.nl

Stichting Interculturele Zorgconsulenten Nederland (SIZIN)
Jan den Haenstraat 22 hs
1055 WE Amsterdam
Tel.: 06 2425 1472
Email: rt@sizin.nl

Stichting Islamitisch Centrum Nederland
Tweede van Swindenstraat 208
1093 XA Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 668 5000

Stichting Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam
Postbus 15514
1001 NA Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 638 5551
discriminatie@meldpunt-amsterdam.nl

Stichting Sammas
NieuweAchtergracht 17
1018 XV Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 419 7167/020 694 1854
Email: info@sammas.nl

Stichting Sociaal-culturele Vereniging Milli Görüs Noord-Nederland
Zuidermolenweg 27
1069 CE Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 618 2452
Email: info@milligorus.nl

Unie van Marokkaanse Moskeeen in Amsterdam en Omstreken (UMMAO)
Email: Ummao1@gmail.com

Unie van Marokkaanse Moslimorganisaties in Nederland
Weesperzijde 74
1091 EH Amsterdam

Slotervaart

Submunicipality

A. Marcouch, submunicipality president
Submunicipality of Slotervaart
Pieter Calandlaan 1
1065 KH Amsterdam
Tel.: 020 14020

Jongerenadviesraad (Youth Advisory Council)
  Het jongerenactiepunt
  t.a.v. Jongerenraad Slotervaart
  Derkinderenstraat 94
  1061 VX Amsterdam
  Tel.: 020 798 9133

Sociaal Investeringsprogramma (SIP)
  Jan Tooropstraat 73–75
  1066 AA Amsterdam
  Tel.: 020 411 4596

Miscellaneous

Poldermoskee
  Jacques Veldmanstraat 463
  1065 Amsterdam
  Tel.: 06 11 113 044
  Email: info@poldermoskee.eu

Stichting Al Mawadda
  Marius Bauerstraat 34
  1062 AR Amsterdam

Stichting Islamitisch Sociaal Cultureel Centrum (ISCC)
  Postjesweg 179
  1062 JN Amsterdam
  Tel.: 020 617 9542

Stichting el Mohammedia/el Nour
  Jan Evertsenstraat 201
  1061 XM Amsterdam
  Tel.: 06 2452 7626/06 5437 5741

Stichting Nisa for Nisa
  MariusBauerstraat 36
  1062 AR Amsterdam
  Tel.: 020 411 1603/06 2027 6775
  Email: info@stichtingnisafornisa.nl

Stichting Turks Onderwijs Centrum (STOC)
  Johan Huizingalaan 80
  1065 JD Amsterdam
  Tel.: 020 669 9079/06 5539 4698
  Email: stoc@hetnet.nl

Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly-arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with challenges and opportunities. The crucial tests facing Europe's commitment to open society will be how it treats minorities such as Muslims and ensures equal rights for all in a climate of rapidly expanding diversity.

The Open Society Foundations' At Home in Europe project is working to address these issues through monitoring and advocacy activities that examine the position of Muslims and other minorities in Europe. One of the project's key efforts is this series of reports on Muslim communities in the 11 EU cities of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Leicester, London, Marseille, Paris, Rotterdam, and Stockholm. The reports aim to increase understanding of the needs and aspirations of diverse Muslim communities by examining how public policies in selected cities have helped or hindered the political, social, and economic participation of Muslims.

By fostering new dialogue and policy initiatives between Muslim communities, local officials, and international policymakers, the At Home in Europe project seeks to improve the participation and inclusion of Muslims in the wider society while enabling them to preserve the cultural, linguistic, and religious practices that are important to their identities.

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