



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

**Inter-cultural and inter-religious Policies  
in Amsterdam, the Netherlands**



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## Content

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations .....	7
2.2 National policy context.....	11
Integration policies.....	11
Policies on Associations of Immigrants .....	12
Policies on the division between church and state .....	13
<b>3 Background information on the city</b> .....	<b>15</b>
3.1 Brief description of the city.....	15
3.2 The city's migrant population and its characteristics/main groups .....	15
3.3 The city' Muslim population and its characteristics .....	18
<b>4 Local intercultural policies in general</b> .....	<b>20</b>
4.1 Responsibility in the city and general approach to ethnic issues .....	20
Responsibility.....	20
General approach towards ethnic issues .....	21
Issues, demands and interests of immigrants .....	23
4.2 Immigrant associations and immigrant religious associations and the policies towards them .....	24
Associations of immigrants .....	24
Religious associations .....	25
Funding for ethnic and religious organisations .....	27
Issues, demands and interests of immigrant and religious organisations .....	29
4.3 Forms of relation and dialogue .....	29
Inter-cultural dialogue .....	29
Inter-religious dialogue.....	33
4.4 Relationship between different ethnic groups in the city.....	34
4.5 Public communication .....	36
4.6 Summary and lessons learnt.....	37
<b>5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities</b> .....	<b>38</b>
5.1 Major issues, demands and interests .....	38

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5.2	General approaches and policies towards Muslim groups .....	43
5.3	Examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Muslim groups .....	44
5.4	Public communication .....	45
5.5	Summary and lessons learnt.....	46
<b>6</b>	<b>Intergroup relations and radicalisation .....</b>	<b>47</b>
6.1	Radicalisation within the majority population .....	47
6.2	Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population.....	48
6.3	Communication strategy concerning radicalisation .....	52
6.4	Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt.....	53
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Interview partners.....</b>	<b>58</b>

## Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project "Cities for Local Integration Policy" (CLIP), which started in 2006. Amsterdam is one of the 34 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their Integration Policies and in this case inter-cultural and inter-religious policies.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities and encouraging a learning process within the network of cities, addressing the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies, providing objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discussing their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants, supporting the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy relevant experiences and outputs of the network to: European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network is also cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Turin, Wroclaw and Swansea are taking care of the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam are responsible for this report on Amsterdam. Together with the contact person of the municipality of Amsterdam Marian Visser of the '*Platform Amsterdam Samen*' (PAS), an enormous effort has been undertaken to find all necessary data on Amsterdam for this report. Many officials and other parties who are involved with integration policies, statistics and support of immigrants have been interviewed, as the list at the end of the report shows. For instance from the Social and Welfare Department and from the *City Districts Westerpark* and *Slotervaart*, and from projects that cooperate with the municipality. They have provided us with reports, statistics and comments on the concept version of this report. Secondly the representatives of the *Polder Mosque*, the *Amsterdam Union of Moroccan Mosques (UMMAO)*, the *Young Moroccans in Amsterdam (JMA)* and members the *network of key figures* and *Stichting Connect* have been willing to provide us with information. And finally researchers from the University of Amsterdam have provided us with data and useful comments. I want to thank all those who have cooperated in giving information and particularly Marian Visser for coordinating the search of data, and all the interviewees. Also Aouatif Tawfik (City district Slotervaart), Emanuel Gebreyesus, Rinus Penninx, Marcel Maussen, Floris Vermeulen (IMES), and Anna Ludwinek (EUROFOUND) who have given useful suggestions to improve the first concept version of this report. The author is completely responsible for the content of this report and the copyright of the report remains with Eurofound.

Anja van Heelsum

September 2009, Amsterdam

## 1 Introduction

This module of the CLIP project focuses on 'intercultural and interreligious dialogue': on the one hand the policies that the city of Amsterdam has introduced on this subject, and on the other hand the way in which the immigrants that are involved think about their needs regarding this subject. As Heckman explains in his introduction paper for this CLIP module, the topic of this module

"has to do with phenomena of urban life that are related to the multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-religious structures of urban populations which challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or keep peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. In present day political discourse, relations between different ethnic and religious groups, immigrants and natives are predominantly discussed in terms of "intercultural dialogue" and/or "inter-religious dialogue". We will conceptualize these phenomena as cases of inter-group relations. This conceptualization stands for an abstraction working with the assumption that there are similarities in the relations between quite different "groups" (Heckman 2008: 3).

This understanding has been established in the field of inter-group relations research in social psychology and sociology. The approach focuses on interactions and relations, and stresses that general explanations and practical recommendations can be made for the relations between different groups.

"...intergroup relations refer to states of friendship or hostility, cooperation or competition, dominance or subordination, alliance or enmity, peace or war between two or more groups and their members" (Sherif and Sherif 1969, 222). "Intergroup behaviour refers to the actions of individuals belonging to one group when they interact, collectively or individually, with another group or its members in terms of their group membership..." (ibid, 223).

As Heckman states, from a political and practical point of view two dimensions of intergroup relations are of particular interest for local governments: conflict between groups and policies to avoid or solve conflict between groups, i.e. conditions of social cohesion in a city.

"The concept of "group" on which intergroup relations research is based is rather broad. In the CLIP project it includes the city administration, the city council, political parties, churches, labour unions, welfare organizations foundations, local media and anti - immigrant movements among others in the majority society. On the part of the minorities it includes religious groups and national minorities. Among the religious groups Muslim communities find particular attention. Where Muslims are not the most relevant group another faith - based community is of interest in our research. It is noteworthy that most of the religious groups are organized on an ethnic basis." Heckman (2008: 4)

Led by this conceptualization of intergroup, a questionnaire has been developed, with three parts: A) local intercultural policies in general, B) local policies towards Muslim communities and C) intergroup relations and radicalisation. This questionnaire has been send to the contact person for Amsterdam. After receiving the answers in the questionnaire, we contacted the city representative again and arranged a city visit.

Interviews took place with officials of the administration and with representatives of immigrants' associations and projects. We also arranged interviews with researchers. In section 8 the full list of interviewees is shown. The combination of the answers in the questionnaire and the information from the interviews was used to write this report. The report is set up more or less in a similar way for all cities, though we have added section 4.2 'Immigrant and religious associations and the policies towards them'. In 4.3 we will define intercultural and inter religious dialogue as cooperation on the organisational level, either formal or informal. In 4.4 we will look at attitudes in the population, under the heading relations between ethnic groups in the city.

In the case of Amsterdam the central concept of the policy that is currently used according to the director of 'Platform Amsterdam Samen' Henk van Waveren is 'Verbinding' (Connecting). It is not particularly directed towards interethnic relations, but at all intergroup relations between citizens in Amsterdam, so also towards conflicts between younger and older citizens, or between religious groups like Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindu's, or towards people with different political views. 'Verbinding' is both used when the policy is directed at a) neighbourhoods: searching for existing connection points where people already find each other and can interact, so that social cohesion may increase, b) migrant or religious associations: these are per definition connection points, but can be stimulated to become more diverse connection points, c) anti radicalisation: finding connections towards individuals in the process of becoming radical and less radical groups to stimulate them to feel part of society. We will explain this further in the next chapters.

Moroccans are the second largest immigrant group in Amsterdam, probably soon the first, and in the case of Amsterdam 'Muslims' are explicitly named in policy documents. This has to do with the national debate on Muslims, in which right wing parties and individuals problematize Muslims, with Amsterdam's fight against prejudice towards Muslims and with the policy on Muslim and other radicalisation since the murder of Theo van Gogh. The awareness of the authorities that particularly a section of the Moroccan youngsters perceive society as anti-Muslim, and perceives the authorities as unfair in treating Muslims, has led to a conflict prevention strategy based on stimulating connections. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to an analysis of the conflict potential made in November 2004 (Bestuursdienst Amsterdam 2004) the following characteristic increase conflict: lack of trust in the neutrality of the police, perception of unequal access to political and economic sources of power, and group anger.

## 2 Background information on the country

### 2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations

The Netherlands was an immigration country in the 17th and 18th century, it was at that time a centre of trade and shipping and tolerant to religious refugees. The percentage of immigrants, that was around 10%, diminished to a very low level in the first half of the 20th century (Lucassen & Penninx, 2002). After the Second World War emigration was dominant, new farmlands were discovered in the United States, Canada and Australia. As table 1 shows, a negative trend (more emigration) in the fifties turned into a positive trend (more immigration) in the sixties.

**Table 1 The Netherlands: estimates of the net number of migrants, by five-year intervals, 1950 to 2000 (in thousands)**

Country	1950- 1955	1955- 1960	1960- 1965	1965- 1970	1970- 1975	1975- 1980	1980- 1985	1985- 1990	1990- 1995	1995- 2000
Netherlands	-123	-31	36	55	152	168	55	151	190	161

source: MPI, calculated from United Nations Population Division (2001) *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision*. (POP/DB/WPP/Rev) 2000/1/F10.

The few immigrants that arrived in the period 1945–1960 came from the former colonies Surinam and Indonesia: Surinamese elite sent their children to study and Indonesians with one Dutch parent could remain Dutch after the independence in 1949 and the Indonesian army officials from the Moluccan islands that had fought in the Dutch army in Indonesia had to be resettled in the Netherlands because they were not safe in Indonesia. Around 1960 the immigration became more numerous. The first large influx was a result of the regulations around the independence of Surinam (in 1975). While the independence was meant to stop immigration, citizens of this former colony had the right to choose between Surinamese and Dutch nationality for five years and half of the inhabitants of Surinam decided to move to the Netherlands. A second large flow of immigrants was caused by the booming economy and the need for cheap labour from the Sixties onwards. Factory and shipyard owners, first in Southern Europe, later in Turkey and Morocco, recruited so-called guest workers. After a period that this looked temporary, their immigration became permanent and wives and children also arrived. During the period that the European Union was further institutionalised, neighbouring countries, in particular Germany, also added to the number of immigrants. In the Eighties the economy went down and the first measures were taken to stop immigration. A considerable refugee population was growing in that period, at first from the then communist countries but in the last decades mainly from third world war areas in the world: Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia and other countries. Since 2000 the number of Chinese and Polish immigrants is increasing considerably. The number of Poles is growing fast from 2007 onwards.

The percentage of people with a foreign nationality is stable around 4.3% since 1997. The number of naturalisations has been going up from 12,800 in 1990 to 82,700 in 1996 and down to 45 300 in 2002 according to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics.

Table 2 shows the largest ethnic groups on January 1st 2009 in three categories that are often distinguished in Dutch statistics, namely immigrants from Western countries, from non-Western countries and from refugee countries. On January 1st the total Dutch population was 16,405,399 of which 13,189,983 (80%) were considered as autochthonous Dutch (note that anybody with one or two parents born abroad is not considered autochthonous).

**Table 2 Largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands in three policy categories, total, first and second generation per 1-1-2009**

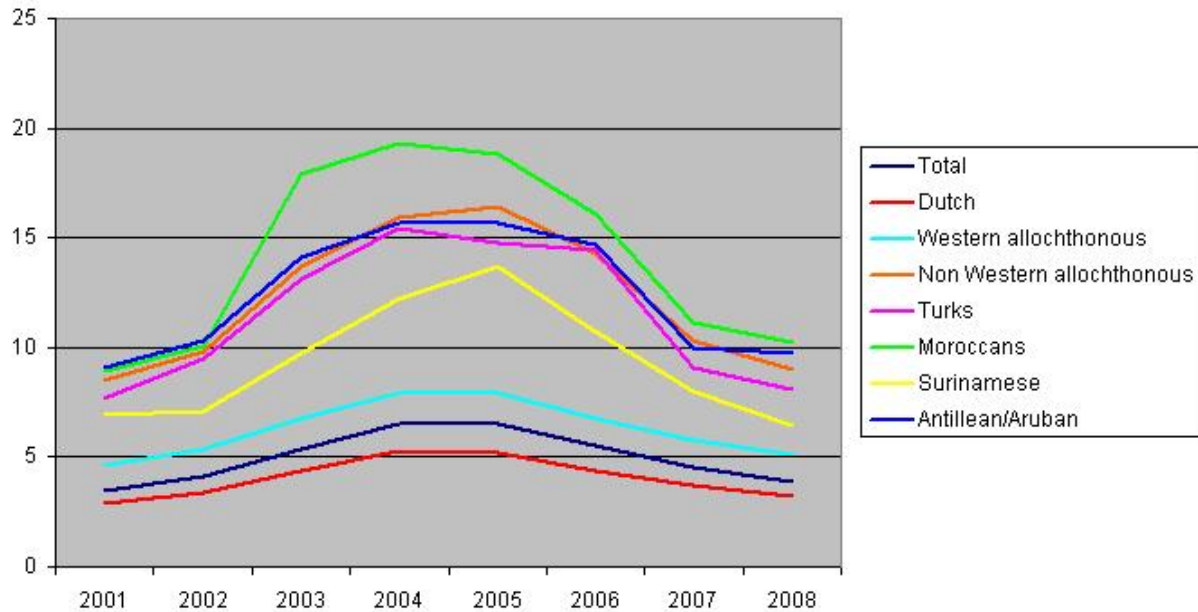
	<i>Total 2008</i>	<i>Total 2009</i>	<i>1st Generation immigrants 2009</i>	<i>2nd Generation immigrants 2009</i>
<b>Total</b>	16 405 399	16 486 587	1 664 500	1 625 171
Dutch	13 189 983	13 196 916		
<b>European Countries</b>				
Belgium	112 333	112 529	37 017	75 512
Germany	379 610	379 518	104 383	275 135
United Kingdom	76 090	77 733	43 572	34 161
Former Yugoslavia	77 115	77 995	52 648	25 347
Poland	58 853	69 115	50 802	18 313
Former Sowjet Union	49 530	52 563	39 431	13 132
<b>Non Western Countries</b>				
Indonesia	387 124	384 553	121 423	263 130
Turkey	372 714	378 400	195 520	182 880
Surinam	335 799	338 519	185 001	153 518
Morocco	335 127	341 640	166 877	174 763
Netherlands Antilles and Aruba	131 841	134 486	79 629	54 857
China	47 108	50 681	35 291	15 390
<b>Refugees</b>				
Iraq	45 459	49 234	38 693	10 541
Afghanistan	37 370	37 739	30 737	7 002
Iran	29 771	30 617	24 535	6 082
Somalia	19 549	21 753	15 224	6 529

*Source: Statline (Central Bureau for Statistics) on 16 April 2009*

As table 2 shows, the older immigrant groups consist already of a large second generation. Within these groups the male/female ratio is around 50%. The refugee populations consist for a larger degree of men (for instance Iraqi 58% men, Iranians 53% men). The relatively new immigrant groups, Poles and Soviet citizens consist of a larger percentage of women (both 60 % women). The distribution in age groups also depends on the time of arrival. Among Indonesians an aging population is more and more visible. The first arrived Turkish and Moroccan guest workers are now in their sixties and seventies. Among the new immigrant groups, like Iraqi, Iranians, Afghani's, we do not see many elderly. In general the non-western immigrant groups have larger families than the Dutch and the western immigrants.

The socioeconomic status of immigrants from the neighbouring countries is either similar to the level of the Dutch or better. The socioeconomic standard of non-western immigrant groups is generally poorer than the Dutch level. This is particular true for the former guest workers from Morocco and Turkey and for refugees. This general remark is not true for every particular ethnic group. Figure 1 shows the percentage of people working and/or on welfare per ethnic group. Welfare includes social security benefit, unemployment benefit, health benefit or disability allowance.

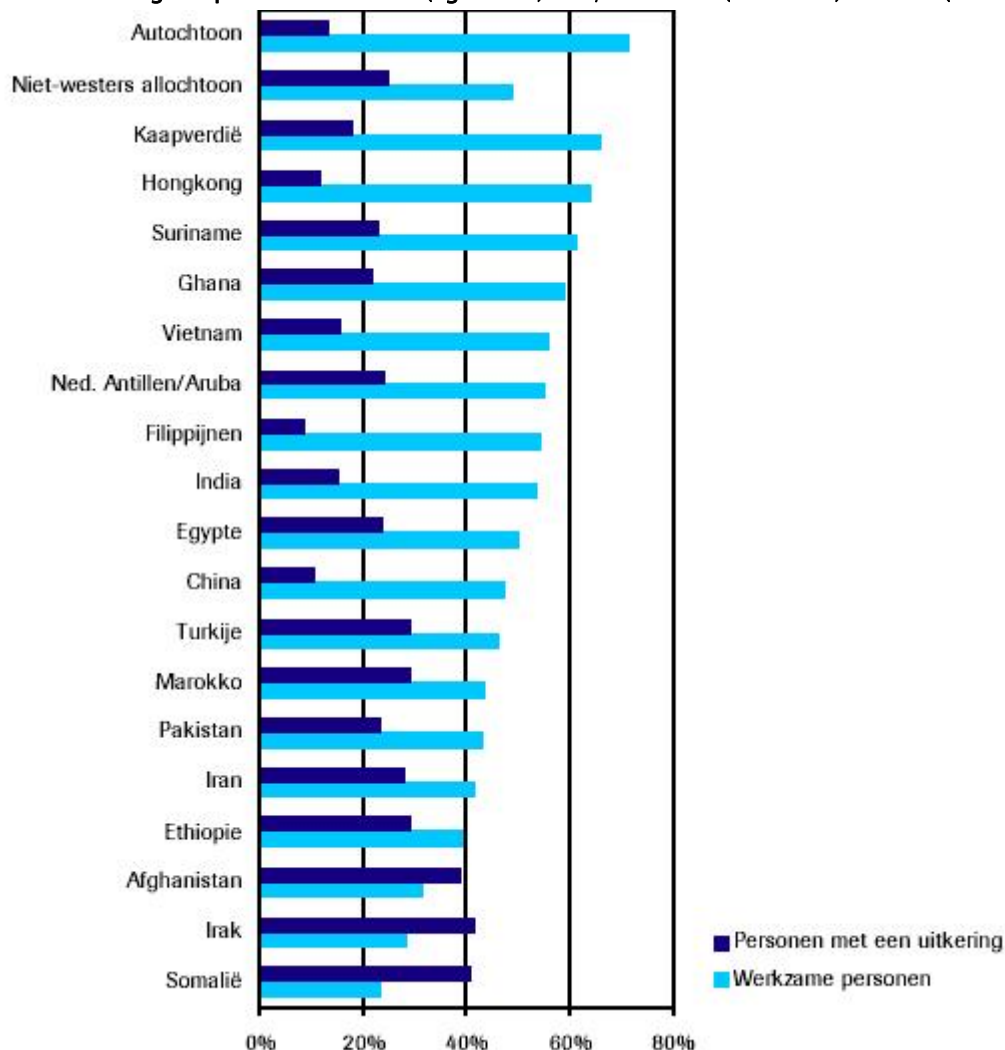
**Figure 1 Unemployment as a percentage of the labour force between 2001 and 2008 for Dutch and the largest ethnic categories.**



Source: CBS Persbericht 17 februari 2009 'Werkloosheid niet Westerse allochtonen in 2008 licht gedaald'.

As figure 1 shows the unemployment of Dutch is considerably lower than that of non-western immigrants and their children. As we showed in the CLIP city report in 2008 \*(Van Heelsum 2008), this does not improve for the second generation

Figure 2 Percentage of persons with work (light blue) and/or welfare (dark blue) in 2004 (15–65 year old)



Source: WODC, Integratiekaart 2006, p.26 (made from information by SSB)

As figure 2 shows, the percentage of working people is among all ethnic groups larger than the percentage of people on welfare, except for Afghani, Iraqi and Somali refugees.<sup>2</sup> The highest percentages of working people and the lowest percentages of people on welfare are found among Dutch, and people from Hong Kong, the Philippines and China. Though the three refugee groups from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia are the most problematic groups, not all refugee groups have a larger proportion of people on welfare than working: this is not true for Vietnamese (who arrived relatively earlier) and Iranians. The four largest non western immigrant groups, Suriname, Turks, Moroccans and Antilleans have relatively more often the net very low social security benefit (a basic sum to survive) while the Dutch have more often the net higher

<sup>2</sup> Asylum seekers are not allowed to work until they receive their refugee status, and this can take up to 10 years.

unemployment benefit (a percentage of their last income). The Turkish groups counts more people with a disability allowance than on social security benefit.

## 2.2 National policy context

### *Integration policies*

Rijkschroef, Duyvendak & Pels (1993) divide the national policies concerning immigrant in three phases. The first phase in the seventies was a categorical policy focussing at specific fields. There were special provisions for Moluccan ex-soldiers. The Surinamese, who were not expected in such large numbers, were ad hoc supported by welfare associations, paid by several municipalities. In the '*Nota Buitenlandse Werknemers*' (1970) guest workers were stimulated to stick to their identity and culture of origin, not to have difficulties on return. Due to the assumption of temporariness, no attempts were made to provide courses with Dutch language and information on the society. A long-term consequence is that the language proficiency of these low educated men is often limited up to this moment.

The second phase starts with a WRR publication of 1979, in which the first policy document was written, the '*Minderhedennota 1983*' (Minority policy 1983). The Dutch government realised that the stay of guest workers was not temporary anymore and the thinking about immigrants shifted to more worry and concern. This policy was directed at stopping a trend that immigrants were acquiring a permanent disadvantaged social position and measures were taken on the terrain of education and labour market. Integration was considered a two-sided process, and respect for the cultures of immigrants was important in this policy document. There was a positive attitude towards the rights of religious groups, for instance on establishing mosques and Hindu temples.

Rijkschroef and others (2003) call the third phase 'integration policy', starting in 1989 with the WRR document '*Allochtonenbeleid*' (Policy on Allochtonous). Documents like '*Contourennota Integratiebeleid Etnische Minderheden 1994*' (Integration Policy Ethnic Minorities) '*Investeren en Integreren 1994*' (Investing and Intergrating), '*Kansen krijgen, kansen pakken 1997-1998*' (Getting opportunities, seizing opportunities) show an urge to motivate and mobilise immigrants to learn the language, increase information and to adjust to Dutch culture. Professional courses became obligatory for newcomers. The problems of the children of immigrants in the educational system become clearer and are now targeted.

A fourth phase started around 2001 when a representative of the right wing parties became minister of integration affairs, first Nawijn (LPF) and then Verdonk (VVD). Both were known for anti-immigrant standpoints. Some proposals to limit the rights of foreigners to a level below the rights of Dutch were discussed in the second chamber, but implementation was not always possible because the proposals were in contradictions with the Dutch constitution. The debate in the media became harsher and more unfriendly to immigrants, and many of them felt very uncomfortable. This period lasted until the elections of 2006. The new government since 2007 has a friendlier approach to immigrants.

Important changes in the policies on integration/citizenship for the municipalities took place with the '*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*' (Law Citizenship Newcomers) effective from January 1st, 2007. Municipalities became more responsible than before to support the integration of newcomers, as was shown in the second module of CLIP (Van Heelsum 2008).

*Policies on Associations of Immigrants*

Both on national and on local level subsidies are given to associations of immigrants. In the Netherlands there are a large number of associations of immigrants: 1125 Turkish associations, 881 Surinamese associations, 720 Moroccan associations, 399 Moluccan associations, 244 Chinese associations and many of the other ethnic groups (Van Heelsum, 2004a and b). About one third of these organisations, particularly the religious ones, generate their own money with the help of gifts and contributions to pay their own building and activities. Some have very limited money and work in homes of members, like refugee associations. Another smaller section is run professionally and incorporated into the social, educational or broadcasting system. Those smaller ones (estimated about 45%) work with limited subsidies – usually from municipalities – and add to their income by asking for entrance fees or contributions (Van Heelsum, 2004b). In the case that municipalities provide subsidies or a building, they usually require that an organisation cooperates on the goals of the integration policy.

As part of its official Minorities Policy, the Dutch government promoted in the mid 1980s the establishment of national bodies representing the major immigrant groups in order to have a counterpart for consultations on policy issues concerning immigrants. The structure of those institutions was regulated in an Act of Parliament and the bodies are fully financed from public funds. The '*Landelijk Overleg Minderheden*' (LOM, National Council Minorities) exists of seven councils representing different nationalities. There is a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Caribbean, South European, Chinese and a Refugee council. The officials are employed by the ministry. The councils have associations as their members, and represent as much as possible all associations of that immigrant community. These bodies offer an opportunity for immigrant groups to voice their opinions and discuss their interests with Ministers and high civil servants. A critical few hold that they mainly serve to legitimize the policies of the government.

Another important body that was created and financed on national level is the '*Contactorgaan voor Moslims en Overheid*' (Contact Organ for Muslims and the government)<sup>3</sup>. This platform was also established as a discussion partner for the minister of Integration Affairs, and is as much as possible made up of all the Islamic denominations that exist in the Netherlands. The fact that it was assembled by the government is on the one hand an advantage, because otherwise the extremely different religious groupings wouldn't easily gather, but on the other hand a disadvantage, because traditionally powerful figures are chosen to represent the groups, and for instance young Moroccans do not feel represented as our interviewees remark.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the website (<http://www.cmoweb.nl>, in April 2009), the members are: 1) the Turkish Dyanet related 'Islamitische Stichting Nederland' (ISN) and 2) 'Stichting Turks Islamitische Culturele Federatie' (TICF) 3) Turkish Suleymancilar 'Stichting Islamitisch Centrum Nederland' (SICN) 4) the Turkish 'Milli Görüs Noord Nederland' (MGN) 5) the Moroccan 'Unie van Marokkaanse Moslim Organisaties Nederland' (UMMON), 6) a Shia organ 'Overkoepelende Sji'itische Vereniging' (OSV), 7) Nederlandse Islamitische Federatie (NIF) 9) The mainly Surinamese/Pakistani 'World Islamic Mission' (WIM) 10) the 'Limburgse Islamitische Raad' (LIR) and 11) Vereniging Imams van Nederland (VIN) ().

*Policies on the separation between church and state*

The relation between church and state is based on two articles in the constitution: article 1 on non-discrimination and equal treatment and article 6 on the freedom of religion. A more explicit law on equal treatment, the '*Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling*' (General Law on Equal Treatment) applies in the Netherlands since 1994, and is meant to stop any form of discrimination. Maussen describes in the interview four principles that the Netherlands traditionally applies in the spirit of these laws<sup>4</sup>:

- Equal treatment, not only of citizens but also of religious and non religious organisations. This means that a faith based associations such as '*Leger des Heils*' (the Salvation Army) may not be rated lower when it sets up social work than a non-religious association. In line with this principle, already in 1977, a decree on meat inspection made Islamic slaughter possible, and the Islamic burial was made possible by a change in the law on burials in 1991.
- Religious freedom is not only a negative freedom (in the sense that it shouldn't be obstructed) but also positive: the government can sometimes actively help to provide for religious needs; this is called the social component of basic rights. Of course public space rules apply like safety of the building, and nuisance. Yet, since the constitutional revision of 1983 there is no direct financing of religion any longer.
- The public sphere is pluriform and there is no single state institution, so it's considered better to have several types of schools than one state-school. The Dutch school system makes it possible that public, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Hindu schools apply for the same subsidies, as long as they follow the national curriculum and maintain the required quality standards. Also within the national broadcasting system a Muslim and a Hindu broadcasting organisation get subsidies, just like the many other broadcasting organisations.
- There is an emphasis on freedom of choice. This means that there has to be a choice, both on the religious terrain – protection against religious coercion – and on the social terrain. So if there is social work for youngsters, there have to be at least two institutions to give people a choice.

The history of church-state relations in the Netherlands has been strongly marked by pillarisation, though this is not the active system any longer<sup>5</sup>. As Maussen remarks, pillarisation principles are actually very modern again, since pluriformity is already important in this context and the system can easily apply also to ethnic and religious newcomers. Relations between the state and religious institutions have been changed

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<sup>4</sup> For more information Maussen (2006: 17) '*Ruimte voor Islam*'.

<sup>5</sup> Pillarisation (*verzuiling* in Dutch) is a term used to describe the denominational segregation of Dutch and Belgian society. These societies were (and in some areas, still are) "vertically" divided in several smaller segments or "pillars" (*zuilen*, singular: *zuil*) according to different religions or ideologies. These pillars all had their own social institutions: their own newspapers, broadcasting organisations, political parties, trade unions, banks, schools, hospitals, universities, scouting organisations and sports clubs. Some companies even only hired personnel of a specific religion or ideology. This led to a situation where many people had no personal contact with people from another pillar.

since 1983, though mosques were helped incidentally because of the principle that Muslims have equal rights for places of worship and had arrears. There was not really a systematic policy on the housing of minority religions, but occasionally there was support by municipalities (Maussen 2009: 53–54). Since 2000 politicians have instigated a public debate that the system has to change, and that the state should have as little to do with religious organisations as possible. On the other hand the national government is supporting a competence training for Imams since 2002 which includes a course and a guidebook on citizenship for 'spiritual caretakers' (see Maussen 2006: 241). The events of 9/11/2001 and the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004 triggered a debate, especially in Amsterdam on the extent in which the state has to a) support a liberal Islam, b) exert some form of supervision, particularly on schools and c) to have anti-radicalisation policies. In March 2009 '*Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten*' (VNG, Association of Dutch Municipalities) published a manual for municipalities about religion in the public sphere, which firstly treats the legal limits of religion and public sphere and secondly gives advice on integration policy and religious organisations, the relations with religious associations and some solutions from practice (VNG, 2009).

### **3 Background information on the city**

#### **3.1 Brief description of the city**

Amsterdam is the largest city of the Netherlands with 758,198 inhabitants on Jan 1st, 2009. Although Den Haag is the seat of the government, Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands. The city developed as a centre for trade and shipping on the banks of the river Amstel in the Middle Ages. In 1275, a dam was built in the Amstel to collect tax from passing ships laden with haring from the North Seas and beer from Germany. Around 1306 the city acquired town rights, which included the right to have walls, a market and a court. Soon it became the most powerful town in the region, both politically and economically: trade relations expanded internationally. The trade of large shipping companies with the East Indies added to its economic position. In the 17th Century, the Golden Age, Amsterdam was known for its wealth, power, culture and tolerance. Foreign traders, writers, painters and labourers were welcome in this atmosphere, but also political and religious refugees, who were protected and had more rights to uphold their views than anywhere else. Churches were built by for instance Catholic Walloons, Scottish Anglicans, Portuguese Jews, but also many 'conventicals' (churches in hiding) appeared of the persecuted religious groupings in other countries. Amsterdam was known for its intellectual and religious tolerance. Already in this period a religiously pluriform society developed (Lucassen & Penninx, 2002).

In the 19th century the economic growth and immigration diminished and in the first half of the 20th century the lowest point was reached. But after the Second World War Amsterdam's economy recovered, the immigration started again and town extension followed. In the last half of the 20th century Amsterdam's inhabited area nearly doubled in size<sup>6</sup>. International migration contributed considerably to its growth in this period. The town can be divided basically into three types of districts. Firstly the cities centre with its canals and the circular street pattern, and southward the relatively well to do Southern districts. Secondly the less wealthy but upcoming old areas around the centre (*West, Oost, Westerpark*), and thirdly the newer areas further out (*Slotervaart, Noord*).

#### **3.2 The city's migrant population and its characteristics/main groups**

Immigration to Amsterdam is as old as the city itself. Where the percentage nationally was about 10%, the percentage of foreign born in Amsterdam was three times higher: it has been consistently been around 30% in the 17th and 18th Century (Lucassen & Penninx, 2002). In the beginning of the 20th Century immigration was on the lowest point, but it increased again from 1960 onwards. Firstly immigrations from Surinam around its independence in 1975 ended up for a large part in Amsterdam. Of the two main ethnic groups in Surinam, the Creoles (Afro Surinamese) went in large numbers to Amsterdam, while Hindustani's (Indian Surinamese) went to Den Haag.

The wave of guest worker immigration also affected Amsterdam substantially. The first Mediterranean, Turkish and Moroccan workers lived with many in one room in pensions. When their settlement became more permanent, they moved to cheap small apartments in the old parts of town just outside the city centre.

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<sup>6</sup> A dynamic map of the inhabited area from the year 1000 to 2000 can be found on the website of the Amsterdam historical museum: <http://www.ahm.nl/groeikaart.php>

The guest workers were poor and interested in saving and sending money home. The increase of the number of Turks and Moroccans in the old areas stimulated some of the Dutch to move out.

After this first phase of large scale immigration three patterns were visible: family reunification of guest workers, ongoing immigration as a result of family formation and student immigration of Surinamese and Antilleans, and the arrival of a large variety of new immigrant groups like refugees and economic immigrants like Ghanaians, Egyptians and Chinese. The family reunification led to some movement of the Turks and Moroccans to bigger houses in the New West area that became a concentration area for Turks and Moroccans.

The current ethnic composition of the population of Amsterdam is shown in table 3. The percentage of Dutch is on January 1st, 2008 51%. The other half of the population is a mixture of Western (14%) and non-western groups (35%). Of the non-western groups 58% is first generation and 42% second generation. Surinamese are still the largest ethnic group (68, 813), but Moroccans have nearly reached the same number (67,153) and their immigration is going on, so they are expected to become the largest group in the near future. It should be noticed that among the persons counted as Surinamese, a much larger percentage of the second generation has actually one Surinamese and one Dutch parent (40%), while among Moroccans and Turks this percentage only 7%. So the Turkish and Moroccan groups are more homogeneous; and probably this will last for the first decades because of religion (they prefer a Muslim partner).

**Table 3 Composition of the population Amsterdam in the largest ethnic groups, and policy relevant categories per 1-1-2007 and 1-1-2008**

	2007: absolute	2008: absolute	2008: percentage	2008 1st generation	2008 2nd generation
Dutch	382 104	381 374	51%		
Surinamese	68 878	68 813	9%	40 218	28 595
Moroccans	66 256	67 153	9%	34 390	32 763
Turks	38 565	38 913	5%	21 523	17 390
Antilleans	11 290	11 440	2%	7 017	4 423
Other non- Western	71 269	72 175	10%	48 470	23 705
Western	104 742	107 422	14%	57 963	49 459
Total	743 104	747 290	100%	209 581	156 335

Source: O+S website Amsterdam on 16 April 2009

As a news item on the statistic website of Amsterdam shows, the highest increase in 2008 took place from Bulgaria (41%) and Romania (32%). Striking is also that the new economies China, India and Russia are in the top ten of countries that provide the highest increase in Amsterdam. On the other hand immigrants from Western Europe are increasing.

It is possible to have dual citizenship in the Netherlands. Of the Surinamese 1,988 (2%) have a foreign passport and 3,857 (6%) have two passports; of the Moroccans 19,447 (30%) have a foreign passport and

44,474 (68%) dual nationalities, of the Turks 10,569 (28%) have a foreign passport and 26,570 (69%) have dual nationalities (O+S, 2006).<sup>7</sup>

Amsterdam has a surplus of 10,000 women, which is also true for some immigrant groups.

The age composition of the immigrant groups is different from the total Amsterdam population. Relatively, there are not yet many elderly among the immigrants. On January 1st 2006, 6% of the Surinamese was older than 65, while among Dutch 17%. The percentage of Surinamese elderly is higher than among other non-western groups, both for Turks and Moroccans only 3% is above 65.

Relatively there are more children and youngsters between the ages of 0–18 years among the immigrant groups. Among Dutch 15% is between 0–18, among Surinamese 29%, among Turks 37%, and among Moroccans 41%.

A specific characteristic of Amsterdam is that more than half of its households (55%) exist of one person and this portion is still increasing. Couples without children are the second largest group (20%) and one in seven households (15%) is a couple with children; one out of ten households (10%) is a single parent family. Among ethnic minority groups the pattern is different. Suriname, Antillean, Ghanaian, Dominican and Columbian groups have a considerably higher percentage of single parent families. For Surinamese the percentage is 60% and for the other groups between 70 and 77%. It is interesting to see that the percentage of single mothers among Surinamese is 70% in the flats of City District *Zuid-Oost*, but only 45% in the newly built middle class housing.

The socio economic position of the large immigrant groups is not as good as among the Dutch. Table 4 shows the unemployment (as a percentage of the labour force) is only 5% among the Dutch in Amsterdam, while all immigrant groups, including Western immigrants have at least 10% unemployment. Of the non-Western groups Moroccans are in the worst position with 28% unemployed, while 20% of Surinamese/Antilleans and 15% of Turks are unemployed. Gross participation rates are also worst for Moroccans, after them Turks, then Surinamese/Antilleans and the Dutch on top of the list. Though the first Turkish and Moroccan immigrants have both arrived as uneducated guest workers, their position on the labour market has developed in as fundamentally different direction: Turks have an unemployment rate of 15% versus Moroccans 28%.

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<sup>7</sup> Note that the Moroccan state does not allow citizens to give up their Moroccan nationality.

**Table 4 Amsterdam's working, unemployed and non-labour force by ethnic groups (X1000) per Jan 1st, 2006.**

Ethnic group	Labour force (n)	Working (n)	Unemployed (n)	Unemployed as a pct of labour force (%)	Non-labour force (n)	Total population 15-64 years (n)	Gross participation rate %
Surinamese and Antilleans	40,6	32,6	8,0	20%	20,1	60,7	67%
Turks	14,5	12,2	2,2	15%	11,8	26,3	55%
Moroccans	20,0	14,4	5,6	28%	22,2	42,2	47%
Other non-western groups	34,6	27,9	6,7	19%	16,3	50,9	68%
Western groups	64,1	57,9	6,2	10%	18,5	82,6	78%
Dutch	212,9	201,5	11,5	5%	63,6	276,5	77%
Total	386,7	346,5	40,2	10%	152,6	539,2	72%

Source: *O+S Amsterdam*

While the mean income and purchasing power in Amsterdam are above the national average, there are large differences between the poorer and richer city districts. In the City Centre the income is well over the national mean, but in city districts like *Geuzenveld-Slotermeer*, *Bos en Lommer* and *Zuidoost* nearly 25% of the households live below the social minimum. In these districts Surinamese, Turks and Moroccans are concentrated. The incomes of non-western immigrants are still far behind the incomes of western immigrants and Dutch. This gap has become larger between 1998 and 2003. 46% of Moroccan youngsters grow up in a household that lives on or below the legal minimum, while this is the case for 32% of the other foreigners and 13% of the Dutch youngsters.

### 3.3 The city' Muslim population and its characteristics

There are no exact figures on the number of Muslims in Amsterdam, but *O+S* (Statistics Amsterdam) has two manners of estimating the number. The first one is by using the large survey called '*Burger Monitor*' that is yearly held in Amsterdam, shown in table 5. The number of Muslims adds up to 66,959, that is 11.4% of the population. Note that this survey concerns people above 18, while among immigrants the percentage of children is higher. The actual percentage is higher if you include children.

**Table 5 The Size of de Muslim population in Amsterdam according to the Amsterdam Burger Monitor 2006** (a survey among citizen of 18 years and older). The question was: to which religion or ideological movement do you feel related? (in Dutch: 'Met welke religie of levensbeschouwelijke stroming voelt u zich verwant?')

	Total number (18 years and older)	Number of Muslims	% Muslims
Surinamese	52 258	4 390	8.4
Antilleans	8 643	0	0.0
Turks	25 769	17 343	67.3
Moroccans	41 151	32 057	77.9
Other non western autochthonous	50 275	9 552	19.0
Western autochthonous	91 643	1 283	1.4
Dutch	333 546	2 335	0.7
Total	603 285	66 959	11.4

Source: O+S/Amsterdamse Burger Monitor 2006 (The 2008 survey did not contain this question)

The second method O+S (Statistics Amsterdam) uses is to look at the two largest ethnic groups with a considerable percentage of Muslims: Turks and Moroccans. This method is used, when we want to look at labour market, educational and other characteristics. The size of the Amsterdam Turkisch population is 38,913 and the Moroccan population is 67,153 (per 1-1-2008). Both have a relatively young population: 53% Turkish and 58% Moroccan are younger than 25, and 87% of both groups is younger than 50. Especially Moroccan women and to a lesser degree Turkish women get relatively many children, though these high fertility rates are decreasing rapidly.

As we have already seen in paragraph 3.2 the position on labour market and in the educational system of particularly Moroccans is more problematic than of the other ethnic groups, with an unemployment rate of 28% of the labour force. A considerable group of Moroccan youngsters think that they get discriminated when they are looking for jobs and apprenticeships, due to the general image of Islam and Moroccans. For girls wearing the headscarf is an issue when they apply for jobs. In some sectors the acceptance of headscarf wearing women has improved fast in the last ten years, but not yet everywhere. School drop out remains however a big problem among the second generation (Crul & Heering 2008).

## 4 Local intercultural policies in general

In this chapter we will first turn in 4.1 to Amsterdam's policies towards immigrant integration, which are actually formulated in such a way that they are intercultural policies, and then in 4.2 to its policies towards immigrant and religious associations. In 4.3 we will go on with intercultural and inter religious dialogue by associations, both formal and informal. In 4.4 'relationships between ethnic groups', we will focus on attitudes in the population. In 4.5 we will look at the communication and media.

### 4.1 Responsibility in the city and general approach to ethnic issues

#### *Responsibility*

Amsterdam is governed by 'red-green' coalition (Dutch Labour party PvdA and Green Left from 2006–2010). The central city government determines the general strategy and controls central services. For instance health (general health services, health care for drug addicts, centres for homeless), higher education (school buildings, information about the quality of educational institutes), general social services (like immigrant reception, the work and income service), infrastructure and town planning, housing, public transport, environment, the harbour and many others. The city is now divided in 14 city districts, with their own elected councils, a chairperson and a governing council<sup>8</sup>. After the first of May 2010 they will merge into seven bigger city districts. City districts usually have some five or six departments: 1) general affairs/governance (public services, logistics, manpower, post, and communication services), 2) finances, 3) public space and environment, 4) wellbeing (social work, nurseries, elderly, youth, immigrants) education (primary school) and sport and 5) labour and housing (market, shops, building permits, ground).

A number of departments play a role on the Central level when it comes to integration policies, policies to increase the social cohesion and anti-radicalisation and policies towards associations of immigrants. The first important section is called '*Educatie en Inburgering*' (E&I, Education and Citizenship) and is responsible for the citizenship and language courses for new immigrants and for immigrants that never had the opportunity to take such courses. We have described this service in the second CLIP module (Van Heelsum, 2008) and we will not treat it in this report. The service is part of '*Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling*' (DMO Department of Social Development).

A second unit in the same department is the '*Unit Diversiteit*' (Diversity Unit). The responsibilities of this unit are: implementing the policies towards associations of immigrants and determining their subsidies through the '*Subsidies Integration and Participation*' (SIP, subsidy arrangement integration and participation), implementing the anti discrimination policy, and the gay policy.

A third relevant unit is the '*Platform Amsterdam Samen*' (PAS, Platform Amsterdam Together), which runs the temporary program '*Wij Amsterdammers 2005–2010*' ('We Amsterdammers'). This temporary unit is not part of the departmental structure of the administration, and therefore independent and more flexible in its approach. The platform works together with the Diversity Unit in their work on the so called '*Meldpunt Goede Ideeën*' (MGI, Desk for Good Ideas) that we will describe further on. The Platform also cooperates with '*Openbare Orde en Veiligheid*' (OVV, public order and safety), in which the '*Informatiehuishouding Radicalisering*' (IHH, Information Household Radicalisation) is established.

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<sup>8</sup> The 15th one (Westpoort) is the harbour, but this doesn't have its own council or officials.

The implementation of the policies that the '*Platform Amsterdam Samen*' develops, takes place in cooperation between the central level and the city districts. Since we cannot treat 14 city districts, in this report we will look at two examples in the city districts, namely in city district *Westerpark* on intercultural policies in chapter 4 and in City District Slotervaart at policies directed at Muslims in chapter 5 and 6.

#### *General approach towards ethnic issues*

As we remarked in the introduction a central theme in the policies of Amsterdam is '*Verbinding*' ('Connecting'). In the policy document '*Erbij Horen en Meedoen 2003*' (Being part of and Participating, 2003), integration had been defined as mutual acceptance by both host society and immigrants and active participation by the immigrants. We will now only treat the most recent policy developments very shortly, which show in the approach of *PAS* and its program '*Wij Amsterdammers*'.

Important for *PAS* are social cohesion, stopping exclusion, dealing with polarisation and preventing radicalisation. The director of the *PAS* explains: "On itself social cohesion is nothing, the main issue is where to find the connections, one can for instance look for these connections on a square in a neighbourhood or at the schools. Finding these connections works indirectly against polarisation. It is important to find the right connections".

Maussen (2006: 70) describes how the policy of *PAS* is typically based on a dialogue model: stimulating mutual understanding, stimulating debates about Islam and other relevant issues, promoting discussion also among Muslims on the diversity within Islam, keeping contact with more orthodox mosques like the *E/Tawheed mosque*, and in the meanwhile paying considerable attention to discrimination and promoting a 'we-feeling' among Amsterdammers.

The theoretical basis of the work of the *PAS* covers both social cohesion and conflicts between groups. On the one hand concepts as social capital are used, and the common understanding is that lack of binding and bridging social capital in immigrant communities may lead to isolation and in extreme cases radicalisation. The administration asked for help and contacted Erwin Staub, a Hungarian-American professor analysed which characteristics in a society bring about violence but also how conflicts can be solved. On request of the municipality of Amsterdam, he applied his reasoning to the situation after the murder of Theo van Gogh with Muslims in Amsterdam. The municipality is of course interested in preventing conflict and stimulating a situation in which destructive ideologies have no chance and in which ingroup-outgroup thinking will diminish. Staub's terminology and theoretical concepts are used and a few of his points can be summarized as follows (from Staub 2005):

- Humanising the 'other': media project can present the lives of Muslims in an understandable way, knowledge of the groups about each others needs helps to understand each other and not to fear each other. Stimulating 'deep' contact, starting at schools and among youngsters, but also by arranging commons activities on for instance sport, business or neighbourhood.
- Promoting a shared vision of a hopeful future, by dialogue between Dutch and Muslim leaders, in which the involvement of Muslim religious leaders is crucial. Raising an inclusive and caring environment for children.
- Active involvement of members of minority groups in political debates, expressing the needs of the immigrant communities; empowerment through engagement in constructive activities, promoting

positive leadership, helping influential individuals to take responsibility and seeing how they can exert influence by their words and actions, to move their group.

Using these ideas, in 2006 a second version of the action plan emerged, in which the emphasis shifted to the underlying reasons for radicalisation and polarisation. The main themes of the new plan are: accumulation of social capital; establishing limits, demands; and offering perspective and opportunities. The actual work of *PAS* for the period 2005–2010 is currently divided into three important lines: 1) stimulating social cohesion, 2) stimulating resilience of society to counter processes of radicalisation (2.1 diminishing the breeding ground for radicalisation and 2.2 coping with polarisation), and 3) countering radicalisation.

Ad 1. Uniting people with the city and each other. Targets are social cohesion, binding and bridging social capital, commitment to and pride of the city and (visible) opportunities in the city. The approach comprises the strengthening and linking of networks, investing in relations with key figures, deploying existing social capital by means of – among others – connecting elite groups, realising meetings between (groups of) people through the use of key facilities, such as sport, culture, economy and education. Examples of projects: *Platform gatherings*, *Social Cohesion Think Tanks*, a TV series called *Canon of the History of Amsterdam*, a tv series called the *West Side Soap*, *City Games* (sport), *Meldpunt Goede Ideeën*, (MGI, the Good Ideas Centre) and *Project Connect* (more information will follow on some of these projects).

Ad 2. Developing Amsterdam's 'resilience' to radicalisation, that is to improve the flexibility and coping capacity in case of crisis. Targets are the promotion of mutual respect, reducing (feelings of) discrimination, a tolerant approach to religious persuasion and less disruptive, provocative behaviour. The approach comprises the participation in and influencing of public debate, broadly and narrowly defined actions against (feelings of) discrimination and bias, and involving teachers and parents in solving problems. Examples of projects: Increasing awareness, the *Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam* (Complaints Bureau for Discrimination Amsterdam), campaign against discriminating admission policy applied by catering establishments and the local alert network in the case of tensions.

Ad 3. Opposing radicalisation. A target is to empower the Muslim community to counter radicalisation, by increasing its religious 'resilience', and by simulating active involvement of professionals and mosques in opposing radicalisation. The approach comprises creating support for and of Muslim organisations and mosques, supporting organisations that make the diversity in Islam visible and promoting dialogue, involving and advising professionals, particularly those working with young people, and propagating a strict anti-radicalisation policy and tolerance of religious orthodoxy. Examples of activities are: the *'Informatiehuishouding Radicalisering'* (IHH, Information Management on Radicalisation) which develops expertise relating to dealing with radicalisation, invests in networks of experts and professionals and supports anti radicalisation policy and experts in several city district (see chapter 6).

It is relevant to notice that city districts adopt their own policies to stimulate social trust and a resilient society. The program incorporates a broad, integrated approach, since the problems addressed in *'We, Amsterdammers'* affect the entire city and its residents can therefore provide a valuable contribution to finding solutions. The city districts play an important role in this process. Since 2006, the city districts have their own *'We, Amsterdammers'* budget, which they use for (supporting) city district projects that combat polarisation and promote social cohesion. A few examples of the city district: platforms to discuss islamophobia and homophobia, protocols for incidents, ramadan activities, etceteras.

Since *PAS* was established as a direct consequence of the escalating situation after the murder of Theo van Gogh, it is also clearly focussing on Islam as one of the groups that are part of possible conflict. Therefore these recent policies cannot be effective without cooperation with Muslim religious institutions, particularly mosques and the Amsterdam councils of mosques, and this raises the question to what extent the municipality should fund activities of these religious institutions. Mayor Cohen takes a clear standpoint on this issue, which is according to Maussen (2006: 76) more in line with a pluralistic model than with the dialogue model of the Council. To find the necessary connections between Muslims and other parts of society, mosques are indispensable, but a number of times project proposals with mosques caused serious discussion in the City Council because the council thought that the state was getting too much involved in religious issues (Maussen 2006:78). On the terrain of anti-radicalisation it seems even impossible to work without religious leaders and organisations, but even then it has been difficult in the last years to get proposals accepted.

For this reason the mayor asked for a policy paper on dealing with issues of church and state, which was finished in 2008 (*Notitie Kerk en Staat 2008*) and accepted by the city council in 2009 as a basic manner to deal with initiatives of religious groups. The in 2.2 mentioned principle of equal treatment is very important in the policy document. The principle of inclusive neutrality – the government is neutral towards religions and treats them equally, and takes care that no religious group gets advantage over another – is considered the basis of Amsterdam's view on society, though occasionally the principle of 'compensation neutrality' – if historical or structural inequalities between religions exist government can give extra support with the argument of disadvantages or social cohesion – can apply.

#### *Issues, demands and interests of immigrants*

Currently the most important issues that concern immigrant groups themselves are firstly connected with their labour market position/income and education; and secondly with religion and culture.

– Employment: as we showed in section 3.2 more immigrants are out of work or in low paid jobs than Dutch. Up to 2008 there was a slight improvement in the employment rates among members of minority groups in Amsterdam. It is probable that the economic recession will especially strike this vulnerable group. A lot of immigrants from the guest worker period who arrived during the sixties and seventies are disabled due to the heavy work they have done in the past and, since they were never offered language courses; they have limited knowledge of Dutch. This increases the chance of unemployment and makes it difficult to participate in a broader sense. Secondly there is a trend among the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrants to choose work above additional education. Another problem of the youngsters is that internships are hard to get. Consequently there is more poverty among Turks and Moroccans. Nearly 50% of the Amsterdam youth with a Moroccan background grow up in so called families that 'live-below-the-minimum'. Although the figures are not that high in the case of other migrant-groups, there is a clear relation between income and ethnicity.

– Education: children from minority groups cope with lower participation and have more often Dutch language problems. After primary schools these children are more often advised to follow lower levels of secondary education (VMBO) than other children. Some 25% of them start later with secondary school and have higher drop-out rates. Measures like pre-school education and language training try to prevent these

problems. A limited number of youngsters is getting through to higher education, but fortunately a section of Turks and Moroccans are getting through to colleges and universities.

–The second types of issues that immigrants consider important are the cultural and religious issues. Immigrants, particularly Muslims feel stigmatized and experience negative attitudes in Dutch society towards their religion (see more in chapter 5). In the past few years Mayor Cohen has repeatedly argued to make use of the religious infrastructure of the city to meet the city's policy goals on integration & participation, polarization and countering radicalization among youngsters. This has both caused an expansion of co-operation between religious organisation and the city and a fierce debate on the subject 'separation between church and state' As we already explained, this (ongoing) debate has delayed the implementation of projects in the city with regard to the policy objectives mentioned above, and this frustrates the associations of immigrants.

#### **4.2 Immigrant associations and immigrant religious associations and the policies towards them**

In this section we will first look at number and type of associations of immigrants, then at religious associations, then at funding and then at the issues that associations consider relevant.

##### *Associations of immigrants*

As Van Heelsum (2005) shows, the number of Surinamese associations was 217 in Amsterdam, there were 189 Turkish associations and 170 Moroccan associations in 2000. At that time the organisational density (organisations per 100 citizens of a community) was considerably higher for Turks (5.6%) compared to Moroccans (3.1) and Surinamese (3.0). Besides their higher organisational density, the Turks also had a better network between their organisations, which was largely due to the then still effective advisory board of Turkish associations.

In the meanwhile the number of associations seems to have grown considerably. The most recent data on the number of associations of immigrants per city district are gathered by Vermeulen (2009). He estimates that there are now 4800 associations of immigrants of which: 837 Surinamese associations, 446 Moroccan and 457 Turkish associations<sup>9</sup>. While the above data of Van Heelsum include the not officially registered organisations and organisations of the second generation, Vermeulen's data are gathered through the chamber of commerce, where associations and foundations can register if they want to legalize, for instance to be able to open a bank account or to hire a building. The numbers given in table 6 are low estimates, since 1) it only concern the officially registered section of the associations, while unregistered clubs also exist 2) it only concerns first generation immigrants and 3) the estimates is based on checking 30% of the registered association.

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<sup>9</sup> This are the associations registered in the Chamber of Commerce of which 50% or more of board members is born outside the Netherland; this is 31,8% of the total number of registered associations (Vermeulen 2009).

**Table 6 Estimated number of associations per city district per ethnic group (2007), pink are neighbourhoods where a concentration lives (more than 15%)**

City district	Total number of associations	Associations per 1000 inhabitants	Surinamese	Moroccan	Turkish	Ghanaian	Antillean
ZuiderAmstel	1336	28,6	32	13	9	13	9
Amsterdam-Centrum	4156	51,4	83	25	37	12	4
Oud-Zuid	2253	26,9	72	38	43	9	14
Westerpark	578	17	12	33	15	0	9
Oud-West	710	22,5	20	26	33	0	6
Oost/Watergraafsmeer	1135	19,3	89	36	49	14	3
Zeeburg	664	14,2	44	42	24	6	9
Amsterdam-Noord	847	9,7	45	52	39	42	3
Slotervaart	591	13,5	50	74	27	0	4
Osdorp	435	9,6	31	28	59	9	0
De Baarsjes	397	11,7	25	22	30	3	6
Bos en Lommer	272	9	32	29	29	0	0
Geuzenveld-Slotermeer	278	6,7	21	26	63	5	0
Zuidoost	1182	15,2	281	2	0	221	79
Total	15095	20,3	837	446	457	334	146

Source: converted by Floris Vermeulen for the purpose of this table (Vermeulen 2009)

Table 6 shows firstly that the associations of Dutch are always a majority – in any of the city districts. Secondly we notice that the associations of immigrants are actually not as concentrated in the neighbourhoods where immigrants live as one would logically expect. Even though a concentration of Moroccans lives in the pink coloured neighbourhoods, there are also 38 Moroccan associations in the richer *Oud Zuid*. It strikes us that there are more than 13 Moroccan associations and more than 9 Turkish associations in all city districts except *Zuid Oost*. Also in the case of the Surinamese community we find more than 12 associations in all city districts, but in this case there is more concentration in the area where Surinamese live concentrated, *Zuid Oost*. The associations of the much smaller Ghanaian community are less spread into all the city districts: a concentration in *Zuid Oost*, and in five districts there are more than 6 associations.

An indication of the type of associations is only available on national level. Van Heelsum (2004: 64) shows that within the Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccan community religious associations are the largest category, while among Chinese educational organisations are more prominent, and among the Moluccans and Somali's developmental aid is more prominent.

#### *Religious associations*

To give an impression of the enormous religious pluriformity of Amsterdam, two maps made by Marck & Nederveen-Meerkerk (2002) are shown below. Their most interesting study has resulted in an interactive CD with the map of religious associations in Amsterdam in 1650, 1750, 1900, 1950 and 2002. The first example in figure 3 shows the city centre and western part of Amsterdam in 2002.

Figure 3. Map of religious associations in 2002 (city centre and western part)



Red= Islam, purple=Catholic, pink=Budhist, Light green = Protestant, bright Green= 'New Christian, dark blue=Jewish, light blue=Sikh, dark yellow=Orthodox.

Source: Marck & van der Nederveen-Meerkerk (2002) On the interactive CD one can retrieve more information by clicking on the dots.

As was remarked in chapter 3 on Amsterdam, the city has from 1650 onwards hosted many religious refugees that were free to establish their churches in Amsterdam and not in the surrounding countries (Lucassen & Penninx 2002; Lucassen 2004). This led to the concentration of Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox and Protestant churches that we still see in the city centre. In the last 50 years new religious movements have arrived again to Amsterdam that established religious premises, in the city centre for instance the Chinese, who established a Buddhist Temple near to the Central Station. Since the current major immigrants groups are not concentrated in the Centre, we find more mosques in the Western part of town where Turks and Moroccans live, and more New Christians churches in *Zuid Oost*, where more Surinamese and Ghanaians live. Figure 4 shows the religious map of *Zuid Oost*. In the middle (red) the *Taiba mosque*, around it an enormous amount of New Christian churches.

Figure 4. Map of religious associations by Marck & van der Nederveen–Meerkerk: City District *Zuid Oost* .



Green= 'New Christian', light green = Protestant, red= Islam, purple=Budhist.

Source: Marck & van der Nederveen–Meerkerk (2002)

Vermeulen (2009) reports that the number of religious associations in Amsterdam went up between 2002 and 2007, the highest concentration is still in the *City Centre* and in *Zuid Oost* district.

#### *Funding for ethnic and religious organisations*

The national government, the central administration of Amsterdam and the city districts provide subsidies that ethnic and to some extent also religious organisations can apply to. National subsidies are given to organisations that function on national level (for instance the National Institute for the History of Slavery – Ninsee), city subsidies are in principle for those who provide services mainly on city level (for instance Kurdish Centre Amsterdam, Associations of Aghans in Amsterdam), and city district subsidies for organisations that function on neighbourhood level. It is possible for associations to ask for funding on more than one level for different projects. Most of the regulations are directly linked to the municipal policy goals of stimulating participation, social cohesion and integration.

Three important examples are: the '*Subsidieverordening Integratie, participatie en Sociale Cohesie*' (SIP, subsidy on integration and participation), the *Meldpunt Goede Ideeën* (MGI, Good Idea Centre) that is related to the '*We, Amsterdammer*' program and a regulation of *Dienst Zorg en Samenleven* (DZS, the welfare service). Besides these big funds, many youth organizations with different cultural backgrounds are supported. We interviewed the representative responsible for SIP and MGI, and will explain a bit more about these two regulations.

Amsterdam has since the arrival of Surinamese in the 1960s supported ethnic organisations. In the past associations were structurally supported to rent a building or to keep an office, but in the last years the focus changed to supporting temporary projects that have to do with integration and participation. The SIP

funds have a maximum of €15,000 per activity, which is only given to volunteer associations that organise a typically Dutch activity like an information meeting at least two times a year for more than one ethnic group. For instance an association that mainly works for Ethiopians (*DIR*) cooperates at least two times a year with the Somali association (*SOMVAO*) to organise a common information meeting on female circumcision. Activities like an office hour on legal and social problems, or a starters course in Dutch language, or computer lessons are also considered in line with the policy, since this can be considered as supporting integration. SIP is part of the regular budget, and therefore involves a rather long bureaucratic application procedure, there is a manual to judge the proposals with clear guidelines. The procedure is meticulous and transparent and therefore liked by the accountants. In 2009 79 organisations of immigrants are funded to organise 478 activities. The most common activities are in the field of health (77 activities) and womens emancipation (59 activities). Other activities include: 16 times language lessons, 16 times home work support, 8 times gay issues.

Compared to *SIP*, the *MGI* (Good Idea Centre) is a much faster arrangement without complicated bureaucracy, no control of accounts or discussions in the city council. The total fund is half a million, and the maximum funding per projects is €50,000, when the fund is finished halfway the year one has to wait for next year. The procedure is less frustrating and it is possible to relate immediately to relevant social issues. A proposal can get funding within three weeks, because a commission decides on it, and after that the money is transferred directly. The mayor is directly responsible. Though *MGI* also uses the policy goals that we described in 4.1 on connecting people, it nearly never happens that an association of immigrants applies for the *MGI* funds. The responsible official gives two reasons: firstly people don't know the fund, and secondly for some of them it is difficult to write a convincing proposal, established institutions are often better at that. But the examples of 'ideas' that became a succes often have directly to do with immigrants, lik for instance '*Pimp je schotel*' (pimp up your dish receiver), an initiative by immigrant youngsters to improve the look of the monotonous street with dish receivers in immigrant neighbourhoods. Sometimes new organisations with high potential arise. When an initiative or organisation is assessed to be a potential success, it will be facilitated both by financing the initiative and giving advisory support. The *MGI* is then the better option, because this fund is more flexible.

Religious associations can also use muncipal funding, though this is always a bit complicated. Both the regular protestant and catholic churches, the older Jewish associations and the newer immigrant religious association (Islamic, Christian, and others) undertake social and representative activities for religious migrants in Amsterdam (among them two Islamic umbrella organisations). In general there are two solutions. In some cases they have registered a separate social associations in the same building, to avoid the church and state discussion. An example of this is the Moroccan association '*Ibno Khaldoun*' in the building of the '*Al Kabir mosque*' receives subsidy from the *SIP* funds. In other cases, they clearly state in their proposal that the project has a purely social purpose and that no converting will take place during the activity. An example of the second is '*Youth For Christ*' a Christian associations that applied to organised youth work in City District *De Baarsjes*, the proposal was chosen as the best one by the selection commission in 2008, but the discussion in the District Council became so explosive that the district mayor had to step down.

Another way of coping in practice with the Church and State debate is to organise events or manifestations with the clear purpose of bringing people together, for instance the *Ramadan festival* (2007–2009) and the *Pentecost festival* (2008). The *Ramadan Festival* in 2008 included four weeks of varied programs of cultural activities and common *iftars* and was meant to give Amsterdammers more insight in the fasting season of Muslims, and to perceive the Ramadan period as a common celebration of all Amsterdammers. The *Pentecost Festival* had the same goal: to build bridges between different religious communities, with in this case a central role for the Christian churches.

#### *Issues, demands and interests of immigrant and religious organisations*

Associations of immigrants very often request simply a space and some possibilities to run their own centre, and this is also the case with religious associations. Since Amsterdam counts 177 nationalities and 3491 associations of immigrants it is impossible to fund all of them. Looking at the current SIP list of subsidized immigrant associations, we notice that Amsterdam has tried to support very many nationalities, and usually not more than two associations per nationality. This means that smaller communities like refugees, that usually arrived later, and are relatively less well organised, currently have more chances than a new Moroccan or Surinamese association.

On the other hand there have been many applications for grants and subsidies by for instance the *Amsterdam Union of Moroccan Mosques UMMAO*, or the separate mosques to support public debates or trainings or other activities on issues related to the stereotyping of Muslims. An issue that keeps coming back is that this kind of debates actually fit very well in the policy that *PAS* is executing, but over and over again subsidizing Muslim associations caused debate in the City Council. The associations of Muslims that we have interviewed were quit frustrated about this. We already described how the mayor asked for a policy paper on the separation between church and state, which is now supposed to help in coping with these issues.

### **4.3 Forms of relation and dialogue**

We will distinguish two forms of dialogue in this paragraph: inter-cultural dialogue and inter-religious dialogue.

#### *Inter-cultural dialogue*

The work of *PAS* explicitly focusses on improving intercultural relations, and is therefore on itself the clearest example of a policy to stimulate good relations. We will now show two examples a) how the City District *Westerpark* implements the policies with the help of *PAS* on a local level and b) how a project that was noticed and supported by *PAS* functions in the City District *Bos en Lommer*.

- *Westerpark's* approach

City District *Westerpark* is highly appreciated by its inhabitants: the highest percentage of citizens that thinks that the city district functions (very) well, the best functioning district council, the highest percentage of citizens that knows the *Buurtbeheeroverleg* (neighbourhood consultation system) and the highest interested in city district politics according to the 2008 Survey '*Burgermonitor Amsterdam*' (O+S 2008). It is

a relatively small city district, and it is not dominated by one ethnic group. This positive attitude may have to do with the way in which policies are executed, and that has a lot to do with bringing people together and connecting them. We talked to the representative in *Westerpark* that takes care of activities related to the goals of *PAS*.

Firstly the representative explains that knowing each other and being known is an important principle. That means not only that connections are stimulated in the streets and on the squares, but also that the district mayor and aldermen are easy to reach, and that they go monthly to neighbourhood centres to talk to anybody who wants something in the neighbourhood, and really do something about the things that worry people. Neighbourhood negotiators organise neighbourhood meetings, and bring people together who disagree or have problems. Open discussion and trying to find new solutions are important.

Secondly she explains that bottom up initiatives are considered more important than an authoritarian top down approach. *Westerpark* has always been a district with a lot of autonomous thinking groups, like squatters and a relatively large number of organisations. It is better to use power of this potential, than to come with something that doesn't interest people. So actually the currently most powerful project '*Young in Westerpark*', was based on the worries that were voiced first at schools and then during neighbourhood meetings, and supported intensively by the city district.

A thirdly basic idea behind the policies is that identity and self confidence of children and youngsters is one of the keys to succes to develop a peaceful neighbourhood. It actually had some youth gangs in the past, but this problem is over. '*Jong in Westerpark*' (young in Westerpark) is a positive approach with four simple rules: 1) everyone is part of 'us', 2) we care for each other, 3) we care about our surrounding, and 4) we keep self-control. These rules are repeated everywhere: at the primary and secondary schools, at the koran lessons at the mosque, at the football club, at the Turkish council and on the squares. When any fight takes place, the involved are immediately put around a table, so the problem is solved and at the same time ties are created. The project started in 2005, and is now supported by 70 local organisations. The rules are easy to apply and actually everyone agrees with them. At the *Marcanti College*, a school for low vocational training, attention is constantly necessary, because the youngsters easily cause annoyance, but the method of *Socratic Talks* between neighbours and youngsters has much more effect than punishing the youngsters. The method of *Socratic Talks* stimulates the youngsters to search for the norms behind certain decisions. What are the assumptions, what is the reasoning and what are the views behind it, and how can the group test their validity? Together they have to search for a solutions by ongoing questioning.

Alltogether the *Westerpark* approach is positive, it focussed on connecting people and avoiding polarisation. Therefore problems are solved fast and breeding grounds for tensions are removed from a very early moment onwards, not only because it starts with kids, but also because small fights cannot develop into big ones.

- The '*Connect*' project in City District *Bos en Lommer*

*City District Bos en Lommer* neighbours *Westerpark* and is known because one of its neighbourhood (*Kolenkitbuurt*) heads the list of 40 problem neighbourhoods in the Netherlands (*Vogelaarwijken*). It shows a combination of high unemployment, children who grow up in poverty, new immigrants, overcrowding of housing and fast removal patterns (see the CLIP housing module for more information: Van Heelsum 2007). This city districts has 65% of immigrants (highest in Amsterdam), 23% of Moroccans and 16% of Turks and

relatively a lot of youth and youngsters. *'Project Connect'* is a typical bottom up initiative of the 37 year old Moroccan Saïd Bensellam, who is managing to work with young Moroccan street boys that are considered unreachable by the regular youth work<sup>10</sup>. Firstly the boys get into contact with Saïd, then a plan is made for a more positive future perspective, then they get into one of the activities: either they get trained at the 1) *'Flying Brigade'* i.e. supporting police, negotiating and stopping escalating conflicts in *Kolenkit* neighbourhood, or 2) at *'Karam'* (this means help) gathering and repairing medical equipment for Morocco and Surinam or 3) the *'Parking project'*, i.e. arranging parking at big events. The activities not only improve the situation of the youngsters, but also adds to a safer and more positively directed multicultural neighbourhood. "Street boys are *connected* to society", as Saïd explains it.

Saïd's own past relates to the boys experience, since Saïd's father also arrived in Amsterdam as a guest worker, and Saïd himself was also thrown out of secondary school. He was hanging around in the street with 'bad friends', but got out of the negative spiral by going to kickboxing lessons, and at 19 he became a bouncer at one of *Leidse Pleins'* night clubs (Veldhuis, 2008, Bahara 2008). This is where he learned to analyse conflicts, directly address problems and not to avoid confrontation. Saïd was not scared to address the streetgangs that terrorised the neighbourhood, for instance at community centre *Horizon*, and often interfered in fights. After some time the police realised that he was one of the few people who could negotiate, and started to ask him to intervene when conflicts in the neighbourhood seemed to escalate. One of his first organised initiatives was to gather money for his cousin in Morocco who needed an operation because of a harelip. The plan of extending this accelerated when an earthquake hit El Hoceima on 24 February 2004, and the foundation *'Karam'* was established. Large numbers of old wheelchairs and beds are gathered from Dutch institutions, they are checked and repaired by the youngsters at the *Connect* building, and finally the shipping was organised.

As the many publications, prizes (*TANS award* 2006, *Amsterdammer of the Year Award* 2007) and even a TV documentary on Dutch national TV (*Tegenlicht*, 20 April 2009) show, Saïd's initiative has gained wide recognition. With the help of all kinds of intermediaries who could arrange the paperwork and who could talk to financiers and officials, he managed to get funding and two floors of an unused office building. *Stichting Connect* has very fast broadened its activities, and now also organises a *Father Project* and a *Mother Project*. Saïd realised that without the parents it was impossible to help the boys. Fathers were often angry and frustrated about their sons, and blamed the mothers for bad upbringing. Saïd's approach is to talk about the emotions behind the trouble, including taboos like the father who feels not respected for all his effort to improve the lives of their families. "Make your son your friend" he tells the fathers, "your son needs your support to improve his life", and he explains them how lost he felt himself when his father blamed him for being thrown from school. When the father is proud of his son, the whole family gets happier. And the boys need to help their younger brothers to avoid that they get into the same trouble again, so Saïd's boys learn to prepare their brothers better.

Beside the incredible speed and succes of the project, there are also difficulties. One of them is that there is some mistrust between *'Connect'* and the established social work insitutions as Veldhuis (2008) describes. On the one hand the established youth workers failed to work with this target group, and actually feel

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<sup>10</sup> More information (in Dutch) <http://www.connectinitiatieven.nl>

threatened, and on the other hand 'Connect' realised that even though they come with real solutions, others get a larger share of the money. To some extent there is even mis-communication between Saïd and city district officials. Several intermediaries had to 'translate', write funding proposals and financial reports, and defend Saïd's approach, among them the pedagogic workers of a Dutch project 'Capabel', a project to improve the cooperation between all the supporting agencies and institutions that work for kids from 0-18 years old in the neighbourhood.<sup>11</sup> A representative of 'Capabel' is sure that it is necessary to search for more of this kind of bottom up initiatives, and that volunteers like Saïd should get the finances and trust that they deserve, but that the city district is not ready for it with its office culture. There seems to be a lot of distance between officials and the boys in the streets. On the other hand, trust in authorities is already largely absent among the population of *Bos en Lommer*. That Saïd was first asked to solve a completely escalated conflict around community centre Horizon, which he did successfully, but was then replaced at Horizon by an established youth worker, has not increased the trust of the boys. And trying to explain how allocated money for 2008 could not be used anymore in 2009 led them to think that the money went into somebody's pocket, since "that's how things work with officials". The same tension exists as we explained in the section on subsidies on migrant associations, with on the one hand the bureaucratic and accounting culture of the existing municipal systems, and on the other hand the current need to approach problems directly. That the faster and more flexible approach of *PAS* fits much better to initiatives like Saïd's, is clear and that's why some of the money for the project comes from *PAS*.

- *The Diversity Council*

Though this is not part of the work of *PAS*, it would be strange not to mention the Diversity Council (*Stedelijk Overleg Diversiteit SOD*) in a chapter on intercultural dialogue. Immigrant associations meet three times a year and can influence the policies. Before 2004, an advisory board was made up of representatives of associations of immigrants, subdivided into five immigrant groups (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese/Antilleans and Refugees/Chinese/Pakistani's). This changed in 2005. Currently the associations still gather, but the *Diversity Council* became a public enquiry organ (*inspraakorgaan*), which can air the interests of their backlash and make worries of the ethnic communities heard. This organ meets with the *Advisory Board on Diversity and Integration* that exists of experts about four times a year. Sometimes a subject of worry for the associations is taken over by the advisory board, and a well-founded advice is written by the *Advisory Board* and presented to the municipal council.

Also in the city districts such consultation methods exist, for instance in City District *Oost-Watergraafsmeer* has a board of representatives of migrant associations (BOMO) that meet five or six times a year and workgroups on issues that are important for immigrants (Van Heelsum & Penninx 1999).

- *The Labour Unions work on Global Solidarity*

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<sup>11</sup> More information on Project Capabel:

[http://www.bosenlommer.amsterdam.nl/onderwijs\\_en\\_jeugd/jeugd/capabel](http://www.bosenlommer.amsterdam.nl/onderwijs_en_jeugd/jeugd/capabel)

The work of the labour union on intercultural dialogue is not something that is particularly done only in Amsterdam, but actually coordinated at the national headquarter of the combined labour unions *Federatie Nederlands Vakcentrale* (FNV) which is in Amsterdam. FNV has a workgroup international affairs in this deals with international solidarity. This section is called FNV Mondiaal.<sup>12</sup> A lot of solidarity activities have taken place for instance with the Ghanaian trade unions, international day to support the Iranian trade union (26 June), supporting Zimbabwean trade union financially, card writing to free Chinese trade union members from prison. Fundraising takes place at markets and during festivals, like for instance on the 5 May Festival (liberation day) on Museumplein in Amsterdam, and the Afrika Roots Festival in Oosterpark in Amsterdam.

#### *Inter-religious dialogue*

There are several forms of inter-religious dialogue, which we understand as cooperation between organisations of religious groups. Mayor Cohen, supports the idea of using the religious infrastructure of Amsterdam to meet the city's policy goals, and is even explicitly part of some of the initiatives. Examples are:

- *Amsterdam met Hart en Ziel* (Amsterdam with heart and soul) organizing manifestations like preaching for others' parish.
- *Raad voor Levensbeschouwing en Religie* (Religious Council) organizing debates and meetings to bridge differences between various religious communities and countering negative stereotyping and perceptions along religious lines, especially during mounting tension between groups as in 2008 during the release of the right wing politician Geert Wilders' film '*Fitna*' (about the problematic impact of Islam in the world).

In many cases the city is represented by a civil servant and very often the mayor or aldermen represent the city in public meetings. Also several city districts organize dialogue meetings between people with different cultural backgrounds or between religious and non religious groups. Different themes are discussed like core values and the place of religion in society.

An initiative that particularly relates to the recently more stressed relations between religious groups is '*Joods Marokkaans Netwerk Amsterdam*' (JMNA, Jewish Moroccan Network Amsterdam).<sup>13</sup> Jewish and Moroccan Amsterdammers met each other at all kinds of occasions, for instance during the dialogue gatherings in City District *De Baarsjes*, in common activities for youngsters, at exchanges between mosques and synagogues and at the yearly Moroccan Jewish '*Mimouna celebration*'. They felt that besides these usual activities relations needed an impulse. On the one hand anti Jewish and anti Muslim prejudices show a lot of similarity, so it is necessary to fight them with one voice. On the other hand there were some worries about each other, Jewish worries existed about the increasing anti-Semitism among Moroccan boys on schools, the incident in 2003 when Moroccan boys plaid football with wreathes that were laid on a monument to

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.fnv.nl/helpjezelf/mondiaal/>

<sup>13</sup> More information (in Dutch) <http://www.jmna.nl> There is a list of its members. The network was established together with mayor Cohen, though he is not on the list of members.

[http://www.art1.nl/artikel/4935-Amsterdams\\_netwerk\\_joden\\_en\\_Marokkanen\\_gelanceerd](http://www.art1.nl/artikel/4935-Amsterdams_netwerk_joden_en_Marokkanen_gelanceerd)

commemorate deaths of second world war was an example, and Muslims worry a lot about the Jewish views on the Iraq war and the Palestine issue and think that the Jews in the Netherlands all support the Israeli policy. The network was officially established on 27 February 2006.

It is meant to resist a) expression of anti-Semitism, islamophobia, and other forms of discrimination, b) the hardening of the Dutch social and political climate c) ingroup-outgroup thinking and stigmatisation of groups in society. It is important that the two groups learn to know each other better. It helps a lot to organise meetings between Jewish and Muslim youngsters at schools, and a couple of a Jewish girls and Moroccan boys go around to explain their family experiences during the Second World War. The Moroccans who fought on the Allied side now get extra attention. Also during times of crises it's important that representatives show how they talk together about issues in public places and on TV. In February 2009 for instance, during the fights in Gaza, meetings were arranged in mosques to discuss how Jews and Muslims in Amsterdam look at this issue. The general idea that we described behind the policy of Amsterdam: connecting people, making them meet and know each other and finding their common goals is also visible here.

#### 4.4 Relationship between different ethnic groups in the city

In this paragraph we will show a) how the image of ethnic, religious and other group and other groups looks like, and b) to what extent people have friends in their own ethnic group or outside it. These recent results come from the survey *Amsterdam Burgermonitor 2008 (O+S 2008)*. This survey is held among 3,000 inhabitants of Amsterdam older than 16 by telephone/ postal questionnaire and in personal interview.

**Table 7 The image of groups: how the interviewed think that others in town think about the groups mentioned in the first column (%)**

Thoughts about:	% (very negative)	% neutral	% (very positive)	% don't know
Moroccans	75	14	4	6
Muslims	62	24	8	7
Antilleans	56	26	8	10
Immigrants	44	35	13	7
Turks	34	42	18	7
Surinamese	21	44	26	8
Homosexual men and women	20	40	32	8
Jews	12	48	29	11
Christians	8	50	32	10
Dutch	5	32	54	9
A-religious people	5	51	33	12

*Source: Amsterdam Burgermonitor 2008 (O+S 2008: 43)*

As table 7 shows the most negative image exists about Moroccans, according to the interviewed. We have to note that 41% says they have such a negative picture themselves, but 75% thinks that other Amsterdammers have a negative picture. On the second place one finds Muslims and Antilleans. On the average Dutch are considered most positively. Not many people think negatively about Jews and Christians. Though the

negative image of Moroccans and Muslims is worrying, we have to notice that there is improvement compared to 2007.

A completely different picture is shown when we look at the results of the same survey on friendship (table 8). Only 23% of Amsterdammers have friends only from their own ethnic group. Of course the Dutch have more people to choose from if they would like to have friends from their own ethnic group than the smaller ethnic groups that are part of Western and other non-Western immigrants. It is therefore quite striking that also only 29% of Dutch Amsterdammers currently have only Dutch friends. Actually the large majority of Amsterdammers, either Dutch, or from any other ethnic background have an ethnically mixed group of friends. The results here show a tendency towards increased mixing.

**Table 8 Constitution of Amsterdammers' group of friends in ethnic terms, 2008 (%)**

	Only from my own ethnic group	Mostly from my own ethnic group	As many from my own as from other ethnic groups	Mostly from other ethnic groups	Only from other ethnic groups
Dutch	29	47	17	2	0
Western immigrants	24	38	25	7	1
Turks	16	31	36	6	0
Moroccans	12	29	38	9	2
Other non Western immigrants	10	20	43	13	2
Surinamese	6	26	43	17	1
Amsterdam mean	23	39	26	7	1

Source: *Amsterdam Burgermonitor 2008 (O+S 2008: 43)*

#### 4.5 Public communication

The local public TV station in Amsterdam since 1992 is *AT5 (Amstel Television 5)*.<sup>14</sup> It is the most important TV source for local news, it gives local politicians access to voters, and it provides sport, culture, 'human interest' and discussion. AT5 gives ample attention to anything that is important in the city and it is quit popular: 72% of Amsterdammers watch it at least weekly, and immigrants watch it as much as Dutch. During celebrations like Ramadan or the Hindu Festival Divali it provides information and shows how the celebrations take place. Weekly an interview with the mayor Job Cohen is broadcasted, and the mayor has a few clear messages related to inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue that he explains in different words over and over again. Tolerance and understanding towards ethnic and religious groups is one of them.

An interesting initiative of the municipality of Amsterdam is that they (co-)financed for the production of the so called '*West Side soap*'. This is a series on the lives of four families, a Turkish, a Moroccan, a Surinamese and a Dutch family who become neighbours and all kinds of themes pass by: love, discrimination, education, friends and work. It is not only meant to fit in Staubs strategy (4.1) that people should know more about each others life and culture, but also to show how interconnected people in an arbitrary street in West Amsterdam already are. On the one hand it fits to experiences of people, on the other hand it is meant to fight prejudices, or even to treat situation that easily lead to misunderstanding in a comical way.

Another public organisation is *SALTO*. Currently 180 different local organisations are active on five of the six radio channels and on two of the three TV channels (the three channels are: A1, A2 and AT5). These organisations are based on neighbourhood, religion, sport, culture or ethnic group. They can also organise themselves based on themes like political view, art, sexual disposition, music choice or other shared interest. All organisations that broadcast via *SALTO* make their own programs. Most programs are in Dutch but broadcasting takes place currently in 26 languages. Amsterdam has several local ethnic media. Almost each ethnic group has their own local Radio station or TV programme, which they use to communicate with and to inform their local group. They often use the local *SALTO* and media company *MTNL* (Migrant

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.at5.nl>

Television Netherland). The main function is to provide information towards those who do not speak Dutch. Many immigrant communities have an hour a week, in which the main news from this community is broadcasted. For instance Ghanaians have a program, in which both news from their country of origin is shown and some religious ceremonies of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches in Amsterdam Zuid-Oost.

The general media have good connections with the various minority groups, although the groups themselves are not always very pleased by the way the general media is covering their issues. Specific local media companies like MTNL target their audiences and give an alternative perspective on the news. Especially during the Gaza crisis we have seen the power of the international broadcasting networks (like Al Jazeera, Moroccan, Turkish and Egyptian national channels) covering the conflict more extensively and from a completely different perspective.

#### **4.6 Summary and lessons learnt**

Interestingly Amsterdam is a mixture of a town where only 23% of its citizens have only friends from their own ethnic group, but on the other hand the situation in Amsterdam is estimated as tenser in the last 9 years than in other European cities, particularly after the murder of Theo van Gogh. It's clear that there are two tendencies: a large and general tendency among both autochthonous and immigrants towards mixing and integration, and a probably smaller tendency towards alienation, stereotyping and negative relations.

Amsterdam reacted on the tensions by allocating a considerable amount of money and organising capacity to deal with polarisation, to improve relations and connect people who might otherwise withdraw from society and even radicalise. The temporary establishment of the *Platform Amsterdam Samen (PAS)*, outside the usual bureaucratic structures and with a fast and flexible way of allocating money has proved to be able to address problems more easily and it is more sensitive to bottom up initiatives of citizens. The approach has worked well in the examples in the city districts that we have mentioned. An initiative like *Connect* by Saïd Bensellam with its important work for young Moroccans would not have easily fitted into the existing bureaucratic structures. PAS is also innovative, which we will show when it comes to its work – together with the Information Household Radicalisation – on radicalisation in chapter 6.

Traditionally Amsterdam has always supported associations of immigrants and religious associations. This has led to an active civic society in immigrants communities and a connected network of associations. Since a strong civic society is a safeguard against isolation of individuals and a guarantee for trust and social connections, the associations are further strengthened with subsidies. Even though the public opinion is not always in favour of this support, Amsterdam maintains this approach to strengthen social capital among the more vulnerable groups.

## 5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

### 5.1 Major issues, demands and interests

As we showed in chapter 3.3 the Muslim community in Amsterdam exists of Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese, Pakistani's and a lot of smaller groups like Afghans, Iraqi's, Iranians and Egyptians. We have already treated the important issue of tense relations that arose after the murder of Theo van Gogh. As showed in all the interviews, prejudices about Muslims are actually one of the greatest concerns of the interviewees, and a lot of Muslims conceive these – true or not – as the main reason why their position in the educational system and on the labour market is not improving. On the other hand the stereotypical view on Muslims is that they are generally conservative, that they suppress women, and are not actively stopping their kids from criminal activities, while some even become sympathisers of fundamentalist movements. A lot of current issues relate to coping with these prejudices. As we showed in table 7, the prejudices are more directed towards Moroccan Muslims than towards Turkish or Surinamese Muslims. Moroccan Muslims are more of the scapegoat, and have also reacted more fiercely to fight the prejudices.

For the second generation the Muslim aspect of their identity is something that needs exploration and discussion, particularly within the background of Dutch society with its prejudices<sup>15</sup>. How to be a good Muslim in a Western society, is the question and it's not easy to determine one's position especially when it comes to gender roles and finding the 'right' Islam. Wearing the headscarf or not and if so the 'modern' one or not<sup>16</sup>, virginity before marriage, marrying someone from a different ethnic background, sports, free or forced partnerchoice, and acceptance of homosexuality are issues. Can an employer refuse you because of your beard or headscarf? Can civil servants refuse to shake hands with women? The Moroccan city district mayor Marcouch in Slotervaart has taken clear positions in this debate, and discussions sometimes become rather fierce ("Marcouchian discussion").

Parents who are barely literate, and who follow traditions from their vilages in North Morocco are not considered of help by the children who are used to reading and finding information in libraries and internet. Generally young people are struggling with their identities, searching for information. That they have to defend themselves towards the outside world, makes it more difficult. Some youngsters even tell their parents that they are not good Muslims, and go for a more conservative interpretation of Islam than their parents (De Koning 2007, Gielen 2008, 2009). The description of the project of Saïd Bensellam in section 4.3 already showed, that some Moroccan youngsters get problems at school and there is a higher drop-out rate froms schools among them than among Dutch kids. Of course it became even more clear that this kind of

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<sup>15</sup> Van Heelsum (1997:114) showed that there is are strong and significant relationships between perceiving prejudice and not choosing to identify as Dutch among second generation youngsters. The outcome of the proces of constructing an identity is a result of position acquisition by a person (and group) and the perceived position allocation (how someone perceives that others see and accept this person).

<sup>16</sup> Dutch Moroccan girls developed a fashion with a tight black plus a colourful head scarf.

issues are most relevant for the Amsterdam policy, when the reasons why some Muslim youngsters become radical were studied (Slootman & Tillie 2006; Demant et al 2008).

The fact that many of the existing mosques were first generation institutions, dominated by elderly men, made it difficult for the youngsters to come with their questions and demands.<sup>17</sup> In the Moroccan mosques the imam often only speaks Arabic, while the home language of Moroccans is Berber or Dutch, and the imams are not so aware of the trouble that youngsters have in Dutch society. For some time internet imams have functioned for instance the Dutch convert Van Bommel. Because of this clear gap in the needs of youngsters, an initiative was taken by representatives of the second generation to establish the so called '*Poldermoskee*' (Polder mosque) which opened on 5 September 2008.<sup>18</sup> Active youngsters who had tried to work within existing mosques, but couldn't manage to arrange something that fitted to their needs, have established this special multi-ethnic mosque. The name refers to the '*poldermodel*', the Dutch traditional model of discussion between denominations to reach consensus. The '*Poldermoskee*' is situated in City District Slotervaart, in an area where many Moroccans reside. It rents space from a housing corporation in a multi-tenant building where the refugee council used to reside (Jac. Veltmanstraat 463, see figure 5).

**Figure 5 The '*Poldermoskee*' in City District Slotervaart**



Objectives are that this mosque provides a solid (i.e. based on clear principles) and safe surrounding to young Muslims to exercise ones religion and to gather information; to contribute to the development of Islamic theology in a secular environment in which Muslim youngsters of different ethnic background and denominations can recognize themselves and which can contribute to positive identity formation; providing a bridging function between Muslims and the Dutch society by stimulating meeting and dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

As the chairwoman explains, the poldermoskee has five pillars:

- 1) Dutch is the language of the lectures and sermons, and Dutch are welcome to listen to the prayer. The five daily smaller rituals are the usual verses in Arab.

<sup>17</sup> In the Moroccan mosques it is more difficult for youngsters than in the Turkish mosques. Turkish youngsters have less language problems (they know more Turkish than Moroccans Arabic) and Turkish boys are often involved by their fathers in the mosques.

<sup>18</sup> More information: <http://www.poldermoskee.nl> and (with more pictures) <http://www.doneermaand-poldermoskee.nl>

- 2) The mosque is inter-ethnic, there is a pool of imams of Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistani and Surinamese background, from completely different Islamic denominations. The board exists of an Egyptian, Moroccans, a Turk and a non-Muslim (the last board member is an active Dutch girl from the neighbourhood, who connects to the social work; her refreshing views on how the neighbourhood could perceive activities are highly appreciated).
- 3) The primary target group is youngsters, of course others may come and actually do so in quite large numbers, but activities are targeted at youngsters.
- 4) The mosque is kindly disposed towards women. There are no dressing rules in the building, so women without head scarf and without long skirts are also welcome, though during the prayer respect is required. Women pray in the same hall behind the men, though there is a second space for those women who want to pray separately.
- 5) The mosque is a bridge between Muslims and non-Muslims. That means it organises more than weekly guided tours for visitors, it invites people from the neighbourhood for a coffee hour, and there are discussion meetings on taboo issues like honour killings, homosexuality and domestic violence, often in cooperation with the city district authorities. Within the ongoing social debate in the Netherlands it is considered important that Muslims themselves also openly and critically join discussion on such issues, and do not leave this to Islam critics.

As one can imagine, bringing together the different denominations of Islam in one institution can lead to intense discussions. The chairwoman explains that the Poldermoskee has a liberal image, because of its stand point on women, but actually they try to bring views together so that people can see the variety that exists among Muslims. For instance one of the board members is more conservative and doesn't shake hands with women. The board is convinced that it is most important to have the discussion, and let people free to choose. Guest speakers have to endorse the five pillars, and there has to be consensus within the board on the subject, but guest speakers are also free to voice their opinions.

Though the '*Poldermoskee*' is very much appreciated by the authorities on all levels and is considered by many exactly what both Dutch and Muslims were waiting for, this hasn't led to considerable financial support for the initiative. The mosque is dealing with a rent that it can hardly afford, but is aware that they would not receive money from the municipality as a religious organisation, so has not applied for subsidies. It tries to attract money from private sources.

It is impossible to cover all issues, but we will now treat a few other issues that have caused discussion in Amsterdam in the last years:

- Mosque building.

There are five completely new mosques in Amsterdam, the *Taiba mosque* in City District Zuid Oost was built in 2003–2004, the *El Oumma mosque* in Slotervaart was completed in 1997, the *Al Mohssinine mosque* in City District Noord (Maussen 2006: 83), the *Nasser mosque* in city district Zeeburg and the *Al Islam mosque* in city district Osdorp. The '*Taiba mosque*' on picture 6 is situated outside the centre of town, near a metro, and the building has taken quite some time, and went with the usual questions about money laundering and

foreign financiers that joined in to finish the project. The mosque is run by the *World Islamic Movement* (WIM), and visited by Surinamese, Pakistanis'and other Muslims.

Figure 6 The 'Taiba Moskee' in City District Zuid Oost



The Moroccan *El Oumma mosque* in Slotervaart is situated in the middle of a neighbourhood where many Moroccans live and on a shopping square, this mosque is completely constructed with bricks and has a square minaret, after Moroccan mosque architecture.

But the process doesn't always finish as succesful, as the ongoing project of building the '*Westermoskee*' (West Mosque) shows. The Amsterdam branch of the Turkish religious movement *Milli Görüs* bought ground and presented a plan to build a very large mosque with architecture related to the Amsterdam School of Architects in City District *De Baarsjes* (see figure 7). The mosque was on purpose named after the '*Westertoren*' (West Tower), the symbol of the old neighbourhood Jordaan, and its name was supposed to mean that it would become a real Amsterdam mosque for real Amsterdam Muslims.

Figure 7 Maquette of the new to build Turkish '*Wester Moskee*' in City District *De Baarsjes*



Its modernity would show by the fact that the mosque would be open to the neighbourhood and men and women would pray in the same hall. But a lot went wrong: changes took place in the board of Milli Görüs and it was not clear to what extent the movement was influenced by the more conservative German head quarter, and what had happened with money contributed by members. The Amsterdam Council had promised that the ground could be used cheaply as usual with religious premises (Maussen 2006: 83). Distrust between mosque organisation, builders, housing corporation and city district administration – all partners in the project – increased and doubts arose if the integrative character of the new mosque could be guaranteed. Years after the discussion started the problems are still not solved and the project is on hold.

- Islamic cemetery

As we have seen section 2.2 Islamic burying is possible in the Netherlands after the law was adjusted in 1991. It's possible on several graveyards in Amsterdam, usually a special corner is reserved. But there is no separate Islamic cemetery. It took several years for a group of representatives of different religious and ethnic communities to agree on a mode to establish an Islamic cemetery and there still are some issues. An important issue for the representatives was that religious rules shouldn't be violated, but suni's shia and ethnic groups thought differently about these rules. The building of the cemetery is planned to start probably in 2010.

- Islamic schools, Koran schools and religious lessons at public schools

Amsterdam has six Islamic primary schools and one Islamic secondary school.<sup>19</sup> Some of them are constantly surrounded by media attention, sometimes because something goes wrong with their finances, sometimes because something goes wrong with the quality of education and sometimes because there are worries about the ideology that is actually taught in these schools. The school inspection is carefully following these schools.

Beside schools that provide the regular curriculum, there are also Koranschools, that only give Koran and Arabic lessons outside the usual school hours. These schools are not checked by the school inspection, since they are considered voluntary initiatives. But with the constant attention for anything Muslim, political discussion also started about the Koranschools. Questions were raised about the educational climate, (learning through repetition, teachers using corporal punishment) and about the assumed non-integrative message. Some of the involved parties proposed to give extra religious/ Koran lessons on primary schools. Although this would be legal, others both politicians and school representatives were against more attention for religion at primary schools.

## 5.2 General approaches and policies towards Muslim groups

We have described in chapter 4 how the Church-State discussion is affecting the work of the Amsterdam authorities with Muslim organisations. Generally Amsterdam doesn't have any other policy towards Muslim

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<sup>19</sup> Information from the municipal website, 'find a school' section:  
<http://onderwijs.amsterdam.nl/live/index.jsp>

communities than to other immigrant groups (the diversity policy applies), but in practice it is impossible to address certain policy issues without paying attention to religion and cooperating with Muslim associations. Subsidising secular activities of religious organisations and religiously inspired activities of secular organisations remains a subject that keeps causing controversy. In the council politicians even within the largest social democratic party PvdA have different opinions on the principle of division between church and state. Mayor Cohen is generally in favour of using the religious infrastructure, but the former elderwoman Hanna Belliot was quoted by NRC newspaper in 2005 saying that it is extremely slippery if the municipality gets involved with religion (Maussen, 2006: 78). In opinion polls Amsterdammers tend to say that religion should not influence politics.

It was extremely frustrating for both the officials of the municipality, governors like Marcouch and for the representatives of the *Raad van Moskeeën* (Council of Mosques) and the *Amsterdam Union of Moroccan Mosques UMMAO*, that usefull proposals that fit well in the policy lines, have been on hold for nearly two years, waiting for a decision. As the representative of the *UMMAO* explains, even if the proposal will in the end get subsidized, he is not sure that he can approach the volunteers that wrote it. Some of them lost their confidence in the authorities and complain that they have no guts to stand up against the insulting remarks from the right. The Church-State discussion blocked to proceed any subsidy for Muslim organisation. The decisiveness and readiness to act directly of *PAS* was seriously halted by this discussion. And because some initiatives went ahead without payment, the representatives of the associations felt not taken serious. It is sometimes frustrating for volunteers, that professional social workers are paid, and they are not, seemingly because they are part of a religious organisation.

Another example is this controversy that arose around '*Marhaba*', the centre for Islamic art and culture in which debate was supposed to take place on Islam that could break rigid attitudes, and make a modern way of thinking on Islam possible. Since the '*Jewish Historic Museum*' has been supported since its establishment, Amsterdam thought there should be something similar for Muslims. But the focus of '*Marhaba*' broadened, and this has probably directly caused the problem, because the two goals, a museum like cultural function and the function of debate on the religion and showing modern tendencies in religion is quite a difficult combination. One of the interviewed remarked that it was too much an top down initiative, Muslims felt that an Islam that the government likes, is put on them. The opening on Friday afternoon (during the prayer) with alcohol added to the irritation. In the end the right wing liberal VVD voted against it in the Council meeting of 29 November 2008, because it considered the initiative involvement in the development of religion.<sup>20</sup>

### 5.3 Examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Muslim groups

Even though the situation described above, Amsterdam also managed to reach some of the goals of the policy. One of the targets is to set up networks, and support activities of key figures in the Muslims community. Of course this is largely due to the members of the network, but these members felt the same need as the municipality to do something against the ongoing polarisation. A group of active young Muslims was gathered from all kinds of existing associations, and put together in training. This became the so called

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<sup>20</sup> See the points of Van 't Wout on the website of the VVD <http://www.vvdamsterdam.nl/artikel/3236.htm>

'*Network of Key Figures*'. Some of the current board members of the '*Poldermoskee*' actually met in this network, and were supported with organisational training, media training and working together. One member came from a group that was established in 2001 the '*Moslim Jongeren Amsterdam*' (MJA, Muslim Youngsters Amsterdam) and explained how the municipality was looking for people to talk to when the situation was most tense. They gathered people from all groups, including the most orthodox mosque in town '*El Tawheed*' and from the Turkish '*Milli Görüs*' movement. Because of the common interest of all the involved to improve the image of Muslims it became a success. The youngsters were stimulated by the training to organise activities in their own groups, but could also more easily connect to similarly active groups in other parts of town.

'*Moslim Jongeren Amsterdam*' has organised a large number of activities, for instance discussion in one of the theatres on Muslim girls in trouble, Muslims and volunteering (with the Red Cross and the World Wildlife Fund), education (with school officials), police (inviting representatives from the police), and on work, application and internship (with two trade unions).

An important key to success is that already active individuals were approached, so actually a lot of the motivation came from within, and that issues were addressed that people found really important, and then that the training was not only talking, but real practical skills and knowledge were transferred, otherwise people would probably have given up. For instance the media training resulted in a much more active attitude towards the media: letters to the editors of newspapers, visibility of the views of youngsters on radio and TV, and more of a strategy in stead of constantly reacting on crisis caused by others.

#### 5.4 Public communication

In chapter 4 we mentioned the local media and the approach that Amsterdam chooses towards them. This applies completely to Muslims. Special for the Netherlands is, due to the pillarised system of the past century, that there is a national Muslim Broadcasting Association, the '*Nederlandse Moslim Omroep*' (NMO). We talked to the chairperson of the board of the NMO, who is also one of the key figures in the network in section 5.3, but with a considerable knowledge about Islam and therefore one of the people that preaches in the '*Poldermoskee*' and that gets involved in other mosques in theological discussion meetings on the principles of Islam.

The three central goals of the Muslim Broadcasting Organisation NMO are directly connected to the discussion in this chapter:

- a) Making the unity and diversity within Islam in the Netherlands visible and promoting mutual recognition and tolerance among adherents of Islam, passing the borders of the confessional groups and ethnic backgrounds that are represented in the Netherlands
- b) Muslims in the Netherlands live in socially backward circumstances. The negative image of Islam makes this worse and can cause a structural backward position of the group and segregation. The NMO wants to fight this stereotype of the enemy and by this and to integration equal treatment of Islamic groups and the improvement of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Dutch society.
- c) NMO chooses to support the improved social position of Islamic youngsters, women and elderly, by recognising that these groups are not only vulnerable in society as a whole but also within Islamic circles and that they deserve support.

### 5.5 Summary and lessons learnt

As we have seen in this chapter Amsterdam has managed to develop from a serious crisis situation after the murder of Theo van Gogh into a buzzing centre of activities of young Muslims. Especially the '*Poldermoskee*' is an achievement that should not be underestimated. Unfortunately the discussion on the Church and State issue has halted many useful initiatives. One aspect was also according to one of the interviewees, that governors worried about the debate that could develop when right wing politicians would dominate the issues. Whereas Amsterdam was known for its tolerance and easygoing attitude in the past, also in coping and supporting initiatives of religious groups, its attitude turned into an extremely careful one. A lesson that Amsterdam has learned is that a policy paper on Church and State, in which the principles of these policies are laid out, is an urgently requirement for all cities in which a similar debate could develop.

And, as the city representative adds, a local government should always stress equal rights and equal treatment of all individual and organisations, religious or non-religious and be clear about the law and other regulations and communicate motives for relevant decision, improve the network of the city administration and invest in the relationship between the city authorities and administration and individual (muslim) organisations in civil society: get to know each other and keep in touch.

## 6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation

### 6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population

Amsterdam is alert on forms of right wing extremism or anti-immigrant movements, but it is not clearly manifest in the city. Of course there are people who are negative about multicultural society in general or Muslims in particular, but they are not mobilized or organised. As Van Donselaar & Rodriguez (2006) show in the '*Monitor Racism and Extremism*', most incidents took place in several smaller municipalities but not in Amsterdam, though anti-Semitic incidents and arson in mosques are also reported in Amsterdam.

The extent of voting at the elections for the right wing '*Partij voor de Vrijheid*' (PVV) may give some indication for the extent of resentment against immigrants among Amsterdammers: 4.5 % of Amsterdammers voted during the 2006 national elections for the right wing party of Wilders '*Partij voor de Vrijheid*' (PVV), compared to the national average of 5.6% but this has recently increased. In the European elections the Amsterdam mean was 12.8 % and the national mean 17%. As table 9 shows, there are big differences between the city districts of Amsterdam. City Districts Amsterdam Noord, Geuzenveld Slotermeer Osdorp and Slotervaart have the highest percentage of votes for the PVV. The areas with relatively more PVV voters are not systematically the areas with a lot of immigrants or a majority of Dutch.

**Table 9. Percentage of ethnic group per city district in 2006 and percentage of percentage of votes for Wilders' PVV in the national election of 2006, and the European elections of 2009 (colours show high concentrations and a high percentage of right wing voting)**

City district	% Surina-mese	% Antil-leans	% Turks	% Moroc-cans	% other non wester-n	% Wester-n Immig-r	% Dutch	% immig-r.	% Votes PVV 2006	% votes PVV 2009
Centrum	4	1	1	2	7	23	63	37	2.6	7.0
Westpoort	2	1	3	0	4	21	70	30	4.9	9.9
Westerpark	7	1	3	9	10	16	55	45	3.5	10.0
Oud-West	4	1	2	5	7	19	62	38	2.7	7.7
Zeeburg	11	1	7	13	9	12	46	54	2.7	7.3
Bos & Lommer	7	1	16	23	9	10	35	65	4.4	12.0
De Baarsjes	7	1	9	11	9	14	49	51	3.6	9.7
Noord	9	1	5	9	10	9	56	44	9.4	26.7
Geuzenveld-Slotermeer	8	1	16	23	8	9	35	65	7.6	24.2
Osdorp	9	1	10	16	7	10	48	52	8.2	25.9
Slotervaart	8	1	8	16	9	12	47	53	6.0	19.0
Zuidoost	32	6	1	2	21	8	29	71	3.6	16.2
Oost/Wgm	8	1	5	10	8	14	55	45	3.7	10.2
Oud-Zuid	4	1	2	4	7	20	63	37	2.5	7.8
ZuiderAmstel	4	1	1	2	6	20	66	34	3.7	12.6

Total	9	2	5	9	9	14	52	48	4.5	12.8
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Source: O+S (note that Westport is an industrial terrain with a settlement of artists)

Negative attitudes and expressions towards immigrants and Muslims in the national media, have actually motivated citizens, foundations and organisations to organise activities which aim at connecting people of different backgrounds. At the same time this climate probably has a negative effect on more vulnerable people among the immigrants and leads to withdrawal into their own community. In city districts like *Bos & Lommer* our interviewees report that particularly Moroccans think that Dutch police men, school authorities and city district officials are against them. Issue are for instance “that the police only arrest Moroccans” and “that our kids are per definition send to the lowest school level”

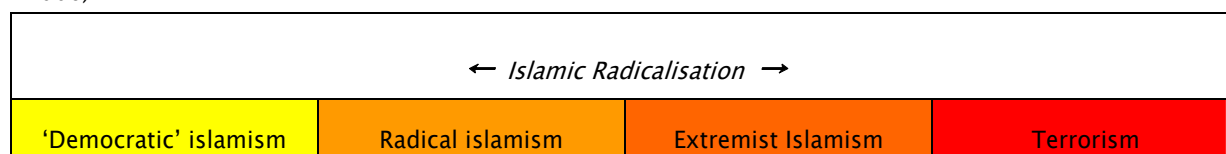
Some of the more extreme resentment against immigrants – especially Muslims – is expressed on the internet on web pages like *Polinco*, *Stormfront* and *Holland Hardcore*, according to Van Donselaar & Rodriguez (2006). These web pages exist on national level, and there is not particular connection to Amsterdam.

## 6.2 Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population

As described in chapter 4, the *Wij Amsterdammers Program* was established after the murder of Theo Van Gogh and therefore has a strong focus on anti-radicalisation. This includes all forms of radicalisation, including right wing extremist and animal liberation extremism, but after the ‘analysis of conflict potential’ (in 2004); the municipality concluded that Muslim radicalisation was a more urgent subject to deal with in Amsterdam than the other two forms.

To start it was necessary to develop some conceptual clarity to find out what radicalisation actually really means. Work of the *Algemene Inlichtingen en Veiligheids Dienst* (AIVD Dutch Intelligence Service) and literature helped to clarify the concepts in ‘*Beleidskader Radicalisering*’ (Policy Lines Radicalisation, Gemeente Amsterdam 2006). Radicalisation is not the same as terrorism or orthodoxy. Terrorism includes acts of violence; while a person that is becoming religiously orthodox does not necessarily harm anybody in the sense that he will perform any violent act. Terrorism is the responsibility of the police, and orthodoxy is a religious choice so not something that the state should interfere with. Radicalisation is defined as: “the growing readiness to aim for or support far reaching changes in the society that are not in line with the democratic rule of law or where undemocratic means are used” (Gemeente Amsterdam 2006). Figure 8 shows a scale with the phases of Islamic Radicalisation, from orthodoxy (democratic Islamism) to violence (terrorism).

**Figure 8 Scale of Islamic Radicalisation** as described in ‘*Beleidskader Radicalisering*’ (Gemeente Amsterdam 2006)





The hardcore jihadi groups are primarily the responsibility of the police. The city is concerned about those in the process of radicalisation – internalizing the jihadi ideology – and joining these networks or groups and wishes to prevent this. The city recognises that prevention must deal with three different levels (cited from CRS):

- General prevention: tackle the breeding ground of grievances that may lead young Muslims to be convinced by a jihadi worldview, including the grievance of islamophobia and discrimination which seems to be growing among the majority population. Therefore they focus among other things on social cohesion to tackle the breeding ground
- Specific prevention: recognize that young seeking Muslims are at risk of encountering the jihadi ideology. The city seeks to strengthen the resilience in the Muslim communities.
- Recognise that some individuals are on this path of radicalisation and are beyond basic prevention, but are not dangerous enough, so the police is not interested. The city tries to assist youth-professionals in dealing with radicalising youth through positive interventions (coaching, mentoring, standard assistance, and ideological challenge). In some cases the police are informed, but only take charge when there are indications of relevant preparatory action.

At the same time a research assignment on the situation in Amsterdam was given to Sloodman & Tillie, which led to a report in 2006 (Sloodman & Tillie 2006). After this, the next policy paper was written '*Amsterdam tegen radicalisering*' (Amsterdam against Radicalisation, Gemeente Amsterdam 2007), in which the approach was described and money allocated. Muslim radicalisation is described as political, because its aims are political. However, the political ideology of the islamists and more specifically, of the jihadists, claims Islam as a framework (rhetoric, symbolism, justification, etc) for its ideology. The religious discourse is necessary to pull radicalising youngsters back.

The field is divided in three subjects: 1) diminishing the breeding ground for radicalisation, 2) enlarging the resistance of vulnerable groups and their social and professional networks, and 3) anti-radicalisation for those who are in the radicalisation process. City District *Slotervaart* was on the front line of these policies, because the murderer of Theo van Gogh came from this district and its district mayor Marcouch had put the theme on the agenda after he was elected in March 2006. So in 2007 this developed further into a testing ground for new activities and projects; and a specialised civil servant was appointed to develop and implement the approach in Slotervaart. Meanwhile in 2009 nine out of fourteen City Districts have laid down their own local anti-radicalisation policy and six city districts decided to appoint a special civil servant to implement the policy. Though the list of activities in all these city districts, but especially in *Slotervaart* is too big to treat all aspects, we will try to give an impression of the work:

#### Ad 1. Diminishing the breeding ground for radicalisation.

Activities that can be considered to diminish the breeding ground for radicalisation can be general, like the Ramadanfestival, which is meant to improve contacts between groups, and a project that focuses on media and image formation.

Some of the breeding ground for radicalisation is found to be related to experiences of discrimination and prejudice that occur in the Dutch context<sup>21</sup>. One of the frustrations that youngsters report in the interviews, is that they think – due to prejudice – their chances in the educational system, on the labour market and even on the streets are much more of a problem than for Dutch. An important activity is therefore to fight discrimination. Complaints on discrimination can go to the general *'Meldpunt Discriminatie Regio-Amsterdam'* (Anti Discrimination Office Amsterdam), which is considered very important and this office is actively supported with an information campaign that discrimination should be reported.

#### Ad 2. Increasing resilience (empowerment)<sup>22</sup>

At a second level of influencing the process of (de-)radicalisation, Amsterdam tries to increase resilience within Muslim communities. One aspect is to support parents with children who are in search of their religious and cultural identity. Both parents and children become more resilient, and can cope better with their situation. It has been noticed that support for parents is needed, though the parents do not easily come with questions to Dutch institutions, because staff has often limited attention for their identity. For that reason a pilot project was organised in City District *Slotervaart*, 'Course Support in Upbringing', directed at cultural aspects of upbringing (Slotervaart 2008: 14; Gielen 2008). The course was organised a Secondary School in the neighbourhood. It turned out that many parent actually worry about issues, like how to cope with a daughter who has become extremely religious and who not only wants to wear the headscarf but even a larger cover, and starts to tell her parents how to behave or a boy that doesn't follow any Muslim rule anymore, but also no Dutch rule. Parents do not always have enough knowledge about Islam, but also not about Dutch society to enter into a serious discussion, and see their children drifting into unwanted directions without being able to stop them. In this case a lot of issues had to do with religion, but it could be anything else, depending on the needs of parents.

Training of teachers is also an important element of the approach. Teachers learn to be open to a different cultural experience, to be able to understand each other better and to create a better climate. They also learn to recognize which boys and girls are getting lost in their search for a positive identity, understand them and support them. Often teachers know kids well, and notice that behaviour is changing and the kids need help. This does not only apply to extreme cases that are already very interested in Salafi ideology, but also to boys and girls who are angered by the TV images of Palestinians suffering, and drawing far fetched conclusions. A teacher has to distinguish which problems he can tackle, for instance by arranging a discussion on the Palestine conflict, and for which problems he has to find the support of someone who is for instance educated in Islamic theology.

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<sup>21</sup> Prejudice is not the only factor that influences this process. Buijs ea. (2006) points at three factors: the need for acceptance (if the subject perceived negative attitudes, he or she has problems to feel accepted by the surrounding society), trying to give meaning and a sense of justice (if the subject perceives – real or unreal– dissimilar treatment for instance at school, on the labour market or by the police, his or her chances increase to become radical).

<sup>22</sup> The Amsterdam officials use the word 'increasing resilience' meaning the strength to cope flexibly. Comments on our text showed that not everybody understood this terminology. Generally one can see this as a form of empowerment.

Muslim associations play an important role in diminishing the breeding ground for radicalisation and to increasing resilience and empowerment of youngsters. They can make their members aware of the different views on Islam, provide them with information on what is orthodox and what is moderate and organise discussion on this. In general it is important to make the existing Muslim organisations stronger and to support youngsters. The city cannot directly support activities with a religious content. To strengthen the Muslim communities resilience, a group of active 'high potential' youngsters was gathered from all relevant Muslim denominations in the '*Network of Key Figures*', as we have discussed in section 5.3. Supporting the '*Muslim Jongeren Amsterdam JMA*', (and thereby indirectly stimulating the network between the '*Union of Moroccan Mosques in Amsterdam UMMAO*' de '*Raad van Moskeeen*' (Council of Mosques) and the '*Polder Mosque*') succeeded to a certain extent. These active youngsters also participate in many of the discussion meetings. The group received training, but as said, several proposals are currently waiting for permission, and not yet executed.

Directed to increasing resilience and empowerment at a personal level can mean that people at risk join in so called '*Socratic discussions*' (Slotervaart, 2008: 12). The pilot took place in the *El Ouma mosque* in Slotervaart, where the special imam for youngsters led the discussion. Basically the imam presented all kinds of social questions and themes and asked the youngsters to reply. The central message was: be critical towards your source of information, and take your responsibility as an individual in society. About 50 to 60 youngsters joined in the five meetings that were organised before the summer holiday of 2008 (Gielen 2008). One of the discussion leaders explains that these kinds of debates are particularly useful to break black and white thinking. For instance, a boy remarks: "We cannot trust the Dutch: they are against Muslims!" The discussion leader replies: "How did you conclude that?". The boy: "Haven't you seen what they say on TV everyday?" The discussion leader: "Who did you see on TV?" The boy: "well, a politician!" The discussion leader: "Is a politician the same as the Dutch?" The boy: "many Dutch vote for him ...". The discussion leader "How many?" .... etcetera. The discussion leader experienced this as a more rewarding way of communicating than just lecturing; he explains that it is most interesting because the discussions often about values and after a while the boys really learn to reason following Islamic moral values.

Another project on this more personal level was an empowerment training for Muslim women, in weak position. Again the pilot 'Training Identity and Empowerment for Muslim girls' took place in City District *Slotervaart* (Slotervaart 2008: 13; Gielen 2009). The first problem that the organisers encountered, was how to convince girls to join such training. In this case they found a group of about 16 girls – part of a larger collective of 50 to 60 – who surrounded a lady that gave orthodox lectures on Islam and advice and guidance to women. The girls were insecure about their (Muslim/Moroccan/Dutch) identity. They used the *El Ouma mosque* and heard there about the Socratic talks and thought they could profit from similar discussions. Six out of sixteen finished the training and went through stages like –1– 'turning point' (self reflection, building up a positive self-image, improving the ability to word ones thoughts and feelings, and solving problems), –2– 'moral judgement' (understanding how a moral judgement comes about, understanding how Dutch society developed with goals like freedom, prosperity and happiness and coping with religious dilemma's) and –3– conflict management (as a girl, towards parents and brothers, towards husbands). Though relatively few girls finished the training, for the ones that got through, the effect was enormous. They were better able to think critically, they became active discussion partners at religious meetings, and they became happier with themselves, their families and their surroundings.

One of the problems that this example shows is that it is extremely difficult to approach the group that is at risk to radicalisation. If this group had not asked to use the mosque, they would never have been found. Probably there are more such groups that operate from homes. If the mosques had a broader reach towards this kind of individuals and small groups, it would be easier to spot and support them.

### Ad 3. Anti-radicalisation

One of the early activities concerning the actual anti-radicalisation has been to set up the *Informatie Huishouding Radicalisering* (IHH, Information Household Radicalisation) as a central place where professionals who think that individuals or groups are in the process of radicalising can report this. A multidisciplinary team analyses the case, gives advice to the professional about possible interventions and contacts. Professionals from schools, youth work, police and city districts – who are trained to recognize radicalisation – can phone the *Information Household* for a report or advice. The office is part of *Openbare Orde en Veiligheid* (OVV, the department of public order and safety). The department has to function very carefully when it comes to privacy of individuals.

If a case of actual radicalisation is confirmed, the notifier gets advice to ask the cooperation of people that surround the group or individual. The example of the training showed that it is not always easy to convince someone to join activities. The cooperation of imam, school teachers, youth workers, parents, family members and anybody who could be important is asked. Parents are informed of what the views of their son or daughter could imply. Firstly the social problems are addressed: home, income, school, health, psychiatry. If possible he or she is provoked into discussions with a religious expert. During discussion – as with the Socratic discussions – the consequences of someone's thinking are reasoned through just by asking questions to stimulate a process of critical thinking for instance: 'would that mean that you would fight a war against your father?', or 'would that mean that you would also kill your sister?' or 'and do you think you are a good Muslim when you do this?' The *Information Household* estimates that there are not more than 8 or 10 cases per year to whom this most extreme interference applies. One has to realise that the chance to find a psychiatric problem among this extreme group is considerable.

Note that we only described a few of the 16 projects in '*Amsterdam tegen Radicalisering*' (Gemeente Amsterdam 2007) and a few of the 24 projects of which progress were reported in the '*Voortgangrapportage Actieplan Slotervaart*' (Progress Report on the Action Plan in Slotervaart) (Slotervaart 2008). The plans have been initiated with an enormous power, and the actually very limited numbers of staff that work on them deserve compliments.

### 6.3 Communication strategy concerning radicalisation

The communication strategies to fight radicalisations go to all the directions that we have already described: firstly the message that 'We Amsterdammers' are free to choose any religion, including a more orthodox religion, and secondly that aggressive acts towards individuals or categories are forbidden by law and will be punished. Unfortunately Amsterdam's message is sometimes surpassed by other priorities of journalists. As a representative of the municipality explains: "Newspapers main strategy is to sell and TV stations want airtime. There is a strong interest in everything Muslim and controversial and the experience is that the press has a flexible attitude toward precision in reporting".

#### 6.4 Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt

As we have seen the approach of Amsterdam is completely new, innovative and fully under development. Particularly on the actual de-radicalisation, it is too early to judge to what extent the approach is effective. That the activities to establish and support networks have a positive effect has already been proven in other circumstances.

But from the example of Amsterdam we can draw some clear lessons. Firstly, it is impossible to fight Muslim radicalisation without the cooperation of Muslim organisations. The policy papers on this subject are much clearer here than we have seen in other cases. It is quite surprising how much has already been set into motion with the limited staff that works on it. This was only possible since Muslims themselves felt that a real need is addressed, supported by Muslims in key positions like district mayor Marcouch. The bottom up interest of the organisations, motivated by the increasing prejudice about Muslims, and by the urge to stop children in polarising further, has led to a development in the community. It has now become normal that the *El Ouma mosque* in Slotervaart cooperated with the City District when riots nearly broke out after someone was shot inside the neighbouring police station on *August Alebeplein* in 2007. The closer ties with the mosque have led to more trust. This is beneficial for the authorities and good for the neighbourhood. A second lesson is that it actually takes time before this subject really gets through on all levels where it is supposed to be addressed. The report by City District *Slotervaart*, where most of the projects took place, shows that already within the city district administration not everyone was immediately ready to act and many departments need to get involved. And after the officials, all the social institutions, the youth workers and the schools, and the hundreds of supporting agencies and foundations also need to get convinced. A third lesson is that a lot depends on the staff members that are employed. The experts that currently work in the *Information Household* and in City District *Slotervaart* are very capable, both as experts and in terms of their social capacity to explain the radicalisation issue to others. They have managed to gain trust of the associations of immigrants and other institutions. Without finding such qualified people, preferably from Muslim groups, it would probably be impossible to convince others of the approach. That *Slotervaart* works only with two experts and the *Information Household* with four makes it possible to operate innovative, but on the other hand it is a risk (too much work; if one quits the knowledge is gone). The increase of staff in this field in five other city districts creates a more stable system.

Whether or not the breeding ground for radicalisation will disappear, is of course not only dependent on the effort of policy makers and active groups in Amsterdam. It is also largely dependent on general social and economic developments. The two forms of polarisation that we treated in this chapter, right wing radicalisation and Muslim radicalisation are two extreme parts of a much larger story in which both immigrants and Dutch try to cope with a changing world. There are a few signs that the situation is getting worse: the recent increase of voting for parties with anti-immigrant issues and the new research by CCME which shows that Moroccans in the Netherlands feel more rejected than in other European countries and unhappiness is growing particularly among the youngsters (CCME 2009). A general anti-polarisation policy might become more and more relevant in the coming years.

## 7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

In this report we have treated the policies of Amsterdam on inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, with special attention to the Moroccan Muslim associations in Amsterdam and on radicalisation. As we have seen in chapter 4 associations of immigrants are traditionally supported in Amsterdam, including religious associations. This has led to a large network of immigrant associations and an active civic community. In times of crisis the municipality can both depend on (multi) cultural and religious associations, and in the chapter 6 on radicalisation we have seen how Muslim associations are indispensable in this field.

Amsterdam searches actively for successful bottom-up initiatives, like the one of Saïd Bensellam for Moroccan youngsters. The advantage of these initiatives is that volunteers are highly motivated and convinced of the need of their activities.

Subsidizing religious associations is a tradition in the Netherlands, and went on unnoticed for many years. Nobody ever protested when *Leger des Heils* (the Salvation Army) received its usual budget. But in the last ten years Amsterdam bumped roughly into the discussion on Church and State, and because the discussion on Muslims in general became much harder, subsidies to Muslim associations were also more easily questioned. It was necessary to write a policy paper on Church and State with clear starting points when payments to religious associations are possible and when not.

In chapter 5 we saw that a particular bottom up initiative, the *Poldermoskee*, which fits very well to the needs of many young searching Muslims, and also to the issues that are addressed as essential in all the policy documents, is at this point in financial problems. Supporting religious organisations remains controversial, though the guidelines have become easier after a grounded document has been written about it. The plans of Muslim associations, who proposed 'social' projects that were on hold will probably speed up now this phase is passed.

The anti-radicalisation policy in chapter 6 is completely new and innovative. It has many aspects that are easy to implement in other cities, where the phenomena of radicalising youngsters is not yet known or maybe not recognized. The preventive measures against radicalisation actually prevent also a lot of other problems, like for instance organising support for parent's upbringing, or information provision on the diversity in Islam or support for young 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants to feel more connected to the (secular) western world.

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## 9 Interview partners

1. Marian Visser, Platform Amsterdam Samen, Municipality of Amsterdam, city contact person for Amsterdam
2. Joris Rijbroek, Platform Amsterdam Samen, Municipality of Amsterdam, responsible official for the policy note on the division of church and state
3. Henk van Waveren, Director of the Platform Amsterdam Samen, Municipality of Amsterdam
4. Luc Holleman, official at the Central Social and Welfare Department ideas (Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling) responsible for subsidies towards ethnic organisations and for the bureau that finances good Municipality of Amsterdam.
5. Saadia Ait-Taleb, officials at the Information House on radicalisation (Informatiehuishouding radicalisering) Municipality of Amsterdam
6. Collin Mellis, officials at the Information House on radicalisation (Informatiehuishouding radicalisering) Municipality of Amsterdam, lecture at IMES on the theoretical background
7. Imogen Vermeulen, representative of City District Westerpark responsible for policies on social cohesion and against polarisation
  
8. Saïd Bensellam, Sticing Connect, Prizewinner 'Amsterdammer of the year 2007' and organiser of a project in Bos & Lommer supporting Muslim youth
9. Jan-Joris Hoefnagel, working at Project Bureau Capabel, supporting initiatives like Connect , and intermediary between financiers, administration and active citizens
  
10. Aouatif Tawfik, official of City District Slotervaart, responsible for the work on the action plan against radicalisation of Muslim youth in Slotervaart.
11. Hassan El Maimoun, official of City District Slotervaart, responsible for the work on the action plan against radicalisation of Muslim youth in Slotervaart.
  
12. Zakariya Lyousofi , member of Moslim Jongeren Amsterdam (MJA), participant in the training of key figures, and boardmember and organiser of activities in the Polder Mosque
13. Yasmine El Ksaihi, Chairwomen of the Polder Mosque, participant in the training of key figures, before that active in the Al Kabir mosque
14. Aissa Zanzen, Chairperson of the board of the Muslim Broadcasting Organisations NMO, member of the Union of Moroccan mosques in Amsterdam (UMMAO), and chair of some of the Socratic Discussions held for youngsters
  
15. Marcel Maussen, Researcher on Mosque building and author of "Space for Islam" , Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam
  
16. Visited a lecture by Collin Mellis of the Information House on radicalisation (Informatiehuishouding radicalisering) Municipality of Amsterdam on the backgrounds of the radicalisation approach

17. Visited a lecture by Marieke Sloomman and Jean Tillie of the University of Amsterdam on processes of radicalisation and de-radicalisation.