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# The Muslim Communities Project

*Edited and introduced by Suha Taji-Farouki*

## Volume 2:

## Muslim communities in the Netherlands and Germany

**State, politics and Islamic institutions: Turks in the Netherlands and Germany**

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**Turkish Islamic organizations and the Dutch state: new opportunities?**

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# Introduction

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The general theme of this second volume in the **Muslim Communities Project** series (published as *CMEIS Occasional Papers*) is the process of institutionalisation among Muslim communities in Western Europe. While the volume as a whole focuses on the particular case of Turkish Muslims in the Netherlands, in the first paper a comparison is offered with the parallel community in reunified Germany (and, prior to its creation, in the former Federal Republic of Germany). **Jeroen Doomernik** traces developments in the institutionalisation of Turkish Islam in both countries in the aftermath of family reunification, which reached a peak during the mid-1970s. Approximately a decade later, and coinciding with the coming of age of the second generation of Muslim immigrants, a significant evolution and diversification of Islamic institutional functions in Western Europe in general could be discerned. At this point, Doomernik argues, a marked divergence between institutionalisation processes in the Dutch and German contexts became apparent. Whereas in the Netherlands a highly diversified and dynamic process of institutionalisation took a firm root, far less diversification and dynamism have been evident in Germany, with the result that fewer opportunities are available to Turkish Muslims for participating in German society on terms of their own making. Doomernik analyses this difference between the Dutch and German experiences in terms of the contrasting political cultures and legal structures of the two countries.

The second paper in this volume considers the process of Islamic institutionalisation in the Dutch context in further detail. **Thijl Sunier** also maps the genesis and evolution of Islamic organisations in the Netherlands, focusing most recently on their endeavour not only to secure Muslim interests, but also to obtain access to political channels and decision-making structures. The author focuses on the specific example of the city of Rotterdam, which has one of the largest Muslim communities in the Netherlands, and is the first Dutch municipality to adopt a coherent policy towards Islamic organisations as a distinct category. Approaching these organisations as specific examples of collective action, Sunier analyses their potential for success in terms both of the broader political and socio-economic context, and of their internal characteristics, especially those relating to recruitment, mobilisation, and power relations

between leadership and rank-and-file. This approach rejects the notion that the development and activities of Islamic organisations are in some way peculiarly 'Islamic', or explicable in terms of Islam *per se*. This detailed case-study underlines the fact that relations between Islamic organisations and the local Rotterdam urban community evolve in accordance with a process that is evidently dialectical in character. Sunier concludes that the discourse of these organisations is hence itself subject to the successive changes generated by this process: the implications of this should be taken into account when discussing possible future articulations of Islam in Western Europe.

# State, politics and Islamic institutions: Turks in the Netherlands and Germany

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Large numbers of Muslim guest workers arrived in Western Europe from the Mediterranean countries during the 1960s. It was generally held that these immigrants would stay for a short period only - long enough to accumulate money to invest in a future existence in their country of origin, but by far too short to allow them to take root in their countries of temporary residence.

For a variety of reasons, however, many guest workers did not manage to accumulate enough capital (or did not do so as quickly or as easily as they had expected), to enable them to return home. In the meantime, economic, political and social conditions at home had deteriorated, giving these immigrants further reason to postpone their return. Moreover, many decided to invite their dependent relatives to join them. Although this move was meant to be of a temporary nature, it had unforeseen consequences and complicated plans for return. Consequently, many of these guest workers came to be genuine, permanent immigrants (Muus & Penninx 1991; Bade 1993).

In January 1993 the Netherlands had an estimated Muslim population of 566,000 (Prins 1994:22). Most of this population is of Turkish or Moroccan origin. Exact and up-to-date figures for the numbers of Muslims among these two groups have not been published. The numbers of nationals (which are not per definition

Note: The basic data for this paper were collected during a four-year study (1986-90) of Islamic institutionalization in Amsterdam and West Berlin (with some excursions to other Dutch and German cities), and were previously published in Dutch (Doomernik 1991). The data have been updated where possible. I owe thanks to Thijl Sunier for helping me with fresh information on Islamic broadcasting in the Netherlands, and to Pieter Gorter for his critical remarks on an earlier version of this paper.

all Muslims) from both countries are, however, available and provide some indication of their relative size. In January 1993 the Turkish population in the Netherlands stood at 212,000 and the Moroccan population at 165,000. Comparatively small numbers of Muslim immigrants also come from the former Dutch colony of Surinam and from several other countries, for example, Egypt and Pakistan.[1]

At the time of the last census in 1987, Germany had 706,366 Muslim inhabitants. Of these, 584,921 were Turkish nationals. Turks constitute the largest immigrant community (estimated at 1,854,945 at 31 December 1992) in the country.[2] By far the largest Turkish population (137,021 at 30 June 1993) is to be found in Berlin.[3] Whereas in Amsterdam Turkish mosques make up less than half the total, in the German capital the vast majority of Islamic institutions are Turkish.[4] Owing to this predominance of Turkish immigrants a comparison between Islamic institutionalization in Germany and the Netherlands is most instructively made on the basis of data from the Turkish communities there specifically. Given the ongoing debates in both countries on multiculturalism and national identity, it is especially interesting to look at the interaction between various Islamic institutions and the functions they seek to fulfil on the one hand, and the state's attitude and political stance towards them on the other.

## The beginning

The young Turks who arrived as guest workers in the Netherlands and Germany gave little attention to religious activities. Occasionally (for example during Ramadan), arrangements for prayer were made but no permanent facilities were created. The process of family reunification which reached a peak in the mid-1970s changed this, however, as it became necessary to create conditions under which culture and religion could be conserved and transmitted to the next generation. In other words, until one could actually return home, a re-creation of the home context had to be attempted in the Netherlands and Germany.

At first Qur'anic schools were established, often functioning as the first step towards more comprehensive institutions, which might encompass prayer-rooms, a small shop, a library, offices and a coffee-house all under one roof. Today, such institutions, which I refer to simply as mosques, are common in the larger cities of Western Europe.

In the Dutch cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht a mosque is available for every 2,000 Turkish inhabitants. In the German cities of Berlin and Cologne this figure tends to be much higher, with around 4,000 persons to every mosque. The main exception is Duisburg (1:1,500)

[1] In Amsterdam Muslims from each of these countries have at least one mosque of their own.

[2] This is likely to mean that, for unknown reasons, only a few Turks in Germany made mention of their religion in the last census.

[3] All data are provided by the Statistisches Bundesamt.

[4] While Muslims of other nationalities do participate in their activities, most of their functionaries and imams are Turkish.

whose mosque quota is well below the average for Dutch cities.[1]

After a decade of rapid mosque proliferation several more or less parallel processes began. First, the orientation of mosque organizations shifted gradually from an exclusive emphasis on preserving a Turkish identity and culture, to a search for ways to address the challenge of perpetuating a Muslim identity and lifestyle in a Dutch or German context. This development was accompanied by the growing interest and influence of second generation immigrants[2] in mosque committees, who formed the typical (if not the sole) movers in this shift in orientation.

Secondly, political antagonisms between left and right, but also between different Turkish religious groups, lost part of their virulence during the first half of the 1980s. Such conflicts had originally fuelled serious competition among immigrant Turks, having marked effects on the institutionalization process. Following the construction of the first mosques many later initiatives were the result of splits or of downright attempts to poach members from rival institutions. By the mid-1980s, however, a certain equilibrium had been established between their respective ideologies: this was cemented in several nationwide (and even Europe-wide) organizations.

## Turkish Islamic organizations in Europe

Following the abolition of the Islamic caliphate and the subsequent introduction of secular government under Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish state established a monopoly on Islamic activities. Hence in theory it runs all mosques, Islamic schools and other Islamic institutions, and all imams are state employees. To exercise this monopoly the Directorate of Religious Affairs was established in 1924; this is currently called Diyanet İşleri Başkanliği (Diyanet in short).

Owing to the Diyanet's monopoly over religious activities other Islamic movements have been at best tolerated, and at times explicitly suppressed, in Turkey (cf. Van Bruinessen 1989: 31-2). Their situation altered drastically, however, with the migration of large numbers of Turks to countries where the Diyanet's restriction of religious activities had not yet reached. Thus many of the first Islamic institutions in Holland and Germany adopted an ideological line which rebelled against Diyanet policy. Their opposition either had a strong political component, or was first and foremost religious in nature. The Milli Görüş, which was established as a political movement in 1972 (Werle & Kreile 1987:80), are the best known example of the first type of opposition, while the Süleymancilar, a movement founded by Süleyman

[1] All data derive from 1989. While several hypotheses can be advanced to explain this discrepancy, these are mainly of a geographical nature (Van Amersfoort, Doomernik & De Klerk 1989; Doomernik 1991:108-11), and are not wholly relevant in this context.

[2] The children of the initial guest workers constitute the second generation. While some may have been born in Turkey, they generally spent their childhood, and were educated, in Germany or Holland.

Hilmi Tunahan (1988-1959) in response to Atatürk's attempts to secularise Turkish society (Ibid: 40), are the best known example of the second type. The Milli Görüş, which has strong links with the Turkish Refah Partisi (founded in the mid-1980s and successor of the Milli Selamet Partisi which was banned after the 1980 military *coup d'état*), stands for a fundamentalist Islam. Politically the movement strives for the establishment of a Turkish Islamic state. The Süleymancilar movement seeks primarily to be left alone, and to enjoy the freedom to express its own religious ideas. Both movements have gained substantial influence among Turkish immigrants in Europe and are well organized into Europe-wide federations with their headquarters in Cologne, Germany.

From the outset mosques were established in the Netherlands and Germany adopting an ideological line similar to that of the Diyanet policy in Turkey (or at least sympathetic to it). However the Diyanet itself initially showed little or no interest in extending its influence beyond the Turkish borders. Around 1980 this attitude changed, and the Diyanet began to offer financial support to existing mosques in Europe and to send imams to these. It also established new institutions. This change in policy was presumably triggered by a desire on the part of the military government established after the coup of 1980 to regain control over anti-Kemalistic tendencies which had spread freely in Germany and other European countries, and were being re-imported to Turkey. The Diyanet's policy in Europe has thus tended to be reactive: for example, it was not until the Dutch branch of the Milli Görüş began to establish Islamic schools in the Netherlands that the Diyanet did the same. Somewhat paradoxically, the Diyanet has by now established itself as what is arguably the most powerful Turkish Islamic organization in Europe. While its central headquarters is of course in Turkey, its European headquarters is to be found in Cologne. Berlin and The Hague house its regional offices.

## Dutch and German political culture

Both Germany and the Netherlands have well-established legal safeguards to protect the interests of cultural and religious minorities. The expression of culture and religion is considered to be a private matter, and hence lies beyond state interference. However, there are considerable differences between the two countries with respect to the ways in which this principle is implemented. The German state takes little or no initiative towards the institutionalization of immigrant culture and religion; nor does it offer much response to such initiatives from immigrant communities. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, some initiatives have been taken to strengthen the involvement of immigrants in the political arena and to help them to institutionalize cultural and religious interests. In addition, initiatives from within minority (immigrant and other) communities can expect to meet with a positive response. To explain these differences it is necessary to examine German and Dutch political traditions, and to consider their current policies towards immigrants.

Dutch society and politics have long been characterized by a pluralist tradition described by the concept of pillars or blocs (*verzuiling*). This "pillarized" (*verzuild*) system resulted historically from the co-habitation of several ideological groups (Catholics, Protestants, liberals and socialists), none of which was large or powerful enough to dominate the others. At the apex, where these pillars met, national politics were made. Out of necessity, decisions came about by compromise rather than confrontation (cf. Lijphart 1968). Each group had its own sub-society structured around independent institutions; each had its own schools, universities, media, trade unions, political parties and, of course (and where relevant), churches. In an endeavour to guarantee to each group the same access to education and broadcasting, schools and radio and television were funded by the state.

Although over recent decades Dutch society has shed many of its "pillarized" characteristics, the legal framework in which this "pillarization" was regulated persists, and can indeed be claimed by new minorities. For example, provided that a minimum number of immigrants demonstrates commitment to their use, the Dutch state is legally bound to facilitate and to fund the creation of certain immigrant institutions.[1]

In the early 1980s it was gradually accepted in Dutch politics (albeit with some reluctance) that the Turks who had originally arrived as guest workers had become genuine immigrants. It therefore became a logical necessity for the state to develop integration policies. Since then it has been relatively straightforward for foreign legal residents to obtain Dutch citizenship, even without relinquishing their previous nationality. Foreigners have also been granted the right to vote at the municipal level, and immigrant organizations (including Turkish Islamic ones) are tied into Advisory Committees which serve both local and national government.

In contrast with the Netherlands where political culture has been shaped through a process of evolution, German political culture was forged through revolution. The German political structure was built almost from scratch following World War II, making it modern but also, in some respects, rather rigid. The position of religious denominations (namely, the Catholic and Protestant churches) within society was clearly defined, and they were granted a significant degree of autonomy (Jacobs 1992). While general education, broadcasting, trade unionism and party politics were considered to lie beyond the domain of the religious denominations, the state would see to it that a certain plurality prevailed in both the media and the educational system. Nevertheless it remains in theory possible to open up non-state schools based on specific denominational (or pedagogic) preferences. The German federal states (Bundesländer) enjoy a large degree of autonomy in regulating their school system (Keller 1992:154), with each federal state determining the conditions under which such private schools must operate. In North Rhine-

[1] For further discussion of the concept of pillars and its implications for new Muslim immigrant communities see Nielsen 1992: 61-2.

Westphalia, for example, denominational schools are the exclusive domain of the Catholic and Protestant churches: hence Islamic primary schools could be accepted only after amendment of this federal state's constitution. In contrast in Berlin (which enjoys the status of a federal state) there are less fundamental legal barriers, but private schools face a practical problem in that every new school is required to fund itself fully for the first full educational cycle of six years. Only after it has proven its viability in this trial period, will the Berlin authorities finance the bulk of the school's expenses.

The German state subsidizes certain welfare activities organized by the churches, and also pays for religious education in state schools. In addition, it collects church taxation on behalf of the churches from church members.[1] Although in principle these privileges are also available to other religious denominations, until now Islamic organizations have been unable to profit from this. The interpretation of the *"Staats-Kirchenrecht"*, the legal framework which closely regulates the relationship between state and church is such that Islam would have to present itself as a "church" in order to claim a position equal to those of the Catholic or Protestant churches. The Islamic community in Germany is far too divided along ethnic and political lines to make such a position feasible.

One might ask whether this conservative interpretation of the *"Staats-Kirchenrecht"* bears any relation to the majority opinion in the German parliament (especially among CDU/CSU (Christian democrats/conservative)), which holds that Germany has not experienced large-scale immigration,[2] and that consequently there is no requirement for policies on integration or multiculturalism. Currently, assimilation into German society or a return to the country of origin appear to be the only options which the German government is willing to accept.

The possibility of dual citizenship has recently been debated, however, with those advocating it underlining the positive effect it is likely to have on the integration of Turkish and other long-term immigrants. Opponents of dual citizenship pointed out that it would raise doubts concerning the individual's loyalty to the German (and for that matter the Turkish) state. The conservative view finally prevailed in parliament.

Several of the German federal states, including Berlin, have considered the possibility of allowing foreigners the right to vote in communal elections. This initiative was torpedoed in 1990 by a decision of the highest German court (Verfassungsgericht), which reserved suffrage exclusively to German citizens. In the meantime, the Maastricht treaty has actually undermined the unequivocality of this ruling, as it provides suffrage rights to citizens from all other European Union (EU) states. However, since Turkey is not an EU member state this does not have

[1] To avoid paying 8 to 9 per cent of their income tax to their church individuals must explicitly renounce their church membership. (Jacobs 1992:132).

[2] This statement clearly does not take into account the several hundred thousand ethnic Germans who have recently arrived in Germany from the former Soviet Union.

implications for the political participation of Turkish immigrants.

## Institutional diversification

The change in orientation within the Dutch and German Turkish Islamic communities towards more or less permanent residence in the new European context saw simultaneous changes in the general institutionalization process. Within mosque organizations attempts were made to develop activities which could enhance members' participation in the receiving society. Such activities were related in particular to employment opportunities, attempts being made to establish a relationship with local authorities in order to further the interests of the organization as a whole as well as those of its individual members. Informal social networks within the neighbourhood were also strengthened. Whether a particular mosque organization began to set such an agenda depended not only on its leadership but also on its ideology, with Milli Görüş and Diyanet mosques demonstrating a tendency to move in this direction. Neither Süleymancilar mosques nor those belonging to an extreme splinter group of the Milli Görüş movement (Islami Cemaatler ve Cemiyetler Birliği) have shown much interest in establishing ties with the German or Dutch contexts.[1]

Diyanet-controlled leadership in both the Netherlands and Germany generally aims at full integration of Turkish Muslims in the receiving societies. Accordingly, Islam must assume a form that does not conflict with Dutch or German culture. The Diyanet has established a daughter organization in the Netherlands (Hollanda Diyanet Vakfi) which duplicates its functions in Turkey, especially building, maintaining and running mosques, and employing imams for these. It has also assumed some of the functions typically undertaken by immigrant communities, including for example establishing a burial fund (which finances repatriation of the deceased to Turkey) and a fund to provide grants to promising students to top up the Dutch state grant. Closely linked to this Dutch Diyanet was another organization which was established to initiate and run Islamic primary schools: Islamitische Stichting Nederland Opvoeding & Onderwijs (ISNO) (the Islamic Foundation for Upbringing and Education in the Netherlands), a name which, incidentally, no longer refers only to Turkey or Turkish institutions. This is understandable since legal stipulations are that such schools cater for Muslim children and not for, for example, Turkish or Moroccan children as such. The ISNO, nonetheless, was clearly a Turkish affair. The ISNO functioned for a number of years only.

Although the Diyanet in Germany (Diyanet Ileri Türk-Islam Birliği) has goals very similar to those of its Dutch sister, it has not assumed a parallel institutional diversity. This can be explained partly by the legal difficulties confronted in Germany in

[1] The ICCB was founded in 1984 by Cemalettin Kaplan, a former Diyanet mufti, who was inspired by the Iranian revolution. Instead of hoping to introduce Islamic law in Turkey by peaceful means, like the Milli Görüş, he hoped to reach this goal by revolutionary means (see also Karakasoglu 1995: 102-7).

relation to the erection of foundations for the administration, for example, of real estate or other assets. A further reason resides in the limited opportunities that exist in Germany for institutionalizing interests which go beyond religion on the part of individual organizations.

In contrast with that of the Diyanet in the Netherlands and Germany, the younger leadership of the Milli Görüş professes a strong commitment to sustaining an identity as Muslims first and last, for whom country of residence, ethnicity and nationality are hence ultimately of minor importance. The Milli Görüş leadership seeks to amalgamate life in a modern western society with a strong Islamic morality. In order to achieve this, institutions in which such values can be inculcated and (re)generated are required. The establishment of Islamic primary schools on an equal footing with Catholic, Protestant or Jewish schools, is seen as an effective way of accomplishing this objective.

## Mosques

In addition to the performance of traditional functions like providing a place for prayer and Qur'an-teaching, many mosques assume roles which go beyond religion. This is especially clear in the case of the Netherlands. Many of these are inwardly oriented, providing for mutual assistance within the community and enabling its members to minimize contact with the wider German or Dutch society. For example financial aid can be made available (see for example Böcker 1994: 154-5), or social and psychological support (frequently provided by the imam). Almost every mosque also houses a grocery store and a coffee house.

In recent years mosques have increasingly assumed functions which aim at achieving stronger participation in, and contact with, the receiving society. In Amsterdam, for example, the Milli Görüş mosque now offers martial arts' classes, and its members participate in Dutch national competitions. The same applies to the soccer team of one of the city's Diyanet mosques (the Stichting Turks Islamitisch Sociaal Cultureel Centrum Amsterdam Noord). The latter mosque also offers Dutch-language courses, and courses for women introducing Dutch norms and customs pertaining to food, medicine and health. Another Diyanet mosque even offers its female members assistance in mastering riding a bicycle. Courses which aim at "emancipation" (which in Dutch policy jargon signifies enhancing the participation of minority groups in Dutch society), especially of female immigrants, are eligible for state subsidies and as an implicit consequence, the premises in which such activities are held may also be subsidized. The subsidy for such activities and the money saved by having part of the building paid for by the state enable mosque organizations to develop a much broader range of activities than one might expect to find in a religious institution.

In Germany provision of this type of state support is unthinkable. While subsidies for immigrant organizations are available a much clearer distinction between religious and secular activities is required by the authorities. The absence of financial support forces mosque organizations

to limit the scope of their activities, and to concentrate on their essential *raison d'être*: religion.

## Islamic schools

The first two Dutch Islamic primary schools were founded in 1988. One was initiated by Moroccan parents in the southern city of Eindhoven, while the other was primarily a Turkish initiative taken by second-generation parents who were also active supporters of the Milli Görüş movement. They had two aims: to equip their children with a stronger sense of Islamic morality, and to encourage the development of higher intellectual skills beyond those that could be acquired within the existing educational system, thus preparing them for their future lives as Muslims in a Dutch context. Thereafter there was a small boom in the establishment of Islamic schools: by 1989/90 six Islamic primary schools were functioning, and four years later their number had grown to 30.

The involvement of the Milli Görüş movement in the establishment of one of the first schools motivated Diyanet supporters to counterbalance this initiative by creating their own schools. Whereas the Milli Görüş-aligned schools thus tended to be the result of grassroots initiatives, the Diyanet-oriented schools were established as the result of initiatives coming from above, namely from the ISNO. In the longer term, the ISNO's approach could not rally enough support among parents, and in 1993 it was decided to conclude its operations (Dwyer & Meyer 1995). Consequently subsequent initiatives have originated on the local, rather than the national, level.

Although all of them are Islamic, there are some clear differences between Milli Görüş schools and those set up by the Diyanet (via the ISNO). In the Milli Görüş schools, the wearing of headscarves and the segregation of boys and girls are compulsory, whereas little is made of these matters in the Diyanet-run schools. An ISNO school in Amsterdam even considered permitting boys and girls to take physical education classes together, but this was rejected by the parents.

In contrast with the Netherlands, I am aware of only one successful attempt to establish an Islamic school in Germany. In 1989 the local Milli Görüş federation in Berlin opened a small primary school in an old industrial building in Kreuzberg. The city's school authorities gave provisional permission for the school to operate. If it has succeeded in achieving financial self-sufficiency over the first six years of its career, the granting of permanent permission will be considered. This stipulation implies total reliance on the contributions of parents and other sympathizers. In spite of the fact that parents have to contribute DM 200 per month, the number of applications for admission (70) for the 1994/95 school year considerably exceeded the school's capacity (30). The total number of pupils at that time was 130-140. Headscarves are not compulsory at this school (although almost all girls wear one); and boys and girls are only separated during swimming and sex education classes.

The situation in North Rhine-Westphalia contrasts sharply with that in Berlin. Here, the ministry of education has reportedly received requests to set up Islamic schools from the Turkish community. As such aspirations are incompatible with the federal law, however, they did not receive serious consideration.[1]

### The media

Apart from occasional newspapers and information bulletins, Turkish communities in Germany have not developed an Islamic media which aims to build bridges between them and the wider society. In the Netherlands the situation is very different, thanks to the establishment of the Islamitische Omroep Stichting (IOS), (Islamic Broadcasting Corporation), in 1981. The initiative for creating this new pillar in the already highly diversified Dutch media landscape emanated from the Turkish Diyanet-aligned leadership in 1981. It was therefore rejected by the Dutch government on the grounds that it was unrepresentative of the heterogeneous Muslim population in the Netherlands: this was the judgement of the ministry of culture, recreation and welfare (Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk). It was difficult to solve this problem, however, as Moroccans and Muslims of other nationalities showed little eagerness to join in the initiative. The problems were also exacerbated by the antagonisms within the Turkish Muslim community itself, outlined above. As a result of effective lobbying among parliamentarians, trade unionists and others, and due to the pressure arising from the approaching voting rights for foreigners,[2] in 1986 the ministry amended its position. A new framework was established: in this, the Turkish committee which had initiated the Islamic broadcasting project was formally detached from the actual broadcasting. The committee members would act merely as directors in a board which at a later stage could include representatives of other Muslim organizations. Although Diyanet-aligned Turks continued to dominate the IOS, this framework provided a solution to a year-long deadlock, and in October 1986 radio and television broadcasting commenced[3] (cf. Landman 1992: 255-6). Although in 1989 the board of directors was extended to include Moroccan and Surinamese Muslim organizations Turkish dominance continued (Ibid.:258).

In 1993 a series of crises arising out of disagreements within the board of directors on the one hand, and between the board and staff on the other, compelled the authorities to cancel the IOS' broadcasting licence. Shortly afterwards, a new committee of Muslims from several nationalities who previously had not participated in the running of the corporation applied for a broadcasting licence. Their initiative was rewarded and a new Islamic broadcasting corporation, the Nederlandse Moslim Omroep (the

[1] In a telephone conversation the ministry's spokesperson added that these requests represented a fundamentalist agenda which did not have wide support within the Turkish community.

[2] In 1986 foreigners were given the right to vote and to be elected to local councils.

[3] It was launched with 15 minutes' television and an hour of radio per week. Broadcasting is in Dutch with television programmes sub-titled in Arabic and Turkish.

Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Corporation) was established.

German law makes no provision for ideologically motivated national broadcasting corporations, and Islamic organizations are consequently compelled to use other media options, like local cable television. In Berlin, for example, the Milli Görüş federation (Islamische Föderation Berlin)[1] runs a television studio from which Islamic programmes are broadcast to the general local cable network in Turkish and German.

## Political participation

Since 1985 it has been permitted for foreign nationals in the Netherlands to engage in communal politics after five years of legal residency.[2] Their participation in voting tends to fall below the Dutch average, and they also remain underrepresented in active party politics.

Nevertheless, some of the prominent personalities (typically male) in Islamic Turkish institutions do occupy party political positions. Often they align with the Christian Democrats, who naturally tend to empathise most with them in questions of religion and morality. However they have also joined the Labour Party and the Green Party (Groen Links) (Rath 1985, Sunier 1994). Typically such personalities do not voice a specifically Islamic agenda, promoting themselves instead as spokesmen for the entire Turkish immigrant population. Although the number of Turkish politicians active in Islamic organizations is not known, it is worth noting that in the 1994 municipal elections in Amsterdam Turks won 17 out of a total of 443 seats in the 16 city district councils and the municipal council (which is responsible for affairs which exceed district competence and for the running of the central city district).[3]

At the national level, Süleymancilar, Milli Görüş and Diyanet organizations jointly participate in an Advisory Council (Inspraak Orgaan Turken) serving the Dutch Home Office. While this council has few rights, it may offer its opinion without this being solicited.

In contrast, in Germany Turkish immigrants have no right to vote. Nor are they invited to express their opinion in committees sponsored by the national government. Organizations of foreigners can make their voice heard only in the local level committees (Ausländerbeiräte). In Duisburg, for example, a Union of Turkish Muslims played an important role in the 1985 elections for the city's Ausländerbeirat.[4]

## Conclusion

The Dutch state clearly offers several opportunities for Islamic institutionalization. These arise either by means of

[1] This federation also encompasses non-Turkish Muslims, as well as Turks who are not necessarily Milli Görüş supporters. The Milli Görüş ideology nevertheless clearly dominates the federation and its policy.

[2] In the city of Rotterdam this ruling was implemented prior to the 1980 city district elections (Rath 1985)

[3] The total number of immigrants elected was 50, 24 of whom originated from the Surinamese population (usually of Dutch nationality).

[4] The Union won five of the eight Turkish seats (Doomernik 1991:154)

active support (usually financial) or passive support (through a benevolent attitude). Particularly important is the legal framework, which allows for the institutionalization of religious interests.

Consequently, the establishment of mosques has rarely presented any fundamental problems. It has hence been possible not only to meet religious needs, but also to organize subsidized non-religious activities aimaed at widening immigrant participation in Dutch society. Following the initial phase of mosque establishment it became possible in addition to create other Islamic institutions such as schools and a broadcasting corporation, all with state subsidies. In the Netherlands Islamic organizations have also been permitted, and even encouraged, to participate in the political field.

In contrast in Germany, the process of institutionalization does not appear to extend much beyond prayer and Qur'an school facilities. While the desire to establish Islamic schools, for example, is clearly present, this is incompatible with the German legal context. Although in principle each German federal state is autonomous with regard to its educational policy, thus far only Berlin has permitted an Islamic school to be established. As subsidies for welfare activities are reserved for secular immigrant institutions, this may eventually lead to the social isolation of certain categories of immigrant Muslims such as older people, and especially women. The scope of their social activities scope is mainly restricted to mosques and their families, and their vision rarely extends beyond these domains, as subsidized activities are not available to them.

Furthermore, the restriction in a mosque's function to religious activities exclusively as a result of the absence of state subsidies may ultimately serve to emphasize the gulf between Muslim immigrant communities and German society.

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# Turkish Islamic organizations and the Dutch state: new opportunities?

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In recent years the ideological climate in Western Europe has grown hostile to Islam. Since the Rushdie affair and the second Gulf War in particular the visibility of Muslims and their institutions (mosques and schools, for example) in Western Europe has increasingly been linked with discussions about fundamentalism on the one hand, and integration on the other.

Shadid and Van Koningsveld (1992), who carried out extensive research on the image of Islam in the Netherlands, maintain that Islam is conceived of in Dutch society in terms of a 'we/they' dichotomy. Many journalists, 'experts' and policy-makers consider Islam and its adherents a threat to Dutch society, or at least place a question mark over the growth of Islamic institutions in the Netherlands.

It is even suggested by some pseudo-experts on Islam that such institutions should be regarded as a fifth column, since it is through them that fundamentalism is spread among Muslims. According to one of these 'experts', we should be worried about the growth of Islam, at least if we '*are in favor of the achievements of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, which brought to us the separation of church and state, humanist ideals, freedom of speech, democracy, liberal principles in science and the emancipation of women. These principles are alien to Muslims: whereas our post-Christian culture is characterized by flexibility, openness and understanding, Islamic culture is abhorrent of any of these accomplishments.*'[1]

It is through such rhetoric that a hostile attitude towards Islam is reproduced over and over again. I myself have encountered such ideas during my own research among Turkish Muslims. For example, representatives of Islamic organizations confided that during the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War journalists came by to ask for an interview with a 'real

[1] E. Zürcher quoted in the Dutch periodical *Elsevier*, 16 February 1991.

fundamentalist'. More sinister manifestations of this anti-Islamic climate across Western Europe are the assaults on Islamic institutions such as arson attacks on mosques by extreme right-wing gangs, of which the Netherlands has had its share.

Shadid and Van Koningsveld (1992) do not merely describe such anti-Islamic attitudes, however. In their opinion the ongoing debate about Islam as a threat constitutes one of the main barriers to the integration of Muslims in Dutch society, together with the categorical refusal of policy-makers to meet their needs and wishes. These authors reject outright the notion that the cultural characteristics of Muslims are in themselves barriers to full-scale integration. They elaborate extensively on the societal effects of the anti-Islamic climate, but they also emphasize the fact that Muslims have not yet developed effective ways of fighting the negative stereotypes that are being propagated.

In spite of the proliferation of negative images of Islam at this time, it was nevertheless during the 1980s that Islam and Islamic organizations gained a foothold in the countries of Western Europe. The route by which this occurred differed considerably from one country to another due to a variety of reasons deriving from specific policies, attitudes towards Islam, and the characteristics of the various Muslim communities themselves.

Nevertheless, it is certain that in varying degrees Muslims did gain access to material and political resources during the 1980s. In analysing the factors which account for this development, two points are crucial. First, we must emphasize the opportunities and possibilities that exist for Muslims and their institutions to promote their interests, and the political potential and strength of these organizations, rather than barriers and weaknesses. Second, we must carry out the analysis at the local level, rather than surveying general tendencies and situations in individual countries as a whole, for it is at the local level that essential differences become visible.

## Islamic organizations: current perspectives

One of the reasons why organizational development is a rather neglected theme in studies on Islamic organizations in Western Europe is the fact that these organizations are being approached either as *migrant organizations,* or *as associations of people with an Islamic background.* Although these approaches are relevant to a certain extent they are inadequate as an analytical tool in the attempt to understand why, how, and to what extent Islamic organizations have managed to improve their position. If we consider Islamic organizations solely as organizations of migrants, then in consequence we must consider them temporal phenomena. This implies, among other things, that the foundation, persistence and development of these organizations is almost entirely based on their function as intermediary between the migrant community and the receiving society. Their *raison-d'être* is supposed to be related to the fact that the rank-and-file migrants do not yet fully participate in the new society.

In such an approach no fundamental distinction is made between Islamic institutions and organizations and any other organization founded by migrants. Activities and services performed by these institutions are related to the migrant background of their members. In other words, Islamic organizations are cultural embodiments of a specific migrant community. As long as these migrants adhere to their cultural heritage, the organization will persist. It is also assumed that these organizations function as a kind of sanctuary in a strange and sometimes hostile environment. However, as the process of integration will take place anyhow, if not for the first or second generations of migrants then at least for the third, the significance of Islamic organizations as organizations of migrants will gradually diminish. Thus, although their function as intermediary is acknowledged by policy-makers, at the same time their persistence is construed as evidence of a multi-staged or staggered process of integration, or at least of incomplete integration. According to this position, integration apparently necessitates or equals loss of culture and religion.

To approach Islamic organizations as associations of people with the same religious background, on the other hand, requires an assumption that Islamic principles and prescriptions require specific types of organizational activity. While it may explain their persistence to a certain extent, this approach exhibits the failings of an essentialist perspective. For example, it does not account for the fact that Islamic organizations increasingly perform duties and services which go beyond strictly religious matters. In general this type of approach implicitly fails to distinguish between Muslim community and Muslim organizations. Although the two have much to do with each other, they are certainly not one and the same. In this approach Islam is disconnected from the social context in which it is embedded, and it is assumed that Islamic organizations assume similar shapes, irrespective of the social setting.

## Islamic organizations as particular forms of interest organizations

Although these two approaches encompass elements that are relevant and important in explaining and analysing organizational development, both give inadequate attention to the interrelation between Islamic principles, the Muslim communities, and the surrounding society. They also fail to consider adequately the political process underlying this interrelation. Islamic organizations can thus be regarded as specific types of interest organizations (Olson 1965). They are not merely associations of people having a pre-constructed Islamic identity, or associations of people with a migrant background who have merely grouped together on that basis. These organisations have rather been founded in order to accomplish certain goals and to promote certain interests, and have developed specific programmes and strategies to that end and perform specific forms of collective action.

If one examines the genesis of Islamic organizations and the evolution of their specific interests and

strategies from a historical point of view, three main stages can be distinguished. During the first stage, which coincided approximately with the first half of the 1970s when there were hardly any facilities for Muslims, collective action was mainly directed at the acquisition of space for prayer. Migrant workers were seeking out ways to continue the way of life they had been accustomed to in their countries of origin. Towards the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the various ideological Islamic movements entered the arena, especially among Turkish Muslims. As a result the question of acquiring space for prayer became imbued with ideological significance. The establishment of a mosque or any other type of institution might now constitute the expression of one particular side to an ideological dispute.

While for a number of reasons during the latter part of the 1980s disputes of an ideological nature within the Muslim communities still played a major role in the development of Islamic organizations, the emphasis increasingly shifted to matters concerning the position of Muslims within Dutch society. Naturally one of the main reasons for this was the realization that returning to the country of origin was no longer a viable option for a growing number of migrants, especially younger ones. The admission by the Dutch government that the Netherlands had become a country of immigration was reflected in policy changes from the beginning of the 1980s. Against this background the articulation of interests and the development of strategies on the part of Islamic organizations (which by now had already developed far beyond mere mosque associations) became increasingly focused on one central issue: the recognition of Islam in Dutch society. While the question of recognition clearly relates on the one hand to legal regulations, also relevant to this question is the actual and practical recognition of Muslims as equal citizens in Dutch society.

In the Dutch context legal recognition takes on a rather specific meaning. Since the change of the Constitution in 1983, Muslims are legally equal to Christians, Jews, and members of other faiths. But also before that, in accordance with the 'pillar system' (see Nielsen 1992: 61-2), for example, they enjoyed an equal right to set up their own schools.[1] At the same time, however, from an ideological perspective Islam is not considered equal to other religions. Hence it is always the case that discussions about Islamic schools or the wearing of the headscarf run parallel to discussions about integration. Indeed the reality is that it is generally much more difficult for Muslims to benefit from legal equality than it is for members of other faiths. Muslims do not yet belong to the Dutch 'imagined community', to paraphrase Anderson (1991), and in Dutch society 'Muslim' still equals backwardness and absence of integration (Sunier 1995).

As well as the achievements of symbolic or legal equality, the question of recognition also encompasses access to political opportunities and

[1] In the Netherlands the school system is based on the 'pillar system' which implies that every religion, provided certain conditions have been fulfilled, has the right to set up its own schools.

material resources. In the latter respect the range of issues stretches from financial aid for Islamic organizations to the general socio-economic position of Muslim communities. Contrary to common assumptions, most of the Islamic organizations are completely dependent on the financial contributions of their members. As most of these members are not at all prosperous, the financial situation of the majority of Islamic organizations is precarious. Islamic organizations seek treatment equal to that enjoyed by other religious denominations in this respect.

The struggle for access to political channels and decision-making structures has recently become one of the principal aims of Islamic organizations. In the Netherlands most Muslims still have a foreign passport and do not enjoy the right to vote for the national parliament. Although some years ago (1986) foreigners were granted the right to vote at the municipal level, ignorance of the Dutch political landscape has meant that attendance at elections remains comparatively low (Rath and Saggar, 1991). The most important political channels utilized by Muslim communities thus far are the 'Advisory Committees'. While these committees do have a consultative voice formally, they have no influence in the decision-making process as the government can decide against the advice of the committee, and ultimately much can depend on the climate in which the consultation is carried out. Evidently, Muslims and their organizations must look for other, more substantial, means of securing influence.

Certain important considerations must be taken into account in any general discussion of the struggle by Islamic organizations to secure Muslim interests. Like other European societies, Dutch society is characterized by an unequal distribution of power. In agreement with McAdam (1982), I reject the assumption that power is concentrated in the hands of a small élite. However, I also reject the pluralist assumption that power is equally distributed among the people (Ibid: 36-7). Those with a migrant background in particular generally have little access to the sources of power and wealth. A number of barriers, both ideological and material, account for this inequality. As Islamic organizations are peopled mainly by those with a migrant background, they can be regarded as 'lower strata' organizations. To promote their interests, such organizations must operate within the ordinary political arena. They deploy Islam strategically in an effort to influence the political process and to improve their bargaining position *vis-à-vis* Dutch society. In this respect such organizations in a way themselves reflect this society, not differing from other organizations which attempt to influence or change the political structure.

The success or failure of the struggle by Islamic organizations to secure Muslim interests depends in general terms on three main conditions. The first relates to what Eisinger (1973) terms 'the structure of political opportunities': at this level the discussion focuses on the broad political, economic, social and other environmental factors which make collective action possible.

Secondly, one must consider what McAdam *et al.* (1988: 704) terms the 'micro-structural dynamics of recruitment'. Islamic organizations cannot be successful unless they develop strategies for mobilizing the rank and file. Hence one must focus analytically not only on the relation between Islamic organizations and the larger (external) society, but also on the internal characteristics of these organizations, and the power relations between their leaders and the rank and file. The third condition relates to the level of collective consciousness among the rank-and-file of Islamic organizations, and the extent to which members of the organization comply with its aims and goals.

## The surrounding society as a structure of political opportunities

As mentioned earlier, the success or failure of collective action partly depends on the characteristics of the political environment. As the specific structure of political opportunities differs from situation to situation and from place to place, the discussion here will concentrate on one particular situation, namely that in the city of Rotterdam. Although the situation in Rotterdam is far from perfect, compared with other cities it offers a relatively positive, as well as a particularly interesting, case for analysis.

The city of Rotterdam has one of the largest Muslim communities in the Netherlands: about 10 per cent of the total population of the city has a Muslim background. There are some 40 Islamic organizations operating in the city, roughly half of which are run by Turks. Rotterdam is the first city to adopt a coherent policy on Islam, and to date it remains the only city where Islamic organizations have gained access to political channels by establishing an Advisory Committee which enjoys a reasonable degree of influence.

As far as municipal policies in the city of Rotterdam are concerned, the most important fact is the recognition of Islam and Islamic institutions as a *separate* category, towards which specific policies are developed. In most other cities in the Netherlands Islamic organizations are regarded as migrant organizations, no different from any other migrant organizations. Consequently, policies towards them are subsumed within regular migrant policies. This process of recognition in the specific case of Rotterdam was closely linked to general changes in policy towards migrants in Dutch society, which began in the early 1980s.

The Dutch government issued a report at this time in which Dutch society was described as an immigrant society. The implication was that the government assumed permanency of residence as the starting-point, and as a consequence the relationship between questions of integration and culture altered, integration becoming the principal focus of government policies. The emphasis on integration now implied full-fledged participation for migrants in the central sectors of Dutch society: labour, housing and education. Formally, migrants were granted the fundamental right to live according to their own cultural background, provided that this did not inhibit the process of integration.

Accordingly, culture and integration were now posited as two opposing poles, in that an emphasis on cultural background now signified less commitment to integration, and vice versa. A further implication of these new policies was the fact that migrants were henceforth increasingly defined in accordance with cultural, rather than socio-economic, profiles.

Concomitant with these developments, and due also to certain - at times dramatic - events in the Muslim world, Turks, Moroccans and other migrants from Muslim countries in the Netherlands were 'discovered' as Muslims. Hence a new category of migrants emerged: 'Muslim migrants'. For the purposes of policy formulation and implementation, people from completely different backgrounds were lumped together under a single heading: 'Muslim culture'. With time, the perceived 'special' character of Islam was assumed as the principal explanatory factor, not only for the attitude of people from the Muslim world, but also for the variety of problems they faced in the Netherlands.

Thanks to the overwhelmingly negative image of Islam discussed earlier, this development naturally was not very beneficial to the people concerned. The implication was indeed that as a category for which integration was still far away, Muslims constitute a burden on Dutch society. Paradoxically, however, as 'Muslim migrants' and the keepers of a distinct 'Muslim culture', Muslims and their representatives could now claim equal rights to adherents of other religions. Furthermore, they could now convince policy-makers, administrators and social workers that Islamic institutions (mosques and Islamic schools, for example) constitute an important prerequisite for living according to the principles of their faith. In addition, at least some policy-makers noted that Islamic organizations had emerged as the most important form of organization among Muslim migrants, enjoying the largest rank and file. In Rotterdam, for example, documents issued by the municipality emphasized the important social and psychological function of mosques and other Islamic institutions. Indeed there was a general preparedness in Rotterdam to transform the formal recognition implicit in the changes in governmental attitudes towards migrants into practical policy, for a number of reasons.

During the 1980s, the number of Muslims and Islamic institutions in Rotterdam had grown rapidly, as in other cities in the Netherlands. Most of the Islamic organizations had been established in parts of the city requiring a large-scale programme of urban renewal. Housing in these neighbourhoods was generally of very poor quality, and most of the residents were socio-economically underprivileged. In the 1970s these localities suffered from severe ethnic tensions, extreme right-wing parties having gained considerable support among the indigenous population by blaming migrants for the unsatisfactory circumstances.

It was therefore of vital importance for the municipality to find a way of successfully managing the process of urban renewal. The Islamic organizations were regarded as an important route of contact with the

migrant residents in these areas, and consequently the municipality proceeded to establish communication lines with the representatives of these organizations. It is worth reiterating that the municipality's willingness to establish contact with the Islamic organizations was thus very closely linked to housing policy, and the general renovation of the city.

Initially contacts between the municipality and the Islamic organizations were sporadic: from time to time imams were invited to the city hall so that administrators could consult them. Gradually, however, such consultations were established on a permanent basis, and towards the end of the 1980s the process acquired more of an institutionalized basis, as a platform of Islamic organizations in Rotterdam (the SPIOR) was founded. While the creation of the SPIOR was the initiative of certain Turkish mosque organizations the municipality was eager to encourage it by subsidizing the SPIOR in part, and recognizing it as a proper channel for reaching the Muslim population. The SPIOR representatives were mainly young, Dutch-speaking Muslims who were much more familiar with the legal regulations and political procedures of the municipality than were the imams, whose role had gradually diminished over time. Although the SPIOR is run by a representative élite, and although many ordinary Muslims in Rotterdam do not have much insight into relations with the municipality, the situation is clearly much better than in cities where there is no communication between Muslims and the municipality at all. Over the years the SPIOR has developed into the main Advisory Committee for Muslims, not only in relation to housing policies but to a variety of other relevant issues. In this capacity it has surpassed the 'traditional' leftist organizations, which were the main interlocutors with the government on behalf of these migrants during the 1970s.

One consequence of the policies adopted by the Rotterdam municipality is the fact that it has since become very difficult to set up new Islamic organizations in the city, as this is now subject to strict regulations. Growth figures for such organizations hence dropped significantly towards the end of the 1980s. At the same time, however, a process of institutional consolidation has been in place, especially at the neighbourhood level. At least some Islamic organizations thus realized that in order to benefit from the prevailing (and relatively favourable) situation, and to take advantage of the municipality's willingness to negotiate, it was necessary to strengthen their position in the neighbourhoods. However, as mentioned earlier, these neighbourhoods suffer from a negative attitude towards Muslims, and indeed towards migrants in general. Muslims are still regarded as strangers and outsiders, who do not fit into the neighbourhood community. Although a large section of the local population has a migrant background, most migrants are not represented in the general residents' organizations and representative bodies, which for the most part are firmly in the hands of the indigenous Dutch population which is not particularly willing to cooperate with Muslims. Residents' organizations, community halls, general social workers and those devoted to migrant

affairs each have vested interests, which can often run counter to those of Islamic organizations. For example, such institutions or professional groups may block the foundation of new mosques when they consider that their creation will have a negative effect on inter-ethnic relations. However, to exclude migrants from the process of community development would ultimately prove counterproductive. Furthermore, irrespective of their specific backgrounds, all residents uphold essentially the same interests with respect to questions of housing policy and general community development. In many neighbourhoods young migrants cause trouble on the streets, and Islamic organizations might prove helpful in the endeavour to address this problem. The leaders of certain Islamic organizations have appreciated the opportunity afforded by this situation. In some Islamic organizations young members have applied for seats on the residents' representative bodies, not as members of an Islamic organization but as local residents. Through such youths a Muslim voice is now heard in residents' representative bodies. At the very least, such developments have prompted Islamic organizations to assume a clearer orientation on local issues, which will possibly lead to the gradual incorporation of Muslim organizations into the local community.

Two further channels through which Muslims have succeeded in establishing a foothold in the local community can be identified. The first channel comprises churches, which in Rotterdam have played a crucial role in the development of Islamic organizations. In the past, churches have placed their buildings at the disposal of Muslims during times of important religious celebrations, such as Ramadan. In addition, various church workers have advocated the Muslim case by pleading this with the municipality. Many of the contacts between mosques and churches currently remain at the level of 'inter-religious dialogue', and many Christians still have difficulties recognizing Islam as a religion equal to Christianity. In spite of this some dialogue groups have developed into important consultative platforms, where issues which go beyond the strictly religious are discussed. In at least two cases, representatives of local churches have played a crucial role in opening up the political channel provided by local councils. Within a few years Rotterdam will cease to exist as a unit, becoming split into politically independent boroughs. While certain of these boroughs have already been functioning relatively independently since the early 1980s, following the municipal elections at the beginning of 1994 each existing borough has its own council. Over the next few years the influence of these councils can be expected to increase. In those boroughs with a large Muslim population especially, it is crucial that the local council reflects the demographic composition of the borough. This is all the more important given that it is precisely in these boroughs that extreme right-wing parties enjoy significant support among the indigenous population. By voting, migrants might be able neutralize the influence of such parties. In the case of two local councils former leaders of Islamic organizations were elected as members of regular Dutch political parties. Support for these candidates came mainly

from the Muslim population, whose votes were mobilized through the mosques. While this remains only a small success when compared with the general picture in Rotterdam, it is nevertheless an important accomplishment. If they succeed at least in retaining this small degree of influence, this can only have a positive effect on the position of Muslims.

### Internal characteristics

The capacity to mobilize political and material resources evidently depends on the ability of leaders to exploit existing opportunities, while at the same time maintaining the organization's cohesiveness. Once they have established their position, there is a tendency for representatives to alienate themselves from the rank and file, issuing in a growing gap between the two. It is vital that this be successfully avoided. As argued previously the internal coherence of Islamic organizations is not based on some preconstructed identity among members. Rather coherence must be secured constantly. Empirical data on collective action in general indicates that people's allegiance to the goals formulated by collective actors cannot be taken for granted as arising spontaneously from their social conditions (McAdam 1982:15). Few people see themselves as actually being oppressed, or deprived of certain opportunities and resources. While they have a vague and fragmented idea about their conditions, this generally does not motive them to engage in spontaneous collective action. Goals must be clearly formulated, and the potential participants in collective action must be made conscious of their needs, both by being offered a specific definition of the situation (Fireman & Gamson 1979: 26), and through the problematization and politicization of these needs. The articulation of needs and demands always follows the initial collective action, and collective actors must develop strategies for mobilizing people around goals thus defined. A crucial factor in the process of demand-articulation is the transformation of the private into the collective: actors must become aware of the communality of their demands, i.e. the fact that they share these demands with other people (Ibid.:27). This also implies that the formulation of demands must be related to the position of the people whose demands are being articulated within the surrounding society. Accordingly, collective benefits (both tangible, material benefits and intangible benefits such as access to political participation and decision-making processes) must be perceived as an entitlement; as something that is deserved as a matter of justice and equal rights. Hence collective benefits can be construed as principles, acquiring a political connotation. Again these principles are not simply there from the outset. They need rearticulating and revising in the course of time, in a dialectical relationship with the surrounding society.

Once organizations have been established, their continued existence depends to a large extent on their capacity constantly to recreate and reformulate their indispensability both towards their membership, and towards society as a whole. When leaders and spokesmen have achieved certain positions and acquired a degree of influence within the

organization, this can be perpetuated and safeguarded only by their constantly redefining and re-legitimizing their role within the organization. In relations with the outside world the indispensability of such leaders and spokesmen, and indeed of the organization as a whole, must be made clear. This is achieved by an attempt to construe the organization and its leaders as the main defenders of Muslim interests. Internally, strategies for achieving and perpetuating cohesiveness are indispensable.[1] The organization must link people together in a number of ways that generate a sense of common identity, a shared fate, and a general commitment to defence of the group. Fireman & Gamson (1979: 22) distinguish five principles that constitute the basis for solidarity within a collective movement. These can be applied to Islamic organizations specifically:

(1) *'Friends and relatives'*. Many who belong to Islamic organizations have entered the organization through a personal network. Leaders have stressed the importance of this particular means of mobilization, as personal networks tend to strengthen a sense of belonging.

(2) *'Participation'*. The very fact of people frequently coming together for some common reason itself contributes to a sense of mutual solidarity. Hence an attractive programme of activities can be very important in this respect.

(3) *'Subordinate/superordinate relations'*. To the extent that each individual shares with other group members the same set of subordinate and superordinate relations with those external to the group, he or she experiences a shared basis for solidarity with the group. This partly explains why Islamic organizations emphasize in addition to religious issues those relating to their members' social position, and why they endeavour to offer a specific definition of the broader situation.

(4) *'No exit'*. This principle loosely relates to the surrounding society. Once an individual has joined an organization, he/she becomes readily identified as a member of the group, and is often treated as such. As exit from the group consequently becomes difficult this functions as a specific basis for solidarity. This explains, for example, why the negatively stereotyped image of Islam in Europe actually serves as an important resource for Muslim group solidarity. Research reveals that the well-organized 'hard core' of an Islamic organization can offer a more precise formulation of the impact of this image than people who are at the organization's fringes. In general people who interact more frequently with society and are thus better integrated are more critical of this image than the average Muslim 'in the street'.

(5) *'Design for living'*. This stands out, in my opinion, as perhaps the most crucial means of consensus building. Organizations tend to offer their members a certain kind of design, along which they can order and interpret their daily life-experiences. When this is formulated in communal terms, and is shared by co-members exclusively as opposed to outsiders, it strengthens feelings of solidarity

[1] There is a constant internal struggle between leaders and membership over legitimacy.

within the group. Of course in Islamic organizations this design is rooted in the Islamic principles embraced by these organizations.

At least one important conclusion can be drawn from the above: the internal coherence of Islamic organizations and the degree of solidarity among their members does not emanate automatically from religious identity, but relates instead to the position of their members in the surrounding society. Building solidarity among members of the first generation hence requires strategies quite different from those required for the second generation. For many first generation Muslim migrants, Islam means continuing the way of life they pursued prior to their migration. Generally speaking, for them Islam is a set of principles and regulations which orders their lives and to which they must adhere. Being Muslim means performing religious duties and living according to traditions and prescriptions which relate very closely to their former lifestyle in their country of origin. As far as they are concerned the main function of Islamic organizations is to enable them to meet their religious needs.

However, a growing number of young people no longer have strong relations with their country of origin, in this case Turkey. Return to Turkey is not a real option, and Turkey has to all extents and purposes become irrelevant to them. The younger generation is more informed about Dutch society, which also makes them more aware of, and more sensitive to, the position of Muslims in the Netherlands, and the way that Islam is represented there in the media, for example. Their greater orientation towards Dutch society at the very least means that they expect more from it than their parents do, and that they demand their full rights as citizens and as Muslims. While not all Muslim youth possess such a fully-formulated articulation of their position for a growing number Islam has emerged as a means of articulating their identity within Dutch society, and of promoting their interests as full members of this society. In some respects membership of an Islamic organization constitutes an expression of a different lifestyle *within* Dutch society. This implies that identity is a form of construction, which hence is never directly based on some alleged 'essential' characteristic of Muslims. On the contrary, it is always related to the society as a whole. Hence if Islamic organizations cannot respond to the changing characteristics of their potential membership, they will eventually lose ground.

## Conclusions

The discussion here has touched only on certain dimensions in the development of relations between Islamic organizations and Dutch society. One conclusion which emerges is that one must conceive of these relations as a process. Islamic organizations enter the political arena in order to promote their interests, playing an active role in preserving, reformulating and perpetuating Islamic identity, and in determining the position occupied by Islam and Muslims in Dutch society. For the most part, this constitutes an ordinary political process which in itself has little to do with Islam per se. By

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promoting their interests Islamic organizations alter the surrounding situation, which in turn generates new circumstances. Ultimately it can be expected that this process will affect not only the position of Islamic organizations *vis-à-vis* the surrounding society, but also Islamic discourse itself. How this discourse changes will of course depend on very specific circumstances, but there are at least two crucial factors which can be expected to influence any such change. As has been demonstrated, a growing number of young people engaged in Islamic organizations are increasingly oriented towards Dutch society. This implies that they expect more from this society, especially with regard to their position within it. Combined with an 'open' and permeable structure of political opportunities, this expectation is likely to produce an Islamic discourse which rather than rejecting the host society emphasizes that Islam can become an integral part of it. If such a strong orientation towards Dutch society is combined with a 'closed' and impermeable structure of political opportunities, however, it is likely to produce a separatist and more radical discourse.

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