

AT HOME IN  
**EUROPE**



# Muslims in Antwerp



# Muslims in Antwerp

At Home in Europe Project

©2011 Open Society Foundations

This publication is available as a pdf on the Open Society Foundations website under a Creative Commons license that allows copying and distributing the publication, only in its entirety, as long as it is attributed to the Open Society Foundations and used for noncommercial educational or public policy purposes.  
Photographs may not be used separately from the publication.

ISBN: 978-1-936133-05-5

Published by

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

400 West 59th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
USA

For more information contact:

AT HOME IN EUROPE PROJECT

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION

100 Cambridge Grove  
W6 0LE London  
UK

Website

[www.soros.org/initiatives/home](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/home)

*Cover Photograph by © Chris de Bode for the Open Society Foundations*

*Cover design by Ahlgrim Design Group*

*Layout by Q.E.D. Publishing*

*Printed in Hungary*

*Printed on CyclusOffset paper produced from 100% recycled fibres.*

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	5
Preface .....	7
Muslims in Antwerp .....	9
List of Abbreviations .....	14
Definitions and Terminology .....	15
Executive Summary .....	18
1. Introduction .....	22
2. Population and Demographics .....	30
3. City Policy .....	39
4. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Identity, Belonging and Interaction .....	45
5. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Education .....	62
6. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Employment .....	79
7. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Housing .....	89
8. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Health and Social Protection .....	94
9. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Policing and Security .....	101
10. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Participation and Citizenship .....	107
11. Experiences of Muslim Communities: The Role of the Media .....	117
12. Conclusions .....	122
13. Recommendations .....	125
Annex 1. Bibliography .....	131
Annex 2. List of Stakeholders Interviewed .....	140
Annex 3. List of the chief Muslim and non-Muslim civil society organisations .....	141

## 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; Norrebro, Copenhagen; Hamburg-Mitte, Hamburg; Evington, Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Leicester; 3<sup>rd</sup> Arrondissement, Marseille; 18<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement, Paris; Feijenoord, Rotterdam; Jarvafältet, Stockholm; the London Borough of Waltham Forest, London.

The report has been prepared by the At Home in Europe project of the Open Society Foundations in cooperation with local/national experts. The At Home in Europe Project would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals who have been engaged with the research since 2008. This report was written by Noel Clycq.

Noel Clycq

*Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies,  
University of Antwerp, Belgium*

Professor Christiane Timmerman, Lecturer and Director of Migration and Intercultural Studies (CeMIS), University of Antwerp, has been instrumental throughout all stages of this report for which we are highly appreciative.

Under the supervision of Noel Clycq the interviews and focus groups were conducted by a team based in Antwerp. The team was comprised of the following individuals: Annabel Heyse, Anne Bausart, Bilal Alou Issa, Elke Hawwash, Laila Alou Issa, Latifa El Morabit, Nadia Babazia, Narges Laamimach, Tarik Hammouti, Ineke Adriaens.

In June 2009, the Open Society Foundations held a closed roundtable meeting in Antwerp inviting critique and commentary on the draft report. We are grateful to the many participants who generously offered their time and expertise. These include representatives of Antwerp and district administration, minority and various civil society organisations, academic experts, and relevant experts. The roundtable was organised by the University of Antwerp to whom we would like to offer particular thanks.

The following people and institutions are acknowledged and thanked for their contribution to the report by being available for interviews, providing information or research, or reviewing and critiquing drafts of the report:

Fekri Saida El, BOEH (Boss Over Own Head) – Sam Mampaey, De8 vzw, Rika Pauwels De8 vzw, Anna Van der Borght, De8 vzw – Hugo Ongena, Elcker-Ik Volkshogeschool (educational institution), Kwaku Acheampong, Federation for Anglophone Africans in Belgium – Mohamed Chakkar, Federation for Moroccans

Associations – Ico Maly, Kifkif – Naima Charkaoui, Center for Minorities – Emmanuel Biniamu Nganga, Center for African Communities – Omar Ba, Center for African Communities – Elauan Najim, Center for Migrant Youth – Lief Vogels, Community Development of the City of Antwerp – Billy Kalonji, Community Development of the City of Antwerp – Sedat Kaya, Union for Turkish associations – Youssef Souissi, Association for Development and Emancipation of Muslims – Tine Debosscher, Flemish Centre of Minorities – Cheba Lamia, Center for Migrant Girls and Women – Abdelmajid Choukri, Student Focus – Davy Verhard, Centre for Equality and Race Relations – Monica De Coninck, Antwerp City Council – Hind Frahi, Antwerp City Council – François Vermeulen, Local Police Antwerp – Winand De Smet, Province Antwerp – Anissa Akhandaf, Police Officer, Diversity Management of City of Antwerp – Andre Van Hauwermeiren, VDAB (regional employment agency) – Bart Van Schel, VDAB (regional employment agency) – Gust De Preter, VSKO (Catholic school community) – Patrick Van de Perre, Journalist “Gazet van Antwerp” (local newspaper) – Sacha Van de Wiele, Journalist “Gazet van Antwerp” (local newspaper) – Hemdane Mouloud, Chairman District Council Borgerhout.

A number of other individuals, based in Antwerp, also agreed to be interviewed by the Open Society Foundations Office of Communications team, to whom we offer thanks.

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

### **Open Society Foundations Team**

Nazia Hussain (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Director</i>
Tufyal Choudhury (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Senior Policy Advisor</i>
Klaus Dik Nielsen (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Advocacy Officer</i>
Hélène Irving (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Programme Coordinator</i>
Andrea Gurubi Watterson (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Programme Officer</i>
Csilla Tóth (At Home in Europe Project)	<i>Programme Assistant</i>

## 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.

# Muslims in Antwerp

## Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations .....	14
Definitions and Terminology .....	15
Executive Summary .....	18
1. Introduction .....	22
1.1 Methodology .....	23
1.2 National Flemish Policy .....	24
2. Population and Demographics .....	30
2.1 Muslims in Antwerp and Borgerhout .....	31
2.2 Migration History and Settlement Patterns .....	34
2.3 Issues of Citizenship and Access to Citizenship .....	35
2.4 Islam in Belgium and Flanders .....	37
3. City Policy .....	39
3.1 Initiatives for Inclusion and Integration .....	39
3.2 Administrative Structures in Antwerp .....	41
3.3 Administrative Structure for Key Social Areas .....	42
4. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Identity, Belonging and Interaction .....	45
4.1 Identity .....	45
4.2 Belonging .....	52
4.3 Interaction .....	53
4.4 Discrimination .....	58
5. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Education .....	62
5.1 Categorisation of Migrant Pupils .....	62
5.2 The School Careers of Migrant Pupils in Belgium and Flanders .....	63
5.3 Education in Antwerp and Borgerhout Intra Muros .....	65
5.4 Muslim Experiences of the Flemish Educational System .....	68
5.5 Language .....	73
5.6 Respect for Religion in the Educational System .....	75
5.7 Muslim Schools .....	76
5.8 Initiatives to Improve Inclusion in Education .....	78

---

6. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Employment .....	79
6.1 The Employment Situation of Muslims in Flanders and Belgium .....	79
6.2 Barriers to the Labour Market .....	83
7. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Housing .....	89
7.1 Housing Policy Initiatives .....	93
8. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Health and Social Protection .....	94
8.1 The Overall Health Status of Belgians and Ethnic Minorities .....	94
8.2 Personal Experiences with Health Institutions in Antwerp .....	96
8.3 The Future of the Health-care System in Antwerp .....	99
9. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Policing and Security .....	101
9.1 The High-tension Context of Antwerp and Borgerhout .....	101
9.2 Satisfaction with Security and Policing .....	102
10. Experiences of Muslim Communities: Participation and Citizenship .....	107
10.1 Political Participation .....	107
10.2 Levels of Institutional Trust .....	110
10.3 Civic Feeling .....	113
10.4 Efforts to Improve the Participation of Muslims in Decision-making Processes .....	115
11. Experiences of Muslim Communities: The Role of the Media .....	117
11.1 Media Coverage of Minorities and Islam .....	117
11.2 Media and Minorities in Antwerp .....	119
11.3 Efforts to Improve Relations between Muslims and the Media .....	121
12. Conclusions .....	122
13. Recommendations .....	125
13.1 Discrimination .....	125
13.2 Education .....	125
13.3 Employment .....	126

13.4 Housing .....	127
13.5 Health Care and Social Protection .....	127
13.6 Policing and Security .....	128
13.7 Participation and Citizenship .....	128
13.8 Media .....	129
Annex 1. Bibliography .....	131
Annex 2. List of Stakeholders Interviewed .....	140
Annex 3. List of the chief Muslim and non-Muslim civil society organisations .....	141

## Index of Tables

Table 1. Data sample for the Open Society Foundations research questionnaires .....	24
Table 2. Population according to the combined data from the population and alien register .....	31
Table 3. Population composition according to ethnic background, % .....	32
Table 4. Population composition according to national background, % .....	33
Table 5. Ethnic origin of non-EU individuals, % .....	33
Table 6. Employment rates among 18–64-year-olds, % .....	34
Table 7. What do you think is the main barrier to being Belgian? .....	48
Table 8. Do you feel at home in the neighbourhood? .....	54
Table 9. Educational achievement of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents .....	68
Table 10. How satisfied are you with primary education? .....	69
Table 11. How satisfied are you with secondary education? .....	69
Table 12. Are you at this moment employed and do you receive a wage? .....	82
Table 13. Respondents' employment by sector .....	83
Table 14. Experience of discrimination when looking for a job in Antwerp .....	84
Table 15. Experience of discrimination in the work environment in Antwerp .....	85
Table 16. Sources of discrimination in the work environment in Antwerp .....	85
Table 17. Do you own or rent your home or do you have other living arrangements? .....	90
Table 18. Years living in the neighbourhood .....	91
Table 19. Have you sought information on health in the past year? .....	96
Table 20. Levels of informal political participation and political interest among Belgians, Turks and Moroccans .....	109

Table 21. Participation of Turks and Moroccans in ethnic and cross-ethnic organisations ..... 113

## Index of Figures

Figure 1. Distribution of students in secondary education ..... 66

## List of Abbreviations

AEL	European Arab League
ATV	Antwerp Television
AVBB	<i>Algemene Vereniging van Beroepsjournalisten in België</i> (General Association of Journalists in Belgium) now split into Flemish- and French-speaking unions
BEM	Borgerhout Extra Muros
BIM	Borgerhout Intra Muros
CD&V	<i>Christendemocratisch &amp; Vlaams</i> (Christian Democratic & Flemish), formerly one party with N-VA, split in September 2008
CD&V/N-VA	Coalition of Christian Democrats and Flemish, (CD &V) and New Flemish Alliance, (N-VA)
DEO	Decree on equal opportunities (Gelijke Onderwijskansen Decreet)
EEO	Equal educational opportunities (Gelijke onderwijskansen)
ICC	Islamic Cultural Centre
N-VA	<i>Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie</i> (New Flemish Alliance), formerly one party with CD&V, split in September 2008
OCMW	<i>Openbare Centra voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn</i> (Public Centre for Community Welfare)
PCP	<i>Parti de la Citoyenneté et de la Prospérité</i> (Party for Citizenship and Prosperity)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PVDA	<i>Partij Van De Arbeid</i> (Workers Party of Belgium)
VDAB	<i>Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding</i> (Flemish Public Employment and Vocational Training Service)
VLOTT	<i>Vlaams Liberaal Onafhankelijk Tolerant Transparent</i> (Flemish, Liberal, Independent, Tolerant, Transparent)
VLD-VIVANT	<i>Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten</i> (Flemish Liberals and Democrats), named Open VLD since 11 February 2007)
VRT	<i>Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroep</i> (Flemish Radio and Television Network), public funded radio and television broadcaster
WEU	Western European Union

## DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

**Allochtoon (plural allochtonen):** Semantically, the word derives from the classical Greek words *allos* (“other”) and *chthonos* (“land”). Originally “allochtoon” referred to those individuals disadvantaged because of their background or origin, hence problematising individuals’ history and personal features. In everyday discourse *allochtoon* refers to persons who are perceived as not being Belgian because of their or their parents’ ethnic or cultural background, religion or home language. A distinction is made between “first generation”, persons born abroad and “second generation”, persons born in Belgium of a parent or parents who are first-generation immigrants. This definition is very broad and many people in Belgium fit into this category. Therefore, a further distinction is made between “Western” and “non-Western”. This is described in depth in Chapter 1 of the report. Note: Muslim migrants are occasionally referred to as *islamallochtonen* in Belgium.

**Autochtoon (plural autochtonen):** This term is the opposite of *allochtoon*. Over time, this term has come to be most commonly used to refer to the indigenous population and dominant ethnic majority in Belgium.

**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:** (Perceived) membership of a group which may share language, cultural practices, religion or common identity based on a shared history. In Belgium, ethnicity is strongly related to social and cultural contexts. Data on the size of ethnic groups are difficult to produce and therefore categories are constructed based on features such as home language, country of birth or nationality.

**Harassment:** Conduct that creates “an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act, Section 26, 1 October 2010. The Act takes the term “harassment” from European Union definitions.



**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 subcategory of minority groups. They can also be characterised and distinguished from other groups by suffering socioeconomic 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 Nations 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 a person or group recognised as such by national laws. In this report, the term refers to ethnic and religious groups that are not the dominant group in society.

**Muslims:** 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. It therefore includes individuals who view themselves as Muslims in a cultural as well as a religious context.

**Nationality:** Country of citizenship.

**Native Belgian:** In this report, the term “native Belgian” is used as the English translation of the Dutch term *autochtoon*, meaning a person born from indigenous, white, Belgian parents.

**New Belgian:** This term is specific to this report and defines new Belgians as individuals who are born in Belgium, are Belgian citizens, and have a migrant background. This can include European and non-European origins. This term can also be used to include persons who do not have Belgian citizenship.

**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 context of discrimination on the grounds of race, which occurs where people face discrimination because of their presumed membership in 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.

**Racial profiling:** see under Ethnic or racial profiling above.

**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

Antwerp, one of the most diverse cities in Belgium, is home to a large Muslim community. In recent years, the city has adopted a number of programmes aiming to improve the emancipation and participation of minorities, recognising the increasing diversity of the local population. Official data are not collected in Belgium on the basis of religion so there are no accurate data on Muslims in Antwerp. Researchers estimate there are around 500,000 Muslims in Belgium, with significant higher concentrations in major cities. There are also few research reports looking at Muslims as a group, so much of the existing research that this report refers to looks at the experiences of Moroccan and Turkish groups, the largest groups of Muslims in Belgium and also in Antwerp. While unsatisfactory, this still provides some indication of experiences of large parts of the Muslim communities in Antwerp.

Migrants of Muslim background, mainly men from Morocco and Turkey, began to arrive in Antwerp in the 1960s during the period of postwar labour migration. In recent years, integration policy has focused on the idea of *inburgering*, the idea that an individual has a responsibility to become a citizen of a new society by learning the language and endorsing the formally established basic values, such as gender equality and secularism. In Flanders, all new arrivals are required to take an *inburgeringscursus* (integration course).

Findings from the Open Society Foundations survey suggest that many Muslims in Antwerp do identify as Belgians. While religion is an important aspect of identity for Muslim respondents, it is not a barrier to identification with Belgium. The majority of Muslim respondents (55 per cent) identified themselves as Belgian; in fact, when the generation is taken into account, identification with Belgium is even higher (66 per cent) among Muslim respondents born in Belgium. However, an important gap exists between how Muslim respondents perceive themselves and how they feel they are perceived by others: while over half of Muslim respondents viewed themselves as Belgians, only a third felt that others viewed them in this way. Muslim respondents cited appearance and ethnicity as key obstacles to being perceived as Belgian. Non-Muslim respondents were twice as likely as Muslims to cite fluency in speaking Dutch as the main obstacle, and the city's integration policy also views the acquisition of language skills as central to integration. However, the research suggests that individuals with a Moroccan or Turkish background who are born and raised in Belgium and who speak fluent Dutch feel among the least accepted and tolerated groups.

Questions aimed at measuring social cohesion paint a mixed picture. On the one hand, the majority of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents believe that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted and are willing to help each other. But the views of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents varied significantly on the question of shared values: 43 per cent of Muslim respondents felt that people in their neighbourhood shared the same values, while only 25 per cent of non-Muslims agreed with this.

The survey also found that most Muslim respondents have a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and to the city of Antwerp. The sense of national belonging to Belgium is not as strong: 20 per cent of Muslim respondents do not feel strongly at home in Belgium, compared with 10 per cent of non-Muslim respondents. Experiences and perception of racism and discrimination emerge as the main reason for this lack of belonging among Muslim respondents. Most respondents felt that religious prejudice had increased over the past five years and that such prejudice was directed primarily towards Muslims. A majority of Muslim respondents reported experiencing religious discrimination at least some of the time.

The gap in the educational achievement of children from ethnic-minority groups begins in preschool, where differences are rather small, and appears to widen in the course of their education. Research indicates that pupils of Moroccan or Turkish background are more likely than other pupils to be held back at the end of primary school and to find themselves in technical and vocational training courses in secondary school, with very few likely to enter higher education. In the narratives of respondents, there is some suggestion that schools and pupil guidance centres are creating barriers that deter parents from seeking admission for their children to the best schools. The research suggests a need to evaluate the advice, information, and support that is available to parents for their children's education.

The majority of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were satisfied with the extent to which schools respected religious practices. However, the absence of a general policy on the accommodation of religious practices makes it harder for parents to make decisions about which school to choose for their children. There is also concern about levels of ethnic segregation in schools and the widening of the ban on the headscarf.

Low levels of educational qualification affect labour market participation and degrees of poverty. The majority of Moroccan and Turkish job seekers have only a primary or lower secondary school education. They are concentrated in low-paying blue-collar jobs like industrial cleaning, hospitality or agriculture, and over half of Turks and Moroccans live below the poverty line, compared with 10 per cent of Belgians. Although unemployment among Moroccans and Turks remains higher than among Belgians, significant progress has been made in tackling the problem. Long-term unemployment rates fell from 61 per cent to 46 per cent between 2003 and 2007. However, early indications suggest that the economic downturn since 2007 is reversing some of these gains.

Discrimination remains an issue in employment. Labour market research indicates that a third of Moroccan men, a quarter of Turkish men, and a fifth of Turkish and Moroccan women report frequent instances of discrimination, often from coworkers rather than supervisors. In the Open Society Foundations survey, skin colour, ethnicity, and religion were among the common reasons cited by Muslim respondents for being rejected for a job. In the perception of focus group discussants, the exclusion of women wearing the headscarf is now the norm, particularly as the city has prohibited its employees from wearing headscarves where they have contact with the

public. It was felt that the city council needed to take a lead in diversifying its workforce. Although the proportion of workers from ethnic minorities is increasing in Antwerp, the vast majority occupies the lowest levels jobs.

Most Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were satisfied with the respect for religious needs shown in health care. Among the practices that Muslims identified as influencing their evaluations was the provision of food that respects dietary requirements. Muslim respondents agreed that they did not want a separate health-care system for Muslims; rather they wanted existing provisions to be inclusive. Among Muslims, older respondents were the most likely to experience difficulties communicating with health-care professionals, because of a lack of translation services.

The majority of all respondents, both Muslim and non-Muslim, is dissatisfied with the policing of their neighbourhoods. Muslim respondents reported feeling harassed by the police and say that police do not take their complaints seriously. The discussion in the focus groups suggests that identity checks are viewed as a normal part of life by young Muslims. Trust in the police, however, is high among respondents, although a significant proportion of Muslim respondents (40 per cent) and non-Muslims (26 per cent) have little or no trust in the police. Campaigns to increase minority applications for jobs in the police force have met with only limited success.

The level of trust in the national parliament and government is high among both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. However, a large gap in the views of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents emerges on the issue of trust in local government. Non-Muslim respondents are significantly more likely than Muslims to have greater trust in the Antwerp city council; over 10 per cent of Muslim respondents (but no non-Muslims) had no trust at all in the city council. Muslims indicated that they were only consulted when incidents happen and do not feel that they are included in the consultation and decision-making processes. This disconnection with the city council was reflected in the focus groups and interviews with key figures in civil society.

There is growing recognition of the importance of ethnic participation in Antwerp politics, with some suggesting that democracy in Antwerp has been saved by the presence and participation of ethnic minorities. The 2006 local elections were perceived as a turning point for Antwerp because young first-time voters from minority groups were seen as playing a crucial role in preventing the extreme-right *Vlaams Belang* (Flemish Interest) from becoming the largest party in Antwerp. Antwerp has been the launching pad for several political parties aimed at attracting Muslim voters, but none has made significant electoral gains to date.

Media reporting of issues relating to Muslim communities is criticised by both Muslim respondents and public officials. Attitudes are shaped by the reporting of a few key incidents. Journalists recognised the flaws in reporting of minority groups but suggested that changes were taking place. They argue that there has been significant investment in ensuring balanced reporting. This increased investment is in part a response to the recognition of the diversity in Antwerp, and the realisation that a local

paper must attract new readers, including those from ethnic-minority groups, in order to survive. At the same time minority groups are encouraged to be proactive in their media contacts and in making their viewpoints more known by setting the agenda.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research report is part of a series of studies conducted in 11 cities in western Europe. Each study applies the same methodology and attempts to offer an in-depth understanding of the situation of Muslims in the selected city. This report focuses on the city of Antwerp in Belgium, and in particular on the district of Borgerhout. The information and data in this report are drawn from academic and policy literature, 200 questionnaires administered in Borgerhout, six focus group discussions, and interviews with key figures in Antwerp. The report's findings are also linked with the results and findings from previous studies, reports, and policy documents.

The sections cover the issues of identity, belonging, and interaction, education, employment, housing, health and social protection, policing and security, participation and citizenship, and the role of the media. In most cases the report focuses on the ideas and experiences of Muslims in these areas. The responses from the questionnaires administered to non-Muslims provide an opportunity for revealing comparisons.

All these topics are discussed with the primary aim of documenting local experiences and processes in the district of Borgerhout, one of the nine districts in the city of Antwerp. Where possible each section begins with an overview of the current general situation in Belgium and/or Flanders and works down to the level of the city and finally to the level of the district.

The district of Borgerhout is composed of two large neighbourhoods, Borgerhout Intra Muros (Latin for "inside the [city] walls") and Borgerhout Extra Muros (Latin for "outside the [city] walls"). They have quite distinct population structures. In Borgerhout Intra Muros (BIM), 47.5 per cent of the population is of Belgian origin while in Borgerhout Extra Muros (BEM) the figure is 80 per cent. The focus in the report will be on Intra Muros but will sometimes refer to the broader district of Borgerhout, to the wider city of Antwerp, and the region of Flanders (and the country of Belgium).

BIM was chosen as the subject for several reasons, first and foremost for the composition of its population: many Muslims, mainly of Moroccan (and Turkish) origin, live here. It is sometimes disparagingly called "Borgerocco" instead of "Borgerhout", referring to the many citizens originating from Morocco. Furthermore, the overall socioeconomic situation of the population is poor compared with other areas and cities. Various problems are apparent in the educational system and the labour market. Many migrants complain about discrimination and exclusion in employment, with the police, in the health-care system or on the housing market. A

symbolic moment in Antwerp was the banning of all religious symbols, a measure mainly aimed at the Muslim headscarf, for city personnel interacting with the public.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Antwerp (as well as the neighbourhood of Borgerhout) has been the site of violent incidents which have intensified interethnic tensions. In 2002, there were riots involving young people of ethnic-minority background after the murder of Mohammed Achrak, a teacher of Islam, by his ethnic-Belgian neighbour. In 2006, Hans Van Temsche walked around Antwerp with a gun looking for migrants to shoot. He eventually murdered two people and injured a third. In 2006, Guido De Moor (of Belgian origin) died after being involved in an argument with young boys of Moroccan origin.

Different grassroots organisations have been established in response to the situation in the neighbourhood, in order to influence local policy and the overall situation of Muslims. The mobilisation of Muslims in response to social issues over the past decade is an indication that a new and educated generation of Muslims is emerging, who are likely to become increasingly influential in the city's public life in the near future.

This report begins with a short in-depth description of the population composition of Antwerp and Borgerhout and provides an overview of the overall socioeconomic situation. The next section focuses on the policy context in Belgium and Antwerp relating to different social domains. The following chapters focus on these eight domains and discuss the positions and experiences of Muslims in the areas of identity and belonging, education, employment, housing, health care, police and security, participation and citizenship, and the media. Finally, a conclusion and recommendations for policymakers, civil society, and the communities in Antwerp complete the report.

## 1.1 Methodology

This report provides an analysis of findings based on existing literature on research and policy and fieldwork in the neighbourhood of Borgerhout undertaken in 2008.

The fieldwork consisted of 200 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with local residents in the two areas (100 Muslims and 100 non-Muslims). Each group was evenly split between male and female respondents from differing social and religious backgrounds. The questionnaires were then expanded for six focus groups with approximately 50 Muslim residents. There was a further range of in-depth interviews conducted with local politicians, members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), practitioners such as teachers and health workers, community representatives, and antidiscrimination and integration experts. This report also includes feedback from a roundtable organised in Antwerp and attended by representatives of diverse

---

<sup>2</sup> Bestuursakkoord Antwerpen 2007–2012 (Policy agreement Antwerp 2007–2012), available at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Marketing\\_en\\_communicatie/MC\\_Com/Bestuur\\_sakkoord\\_2007\\_2012\\_def.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Marketing_en_communicatie/MC_Com/Bestuur_sakkoord_2007_2012_def.pdf), p. 46 (accessed September 2010).



organisations and institutions (faith-based organisations, civil society, and the city administration) to test the findings and to generate critical feedback on the draft text of the report. See Table 1 for the data sample.

**Table 1. Data sample for the Open Society Foundations research questionnaires, %**

	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Total
Male	54.1	55.9	55.0
Female	45.9	44.1	45.0
<b>Total</b>	%	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	Number	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

It is important to use caution in interpreting the Open Society Foundations data, as these concern only 200 respondents with an even narrower subset when specific issues such as experiences concerning discrimination for a promotion are discussed. Nevertheless, these responses are genuine and many are confirmed by data from the focus group discussions, interviews with key figures, and literature research.

## 1.2 National Flemish Policy

The regulation of social domains is increasingly framed by EU protocols, but this section focuses on the national and subnational levels.

### Education

Belgium has a very liberal education system. Nevertheless, the Belgian constitution provides a few basic principles: compulsory education for all children up to the age of 18 and freedom of education, which allows every naturalised or legal person to organise education and establish institutions for this purpose, including the freedom to choose where to be educated.

The Flemish community is responsible for Flemish education policy. This policy is characterised by a strong emphasis on equal opportunities, particularly since the Decree on Equal Opportunities (DEO) came into force in 2002. It is founded upon three pillars:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See the website of the Flemish Ministry of Education, available at <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/gok/> (accessed September 2010).

1. Parents' right to enrol their children in a school of their choice. The reasons for refusing a child are clearly defined.
2. The creation of local consultative bodies that help implement the equal opportunities policy locally and the establishment of a Commission on Pupils' Rights, which ensures the legal protection of pupils' rights.
3. An integrated support provision that allows schools to provide full opportunities to all children and to deprived children and young people in particular.

In order to monitor equal opportunities, the Flemish education system records data for all pupils on four indicators:<sup>4</sup>

- The language spoken at home (Dutch or another language)
- Mother's educational levels
- Whether the pupil is eligible for a (study) grant
- The socioeconomic character of the pupil's neighbourhood

Schools can receive more government funding according to the number of equal opportunity (EO) pupils.<sup>5</sup> Flanders supports a wide range of educational networks: community organisations (organised by the Flemish community), subsidised publicly run schools (municipal and provincial education), and subsidised privately run schools (with a majority of Catholic schools, which account for the enrolment of around 70 per cent of all pupils).<sup>6</sup>

## Employment

Although the federal government retains some responsibility for the organisation of labour in Belgium and Flanders, most of the major competencies are transmitted to the Flemish government. The Flemish policy domain "Work and Social Economy" is

---

<sup>4</sup> The family depends on government remittances; the pupil is homeless; the mother does not have a diploma of secondary education; the language spoken at home is not Dutch.

<sup>5</sup> The term Equal Opportunity pupils – or EO pupils- refers to those pupils that meet at least one of the four Equal Opportunity indicators.

<sup>6</sup> See the website of the Ministry of Flemish Community, 2001.  
<http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/gidsvoorleraren/1indienst/onderwijskoepeel.htm> (accessed 7 February 2011).

composed of five entities,<sup>7</sup> one core department, the Work and Social Economy Department, and four agencies.<sup>8</sup>

### Housing

Housing is also a Flemish competence.<sup>9</sup> Recently it became a significant issue after the Flemish Social Housing Company adopted “willingness to learn Dutch” as a condition for social housing.<sup>10</sup> The criteria to measure this willingness will be designed by the Flemish government.<sup>11</sup> This idea received significant criticism – as well as some support – and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination expressed its disapproval in 2008.<sup>12</sup>

### Health Care

Welfare, public health, and family are important policy domains on the Flemish level. The explicit target groups for the current administration are youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, and families. No reference is made to ethnic minorities.<sup>13</sup>

### Policing

The Belgian police consist of the federal and the local police, which are autonomous and come under the authority of different departments. Together, the federal police

---

<sup>7</sup> The website of the Flemish Ministry of Labour is <http://www.werk.be/wse> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Flemish Subsidy Agency for Work and Social Economy; the Flemish Public Employment and vocational training Service; the Flemish Agency for the Training of Entrepreneurship; the European Social Funds Agency Flanders.

<sup>9</sup> The website of the Flemish Ministry for Housing is [http://www.vlaanderen.be/servlet/Satellite?c=Solution\\_C&cid=1246631070879&context=1141721623065---1191211215889-1191211214827--1246630941683&p=1186804409590&pagename=Infolijn%2FView](http://www.vlaanderen.be/servlet/Satellite?c=Solution_C&cid=1246631070879&context=1141721623065---1191211215889-1191211214827--1246630941683&p=1186804409590&pagename=Infolijn%2FView) (accessed September 2010). See also the website of the Flemish Minister for Housing at <http://www.freyavandenbossche.be/nieuws/wonen/meer/> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>10</sup> See the website of the Flemish Social Housing Company for the conditions to apply for social housing: <http://www.vmsw.be/Particulieren/Huren/VoorwaardenSHM/tabid/4138/language/nl-NL/Default.aspx> (accessed 7 February 2011).

<sup>11</sup> See the website of the Flemish Ministry for Housing.

<sup>12</sup> The website of the Federal Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism [http://www.diversiteit.be/index.php?action=artikel\\_detail&artikel=35](http://www.diversiteit.be/index.php?action=artikel_detail&artikel=35) (accessed September 2010); see also [http://www.diversiteit.be/diversiteit/files/File//wetgeving\\_legislation/international/rapportcerd.pdf](http://www.diversiteit.be/diversiteit/files/File//wetgeving_legislation/international/rapportcerd.pdf) (accessed September 2010).

<sup>13</sup> The website of the Flemish Ministry for Health Care is <http://wvg.vlaanderen.be/welzijngezondheid> (accessed September 2010).

and local police perform integrated police functions. They complement one another and work in close cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

The local level is made up of police zones. Each police zone is composed of one or several municipalities. The local police perform basic police functions. On the ground, this means that each zone carries out at least six basic missions: district policing, reception, intervention, aid to victims, local investigation, and public order. The local police also carry out some federal police missions, for example the maintenance of law and order during major sporting events. The local police, composed of 196 police zones spread over Belgium, employs almost 33,000 staff members.

## Policy on Diversity, Integration, and Migration

### *European Union*

As is the case with most national policies of EU Member States, EU migration and integration policy influences Belgian and Flemish policy. The EU regulations harmonise the national policies in these two areas. Several European directives set out criteria for the equal treatment of non-EU citizens, for example, concerning family reunification, asylum seekers, and the rights of minorities. These directives must be implemented and inserted into national policy. The EU even publishes handbooks on integration for policymakers and practitioners (in 2004 and 2007).<sup>15</sup> In recent years, the harmonisation of a unified European migration policy has been subject to intense debate. The EU is also concerned with antiracism and discrimination policy. The EU supports the implementation of its directives through various financial channels.

### *National*

Belgium is a country marked by a history of state reorganisations. As a consequence, since 1980 the three communities, French, Flemish and German, have retained most of the competencies with respect to the reception and integration of immigrants. Nevertheless, the federal Belgian state remains responsible for various matters related to the integration and migration policy of the communities.

The federal government regulates the law on migration and residence status, including asylum, family reunification, and regularisation). The reception of asylum seekers, urgent medical aid for individuals without legal residence status, the voluntary return of individuals to their home country, nationality legislation, human trafficking, antiracism, the recognition of religious practices, working permits, and voting rights are also under federal authority. Finally, with specific respect to integration policy, the federal government financially supports different projects of the communities and organises intergovernmental conferences on migration policy. Despite the federal

---

<sup>14</sup> The website of the Federal Police is <http://www.police.be/#> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>15</sup> The handbooks are available at [http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/doc\\_centre/immigration/integration/doc\\_immigration\\_integration\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/immigration/integration/doc_immigration_integration_en.htm) (accessed September 2010).

character of these important competencies, the bulk of integration policy has been transferred to the communities.

The understanding of the definition of integration has shifted in recent years from a preservation of identity and culture where the responsibility to integrate lies with the receiving society, towards a notion in which integration and its success rests on the individual responsibility of people of migrant and ethnic-minority background.<sup>16</sup> In the Netherlands and Belgium, a new concept, *inburgering*, was developed to replace the tainted concept of integration. Although difficult to translate outside the specific context,<sup>17</sup> *inburgering* refers to the idea that a person must become a citizen of his or her new society by learning its language and adopting and endorsing its basic values, such as the equality of men and women or the separation of church (religion) and state. On a philosophical level this presumes a migrant is not a citizen but has to make an effort to become one. Notwithstanding this new concept, all Belgians – or people born in Belgium – are presumed to be citizens from birth.

### *Flanders*

The integration and *inburgering* policy in Flanders has developed through a number of decrees. In 1998, the decree on Flemish policy towards ethno-cultural minorities was ratified. It establishes three pillars:

- an emancipation policy aimed at the integration of target groups
- a reception policy for newcomers
- a reception policy for target groups (more specifically, asylum seekers and “itinerants”), with emphasis on well-being, health, and education<sup>18</sup>

The responsibility for the development, coordination, and execution of this policy lies in the hands of the cities and municipalities. The focus is on mainstreaming: *inburgering* and diversity policy must be included in every domain. Different municipal integration services are set up to make this possible.

The next step in the elaboration of a coherent Flemish integration policy was the 2003 decree on the Flemish *inburgering* policy with respect to newcomers and their integration into Flemish society. It is based on the premise that all newcomers are

<sup>16</sup> J. Wets, *Wat is inburgering in Vlaanderen? Conceptnota “inburgering” in het kader van het VIONA – onderzoek “Evaluatie van de inhoudelijke en financiële aspecten van het Vlaams inburgerings-decreet”* (What is integration in Flanders? Concept note on integration within the framework of the VIONA research on evaluation of the content-specific and financial elements of the Flemish integration decree), HIVA, Leuven, 2007 (hereafter Wets, *What is integration in Flanders?*).

<sup>17</sup> D. Jacobs, “Inburgering. Van integratie naar acculturatie” (Integration. From integration to acculturation), *Ex Tempore. Verleden Tijdschrift Nijmegen* 19(3) (2000), pp. 3–13.

<sup>18</sup> Decree on Flemish policy towards ethno-cultural minorities, *Decreet inzake het Vlaams beleid ten aanzien van etnisch-culturele minderheden*, available at [http://www.provant.be/binaries/Vlaams\\_decreet\\_tcm7-66335.pdf](http://www.provant.be/binaries/Vlaams_decreet_tcm7-66335.pdf) (accessed 7 February 2011).

required to follow an *inburgeringscursus* or integration course. The implementation of this policy is, however, restricted by bilateral agreements and European directives that prohibit the creation of obligations on every newcomer to do this course. The focus of the *inburgeringscursus* is primarily on learning the Dutch language. After this, individuals are required to take a course on societal orientation and then on labour career orientation. This three-step programme is supposed to lead to the successful *inburgering* of a newcomer. In line with this policy several “Houses of Dutch” (*Huizen van het Nederlands*) were founded and individuals can turn to them when they want to find a Dutch language course that fits them best.

The *inburgering* decree of 2003 was amended in 2007 and 2008 and the terminology was shifted from integration towards diversity. When the obligatory nature of the decree from 2003 was limited by other legislation, the 2007 amendments made it possible to require almost all newcomers to do the *inburgeringscursus*, including those arriving through marriage or family migration; and people exercising religious functions now have to do this course too.<sup>19</sup> Even migrants who have been living in Flanders for a long time, the so-called old-comers, who receive unemployment benefits or income support, can be required to participate in an *inburgeringscursus*. Refusal to participate can lead to a fine of up to €5,000. In 2008, the *inburgering* decree was brought into line with the new federal residence regulation, in particular with regard to the new asylum procedures.

---

<sup>19</sup> P. De Cuyper and J. Wets, *Diversiteit in integratie. Een evaluatie van de vormgeving, efficiëntie en effectiviteit van het Vlaamse inburgeringsbeleid* [Diversity in integration. An evaluation of the design, efficiency and effectivity of the Flemish integration policy], HIVA, Leuven, 2007.

## 2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Due to privacy regulations it is impossible to generate statistical data on the religious backgrounds of individuals and groups living in Belgium.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, estimates always rely upon methodologically unstable reasoning: the ethnic background of individuals is used to predict or assume their religious affiliation. As a consequence, instead of speaking about “Muslims”, it is probably better to speak about individuals with a “Muslim background”. The extrapolation of data on “Muslim” groups based on ethnic data is of course problematic for several reasons. It leads to all individuals with an ethnic background from a predominantly Muslim country being counted as “Muslims” irrespective of religious practice or adherence or commitment. Furthermore, Muslim converts, refugees, asylum seekers, naturalised foreigners, and offspring of Muslim families remain unregistered or are difficult to register. Taking into account all these categories, the Open Society Foundations’ background study for this report estimated the total Muslim population in Belgium at around 500,000<sup>21</sup> out of a total population of 10.6 million in Belgium.<sup>22</sup>

Nine per cent of the Belgian population has a foreign nationality.<sup>23</sup> In fact, it is estimated that 20 per cent of the Belgian population falls into the category of being foreign nationals, naturalised as Belgian nationals or having at least one parent who is a non-national. The largest ethnic-minority group in Belgium is Italian.<sup>24</sup> Of the groups considered to have a predominantly Muslim background, the two largest ethnic-minority groups are Turkish and Moroccan.

Of the ten Belgian provinces, Antwerp has the largest population (1,715,707 inhabitants) and the city of Antwerp is also the biggest city in Belgium (473,265

<sup>20</sup> C. Timmerman, I. Lodewyckx, D. Vanheule and J. Wets, eds, *Wanneer wordt vreemd, vreemd? De vreemde in beeldvorming, registratie en beleid* (When does foreign become foreign? The foreigner in representation, registration and policy), ACCO, Leuven, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> EUMAP, *Muslims in EU Cities: Cities Report, Preliminary Research Report and Literature Survey, Belgium*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, 2007 (hereafter EUMAP, *Belgium Preliminary Research Report*).

<sup>22</sup> Administratie Planning en Statistiek (Administration, Planning and Statistics, renamed Study Service of the Flemish Government), 2008, available at <http://aps.vlaanderen.be/svr/demografie.html> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Belgian population statistics provided by the federal government, available at [http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/statistieken/cijfers/bevolking/structuur/huidige\\_nationaliteit/belgisch\\_vreemd/index.jsp](http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/statistieken/cijfers/bevolking/structuur/huidige_nationaliteit/belgisch_vreemd/index.jsp) (accessed February 2011).

<sup>24</sup> E. Peeters, ed., *Verslag 2007 Discriminatie/Diversiteit* (Report on discrimination/diversity 2007), Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en Racismebestrijding, Brussels, 2008.

inhabitants).<sup>25</sup> This research report focuses on the city of Antwerp and in particular on the district of Borgerhout.

## 2.1 Muslims in Antwerp and Borgerhout

The city of Antwerp possesses, unlike many other Belgian cities, detailed statistics on its population composition. Nevertheless, one major disadvantage remains the lack of data concerning religion. There are no databases registering the religious background of individuals. A second difficulty concerns the relation between other variables: for instance, there are no statistics stating how ethnicity and age and gender are related.

The city of Antwerp comprises nine districts. The district of Borgerhout, which has a population of 42,597, is split up into two neighbourhoods: Borgerhout Intra Muros (BIM) and Borgerhout Extra Muros (BEM). The data show that the ethnic composition of the population of each varies considerably. For this report, a focus on BIM will be more relevant, as Table 2 shows.

**Table 2. Population according to the combined data from the population and alien register**

Region	Population and alien register		All registers (including asylum seekers)	
	No.	%	No.	%
City of Antwerp	465,596	100	473,265	100
District of Borgerhout	41,781	9	42,597	9
Borgerhout Intra Muros	26,941	6	27,638	6
Borgerhout Extra Muros	14,840	3	14,959	3

**Source:** P. Rotthier, “Profiel wijken Borgerhout postcode 2140” (Neighbourhood Profile, Borgerhout postcode 2140), City of Antwerp, policy document, 2006 (hereafter Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”)

BIM is part of the 19th-century belt built around the inner city of Antwerp. After general deindustrialisation, this area became a victim of decay and significant population shifts were apparent: higher-income groups left the area and the lower-income groups remained. A few decades later new migrants of mainly Moroccan but

<sup>25</sup> P. Rotthier, “Profiel wijken Borgerhout postcode 2140” (Neighbourhood Profile, Borgerhout postcode 2140), City of Antwerp, policy document, 2006 (hereafter Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”).



also Turkish origin – labour migrants – moved to BIM, where inexpensive housing was readily available. In recent years, eastern European migrants and asylum seekers have also moved into this area.

BIM has all the characteristics of a socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhood: unemployment is high and the level of education is low. When exploring the overall socio-economic situation, focusing on the poverty levels and the welfare of people, important differences can be found between the two large areas of Borgerhout. Whereas the average annual income in the city of Antwerp is €22,062, it is €20,246 for the district of Borgerhout, €18,491 for BIM and €2,884 for BEM. The average income differences are quite large for a district as small as Borgerhout.<sup>26</sup> The poverty index from the Children and Families Agency, a Flemish governmental agency with responsibility for young children and families in Flanders, shows that around 14 per cent of all newborns in the city of Antwerp are registered as being born in a disadvantaged family.<sup>27</sup> As expected, the numbers of children born to disadvantaged families for BIM are higher (18 per cent) and those for BEM are lower (7 per cent).<sup>28</sup>

**Table 3. Population composition according to ethnic background, %**

	Native Belgian	New Belgian	Foreigners
City of Antwerp	74	13	14
District of Borgerhout	59	23	18
Borgerhout Intra Muros	48	29	23
Borgerhout Extra Muros	80	11	10

Source: Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”

The data in Table 3 make a distinction between “native Belgians”, those who are seen as Belgian by origin and who do not have “foreign roots”, “new Belgians”, individuals who have Belgian citizenship but “foreign roots”, and foreigners, who do not have Belgian citizenship.

Almost 75 per cent of the population of Antwerp is registered as native Belgian and 27 per cent as new Belgian or foreigner. In the district of Borgerhout 59 per cent is native Belgian, 23 per cent is new Belgian and 18 per cent is foreign national.<sup>29</sup> In BIM 48 per cent of the population has a Belgian background and 52 per cent has a foreign

<sup>26</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”.

<sup>27</sup> The poverty index of a family is measured by the employment status of the parents, the education of the parents, the income level of the family, the housing situation, the health status of the child (or children) and the development opportunities of the child (or children). When a family scores negative on three of these six indicators it is registered as disadvantaged.

<sup>28</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”, p. 13.

background, while in BEM, 80 per cent of residents has a Belgian background and 20 per cent a foreign background.

**Table 4. Population composition according to national background, %**

	Belgian	EU <sup>30</sup>	Non-EU	Unknown
City of Antwerp	74	7	18	2
District of Borgerhout	59	7	33	2
Borgerhout Intra Muros	48	7	44	1
Borgerhout Extra Muros	80	6	12	2

Source: Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”

The data allow for a subdivision into different groups: the group of new Belgians and foreigners in BIM consists of 7 per cent with an EU background, 44 per cent with a non-EU background and 1 per cent with an unknown background. Table 4 shows a vast majority of the individuals with a non-Belgian background have a non-EU origin. Table 5 shows the various origins of the non-EU group.

**Table 5. Ethnic origin of non-EU individuals, %**

	Rest of Europe	Morocco	Turkey	Rest of Asia	Rest of Africa	Americas and Oceania	Refugees
City of Antwerp	11	41	13	15	10	5	6
District of Borgerhout	8	71	2	6	9	2	4
Borgerhout Intra Muros	6	75	2	5	8	1	3
Borgerhout Extra Muros	18	44	5	12	11	5	6

Source: Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”

Table 5 shows that the vast majority of non-EU individuals living in BIM have a Moroccan background. Although there is no specific information on the religious background of these residents, Moroccans and Turks may be considered to have a

<sup>30</sup> EU refers to the 27 Member States of the European Union in 2007.

Muslim background. Other people of ethnic origin considered to have a Muslim background are Chechens and Senegalese, but again, specific data are lacking.

BIM has a relatively young population in comparison with BEM and even in comparison with the city of Antwerp. Although there is a lack of precise data, researchers presume the younger population is due to the presence of many young migrant families. The household size is also bigger in BIM than in the city or BEM.<sup>31</sup>

A major problem in BIM is the low employment rate compared with other areas (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Employment rates among 18–64-year-olds, %**

	Employment rate
City of Antwerp	58
District of Borgerhout	53
Borgerhout Intra Muros	48
Borgerhout Extra Muros	61

Source: Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”

Even though these figures are quite detailed and precise, a main disadvantage is the lack of variable linking. For example, data linking gender, ethnicity, and employment status are not available and different studies show many migrants, especially individuals with a Moroccan or Turkish background, face a greater risk of unemployment than others.<sup>32</sup>

## 2.2 Migration History and Settlement Patterns

Belgium only started to develop a coherent migrant policy in 1989.<sup>33</sup> By this time patterns of immigration settlement had been established for several decades. Before the

<sup>31</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> L. Okkerse and A. Termote, *Hoe vreemd is vreemd op de arbeidsmarkt? Over de allochtone arbeidskrachten in België* (How foreign is foreign on the labour market? On migrant workers in Belgium), Algemene Directie statistiek en Economische Informatie, Brussels, 2004.

<sup>33</sup> J. Wets, *Wat is inburgering in Vlaanderen? Conceptnota ‘inburgering’ in het kader van het VIONA- onderzoek ‘Evaluatie van de inhoudelijke en financiële aspecten van het Vlaams inburgeringsdecreet’* (What is integration in Flanders? [[Concept note on integration within the framework of the VIONA research on evaluation of the content-specific and financial elements of the Flemish integration decree), HIVA, Leuven, 2007 (hereafter Wets, What is integration in Flanders?).

First World War, migration was predominantly a spontaneous process; after the war it took on a more structured form.<sup>34</sup>

After the First World War, Belgium needed cheap labour for its developing industries. Initially, between 1921 and 1939, migrants came from the neighbouring countries and from eastern Europe. In a second period (1948–1958) right after the Second World War, Belgium signed contracts for labour migration with Italy, Greece, and Spain. From 1962 to 1966 labourers from Turkey and Morocco were recruited. The economic downturn that began in 1967 led to a reduction in migrant labourers and recruitment was officially halted in 1974.<sup>35</sup> It was not until 1988 that Belgium experienced net migration (the difference between immigration and emigration divided usually per 1,000 inhabitants in an area).<sup>36</sup> In recent years, there has been a growing diversity of nationalities and countries of origin of new migrants compared with the labour migration in earlier decades; around 70,000 migrants are entering Belgium annually.<sup>37</sup> The settlement of large immigrant communities in the city of Antwerp is a relatively recent phenomenon, compared with other cities and the coal-mining regions of Belgium.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.3 Issues of Citizenship and Access to Citizenship

At the moment there are different procedures for acquiring or having Belgian nationality “attributed”. To acquire it, individuals must make a “nationality declaration from the age of 18” or “choose their nationality between 18 and 22 years of

<sup>34</sup> N. Ouali, *De immigratie in België. Aantallen, stromen en arbeidsmarkt* (Immigration in Belgium. Numbers, streams and labour market), Federale Overheidsdienst Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Sociaal Overleg, 2003, available at <http://www.werk.belgie.be/defaultNews.aspx?id=21648> (accessed February 2011) (hereafter Ouali, *Immigration in Belgium*).

<sup>35</sup> J. Geets, F. Pauwels, J. Wets, M. Lamberts and C. Timmerman, *Nieuws migranten en de arbeidsmarkt* (New migrants and the labour market), HIVA, Leuven, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Ouali, *Immigration in Belgium*.

<sup>37</sup> Koning Boudewijnstichting (KB) and Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en Racismebestrijding (CGKR), *Belgische debatten voor een migratiebeleid. Facts and figures* (Belgian debates on a migration policy. Facts and figures), Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brussels, 2008 (hereafter KB and CGKR, *Belgian debates on a migration policy*).

<sup>38</sup> EUMAP, *Belgium Preliminary Research Report*.

age”,<sup>39</sup> or marry a Belgian, or apply for naturalisation (which is granted by the Chamber of Representatives and is not the same as a declaration of nationality).

---

<sup>39</sup> A. From the age of 18 you can obtain Belgian nationality by signing a nationality declaration if you fall within one of the following categories: You were born in Belgium and have had your main place of residence in Belgium, without any interruptions, since you were born. Under these circumstances, the declaration of nationality may only be made before the registrar in your municipality in Belgium.

1. You were born abroad and one of your natural or adoptive parents had Belgian nationality at the time of the declaration (insofar as the adoption became effective before you had reached the age of 18 years or before you were emancipated). If your main place of residence is located abroad, your natural or adoptive parent of Belgian nationality should have his or her main place of residence in Belgium when submitting the declaration and you should show that you have preserved the effective connections with this natural or adoptive parent. The declaration of nationality may be made before either the registrar in your municipality if you reside in Belgium or the head of the Belgian mission or consular post in your principal place of residence if you reside abroad.

2. Your legal main place of residence has been Belgium for at least seven years and you have an unlimited residence permit or authorisation to settle in Belgium. In this case, the nationality declaration can only be signed in front of the registrar in your municipality in Belgium.

#### **B. Choosing nationality between 18 and 22 years of age**

You can sign a declaration indicating that you have opted for Belgian nationality under the following circumstances:

1. You were born in Belgium.

2. You were born abroad and one of your natural or adoptive parents is a Belgian citizen at the time the declaration opting for Belgian nationality is made.

3. You were born abroad and one of your parents or adoptive parents was or had been a Belgian citizen when you were born.

4. You were born abroad and your main place of residence was in Belgium for at least one year before you turned six, with a person under whose legal authority you fell.

You must also meet the following conditions:

– You must be between 18 and 22 years of age when the declaration is made.

AND

– Your main place of residence must have been in Belgium during the 12 month period preceding the declaration.

AND

– You must have had your main place of residence in Belgium either between the ages of 14 and 18 or for a period of at least nine years. You are exempt from these latter two criteria if one of your parents or adoptive parents was a Belgian citizen or had previously held Belgian citizenship at the time of your birth.

Residence abroad can be equated with residence in Belgium if you can prove that you have genuine ties with Belgium.

You obtain Belgian nationality on the date upon which the declaration indicating that you have opted for Belgian nationality is entered into the Belgian register by the registrar. See the website of Belgium Diplomacy: [http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/services\\_abroad/nationality/voluntary\\_acquisition/declaration\\_and\\_option/index.jsp](http://diplomatie.belgium.be/en/services/services_abroad/nationality/voluntary_acquisition/declaration_and_option/index.jsp) (accessed February 2011).

Belgian nationality can only be attributed to minors: it is either automatic, or because one parent declared Belgian nationality before the child reached the age of 12.<sup>40</sup>

The Belgian naturalisation legislation changed in 1984, 1991, and again in 2000. Each change aimed to make access to naturalisation less restrictive and led to significant increases in the naturalisation of foreigners.<sup>41</sup> Once foreign nationals gain Belgian citizenship, they disappear in the statistics, as registration of ethnic origin is not permitted under privacy regulations.<sup>42</sup>

The right to vote is related to the issue of citizenship. All Belgian citizens are required to vote in national elections. The right to vote in local (municipal) elections was originally restricted to Belgian citizens; in 1996, this right was extended to EU citizens. Following a long and tense debate on 23 April 2004, this right was also granted to non-Belgians living in Belgium for more than five years. Although non-nationals have the right to vote (in municipal elections), only Belgian nationals are required to vote (in elections on all levels).

#### 2.4 Islam in Belgium and Flanders

Belgian law officially recognises six religions: Catholicism (from 1802), Protestantism (1802), Anglicism (1870), Judaism (1870), Islam (1974), and Orthodox Christianity (1985). Religions that have official recognition gain several benefits. For example, primary and secondary state schools are required to offer religious courses if a parent asks for it, and the state is required to fund religious services and the wages of clergy.<sup>43</sup> Although Islam received official recognition in 1974, there was no state funding for these activities until 2008.

In 2004, there were 162 mosques in Flanders. These usually cater for particular migrant or ethnic groups. The largest number, 82, are Arab (33 of them in Antwerp), 67 are Turkish (23 in Antwerp), 6 are Pakistani (two of them in Antwerp), and there

<sup>40</sup> Nationality is automatically attributed to children born in Belgium with one Belgian parent, a child born abroad with one parent born in Belgium or its former colonies, a child without a nationality born in Belgium. For other cases and special circumstances see the website concerning foreign rights, available at <http://www.kruispuntmi.be/vreemdelingenrecht/wegwijs.aspx?id=69>; see also the Federal Government of Belgium, available at <http://www.belgium.be/nl/familie/identiteit/nationaliteit/verkrijging/index.jsp> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>41</sup> KB and CGKR, *Belgian debates on a migration policy*.

<sup>42</sup> The privacy regulation in Belgium is available at <http://www.e-privacy.be/privacywet.pdf> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>43</sup> A. Overbeeke, "Segregatie, desegregatie, integratie? Het recht op schoolkeuze en –stichting, schoolkeuzegedrag en de gevolgen ervan voor de schoolsamenstelling" (Segregation, desegregation, integration? The right to school choice and establishment, school choice behaviour and the consequences for school composition), *TORB (Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht en Onderwijsbeleid – Journal of Education Law and Education Policy)*, 2004, pp. 303–318 (hereafter Overbeeke, "Segregation, desegregation, integration?").

are seven others (five of which are in Antwerp).<sup>44</sup> There has been great reluctance to recognise and thereby provide state funding for mosques, and there are also clear differences in policy between the three Belgian regions: in the Walloons, 43 mosques are recognised, but in Brussels only five and in Flanders no more than six mosques are recognised.<sup>45</sup> In Flanders, the recognition of a mosque is a longer process and in Antwerp only two of the existing mosques are officially recognised and receive state funding.

---

<sup>44</sup> M. Kanmaz and M. El Battiui, *Moskeeën, imams en islamleerkrachten in België. Stand van zaken en uitdagingen* (Mosques, imams and Islam teachers in Belgium. State of affairs and challenges), Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brussels, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> E. Piqueray, "Eindrapport: Haalbaarheidsstudie over een vormingsaanbod voor islamkaders" (Final report: Feasibility study on a training framework for Islam executives), Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies, Antwerp, 2008.

### 3. CITY POLICY

#### 3.1 Initiatives for Inclusion and Integration

In recent years, the city of Antwerp has designed two comprehensive policy documents on the management of diversity: “Samenleven in een stad van iedereen, Atlasnota 2006–2008” (Living together in a city of everybody, Atlas<sup>46</sup> report 2006–2008) and its successor “Meerjarenplan ‘Samenleven in diversiteit: Eenheid en verscheidenheid & verscheidenheid in eenheid’ 2009–2011”<sup>47</sup> (“The long-range plan ‘Living together in diversity: unity and variety & variety in unity’ 2009–2011”). The second document takes as its starting point the conclusions from the Atlasnota 2006–2008, namely that, in Antwerp, diversity is a present-day fact as well as an important part of the future, and diversity is not equally represented in all city areas. Furthermore, “Living together in diversity” adds a fourth conclusion: diversity is not only related to the ethnocultural background of individuals.

No new services have been created with the document “Living together in diversity” but the existing ones have been redistributed to fit into coherent entities, as follows.

- *Reception desk Inburgering Antwerp* which executes the Flemish *inburgering* policy for Antwerp;
- the five *City meeting points* that provide rooms for local meetings and offer a variety of activities;
- the *A city in change* service, with a focus on the involvement of citizens in structural projects;
- the *Development cooperation* service that raises awareness among the people of Antwerp concerning the North–South dynamic;
- the *Service ideologies* that maintain and restore churches and synagogues, finance several officially recognised religious services and encourage inter-ideological dialogue;
- the *Interpreter and translation* service that primarily assists organisations and city services;
- the *Social cohesion* service that encourages individuals, organisations, communities and groups to actively participate in society and in the different city projects;

---

<sup>46</sup> Atlas is the city meeting point for integration and diversity, see also <http://www.antwerpen.be/atlas> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>47</sup> The policy document, “The long-range plan ‘Living together in diversity: Unity and Variety & Variety in unity’ 2009–2011”, available at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale\\_zaken/SZ\\_Integratie/20080522\\_MJP\\_Eindversie.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale_zaken/SZ_Integratie/20080522_MJP_Eindversie.pdf) (accessed September 2010).



- a *Diversity service* which supports the other city services and the Social Service Department to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of their identities, are helped in a constructive way.

To carry out these services, several competencies, such as the organisation of meeting points, and the reception of refugees, are outsourced to various organisations. City policy is to maintain close relations with different organisations. Cordoba, a meeting place for representatives of the various ideologies, was founded to focus on interreligious dialogue and cooperation in Antwerp. Various services for equal opportunities, Dutch language courses, and *inburgering* are gathered together in one building (the Atlas building).

The city of Antwerp has invested significantly in communications with its residents about its activities. The website of the city ([www.antwerpen.be](http://www.antwerpen.be)) is extensive and many policy documents, studies, meeting reports, and documents on different important social domains are available there. People who subscribe can get an electronic newsletter each Friday after the city council has its meeting. The city of Antwerp also has a weekly programme, “De Antwerpenaar”, on the local television network (ATV, Antwerp Television), which it uses to inform residents about social issues.

Citizens can get information on local policy and consult all public policy documents and decisions at City Hall, via the internet or in the local district houses.<sup>48</sup> For specific uses, when a city official deems it necessary, citizens can have the services of interpreters for communication with city officials. Furthermore, the city of Antwerp distributes a free information newspaper to each house twice a month, including information for each residential district.

Antwerp has also developed communication channels through which citizens can ask for information on city services (*infolijn*), share their grievances, send their comments or make suggestions about the services of the Public Centre for Community Welfare (*Meldingskaart OCMW*), or report incidents like fallen road signs (*Meldingskaart stad Antwerpen*). The city also set up various consultative bodies. Another important instrument to inform citizens consists of the neighbourhood forums where neighbourhood policy is presented and discussed. Citizens are invited to participate and discuss policy decisions through the website of the city of Antwerp, and via letters or announcements in local papers. In some cases, citizens can rely upon interpreters and intercultural mediators can be consulted when necessary.

---

<sup>48</sup> Local district houses are decentralized city offices – one in each of the nine districts in the city of Antwerp - inhabitants can approach in order to make communication with policy makers more accessible and less time consuming.

### 3.2 Administrative Structures in Antwerp

Belgium is a federal state made up of three communities (French, Flemish, and German) and three regions (Wallonia, Flanders, and Brussels).<sup>49</sup> Communities have jurisdiction over what are called person-related matters (such as culture, education, language).<sup>50</sup> Regions are responsible for what are called territorial matters (such as the economy, the environment, employment, housing, and agriculture). The federal state retains overall power, for example, in foreign affairs, national defence, justice, finance and domestic affairs. There are also three other institutional levels: the provinces, districts, and municipalities. There are ten provinces (five in the Flemish Region and five in the Walloon Region), 43 districts and 589 municipalities.

For the Muslim population the most relevant of these is the municipality. Belgium is a decentralised state, where the municipalities have very broad authority for housing, education, employment, security and land planning within their territory.<sup>51</sup>

This research report looks at the local context in the city of Antwerp, which has nine districts, with a focus on the district of BIM.

#### City Council

Following the local elections of 2006, 55 municipal councillors were elected. The two largest blocks were the centre left sp.a-spirit (socialists, now called sp.a), with 22 representatives, and the extreme right Vlaams Belang–VLOTT with 20 representatives. Of the 13 remaining seats, six went to the CD&V-N.VA (Christian Democrats and Flemish Separatists), five VLD-VIVANT (liberals) and two Groen! (Green Party). The town executive is composed of the mayor and eight councillors; four from sp.a-spirit, two from VLD-VIVANT and two from CD&V-N.VA.

In Antwerp the city council holds most of the major competencies, given the limitations set out by the federal, regional and community policies. The city is responsible for the harbour, personnel matters, culture, tourism, the budget, inter-municipal companies, markets, animal well-being, legal matters, city development, sport, diamonds, marketing and communication, supra-local funding, education, the economy, labour, trade, the Social Service Department, social affairs, diversity, public works, city and neighbourhood maintenance, the environment, decentralisation, youth, housing, community structure, municipal district consultation and development cooperation.

<sup>49</sup> The administrative structure of the federal state of Belgium is available at [http://www.belgium.be/en/about\\_belgium/index.jsp](http://www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/index.jsp) (accessed July 2011).

<sup>50</sup> EUMAP, *Belgium Preliminary Research Report*, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup> EUMAP, *Belgium Preliminary Research Report*, p. 42.

## District Council

There are 209 district council members elected every six years to the nine district councils. Since 2006 Borgerhout has had 25 district council members (11 sp.a-spirit-Groen!, two Open VLD, three CD&V-N.VA and eight Vlaams Belang-VLOTT).

The members of the district council are directly elected by the citizens of the district. The size of the district council reflects the size of the population of a specific district. To ensure a close relationship between district members and citizens, all members of district councils are required to live in the district. At least once a month there is a district council meeting open to the public. The agenda and the reports of the meetings are also public.

Since 2000 the city of Antwerp has been decentralised, which means the city council and the college of the mayor and aldermen delegated some of their responsibilities and competencies on local issues to the nine district councils and nine district colleges. Together with the 55 municipal councillors the 209 district council members make up the city council. Although decentralisation was undertaken to ensure greater attention was given to specific local needs, only minor competencies were delegated to the districts. They can develop policy for the local streets and can decide on neighbourhood parks, green areas, street lighting, and footpaths. Other competencies relate to youth policy, policy on culture and festivities, sport, seniors, communication, and traffic safety (for the latter they only have an advisory competence), all on the local district level and within the framework of city or national policy.

The district councils can also give general advice to the city council on matters that relate to the district. They can put items on the agenda of the city council, and put forward propositions about the staff. District councils can also draw up their own budget within their approved financial grant. They can set up advisory boards, organise a referendum relating to their own competencies, vote supplementary police regulations on the condition that it is approved by the city council, and design their own internal management rule book.

### 3.3 Administrative Structure for Key Social Areas

#### *Antwerp*

The city of Antwerp has developed its *inburgering* policy within the constraints of the EU, the Belgian federal state and the Flemish community policies, and various policy documents are concerned with the notions of integration, *inburgering*, and diversity. Although diversity is interpreted more broadly than ethnocultural diversity, the focus remains on ethnocultural minorities.

The “Long-range plan ‘Living together in diversity: Unity and variety & variety in unity’ 2009–2011” (Meerjarenplan “Samenleven in diversiteit: Eenheid en verscheidenheid & verscheidenheid in eenheid” 2009–2011) gave an overview of the various city policy documents on diversity. The policy agreement 2007–2012 discussed

diversity in its chapters on diversity, social affairs, and community structure, in which several goals with respect to diversity were indicated. The idea of diversity was to be included throughout all policies, and a first step was to employ more individuals from ethnic-minority backgrounds. A key component was that every inhabitant of Antwerp should be able to experience and practise his or her religion in conformity with the current legislation and with respect for people adhering to other faiths and nonreligious individuals. Inclusiveness is the key word but approaches for specific target groups (such as, for example, migrant youth experiencing emotional difficulties) remain possible.

The development of the city's diversity policies is part of Antwerp's response to countering prejudice and discrimination directed at ethnic-minority groups. The "City Plan for Diversity 2008–2012" (Stadsplan Diversiteit 2008–2012) promotes the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity present in Antwerp. The plan addresses the city's ethnic and national diversity (there are 169 different nationalities living or working in Antwerp), but defines the concept of diversity in such a way that religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and socioeconomic status are incorporated into it. The plan presents Antwerp as a city that wants to offer equal opportunities to its residents, whether Belgians or foreign nationals, old or new migrants. The policy focuses on the need to challenge discrimination and racism and stresses the importance of acquiring language skills as vital to social cohesion and understanding between different groups. This approach recognises the challenges of creating a city in which people are able to develop and experience their own identities, not only ethnic and religious, but also relating to, for example, family, sexual orientation, and language.

Policy documents emphasise that the city of Antwerp aims to make diversity in Antwerp as visible as possible in communication campaigns and in support for events like the Paralympics, the gay pride parade, or International Women's Day. However, the barriers to implementing this vision need to be more explicitly acknowledged. In particular, the majority native Belgian population plays a dominant role in framing the terms of integration. Many existing social practices also conform to the needs of the dominant faith group.

However, in spite of these policies, a ban on religious symbols in public city functions was introduced. The discussions between local policymakers started at the end of 2006 and resulted in a ban in spring 2007. Interviews with key stakeholders from across the Muslim community indicate that there is general dissatisfaction with this measure. There is disappointment that a mayor who was elected with significant support from ethnic-minority and Muslim voters introduced the ban. Some felt this law is unjust and needs to be changed because it is discriminatory against Muslim women. Others were concerned that the focus on the headscarf draws attention away from more crucial problems faced by Muslims, such as their performance in education and on the labour market. Several Muslim women in the Open Society Foundations' focus groups supported a repeal of this law:

To start with there shouldn't be a ban on headscarves. I feel the federal government should declare this explicitly: that everybody wearing a headscarf should be accepted, and I even think it should be incorporated in the discrimination legislation as in the Netherlands. ... Policy wise, first of all, I think [wearing a headscarf] shouldn't be banned in public functions.<sup>52</sup>

The research indicates that Muslim residents and policy officials alike appreciate the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in Antwerp and believe that making this diversity visible is important for promoting tolerance. They nevertheless differ completely on the issues of employing Muslim women wearing headscarves in public functions.

While recognising the need for individuals to express their identity, the policy document "City Plan Diversity 2008–2012" also argues that too much stress on individual identity can hinder participation in society. However, this document does not explain further what this entails. The city's integration policy views the acquisition of language skills as central to integration, and the perception that learning the Dutch language is vital to integration is also found in the views of respondents to the Open Society Foundations' questionnaire (particularly non-Muslim respondents). At the same time, the evidence from the questionnaire indicates that individuals with Moroccan (and also Turkish) backgrounds who are born and raised in Belgium and who speak Dutch fluently are among the least accepted and tolerated.

Specific reporting bodies have been established in different cities for all sorts of discrimination. A local complaints department in Antwerp was set up in May 2008 in cooperation with the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism. Individuals who believe they have been targets of racism and discrimination, who want to testify or who want information can contact this centre by telephone or email or they can visit. The personnel try to help by mediation, seeking clarification, giving advice, referring complainants to a lawyer or taking the case to court.

---

<sup>52</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

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

Identity and belonging are important elements of integration.<sup>53</sup> While an individual may be integrated into the labour market and have different social networks he or she may not identify with the area, city, or country in which he or she lives. At the same time, the failure of public and social policy to acknowledge and respect important aspects of a person's identity and sense of self can hinder integration.<sup>54</sup>

This section discusses the identity constructions and perceptions of discrimination by Muslims: how do they see themselves, what is the influence of a context where Islam is a minority religion, how do they feel treated as Muslim? It explores how Muslims feel about their neighbourhood and city. This includes their sense of belonging and the positive and negative aspects of their neighbourhood and city. It notes the places and spaces in which interactions take place with people from the same and different ethnic and religious groups as themselves.

### 4.1 Identity

In recent years there has been a significant increase in research on identity constructions among Muslim migrants. This is partly due to an increase in academic interest in a growing community that participates in society but is still categorised as different from the dominant European societies.<sup>55</sup> Although there have been significant Muslim populations in Europe for decades now, they are increasingly considered a "difficult" minority whose loyalty to the state (of Belgium or other countries) is often questioned.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> F. Heckman and W. Bosswick, *Integration and Integration Policies*, an INTPOL feasibility study for the IMISCOE Network of Excellence, 2005, available at <http://www.imiscoe.org> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>54</sup> M. Malik, "Equality and Discrimination", in T. Choudhury, ed., *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, 2005.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, S. Zemni and G. Van Den Bossche, "Allochtonen aller landen ... Burger U in. Wat het debat over inburgeringsplicht ons kan vertellen over identiteit(en)" (Allochthones from all countries...Integrate. What the debate on the obligation to integrate can tell us about identities), in A. Van Den Brande, ed., *Identiteiten. Functies en disfuncties* (Identities, Functions and Dysfunctions), Academia Press, Ghent, 2002, pp. 107–143; N. Fadil, *Submitting to God, Submitting to the Self. Secular and Religious Trajectories of Second-generation Maghrebi in Belgium*, University of Leuven, Leuven, 2008 (hereafter Fadil, *Submitting to God, Submitting to the Self*); E. Vanderwaeren and C. Timmerman, eds, *Diversiteit in islam: over verschillende belevingen van het moslim zijn* (Diversity in Islam: on different experiences of being Muslim), Acco, Leuven, 2008 (hereafter Vanderwaeren and Timmerman, *Diversity in Islam*).

<sup>56</sup> R. Gowricharn, *Het omstreden paradijs. Over multiculturaliteit en sociale cohesie* (The controversial paradise. About multiculturalism and social cohesion), Forum, Utrecht, 2002.

The most prominent identity border between groups has gradually become constructed on a more religious base. As Houtart states, “religion is back from never having fully disappeared”.<sup>57</sup> Muslims are categorised in Belgium and Flanders as “the eternal other”<sup>58</sup> in a society that still views itself as predominantly Christian. The symbolic and practical presence of Christianity is, for example, still prominent in several political parties and the general educational system. Furthermore, as is discussed below, the Antwerp city council prohibited the wearing of religious symbols for city personnel working with the public. Although this is posted as a general measure, no one doubts its primary aim is to prohibit Muslim women who work for the city from wearing the headscarf in public.

Individuals define themselves but they are also defined by others.<sup>59</sup> The latter process of ascription is even more rigid for minority and/or minority-dominated ethnic groups.<sup>60</sup> It is in this context that migrants and minority groups with a Muslim background construct their identity, and it is no surprise that religion – or religious affiliation – will be a prime identity marker for Muslims (but certainly also for non-Muslims, which in Belgium means Christians in the first place).

The Open Society Foundations survey interviewed 100 Muslims and 100 non-Muslims on the basis for their self-definition, but other questions in the survey provide insight into the role of religion in the construction of identity. A greater proportion of Muslim (33 per cent) than non-Muslim (10 per cent) respondents were observed to bear on their persons a visible manifestation of their religious identity. This identity expression is to be expected given the particular context described above. Nevertheless, it is also possible that Muslim symbols are more eye-catching in a non-Muslim society and that interviewers notice Muslim symbols, such as the hijab, more than they would notice non-Muslim symbols, such as the Christian cross on a necklace.

When asked which features would describe the respondents most, “family” came forward as the most prominent defining factor (61 per cent of the Muslims and 50 per cent of the non-Muslims). An important second feature for Muslims was their religious background (31 per cent). For non-Muslims their work (16 per cent), their hobbies (15 per cent), and their age (10 per cent) were important defining features.

<sup>57</sup> F. Houtart, “Religious Identity”, in C. Timmerman and B. Segaert, eds, *How to Conquer the Barriers to Intercultural Dialogue. Christianity, Islam and Judaism*, Peter Lang, Brussels, 2005, pp. 105–115.

<sup>58</sup> B. Snauwaert, N. Vanbeselaere, B. Duriez, F. Boen and D. Hutsebaut, “Living apart together? On ethnic identity dynamics and intergroup relations between allochthons and autochthons”, in Marie-Claire Foblets and Pang Ching Lin, eds, *Cultuur, etniciteit en migratie (Culture, ethnicity and migration)*, Liber Amicorum Prof. Dr E. Roosens, ACCO, Leuven, 1999, pp. 131–161 (hereafter Snauwaert et al., “Living apart together?”).

<sup>59</sup> E. Roosens, *Eigen grond eerst? Primordiale autochtonie: dilemma van de multiculturele samenleving (Own soil first? Primordial autochthony: dilemma of the multicultural society)*, Acco, Leuven, 1998.

<sup>60</sup> R. Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*, Sage Publications, London, 1997 (hereafter Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*).

The importance of religion to the identity of Muslim respondents does not appear to be a barrier to identification as Belgian. When asked whether they see themselves as (primarily) Belgian, irrespective of their formal nationality, the majority of Muslims (55 per cent) identified as Belgian. In fact this general figure conceals differences of generation, as 63 per cent of Muslims born in Belgium identify themselves as Belgian. A closer examination of the largest Muslim group in Borgerhout, the Moroccan community, shows that even among those born in Morocco, 47 per cent identified themselves as Belgian. The identification as Belgian was high among citizens of Moroccan origin. For non-Muslims the identification as Belgian was higher (79 per cent), as most of them are of native Belgian origin (although there remains a significant group of 21 per cent who did not identify themselves as Belgian).

The construction of identity is shaped not only by how individuals define themselves but also by how they are defined by others, particularly for minority groups where unequal power relations can strongly affect their own identity construction.<sup>61</sup> The Open Society Foundations' survey reveals an important gap in how Muslim respondents perceive themselves and how they feel they are perceived by others. While 55 per cent of Muslims viewed themselves as Belgian, only 35 per cent felt that others view them as Belgians. Here the experience of non-Muslims was very different: 79 per cent identified themselves as Belgian and 84 per cent indicated they are perceived as Belgian. It is possible, for example, that eastern European migrants, who are white and often have a Christian background, are more rapidly perceived as Belgian even though they may not identify themselves this way.

The participants in the Open Society Foundations' research stressed different elements that create a border between Belgian and other identities. Several respondents stated they felt that their most defining feature was primarily Moroccan, Malian, Latvian, Senegalese, or Turkish, surpassing their Belgian identity; they mainly construct their identity from an in-group perspective. For others their everyday interactions and experiences with others (from the out-group) have led them to feel that some of their characteristics prevent them from being fully accepted by the Belgian majority. For women wearing a headscarf, this religious symbol accentuates their "otherness" in a Christian society and makes it difficult for Belgians to accept them as one of them. Others pointed to their linguistic competences; in Belgium and more specifically in Flanders, speaking Dutch is perceived as one of the most important cultural emblems migrants must adopt. Respondents who said they speak Dutch with difficulty or even only with an accent also reported that they are viewed as foreigners as a result. The most important physical characteristic for categorising a person as "other" is skin colour.

---

<sup>61</sup> A. Wimmer, "Dominant Ethnicity and Dominant Nationhood", in E. Kaufmann, ed., *Rethinking Ethnicity. Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*, Routledge, London, 2005, pp. 40–58.



Table 7 shows in detail which social obstacles respondents identified as preventing individuals being considered Belgian.<sup>62</sup> There are a few clear differences noticeable between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. Whereas 36 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents stated that not speaking the national language was for them the most important social obstacle, this was the case for 19 per cent of the Muslim respondents. For the latter “being from an ethnic minority/not being white” was the most important social obstacle to being considered Belgian (28 per cent). Only 4 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents agreed with this. For Muslims being born abroad was also an important barrier (9 per cent). Nevertheless, there was a significant group of Muslims (11 per cent) and non-Muslims (12 per cent) who stated that there are no obstacles to being considered Belgian. It is interesting to note that only a minority of the Muslim (2 per cent) and none of the non-Muslim respondents indicated “not being Christian” as an obstacle to being Belgian.

**Table 7. What do you think is the main barrier to being Belgian?, %**

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Not speaking the national language/s	19.4	36.3
Being born abroad	9.2	2.0
Being from an ethnic minority/not being white	27.7	3.9
Accent/way of speaking	2.0	2.0
Not being Christian	2.0	0.0
There aren't any barriers	11.2	11.8
None of these	5.1	3.9
Don't know	6.1	2.9
Other	16.3	37.2
Did not answer	1.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>98</b>
		<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

<sup>62</sup> Interviewers were instructed to interpret this question as follows: “Ask the individual what s/he thinks are the main barriers to being Belgian”. Nevertheless, it is possible respondents could interpret it as a question probing for what could be the main barriers to being accepted as Muslim.

## Ethnic, National, and Religious Identities

Muslims are not one uniform group or community. The two largest denominations within Islam are Sunni and Shi'a, the former constituting by far the biggest group. Furthermore, there are different schools of law. At the same time different ethnocultural contexts and identities play crucial roles in the construction of religious identities and groups.<sup>63</sup>

Although in Antwerp Muslims with a Moroccan background constitute the largest ethnic-minority group, there are also, among others, Muslims with Turkish, Chechen, Senegalese, and Pakistani origin. Their shared overall Muslim background can be perceived as a group unifier but each ethnic group has its own particularities. Of course, even within an ethnic or national group many differences are present; for example, many Moroccans in Antwerp and Borgerhout have a Berber background. Gender and intergenerational differences are important as well. All these elements play a role when constructing social group identities.

The differences in ethnic background and therefore also more often than not in religious affiliation are reflected by the structure of migrant organisations in Antwerp. There are several umbrella organisations of Turkish, Moroccan, African, and Russian origin that focus on specific minority groups. At the same time there are umbrella organisations trying to represent the diversity of Muslims present in Belgium.

## The Influence of Gender and Generation

Other important factors influencing identity constructions are gender and generation. In common with many social groups, gender plays a crucial role in Muslim communities.<sup>64</sup> Patriarchal traditions are contested by newer generations. In the focus groups, participants pointed to the difficulties of challenging patriarchal traditions. The following statement by a young woman illustrates her idea that in the context of city officials' consultation with Muslims, patriarchal traditions and the existing power structure are reinforced not only by dominant groups within the community but also by city officials who seem to rely upon the opinions of older men who have been spokespersons for many years. The speaker pointed to the double battle that migrant women often have to fight: one against racial and ethnic discrimination by the ethnic majority and one against the dominant patriarchal groups in their own community.

For me, a major problem with the government and especially here in Antwerp is that for everything that has to do with Muslims they run to the men from the

---

<sup>63</sup> Fadil, *Submitting to God, Submitting to the Self*; E. Vanderwaeren and C. Timmerman, *Diversity in Islam*.

<sup>64</sup> Fadil, *Submitting to God, submitting to the Self*; Vanderwaeren and Timmerman, *Diversity in Islam*; C. Timmerman, *Onderwijs maakt het verschil. Socio-culturele praxis en etniciteitsbeleving bij Turkse jonge vrouwen* (Education makes the difference. Socio-cultural praxis and experiences of ethnicity among young Turkish women), ACCO, Leuven, 1999.

mosque. And that's just a reinforcement of their prejudice that within Islamic communities women have nothing to say. When it's about the headscarf or about gynaecologists, they have to ask the opinion of women. Because it's about her, after all. Those men from the mosque, I have no affiliation with them. They don't have to decide for me. Most of them think: "Oh, it's something from the government so we'll have to conform. If not, maybe they'll shut down our mosque." Many men think that way. Many are also from the first generation, some from the second. They still have that patriarchal tradition. You have to know Muslim women raised here in Europe, they have to fight two battles. One against the asocial culture – let's put it that way – against the autochthonous society, and the other, tearing loose from the patriarchal tradition that was transmitted from earlier generations.<sup>65</sup>

Differences between generations are not only related to religion and religious practices or interpretations. Some first-generation parents, especially those who migrated in the 1960s and 1970s, grew up in an environment that was significantly different from the neighbourhoods and cities they are now living in. Their children can have very different experiences in their daily lives. As the following quotation shows, this can trouble the relationship between these youngsters and their parents:

Yes, our parents, they are illiterate, they really had a very simple life. About my parents, they come from the countryside in Morocco and my mother hadn't seen a car until she was an adolescent. And then they come over here and now they feel their children should be happy: they have clothes and food every day... We have different needs. They know this and adapt to it but it goes so slow.<sup>66</sup>

Gender and intergenerational relations come under pressure in evolving and diversifying societies. This is the case for many social groups and therefore also for minority groups where an older generation has often been born in another country and where women often have to fight double discriminatory social norms, emanating from the dominant ethnic (out)group and from certain social groups in the (in)group.

### The Influence of Global and National Events on Identity

Identity construction is always linked to specific contexts and events and, in turn, these contexts and events are linked to other contexts and events.<sup>67</sup> Associations and references respondents made to different social groups, events, and situations in and outside Belgium are significant to the identity construction of Muslims in Belgium.

The most important events in recent history influencing the relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims in western Europe (and also beyond) are, of course, the

---

<sup>65</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>66</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>67</sup> Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*.

attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. Although Islam and Muslims were for several decades “the dangerous other”,<sup>68</sup> after these attacks Islam became increasingly perceived as a threat to the Western way of living.<sup>69</sup> One of the consequences is that Muslims in European countries like Belgium are often sought out when a negative incident occurs, to give their opinion and to distance themselves from their co-religionists. When a person, or in this case a group of persons sharing an overall and common religious background, is constantly categorised according to a specific element of their general identity (religion), it is to be expected this element will become a more central feature of their identity. In other words, when Muslims constantly have to justify being Muslim, their Muslim identity will become increasingly salient not only in specific (religious) contexts but almost all the time.<sup>70</sup>

International events have not only an adverse impact on the identity construction of Muslims, but also a positive one. The focus group discussions demonstrated how important it can be for individuals to visit other countries and see with their own eyes how diversity is interpreted in different settings and contexts. For example, while women in the focus groups observed that it is very difficult for Muslim women wearing a headscarf in Belgium to find a job, participants also said that they had been surprised to meet women abroad working in high-status positions such as a professor, or in public functions like a bus driver, wearing headscarves on the job.

These interactions and experiences shape these women’s mental images and stimulate their political awareness: what is possible in other countries is also possible in Belgium.

That’s the big difference, you know. For example, here [in Belgium] they had to fight really hard against Catholicism ... and then you have Islam. And that has to go away too. And in countries like the U.S. religion is still very important. Everybody goes to church once in a while and then it is normal; you experience your religion, you know.<sup>71</sup>

Personal travel experiences and international events can have an important influence on the perceptions and identity constructions of Muslim respondents. Many minorities living abroad and many migrant youngsters born and/or raised in another country from their parents or grandparents have a more complex ethnic identity. For example, when Moroccan-origin individuals living in Belgium<sup>72</sup> travel from Belgium to

<sup>68</sup> Edward Said, *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the World*, Random House, New York, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> J. Billiet and M. Swyngedouw, *Etnische minderheden en de Vlaamse kiezers* (Ethnic minorities and the Flemish voters), Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek, Leuven, 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Snauwaert et al., “Living apart together?”.

<sup>71</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>72</sup> But this is also the case for Turkish migrants, for example. See C. Timmerman, *Onderwijs maakt het verschil. Socio-culturele praxis en etniciteitsbeleving bij Turkse jonge vrouwen* (Education makes the difference. Socio-cultural praxis and experiences of ethnicity among young Turkish women). Leuven: ACCO, 1999.

Morocco, research shows that they are perceived as foreigners to native Moroccans. At the same time in Belgium they are also perceived as foreigners.<sup>73</sup> Finding one's own place in such differing contexts and settings is not easy, as the following discussion between Muslim women in the focus group illustrates:

First participant: It's just that you have to prove yourself all the time [as Muslim in Belgium]. Or that you have to pretend that you are a European or Western woman, while you're not. If you aren't, then you can't become one.

Second participant: I don't have much affiliation with my roots. If someone asks, then I'm in the first place Belgian. I think you can be Western and Belgian and Muslim. I don't think you constantly again and again have to put them up against each other: you are Western, or you are Muslim. That's like being Muslim can't be a part of the West, and that is the problem.<sup>74</sup>

## 4.2 Belonging

The Open Society Foundations' questionnaire included a number of questions seeking to measure levels of social cohesion in an area. Three indicators to measure these levels are the level of trust that people have for others living in their neighbourhood; whether people believe that people in their neighbourhood are willing to help their neighbours; and whether they think people in their area share the same values.

The majority of Muslims and non-Muslims agreed that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted. However, closer analysis suggests that non-Muslim respondents were much more positive and Muslim respondents more sceptical about their neighbours: 65 per cent of the non-Muslims and 28 per cent of the Muslim respondents indicated that many of the people in their neighbourhood can be trusted. On the other hand, more Muslim (55 per cent) than non-Muslim (30 per cent) respondents believed some co-residents could be trusted: 16 per cent of the Muslims and 5 per cent of the non-Muslims replied that only a few could be trusted. However, only 1 per cent responded that no one in their neighbourhood was to be trusted.

On the second measure of cohesion, the vast majority of Muslims (76 per cent) and non-Muslims (59 per cent) agreed that people in their neighbourhood were willing to help each other. However, here Muslim (27 per cent) respondents were more likely than non-Muslim (10 per cent) respondents to strongly agree with this statement.

A greater difference in the views of Muslims and non-Muslims emerges on the question of whether respondents thought their neighbourhood was a tightly knit community.

---

<sup>73</sup> B. Meuleman and J. Billiet, "De houding van Vlamingen tegenover 'oude' en 'nieuwe' migranten: diffuus of specifiek?" (The attitude of Flemish people towards 'old' and 'new' migrants: diffuse or specific?), in J. Lemaître ed., *Vlaanderen Gepeild 2003!*, Ministerie Vlaamse Gemeenschap (Gauged Flanders 2003!, Ministry of the Flemish Community) Brussels, 2003.

<sup>74</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

While a majority of Muslims (61 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that their neighbourhood could be considered a tightly knit community, the majority of the non-Muslim respondents (48 per cent) disagreed or disagreed strongly (11 per cent) with this statement.

Sharing the same values is often considered one of the most important factors for constructing a solid community. Therefore the results for the previous question should correlate with these results. Nonetheless, believing people do or do not share the same values does not say anything about what these values and principles or how these values are acted out in everyday life. As expected, Muslim respondents in the Open Society Foundations' sample agreed more with this statement than non-Muslim respondents: 8 per cent of Muslim respondents and 3 per cent of non-Muslim respondents strongly agreed that they shared the same values as their neighbours, while 35 per cent of the Muslim respondents and 22 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents agreed with this. At the same time there were large percentages of respondents who disagreed with the idea that people in Borgerhout shared the same values: 34 per cent of the Muslims and 47 per cent of the non-Muslims disagreed and 11 per cent of the Muslims and 21 per cent of the non-Muslims strongly disagreed.

Muslim and non-Muslim respondents differ to some extent on whether people living in Borgerhout get along. A larger percentage of Muslims respondents (13 per cent) than non-Muslims (2 per cent) strongly agreed with this statement (57 per cent of the Muslims compared with 52 per cent of the non-Muslims agreed). Almost twice as many non-Muslims (31 per cent) than Muslims (17 per cent) disagreed with the idea that people living in Borgerhout get along (3 per cent of the Muslims and 6 per cent of the non-Muslims strongly disagreed). Overall, Muslim respondents seemed more supportive of the idea that Borgerhout's residents get along.

A last theme related to feelings of belonging to the local neighbourhood and its inhabitants is whether people cooperate to make Borgerhout a better place. The results show similar numbers for both groups. Although more Muslims (14 per cent) than non-Muslims (6 per cent) strongly agreed with this statement, more non-Muslims (57 per cent) than Muslims (45 per cent) agreed with this. The same percentage of Muslims and non-Muslims disagreed (25 per cent) and just a few more non-Muslims (8 per cent) strongly disagreed compared with Muslims (6 per cent).

The results show Muslim respondents seem to have more positive perceptions of their co-residents than non-Muslims. In general they felt their neighbours were more trustworthy, get along, share the same values, and form a tightly knit community.

### 4.3 Interaction

The questionnaire made a distinction between questions on the neighbourhood of Borgerhout, the city of Antwerp, and the country of Belgium. Respondents were asked how much they felt or did not feel at home in each area.

The figures show Muslim and non-Muslim respondents felt very strongly (44 per cent of the Muslims and 50 per cent of the non-Muslims) to fairly strongly (48 per cent of the Muslims and 46 per cent of the non-Muslims) at home in their neighbourhood Borgerhout. Only a very small minority of both groups did not feel strongly or not at all at home in Borgerhout (7 per cent of the Muslims and 4 per cent of the non-Muslims). See Table 8.

**Table 8. Do you feel at home in the neighbourhood?, %**

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Very strongly	43.9	50.0
Fairly strongly	48.0	46.1
Not very strongly	4.1	2.9
Not at all strongly	3.1	1.0
Don't know	1.0	1.0
<b>Total</b>		
	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

A majority of both Muslim (88 per cent) and non-Muslim (91 per cent) respondents indicated they felt at home in Antwerp. In fact, 55 per cent of non-Muslim respondents indicated they felt very strongly at home in the city, compared with 38 per cent of Muslim respondents.

On an even more general level respondents were asked whether they felt at home in the country of Belgium. Here the results show that Muslim respondents felt less at home in Belgium compared with non-Muslims, although large percentages felt strongly (35 per cent of the Muslims and 50 per cent of the non-Muslims) or fairly strongly (40 per cent of the Muslims and 39 per cent of the non-Muslims) at home. For Muslims there was a relatively large group – compared with the previous questions – who did not feel very strongly at home (21 per cent of the Muslims and 10 per cent of the non-Muslims) or not at all at home (4 per cent of the Muslims and 1 per cent of the non-Muslims) in Belgium.

The figures show Muslim respondents feel more at home in their neighbourhood than in the city. They feel least at home in the country of Belgium. Non-Muslims feel most at home in the city and a bit less in the neighbourhood and country.

Respondents were asked why they did not feel at home in the city. Several non-Muslims stated there are too many migrants (with a Muslim background and from

eastern European countries) in their neighbourhood, there is not a lot of interaction between different communities, there is too much noise, and it can be too crowded: “there is less social contact between people than there used to be”, “I grew up in a village and here there is too much noise and there are too many people to feel at ease”, “there are too many different nationalities and there are peoples whose religion, especially Muslims, is not compatible with Belgian principles”. On the other hand, some non-Muslim respondents said the increasing racism in the city does not correspond with their way of life, which makes them ill at ease.

The questionnaire results show that the primary reasons Muslims respondents do not feel at home in the city of Antwerp are the perception of and confrontation with discrimination and racism. They do not feel accepted as legitimate citizens of Antwerp and Belgium. In the questionnaires, Muslim respondents gave the following answers: “I cannot be myself or express my religious beliefs”, “Belgian people look down upon me regardless of the fact that I grew up here, speak Dutch and have an education”, “People shout insults, this is not our country and we are still perceived as foreigners”, “because I wear a headscarf”, “we are treated like dirt, they don’t respect us”.

In a focus group, women expressed negative feelings about the acceptance of diversity and “the other”. They feel the national and local governments do not condemn discrimination, but instead trigger it, and average citizens are not ashamed of their racist beliefs any more.

The questionnaire results show Muslim respondents feel most at home in their neighbourhood, Borgerhout. This was also confirmed in the focus group discussions among younger men, who declared Borgerhout was their home. As a place where many neighbours have a non-Belgian origin and many even have a Muslim background (official figures show that 52 per cent of the residents in Borgerhout have a non-Belgian origin), they do not feel like “the other” in Borgerhout. But when they leave their neighbourhood, they find themselves treated and perceived differently:

First participant: Borgerhout has its positive and its negative sides. [Feeling at ease] is primarily a problem when you go outside Borgerhout. Because in Borgerhout, you are in your own place, in your environment. You are used to it, you know how things go and it seems like the environment has adapted to us in Borgerhout. You have Moroccan bars where you’re not discriminated against and so on. But from the moment you go outside Borgerhout, anyway in my case, the problems start. Except for the police, there are no serious problems in Borgerhout. Most people who come to live here, Belgian people, they are usually left-wing. People who live here longer, among them there is some resentment. That’s true.

Second Participant: The problem is not in Borgerhout itself, I think. When you go outside Borgerhout and you say, “Yes, I’m from Borgerhout,” then they think



”He has to do with criminality or something like that”. Or they just look at you and they have prejudices from the start.<sup>75</sup>

Answers to questions about whether or not they felt at ease in parts of their neighbourhood or city showed a clear difference between -Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. Twenty-one per cent of Muslim respondents and 50 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents did not feel at ease in parts of the city. As the focus group discussions showed, Muslim respondents feel at home in their neighbourhood, but the north of Antwerp and the area around the train station are perceived negatively. Others said they do not feel at ease in “rich neighbourhoods” like Brasschaat. In general, non-Muslims pointed to similar areas in Antwerp like the train station and the north of Antwerp, but instead of referring to rich neighbourhoods as uncomfortable areas, they point to neighbourhoods where many “foreigners” live. While the features that make respondents feel ill at ease differ from individual to individual and from context to context, in general respondents give similar reasons: they try to avoid going to areas known for the presence of alcoholism, drugs, or street-corner youth.

The research sample was asked not only how they perceived their neighbourhood and the locals but also what kind of meaningful interactions they engaged in. The questionnaires probed for interactions with people of other ethnic and religious groups in different social domains like the home environment, at school and work, during leisure time, and so forth.<sup>76</sup>

One of the most intimate places people interact with others – and this could be an indicator of the meaningfulness of these relations – is in the home environment, where 41 per cent of the Muslims and 31 per cent of the non-Muslims interact with people from other ethnic groups at least on a weekly basis (incorporating interactions on a daily basis). These figures are a bit lower for interactions with religious others, at 32 per cent for Muslims and 26 per cent for non-Muslims.

Next to people’s homes, schools and workplaces are often social domains where meaningful interactions take place. Bringing people with different backgrounds together to learn or work in the same space is supposed to bring about less prejudice – the so-called contact hypothesis.<sup>77</sup> On a daily basis Muslims have more contact with ethnic others than non-Muslims (55 per cent compared with 40 per cent), while the

<sup>75</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>76</sup> According to large-scale country-wide health surveys, Turks and Moroccans have an equal amount of social contact and interactions compared with Belgians: around 7–8 per cent had contact less than once a week with another person and only 6 per cent were dissatisfied with their social interactions: see K. Levecque, I. Lodewyckx and S. Van den Eede, *Gezondheid en gezondheidszorg bij allochtonen in Vlaanderen* (Health and health care with migrants in Flanders), Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, Antwerp, 2006 (hereafter Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*).

<sup>77</sup> G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice: A Comprehensive and Penetrating Study of the Origin and Nature of Prejudice*, Doubleday & Co., New York, 1958.

latter have more contact with ethnic others on a weekly basis (11 per cent for Muslims and 24 per cent for non-Muslims).

The percentages are similar for meaningful interactions with religious others: 53 per cent of the Muslims and 32 per cent of the non-Muslims interact on a daily basis at school or at work. For interactions on a weekly basis the relation is reversed: 26 per cent for non-Muslims and 13 per cent for Muslims.

Muslim respondents seem to have much more contact on a daily basis with ethnic others in their leisure time, like doing sports or other activities, at 17 per cent of the Muslims compared with only 1 per cent of the non-Muslims. The amount of these kinds of interactions on a weekly basis is more or less equal for both groups (23 per cent for Muslims and 20 per cent for non-Muslims). There are large groups (19 per cent of the Muslims and 27 per cent of the non-Muslims) who do not have any meaningful interactions with ethnic others during their leisure time. Similar trends are visible, although less pronounced, for interactions with religious others.

Recent research in Antwerp discussed the hypothesis whether more interaction will bring about more understanding and positive perceptions of the other.<sup>78</sup> Yet results show there is often not a clear-cut relationship between both variables: people who do not have a lot of contact with migrants can have positive perceptions about them. For Antwerp this is illustrated by a recent process where many more highly educated Belgian-origin families bought houses in Borgerhout, not only because of the low prices but also because they deliberately wanted to show their appreciation of the multiethnic and multicultural character of this neighbourhood.

### Increasing Meaningful Interactions between Communities

Although the questionnaire data show respondents do have meaningful interactions with ethnic and/or religious others, the vast majority still thinks that more should be done to stimulate people with different backgrounds to come into contact with each other: 77 per cent of the Muslims and 74 per cent of the non-Muslims felt this way.

Many Muslim respondents pointed to neighbourhood festivities and activities to bring people together:

A place where they can meet in person, a market or something like that, a mix of different cultures. There they can buy lots of stuff, from Belgian fries to Chinese apples. I think these kinds of activities should be organised on a market place, involving minorities in the organisation of various things. Now everything is organised in the Belgian way and they can't reach out to different cultures.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> L. Warmenbol, "Interetnisch contact en beeldvorming over alloctonen in gemengde stadsbuurten; een Antwerpse case" (Inter-ethnic contact and representation of migrants in mixed neighbourhoods; an Antwerp case), *Migrantenstudies* 4 (2007), pp. 282–303.

<sup>79</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

Others said media representation of diversity and ethnic and religious minorities is too negative and too stereotypical and there needs to be a change of mentality:

There should be more interaction to clear away these big prejudices. The media play a crucial role in this by reflecting the right representation to avoid certain groups being stigmatised.

There should be more television programmes for minorities, like in the Netherlands.

People shouldn't use words like *allochtonen* [migrants/minorities] any more.<sup>80</sup>

Several non-Muslim respondents also referred to neighbourhood festivities:

They should organise more events that can bring the segregated networks into contact with each other so you get a mix.

Activities in the street like barbecues, city and neighbourhood officials can take the initiative and should address and motivate people from the neighbourhood.

Organise local small-scale activities aimed at the neighbourhood: for example, a spring cleaning. Everybody cleans the street in front of their door and get as a reward a flowerpot to put on their front step. This way the neighbourhood is perked up and people can make small talk and get to know each other.<sup>81</sup>

At the same time some indicated that migrants should make more effort to learn the national language:

Taking Dutch language courses should be encouraged. This is the key to get contact and interaction between different cultures, migrants should be better integrated in the society. They should get more opportunities on the labour market and they should be forced to integrate, for example, by learning Dutch.<sup>82</sup>

Information was also the key to getting along for non-Muslim respondents: "The city should organise more information days so they can get to know the people from Antwerp and their mentality, so we can get along better."

#### 4.4 Discrimination

In the focus group discussions, discrimination was a crucial issue. Several participants had been subjected to hate speech and/or discrimination. One of the main concerns of Muslim parents was that their children would be subjected to this discrimination and

---

<sup>80</sup> Open Society Foundations survey data.

<sup>81</sup> Open Society Foundations survey data.

<sup>82</sup> Open Society Foundations survey data.

then how would they protect them from these negative experiences and make them strong enough to be able to cope.<sup>85</sup>

The questionnaires distinguished between prejudice towards ethnic groups and prejudice towards religious groups, yet the interviewees and focus group participants did not always make a clear distinction between ethnic and religious discrimination.

The views of Muslim and non-Muslims on the levels of ethnic prejudice in Belgium are quite similar. A quarter of Muslims and 19 per cent of non-Muslims thought that there was a lot of prejudice towards ethnic minorities, while 54 per cent of the Muslims and 63 per cent of the non-Muslims thought there was a fair amount of prejudice, and 13 per cent of the Muslims and 16 per cent of the non-Muslims thought there was little prejudice.

When asked to identify which groups this prejudice was directed towards, both Muslims and non-Muslims identified Arabs (54 per cent Muslim and 38 per cent non-Muslim) and Muslims (19 per cent Muslim and 28 per cent non-Muslim) and then black people (7 per cent Muslim and 15 per cent non-Muslim) as the primary targets of ethnic discrimination. A greater proportion of non-Muslims than Muslims identified Muslims as experiencing the most prejudice.

The question on how much racial or ethnic prejudice has changed during the past five years revealed a clear difference between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. The former were convinced there is more prejudice now than there was five years ago (59 per cent). Only 34 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents held the same opinion. More non-Muslims believed there was less prejudice than five years ago (27 per cent non-Muslim compared with 7 per cent Muslim).

In a similar question, respondents were asked whether there is a lot of prejudice against religious groups. Almost twice as many Muslims (37 per cent) as non-Muslims (19 per cent) indicated this was true, although a greater proportion of non-Muslims (58 per cent) than Muslims (43 per cent) thought there was a fair amount of prejudice against religious groups.

A vast majority of Muslim (79 per cent) and non-Muslim (71 per cent) respondents were convinced there was more religious prejudice than there was five years ago. The vast majority of Muslim (91 per cent) and non-Muslim (90 per cent) respondents also concurred that this prejudice was targeted primarily at Muslims (Muslims 91 per cent and non-Muslims 90 per cent). However, groups like Jews, Hindus, Sikhs, and Catholics are presumed to suffer from this kind of religious discrimination also.

---

<sup>85</sup> N. Clycq, *Van keukentafel tot "God". Belgische, Italiaanse en Marokkaanse ouders over identiteit en opvoeding* (From kitchen table to "God". Belgian, Italian and Moroccan parents on identity and education), Garant, Antwerp, 2009 (hereafter Clycq, *From Kitchen Table to "God"*).

## Experiences of Discrimination Based on Social Features

The survey also probed for respondents' experiences of other forms of discrimination.

The majority of the respondents – 62 per cent of the Muslims and 71 per cent of the non-Muslims – indicated never experiencing discrimination on the basis of gender (this happened rarely with 23 per cent of the Muslims and 19 per cent of the non-Muslims). A very small percentage reported this happened almost all the time (1 per cent of both groups) and for 3 per cent of the Muslims and 1 per cent of the non-Muslims it occurs a lot of the time.

As already touched upon in a previous section, discrimination on ethnic grounds is more common: a third of Muslim respondents reported experiencing ethnic discrimination some of the time, 15 per cent a lot of the time, and 4 per cent almost all the time. 21 per cent of the Muslims and 74 per cent of the non-Muslims never experienced ethnic discrimination. These figures on ethnic discrimination show Muslim and non-Muslim respondents have quite different experiences. The following data on religious discrimination not only confirm this but also show the gap to be even larger.

Where 9 per cent of the Muslims reported experiencing religious discrimination all the time, none of the non-Muslims did. A further 16 per cent of Muslims (2 per cent of non-Muslims) experienced religious discrimination a lot of the time and 32 per cent some of the time. At the opposite end 22 per cent of the Muslims and 86 per cent of the non-Muslim said they never to experience religious discrimination.

Discrimination on the basis of skin colour is one of the oldest forms of racism.<sup>84</sup> In the Open Society Foundations' research sample, 6 per cent of the Muslims reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of skin colour all the time, while none of the non-Muslims had this experience. Additionally, 10 per cent of the Muslims and 3 per cent of the non-Muslims experienced this kind of discrimination a lot of the time. At the opposite end, almost twice as many non-Muslims (81 per cent) than Muslims (43 per cent) reported never experiencing discrimination based on their skin colour (22 per cent of the Muslims and 8 per cent of the non-Muslims experienced it rarely, and 18 per cent of the Muslims and 8 per cent of the non-Muslims some of the time).

A last form of discrimination relates to the neighbourhood people are living in, in this case Borgerhout. The figures of both Muslim and non-Muslim groups are quite comparable: 3 per cent of the Muslims and 3 per cent of the non-Muslims experienced it almost all the time, 5 per cent of the Muslims and 6 per cent of the non-Muslims a lot of the time, 15 per cent of the Muslims and 19 per cent of the non-Muslims some of the time, 19 per cent of the Muslims and 13 per cent of the non-Muslims rarely;

<sup>84</sup> H. Van den Berg, "Discours-analyse van alledaags racisme" (Discourse analysis of everyday racism), in J. Servaes and V. Frissen, eds, *De interpretatieve benadering in de communicatiewetenschap. Theorie, methodologie en case-studies* (The interpretative approach in communication science. theory, methodology and case studies), ACCO, Leuven, 1997, pp. 183–207.

and 56 per cent of the Muslims and 60 per cent of the non-Muslims never experienced discrimination related to the neighbourhood they live in.

Various Muslim respondents felt unjustly treated in domains like the educational system or the labour market and criticised police intervention and media coverage. The influx of new migrants can change the perception of interethnic relations in a specific context. In one focus group a young Moroccan-Belgian born and raised in Belgium noted that Polish migrants are more rapidly accepted because they are white, even if they “walk around with a bottle of beer in their hand” and speak Dutch poorly.

The discussion here echoes the famous Feryn<sup>85</sup> case, in which the manager of a company that fits garage doors said he preferred Polish to Moroccan workers because his customers did not want Moroccans working in their house. Needless to say, these feelings and perceptions among individuals who feel not accepted and who see new arrivals being accepted more rapidly can be detrimental for people’s feelings of belonging and positive self-perception.

---

<sup>85</sup> See the website of the Federal Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism at [http://www.diversiteit.be/index.php?action=artikel\\_detail&artikel=21](http://www.diversiteit.be/index.php?action=artikel_detail&artikel=21) (accessed September 2010).

## 5. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EDUCATION

Education, especially school, is one of the most important pillars of integration. The education system provides individuals with the skills and qualifications for participation in the labour market. It also plays a formative role in the socialisation of young people in the unspoken rules and values of society.<sup>86</sup> It is the first public institution that young Muslims have contact with. The ways in which schools respond to and respect the needs and language requirements of Muslim pupils is therefore likely to shape their feelings of acceptance and belonging to the wider Belgian society. Schools also contribute to integration by providing opportunities for interaction between pupils and parents of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

### 5.1 Categorisation of Migrant Pupils

Data based on the nationality of pupils provide only a limited picture of the educational situation in Belgium and Flanders. Many individuals with an immigrant background have Belgian citizenship and so their experiences do not appear in data based on nationality. Due to strict privacy regulations a more in-depth analysis of the educational performances of ethnic minorities is only possible via specific studies and not on a national or even regional level.

The official educational statistics apply the criterion of “language spoken at home” as an indicator for the ethnic background of pupils. But this remains a highly problematic criterion. When the question is phrased as “Do you speak Dutch at home?” this only allows for differentiation between Dutch and all other languages. Furthermore, people, especially migrant youth, seldom speak only one language at home. The language spoken can differ according to the context, the listener (parents, siblings) and the topic (family-related, school-related).<sup>87</sup>

In the “renewed” decree on equal educational opportunities (EEO), migrant pupils are no longer registered according to a single linguistic criterion but according to three criteria: does the child speak Dutch with his or her mother, father, and/or siblings? When “no” is answered to two of these three questions the pupil is registered as a child with an ethnic-minority background. This more refined measurement has led to a reduction in the number of pupils identified as having an ethnic-minority background between the 2005 calculation (based on the old criteria) and 2008 (based on the new

<sup>86</sup> W. Schiffauer, *Staat-Schule Ethnizität* (State-school ethnicity), in F. Gesemann, ed., *Migration und Integration in Berlin* (Migration and integration in Berlin), Leske and Budrich, Opladen, 2001, pp. 233–250.

<sup>87</sup> P. Van Avermaet, “Language shift among Italian immigrants in Flanders”, University of Leuven, Belgium, unpublished PhD thesis, Catholic University of Leuven, Leuven, 2008 (hereafter Van Avermaet, “Language shift”).

criteria), and a consequent reduction in the state funding to schools, as the financial support depends on the amount of EEO pupils.

At the same time, another difficulty arises: parents themselves have to attest what language they speak at home. As parents may not fully understand the necessity of these questions or feel stereotyped or intimidated by them, clear-cut data on language spoken at home – and a large part of the educational policy towards disadvantaged pupils rests on these data – is doubtful. Misunderstandings and even manipulation by school personnel and parents result in unreliable data. More objective criteria to identify minority pupils and/or disadvantaged pupils are needed.

## 5.2 The School Careers of Migrant Pupils in Belgium and Flanders

According to recent statistics on education, Belgium – and Flanders in particular – is known for the high performances of their students (PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment, 2003, 2006). But a closer look shows there are huge differences between Belgian and migrant pupils. Furthermore, these differences are larger in Flanders than in the Walloons, as Flemish pupils score higher than Walloon pupils on these tests.<sup>88</sup>

There are several studies that provide an insight into the educational experiences of young people from ethnic-minority groups. In Belgium, especially Flanders, the focus primarily involves the educational experiences of Moroccan and Turkish pupils. There was also a research study on the educational situation of “Muslim migrants” or *islamallochtonen*, but it also focused on the national and ethnic background of Turkish, Moroccan, and other Maghrebi or Arabic pupils.<sup>89</sup>

Flemish education policy emphasises the importance of preschool participation.<sup>90</sup> The “Year of the Toddler” was 2007 and even at the beginning of the school year 2008–2009 measures such as financial benefits for preschools were taken to increase

<sup>88</sup> D. Jacobs, A. Rea and L. Hanquinet, *Prestaties van de leerlingen van buitenlandse herkomst in België volgens de PISA-studie* (Performances of pupils of foreign origin in Belgium according to the PISA study), Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brussels, 2007.

<sup>89</sup> M. Lacante, M. Almaci, R. Van Esbrock, W. Lens and M. De Metsenaere, *Allochtonen in het hoger onderwijs. Onderzoek naar factoren van studiekeuze en studiesucces bij allochtone eerstejaarsstudenten in het hoger onderwijs* (Migrants in higher education. Study of the factors of study choice and success among first-year migrants in higher education), Ministerie Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Brussels, 2007 (hereafter Lacante et al., *Migrants in higher education*).

<sup>90</sup> The website of the Flemish Ministry of Education is at <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/basisonderwijs/kleuterparticipatie> (accessed September 2010).



participation,<sup>91</sup> in line with evidence that a delay going to preschool has an impact on primary and secondary education.<sup>92</sup>

In 2003, a difference between ethnic groups (based on nationality) was apparent in the enrolment of children in preschools: 95 per cent of three-year-olds with parents with a western European (WEU) nationality were enrolled in preschools, compared with 80 per cent of three-year-olds with parents with a Maghrebi nationality. For four- and five-year-old children, the enrolment figures were 99 per cent of children of parents with a WEU nationality and 85 per cent of children of parents with a Maghrebi nationality.<sup>93</sup> Based on these nationality criteria, 2.5 per cent of WEU-nationality children and 6 per cent of Maghrebi nationality children were late in entering preschools.<sup>94</sup> A more detailed definition of ethnicity shows the delay of children with a Turkish or Moroccan background is as high as 9–13 per cent at the end of preschool.<sup>95</sup> Notwithstanding these differences, the statistics show that the vast majority of Maghrebi youngsters do participate in preschools.

Based on nationality statistics, the gap in learning at the end of primary education between Belgian and a non-Belgian child is large: 13 per cent compared with 51 per cent.<sup>96</sup> In particular, Turkish girls (52 per cent) and Moroccan boys (46 per cent) have the highest gap compared with Belgian and WEU pupils.<sup>97</sup>

One of the consequences for secondary education is that significantly more pupils with an immigrant background are found in technical and vocational training and in special education courses. Around half of Moroccan and Turkish origin pupils leave secondary education without a secondary education diploma, compared with 7–13 per cent of

<sup>91</sup> Not only for migrant families but also for low-income and single-parent families.

<sup>92</sup> S. Groenez, I. Van den Brande and I. Nicaise, *Cijferboek sociale ongelijkheid in het Vlaamse onderwijs – een verkennend onderzoek op de Panelstudie van Belgische huishoudens* (Grade book of social inequality in Flemish education), Steunpunt LOA, Leuven, 2003.

<sup>93</sup> P. Mahieu, “Allochtonen jongeren in het onderwijs” (Migrant students in education), *Over Werk: tijdschrift van het Steunpunt WAV* 13(3) (2003), pp. 147–150; D. Hermans and M.-C. Opendakker, “Allochtonen in het basis- en secundair onderwijs in Vlaanderen” (Migrants in primary and secondary education in Flanders), in *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*, Steunpunt WAV, Leuven, 2005, pp. 187–207 (hereafter Hermans and Opendakker, “Migrants in primary and secondary education in Flanders”).

<sup>94</sup> Hermans and Opendakker, “Migrants in primary and secondary education in Flanders”.

<sup>95</sup> N. Duquet, I. Glorieux, I. Laurijssen and Y. Van Dorsselaer, *Wit krijt schrijft beter. Schoolloopbanen van allochtone jongeren in beeld* (White crayon writes better. School careers of migrant youth), Garant, Antwerp, 2006 (hereafter Duquet et al., *White crayon writes better*).

<sup>96</sup> Hermans and Opendakker, “Migrants in primary and secondary education in Flanders”.

<sup>97</sup> Duquet et al., *White crayon writes better*.

native Belgian pupils.<sup>98</sup> As a consequence the participation rate of ethnic-minority youths in higher education is very low, particularly for those with Moroccan or Turkish backgrounds. Another study found only 6 per cent of students in the seven higher education institutions they studied had a migrant background.<sup>99</sup>

This suggests that despite efforts like the Equal Opportunities Decree the Flemish education system has not succeeded in reducing the gap between Belgian-origin pupils and minority pupils (in particular those of Moroccan and Turkish origin). The gap begins in preschool and only seems to widen through primary, secondary, and higher education.<sup>100</sup>

### 5.3 Education in Antwerp and Borgerhout Intra Muros

#### Primary Education in Antwerp

Eight per cent of primary school pupils in Antwerp live in BIM and 2.9 per cent live in BEM. The proportion of pupils in preschool and primary education pursuing “regular” or “exceptional” education in BIM is similar to the distribution in Antwerp in general. Official statistics indicate that, in 2005, 60 per cent of the pupils in primary education in the inner city of Antwerp (including BIM) did not speak Dutch at home.<sup>101</sup>

In primary education there are no significant differences between pupils from different areas in Antwerp: similar percentages of pupils in BIM, BEM, and the city of Antwerp go to “regular” or “exceptional” primary education institutions.<sup>102</sup>

#### Secondary Education in Antwerp

Eight per cent of Antwerp’s secondary school pupils live in BIM, whereas 3 per cent live in BEM. An examination of the distribution according to curriculum in secondary education reveals a significant difference between the city of Antwerp, the district of Borgerhout, and the two neighbourhoods in Borgerhout, BIM and BEM (see Figure 1).

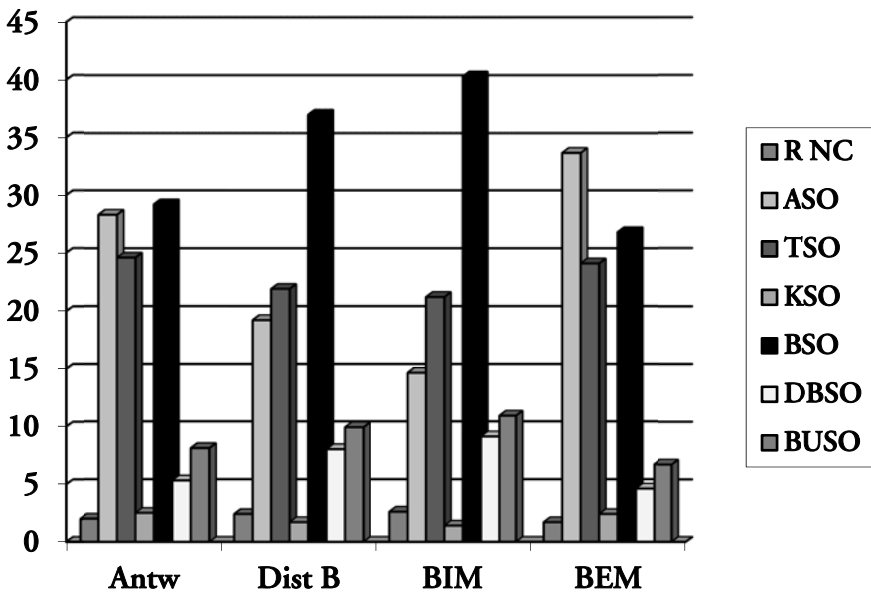
<sup>98</sup> Duquet et al., *White crayon writes better*. Similar results for Muslim pupils can be found in Lacante et al., *Migrants in higher education*, and M. Van Craen and M. Almaci, “De ondervertegenwoordiging van allochtonen in het universitair onderwijs: cijfers, oorzaken en remedies” (The under-representation of migrants in university education: numbers, causes and remedies), in *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*, Steunpunt WAV, Leuven, 2005, pp. 209–228.

<sup>99</sup> Lacante et al., *Migrants in higher education*.

<sup>100</sup> N. Hirtt, I. Nicaise and D. De Zutter, *De school van de ongelijkheid* (The school of inequality), EPO, Berchem, 2007.

<sup>101</sup> Buurtmonitor Antwerpen (City monitor for Antwerp), available at <http://www.antwerpen.buurtmonitor.be> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>102</sup> Rothier, “Neighbourhood Profile”.

**Figure 1. Distribution of students in secondary education**<sup>103</sup>

Sources: Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”, p. 32; Flemish Community, Dept of Education – school year 2005–2006. Edited by Stad Antwerpen, Databank Sociale Planning and Noel Clycq

29 per cent of pupils in Antwerp (Antw in Figure 1) are in part-time secondary vocational education and 28 per cent in general education. The situation in BEM is quite similar, with 34 per cent of pupils pursuing general education. In BIM the picture is very different: 40 per cent pursues part-time vocational education and only 15 per cent general education. The figure shows that although the distribution in primary education is quite similar for the city of Antwerp, the district of Borgerhout (Dist B), and for BIM, the distribution differs significantly in secondary education.

Five per cent of the pupils of Antwerp in primary education are held back for more than a year in school.<sup>104</sup> In Borgerhout, this figure is 8 per cent. But again there is a difference between BIM (9 per cent) and BEM (6 per cent). For secondary education, the percentages are, as expected, higher: 18 per cent at the city level, 29 per cent for BIM, and 14 per cent for BEM. Taking into account the ethnic background of pupils

<sup>103</sup> R NC stands for Reception Class for Newcomers, ASO for General Education, TSO for Technical Education, KSO for Art Education, BSO for Vocational Education, DBSO for Part-time Vocational Education and BUSO for Exceptional Education.

<sup>104</sup> A delay of one year is not considered problematic: Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”.

in the city of Antwerp, data show big differences between Moroccan, Turkish, and Belgian pupils and between boys and girls. Among Belgian pupils, 56 per cent of the boys and 42 per cent of the girls are delayed one or more years; of Moroccan pupils, 72 per cent of the boys and 65 per cent of the girls are delayed one or more years; and of Turkish pupils, 79 per cent of the boys and 67 per cent of the girls are delayed one or more years. It is to be expected that this will have consequences for the participation of these pupils in higher education.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the participation of young people of Moroccan and Turkish background in higher education is significantly lower than that of other Belgian youth: whereas 38 per cent of Belgian men and 48 per cent of Belgian women have a higher education diploma, this is only the case for 10 per cent of the Turkish men and 6 per cent of the Turkish women, and for 7 per cent of the Moroccan men and 13 per cent of the Moroccan women.<sup>106</sup>

### Questionnaire Data on the Education of Respondents

The overall educational level of Muslim respondents was lower than non-Muslim respondents in the Open Society Foundations' questionnaire (see Table 9). Whereas 18 per cent of the Muslims had not received any formal education, this was so for only 2 per cent of the non-Muslims. Muslims (17 per cent) had a much lower percentage than non-Muslims (57 per cent) for the successful completion of higher education.

---

<sup>105</sup> V. Vandezande, F. Fleischmann, G. Baysu, M. Swyngedouw and K. Phalet, *De Turkse en Marokkaanse tweede generatie op de arbeidsmarkt in Antwerpen en Brussel* (The Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market in Antwerp and Brussels), Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek, Leuven, 2008 (hereafter Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*).

<sup>106</sup> Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*; for similar results see Lacante et al., *Migrants in higher education*, and S. Rottiers, E. Defrancq and E. Rouwens, *Allochtone studenten aan de UA* (Migrant students at the University of Antwerp), University of Antwerp, Antwerp, 2004.

**Table 9. Educational achievement of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents, %**

		Muslim	Non-Muslim	Total
No formal education		18.4	2.0	10.0
Primary education		21.4	10.8	16.0
Secondary education		42.9	30.4	36.5
University		17.3	56.9	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>200</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

When asked in which country the respondents received their education, the majority – 56 per cent of Muslims and 87 per cent of non-Muslims – answered Belgium, whereas 25 per cent of Muslims and 9 per cent of non-Muslims received their education in a non-EU state. For a significant group of Muslim respondents (18 per cent) this question was not applicable because they had not received any education.

#### 5.4 Muslim Experiences of the Flemish Educational System

Results from the Open Society Foundations survey indicate that in both primary and secondary education, Muslims are more likely than non-Muslims to be satisfied with the quality of education in their area, while a similar proportion of Muslims and non-Muslims expressed dissatisfaction (see Tables 10 and 11). However, it should be noted that a significantly greater proportion of non-Muslims than Muslims had no view on this issue.

**Table 10. How satisfied are you with primary education?, %**

		Muslim	Non-Muslim
Very satisfied		16.3	19.6
Fairly satisfied		45.9	25.5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		9.2	2.0
Fairly dissatisfied		11.2	10.8
Very dissatisfied		7.1	2.9
Don't know		10.2	39.2
<b>Total</b>	%	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	Number	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

**Table 11. How satisfied are you with secondary education?, %**

		Muslim	Non-Muslim
Very satisfied		19.4	11.8
Fairly satisfied		38.8	22.5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		11.2	4.9
Fairly dissatisfied		11.2	10.8
Very dissatisfied		7.1	2.0
Don't know		12.2	48.0
<b>Total</b>	%	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	Number	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

Although the majority of Muslim respondents in the sample stated they were satisfied with the Flemish and Antwerp educational system, the focus group discussions suggested that feelings of discrimination were not at all uncommon.

A male focus group participant gave an example about an incident at school. Similar experiences were expressed throughout the focus group discussions along with references to the negative “othering” processes to which Muslim respondents felt subjected.

Because my son happens to be named Osama, there is a teacher who said: “I would feel humiliated if my name was Osama.” You don’t say that to a child. And my child came running home in tears.” “What do I have to do with that [Osama Bin Laden], I didn’t choose it.”<sup>107</sup>

### School Admissions Policies

Parents in Belgium have a constitutional right to choose the school they want for their child. Official policies do not limit parental choice: parents are not required to send pupils to a school in their neighbourhood. Nonetheless, when the enrolment period starts, schools usually reserve a short period during which parents who already have one child in a particular school can enrol the sibling/s of this child in the same school.

The Decree on Equal Educational Opportunities<sup>108</sup> restricts the right of school administrations to refer children to another school or to deny them enrolment in their school. Administrations can refuse a child when the structural school facilities do not allow for additional enrolment (for safety reasons) and when the pupil is “permanently excluded” from this particular school. An administration can refer children to another school if they need specific education, care, or therapy that exceeds the resources of the school. A school is also allowed to find a balance between EEO pupils and “regular” pupils. Specific attention is paid to the language spoken at home (Dutch or not). When the share of EEO pupils in a particular school exceeds the general city level of EEO children by more than 10 per cent that school is allowed to refer pupils to another school.

Some school administrations are creative in skirting these restrictions on their authority and construct new barriers to the enrolment of potential pupils. Mahieu calls this “constructive refusal”.<sup>109</sup> Administrations cannot explicitly tell parents that their child cannot be enrolled, but they can emphasise that the curriculum level is probably too high, other schools are better equipped to assist their child, or they can point to “cultural-religious” barriers. These arguments are used to create doubts in parents’ minds about whether the school of choice is appropriate for their child. Furthermore, schools can announce their enrolment period in such an obscure way that certain social

<sup>107</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>108</sup> The website of the Flemish Ministry of Education is at <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/EDULEX/database/document/document.asp?docid=13298> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>109</sup> P. Mahieu, “Waterfall en achterstelling: wat is oorzaak of gevolg?” (Waterfall or setting back: what is cause or consequence?), in *TORB (Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht en Onderwijsbeleid – Journal of Education Law and Education Policy)*, 2002, pp. 128–139.

groups, mainly migrants and socioeconomically disadvantaged families, will be unaware of it. Barriers can also be created by requiring parents to buy expensive school uniforms or pay for costly school excursions. The Flemish education administration is aware of these problems and tries to counter them by reducing such expenses for primary education.<sup>110</sup>

Vulnerable migrant parents are often not aware of the enrolment periods schools set up. When they try to enrol their children towards the end of the enrolment period, schools are often already full, which makes it easy for the schools to refuse or refer these often disadvantaged pupils to another school.

Schools can also establish school regulations and pedagogical projects, internal policy documents they can formulate in relative autonomy, to attract particular types of parents or dissuade others. There are around 70 local consultative bodies that organise meetings with, among others, school personnel (principals), policy officials, migrant organisations, and parent representatives. During these meetings topics such as school policy or the referral and refusal of pupils are discussed.

The Flemish government permits the school administrations themselves to ban headscarves in their institutions, which can make it difficult for Muslims to find an acceptable school in their vicinity. No data on how many schools have actually enacted such a ban are available.

### Educational Advice

A significant proportion of Muslim (76 per cent) and non-Muslim (72 per cent) respondents in the Open Society Foundations survey indicated that they had needed information on education in the past 12 months, for themselves or for their children (or other relatives or friends). When children are going into preschool, primary education, or secondary education, their parents often need information on the different schools in the neighbourhood and the different options available. For advice they turn to friends or relatives with children. The internet is also an important source of information for parents as well as for students who want to go to college or university, and for people who need information on specific evening courses or work-related training. Several educational institutions, and universities in particular, organise Study Information Days (*SID in's*) in different Flemish cities to inform and recruit students. These days are always announced on the internet and through different channels like migrant organisations or brochures. People in need of information on work-related training can contact several commercial employment offices or turn to the Flemish Public Employment and Vocational Training Service.

Research has suggested that the difference in educational outcome between native Belgian and ethnic-minority pupils is in large part due to differences in the educational advice they receive from official pupil guidance centres. At the end of primary

<sup>110</sup> See <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/schoolkosten/basis> (accessed February 2011).



education, Moroccan and Turkish pupils are more likely than native Belgian pupils to be advised to pursue vocational training or education instead of general education.<sup>111</sup> As a consequence, Moroccan and Turkish pupils are overrepresented in vocational education and underrepresented in general education.

Research on parents' or pupils' evaluation of these pupil guidance centres is very limited. Surveys indicate that parents are generally satisfied by the service provided, but the data are not disaggregated by the ethnic, religious, and cultural background of the parents.<sup>112</sup> Qualitative research suggests that Moroccan parents have quite negative feelings of and experiences with these guidance centres.<sup>113</sup> They feel advice is misguided and based on stereotypes and that their children are pointed too quickly in the direction of training towards lower qualifications.

Several focus group participants gave accounts of the difficulties and opposition they experienced with school personnel and the student guidance centres. One father recounted how, after being told his son would not be able to finish general education, he was advised to transfer his son to technical education. The father ignored this advice. Three years his son was still doing very well in general education, the father said.

A woman participating in a focus group stressed the difficulties she experienced with the student guidance centres:

They told my children that they couldn't go to college. It's not necessary and so on. Everybody listens to the Student Guidance Centres (SGC). They believe the SGC. But we fought them. We never listened to the SGC. If we would do that, we would have stayed behind.<sup>114</sup>

Although these centres are supposed to be helping parents and pupils in their school careers, research shows migrant parents can have very different experiences compared with native Belgian parents.<sup>115</sup> The focus group discussions showed that migrant/Muslim parents were quite negative about the centres, although they also stressed that the situation has improved in recent years. Further research is needed to

---

<sup>111</sup> Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*.

<sup>112</sup> K. Verschuere, H. Colpin, P. Ghesquière, W. Hellinckx, B. Maes, A. Penne and K. Scheurweg, *Tevredenheid in Centra voor leerlingenbegeleiding: ontwikkeling van een instrumentarium* (Satisfaction with pupil guidance centres: development of a set of instruments), Departement Onderwijs en Vorming van het Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap: Centrum voor Schoolpsychologie (Department of Education and Formation of the Ministry of the Flemish Community: Centre for School Psychology), K.U. Leuven, Leuven, 2007 (hereafter Verschuere et al., *Satisfaction with pupil guidance centres*).

<sup>113</sup> Clycq, *From Kitchen Table to "God"*.

<sup>114</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>115</sup> Clycq, *From Kitchen Table to "God"*; Verschuere et al., *Satisfaction with pupil guidance centres*.

ensure a clearer understanding of how particular groups experience the Flemish educational system and its different institutions.

## 5.5 Language

There is enormous emphasis in Flanders on learning the Dutch language, which is seen as central to participation and integration. The educational system distinguishes between Flemish and non-Flemish pupils on the basis of whether they speak Dutch at home. For new migrant children, specific language courses are set up in primary and secondary schools for them to acquire Dutch as soon as possible. Schools with non-Dutch-speaking children receive more financial help from the government.

Focus group participants, especially second-generation parents, expressed their disbelief in the way in which assumptions were made about the linguistic competence of pupils from minority groups:

My son had to take a test to measure his proficiency in Dutch because they assumed he could not speak Dutch well. When he came home he was angry. He said: “Mamma, what did they do? They wanted to put me in a group of migrants who don’t speak Dutch.” He was really offended and said I had to go to school to complain to the staff.<sup>116</sup>

Depending on the number of non-Dutch-speaking pupils, schools receive funding for setting up courses and employing teachers who focus on these pupils. Therefore, having more migrant pupils can generate substantial extra funding. Some focus group respondents criticised the abuse of government funding for pupils with language difficulties.

My sister told me last week about a school in Borgerhout. The principal gathered together all the Moroccan parents and told them: “If you fill in these papers and state that you speak Moroccan at home, we will get extra funding and we can make a playground for the children.” Really. And my sister said: “We filled this in last year and we haven’t gotten our playground yet.” They are all second- and third-generation parents. They all speak Dutch at home and still they did the principal a favour by filling in that they speak Arabic at home.<sup>117</sup>

Language remains an important cultural emblem for migrant parents.<sup>118</sup> By learning to speak their mother tongue, ethnic-minority children are able to communicate with their parents and/or grandparents: this is a crucial link for cultural continuity in the

---

<sup>116</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>117</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>118</sup> S. Marzo, *Parlano diverso ... L'italiano parlato in Limburgo: uno studio variazionale e corpus based* (Speaking variously ... Spoken Italian in Limburg: a variational, corpus-based study), K.U. Leuven, Leuven, 2006; Van Avermaet, “Language shift”.

family context.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, it is assumed that a good mastery of the mother tongue will help in the acquirement of a new language.<sup>120</sup> With this idea in mind, the Foyer,<sup>121</sup> located in Brussels, sets up and supports different projects called bicultural education courses in Spanish, Italian, and Turkish. These initiatives remain very local and are not an official policy of the Flemish government.

There have been experiments with mother-tongue education for minority pupils in the past. However, these initiatives did not receive much governmental support.<sup>122</sup> Bilingualism in Belgium is supported, but children need to learn the “right” languages (Dutch, French, or English) and not the “wrong” languages (Turkish, Moroccan, or Arabic), as a linguistics professor has stated.<sup>123</sup> There are obvious examples where primary and/or secondary education is provided in a foreign language in Belgium and Flanders: the Jewish schools in Antwerp, the Japanese school in Brussels, and the different European schools for EU personnel throughout Belgium.<sup>124</sup> In the context of migrants with a Muslim background like Moroccans and Turks, there is significant public and political concern about education in the mother tongue.<sup>125</sup> Recently some Lucerna schools (founded by middle-class Turkish-origin parents living in Belgium) with a focus on learning languages were established for pupils with a migrant background. However, the main language is Dutch and pupils are encouraged to learn Dutch and not Turkish, Moroccan, or Arabic.<sup>126</sup> Although respect and attention for multiculturalism and diversity are key in the pedagogical projects of these non-confessional schools, they try to remain somewhat low-profile. When parents want to send their children to specific language courses for minority languages like Turkish, Arabic, or Italian, they must fall back on private courses, sometimes funded by the governments of Morocco, Turkey, Italy, or other sending countries.

<sup>119</sup> Clycq, *From Kitchen Table to “God”*.

<sup>120</sup> J. Leman, ed., *Moedertaalonderwijs bij allochtonen. Geïntegreerd onderwijs in de eigen taal en cultuur* (Mother-tongue education for migrants. Integrated education in own language and culture), ACCO, Leuven, 1999 (hereafter Leman, *Mother-tongue education for migrants*).

<sup>121</sup> See website at [http://www.foyer.be/?lang=nl&page=article&id\\_article=795](http://www.foyer.be/?lang=nl&page=article&id_article=795) (accessed September 2010).

<sup>122</sup> Leman, *Mother-tongue education for migrants*.

<sup>123</sup> R. D'Hont, “Meertalige scholen: vloek of zegen?” (Multilingual schools: a curse or a blessing?), available at <http://www.skolo.org/spip.php?article852&lang=fr> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>124</sup> E. Roosens, “De multiculturele samenleving, een luchtspiegeling?” (The multicultural society, a mirage?), oration delivered on the occasion of the opening of the 30th academic year at the Catholic University of Leuven, 2005, available at <http://alum.kuleuven.be/3deleefstijd/archief%20lezingen/Samenvatting%20Roosens.doc> (accessed May 2010) (hereafter Roosens, “The multicultural society, a mirage?”).

<sup>125</sup> Overbeeke, “Segregation, desegregation, integration?”.

<sup>126</sup> Website at <http://www.lucernacollege.be> (accessed September 2010).

## 5.6 Respect for Religion in the Educational System

While a similar majority of both Muslims (59 per cent) and non-Muslims (63 per cent) are satisfied with the extent to which schools respect the religious practices of different pupils, a far greater proportion of Muslim respondents (31 per cent) than non-Muslims (10 per cent) indicated there is too little respect for religion in the schools.

Further analysis of the results indicates that a major concern is whether female students are permitted to wear the headscarf. Although there is no general policy stemming from the Ministry of Education's decision to allow individual schools to decide on permission or prohibition on the wearing of a headscarf, many schools have introduced a ban. The general perception is that most schools prohibit the headscarf and this reduces the range of school options. Teachers are also affected by this prohibition. Discussions in the focus groups highlighted the difficulties faced by Muslim female teachers in finding a school that accepts Muslim teachers wearing a headscarf. A university employee also described the problems she encountered in finding schools for her students to do their internship.

So, my job at the university, we have special courses [for students who need to do their internship as a teacher]. And we have splendid students, but they wear a headscarf and the schools say: no, they do not enter here.<sup>127</sup>

This shows that not only pupils but also teachers have trouble finding schools permitting the wearing of the headscarf. The only exceptions are made for the teachers of Islamic courses, who are allowed to wear their headscarf.

Respondents were also concerned about the respect for other religious practices, such as festivities (Ramadan, Feast of Sacrifice, Festival of the Breaking of the Fast). Yet some schools respect these religious celebrations by offering pupils the day off. Similar concerns were expressed with respect to a space for prayer or offering *halal* food to pupils.

The absence of a general policy on the accommodation of religious practices makes it harder for parents to make decisions about which school to choose for their children. Respondents argued there are too few schools that offer full recognition and appreciation of the Islamic background of their pupils.

Publicly financed schools are required by law to provide religious courses on Islam. These courses are a sensitive topic in Catholic schools. Although around 60–65 per cent of the general pupil population is enrolled in these schools, they rarely offer Islamic courses. Catholic schools have a very good reputation in Belgium, because they are presumed to deliver an excellent education and are perceived to be strict and focused on discipline, and this is a reason why many parents, including Muslim, choose these schools. But Muslims face a dilemma on whether to choose a good private

<sup>127</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

and/or Catholic school where Islamic courses are rare or to opt for a public school with a less positive image where Islamic courses are taught.

### 5.7 Muslim Schools

Although there are a number of Protestant and Jewish schools and although the majority of the general pupil population is enrolled in Catholic schools, the establishment of Muslim schools is a very sensitive topic in Belgium and Flanders.<sup>128</sup> Since Islam gained official recognition in 1974 it has been theoretically possible for Muslims to set up Islamic schools. In practice, however, almost every proposal for an Islamic school has been resisted. Thus, although other religiously affiliated schools have existed for several decades in Belgium, Islamic schools are very rare. Furthermore, these schools are presumed to have an adverse impact on the integration of Muslim migrants.<sup>129</sup>

Notwithstanding the lack of state funding, one privately funded Islamic school has been established in Brussels. While the need for Islamic schools is not seen as a necessity by many Muslims, the failure of the current educational system in reducing the educational gap between native Belgian and ethnic-minority pupils has led to a growing belief among some that Islamic schools, with their special attention to the linguistic, religious, and cultural background of their students, can improve this situation.

### Increasing the Number of Teachers from Minority Groups

Respondents noted there is a general lack of knowledge on the different ethnic minorities in Belgium and on their religious backgrounds in particular. Minority languages like Turkish, Moroccan or Berber are too often perceived as a problem for the educational performances of migrant pupils. These languages are not (or, at best, are less) valued, and some educationalists think one language can simply be replaced with another.<sup>130</sup> This ignores the importance of native languages for these parents and children, not in the least for their self-perception, identity construction, and for communication between grandparents and grandchildren. As Antrop-Gonzalez has shown for students of Puerto Rican origin in the United States, a positive and strong self-identification as Puerto Rican and positive responses to their ethno-cultural

---

<sup>128</sup> Roosens, "The multicultural society, a mirage?"

<sup>129</sup> Overbeeke, "Segregation, desegregation, integration?"

<sup>130</sup> K. Jaspert, "Taal, onderwijs en achterstandsbestrijding: enkele overwegingen" (Language, education and the battle against deprivation: some considerations), in S. Sierens, M. Van Houtte, P. Loobuyck, K. Delrue and K. Pelleriaux, eds, *Onderwijs onderweg in de immigratiesamenleving (Education along the way in the immigration society)*, Stichting Gerrit Kreveld, Academia Press, Ghent, 2006, pp. 139–164.

background are important factors influencing their school careers.<sup>131</sup> Research supports the claim of parents that positive feedback is crucial, as mothers in the Open Society Foundations focus group affirmed:

**First participant:** But that is one of the most important educational criteria: positively stimulating a child by saying you can do it.

**Second participant:** But that's one thing our children experience way too little at school.<sup>132</sup>

To change this situation various respondents believe more migrant teachers in the schools are necessary. This will not only help pupils and their parents, but also the other teachers. The pupils and parents will be better supported and understood, and the teachers can learn about the diversity in their pupil population and will gain more understanding of the different contexts pupils and parents come from. At the moment only Islamic teachers have a Muslim background; migrant teachers are rare in regular courses. Most schools do not have an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse staff. Migrant teachers trying to enter an all-Flemish environment can experience difficulties finding suitable positions. Sometimes the expectations of those teachers are too high or too specific, as if they could solve all the problems of migrant or Muslim pupils.

Furthermore, respondents indicated there is a lack of information for parents who sometimes are not familiar with the Flemish education system. At the same time a more balanced supportive network for parents could be beneficial.

Finally, a major concern for some respondents, but also for various people in important positions, is the high rate of social and ethnic segregation in the Antwerp schools. Some districts and neighbourhoods are more segregated than others and the schools in the city centre have an especially high percentage of migrant and disadvantaged pupils. Although it is not clear what the effect of segregation is on the performance of pupils in this instance, such environments generally lower the quality of education and subsequent attainment levels of pupils from minority backgrounds attending these schools.<sup>133</sup> Respondents and key figures share these concerns over the performance levels in these schools which they believe are lower than average.

Muslim respondents felt their language and religion are negatively treated by school personnel and official institutions, and they themselves perceive them as necessary cultural emblems to hold on to and to pass on to their children.

<sup>131</sup> R. Antrop-Gonzalez, "This School Is My Sanctuary: The Dr Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School", Working Paper 57, Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI), Michigan State University, MI, 2003.

<sup>132</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>133</sup> J.H. Braddock and T.M. Eitle, "School Desegregation: Research, Policy, Practice, and Future Directions", in James A. Banks and Cherry McGee, eds, *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 2nd ed., Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2003, pp. 828–845.

## 5.8 Initiatives to Improve Inclusion in Education

The overall educational situation of pupils with a migrant background is far worse than that of Belgian-origin pupils. In response the government introduced the Equal Opportunities Decree to combat the inequalities in the system. Basically this decree assures schools that when they enrol a certain amount of pupils meeting the equal opportunities criteria they will receive more funding.

Furthermore, there are new organisations such as Broad School (*Brede School*), which works to create a supportive network of schools, families, cultural organisations, day nurseries, libraries, and sport organisations, and Flanking Education (*Flankerend Onderwijs*), which supports local educational actors to positively influence local education.

More specific initiatives have been taken at the city level. Antwerp in particular is known for its different projects and programmes such as like Learning City (*Lerende Stad*). This programme no longer exists having been replaced by the AG Stedelijk Onderwijs. In the past decade more collaboration between the different educational networks, private and public, was encouraged by the city. The different documents and interviews with city officials show education was and is a key topic. The city of Antwerp has stated that citizens should be informed about their educational opportunities. It wants to stimulate the acquisition of Dutch; to increase preschool participation for specific target groups; to decrease the percentage of truant pupils; and to increase the inflow and success rate in higher education and the participation of disadvantaged parents and children.<sup>134</sup>

Some projects started in the year 2007–2008, such as School en Ouders – KAAP (Parents and School – CAPE), aim to provide non-Dutch-speaking parents the opportunity to learn Dutch in their children’s schools or Broad School. A website exists for the choice processes in education, going from preschool to higher education and providing information and counselling.<sup>135</sup>

There is a significant group of youths at risk who play truant and have a history of violent or deviant behaviour. Efforts to help young people include a program for working with individuals in primary and secondary education, and a reporting centre with a “truant officer” (*Spijbelambtenaar*). In addition, there is now a coaching network focusing on the school and the community.<sup>136</sup>

Alongside these projects the city of Antwerp funds initiatives that reinforce school policy, pay attention to diversity, and enable children to have successful school careers.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>134</sup> *Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid Antwerpen*, available on the website of the city of Antwerp at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Lerende\\_stad/LS\\_Staf/aob/brochure\\_aob\\_250808.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Lerende_stad/LS_Staf/aob/brochure_aob_250808.pdf) (accessed September 2010) (hereafter *Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid Antwerpen*).

<sup>135</sup> *Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid Antwerpen*.

<sup>136</sup> *Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid Antwerpen*.

<sup>137</sup> See <http://www.antwerpen.be/onderwijs> (accessed February 2011).

## 6. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: EMPLOYMENT

### 6.1 The Employment Situation of Muslims in Flanders and Belgium

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

The previous section highlighted the sometimes problematic educational situation of many Muslim pupils, based on the experiences of Turks or Moroccans. Poor educational outcomes affect labour market participation. Indeed, statistics show there is an ethno-stratification (see below) of migrant workers in less favourable jobs and that significantly more migrants are unemployed and looking for work. Unemployment is much higher among Muslims and, as recent figures show, the current economic crisis has a particularly adverse influence on the employment status of Muslim migrants.<sup>138</sup>

Labour market data are not available for Muslims as a group. Labour market statistics in Belgium make distinctions between autochthonous Belgians, "new Belgians", EU nationals, and non-EU nationals. Since 2000 many Turks and Moroccans have acquired or received Belgian nationality and are found in the category of new Belgians. There are striking differences in the labour market experiences of different groups. Between 2000 and 2004 the employment rate for Turkish and Moroccan nationals and new Belgians decreased while unemployment increased.<sup>139</sup> Data for 2005 shows the employment rate for autochthonous Belgians stood at 65 per cent, while for new Belgians the employment rate was 52 per cent. Most striking is the employment rate for Turkish and Moroccan nationals at 29 per cent, less than half of that of autochthonous Belgians.<sup>140</sup>

The Flemish Public Employment and Vocational Training Service (*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding*, VDAB) uses name recognition software to provide a more detailed picture of the labour market participation of people of Turkish

<sup>138</sup> VDAB, *Alloctonen sneller aan het werk, Analyse van het uitstroomptraject van werkzoekenden in 2003, 2005 en 2007* (Migrants faster at work. Analysis of the outflow of job-seekers in 2003, 2005 and 2007), VDAB Studiedienst Discussiepaper 2008/2, available at <http://vdab.be/trends/papers/paper2008nr2.pdf> (accessed September 2010) (hereafter VDAB, *Migrants faster at work*).

<sup>139</sup> Tielens, M. "Van A tot Z achterop. De achterstelling van alloctonen in onderwijs en werk" (From A to Z held back. The arrears of migrants in education and work), *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen* (The Labour Market in Flanders), Leuven, Steunpunt WAV, 2005, pp. 118–128 (hereafter Tielens, "From A to Z held back"); R. Misplon and F. Holderbeeke, "Alloctonen op zoek naar werk" (Migrants looking for a job), in *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*, Leuven, Steunpunt WAV, 2005, pp. 153–170.

<sup>140</sup> Tielens "From A to Z held back".



and Maghrebi origin irrespective of their nationality status.<sup>141</sup> This analysis suggests that significant progress has been made in tackling long-term unemployment, as the proportion of unemployed Moroccans and Turks who were out of work for over a year fell from 61 per cent in 2003 to 46 per cent in 2007. Although this is important progress, the proportion remains much higher than the 2007 figure for unemployed native Belgians, of whom 35 per cent were still unemployed after one year.<sup>142</sup>

Despite this progress, early indications are that the situation is worsening again. As is often the case, economic crises hit the most insecure sectors first. In January 2009, the unemployment rate increased by 10 per cent compared with January 2008.<sup>143</sup> When broken down according to ethnic origin and/or nationality, it is clear that unemployment has hit certain groups harder than others. While there has been an 8 per cent increase in native Belgians claiming the non-working job-seekers' benefit (the official term), among Turks and Moroccans this figure has increased by 20 per cent.<sup>144</sup> The higher figures for these minority groups are to a large extent due to the fact that they are overrepresented in certain economic sectors.

Scholars call this an ethno-stratification of the Belgian and Flemish labour market.<sup>145</sup> Compared with native Belgians, ethnic-minority groups such as Moroccans and Turks are overrepresented in blue-collar jobs like industrial cleaning, hotels and restaurants, temporary employment, and agriculture, and are positioned at the bottom of the white-collar hierarchy.<sup>146</sup> As a consequence, they are also overrepresented in the bottom wage classes.<sup>147</sup>

Poverty statistics show dramatic differences between various ethnic groups: 10 per cent of the Belgians, 21 per cent of the Italians, and 59 per cent of the Turks and 56 per cent of the Moroccans<sup>148</sup> live below the general poverty line.<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> VDAB, Migrants faster at work.

<sup>142</sup> VDAB, Migrants faster at work.

<sup>143</sup> [http://vdab.be/trends/kik/doc/KiK\\_Allochtonen200903.pdf](http://vdab.be/trends/kik/doc/KiK_Allochtonen200903.pdf).

<sup>144</sup> For Brazilians (29 per cent), Ghanaians (28 per cent), and Bulgarians (44 per cent) the percentages are even higher.

<sup>145</sup> S. Vertommen, A. Martens and N. Ouali, *Topography of the Belgian Labour Market*, Koning Boudewijnsstichting / Fondation Roi Baudouin, Brussels, 2006 (hereafter Vertommen et al., *Topography*).

<sup>146</sup> Vertommen et al., *Topography*.

<sup>147</sup> S. Vertommen and A. Martens, "Allochtonen beloond: Ethnostratificatie op de loonmarkt" (Migrants rewarded: Ethnostratification on the labour market), in *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*, Leuven, 2005, p. 171-186.

<sup>148</sup> Persons with an Italian, Turkish or Moroccan nationality and persons born in Morocco, Turkey or Italy, irrespective of their nationality status, are categorised as Moroccan, Turkish or Italian.

## The Employment Status of Muslims in Antwerp and Borgerhout

While the overall unemployment rate in 2007 in Flanders was 6 per cent, in Antwerp it was 12 per cent.<sup>150</sup> In Antwerp the employment rate of non-EU nationals of working age (33 per cent) was half that of Belgian nationals (63 per cent).<sup>151</sup> The figures show that the unemployment rate for Maghrebi and Turkish individuals was higher – especially for those less than 25 years old – than for other groups.<sup>152</sup>

The data for nationality only provide a partial picture, as they do not cover people of Moroccan and Turkish origin who are Belgian nationals. According to nationality figures, 8 per cent of the Maghrebi and Turkish citizens are unemployed. However, data on ethnic origin show that 27 per cent of individuals with a Maghrebi or Turkish origin are unemployed.<sup>153</sup> While Belgian citizenship brings advantages in the labour market, factors like discrimination and racism seldom disappear as they are rarely influenced by citizenship.

The low labour market position of Maghrebi and Turkish individuals is in large part due to their lower educational qualifications.<sup>154</sup> Of those of Maghrebi and Turkish origin who are job-seekers in Antwerp, the majority (62 per cent) have only a primary or lower secondary education diploma, 31 per cent have a higher secondary education diploma, and only 4 per cent have a higher education diploma.<sup>155</sup>

While the employment rate in Antwerp is 58 per cent, in Borgerhout it is slightly lower at 53 per cent. However, this conceals a significant difference in the employment rates of BIM (48 per cent) and BEM (61 per cent).<sup>156</sup> This accords with the opinion held by some key local figures that Borgerhout is composed of two very different areas: Intra Muros and Extra Muros. In the former, known for its ethnic diversity and young

<sup>149</sup> B. Van Robaeys and N. Perrin, “Armoede bij personen van vreemde herkomst becijferd – Deelverslag van ‘Armoede bij personen van vreemde herkomst’” (Poverty among persons of foreign origin quantified), UA-OASeS, Antwerp, available at [http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/NL/PUB\\_1635\\_Armoede\\_vreemde\\_origine\\_becijferd.pdf](http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/NL/PUB_1635_Armoede_vreemde_origine_becijferd.pdf) (accessed February 2011).

<sup>150</sup> *Arbeidsmarktmonitor Antwerpen 2007* (Antwerp job market monitor 2007), Stad Antwerpen, 2007 (hereafter *Antwerp Job Market Monitor 2007*).

<sup>151</sup> S. Kerremans, *De socio-economische positie van de Antwerpse bevolking. Een verkennende analyse op gegevens van de Kruispuntbank Sociale Zekerheid* (The socio-economic position of the Antwerp population), Databank Sociale Planning Antwerpen (Database for Social Planning Antwerp), Antwerp, 2007.

<sup>152</sup> *Antwerp Job Market Monitor 2007*.

<sup>153</sup> *Antwerp Job Market Monitor 2007*.

<sup>154</sup> *Antwerp Job Market Monitor 2007*.

<sup>155</sup> *Antwerp Job Market Monitor 2007*.

<sup>156</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”.

population, the unemployment figures are much higher than in the latter. In the district of Borgerhout youth unemployment is a crucial issue.<sup>157</sup>

### Employment Data from the Questionnaires

Of the respondents to the Open Society Foundations' questionnaire, 43 per cent were employed full-time, a figure which when broken down means 38 per cent of the Muslims and 47 per cent of the non-Muslims. Although the research sample is not representative, the patterns discussed above are also – to some extent at least – present here. (See Table 12.)

**Table 12. Are you at this moment employed and do you receive a wage?, %**

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Yes, full-time employee	37.8	47.1
Yes, part-time employee	7.1	11.8
Yes, self-employed	2.0	6.9
No, retired	8.2	11.8
No, unemployed and looking for work	11.2	5.9
No, student	19.4	7.8
No, looking after home or family	13.3	2.0
No, permanently sick or disabled	1.0	1.0
Other	0.0	5.9
<b>Total</b>		
	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

National and regional figures show that individuals of Turkish and Moroccan origin or nationality are overrepresented in blue-collar jobs.<sup>158</sup> The analysis indicates this trend is also apparent in the Open Society Foundations Antwerp sample (see Table 13): 31 per cent of the non-Muslims but only 3 per cent of the Muslims were employed in a

<sup>157</sup> *Antwerp Job Market Monitor 2007*.

<sup>158</sup> Vertommen et al., *Topography*; Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*.

modern higher profession like teacher, physiotherapist, or social worker. More Muslims (22 per cent) than non-Muslims (13 per cent) worked in routine manual labour jobs or semiroutine manual labour (14 per cent and 10 per cent). A significant proportion of the Muslim sample (53 per cent) were students, unemployed, or looking after family or home.

**Table 13. Respondents' employment by sector, %**

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Modern professional occupations	3.1	31.4
Clerical and middle management occupations	17.3	13.7
Senior managers or administrators	1.0	9.8
Technical and craft occupations	11.2	10.8
Semi-routine manual and service occupations	14.3	9.8
Routine manual and service occupations	22.4	12.7
Middle or junior managers	3.1	2.0
Traditional professional occupations	4.1	4.9
Did not answer (N/A)	23.5	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>98</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

## 6.2 Barriers to the Labour Market

Data on ethnic discrimination in Belgium are scarce and fragmented. There is older research which suggests that equally qualified individuals with a foreign background were more discriminated against in the labour market than individuals of Belgian origin: the discrimination ratio was 39 per cent for Flanders, 27 per cent for the Walloons, and 34 per cent for Brussels.<sup>159</sup> A more recent study gives a long list of the different guises discrimination can take: employers can lie and say a job is already taken, they can increase their requirements spontaneously (e.g., concerning linguistic ability), they can demand specific clothing prescriptions (e.g., concerning the wearing

<sup>159</sup> Arriijn, P., S. Feld and A. Nayer. *Discrimination à l'embauche* (Discrimination in recruitment). Brussels: Services fédéraux des affaires Scientifiques, Techniques et Culturelles (Federal Services of Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs), 1997.

of a headscarf), and so on.<sup>160</sup> In recent years, there have been several cases where an employer has been accused of discrimination, such as the Feryn case mentioned above.

An in-depth examination of labour market discrimination in Antwerp providing data on the experiences of Belgian, Moroccan, and Turkish employees found that around one in ten Moroccan and Turkish employees experienced discrimination frequently.<sup>161</sup> A further 33 per cent of Moroccan male employees and 20 per cent of Turkish male and female employees and Moroccan female employees reported experiencing discrimination sometimes (see Table 14).

**Table 14. Experience of discrimination when looking for a job in Antwerp, %**

	Belgian origin		Turkish origin		Moroccan origin		Total average
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	
Never	84	90	47	55	32	54	60
Rarely	10	5	21	12	20	14	14
Sometimes	4	4	20	20	33	21	17
Frequently	2	2	10	9	12	7	7
Often	1	0	2	4	2	4	2

Source: Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*, p. 65.

As expected, the 2008 study's data for those who were employed indicate that those of Belgian origin report very few experiences of discrimination: indeed, 83 per cent of men and 90 per cent of women reported never encountering discrimination. Among minority groups there are differences in the survey results. Almost a third of the Moroccan men (31 per cent) reported experiencing discrimination frequently or sometimes. This is higher than the rates for Moroccan women (22 per cent), Turkish male (25 per cent) and female employees (21 per cent) (see Table 15).

<sup>160</sup> A. Martens and N. Ouali, *Ethnische discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest* (Ethnic discrimination on the labour market in the Brussels regional capital), Brussels/Leuven, 2005.

<sup>161</sup> Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*.

**Table 15. Experience of discrimination in the work environment in Antwerp, %**

	Belgian origin		Turkish origin		Moroccan origin		Total average
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	
Never	83	90	51	67	30	62	64
Rarely	10	3	21	9	39	14	16
Sometimes	5	6	17	13	22	15	13
Frequently	2	1	8	8	9	7	6
Often	2	0	4	2	0	2	1

Source: Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*, p. 67.

For most respondents, but in particular for Turkish and Moroccan origin respondents (Turkish women in particular with 70 per cent), co-workers rather than supervisors or managers were reported to be the main source of discrimination (see Table 16).

**Table 16. Sources of discrimination in the work environment in Antwerp, %**

	Belgian origin		Turkish origin		Moroccan origin		Average
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	
Colleagues	31	39	46	70	46	45	50
Supervisors	22	11	21	8	25	16	19
Senior managers	28	28	14	10	12	11	13
Customers	13	17	14	11	15	25	15
Others	6	6	6	2	2	4	3%

Source: Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*, p. 68.

Data on Discrimination on the Labour Market from the Open Society Foundations Questionnaires

In the Open Society Foundations' survey, 29 per cent of Muslims and 24 per cent of non-Muslims had been rejected for a job at least once in the previous five years. Among Muslim respondents, skin colour (21 per cent), ethnicity (16 per cent) and religion (11 per cent) were identified as the main reasons for rejection by some, while for 32 per cent the reason remained unknown and for 21 per cent there were other reasons. By contrast, among non-Muslims, age (22 per cent) emerged as the most cited reason for being rejected for a job. However, the majority of the non-Muslims stated

the rejection was based on other reasons, including the lack of sufficient prior experience or abilities compared with other candidates.

Promotion and progress in employment emerge from the survey as an area where the experiences of Muslim respondents differ significantly from those of non-Muslims. Almost a quarter (24 per cent) of the Muslims who are or were participating on the labour market said that they had faced discrimination over promotion, compared with 9 per cent of non-Muslims.

Again, respondents indicated different reasons for this perceived discrimination and important differences between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents are apparent. Whereas no Muslims stated they were discriminated against because of their gender, this was the case for 17 per cent of the non-Muslims. For Muslim respondents, the major discrimination reason was their ethnicity (42 per cent), whereas none of the non-Muslim respondents – although some of them had a sub-Saharan African or eastern European background – indicated their ethnicity was a reason. Also skin colour (for Muslims) and age (for both categories) were specified as important discrimination reasons.

As in education, the headscarf is a problematic issue for employment in Flanders. It was the perception of focus group discussants that the exclusion of women wearing the headscarf (or other Islamic symbols) has become a more or less general rule in the labour market, unlike in the Netherlands, where it is accepted that women may wear a headscarf working in retail. As a woman participating in the focus group said, I'm unemployed. They told me I have to take off my headscarf if I want to find a job.

Others – for example, the older women in a focus group – complained about the discrimination (young) migrant men can encounter on the labour market. Failure to secure employment with a long-term contract also affects opportunities in other areas such as the housing market:

Doing short-term [interim] jobs doesn't allow you to buy a home. You need to be able to show a pay slip. If you don't have a long-term job, you don't get a loan. And that is the problem here for the Muslims.<sup>162</sup>

In the focus group with young men, their personal experiences with short-term work, called interim work, was discussed in more depth. Participants agreed that migrants with a criminal record had to resign themselves to jobs at the bottom of the ladder, although non-migrants could still find employment after serving prison sentences.

In the Open Society Foundations' sample, around 25 per cent of all respondents had searched for information on employment in the previous 12 months. No differences between Muslims and non-Muslims were apparent. Respondents had various reasons to look for employment and used different information sources like ads, spontaneous applications, interim-employment offices, the public employment office, their former

---

<sup>162</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

internship places, friends or former colleagues, family relations, and the internet. No significant differences between various ethnic groups were apparent.<sup>163</sup>

Those looking for a job can fall back on the expertise and advice of the VDAB. Founded in 1989, it has social and economic missions: the former means putting job-seekers and employers into contact with each other, the latter refers to the fact that the VDAB's work is to be a reliable partner for the (un)employed and the employers in human resources management. Non-Dutch-speaking people can be helped with special guidance and training sessions. The VDAB has even translated its website into 25 European and five other languages (albeit with an online translation program). The VDAB offers a database of curricula vitae from all job-seekers, which employers can use to consult and contact candidates. At the same time the VDAB offers a database of job vacancies for job-seekers.

In recent years the VDAB has been investing in the guidance of newcomers in Flanders by setting up specific integration courses. The VDAB also manages unemployment benefits since access to these requires individuals to be officially registered as job seekers.

Respondents from the Antwerp sample had contacted the VDAB when looking for a job, searching for training courses to increase their attractiveness on the labour market and so on. The union is also an important information provider when respondents need information about their contracts and (un)employment rights or when employees resign or are dismissed. Job seekers can also rely on commercial recruitment agencies with databases of vacancies. Friends and family networks remain an important resource for information on employment. Research shows informal networks are crucial in getting the necessary information and access to jobs.<sup>164</sup> Overall, respondents were positive about the support they received from public services.

### Efforts to Improve the Labour Market Position of Muslims

As with education, the overall employment situation of migrants is far worse than that of Belgian-origin individuals. All researchers studying the labour market participation of migrant groups, in particular, are aware that educational qualifications are a significant determinant for obtaining a job. The close connection between education and employment is reflected at the level of policy by the fact that the minister responsible for Flemish education policy is also responsible for Flemish employment policy. The competencies of the labour market policy are mainly Flemish, but parts remain national; local policies are developed at the city level.

<sup>163</sup> See also Vandezande et al., *Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market*.

<sup>164</sup> M. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties", *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6) (1973), pp. 1360–1380.



The city cofinances training, organised by the VDAB, which focuses on four underprivileged groups: people with limited education, elderly people, migrants, and people with disabilities.

Specifically targeting the crisis in juvenile unemployment, the city of Antwerp in 2005 started projects to help youths between 18- and 25-years-old in their search for jobs by giving them career guidance, specialist education, work experience, and job coaching. The focus is on youths who live below the poverty line, who depend on government welfare, and are without work experience and/or without a diploma.

Despite these efforts recent figures show that people working for the city of Antwerp are still to a large extent of native Belgian origin. Analysis using nationality and names suggests that 7 per cent of city personnel and 10 per cent of social service personnel are from ethnic-minority groups. However, the situation appears to be improving. In the second half of 2007, 20 per cent of new employees were from ethnic-minority groups.<sup>165</sup> Although this suggests that the city of Antwerp is succeeding in attracting more ethnic-minority personnel, further analysis shows that the vast majority (more than 80 per cent) of ethnic-minority employees occupy the lowest-level jobs (such as street or industrial cleaning services). The figures for ethnic-minority personnel are even lower in other city sectors like the harbour (1.5 per cent) and the police force (around 2 per cent).<sup>166</sup>

In stakeholder interviews, those working to improve labour market participation identified the barriers ethnic-minority people, Muslims in particular, face in the labour market. Wearing the headscarf emerged as an important barrier for some Muslim women as many companies are reluctant to employ them. Muslim men, especially those of Moroccan and Turkish origin, must counter discrimination based on stereotypes that they have a poor attitude towards work and insufficient mastery of the Dutch language. These prejudices remain difficult to change and hinder these groups when entering the labour market.

Therefore, some community figures stress that more direct measures like target numbers or even quotas are needed. Yet there is no broad basis of support for these measures. Others say the government has to set the example and employ more people with a non-Belgian origin. If governmental or city institutions do not reflect the diversity present in their country, region or city, they cannot force the private sector to do so.

---

<sup>165</sup> VDAB, *Migrants faster at work*.

<sup>166</sup> City councillor responsible for diversity, available at [http://www.monicodeconinck.be/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=28](http://www.monicodeconinck.be/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=28) (accessed September 2010).

## 7. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HOUSING

As already mentioned, the population composition differs dramatically between BIM and BEM. In BIM the population is more ethnically diverse and a significant proportion of the population consists of young people with migrant backgrounds. A small number of older residents of Belgian origin have not left the neighbourhood. Whereas BIM has an overrepresentation of people under 40, BEM has an overrepresentation of those over 60 years old. In recent years a new trend has become apparent: the older, lower-cost houses in BIM have become attractive for young higher-income families as well as for artists. This is changing the composition of the neighbourhood again.

There are no specific data on the housing situation of Muslims in Antwerp. In general, the housing situation in BIM is comparable with the general city situation: 36 per cent are single-family houses, 48 per cent are apartments, and 17 per cent are unknown. In BEM, where many elderly people live, around 67 per cent of the dwellings are apartments. Although the information on the housing market does not cover all the living units in the area, in BIM (43 per cent) fewer people own a house or apartment than in BEM (49 per cent) or in the city of Antwerp (48 per cent).<sup>167</sup>

Seven per cent of the Antwerp social housing stock (26,861 houses) is located in BIM. The proportion of housing stock that is social housing is the same in BIM and BEM as in Antwerp as a whole. In the district of Borgerhout, 117 houses are labelled as abandoned and 31 as neglected: 107 of the former and all the latter are located in BIM. In the district, 61 houses are unfit for living in, 58 of them are in BIM. The percentage of abandoned, neglected, and unfit houses in BIM is higher compared with BEM and also with the overall city average.<sup>168</sup>

Littering is a major problem in BIM. It is something people are confronted with in everyday life and often critically defines the outlook of a neighbourhood. Figures relating to the number of complaints about littering to the square kilometres of an area show dramatic differences between the research areas. Whereas there were around 92 reports per square kilometre at the city level, there were around 133 for BEM. For BIM the reports increased dramatically to 1,237 reports per square kilometre.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>167</sup> I. Hackethal, *Omgevingsanalyse i.h.k.v. meerjarenplan 2009–2014* (Environmental analysis long-term planning 2009–2014), Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad, Antwerp, 2008; see also L. Lambrechts, *Terreinverkenning private woonmarkt* (Field description of the private housing market), Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad, Antwerp, 2006.

<sup>168</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”.

<sup>169</sup> Rotthier, “Neighbourhood Profile”.

### Housing and Neighbourhood Data from the Antwerp Questionnaires

A recent study shows that in Belgium as a whole 80 per cent of native Belgians own their accommodation. The corresponding figures are 70 per cent for people from EU Member States, 44 per cent for people from outside the EU, and 64 per cent for Turks and Moroccans.<sup>170</sup> Among the Open Society Foundations' sample survey, the majority of Muslims (55 per cent) and non-Muslims (50 per cent) were owner-occupiers. A third of the non-Muslim sample rented their accommodation from a private landlord, while this was only the case for 13 per cent of the Muslim respondents. Of the Muslim respondents 21 per cent lived with their parents and/or siblings at home (see Table 17).

**Table 17. Do you own or rent your home or do you have other living arrangements?, %**

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Own outright	30.6	17.6
Own with mortgage/loan	24.5	32.4
Part rent, part mortgage (shared equity)	3.1	2.9
Rent public/social housing	4.1	3.9
Rent private landlord	13.3	33.3
Live with parents/siblings	21.4	3.9
Live rent-free	3.1	3.9
Other	0.0	2.0
<b>Total</b>		
	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

Respondents had different reasons for moving to the neighbourhood, although no dominant reason emerges from the interviews. For Muslims as well as for non-Muslims the niceness of the area and/or the house in particular and the affordable housing were important reasons. For Muslims the vicinity of family and the multicultural character of the neighbourhood were also attractive reasons. For non-Muslims the fact that the house was near their work was an important reason. The majority of Muslim

<sup>170</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

respondents had lived in the area for over ten years, while the majority of non-Muslims had lived in the area for less than ten years, including a third that had lived in the area for 1–5 years (see Table 18).

**Table 18. Years living in the neighbourhood, %**

No. of years	Muslim	Non-Muslim
<	2.0	6.9
1–5	17.3	34.3
6–10	15.3	16.7
11–20	33.7	26.5
21–30	21.4	4.9
31+	10.2	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>98</b>
		<b>102</b>

Source: Open Society Foundations

As for social housing, a large part of the Muslim (38 per cent) and non-Muslim (29 per cent) respondents were fairly satisfied; 14 per cent of the Muslims were very satisfied while this was true only for 2 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents. At the same time 10 per cent of the Muslims and 12 per cent of the non-Muslims were fairly to very dissatisfied. These numbers must be carefully interpreted as a large group of Muslims (24 per cent) and non-Muslims (47 per cent) answered “Don’t know” to the question about social housing as they probably did not have experience of it. It is interesting to note that almost half of the non-Muslims were in this position, while this was only so for one-quarter of the Muslims.

When asked what they wanted to change about social housing in Borgerhout, respondents referred to the bad condition of some of the houses, but overall the most important problem remained littering and street cleaning. Respondents felt their co-residents should pay more attention to these issues, but also asked for more police intervention and for a different policy on the public collection of garbage. Some also wanted more affordable houses on the private market and others sought a stricter approach towards landlords charging excessive rents. A minority of Muslims (18 per cent) and non-Muslims (23 per cent) had sought information on housing in the previous year.

### The Positive and Negative Aspects of Their Neighbourhood and City

The questionnaires show most Muslim (66 per cent) and non-Muslim (73 per cent) respondents liked their neighbourhood. Only 5 per cent of the Muslim respondents and 4 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents did not think of Borgerhout as a nice neighbourhood to live in.

When asked what they liked about their neighbourhood, respondents listed different reasons, but some general topics recurred in their answers. Borgerhout seems to combine the advantages of a city with the advantages of a village. There are stores where a variety of food and supplies from different cultural groups are available. Many respondents like this kind of diversity. Another city-like feature is a well-designed and extensive public transport system: Borgerhout is near Antwerp city centre and it just takes a few minutes to get there by bus or tram. Because Borgerhout is dense, different activities are organised and people can come into contact with each other. People feel their neighbourhood is reviving and the city is ready to invest. But, at the same time, the composition of the neighbourhood is also changing. Not only is the ethnic diversity increasing but there is also a trend for Belgian-origin couples with a higher education to come to live in Borgerhout. They are perceived to be more open-minded towards ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity.

Several respondents referred to Borgerhout as a village in a city. Their idea of village features refers to the cosiness and the presence of green places. Everything is nearby and neighbours and shop owners know each other by name. These experiences generate feelings of belonging and mutual understanding and closeness.

Nevertheless, many respondents pointed out that Borgerhout suffers from various problems. The questionnaires showed a number of shared concerns which can be perceived as typical city issues. Although Borgerhout was praised for its cosiness, it was also seen as a crowded place with excessive traffic. Some complained about youths hanging around on street corners and making too much noise. Others stated there is some small criminality and vandalism. For some, the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in Borgerhout complicates living together.

Many respondents proposed measures for controlling traffic violations and speeding in particular. Some wanted harsher regulation for littering and vandalism, but also believed the city should do more to collect garbage on a more regular basis.

More specifically, respondents were asked to evaluate different neighbourhood facilities like the services for young people or public transport. Non-Muslims seemed more satisfied than Muslims with services for young people: 51 per cent were fairly to very satisfied, compared with 37 per cent of the Muslims. However, a large group of both Muslims (38 per cent) as well as non-Muslims (51 per cent) did not express an opinion on this issue, perhaps because they had no experience of such facilities. In contrast, the large majority of both Muslims (76 per cent) and non-Muslims (80 per cent) were very or fairly satisfied with public transport in the area.

## Discrimination in Housing

Discrimination in the housing market is a problem in Borgerhout, although the focus group discussions were mainly concerned with such experiences on the labour market and in the educational system. Nevertheless, respondents were worried about the difficulties they encountered when looking for accommodation to rent. One common experience was that giving a foreign-sounding name in a telephone conversation was often enough to be rejected. When Muslim respondents succeed in evading this first hurdle, they are sometimes rejected at the door. The focus group among older women related these experiences; the response, according to one participant, was to buy houses instead of renting them:

Sometimes it is right from the start: “It is not for foreigners.” Like that, straightaway. And now they [Belgian-origin people] have become the foreigners. It’s a pity, but the times change for everybody. It was hard back in the day to rent something. Very, very hard.<sup>171</sup>

### 7.1 Housing Policy Initiatives

The city of Antwerp has made considerable investment in the local housing market. Affordable houses in specific neighbourhoods with a high proportion of socioeconomically disadvantaged families and individuals are increasingly scarce. Through cooperation with private investors the city aims to create 1,000 new houses each year. The city wants to steer the housing market actively and with the support of the Social Lettings Office.<sup>172</sup> Landlords who receive financial support for constructing or reconstructing their properties for letting rent out their accommodation for nine years at social housing prices. Furthermore, the city will invest in the housing market through buying and renovating old houses and through selling unused properties. Finally, there are measures that give tenants more security and social protection against rack-renters. No specific reference to the needs, desires, or experiences of ethnic or Muslim minorities is made.

---

<sup>171</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>172</sup> See website of the Social Lettings agency in Antwerp at <http://www.svka.be/> (accessed September 2010).

## 8. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

### 8.1 The Overall Health Status of Belgians and Ethnic Minorities

The health situation of ethnic minorities is a largely understudied research area. Existing research is mostly old and fragmentary.<sup>173</sup> In recent years, general health surveys have stimulated new research. A Flemish study from 2006 gives one of the first interesting overviews of the current health situation of ethnic minorities in Flanders.<sup>174</sup> Yet here too there is no registration of religion. Individuals can only be categorised according to their nationality and their country of origin; as is the case in most Belgian and Flemish research, Turks and Moroccans are grouped together and can be considered the two largest minority groups with Islamic backgrounds.

Differences between, on the one hand, Belgians and, on the other, Turks and Moroccans concerning their overall perceptions of their personal physical health status are large: 20 per cent of the former but 30 per cent of the latter perceived their health status as average, bad or very bad.<sup>175</sup> Nevertheless, Belgians (23 per cent) are more likely than Turks and Moroccans (15 per cent) to report having one or more long illness, chronic condition, or disability. However, Turks and Moroccans are more likely than Belgians to suffer from diabetes: one in five Turks and Moroccans has it.<sup>176</sup> Although Moroccans and Turks report fewer chronic health conditions, they say that their health condition hinders them more in everyday life.<sup>177</sup>

Significant differences also emerge between Belgians and Turks and Moroccans in relation to mental health. A third of Moroccans and Turks experience psychological distress compared with a quarter of Belgians. One in four Moroccans and Turks are reported to be at high risk of mental disorder compared with one in eight Belgians.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>173</sup> M.-C. Foblets, B. Djait and K. Pieters, eds, *Mietjes and macho's: Allochtone jeugd-delinquentie. Getuigenissen van autochtone en allochtone jongeren* (Pussies and machos: migrant juvenile delinquency. Confessions of native and migrant youngsters), ACCO, Leuven, 2004 (hereafter Foblets et al., *Pussies and machos*); Hendrickx Kristin, *Belang van klinische en communicatieve vaardigheden in de opleiding geneeskunde in het kader van seksuele gezondheid, met speciale aandacht voor allochtone patiënten* (The importance of clinical and communicative skills in medical training with respect to sexual health, with special attention to minority patients), University of Antwerp, Antwerp, 2008.

<sup>174</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

<sup>175</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

<sup>176</sup> Notwithstanding the high prevalence of diabetes, Turks and Moroccans (27 per cent) have their blood sugar rate examined much less frequently than Belgians (47 per cent) (Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*); also for tracing different forms of cancer the percentage for Turks and Moroccans is half of that for Belgians.

<sup>177</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

<sup>178</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

The rate of severe depression is much higher for Turks and Moroccans (25 per cent) than for Belgians (7 per cent), as are anxiety (13 per cent compared with 5 per cent) and severe physical complaints (31 per cent compared with 7 per cent).<sup>179</sup>

The Open Society Foundations' questionnaire included questions about respondents' experiences of health services. The majority of both Muslim (79 per cent) and non-Muslim (86 per cent) respondents were fairly or very satisfied with health care services in Antwerp.

Muslims and non-Muslims showed a similar range of views on whether hospitals have enough respect for the needs of people of different religious backgrounds. The majority (62 per cent of Muslims and 68 per cent of non-Muslims) believed that this was so, while in both groups less than 10 per cent felt that hospitals showed insufficient respect. Among the practices that Muslims identified as influencing their evaluation was the provision of food catering for their dietary requirements. Several hospitals give every patient a questionnaire to find out their food preferences (among other things). Several respondents also praised the availability of translators and the provision of prayer spaces.

Almost a third of respondents had sought information on health issues in the preceding 12 months. Many respondents reported having good and close relationships with their personal doctors and turned to them for immediate information and advice. Several older respondents were diabetic patients and needed information about their disease.

Health issues are often related to age.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, analysis on the questionnaires shows a correlation between the age of respondents and their need for health information in the past year (see Table 19). While a third of respondents below 20 years old sought health information, among those over 50 it was closer to half (45 per cent). At the same time, the focus group discussion indicated that those in the older age group experienced specific difficulties when they came into contact with health care institutions.

---

<sup>179</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

<sup>180</sup> A. Janssens and C. Timmerman, *Hoe elkaar de hand reiken? De zoekende interactie tussen de allochtone ouderen en het zorgaanbod in de stad Antwerpen* (How to reach out? The searching interaction between migrant elderly and health care in Antwerp), Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, Antwerp, 2003.



**Table 19. Have you sought information on health in the past year?, %**

		<20 years old	20–29 years old	30–39 years old	40–49 years old	50–59 years old	60+ years old
Yes		33.3	20.3	27.8	26.7	42.1	48.1
No		66.7	79.7	72.2	73.3	57.9	51.9
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Number	9	64	36	45	19	27

Source: Open Society Foundations

## 8.2 Personal Experiences with Health Institutions in Antwerp

There has been growing public and media debate on public health services and the needs of Muslim patients.<sup>181</sup>

In the Open Society Foundations focus group discussions, three major concerns emerged: communication difficulties, disrespect for religious habits, and discriminatory treatment.

### Communication Difficulties

Older respondents needed information about their health status. The survey indicated that most Muslim respondents over the age of 60 years had sought information on health issues in the preceding 12 months. Difficulties in understanding and speaking Dutch placed a barrier to their ability to communicate with doctors and nurses.

In the focus group with older Muslim men, several participants who had been in recent contact with health care institutions reported difficulties in communication between personnel and patients. Participants reported significant differences in their experience of their own doctors and their experiences in hospitals. Participants were able to overcome communication difficulties with general practitioners (GPs) as they could bring their children or other family members with them to be their translators. This was more feasible for GP appointments as they often have more flexible schedules. By contrast, times for appointments with hospital doctors are less flexible. Thus, it is more difficult for patients to find a translator, and some participants may not have family members to translate for them.

<sup>181</sup> C. Vassart, *Gezondheidszorg en diversiteit: het voorbeeld van de moslimpatiënten* (Health care and diversity: the example of Muslim patients), Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brussels, 2005 (hereafter Vassart, *Health care and diversity*).

Participants were aware of the difficulties associated with the linguistic diversity in Antwerp and Borgerhout. It is impossible to provide translators for every language. They emphasised that there is more than one Arabic language, so one Arabic-speaking translator would not suffice.

The error is many people think that if they know Berber they know Arabic. The government thinks, all right, that is a Moroccan. But I speak Arabic, the other speaks Berber. They don't have to assume a Moroccan always speaks the two languages. It is not so a Moroccan can translate all the time, no.<sup>182</sup>

This concern was confirmed by another Moroccan focus group participant who herself worked at a clinic as a doctor. She was often asked to translate between doctors and Egyptian, Iraqi, or other Middle Eastern patients. Sufficient knowledge about different ethnic-minority groups is structurally lacking and this lays a strain on the doctor-patient relationship.

### Respect for Religion

Although only 9 per cent of the Muslim respondents in the research sample stated they felt health care institutions in Antwerp had too little respect for the religion of their patients, this was, nevertheless, raised as an issue by several focus group participants. In their discussion, participants showed a heterogeneous view of the health care system and made distinctions between different clinical institutions and even between different sections in a specific clinic. When participants criticised the lack of respect for their religious beliefs and practices they were referring to food habits, prayer possibilities, or the wish to be attended to by a doctor or nurse of the same sex. In focus group discussion, participants contrasted the situation in the Netherlands, where appropriate dietary accommodations are offered as a matter of course in hospitals, with hospitals in Belgium, where there is little structure in place to ensure that meals suit different religious requirements.

Participants also stated that this mutual distrust could have serious consequences for patients' health. For example, sometimes if the hospital food was not acceptable for a patient, family members brought their own, but this might not be suitable for patients whose diets needed careful monitoring.

### Discrimination

A third major issue is concerned with the feelings of discrimination and negative stereotyping in health care situations. In general, focus group participants were hesitant to define a specific action as discriminatory. Nevertheless, in a few cases respondents expressed their regret about certain stereotypes. Those working in the health care system sometimes criticise the way colleagues treat patients. For example, Muslim

---

<sup>182</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

patients wearing traditional clothing may be treated differently, according to focus group participants:

**First participant:** I don't know to what extent doctors always give the same explanation. That really depends on how you are dressed. When they [patients] come in djellaba, they [doctors] automatically assume they won't understand much, so they give a simple explanation. They do not explain what happens when you're under the anaesthetic, why it is necessary. I find a worried mother in the hallway of the hospital: why is my child put to sleep? And then I ask the doctor who responds: "You know that kind of people. Low IQ and so on." While in fact that mother is capable of understanding the explanation. Well, explain it then!

**Second participant:** Yes, they really do it like that. And they give very little information, they think they can't understand Dutch anyway.

**First participant:** Or they won't understand it, it's too difficult.

A Muslim nurse also reported how she had received hostile treatment from patients, but that the hospital staff supported her when a patient refused to be treated by a Muslim.

The literature on health care and minorities often focuses on cultural differences between Muslim patients and nursing personnel. Two issues that often arise are nursing care of a patient at home and the wish to be attended to by someone of the same sex.<sup>183</sup>

In home nursing care, there remains a taboo about the idea of an elderly person being cared for by an outsider rather than a family member. Focus group participants recognised that this was a taboo that must be overcome, as they did not expect their children would take care of them. "Honestly, you have to overcome those cultural borders, from the nurse and from the patient. Both."

A different kind of taboo is the wish to be attended by a nurse or doctor of the same sex. In recent years, some cases were reported in the media that Muslim men did not want a male gynaecologist to take care of their wives, and this was also true of some of the female patients as well.<sup>184</sup> For some men this is indeed a difficult situation, but they do not want to endanger the lives of their wives and do not demand a female gynaecologist in emergencies.

---

<sup>183</sup> Vassart, *Health care and diversity*, C. Vassart, *Migratie en vergrijzing: Syntheserapport* (Migration and ageing: a synthesis report), Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brussels, 2007.

<sup>184</sup> Article in *de standaard* (daily newspaper), available at <http://www.standaard.be/artikel/detail.aspx?artikelid=b19070279070913>; "moslims weigeren vaak mannelijke gynaecoloog" (muslims often refuse male gynaecologists), *gazet van antwerpen*, <http://www.gva.be/antwerpen/geel/moslim-weigert-mannelijke-gynaecoloog-bij-risicobevalling.aspx> (accessed september 2010).

### 8.3 The Future of the Health-care System in Antwerp

The healthcare system in Flanders and Antwerp was praised for its reliable medical expertise, but respondents complained about the obstacles and discrimination they experienced. Their solutions to the problems they encountered in health care situations were mainly concerned with communication and information and could be ameliorated by employing more ethnic-minority and Muslim personnel and by certain structural changes. One thing respondents had in common was that they did not wish for separate health care provisions for Muslims. They wanted an inclusive policy.<sup>185</sup>

Those nursing homes are indeed a good idea, but the government should ensure they are adapted to the needs of Muslims. For example, concerning food, a place where they can do their ritual washing, a place where they can practise their religion in a good way. It is getting urgent to think about these things.<sup>186</sup>

One of the proposed solutions is the employment of personnel with a Muslim background and from different ethnic minorities. This allows monocultural health care institutions to bridge existing gaps. Patients can be attended to by doctors and nurses who are aware of certain cultural specificities and sensitivities. Patients may feel more at ease knowing they are helped by someone who they assume understands their culture and religion.

Respondents believe having an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse staff will help Belgian nurses and doctors in their interactions with migrant patients. According to different key figures and focus group participants, information on ethnic-minority groups is still lacking. Specific courses and training sessions could help.

Ethnic-minority personnel could also act as interpreters and translators for first-generation migrants. Respondents acknowledged that general structural changes at this point are difficult. For example, it is impossible to have translators for every minority language in each hospital. Therefore, a low-profile and relatively cheap solution would be the hiring of ethnic-minority personnel. Recent figures show that there are only three GPs of migrant origin based in BIM.<sup>187</sup>

The most important structural changes consist of respect for religious practices. Large-scale and therefore more anonymous health care institutions like clinics or homes for pensioners especially need to adapt to their changing clientele. According to respondents, GPs are more open to the needs and desires of migrant patients because in areas like Borgerhout they form the bulk of their clientele. For clinics, this is different since they are less dependent on local patients than GPs. At this moment clinics are

<sup>185</sup> D. Talloen, “Allochtone ouderen en de uitdaging voor de dienst- en zorgverlening” (Migrant elderly and the challenge for the service and care system), *Welzijnsgids* 67 (2008), pp. 61–78.

<sup>186</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>187</sup> See the website of the Public Centre for Community Welfare at [http://ocmw.antwerpen.be/Openbare\\_zittingen/Verslag\\_06112007\\_bijlage03.pdf](http://ocmw.antwerpen.be/Openbare_zittingen/Verslag_06112007_bijlage03.pdf)

more or less free to decide how they interact with and adapt to their changing clientele. Respondents sought a more radical approach, especially in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.

Elderly Muslims in particular, born and raised in their countries of origin and migrating to Belgium in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, rarely master enough Dutch language skills to find their way through the Belgian health care system. They are now increasingly attaining old age and will fall back on the existing elder care system that is not adapted to their needs. Muslims may be especially concerned that dietary requirements and religious practices (room for prayer, ritual washing) are not being met as a matter of course. Respondents did not propose parallel isolated pensioners' institutions and facilities but wanted to be incorporated in the existing structures that need to be adapted.

The focus in the Antwerp health care system is on the most disadvantaged groups, in particular those who live below the poverty level. People must first find their way to GPs, whose empowerment is therefore crucial. Social support centres are set up to guide and help these groups. Furthermore, intermediaries can help develop local support networks. The city is working on setting up a health monitor, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Individuals are encouraged to create a global medical dossier with a GP who will then have information on their medical history. Also health care for the growing number of elderly patients is being developed at present through the support of volunteer family members. No specific reference to the needs, desires, or experiences of ethnic or Muslim minorities is being made. In 2007 a small project was set up by the city of Antwerp, called Tuppercare, whose aim was to train volunteers to become social advisers on issues relating to education, housing and health care. The volunteers provide immigrant and disadvantaged native communities with information in Dutch or in their native language on these issues, with the overall objective of preventing or avoiding health or other social problems.<sup>188</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> The website of the city councillor responsible for the Public Centre for Community Welfare is [http://www.monicadeconinck.be/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=28](http://www.monicadeconinck.be/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=70&Itemid=28) (accessed September 2010).

## 9. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: POLICING AND SECURITY

### 9.1 The High-tension Context of Antwerp and Borgerhout

One of the most complicated social relationships is the one between the police and ethnic minorities. Public trust and policing in Belgium is underresearched. In recent years two descriptive studies took the first steps to fill this gap. Research by Ackaert and Van Craen found that Turkish and Italian migrants in former mining communities in the Limburg province of Flanders had less trust in the police than Belgian-origin respondents. Their follow-up study compared the experiences of Turkish and Moroccan respondents (representing the two largest Muslim communities in Flanders) and Belgian-origin respondents in Limburg province.<sup>189</sup> Their analysis paints a nuanced picture: overall, migrants have high levels of trust in the police. There are no large differences between Turkish and Moroccan migrants and disadvantaged Belgian respondents. Turkish migrants have higher levels of trust in the police than Belgians.

It is also important to investigate what causes a rise or fall in trust in the police and to compare levels of trust among specific groups of people. The research literature suggests that the outcomes of police work and even the functioning of the police system are not crucial for the level of trust.<sup>190</sup> Above all, individuals must feel fairly treated by the police and this perception is essential for building trust. This is also confirmed in Belgian research.<sup>191</sup>

The issue of police trust in Antwerp must be understood in the context of the history of Antwerp and specific incidents that had a major impact on the relationship between the police force and migrants, the Moroccan community in particular. As a result of these incidents, mutual distrust is presumed to be high and the image of the Antwerp police force among migrant groups is negative.

One incident in particular can be considered as a defining moment. On 22 November 2002 an Islamic teacher, Mohamed Achrak, was shot and murdered by his Belgian neighbour in Borgerhout. A part of the Moroccan community believed racial prejudice was a motive, but from the start this element was downplayed and rejected by the mayor and other city officials. From early on, the suspect was identified as mentally ill.

<sup>189</sup> M. Van Craen and J. Ackaert, "Het vertrouwen van allochtonen en autochtonen in de politie: geen zwart-wit verhaal" (Trust of minorities and majorities in the police: not black and white), *Eerste Criminologisch Forum*, Ghent, 2008 (hereafter Van Craen and Ackaert, "Trust of minorities and majorities in the police").

<sup>190</sup> T.R. Tyler, "Policing in Black and White: Ethnic Group Differences in Trust and Confidence in the Police", *Police Quarterly* 8(3) (2005), pp. 322–342 (hereafter Tyler, "Policing in black and white").

<sup>191</sup> Van Craen and Ackaert, "Trust of minorities and majorities in the police".

The reluctance to classify the murder as a race crime – or to leave that option open – generated frustration in the Moroccan community. It was felt that officials were denying the racist motives behind the murder, and that they refused to recognize how the adverse social climate was affecting ethnic minorities, especially Moroccans and Muslims. In the days following the murder, Moroccan youngsters rioted, causing much damage to property and a deterioration in the image of Borgerhout and the Moroccan community.

Around this period a newly created political movement, the European Arab League (AEL), was gaining media attention in Flanders (see Chapter 10). After the Achrak murder, the AEL and its leader Dyab Abou JahJah were accused of instigating the local riots. The relationship between the AEL and public authorities rapidly worsened.<sup>192</sup>

Officials saw the AEL as an organisation that wanted to create no-go zones for the police in Borgerhout by setting up private militia groups. But the AEL itself argued that their actions, including a flyer entitled “Bad cops, AEL is watching you” and the videotaping of discriminatory treatment of migrants by police officers, were a response to a leaked internal police memo which suggested that the police would focus their attention on “delinquent Moroccans”.<sup>193</sup>

## 9.2 Satisfaction with Security and Policing

The questionnaires show more non-Muslim (24 per cent) than Muslim (10 per cent) respondents had been a victim of crime in the past year. The figures are too small to build strong conclusions but the majority of Muslim (90 per cent) and non-Muslim (95 per cent) respondents believed discrimination was not an issue in these cases. Muslims were predominantly victims of crime in the wider city (50 per cent) and their neighbourhood (40 per cent), non-Muslims in the neighbourhood (58 per cent) and the local area (29 per cent). As more non-Muslims than Muslims were victims of a crime they therefore had more contact with the police, as the figures show (60 per cent compared with 25 per cent). In about half of the cases, the police initiated contact, and in half the respondents did; 50 per cent of the Muslims initiated the contact and 52 per cent of the non-Muslims.

---

<sup>192</sup> JahJah was accused of possessing firearms and child pornography and obtaining financial resources from extremist, fundamentalist, and terrorist organisations in the Middle East. The prime minister even announced in parliament that judicial action against the AEL and JahJah was at hand, a statement for which he later received a lot of criticism for possibly breaching the division of power among branches of government in a democratic state. A few days later JahJah was actually imprisoned for a week (and afterwards released, gaining “heroic” status in several subgroups of the local Moroccan community in Antwerp). It was not until the end of 2008 that he was officially acquitted of the charges made against him (and against his fellow AEL cofounder Achmed Azzuz).

<sup>193</sup> See the AEL website at <http://www.arabeuropean.org/belgium/> (accessed September 2010).

Respondents who had contact with the police in the past year were asked to evaluate those contacts. A majority (67 per cent) of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were satisfied. However, a relatively large group (33 per cent) was dissatisfied.

Among Muslim respondents who felt dissatisfied, reasons included feeling harassed by false accusations by the police or by neighbours, or feeling that the police minimised their complaints or took insufficient action. Some felt the police officers were prejudiced and/or rude. In general, non-Muslim respondents shared similar complaints with Muslim respondents. They criticised police officers for being rude, too strict, arrogant, and indolent; the police minimised the grievances of the victims and did not take the action sought by the respondents.

The majority of Muslims (55 per cent) and non-Muslims (54 per cent) were fairly or very satisfied with the policing in their neighbourhoods, while a small proportion of both groups (14 per cent for Muslims and 23 per cent for non-Muslims) were fairly or very dissatisfied.

Those who were dissatisfied gave various reasons for their discontent, without a clear pattern and in some cases contradicting one another. When asked what needed to improve in police supervision in their neighbourhood, several respondents wanted to see more police on the street, indicating police officers should patrol more at night and along the darker avenues. They should be more on foot than they are at present. At the same time, there were other respondents who wanted to see fewer police officers patrolling their neighbourhood because the police presence causes a bad atmosphere. They argued that prevention not repression is the key to better security. Some believed that there should be more neighbourhood police officers who have direct contact with citizens, to improve interaction and communication between both sides and construct a trusting relationship between police and migrants, which does not currently exist. A solution for some was to give police officers intercultural training courses to be able to understand and interact with diverse citizens.

Another contradiction became apparent in the evaluation of police supervision in the neighbourhood. Some respondents wanted the police to be concerned with the real and serious problems like criminality and littering, and not with handing out parking tickets. Others stressed the unhappy effect on the neighbourhood atmosphere of individuals parking in inappropriate places and spaces.

Trust in the police was high among all respondents, but higher among non-Muslims (74 per cent) than Muslims (59 per cent). Nevertheless, there was a significant group of Muslims (40 per cent) and non-Muslims (26 per cent) who had little or no trust at all in the police. The findings in the Open Society Foundations' survey, where a large proportion of the respondents were of Moroccan background, were consistent with the



findings by Van Craen and Ackaert on the proportion of Moroccans (61 per cent) and Turks (49 per cent) having strong trust in the police.<sup>194</sup>

As the literature showed, police distrust is mainly related to the perception of individual fair treatment by the police in everyday interactions. Police efficiency, functioning, and results are not crucial for building up this relation of trust.<sup>195</sup> Discussion in the focus groups demonstrated how even a single negative interaction could have a long-lasting effect. A woman briefly complained about the slow police response to her phone call, but this did not bother her as much as the impatient and accusatory attitude of the attending police officer.

In general, older respondents seemed more reluctant to discuss their contacts with the police. They seemed more conciliatory and repeated that they did not have problems in Belgium. Most of them were born abroad and somehow still felt they were guests in Belgium. These perceptions are totally different for younger Belgian-born respondents with a migrant background. For example, in the focus group with younger men, police contact was one of the most intensely debated topics. Several of them had had contact with the police in the past year(s) and were very dissatisfied about it. They felt harassed and wrongfully accused. As one respondent stated, “[As a Moroccan in Antwerp] you are guilty until proven innocent.”

I experienced it myself many times. They just do your identity check. I don't mind an identity check, this is normal. [But] then you give your identity card and they say, “Yes, you are up to something.” I'm on my way home or to a friend or to my nephew. They don't even do their job. They can't say, “I can see you are up to something.” That just isn't police work any more, that's just showing “I'm the boss here. I can take you away whenever I want to.”<sup>196</sup>

The quotation is revealing of how the participants discussed the normality of random identity card checks by the police. The incidents retold in the focus group are consistent with research showing that many people, particularly men from ethnic minorities, are more likely to be subjected to random identity checks than native Belgians.<sup>197</sup> In fact, the discussion in the focus group suggests that identity checks are viewed as a normal part of life by young Muslims: “I don't mind an identity check, this is normal.”

Another focus group participant discussed his own experience of being unjustly targeted by the police. While driving his car, he was pulled over and treated as a dangerous suspect.

---

<sup>194</sup> Van Craek and Ackaert, “Trust of minorities and majorities in the police”.

<sup>195</sup> Tyler, “Policing in black and white”.

<sup>196</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>197</sup> Foblets et al., *Pussies and machos*.

That was really a complete humiliation. And I only asked: “What is wrong, why did you have to treat me like this?” Everybody was looking at me from behind their windows. It was a theatre show... I filed a complaint with the police... I said I want to confront these three police officers. Were they looking for someone who looked like me, or was it a regular police control? Because a regular control, we know how that goes. We have that experience: that is an ID check, go tap, yes ok, you can go home. But hands on the dashboard, don’t move, don’t get out... A month ago I received a letter from the police saying, we can’t investigate your case any further and it’s dropped. And what are you supposed to do then? Well, I told myself: I drop the case.<sup>198</sup>

As these experiences suggest, a relationship of distrust between the focus group participants and the police force is apparent. One of the solutions often proposed is to employ more officers from minority groups. But figures show this is very difficult to achieve. The Antwerp police have not succeeded in employing personnel with a minority background, despite a €600,000 publicity campaign to increase recruitment from minority groups. However, only a few persons with a migrant background were eventually hired, instead of the proposed 60 officers. Several reasons are put forward to explain the challenge of recruiting officers from minority groups: it is acknowledged that policing is perceived as a job for white Belgians. The Antwerp police force is perceived as harbouring many racist officers, and people with a migrant background who join the Antwerp police are sometimes labelled as “traitors”.<sup>199</sup> Muslim respondents referred to discriminatory processes, like designing specific tests to exclude migrants, while police management says the lack of proficiency in Dutch is the main reason why migrants rarely pass all the tests. As a result, only 2 per cent of the Antwerp police have a migrant background, that is, just under 50 officers out of a total of 2,360.<sup>200</sup>

In the focus group with young men the everyday policing experiences were discussed in great detail. Different participants had negative perceptions of and experiences with the Antwerp police. Following a question about whether he would join the police force, a participant responded as follows:

No, actually not in Antwerp. Otherwise they would think of you as a “rat”. If they are arrested or something like that, they say you told on them. That would bother me very much. If a migrant wants to become a police officer, it’s better outside of Antwerp.<sup>201</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>199</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>200</sup> J. Meijer, “Antwerpen wil minder maar betere moskeeën” (Antwerp wants less but better (equipped) mosques) *De Morgen*, 5 May 2008.

<sup>201</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

Another participant agreed:

Those who are already in the force, they wrestle with those [mixed] feelings, you know... Then they use force on everybody and think: as long as I'm accepted by my colleagues, it's OK. The [migrant/Muslim] community, they don't care about that.<sup>202</sup>

The focus group discussions mainly criticised the way police officers did their job: being too strict, or not strict enough, being rude and discriminating against migrants. The questionnaires also show respondents do put a lot of trust in the police force. In the research sample, the level of trust is higher for non-Muslims than for Muslims, but recent research shows Turkish migrants have a higher amount of trust in the police and Moroccans are at the same level as Belgians.<sup>203</sup> This is an important finding and should be used as a starting point for campaigns to diversify the police force.

---

<sup>202</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>203</sup> Van Craek and Ackaert, "Trust of minorities and majorities in the police".

## 10. EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The city of Antwerp was one of the Belgian cities where migrant communities – in Belgium this mainly refers to Muslim communities – have attempted to develop political and grassroots organisations to change political and social reality. The reaction of the ruling parties to these developments reveals great anxiety and fear. This was most visible in Flanders after the creation of the AEL, with its charismatic spokesperson and chairman JahJah.

This chapter focuses on the social and political participation of migrant communities and of individuals of Turkish and Moroccan origin. As there is no research that focuses on political participation in Antwerp, this chapter refers to data for Brussels.

### 10.1 Political Participation

While politicians from ethnic-minority groups sometimes explicitly address ethnic-minority voters and the particular concerns they may have, few other mainstream politicians do this. One campaign was by the centre left Green Party (Groen!), which initiated a campaign after the banning of the headscarf in Antwerp featuring a woman wearing a headscarf alongside the slogan “*t Stad is van iedereen*” (The city is for everybody). No other mainstream political party in Flanders has addressed ethnic-minority voters in a similarly explicit manner.

There is growing recognition of the importance of the participation of ethnic minorities in Antwerp politics, with some suggesting that democracy in Antwerp has been saved by them.<sup>204</sup> The 2006 local elections were perceived as a turning point for Antwerp. In this election, young first-time voters from minority groups were seen to be playing a crucial role in preventing the extreme right and anti-Muslim party Vlaams Belang–VLOTT (The Interest of Flanders) from becoming the largest party in Antwerp and winning the position of mayor. The Vlaams Belang–VLOTT party ended up with 33.5 per cent of the votes and the sp.a-spirit party (mainly socialist) won 35.3 per cent of the votes, and as a consequence the latter secured the post of mayor.<sup>205</sup> It is commonly believed that Vlaams Belang will continue to be prevented from gaining power in Antwerp as the proportion of voters from ethnic-minority groups increases.<sup>206</sup>

Although several political parties have tried to address migrant voters, almost none give prominent places to politicians with a migrant background, except for the Green Party

<sup>204</sup> Public data provided by the non-profit website npdata, managed by the sociologist Jan Hertogen: <http://www.npdata.be/BuG/62/BuG-62.htm> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>205</sup> The website of the Ministry for Internal Affairs is at [http://binnenland.vlaanderen.be/verkiezingen2006/overzicht.html#tabevent\\_tab\\_geoUnitOverview\\_GE](http://binnenland.vlaanderen.be/verkiezingen2006/overzicht.html#tabevent_tab_geoUnitOverview_GE) (accessed February 2011).

<sup>206</sup> “Rol Vlaams Belang is uitgespeeld”, (It is over for the Vlaams Belang) *De Standaard*, 31 October 2007.

and to a minor extent sp.a. Muslims in Antwerp have tried to establish Islamic parties. In 1999, the *Noor* (Light) Party was the first party to be created with a clear reference to Islam. Nevertheless, so far it has been unable to present any candidates in elections. Despite its lack of success, its overall organisation has been maintained. It competed in elections for the First Chamber in 1999 and 2003, but was absent from the local elections in 2000. In 1999, the party only managed to obtain 1,240 votes (or 0.15 per cent of the total vote) in the Brussels Halle Vilvoorde district, and did not improve its share of the vote in the 2003 general elections (1,141 votes).<sup>207</sup> The Party for Citizenship and Prosperity (*Parti de la Citoyenneté et de la Prospérité*, PCP), stemming from the Movement of Young Muslims, unexpectedly managed to get a good average score when it first contested the general elections in 2003, that is to say, 8,258 votes (0.98 per cent). This party, which is only present in the Brussels Halle Vilvoorde district, is largely made up of converts and can be linked to the Islamic Centre of Brussels. It was expected that if the PCP were able to repeat this result in the next local elections in 2006, it would be likely to obtain one or more seats in some municipalities of Brussels.<sup>208</sup> But in 2006 they did not participate in the elections. The Resist Party, stemming from a merger between the Arab European League, AEL, and the extreme left-wing party *Partij Van De Arbeid van België* (Workers Party of Belgium, PVDA), cannot be classified in the same group as the PCP or the *Noor* Party, as it has a different function, structure, and ideology. The party received 17,000 votes for the Senate in 2003 (0.27 per cent in Flanders, 0.84 per cent in Antwerp) and 10,000 votes for the Chamber (0.6 per cent in Antwerp). Bousetta and Swyngedouw suggest that these results were not a real success, given the media coverage of JahJah, a fact that drove him to announce the creation of the Muslim Democratic Party (*Moslim Democratische Partij*) for the 2006 local elections in Antwerp,<sup>209</sup> But in the end the Muslim Democratic Party did not participate in these elections.

In 2008, a new party with the name MOSLIM (MUSLIM) was established by former members of the Green Party who were disappointed by the banning of the headscarf in public functions and felt that they were not being taken seriously. As the name suggests, the party aims to attract the support of Muslim voters in Antwerp.<sup>210</sup>

Some studies suggest Turkish migrants are more politically involved than Moroccan migrants. But an in-depth analysis draws a more complex picture. Evidence from

<sup>207</sup> H. Bousetta and B. Maréchal, *L'islam et les musulmans en Belgique, enjeux locaux et cadres de réflexion globaux* (Islam and Muslims in Belgium, local stakes and global reference frameworks), Publications de la Fondation Roi Baudoin – Programme Société Civile, Brussels, 2003, p. 20 (hereafter Bousetta and Maréchal, *Islam and Muslims in Belgium*).

<sup>208</sup> Bousetta and Maréchal, *Islam and Muslims in Belgium*, p. 20.

<sup>209</sup> H. Bousetta and M. Swyngedouw, “Antwerp face à la contestation de sa jeunesse allochtone” (Antwerp facing the protest of its migrant youth), *Revue de sociologie de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université de Brussels* (2004).

<sup>210</sup> See the website of the consultation centre for Flemish organisations at <http://www.ovv.be/page.php?ID=2678> (accessed September 2010).

Brussels indicates that political candidates of Moroccan origin were more successful than Turkish-origin candidates.<sup>211</sup> As Table 20 shows, in a study of informal political participation, Moroccans were more inclined to be involved in this kind of activity than Turks or Belgians. On a scale measuring political interest, Moroccan-origin respondents scored higher than Turkish-origin respondents. This analysis shows formal participation is only part of the story.

**Table 20. Levels of informal political participation and political interest among Belgians, Turks and Moroccans**

	Informal political participation scale <sup>212</sup>	Mean score for political interest <sup>213</sup>
Belgians	2.43	3.30
Turks	2.42	2.86
Moroccans	2.49	3.10

**Source:** D. Jacobs, K. Phalet and M. Swyngedouw, “Associational Membership and Political Involvement among Ethnic Minority Groups in Brussels”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30(3) (2004), pp. 543–559 (hereafter Jacobs et al., “Associational Membership”)

### Social and Political Participation of Muslims in the Antwerp Open Society Foundations Sample

The vast majority of Muslim (91 per cent) and non-Muslim (85 per cent) respondents in the Open Society Foundations’ survey were entitled to vote in the parliamentary elections. A high proportion of both Muslims (83 per cent) and non-Muslims (77 per cent) eligible to vote participated in the general election and local elections (Muslims 86 per cent and non-Muslims 82 per cent.) This high turnout rate is in part due to the fact that voting is obligatory for Belgian citizens.

When asked for their participation in neighbourhood activities, we see a clear difference of response between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. Only 17 per cent of the former but 43 per cent of the latter had participated in a public meeting in the past 12 months. The percentages do not differ significantly for public demonstrations: 12 per cent of the Muslim and 18 per cent of the non-Muslim respondents participated. A large gap also emerges for a question about signing a

<sup>211</sup> EUMAP, *Belgium Preliminary Research Report*.

<sup>212</sup> The informal political participation scale dwells upon three items in the questionnaire, which relate to the following: discussing politics with friends, trying to convince friends about a political opinion and helping to find solutions to neighbourhood problems.

<sup>213</sup> The scale is composed of questions about interest in national and Brussels politics and the frequency with which one reads the political news in the newspaper.

petition in the past 12 months: 13 per cent of the Muslims and 60 per cent of the non-Muslims answered “yes”.

Only a small portion of both groups – 8 per cent of the Muslims and 29 per cent of the non-Muslims – had participated in a meeting about issues in their neighbourhood. Such meetings related to different topics: traffic in the neighbourhood, the structural rebuilding of the neighbourhood to ensure more leisure space for youngsters and the elderly, the problems of street-corner youths, feelings of insecurity, the organisation of neighbourhood festivities and activities, and a debate between candidates from different political parties.

## 10.2 Levels of Institutional Trust

Non-Muslims (50 per cent) were slightly more likely to have a lot or a fair amount of trust in Parliament compared with Muslims (39 per cent), whereas 45 per cent of the Muslims and 40 per cent of the non-Muslims reported having very little trust.

The level of trust in the government was lower than for Parliament among both groups. Here, however, Muslims indicated greater trust in the former (46 per cent had a lot or some trust) compared with non-Muslims (32 per cent). The level of trust in the government was higher for Muslims than for non-Muslims.

A larger difference in the views of Muslims and non-Muslims emerged on the issue of trust of local government. Non-Muslims (71 per cent) were significantly more likely than Muslims (40 per cent) to have a lot or some trust in the local council. None of the non-Muslims had no trust at all in the city council, although 11 per cent of the Muslims did. This disconnection with the local council was reflected in the focus groups and in interviews with community leaders as well.

### Influencing Policy Decisions at the Local and National Levels

Although there were stark differences in the level of trust of Muslims and non-Muslims in the city council, both groups expressed a similar range of views on whether individuals were able to influence the policy decisions of the city: 39 per cent of Muslim and 47 per cent of non-Muslim respondents agreed or definitely agreed that they could influence local decisions. However, a much larger proportion of Muslim respondents (17 per cent) than non-Muslim respondents (3 per cent) did not know if they did have this influence.

Around a third of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents agreed that they could have an influence on national decisions (35 per cent of Muslims and 31 per cent of non-Muslims agreed or definitely agreed). A higher percentage of non-Muslims (40 per cent) than Muslims (26 per cent) disagreed with the statement that they could influence decisions concerning their country; and more non-Muslims (28 per cent) than Muslims (20 per cent) strongly disagreed with this statement. Again a large proportion of the Muslim respondents (around 17 per cent) indicated they did not

know whether they could influence these policy decisions. Only 2 per cent of the non-Muslims felt the same way.

The city of Antwerp sees the mosques as important actors in local policy, but at the same time Muslims are not a specific target group in policymaking. The city aims at a broad diversity and an inclusive policy, although an approach that focuses on strategic intervention for specific target groups, such as new migrants and women, could be established. The diversification of the activities organised by mosques has been welcomed by city officials, since mosques can develop wider Islamic cultural and educational networks. Mosques now attract a broader range of people, from older men to young girls.

Senior city officials state that there are bimonthly consultation meetings between Islamic umbrella organisations and city officials. These meetings are seen as important opportunities for Muslim organisations to participate in the political decision-making processes where issues can be discussed and solutions sought.<sup>214</sup>

Another delicate part of the city's policy towards Muslims is the recognition of mosques. In Flanders eight mosques are recognised by the government.<sup>215</sup> The city of Antwerp set up a recognition procedure to ensure mosques are modern, provide adequate accommodation, and meet fire safety requirements. The city has proposed that the 36 existing prayer houses in the city be consolidated into ten modern, bigger mosques. Mosque organisations wishing to be recognised by the city and receive financial support can submit files of their budget and management structure. Of the 17 mosques that applied for recognition, only two have been recognised because the others did not meet the proposed criteria.

To ensure interreligious dialogue, tolerance, and understanding, the city of Antwerp established a working group called Cordoba with representatives from the seven recognised faith groups, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Anglicans, Orthodox, and atheists. Public consultations have also been organised on the district level. According to city officials, it is difficult to attract less-educated and disadvantaged families, especially those living in BIM. Although these consultations are public, it is mainly new Belgians and better educated residents who come to these meetings and try to influence policy decisions.

City officials emphasise that the fragmented nature of the Moroccan community makes it hard to find an umbrella organisation that speaks for all Muslims in Antwerp. Indeed, there are a lot of minority and Muslim organisations in Antwerp. Some are larger and try to encompass a broader field, others are very local, and still others are set up in response to decisions made by the city.

---

<sup>214</sup> Open Society Foundations' interview with policymakers.

<sup>215</sup> See the website of the Flemish government at [http://www.marinokeulen.be/mod\\_news/minister-keulen-erkent-8-moskeen/](http://www.marinokeulen.be/mod_news/minister-keulen-erkent-8-moskeen/) (accessed February 2011).



Yet interviews with key figures and the existing literature demonstrate that the perceptions of policymakers and people working in the field differ significantly. The procedure to obtain financial and material support from the city is often too difficult and complex for grassroots organisations that often do not have the resources to set up formal structures.<sup>216</sup> One of the consequences is that some of these organisations rely completely upon volunteers and take up crucial roles in the community, but cannot meet the demands of the contractual procedures:

The *Sociaal Impulsfonds* (Social Impulse Fund), that goes through the city, so they can have their say on the approval. And this project was actually well put together... We were going to finance it, because we still had some financial resources and that organisation did not want to ask resources from the city because it is quite complex and demanding... And the organisation thought, ok, if they [the city] want to give money, that doesn't matter for us, as long as I can do my project. And then they were invited to submit a contract, and you should have seen their demands. Two pages of demands. The management of the organisation thought: they see us as full-time staff members and they [the city] want to have their say on the project. And most striking of all: they wanted pictures of every meeting. That's extreme, you know. Actually that is a breach of people's privacy. Women with problems were coming there, who are confused or suffering from depression, you know, and then they have to take pictures of those meetings? What is that? And the organisation sent the money back to the city.<sup>217</sup>

In the focus group with older Muslim men, some discussed the difficulties contacting policymakers, who refer them to subordinates. They did not feel they were treated as important partners, although they felt they represented certain target groups.

Some felt communication with city officials was easier with the previous mayor.

But if you look at the city policy. I mean the way the city interacts with the representatives of the migrant community. There is no room for them. With the previous mayor you could pick up the phone and you were invited and everything was discussable. There really was openness. And then the new mayor came and everything is blocked. You can't contact city executives, unless it all goes through a certain task force. Everything passes by them and the city coordinates everything. Everything!<sup>218</sup>

<sup>216</sup> P. Heyse, *Onderzoek naar de structuur en werking van allochtone vrouwenverenigingen* (Study of the structure and operation of migrant women's organisations), Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, Antwerp, 2008 (hereafter Heyse, *Study of the structure and operation of migrant women's organisations*).

<sup>217</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>218</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

### 10.3 Civic Feeling

It has been suggested that the social participation of Turks and Moroccans differs because of their different ethnocultural backgrounds.<sup>219</sup> Turkish migrants reportedly maintain stronger ties with their ethnic community and country of origin and are more proficient in their mother tongue.<sup>220</sup> Moroccans, on the other hand, are more linguistically divided between Arabic-speaking and Berber-speaking communities.<sup>221</sup>

Research by Jacobs et al. points towards differences in the way Moroccan and Turkish migrants seem to participate in ethnic and cross-ethnic organisations in Belgium (see Table 21).<sup>222</sup>

**Table 21. Participation of Turks and Moroccans in ethnic and cross-ethnic organisations, %**

	Turks	Moroccans
Cross-ethnic participation (Belgian or mixed organisation)	60	17
Ethnic participation (Turkish or Moroccan organisation)	35	10
Average participation	68	19

Source: Jacobs et al., “Associational Membership”, pp. 543–559.

Other data from the 2006 health survey show differences between Belgians and Turks and Moroccans concerning their membership or participation in organisations: 34 per cent of the Belgians and 57 per cent of the Turks and the Moroccans were not members of an organisation.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>219</sup> U. Manço, “La présence musulmane en Belgique: dimensions historique, démographique et économique” (The Muslim presence in Belgium. Historical, demographic and economic dimensions), in U. Manço, ed., *Voix et voies musulmanes de Belgique* (Muslim voices and views in Belgium), Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, Brussels, 2000, pp. 17–40.

<sup>220</sup> M. Van Craen, M., K. Vancluysen and J. Ackaert, *Voorbij wij en zij? De sociaal-culturele afstand tussen autochtonen en allochtonen tegen de meetlat* (Beyond us and them? The social-cultural distance between natives and migrants measured), Vanden Broele, Brugge, 2007. They therefore concluded that an integration paradox was apparent in Flanders. Moroccans are perceived as (one of) the least integrated migrant communities, but data show they make more use of the Dutch language than Turkish migrants.

<sup>221</sup> EUMAP, *Belgium Preliminary Research Report*.

<sup>222</sup> Jacobs et al., “Associational Membership”, pp. 543–559.

<sup>223</sup> Levecque et al., *Health and health care with migrants in Flanders*.

Migrants have significantly lower participation rates in local organisations, although a large number of migrant organisations exist. The umbrella organisation *Minderhedenforum* (Minorities Forum) is composed of the 17 federations of minority organisations, such as the Federation of Moroccan Democratic organisations, the Federation of Moroccan Organisations, the Turkish Union of Belgium, and the Union of Turkish organisations. Its membership also includes minority organisations involving Italians, Africans, and Latin Americans. The forum covers members from Flanders and Brussels.<sup>224</sup>

In addition to ethnic or migrant organisations, there are several umbrella organisations that aim to represent the different Muslim communities and traditions found in Belgium and Flanders. In Antwerp the *Vereniging voor Ontwikkeling en Emancipatie van Moslims*<sup>225</sup> (Organisation for the Development and Emancipation of Muslims) tries to provide a link between Muslims from different ethnic, cultural, and political backgrounds. The Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC) was established in 1968 and is recognised by the Belgian government. It aimed to become the official representative body of Muslims in Belgium and in 1974, after the official recognition of Islam, the ICC helped organise Islamic courses in primary and secondary schools. However, the ICC executive only gained official recognition in 1999. It was given official responsibility to organise, among other things, a theology course and the education of Islamic teachers. Internal problems and management problems, however, led to the suspension of government funding in 2007. Notwithstanding this, it remains the only umbrella organisation with official links between the government and Muslims in Belgium.<sup>226</sup>

There is a lack of specific data on the social participation of migrants and Muslims in Antwerp, although the city has recognised around 180 organisations and collected them in their 'Atlas of the City'.<sup>227</sup> Many focus on specific ethn-cultural minorities like Moroccans, Turks, sub-Saharan Africans, Russian-speakers, and Latin Americans.

In Borgerhout, mosques play a crucial role in increasing the participation rates of residents. They also establish youth and women's groups, and run language courses that attract individuals who are not primarily interested in the religious role of mosques.

<sup>224</sup> See the website of the Forum for Minorities at <http://www.minderhedenforum.be/leden.htm> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>225</sup> See the website of the organisation for the development and emancipation of Muslims at <http://www.voem-vzw.be> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>226</sup> E. Piqueray, "Eindrapport: Haalbaarheidsstudie over een vormingsaanbod voor islamkaders" (Final report: Feasibility study on a training framework for Islam executives), Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies, Antwerp, 2008.

<sup>227</sup> See the website of the City of Antwerp at <http://www.antwerpen.be/atlas> (accessed February 2011).

The complexity of the process for gaining official recognition and access to government funding endangers the survival of various ethnocultural and religious organisations.<sup>228</sup>

#### 10.4 Efforts to Improve the Participation of Muslims in Decision-making Processes

Although the city of Antwerp is aware of the population diversity of their territory, communication with Muslim organisations remains a challenge. The latter feel they are only consulted when incidents happen and that they are not included in the consultation and decision-making processes. City officials suggest that this is the consequence of the fragmented nature of the Muslim community in Antwerp. Stakeholders in community and migrant organisations, on the other hand, feel that they are not taken seriously and the procedures to apply for city funding are too complex; they disapprove of the strict controls the city wants to place upon migrant organisations.

A new element is the diversification of the Muslim community in Antwerp and the accompanying diversification of representatives. As noted above, young female Muslims, for example, do not feel represented by first-generation older Muslim men who city officials automatically turn to when they want to talk to Muslims. There is indeed a fragmentation – or perhaps a better word is diversification – apparent in Muslim communities in Antwerp, which creates a challenge for ensuring effective engagement with city officials. There is not a single representative of Muslims: the gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and generational diversity is too big.

The diversity of Muslims in Antwerp and frustrations with traditional community leaders have led to the creation of new organisations that want to influence city policy, such as the AEL and political parties like the Muslim Democratic Party and MOSLIM (MUSLIM). After the ban on the headscarf in public city functions was introduced, the *Baas Over Eigen Hoofd* (Boss Over Own Head) was founded to challenge the ban through dialogue with city officials and by organising different events combating the stereotypes about Muslim women wearing headscarves.

These groups are sometimes very critical of local and national policy, but, although they are not flawless, they are too easily disregarded. As some key individuals from various social, ethnic, and political backgrounds state, it would be a mistake to not take these groups seriously as they often discuss important social problems and have different experiences from the older generations, which do not feel represented by them. They should be perceived and received as necessary for the management of the diversity of Antwerp.

More concretely, policymakers at the city level should offer special training programmes for Muslim and/or migrant communities. This new group of young critical Muslims also needs sufficient support and guidance to take up leadership roles.

---

<sup>228</sup> Heyse, *Study of the structure and operation of migrant women's organisations*.

A number of local stakeholders, such as religious leaders, teachers, city officials, and community leaders acknowledged that many of these youngsters become overloaded with questions and requests concerning community topics, problems or incidents not only by the people they represent but also by policymakers, the media, and different social actors. This more often than not leads to many of these youngsters turning away from the important social roles they could take up. It is absolutely necessary that they receive sufficient support and are given the time to learn how to become a spokesperson, how to manage communication strategies, and how to develop leadership qualities.

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

This chapter, drawing upon the growing body of research on media and minorities as well as the responses to the Open Society Foundations' questionnaires, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews, discusses the media sources used by Muslims in Belgium, the portrayal of minorities, and the role of the media in Antwerp. Television is the most important medium people use for information or entertainment. In Flanders all youngsters spend the same amount of time in front of their television sets.<sup>229</sup>

The results of the Open Society Foundations' survey show that Muslims and non-Muslims use a variety of different sources to acquire the information they need. For news on the local area they rely upon folders and brochures from local organisations and from the district. The internet is also a good source for local information. Antwerp has several periodicals and a national newspaper that are read for the local and national news. Neighbours also share information with each other by talking. For more national and international information the internet, national television and radio, and newspapers are used. This appears to be consistent with other research which suggests that while satellite dishes in areas with minority groups are increasingly visible, young people from minority groups rely upon mainstream Flemish media when they are looking for information on current events.<sup>230</sup>

### 11.1 Media Coverage of Minorities and Islam

Analysis of representation of minorities in Belgian newspapers shows that on an average day there were 3.6 articles on minorities in newspapers. On television news there is on average one item a day that relates to ethnic minorities, and information on ethnicity was mentioned in the headline of one-third of the television items on ethnic

<sup>229</sup> L. d'Haenens, C. van Summeren, F. Saeys and J. Koeman, *Integratie of identiteit? Mediamenu's van Turkse en Marokkaanse jongeren* (Integration or identity? Media menus of Turkish and Moroccan youngsters), Boom, Antwerp, 2004 (hereafter d'Haenens et al., *Integration or Identity?*).

<sup>230</sup> A. Detant, "De radio spreekt Arabisch. Een onderzoek naar de rol van de media bij de integratie van migranten" (The radio speaks Arabic. Research on the role of media for the integration of migrants), in H. Verstraeten and P. Perceval, eds, *Media en Maatschappij 2*, VUB Press, Brussels, 1994, pp. 11–26; W. De Sutter and F. Saeys, eds, *Bezit en gebruik van audio-visuele media bij allochtone populaties. Een onderzoek uitgevoerd bij Gentse scholieren. Possession and use of audio-visual media with migrant populations. A research conducted with pupils in Gent*, Academia Press, Ghent, 1996; S. Stiens, *Het schotelantenne-fenomeen: kijkgedrag bij Marokkaanse jongeren* (The satellite-dish phenomenon: viewing behaviour among Moroccan youth), K.U. Leuven, Leuven, 2000; N. Clycq, M. Michielsens and C. Timmerman, "Allochtone nieuwszoekers: gebruik en evaluatie van televisienieuwsprogramma's en -zenders door jongvolwassenen allochtonen" (Migrant news seekers: use and evaluation of television news programmes and networks by adolescent migrants), *Tijdschrift voor communicatiewetenschap* 33(2) (2005), pp. 146–161 (hereafter Clycq et al., "Migrant news seekers").

minorities.<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, in half of the newspaper items and in 80 per cent of the television news items where those of Moroccan and Turkish background were interviewed or presented their views, the ethnic origin and/or the nationality of the individuals involved was explicitly mentioned, while the supposed Belgian nationality of individuals was rarely noted. Devroe argues that by referring to their foreign ethnic origin – although they might be born in Belgium and have Belgian nationality – these individuals are categorised as the other.

Ethnic minorities are usually represented in items on migration, multiculturalism, asylum seekers, and equal opportunities.<sup>232</sup> These findings could encourage the assumption that topics like racism and discrimination are often tackled in these news media. Yet this is not the case: only 6 per cent of the items discussed racism and 3 per cent discrimination.<sup>233</sup>

The topic was crime in 38 per cent of the newspaper items and 53 per cent of the television items involving ethnic minorities.<sup>234</sup> Further analysis shows that in 64 per cent of these newspaper items ethnic minorities were portrayed as perpetrators of crime while in only 23 per cent of the newspaper items were they presented as victims of crime.

An analysis of media coverage of ethnic minorities in seven Antwerp periodicals found patterns of representation similar to those found in the national media. The attention these periodicals pay to ethnic minorities is minimal. Not only is the number of these articles small, but they also often only indirectly refer to ethnic minorities and the articles are short. When topics relating to ethnic minorities are discussed, more often than not people of Belgian origin like policymakers share their opinions while minorities remain invisible and inaudible. As a consequence minorities are represented as passive, voiceless, and needy. When they can express their opinion, it is often to criticise city policy, which can strengthen the perception that they belong to a discontented community that incites social unrest. The study therefore concludes that the media coverage of ethnic minorities in Antwerp is indeed stereotypical.<sup>235</sup>

---

<sup>231</sup> I. Devroe, *Gekleurd nieuws? De voorstelling van etnische minderheden in het nieuws in Vlaanderen* (Coloured news? The representation of ethnic minorities in the news in Flanders), Department of Communication Sciences, Ghent, University of Ghent, 2007 (hereafter Devroe, *Coloured News?*).

<sup>232</sup> Devroe, *Coloured News?*.

<sup>233</sup> Devroe, *Coloured News?*.

<sup>234</sup> Devroe, *Coloured News?*.

<sup>235</sup> S. Ronsmans, *Berichtgeving en beeldvorming van allochtonen in de Antwerpse media* (Coverage and representation of migrants in the Antwerp media), Free University of Brussels, Brussels, 2004.

## Evaluation of Mass Media by Muslims

When minorities are asked to evaluate the media, clear patterns are visible: they feel stereotyped.<sup>236</sup> Indeed, research indicates that in the past ethnic minorities were represented in the media in a stereotypical way: either the items were about crime, or about exotic events like an increase of positive attention in the month of Ramadan.<sup>237</sup> Others say ethnic minorities are in the first instance generalised and objectified, followed by being problematised (ethnic minorities are the cause of social problems), primitivised (they are primitives who live their lives according to ancient traditions), exoticised (with a focus on festivities like Ramadan or the Sugar Feast), and criminalised (ethnic minorities are the main perpetrators of crimes).<sup>238</sup>

As far back as 1994, the *Algemene Vereniging van Beroepsjournalisten in België* (Union of Journalists, AVBB) issued guidelines on how to report on crime in relation to ethnic minorities.<sup>239</sup> The guidelines suggested that journalists should only report nationality, country of origin, ethnic background, colour of skin, religion, or culture if this information was relevant to the news item, and should avoid irresponsible generalisations and polarisation.<sup>240</sup>

One of the remarks of migrant respondents found in the research literature is that they are often discussed, but that they seldom can express their own opinions.<sup>241</sup> These feelings are confirmed by Devroe's media content analysis.<sup>242</sup>

### 11.2 Media and Minorities in Antwerp

The media in Antwerp have received a lot of criticism, not only from Muslim participants in the focus groups but also from different key figures. Policymakers feel that they are doing a good job, but the media are a problem as they exaggerate incidents happening in Antwerp. The focus groups, discussed similar ideas, with Muslims feeling they were only represented as trouble-makers.

During focus groups the discussion on media representation was particularly heated and passionate. Reference was made to the media coverage of an incident a few years

<sup>236</sup> See, for example, Clycq et al., "Migrant news seekers".

<sup>237</sup> d'Haenens et al., *Integration or Identity?*

<sup>238</sup> Some even define the focus on suppressed Muslim women as part of a process of eroticisation, see A. Smelik, *Effectief Beeldvormen. Theorie, praktijk en analyse van beeldvormingsprocessen* (Effective representation. Theory, practice and analysis of representation processes), Van Gorcum, Assen, 1999, p. 31.

<sup>239</sup> See the website of the Council for Journalism at <http://www.scriptieprijs.be/index.php?page=428> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>240</sup> This association is also working to update this list at <http://lvb.net/item/4291> (accessed September 2010).

<sup>241</sup> Clycq et al., "Migrant news seekers".

<sup>242</sup> Devroe, *Coloured News?*



ago when a white Belgian boy was stabbed and died in a Brussels train station. The media coverage in the aftermath of this incident suggested that the perpetrators were Moroccans (according to eye-witness reports and video surveillance tapes), although this later turned out to be untrue. In one Flanders newspaper, a journalist even demanded that the migrant community – he meant the Moroccan Muslim community – hand over the perpetrators to the police because this would be interpreted as a good gesture towards Belgian society. Media coverage of incidents like this can have an important negative influence on the self-image of media users.

Also the murder of Joe van Holsbeeck really was an enormous blow for our community... I felt really ridiculous to be Moroccan... We had all of Belgium against us for a whole week. And then you don't really feel like a citizen in Belgium any more. Because I was born and raised here, but at that moment I really felt foreign in Belgium. Because of something I didn't do actually, but I keep myself informed on current events a lot and that feeling of guilt was directly due to the media.<sup>243</sup>

Another defining moment for the relationship between the media and Muslims was the coverage of the creation and the activities of the AEL in Antwerp. As mentioned above, large sections of mainstream society, including politicians, denounced this organisation. When the police force took action and imprisoned its leader, JahJah, newspapers reported weapons and child pornography were found in his house and that he was the head of a money-laundering organisation and received funding from international extremists.<sup>244</sup> All of these allegations turned out to be unsubstantiated. This kind of media coverage, the hunting down of one of the first grassroots migrant organisations, which attracted support from a part of the mainly Antwerp Muslim and migrant community, made a deep impression on several focus group participants.

Yes, when, for example, in Borgerhout, the first time in the history of Belgium the Maghrebi community engaged themselves politically. Independent of the politics. Around the AEL. Then we saw the stigmatisation and criminalisation. Years of insinuations, also the media played a major role in that, and the choosing of migrants as a shooting target is something structural and not something sporadic, you know... But in the end they never talked about the police brutality we experience, certainly as Moroccans in Antwerp.<sup>245</sup>

Focus group participants expressed the feeling that the media play a crucial role in the representation of Muslims and in the development of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. At the same time the media are also perceived as a good channel to convey a message that will reach a large audience.

---

<sup>243</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>244</sup> See the website of a non-profit organisation devoted to a critical review of media discourse at <http://www.mediakritiek.be/index.php?page=7&detail=206> (accessed February 2011).

<sup>245</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

Really, I get all worked up over it. The problem is just ... the media, you know. Every newspaper you open: Islam, Islam, Islam. It's always about Islam. ... And then you have to take matters in your own hand and the only way is to publicise articles. To try to keep open the debate in the media and to organise debates. It all boils down to this.<sup>246</sup>

In stakeholder interviews with journalists, there was a recognition that reports on minorities can sometimes be flawed, but it was argued that significant investments have been made to ensure a balanced representation of minorities. This investment is in part a response to recognition of the diversity in Antwerp and in part recognition that local papers must attract new readers, including those from ethnic-minority groups, in order to survive.

### 11.3 Efforts to Improve Relations between Muslims and the Media

Individuals from ethnic minorities, like most people, rely upon the Flemish mainstream media as well as foreign media for their information (and entertainment).<sup>247</sup> Nevertheless, focus group participants felt it was important to have programmes about topics like Islam and ethnic diversity. These were seen as important not just for people from minority groups but also for other Belgian viewers who they often have a negative perception of Muslims.<sup>248</sup>

At present public broadcasting time is available for Catholic and Jewish services. There was, however, a negative response to proposals to make this available to Muslims. The public television network VRT had signed a diversity charter stating that as a public mass medium it should reflect the diversity of the population. An agreement was recently signed between VRT and the Flemish government (2012–2016) to promote diversity.

The umbrella organisation *Minderhedenforum* created a website<sup>249</sup> devoted to minorities in the media. It collects research results and other data exploring, criticising, and correcting the relationship between media and minorities.

---

<sup>246</sup> Open Society Foundations focus group.

<sup>247</sup> d'Haenens et al., *Integration or Identity?*.

<sup>248</sup> Clycq et al., "Migrant news seekers".

<sup>249</sup> See the website of the Forum for Minorities, with a subsection devoted to a critical review of the representation of minorities in the media at <http://www.minderhedenforum.be/2media/overTrefmedia.htm> (accessed September 2010).

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

The city of Antwerp counts 169 different nationalities among its citizens. The management of diversity is therefore a defining feature of the city's policy. The "Diversity plan 2009–2011" stated that diversity is a fact and it is the future of the city, but diversity is not presently found equally in all city domains. Furthermore, diversity is not only concerned with ethnocultural groups. These and similar statements in policy documents show that city officials are aware of the changing population composition. Yet the explicit attention to diversity is also due to finding that social differences between Belgian-origin groups and minority groups, especially those with a Moroccan and Turkish background, are sometimes dramatically large.

Several different research methods were used to collect relevant data for this report to provide a snapshot of the situation of Muslims in Antwerp in respect to eight areas: identity and belonging, education, employment, housing, health care, police and security, participation and citizenship, and the media.

The overall educational situation of Muslims is much worse than non-Muslims: their school careers are more troubled, they are more frequently held back, more leave school without a diploma than other groups and they are overrepresented in technical and vocational training. Their participation and certainly their success rate in higher education are consequentially very low. Therefore, when entering the labour market many Muslims are not only less qualified but they also face different kinds of exclusion. They are overrepresented in specific sectors like manual labour and industrial cleaning, and underrepresented in managerial functions. Furthermore, they experience difficulties finding a job but they also face discrimination on the work floor. Overall, Muslim migrants have much lower wages than Belgian-origin employees. This makes it difficult for the former to find suitable accommodation. At the same time, they experience discrimination when looking for a house or apartment to rent. As one respondent said, "We have to buy houses [to by-pass discrimination] but how are we going to do that if we don't have a job?" Even in the health-care system, respondents reported misunderstandings and negative stereotyping by medical personnel. With an ageing first-generation Muslim population, increasing numbers will rely upon the existing health care system but fear that their religious and cultural needs will not be acknowledged or met. Health care professionals and Muslim elderly people experience communication problems. Mainly older respondents discussed the health care system. Younger Muslim men focused more on the police force. Their experiences with the Antwerp police force are quite negative. The media is often given an important role in shaping the representation of the other, in this case Muslims. Research shows this representation is often stereotypical and hostile. Respondents felt that there was a lack of accurate and well-balanced information on minorities and Muslims and Islam in particular. This is for them one of the most important reasons discrimination and racism are still widely present in Flanders and Belgium.

All these experiences shape the identity constructions of Muslims. When one's mother tongue is perceived as an obstacle and not an advantage in personal life and educational career, when discrimination is experienced in the labour market due to ethnic or religious background, and when the police stop and single out visible minorities more often than their Belgian-origin compatriots, self-identity is affected. In particular, the measure banning the headscarf (and other religious symbols) for city personnel in public functions has had a detrimental impact on the level of trust between Muslim citizens and the policymakers of Antwerp. This has been defended as a measure ensuring the neutral character of the city of Antwerp, or even as a method of combating discrimination in selection procedures, as women wearing headscarves are often discriminated against. The idea of neutrality should be subject to intense and necessary debate, an almost absent component in the highly sensitive and symbolically charged discussion which led to a ban on the headscarf. This debate should be brought into the public forum. The social unrest shows there is a genuine need to have this debate and to consider minorities' voices.

The measure has undermined the trust between Muslim citizens, policymakers, and local government. It is feared that this measure could inspire private-sector employers to ban the headscarf. Muslim women wearing the scarf already experience discrimination, exclusion, and rejection, not only on the labour market generally but also in the educational system.

The city sets out a well-balanced management of diversity and a genuine recognition that the multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural character of its population are important policy aims. In this context a regulation prohibiting the wearing of the headscarf does not seem like a step in the right direction. The perception that the neutrality of the city is symbolised by the neutral appearance of city personnel and not by the neutral treatment of customers suggests an assimilationist view of the integration of others. It favours an abandonment of difference and an absorption into the dominant culture and group rather than a recognition of diversity or difference. Furthermore, various political and community figures regret this focus on the headscarf, which challenges the identities of a large group of Muslim individuals and has taken attention away from more crucial problems. Greater integration, *inburgering* or equal opportunities may be better achieved by allowing the headscarf (and other related symbols) in public office. A confident open society should seek to incorporate this kind of diversity.

### Stimulating Interactions and Reorganising the Division of Competencies

Through interaction people will develop understanding and tolerance for each other and for each other's differences. Such interactions ought to take place in local communities. Therefore the city wants to invest in local events in schools, at work, in cultural centres, in neighbourhoods, and districts. This reflects the demands of the respondents who want more interactions between different groups and communities in Antwerp. They also believe that these interactions and locally organised events will help mutual understanding and tolerance, citing local organisations that can take up this

role. Nevertheless, interviews with individuals, including representatives of local government institutions and minority and religious groups, make clear how difficult it is to bring together a wider range of Belgians, including individuals of ethnic-minority backgrounds. Many of the respondents felt at home in their city and in their neighbourhood, so it is important to address them on that basis rather than as Muslims or migrants, and they should simply be considered as people living in Antwerp.

At the same time a new approach to Islam could bring people closer to each other: Muslim art and Islamic cultural elements are absent in Antwerp and are too strictly perceived as religious artefacts. Taking them out of the religious sphere would stress their importance and relevance for Antwerp and would be a positive approach to Islam and Muslim minorities.

The appropriate authority to organise these local events is the district council, but the Open Society Foundations interviews show that councillors believe crucial areas for local participation are the educational system and the labour market. Demands have been made by some people to give district councils more competencies to combat social inequalities in these crucial areas that are now the prerogative of the city.

In a district like Borgerhout, divided into two very different sections, BIM and BEM, citizens' needs and interests differ dramatically. While BIM is known for its ethnic diversity, low general socioeconomic levels, challenges in the educational and labour sectors, and a variety of social inequalities, BEM is known for the opposite. In BEM, the main problems, according to a key community representative, are dog fouling and repair of loose paving stones. With a main budget covering both very different communities, it is not possible to make effective policies. The investments in BIM have to be of a totally different nature from those in BEM. New divisions of power and competencies and maybe even district boundaries are urgent.

Nowadays, being a Muslim in Flanders and Belgium – and for that matter, Europe – generates a lot of social criticism and adverse reactions. This may be one of the reasons why Muslim respondents in this study are shown to have tried to develop a strong and positive self-identity: people perceived as a problem or even as a threat to public life often seek to develop a positive self-image. Respondents expressed this by stressing that they want to participate in social life and Flemish and Belgian society. However, they also want to participate on their own terms, which mean that if they do not feel represented by the ruling parties they will establish organisations that give voice to their views and concerns. Policymakers are unsure how to respond to these critical and assertive movements that are mainly established by young, Belgian-born, and educated Muslims. One of the trends is to bypass these movements and turn to more traditional religious leaders, like imams, as representatives of the Muslim population in Antwerp. Yet many young Muslims, especially more educated women, do not necessarily feel represented by these first-generation imams. Therefore, it is important for policymakers to recognise that the incorporation of these new groups and organisations of Belgian-born Muslims is critical for a city with a growing Muslim and migrant population.

## 13. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report points to a keen awareness by the city of Antwerp of the challenges faced by its Muslim citizens. A variety of policy papers stress the importance of changing the dramatic social inequalities present in specific neighbourhoods. In these documents, various projects and policy aims are formulated and developed which highlight the good intentions of local government.

In almost all social domains discussed in this study there remain significant challenges in ensuring that Muslims enjoy full and equal participation in society. This section makes recommendations for the chapters covered by the report.

### 13.1 Discrimination

1. The Open Society Foundations' research, consistent with other studies, suggests that religious discrimination against Muslims is increasing in Belgium. The Belgian federal, regional, and local governments should recognise that discrimination remains a critical barrier to full and equal participation in society and leadership from all echelons of government is necessary to combat it. Efforts to challenge this should include explicit language in official policies to support the robust monitoring of all forms of discrimination, raising awareness of antidiscrimination legislation and the types of mechanisms available for victims to lodge complaints, including those seeking redress.

### 13.2 Education

2. Many schools do not have an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse teaching staff. Teachers with an ethnic-minority background are an asset, as they are often more aware of and sensitive towards certain specific experiences, and can encourage pupils from similar backgrounds to have high aspirations. Diversity policies should be well-balanced and broadly supported with a framework designed to encourage and support these teachers during their formative teaching years.
3. National and local government education departments should consider strategies in which the major languages spoken in minority communities can be included as part of the modern language curriculum. Such minority languages should be perceived as a positive aspect of identity and not be viewed as an obstacle in pupils' school careers.
4. Better data collection is essential. Departments responsible for policy, in particular the Flemish Ministry of Education, should design a database with objective criteria that measure the ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds of pupils. Using the language spoken at home as the sole indicator for the

ethnic background of a pupil is not sufficient. As in past registration procedures, the country of birth of parents and grandparents and pupils is a useful indicator. The present criteria for measuring the socioeconomic background of pupils remain relevant.

5. A review of the practice of prohibiting the headscarf in schools and its impact on students and schools should be conducted in close cooperation and consultation with Muslim minorities, Muslim pupils, and their parents. This should be in accordance with the legal system in Flanders that permits schools to establish specific rules when and where the wearing of the headscarf is allowed.

### 13.3 Employment

6. The City of Antwerp and more specifically the Public Centre for Community Welfare (OCMW) should take steps to increase the diversity of its workforce. It should ensure that employees from diverse backgrounds are represented across all echelons of the administration, not just in the lower qualified and unqualified positions. The City of Antwerp and its relevant government departments must set an example which can also be an encouragement for private sector organisations to improve their staff diversity.
7. Government agencies that contract out to private companies and other agencies should place greater emphasis on organisations that are prepared to demonstrate diversity in their workforce and practices. A commitment to the workplace representation of minorities and underrepresented groups should be a consideration when selecting contractors.
8. Discrimination in the labour market should be tackled more aggressively. Various government agencies – federal, regional and city policymakers – and organisations (mosques and migrant organisations, among others) must be involved in this process, to improve coordination and cooperation, to better inform the public about the possibilities and places to report discrimination, and to reinforce prevention campaigns.
9. There are a number of organisations, institutions, and actors engaged in improving the employment prospects of young people who leave school with no or low qualifications. Consideration could be given to strategic plans or agreements that understand and explore the needs and qualifications of such individuals and match them with existing labour market opportunities. Long-term support and coaching are also necessary in order to counteract early negative experiences in education and the labour market, not only for better career options but also for personal identity and self-esteem reasons. This requires a strong commitment from support agencies and organisations, including minority-based initiatives.

10. At the European and national Belgian level, policy should be developed that enables the recognition of educational qualifications acquired outside the EU. Many first-generation migrants experience difficulties finding meaningful employment pertaining to their level of education due to a lack of recognition of their diplomas and grades obtained in their country of origin.

#### **13.4 Housing**

11. Different types of housing-related discrimination exist. There are no accurate figures on the nature and extent of discrimination in housing. The City Integration Service, the City Housing Service, and relevant antidiscrimination bodies should ensure that accurate figures on the numbers of people experiencing discrimination in housing and the form that this discrimination takes are collected with a view to developing measures to tackle this issue.
12. Antwerp suffers from uneven housing distribution of people with migrant backgrounds accompanied by spatial segregation. The City of Antwerp and relevant agencies should facilitate policy and practices in housing allocation that reflect the aim of building links between people and provide good-quality housing and facilities. Physically appealing neighbourhoods create an environment of comfort and security and lead to better cohesion and interaction.

#### **13.5 Health and Social Protection**

13. There is no broad policy framework to facilitate the incorporation of diversity into the health system. Policymakers should collaborate with organisations and practitioners to collect a database of good practices and make them available for all actors involved.
14. The elderly Muslim population and its needs are an emerging concern within the health sector. The specific needs of this generation, namely their dietary, religious, and cultural specificities, combined with inadequate language skills, are not adequately addressed in health policy strategies. Hospitals and health care professionals should consider ways to address these needs and to provide appropriate services.
15. The Tuppercare project of the City of Antwerp is a good practice which has sought to invest in training volunteers from migrant and ethnic Belgian backgrounds in an effort to improve public service delivery in health care and other areas. The City of Antwerp should invest further in training volunteers from migrant backgrounds as an effective way of improving social and political participation and as an avenue to improve communication between public service providers and clients/patients.



### 13.6 Policing and Security

16. There is a relatively high level of trust in the police from Muslim respondents in this research project. At the same time, young Muslim males have a lower level of trust in the police due to experiences with stop-and-searches and other forms of discriminatory police behaviour. The police force is widely viewed as unsympathetic by segments of the ethnic minority communities, and campaigns to recruit minority officers have been largely unsuccessful. The high level of trust in the police force is a positive factor that the City of Antwerp police should capitalise on in order to attract recruits from different backgrounds and diversify the force's image. This should include policies to equal promotion and retention of minority police officers and other staff.
17. Lack of trust in the police is often related to the perception of individual unfair treatment by the police in their everyday interactions. Police efficiency, functioning, and results are not the only crucial factors for building up this relationship of trust. The City of Antwerp police, its local counterparts, and the City of Antwerp should further develop community initiatives whose essential prerequisite is better communication between them and people from different communities. Such initiatives should prioritise working with young people from these communities and community or neighbourhood representatives. A number of international projects are currently undertaking such projects, including My City Real World.<sup>250</sup>
18. The City of Antwerp police should develop clear regulations and operational written standards for initiating stop-and-searches and the conduct of officers during these stops. These standards should stress that ethnicity, religion, and other superficial personal characteristics do not provide a sound basis for stop-and-searches.

### 13.7 Participation and Citizenship

19. Though ethnic-minority participation in civic and social organisations is low, there is an increase in the number of young and well-educated Belgians with a Muslim background who are actively demonstrating their civic engagement in Antwerp. These individuals and groups, especially those representing young women, are an important and critical representation of socially and politically minded activists whose experiences are different from that of the older generation of minorities but equally, if not more, relevant to the needs of the second and third generations of minority communities in Antwerp today. The City of Antwerp and its relevant departments are urged to create or broaden platforms which incorporate the views of such people alongside existing interlocutors from various communities. Furthermore, it is vital that local

---

<sup>250</sup> For more information, see [www.mycityrealworld.org](http://www.mycityrealworld.org).

government funding and other support are available in order to harness and develop the leadership skills of these individuals, for the future of Antwerp.

20. There are a sizeable number of community organisations in Antwerp but access to funding is hampered by the complexity of local government funding rules and procedures. Such organisations require support in order to create and maintain formal structures, such as paid staff, and become professional organisations. The City of Antwerp and relevant Belgian ministries should support these organisations in simplifying and widely disseminating funding application processes. Moreover, local government offices can be instrumental in professionalising these organisations by offering training on how to liaise with donors and partners, methods of fundraising and ways to write proposals.
21. Regional and local decision-makers and community organisations should invest more in young representatives with a minority or Muslim background who demonstrate leadership skills or who are currently undertaking such roles. There is a concern that these articulate and engaged individuals can become overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them from many different quarters and do not continue working in community organisations after a while. This is a big loss of human capital for community organisations. These individuals can benefit immensely from management, communication, and leadership courses.

### 13.8 Media

22. The 1994 recommendations by the Union of Journalists on standards when reporting on minorities are currently being updated. Any such guidelines should reflect the social, cultural, and political environment of today, where there is increasing hostility and discrimination against religious groups.<sup>251</sup>
23. 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, counter stereotyping, and make more efficient use of possibilities offered by the media. A positive representation of Muslims, such as blood donor collections for the Red Cross organised by mosques, seldom find their way into mainstream media and a well-thought-out communication strategy to highlight such actions can promote a more positive image of a city and country's Muslim citizens and residents.

---

<sup>251</sup> Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en Racismebestrijding, Jaarverslag 2008 Discriminatie/ Diversiteit (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Annual Report 2008 on Discrimination in Belgium, available at [http://www.diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie\\_detail&cid=106&thema=2&select\\_page=216](http://www.diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie_detail&cid=106&thema=2&select_page=216) (accessed September 2010).

24. In order to enhance their reporting of and for Muslims, journalists should explore avenues for improved networking with Muslim communities. Initiatives could include classes for journalists on Belgium's minorities' cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, coproduction between mainstream and Muslim and minority journalists and outlets, and the production of high-quality information about Muslim-related organisations and experts.

## ANNEX 1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### In English

- Allport, G. *The Nature of Prejudice: A Comprehensive and Penetrating Study of the Origin and Nature of Prejudice*. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1958.
- Antrop-Gonzalez, R. "This School Is My Sanctuary: The Dr Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School", Working Paper 57. East Lansing, MI: Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI), Michigan State University, MI, 2003.
- Braddock, J.H. and T.M. Eitle. "School Desegregation: Research, Policy, Practice, and Future Directions". In James A. Banks and Cherry McGee, eds, *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 2nd edn. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003, pp. 828–845.
- EUMAP. *Muslims in EU Cities: Cities Report, Preliminary Research Report and Literature Survey. Belgium*. Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2007.
- Fadil, N. *Submitting to God, Submitting to the Self. Secular and Religious Trajectories of Second Generation Maghrebi in Belgium*. Leuven: University of Leuven, 2008.
- Granovetter, M. "The Strength of Weak Ties", *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6) (1973), pp. 1360–1380.
- Heckman, F. and W. Bosswick. *Integration and Integration Policies, an INTPOL Feasibility Study for the IMISCOE Network of Excellence*. 2005. Available at <http://www.imiscoe.org>
- Houtart, F. "Religious Identity". In C. Timmerman and B. Segaert, eds, *How to Conquer the Barriers to Intercultural Dialogue. Christianity, Islam and Judaism*. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2005, pp. 105–115.
- Jacobs, D., K. Phalet and M. Swyngedouw. *Social capital and political participation among ethnic minority groups in Brussels. A test of the civic community argument of Fennema and Tillie*. Paper presented at the Workshop on Political Participation for Migrants and Their Descendants in Post-War Western Europe at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Turin, March 2002.
- Jacobs, D., K. Phalet and M. Swyngedouw. "Associational Membership and Political Involvement among Ethnic Minority Groups in Brussels", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30(3) (2004), pp. 543–559.
- Jenkins, R. *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Malik, M. "Equality and Discrimination". In T. Choudhury, ed., *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens*. Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2005, pp 46-99.
- Said, E. *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the World*. New York: Random House, 1997.
- Sнауwaert, B., N. Vanbeselaere, B. Duriez, F. Boen and D. Hutsebaut. "Living Apart Together? On Ethnic Identity Dynamics and Inter-Group Relations between Allochthons and Autochthons". In M.-C. Foblets and Pang Ching Lin, eds, *Cultuur*,

- ethniciteit en migratie* (Culture, ethnicity and migration), pp. 131–161. Leuven: Liber Amicorum Prof. Dr E. Roosens, ACCO, 1999.
- Tyler, T.R. “Policing in Black and White: Ethnic Group Differences in Trust and Confidence in the Police”, *Police Quarterly* 8(3), 2005, pp. 322–342.
- Van Avermaet, P. “Language Shift among Italian Immigrants in Flanders”, University of Leuven, Belgium, unpublished PhD thesis, Catholic University of Leuven, Leuven, 2008.
- Vertommen, S., A. Martens and N. Ouali. *Topography of the Belgian Labour Market*, Koning Boudewijnstichting/Fondation Roi Baudouin, 2006.
- Wimmer, A. “Dominant Ethnicity and Dominant Nationhood”. In E. Kaufmann, ed., *Rethinking Ethnicity. Majority Groups and Dominant Minorities*. New York: Routledge, 2005, pp. 40–58.

### Dutch and French

- Arijn, P., S. Feld and A. Nayer. *Discrimination à l'embauche* (Discrimination in recruitment). Brussels: Services fédéraux des affaires Scientifiques, Techniques et Culturelles (Federal Services of Scientific, Technical and Cultural Affairs), 1997.
- Billiet, J. and M. Swyngedouw. *Etnische minderheden en de Vlaamse kiezers* (Ethnic minorities and the Flemish voters). Leuven: Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek, 2009.
- Bousetta, H. and B. Maréchal. *L'islam et les musulmans en Belgique, enjeux locaux et cadres de réflexion globaux* (Islam and Muslims in Belgium, local stakes and global reference frameworks). Brussels: Publications de la Fondation Roi Baudouin – Programme Société Civile, 2003.
- Bousetta, H. and M. Swyngedouw. “Antwerp face à la contestation de sa jeunesse allochtone” (Antwerp facing the protest of its migrant youth), *Revue de sociologie de l'Institut de Sociologie de l'Université de Brussels* (2004), pp. 83–94.
- Centrum Voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en racismebestrijding (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism). “Jaarverslag 2008 Discriminatie/Diversiteit” (Annual Report on Discrimination in Belgium). Available at [http://www.diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie\\_detail&id=106&thema=2&select\\_page=216](http://www.diversiteit.be/?action=publicatie_detail&id=106&thema=2&select_page=216) (accessed September 2010).
- Clycq, N. *Van keukentafel tot “God”. Belgische, Italiaanse en Marokkaanse ouders over identiteit en opvoeding* (From kitchen table to “God”. Belgian, Italian and Moroccan parents on identity and education). Antwerp: Garant, 2009.
- Clycq, N., M. Michielsens and C. Timmerman. “Allochtone nieuwzoekers: gebruik en evaluatie van televisienieuwsprogramma's en -zenders door jongvolwassenen allochtonen” (Migrant news seekers: use and evaluation of television news programmes and networks by adolescent migrants), *Tijdschrift voor communicatiewetenschap* 33(2) (2005), pp. 146–161.

- De Cuyper, P. and J. Wets. *Diversiteit in integratie. Een evaluatie van de vormgeving, Efficiëntie en effectiviteit van het Vlaamse inburgeringsbeleid* (Diversity in integration. An evaluation of the design, efficiency and effectivity of the Flemish integration policy). Leuven: HIVA, 2007.
- De Sutter, W. and F. Saeys, eds. *Bezit en gebruik van audio-visuele media bij allochtone populaties. Een onderzoek uitgevoerd bij Gentse scholieren* (Possession and use of audio-visual media with migrant populations. Research conducted with pupils in Ghent). Ghent: Academia Press, 1996.
- Detant, A. “De radio spreekt Arabisch. Een onderzoek naar de rol van de media bij de integratie van migranten” (The radio speaks Arabic. Research on the role of media for the integration of migrants). In H. Verstraeten and P. Perceval, eds, *Media en Maatschappij 2*. Brussels: VUB Press, 1994, pp. 11–26.
- Devroe, I. *Gekleurd nieuws? De voorstelling van etnische minderheden in het nieuws in Vlaanderen* (Coloured news? The representation of ethnic minorities in the news in Flanders). Ghent: Department of Communication Sciences, University of Ghent, 2007.
- d’Haenens, L., C. van Summeren, F. Saeys and J. Koeman. *Integratie of identiteit? Mediamenu’s van Turkse en Marokkaanse jongeren* (Integration or Identity? Media menus of Turkish and Moroccan youngsters). Antwerp: Boom, 2004.
- D’Hont, R. “Meertalige scholen: vloek of zegen?” (Multilingual schools: curse or blessing?). Available at [http://http://www.skolo.org/spip.php?article852&lang=frwww.solidaire.org/international/article.phtml?section=A2AAAABB&object\\_id=34252](http://http://www.skolo.org/spip.php?article852&lang=frwww.solidaire.org/international/article.phtml?section=A2AAAABB&object_id=34252) (accessed February 2011).
- Duquet, N., I. Glorieux, I. Laurijssen and Y. Van Dorsselaer. *Wit krijt schrijft beter. Schoolloopbanen van allochtone jongeren in beeld* (White crayon writes better. School careers of migrant youth). Antwerp: Garant, 2006.
- Foblets, M.-C., B. Djait and K. Pieters, eds. *Mietjes and macho's: Allochtone jeugddelinquentie. Getuigenissen van autochtone en allochtone jongeren* (Pussies and machos: migrant juvenile delinquency. Confessions of native and migrant youngsters). Leuven: ACCO, 2004.
- Geets, J., F. Pauwels, J. Wets, M. Lamberts and C. Timmerman. *Nieuwe migranten en de arbeidsmarkt* (New migrants and the labour market). Leuven: HIVA, 2006.
- Gowricharn, R. *Het omstreden paradijs. Over multiculturaliteit en sociale cohesie* (The controversial paradise. About multiculturalism and social cohesion). Utrecht: Forum, 2002.
- Groenez, S., I. Van den Brande and I. Nicaise. *Cijferboek sociale ongelijkheid in het Vlaamse onderwijs – een verkennend onderzoek op de Panelstudie van Belgische huishoudens* (Grade book of social inequality in Flemish education). Leuven: Steunpunt LOA, 2003.
- Hackethal, I. *Omgevingsanalyse i.h.k.v. meerjarenplan 2009–2014* (Environmental analysis long-term planning 2009–2014). Antwerp: Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad, 2008.

- Hendrickx, K. *Belang van klinische en communicatieve vaardigheden in de opleiding geneeskunde in het kader van seksuele gezondheid, met speciale aandacht voor allochtone patiënten* (The importance of clinical and communicative skills in medical training with respect to sexual health, with special attention to minority patients). Antwerp: University of Antwerp, 2008.
- Hermans, D. and M.-C. Opendakker. "Allochtonen in het basis- en secundair onderwijs in Vlaanderen" (Migrants in primary and secondary education in Flanders). In *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*. Leuven: Steunpunt WAV, 2005, pp. 187–207.
- Heyse, P. *Onderzoek naar de structuur en werking van allochtone vrouwenverenigingen* (Study of the structure and operation of migrant women's organisations). Antwerp: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, 2008.
- Hirtt, N., I. Nicaise and D. De Zutter. *De school van de ongelijkheid* (The school of inequality). Berchem: EPO, 2007.
- Jacobs, D. "Inburgering. Van integratie naar acculturatie" (Integration. From integration to acculturation), *Ex Tempore, Verleden Tijdschrift Nijmegen* 19(3) (2000), pp. 3–13.
- Jacobs, D., A. Rea and L. Hanquinet. *Prestaties van de leerlingen van buitenlandse herkomst in België volgens de PISA-studie* (Performances of pupils of foreign origin in Belgium according to the PISA study). Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting, 2007.
- Janssens, A. and C. Timmerman. *Hoe elkaar de hand reiken? De zoekende interactie tussen de allochtone ouderen en het zorgaanbod in de stad Antwerpen* (How to reach out? The searching interaction between migrant elderly and health care in Antwerp). Antwerp: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, 2003.
- Jaspaert, K. "Taal, onderwijs en achterstandsbestrijding: enkele overwegingen" (Language, education and the battle against deprivation: some considerations). In S. Sierens, M. Van Houtte, P. Loobuyck, K. Delrue and K. Pelleriaux, eds, *Onderwijs onderweg in de immigratiesamenleving* ((*Education along the way in the immigration society*)). Ghent: Stichting Gerrit Kreveld, Academia Press, 2006, pp. 139–164.
- Kanmaz, M. and M. El Battiui. *Moskeeën, imams en islamleerkrachten in België. Stand van zaken en uitdagingen* (Mosques, imams and Islam teachers in Belgium. State of affairs and challenges). Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting, 2004.
- Kerremans, S. *De socio-economische positie van de Antwerpse bevolking. Een verkennende analyse op gegevens van de Kruispuntbank Sociale Zekerheid* (The socio-economic position of the Antwerp population). Antwerp: Databank Social Planning Antwerpen (DSPA), 2007.
- Koning Boudewijnstichting (KB) and Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en Racismebestrijding (CGKR). *Belgische debatten voor een migratiebeleid. Facts and figures* (Belgian debates for a migration policy. Facts and figures). Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting, 2008.
- Lacante, M., M. Almaci, R. Van Esbrock, W. Lens and M. De Metsenaere. *Allochtonen in het hoger onderwijs. Onderzoek naar factoren van studiekeuze en studiesucces bij allochtone*

- eerstejaarsstudenten in het hoger onderwijs* (Migrants in higher education. Study of the factors of study choice and success among first-year migrants in higher education). Brussels: Ministerie Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2007.
- Lambrechts, L. *Terreinverkenning private woonmarkt* (Field description of the private housing market). Antwerp: Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Stad, 2006.
- Lemaître, J. ed. *Vlaanderen Gepeild 2003!* (Flanders Monitored 2003!). Brussels: Ministerie Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2003.
- Leman, J., ed. *Moedertaalonderwijs bij allochtonen. Geïntegreerd onderwijs in de eigen taal en cultuur* (Mother-tongue education for migrants. Integrated education in own language and culture). Leuven: ACCO, 1999.
- Levecque, K., I. Lodewyckx and S. Van den Eede. *Gezondheid en gezondheidszorg bij allochtonen in Vlaanderen* (Health and health care with migrants in Flanders). Antwerp: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, 2006.
- Lodewyckx, I., J. Geets and C. Timmerman. *Aspecten van Marokkaanse huwelijksmigratie en Marokkaans familierecht* (Aspects of Moroccan marriage migration and Moroccan family law). Antwerp: Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, 2006.
- Mahieu, P. “Waterval en achterstelling: wat is oorzaak of gevolg?” (Waterfall or setting back: what is cause or consequence?), *TORB (Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht en Onderwijsbeleid – Journal of Education Law and Education Policy)* (2002), pp. 128–139.
- Mahieu, P. “Allochtone jongeren in het onderwijs” (Migrant students in education), *Over Werk: tijdschrift van het Steunpunt WAV* 13(3) (2003), pp. 147–150.
- Manço, U. “La présence musulmane en Belgique: dimensions historique, démographique et économique” (The Muslim presence in Belgium. Historical, demographic and economic dimensions). In U. Manço, ed., *Voix et voies musulmanes de Belgique* (Muslim voices and views in Belgium). Brussels: Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, 2000, pp. 17–40.
- Martens, A. and N. Ouali. *Ethnische discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkts in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest* (Ethnic discrimination on the labour market in the Brussels regional capital). Brussels/Leuven: Steunpunt WAV, 2005.
- Marzo, S. *Parlano diverso ... L'italiano parlato in Limburgo : uno studio variazionale e corpus based* (Speaking variously ... Spoken Italian in Limburg: a variational, corpus-based study). Leuven: K.U. Leuven, 2006.
- Meuleman, B. and J. Billiet. “De houding van Vlamingen tegenover ‘oude’ en ‘nieuwe’ migranten: diffuus of specifiek?” (The attitude of Flemish people towards 'old' and 'new' migrants: diffuse or specific?). In J. Lemaître, ed., *Vlaanderen Gepeild 2003!* (Flanders Monitored 2003!). Brussels: Ministerie Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2003.
- Misplon, R. and F. Holderbeeke. *Allochtonen op zoek naar werk* (Migrants looking for a job) in *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*. Leuven: Steunpunt WAV, 2005, pp. 153–170.
- Okkerse, L. and A. Termote. *Hoe vreemd is vreemd op de arbeidsmarkt? Over de allochtone arbeidskrachten in België* (How foreign is foreign on the labour market? On migrant



- workers in Belgium). Brussels: Algemene Directie statistiek en Economische Informatie, 2004.
- Ouali, N. “De immigratie in België. Aantallen, stromen en arbeidsmarkt” (Immigration in Belgium. Numbers, streams and labour market). Federale Overheidsdienst Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Sociaal Overleg, 2003. Available at <http://www.werk.belgie.be/WorkArea/showcontent.aspx?id=21642> (accessed February 2011).
- Overbeeke, A. “Segregatie, desegregatie, integratie? Het recht op schoolkeuze en –stichting, schoolkeuzegedrag en de gevolgen ervan voor de schoolsamenstelling” (Segregation, desegregation, integration? The right to school choice and -establishment, school choice behaviour and the consequences for school composition), *TORB (Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht en Onderwijsbeleid – Journal of Education Law and Education Policy)* (2004), pp. 303–318.
- Peeters, E., ed. *Verslag 2007 Discriminatie/Diversiteit* (Report on discrimination/diversity 2007). Brussels: Centrum voor Gelijkheid van Kansen en Racismebestrijding, 2008.
- Piqueray, E. *Eindrapport: Haalbaarheidsstudie over een vormingsaanbod voor islamkaders* (Final report: Feasibility study on a training framework for Islam executives). Antwerp: Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies, 2008.
- Ronsmans, S. *Berichtgeving en beeldvorming van allochtonen in de Antwerpse media* (Coverage and representation of migrants in the Antwerp media). Brussels: Free University of Brussels, 2004.
- Roosens, E., *Eigen grond eerst? Primordiale autochtonie: dilemma van de multiculturele samenleving* (Own soil first? Primordial autochthony: dilemma of the multicultural society). Leuven: Acco, 1998.
- Roosens, E. “De multiculturele samenleving, een luchtspiegeling?” (The multicultural society, a mirage?), Rede uitgesproken naar aanleiding van de 30ste opening van het academiejaar aan de Katholieke Universiteit Leuven ((Oration delivered on the occasion of the 30th opening of the academic year at the Catholic University of Leuven), 2005. Available at <http://alum.kuleuven.be/3deleeftijd/archief%20lezingen/Samenvatting%20Roosens.doc>
- Rothier, P. *Profiel wijken Borgerhout postcode 2140* (Neighbourhood profile, Borgerhout postal code 2140). City of Antwerp policy document, 2006.
- Rottiers, S., E. Defrancq and E. Rouwens. *Allochtone studenten aan de UA* (Migrant students at the University of Antwerp). Antwerp: University of Antwerp, 2004.
- Schiffauer, W. *Staat-Schule Ethnizität* (State-school ethnicity). In F. Gesemann (ed.), *Migration und Integration in Berlin* (Migration and integration in Berlin). Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 2001, pp. 233–250.
- Smelik, A. *Effectief Beeldvormen. Theorie, praktijk en analyse van beeldvormingsprocessen* (Effective representation. Theory, practice and analysis of representation processes). Assen: Van Gorcum, 1999.

- Stiens, S. *Het schotelantenne-fenomeen: kijkgedrag bij Marokkaanse jongeren* (The satellite-dish phenomenon: viewing behaviour among Moroccan youth). Leuven: K.U. Leuven, 2000.
- Talloen, D. “Allochtone ouderen en de uitdaging voor de dienst- en zorgverlening” (Migrant elderly and the challenge for the service and care system), *Welzijnsgids* 67 (2008), pp. 61–78.
- Tielens, M. “Van A tot Z achterop. De achterstelling van allochtonen in onderwijs en werk” (From A to Z held back. The arrears of migrants in education and work). In *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*. Leuven, Steunpunt WAV, 2005, pp. 118–128.
- Timmerman, C. *Onderwijs maakt het verschil. Socio-culturele praxis en etniciteitsbeleving bij Turkse jonge vrouwen* (Education makes the difference. Socio-cultural praxis and experiences of ethnicity among young Turkish women). Leuven: ACCO, 1999.
- Timmerman, C., I. Lodewyckx, D. Vanheule and J. Wets, eds. *Wanneer wordt vreemd, vreemd? De vreemde in beeldvorming, registratie en beleid* (When does foreign become foreign? The foreigner in representation, registration and policy). Leuven: ACCO, 2004.
- Van Avermaet, P. “Language shift among Italian immigrants in Flanders”, University of Leuven, Belgium, unpublished PhD thesis, Catholic University of Leuven, Leuven, 2008
- Van Craen, M. and J. Ackaert. *Het vertrouwen van allochtonen en autochtonen in de politie: geen zwart-wit verhaal* (Trust of minorities and majorities in the police: not black and white). Ghent: Eerste Criminologisch Forum, 2008.
- Van Craen, M. and M. Almaci. “De ondervertegenwoordiging van allochtonen in het universitair onderwijs: cijfers, oorzaken en remedies” (The under-representation of migrants in university education: numbers, causes and remedies). In *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*. Leuven, Steunpunt WAV 2005, pp. 209–228.
- Van Craen, M., K. Vancluysen and J. Ackaert. *Voorbij wij en zij? De sociaal-culturele afstand tussen autochtonen en allochtonen tegen de meetlat* (Beyond us and them? The social-cultural distance between natives and migrants measured). Brugge: Vanden Broele, 2007.
- Van den Berg, H. “Discours-analyse van alledaags racism” (Discourse analysis of everyday racism), in J. Servaes, and V. Frissen, eds, *De interpretatieve benadering in de communicatiewetenschap. Theorie, methodologie en case-studies* (The interpretative approach in communication science. theory, methodology and case studies). Leuven: ACCO, 1997, pp. 183–207.
- Vanderwaeren, E. and C. Timmerman, eds. *Diversiteit in islam: over verschillende belevingen van het moslim zijn* (Diversity in Islam: on different experiences of being Muslim). Leuven: Acco, 2008.
- Vandezande, V., F. Fleischmann, G. Baysu, M. Swyngedouw and K. Phalet. *De Turkse en Marokkaanse tweede generatie op de arbeidsmarkt in Antwerpen en Brussel* (Turkish and Moroccan second generation on the labour market in Antwerp and Brussels). Leuven: Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek, 2008.

- Van Robaey, B. and N. Perrin. *Armoede bij personen van vreemde herkomst becijferd – Deelverslag van 'Armoede bij personen van vreemde herkomst'* (Poverty among persons of foreign origin quantified). Antwerp: UA-OASeS. Available at [http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/NL/PUB\\_1635\\_Armoede\\_vreemde\\_origine\\_becijferd.pdf](http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/NL/PUB_1635_Armoede_vreemde_origine_becijferd.pdf) (accessed February 2011).
- Vassart, C. *Gezondheidszorg en diversiteit: het voorbeeld van de moslimpatiënten* (Health care and diversity: the example of Muslim patients). Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting, 2005.
- Vassart, C. *Migratie en vergrijzing: Syntheserapport* (Migration and ageing: a synthesis report). Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting, 2007.
- Verschueren, K., H. Colpin, P. Ghesquière, W. Hellinckx and B. Maes, A. Penne and K. Scheurweg. *Tevredenheid in Centra voor leerlingenbegeleiding: ontwikkeling van een instrumentarium* (Satisfaction in student guidance centres: development of a set of instruments). Leuven: Departement Onderwijs en Vorming van het Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Centrum voor Schoolpsychologie, K.U. Leuven, 2007.
- Vertommen, S. and A. Martens. "Allochtonen beloond: Etnostratificatie op de loonmarkt" (Migrants rewarded: Ethno-stratification on the labour market). In *De arbeidsmarkt in Vlaanderen*. Leuven, Steunpunt WAV 2005, pp. 171–186.
- Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB). *Allochtonen sneller aan het werk* (Migrants faster at work). VDAB Studiedienst. Antwerp: VDAB, 2008.
- Warmenbol, L. "Interetnisch contact en beeldvorming over allochtonen in gemengde stadsbuurten; een Antwerpse case" (Inter-ethnic contact and representation of migrants in mixed neighbourhoods; an Antwerp case), *Migrantenstudies* 4 (2007), pp. 282–303.
- Wets, J. *Wat is inburgering in Vlaanderen? Conceptnota "inburgering" in het kader van het VIONA – onderzoek "Evaluatie van de inhoudelijke en financiële aspecten van het Vlaams inburgeringsdecreet"* (What is integration in Flanders? Concept note on integration within the framework of the VIONA research on evaluation of the content-specific and financial elements of the Flemish integration decree). Leuven: HIVA, 2007.
- Zemni, S. and G. Van Den Bossche. "Allochtonen aller landen ... Burger U in. Wat het debat over inburgeringsplicht ons kan vertellen over identiteit(en)" (Migrants from all countries ... integrate. What the debate on the obligation to integrate can tell us about identities). In A. Van Den Brande, ed., *Identiteiten. Functies en disfuncties* (Identities. Functions and disfunctions). Ghent: Academia Press, 2002, pp.107–143.

## Policy documents

- Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid Antwerpen, available on the website of the city of Antwerp at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Lerende\\_stad/LS\\_Staf/aob/brochure\\_aob\\_250808.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Lerende_stad/LS_Staf/aob/brochure_aob_250808.pdf) (accessed September 2010).

- Bestuursakkoord Antwerpen 2007–2012 (Policy agreement Antwerp 2007–2012). Available at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Marketing\\_en\\_communicatie/MC\\_Com/Bestuursakkoord\\_2007\\_2012\\_def.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Marketing_en_communicatie/MC_Com/Bestuursakkoord_2007_2012_def.pdf) (accessed 10 September 2008).
- Bestuursakkoord Borgerhout 2007–2012 (Policy agreement Borgerhout 2007–2012). Available at <http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Districten/Borgerhout/bestuursakkoord%20.pdf> (accessed 10 September 2008).
- Stad Antwerpen. Antwerps plan om de jeugdwerkloosheid aan te pakken (Antwerp plan to deal with juvenile unemployment). Available at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale\\_zaken/SZ\\_Werk/A4\\_antwerk.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale_zaken/SZ_Werk/A4_antwerk.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2008).
- Stad Antwerpen. *Arbeidsmarktmonitor Antwerpen 2007* (Antwerp job market monitor 2007). Antwerp, 2007.
- Stad Antwerpen, Lokaal Sociaal Beleidsplan 2008–2013 (Local social policy plan 2008–2013). Available at <http://www.ocmw.antwerpen.be/Voorstel%20startpagina/Frame/Over%20het%20OCMW/LSBplan20072013.pdf> (accessed 25 July 2008).
- Stad Antwerpen. Samenleven in diversiteit: Eenheid in verscheidenheid & verscheidenheid in eenheid, Beleidsplan 2009–2011 (City of Antwerp, living together in diversity: unity in diversity & diversity in unity, policy plan 2009–2011). Available at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale\\_zaken/SZ\\_Integratie/20080522\\_MJP\\_Eindversie.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale_zaken/SZ_Integratie/20080522_MJP_Eindversie.pdf) (accessed September 2010).
- Stad Antwerpen. Samenleven in een stad van iedereen, Atlasnota 2006–2008 (City of Antwerp, living together in a city of everybody, Atlas report 2006–2008). Available at [www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale\\_zaken/SZ\\_Integratie/20050930\\_definitieveversieMJP.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale_zaken/SZ_Integratie/20050930_definitieveversieMJP.pdf) (accessed 22 June 2008).
- Stad Antwerpen. Stadsplan Diversiteit 2008–2012 (City plan for diversity 2008–2012). Available at [http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale\\_zaken/SZ\\_Integratie/20080625\\_Stadsplan%20diversiteit%20Antwerpen%202008-2012.pdf](http://www.antwerpen.be/docs/Stad/Bedrijven/Sociale_zaken/SZ_Integratie/20080625_Stadsplan%20diversiteit%20Antwerpen%202008-2012.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2008).

## ANNEX 2. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

**Omar Ba:** affiliated with African Platform in Antwerp and expert on sub-Saharan Muslim affairs

**Nadia Babazia:** staff member of Support point for Migrant Girls and Women, Brussels, and staff member of Cell Diversity, public Flemish television network VRT

**Bilal Benyaich:** former staff member of kifkif, an intercultural organisation and think-tank

**Monica De Coninck:** city official for Social policy, Diversity and Counters in Antwerp; president of the Public Centre for Community Welfare, Antwerp, member of political party sp.a

**Saida El Fekri:** staff member of Federation of Moroccan Organisations in Antwerp

**Jamal El Haoual:** staff member of de8 (the eight: grouping of eight organisations in the Antwerp Minorities Centre de8, specialising in the labour market position of ethnic minorities)

**Hind Fraihi:** staff member of the cabinet of Monica De Coninck, adviser

**El Hassan Radi:** Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen Communitybuilding Antwerp

**Mouloud Hemdane:** chairman of the district council of Borgerhout, member of political party sp.a – spirit – Groen!

**Yousef Souissi:** chairman of the Organisation for the Development and Emancipation of Muslims, Antwerp

**Fauzaya Talhaoui:** town councillor for Antwerp, member of political party sp.a – spirit

**Maarten Van Camp:** ex-staff member of de8, specialising in the education of ethnic minorities

**Patrick Van de Perre:** journalist on *Gazet van Antwerp*, local newspaper, expert in Jewish affairs

**Sacha Van Wiele:** journalist on *Gazet van Antwerp*, expert in Jewish affairs.

Informal fruitful conversations with various colleagues (Els Vanderwaeren, Petra Heyse, Chris Timmerman, Ina Lodewyckx) who are experts in the fields of Islam, migration, integration, ethnicity.

## **ANNEX 3. LIST OF THE CHIEF MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

### **Minority organisations**

Antwerps Minderhedencentrum de8

Van Daelstraat 35, 2140 Borgerhout

Tel.: 03 270 33 33

Fax: 03 235 89 78

Email: [info@de8.be](mailto:info@de8.be)

Website: [www.de8.be](http://www.de8.be)

Federatie van Marokkaanse Verenigingen vzw (FMV)

Oudstrijdersstraat 9, 2140 Borgerhout

Tel.: 03 204 10 10

Fax: 03 239 98 32

Email: [secretariaat@fmv-vzw.be](mailto:secretariaat@fmv-vzw.be)

Website: <http://marokkaansefederatie.com>

Kif Kif Algemeen Secretariaat

Lange Beeldekenstraat 245, 2060 Antwerpen

Tel: 03 667.69.33

Fax: 03 677.26.33

Email: [info@kifkif.be](mailto:info@kifkif.be)

Minderhedenforum vzw

Vooruitgangsstraat 323/4, 1030 Brussel

Tel.: 02 245 88 30

Fax: 02 245 58 32

Email: [info@minderhedenforum.be](mailto:info@minderhedenforum.be)

Platform van de Afrikaanse Gemeenschappen Vzw

Breughelstraat 31-33, 2018 Antwerpen

Tel. /Fax: 03 293 32 60

Email: [afrikaansplatform@telenet.be](mailto:afrikaansplatform@telenet.be)

Voorzitter: Prof. Dr Jacob Niamba Souga

Algemeen secretaris: Firmin Boika

Unie Van Turkse Verenigingen (UTV)

Lange Achteromstraat 32, 2018 Antwerpen

Tel.: 03 289 91 13

Fax: 03 289 77 10

Email: [info@utvweb.be](mailto:info@utvweb.be) - <http://www.utvweb.be>

Voorzitter: Sedat Kaya

Vereniging voor Ontwikkeling en Emancipatie van Moslims (VOEM) vzw  
Nationaal Secretariaat & Afdelingssecretariaat Antwerpen  
Stuivenbergplein 33, 2060 Antwerpen  
Tel./Fax: 03 272 35 07  
Email: secretariaat@voem-vzw.be

Vlaams Minderhedencentrum  
Vooruitgangstraat 323/1, 1030 Brussel  
Tel.: 02 205 00 50  
Fax: 02 205 00 60  
Email: info@vmc.be

## **Policy**

### **Atlas**

Carnotstraat 110, 2060 Antwerpen  
Tel.: 03 22 77 011  
Email: atlas@stad.antwerpen.be  
Website: <http://www.antwerpen.be/atlas>

Districtshuis Antwerpen secretariaat  
Lange Gasthuisstraat 21, 2000 Antwerpen  
Tel.: 03 201 3411  
Fax: 03 201 3511

Districtshuis Borgerhout  
Moorkensplein 1, 2140 Borgerhout-Antwerpen  
Tel.: 03 270 1711

Wijkkantoor Borgerhout  
Groeningerplein 1, 2140 Borgerhout-Antwerpen  
Tel.: 03 633 85 10

## **Discrimination**

Centrum voor gelijkheid van kansen en voor racismebestrijding  
Koningsstraat 138, 1000 Brussel  
Tel.: 02 212 30 00  
Fax: 02 212 30 30

Meldpunt Discriminatie Antwerpen  
Sint-Jacobsmarkt 7, 2000 Antwerpen  
Tel.: 0800 94 84 3  
Fax: 03 292 37 79

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.

