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Constructing mosques: the governance of Islam in France and the Netherlands

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The integration of Muslim immigrants is frequently seen as a direct consequence of a country’s political tradition. These traditions themselves are often portrayed in clichéd terms. The patterns of incorporation that emerge following the entry of newcomers depend, on closer inspection, on the interplay among a complex set of factors that varies across time periods. This comparative study of policies adopted by the state to accommodate the religious practices of Muslims traces developments in France and the Netherlands in a historical perspective, beginning with the period of French and Dutch colonial rule and ending with the most recent bouts of controversy. The analysis examines discussions about mosque building in Marseilles and Rotterdam, tracing how Islam was represented in colonial exhibitions and in debates at the millennium over what constitutes “appropriate” mosque architecture. The author concludes that colonial governing approaches have shaped post-war policies of accommodation of Islam to a far stronger degree in France than in the Netherlands.
Constructing Mosques

The governance of Islam in France and the Netherlands
Constructing Mosques
The governance of Islam in France and the Netherlands

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aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
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Marcel Maussen

January 2009
Chapter 1 – The governance of Islam and the construction of mosques in Western Europe

1.1. Introduction

In October 2001 the Mevlana Mosque in Rotterdam opened. The new building follows a Turkish design, with two slim minarets, pink panelling and a green dome. Its traditionally styled architecture merges with the use of contemporary building techniques, and the walls consist of pre-fabricated concrete that has been plastered and painted. The mosque is situated on a remarkable spot on the edge of a neighbourhood where it can be seen from the train coming from The Hague. By its location and distinctive architecture, the building is much like many new mosques that have arisen in the Netherlands throughout the 1990s.

During the ceremonial opening, the Mayor of Rotterdam, Ivo Opstelten, spoke warm words of welcome. He said that the new building finally gave the “mosque the status it deserves”. A journalist spoke of the “spatial integration of Muslims in the Netherlands”. Turkish Muslims were rightly proud of what they had accomplished and some credit should also be given to the municipality that had laid down in policy that the Muslim community was an “important part of the town community”. New mosques were taken to illustrate how the ethnic composition of Dutch cities had changed because of immigration.

When I began this study, the creation of new houses of worship by immigrant communities was very much understood in terms of the “politics of recognition”. My aim was to analyse public discussions regarding the building of mosques in the Netherlands and in France as emblematic of negotiations on diversity in multicultural societies. While talking over my plans with a scholar of Islam in the Netherlands the question came up as to whether yet another study on the issue of mosques was worth the trouble. He believed that research on Islam would now focus on more exciting issues, such as the development of religiosity among second generation Muslims. The dynamics of the institutionalisation of Islam had already been documented. It was conceived as a success story. Immigrant communities had been confronted with hostility, prejudice and fear when seeking to find recognition for their religious demands, but gradually

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3. The idea that new mosques demonstrated that Dutch society had changed because of the presence of immigrants was articulated somewhat earlier in a background article. See “Hoe groter de moskee, hoe dichter bij Allah. Islamitische bouwkunst in Nederland” in Intermediair July 16 1993.
they had managed to overcome the main obstacles and in the process the receiving society had become more accustomed to the presence of Islam. As the subtitle of a book put it, Muslims had emancipated “from prayer rug to minaret”. Thus understood the politics of recognition was actually an evolutionary process in which cultural minorities went through successive stages of emancipation, contestation and acceptance and that could only find its end point in the emergence of a multicultural society. As it happened, the Netherlands were setting an example for other European countries to follow, because it accommodated new ethnic and religious communities in a supportive manner.

Understood in these terms, my study would do for the 1990s what others had done for the 1980s. It would document the ways Muslim communities progressively had to break down walls of prejudice when seeking recognition. A new aspect of this continuing process would be the building of new mosques, which would bring to the fore the issue of visibility. One of my thesis supervisors suggested that demands of immigrants to be visibly represented in the public realm would set off a new dynamic of contestation. He suggested I focus on the ways contemporary discussions on newly built mosques were essentially a renegotiation of “the symbolic order”. The increasingly visible presence of ethnic communities would oblige French and Dutch societies to conceptualise their symbolic universes anew.

After collecting my first material in the Netherlands I went to Marseilles for a period of several months to collect my data on the French case study. Many of my assumptions about the ways discussions on mosques developed and what they essentially were about were being destabilised. Actually, there were no discussions on the building of mosques in the Southern French city. There was only a large discussion on the building of a central mosque for all Muslims in the city – a Cathedral mosque as it was called – that had been going on for more than a decade. I was inclined to see here how the politics of recognition of Islam were being shaped by French political culture and its emphasise on unity and centrality.

In the meanwhile I had stumbled across mosque building plans in Marseilles that dated back to 1916, 1937 and 1942. None of these projects had actually been realised, in contrast to the Paris Mosque that had been completed in 1926. I could have chosen to ignore these earlier mosque building projects, after all my study focussed on the 1990s, or treat them in the way French scholars had discussed the creation of the Paris Mosque as an anecdote of colonial “times gone by”. Seen in a different light, these very projects could also be seen as a challenge to some of my leading assumptions. These mosques and their minarets were not the end-result of a gradual process of emancipation of Muslim communities that had begun worshipping on a prayer rug. The favourable reactions of the French to the creation of these mosques could not be explained in terms of a progressive growth of tolerance and understanding of multiculturalism. The idea that perceptible mosques and minarets were always seen as a threat to “the symbolic order” seemed increasingly doubtful.

When I returned to the Netherlands, about a year after 9/11, things became even more confusing. In the context of deep controversies about the perceived stagnation of immigrant integration and the spectacular rise of Pim Fortuyn, Dutch discussions on Islam had turned bitter. Highly polemical discussions on mosque building projects in Rotterdam and Amsterdam had developed. Populist politicians spoke of the new mosques as unsightly “oriental sugar cakes”,

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5. This was the subtitle of a study on the institutionalisation of Islam in the Netherlands by Landman 1992.
illustrations of “Arab conservatism”, “palaces of hatred” and symbols of the “multicultural tragedy”. The Mayor of Rotterdam now also seemed to have a different view of the matter. During the groundbreaking ceremony for the building of a Moroccan mosque in 2003 he expressed his misgivings about the design. It was too prominent, demonstrated a lack of respect for “our culture” and therefore risked becoming an “exotic attraction”. The Mevlana mosque – once a symbol of the “spatial integration of Muslims” – was now depicted as an example of awful architectural kitsch that in a disturbing way displayed the collective “nostalgia” of immigrants and their utter unwillingness to integrate and adapt to the Netherlands. By 2004 the populist party Liveable Rotterdam had come up with plans for a municipal policy that would prevent the building of mosques in an “out of the ordinary style”. National politicians even advocated a general ban on the building of new mosques.

The upheavals in discussions on immigrant integration and Islam in Western Europe over the past decade have been represented as illustrative of a “backlash against multiculturalism”. That image is unfortunate. It evokes the image of embittered social scientists who are forced to “sit still and wait” until the tide of popular opinion has changed and everybody will once again understand that multiculturalism is actually a good thing. Speaking of a backlash against multiculturalism is also problematic because it suggests an explanation of present day contestations in terms of malice and fear. Coupled with the now fashionable concept “Islamophobia” the backlash against multiculturalism is seen as being caused by (extreme) right wing politicians and ignorant, racist and fearful citizens – the “enemies of Islam” – that have taken public agendas hostage and deliberately marginalise well-meaning immigrant communities and the “friends of Islam”.

The thesis I will defend in this book is different. I argue that recent discussions as well as history illustrate that there is a need to rethink prevailing understandings about the factors that shape accommodation of Islam and Muslim immigrant communities and explanations of when and why processes of accommodation and incorporation become contentious.

The ways in which the presence of Islam and the creation of Muslim institutions becomes seen as problematic crucially depends on the ways that presence is represented in public discussions. There is truth in the observation that those aspects of Islamic presence that are more perceptible and that involve Muslim communities making claims within the public realm can more easily lead to contestation. But if they actually do and how they do very much depends upon how discussions develop. Invisible Muslim presence can sometimes become equally problematic. Symbols of the presence of Muslims or their institutions are being staged as “drama” and become public issues in need of government regulation (cf. Gusfield 1981). In other words, whether or not the construction of mosques becomes a contentious issue, and if so how, depends on the social-construction of meaning.

The idea that mosque buildings challenge the “symbolic order” should be understood in light of the ways Berger and Luckmann define symbolic universes as the “matrix of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings” (Berger and Luckmann 1991: 114, italics in the original, M.M.). These universes depend on the ability of institutions to meaningfully regulate social situations that present themselves within a society. This means that mosque buildings do
not necessarily become public issues because they are perceptible or because they function as symbols. They do if they are socially constructed in such a way that institutional arrangements are insufficiently capable of accommodating the social situations and latent social conflicts associated with mosque creation. So answering the question as to why sometimes discussions on mosques are so contentious, means simultaneously exploring why sometimes they are not. To investigate this I will analyse the ways mosque creation has been represented in light of varying institutionalised regimes of regulation and how depending on the particular attributions of meanings that have come to dominate the issue-field, dynamics of contestation and accommodation develop.

The focal point for the analysis will be policy making processes broadly understood. Policy making is the dominant way in which modern societies regulate social conflicts and situations that have come to be defined as problematic. It requires “the redefinition of a given social phenomenon in such a way that one can also find solutions for them” (Hajer 1995: 2). This makes public policy making and the formation of policy responses around the construction of mosques the appropriate site to analyse how societies represent and regulate Islamic presence and accommodate Muslim immigrant minorities. Public policy responses are all actions engaging public authorities, including decisions not to act, that are developed in view of accommodating Islam and Muslim populations. They comprise laws and regulations, policy memoranda, guidelines and declarations, plans and projects, the creation of special public institutions and subsidy schemes. These actions are called policy responses irrespective of whether they result from previous demands raised by organised Muslim groups.

1.2. Islam and public policies in Western Europe: the state of research and theory

Over the past decades Muslim communities in Western Europe have set up a range of institutions serving for their religious, social, cultural and educational needs. The development of these institutions is the result of series of interactions, involving organised Muslims, governments of the countries of origin of immigrants, international Muslim organisations, public authorities at national and local levels, and a range of other host society actors. Institutionalisation patterns are significantly shaped by characteristics of the societies in which Muslims live, including prevailing state-religion legislation, attitudes among government officials and the wider opinion climate towards Islam. Legal overview studies have mapped out the relevant constitutional

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regulations and religious policies that structure opportunities for Muslim communities in different countries. Social scientists have analysed in a comparative perspective the ways “societies create opportunities for Islam, or oppose them” (Buijs and Rath 2002: 9).

Early studies on the institutionalisation of Islam in Western Europe borrowed heavily from the conceptual maps of immigrant integration studies. They were inclined to represent the development of Islamic institutions as an evolutionary process of emancipation that would find its end state in a complete integration of the “new religion” and possibly in the forming of a “European Islam”. Increasingly it has become obvious, however, that there is little sign of convergence of patterns of institutionalisation of Islam in different countries. It is also problematic to assume that the process of institutionalisation of Islam is out of necessity progressive and moving towards an end state when Islam will be fully integrated and accepted. The development of Islam in Europe comprises many setbacks, changes of direction and unexpected turns. What may appear completed and well accepted Islamic institutions and accomplished rights may, sometimes unexpectedly, become subject to intense contestation and public debate. This also points towards the complex political nature of the process of formation of Islamic institutions.

Existing patterns of institutionalisation of Islam can better be understood as the outcome of a political process in which organised groups of Muslims enter into relations of cooperation and conflict with a range of actors, institutions and governments, both in the host society and beyond. The institutionalisation process can then be analysed by borrowing from political process theories and research on interest organisations, collective action and social mobilisation. Group-related factors, such as the decentralised institutional structure of the Islamic faith, the ethnic composition of the Muslim population, the financial resources of Muslim communities and the density of the networks of organisations, can explain the outcomes of these social and political processes to some extent. To a significant degree, however, outcomes crucially depend

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9. For legal studies see Basdevant-Gaudemet 1996; Ferrari and Bradney (eds) 2000; and Hafiz and Devers 2005. Legal survey studies usually lack attention to the social context wherein regulations operate and for the application of regulations (Rivers 2000). Therefore they do not provide much insight into how constitutional principles, legal regulations and policy guidelines shape policy responses and policy implementation. Without the study of application it remains unclear how written laws may “bend under the weight of interpretation” (Bleich 2002: 1055). Constitutional and legal regulations and religious policies are but one aspect of the institutional arrangements shaping accommodation policies. Legal surveys have focussed on the comparative analysis of legal arrangements in different countries, but they have done little to explain the “emergence, stabilisation and reproduction” of these arrangements (Bader 2007b: 877).

10. See recently Rath et al. 2001; Fetzer and Soper 2005; and Laurence and Vaisse 2006.

11. The image of Islam as a “new religion” and of the process of institutionalisation as evolutionary was repeatedly evoked in the titles of studies on Islam. The subtitle title of Kepel’s earlier mentioned study on Islam in France was the “birth of a religion” (Kepel 1991; also Cesari 1995). The subtitle of the Dutch edition of the study by Rath et al. 2001 on Islam in the Netherlands was “A de-pillarised society reacts to the development of a ‘new’ religion”. Tietze (2001: 20-43) distinguishes between successive phases of research on Islam in Europe that he labels respectively the phase of “transplanted Islam”, “Islam of immigrants” and “integrated Islam”.

12. For a long time leading scholars of Islam in Europe argued that receiving societies essentially had two options when it came to accommodating Muslim needs: they could either grant Muslims equal right and recognition or they could obstruct these demands and decide to treat Muslims unequally. Whenever there was political debate on whether and how to accommodate Muslim demands, critical researchers all too rapidly concluded that protests were a result of unfamiliarity, prejudice and simple hostility against Muslim immigrants. The idea that protest and rejection of Islam resulted from a lack of knowledge often inspired pioneering researchers to explain at length what Islamic doctrine and belief consisted of. See for example Waardenburg (ed.) 1987.
on host-society factors, including institutional arrangements, pre-existing social conditions and “the political environment into which migrant religions have to find a space for their community” (Statham et al. 2005: 429).

Studies on the politics of Muslim mobilisation have first and foremost built on existing research on ethnic mobilisation and the formation of ethnic communities and organisations. Ethnic organisations face specific institutional opportunities and constraints that are notably shaped by country-specific regimes that regulate rights of immigrants and possibilities for access to citizenship. Other external opportunities for ethnic organisations comprise prevailing attitudes with regard to the presence of immigrants, the existence of anti-immigrant movements and political parties, and ideas about the legitimacy of ethnic community formation. It has become increasingly clear however, that Muslim organisations should not simply be put on a par with other types of ethnic organisations. Organised Muslims also face particular opportunities and constraints. The ongoing public debates on Islam, for example, have important consequences for the opportunities of Muslim organisations in the West, but less so for secular ethnic organisations.

Political mobilisation theories typically conceptualise the factors that shape collective action as external opportunity structures. In their theoretical models these opportunity structures are taken to be stable over time and relatively unequivocal in the way they shape public policy responses. Unfortunately, most comparative country studies in this tradition have worked with rather crude images of national models. Illustrative is the constant presentation of the French secular model as unfavourable to the recognition of Muslim claims, and of Dutch and British “multicultural models” as willing to grant immigrant communities “group rights”.

13. An important aspect of Muslim mobilisation is the way external opportunity structures shape processes of public claims making. Rath et al. (2001) argue that in the Netherlands Muslim claims for equal treatment encountered more support than claims for exceptional treatment. Koopmans et al. (2005) and Statham et al. (2005) in a similar way distinguish between group demands for parity of treatment and those for exceptional treatment. These demands encounter different responses depending on the political and discursive opportunity structures in different countries (Statham et al. 2005: 431). Koenig and Bader distinguish between demands for the practical accommodation of religious practices by ways of exemptions, for some autonomy in organised societal spheres, for pluralisation of education, media, public culture and symbols of national identity, and for group representation and political participation (Bader 2007a: 18; Koenig 2003 and 2005). A recent comparative study on state accommodation of Islam in Britain, France and Germany emphasises the pivotal importance of church-state patterns in structuring political arguments and accommodation policies (Fetzer and Soper 2005).


15. See for example Geisser 1997.

16. See for example Sunier 1996.

17. Especially Koopmans et al. 2005 and Statham et al. 2005 use broad brushed images of national models. Statham et al. (2005: 445) argue that the Dutch state is willing to “grant cultural group rights” that immigrant groups “do not even want”. At closer look this characterisation of “the Dutch model” is justified by an example taken from a single newspaper clipping. Another way of alluding to the presumed self-evidence of what actually is a stereotypical image of a national model is the reference to a situation that is taken to be “typical”. In the case of policy responses to Islam in France the example of the Mayor of Charvieu-Chavagneux who had a prayer house
national accommodation policies in these countries have varied significantly over the past 30 years. There are also considerable differences between public policies that are developed at different levels of state organisation (national, federal, municipal) and in different institutional spheres (such as education, media, and penal institutions). A second problem is that political process theorists tend to understand public policy responses as a result of societal pressure and as reactions by public authorities. However, often times public policy is formed, not in reaction to external demands, but as a result of ideas and concerns within the policy making process itself. Examples are efforts to create imam training programs in Western Europe and municipal programs to combat radicalisation among younger Muslims. Public policies often result from a reciprocal adjustment of ideas of organised Muslims, groups in the host society and government officials.  

A more recent development in research on Islam is the turn towards theoretical approaches that explain public policy responses in light of country-specific institutional arrangements. Muslim demands for recognition are then seen as incentives for policy making. Two types of institutional arrangements considerably shape accommodation policies with regard to Muslim demands. They are country-specific regimes for handling national integration, cultural diversity and immigrant integration, and institutionalised church-state relations. The fact that these two institutional arrangements have been so crucial is because in a West-European context Islam in a religion that has been introduced via immigration.

There is obviously a risk that institutional theories will also end up using rather crude images of national regimes and presume that these regimes cleanly determine actual policies of accommodation. This can be avoided, however, if institutionally oriented theories take to heart three inter-related insights that come forward in recent studies. I will discuss these aspects shortly here because they form the basis of my own approach which is further developed in the next section.

In the first instance, efforts to regulate social problems on the basis of institutional arrangements are crucially shaped by the ways these problems are defined. In the case of the presence of Islam in Western Europe there are extra reasons to carefully analyse the ways policy making processes are motivated and informed by the social construction of public issues. This is nicely illustrated in John Bowen’s analysis of discussions on the Islamic headscarf in France. Through a careful reconstruction of the ways “a bit of cloth” came to stand for major societal problems in French society, it becomes explicable why French authorities in 2004 banned all signs that clearly show a religious affiliation from public schools. By that time the headscarf had become destroyed by a bulldozer in 1989 has figured countless times as the illustration par excellence of the obstacles Muslims in France have encountered in creating institutions (See Kepel 1994; Cesari 1997; and Fetzer and Soper 2005: 88-89).

18. This aspect is usually hidden from view in political process studies that, often in an attempt to test causal models, seek to quantify policy responses and outcomes instead of describing more in content what they consist of. However, understanding accommodation policies also requires a study of the substance of public policies, which means analysing what type of mosque buildings are encouraged, what criteria apply to the forming of Muslim schools and the specific ways the need for Muslim spiritual care in prisons and hospitals is accommodated and for what reasons. See Beckford et al. 2005 for an excellent case study on the accommodation of Muslim needs in prisons in France and Britain that does take notice of the substance of accommodation policies.

an issue of national importance. As Bowen demonstrates, French elites had come to believe that if the state showed its determination to prevent Muslim girls from wearing a headscarf in public schools, it was showing its capacity to tackle urgent social issues such as sexism, social and ethnic segregation, and Islamic fundamentalism. Understanding the formation of this particular public policy response thus required a reconstruction of the ways the headscarf became a public problem and an analysis of the particular role of the state and the legislative process in France for the regulation of social conflicts (Bowen 2006). More generally, I would conclude that depending on the specific understanding of public issues, different institutional arrangements and different levels of state organisation (state, federal, local) may come into play and different kinds of public policy responses are deemed appropriate. Sometimes Muslim demands are framed in such a way that they can quite easily be regulated.\(^{20}\) It may also happen that an aspect of Islamic presence or practice comes to be seen in the light of profound moral issues and as a threat to the institutional ordering of a given society. In that case discussions on regulation will tend to become complex and contentious, and they may touch upon ideas about the very character of the state and crucial values of modern societies.\(^{21}\)

In the second instance, while it is true that public policy responses are significantly shaped by regimes of government of religious diversity and national integration, it is also clear that these regimes are internally more heterogeneous and less unequivocal than had initially been assumed. For example, the clear-cut typology of national models of citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany as developed by Brubaker (1992), has been complemented, but also challenged, by empirical studies that have demonstrated that important variations exist in these countries (Bowen 2007: 1005).\(^{22}\) Studies on church-state regimes more and more recognise that country-specific institutional arrangements are historic products and that they consist of elements that may exist in tension or in contradiction with each other (Koenig 2007: 912; Bader 2007a). In addition, there is a widely felt need to combine a more general analysis of distinctive national governing approaches with the study of actual accommodation policies, developed at different levels of administration, and also in specific societal sectors. For example, public policy responses in prisons may well be different than those developed in the sphere of public education or when compared to municipal policies around the creation of mosques. Finally, states do not exclusively regulate religious issues via their religious and integration policies. The actual opportunities for religions are also shaped by strategies of government related to public health, urban planning, or housing (Bader 2003: 64). Empirical studies on what

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20. For example, an issue such as the creation of Muslim cemeteries has frequently been dealt with in pragmatic ways by municipal governments acting on the basis of existing regulations within the sphere of urban planning and funeral arrangements. There are also counter-examples because sometimes (public) cemeteries also have symbolical significance within a particular country. France is an important counter-example given the relatively strict rules concerning the use of religious symbols on public cemeteries (cf. Bowen 2006).

21. National governments will also become more involved when issues require some kind of national regulation, as in the case of creating a representative Muslim body. In a context of Europeanisation of government, church-state regimes often are also interpreted as symbols of state sovereignty and national distinctiveness. By consequence social-constructed interpretations of national models may become of more influence in stamping policy responses (Koenig 2007: 928).

22. Studies that have described the development of citizenship and integration policies in France in a more historical way include Favell 1998; Feldblum 1999; Weil 2004; Spire 2005; and Rosenberg 2006. For Germany see notably Joppke 1999.
governments “actually do to religions” may bring to light important differences and similarities in the regulation of Islam. These studies may then help to further develop and refine models of national regimes of government and governance (Bader 2007b).

Finally, institutional approaches stand to gain from a more accurate historical perspective on the accommodation of Islam. Basically, all existing studies have analysed the forming of Islamic institutions in the period between the late 1970s and the present day. Given this timeframe, the creation of Islamic institutions was conceptualised as an aspect of a wider process of immigrant integration and the formation of ethnic, community-based institutions. I argue that this research perspective has blocked other possible ways of understanding the formation of public policy responses to Islam. Let me elaborate this a bit further.

Until recently, there has hardly been an interest in exploring the possible continuities and ruptures between the governance of Islam in the colonial period and the accommodation policies developed over the past 30 years. This is remarkable, because in the case of European countries such as France, the Netherlands and Britain, post-war immigration has been significantly related to the aftermaths of colonial rule. Most Islamic institutions in Western Europe that predate the 1970s are in one way or another related to the history of European imperialism. This applies to the mosques that were built in Liverpool (1887), London (1926) and Paris (1926). There are also Muslim cemeteries that were created in Europe and a special Muslim hospital was founded in 1935 in Bobigny, a small town close to Paris. A historical discussion of the accommodation of Muslim populations in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century may help to critically reflect upon the now popular idea that until “our age of migration” a geographic and cultural abyss was separating Europe from the world of Islam. Knowledge of these encounters with Islam may also help to create reference points bridging between Muslim immigrant and native European populations.

However, there are also other important theoretical reasons to make institutional approaches more historically sensitive. Institutionally oriented studies on state accommodation of immigrant populations have tended to assume that regimes of citizenship and nationhood shape the way countries incorporate immigrants and design integration policies. In short they argue, for example, that there exists a French Republican model and that by consequence immigrants in France will encounter a particular type of accommodation policies that are recognisably “French”. However, historical studies have shown that this simple image may be misleading. For example, in the 20th century, France has accommodated immigration of Italians, Spaniards and Greeks in a very different way than it has responded to the presence of Polish immigrants who were recruited as temporary foreign workers in the 1930s. The actual differences of approaches and incorporation policies

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23. There are relatively few studies on policies of accommodation of Islam in the 1960s and early 1970s (Tietze 2001: 20-43). Sunier (2006: 144ff) argues that in this period pioneering researchers on Islam were mostly religious scholars and cultural anthropologists with a specialisation in Islam. Most researchers argue that in this period Islam had led a “hidden existence” and policy reactions to Muslim religious needs were “fragmentary” and “ad hoc” (Rath et al. 2001: 27). Exceptions are Theunis 1979; Kepel 1991; and Krosigk 1999.

24. In recent years the interest for the study of colonial policies and Islam in light of more contemporary experiences in Europe has grown. See Renard 2000 and his forthcoming PhD-thesis on the accommodation of Islam in France; Le Pautremat 2003; Luizard (ed.) 2006; Bowen 2006; and Geisser and Zemouri 2007.

that exist within “the French model” are demonstrated most dramatically when the experiences of European and colonial immigrants are compared. A recent study demonstrated how in the 1930s, French governments subjected Algerian Muslim immigrants to “much greater disciplinary controls than any foreigners” (Rosenberg 2006: 206). A historical perspective will also be valuable to better understand what ideas are shaping contemporary integration policies, especially with regard to those immigrant populations that, for whatever reasons, carry the legacies of having been subject to previous forms of government by European states. The situation of post-colonial immigrants, such as Algerians in France, is of special interest.26

The historical perspective and especially the focus on the colonial period will help to correct another flaw in existing studies on state accommodation of Islam. Institutional studies have borrowed from church-state theories and they have rapidly concluded that the ways states respond to Muslim religious claims varies because of their distinctive institutionalised regime of governance of religious diversity. However, that view seriously underestimates the relevance of how European imperial states have been involved in the governance of Islam in ways they have not been with the governance of other religions, such as Hinduism, Confucianism or Buddhism. It is necessary to explore whether those colonial experiences may continue to be relevant.27 This approach may also help to understand whether, and if so in what ways, the situation of Islam differs relevantly from that of other immigrant-origin minority religions in Western Europe.

1.3. A historically sensitive, institutional approach to the study of public policy discussions on Islamic presence and mosque creation

1.3.1. Policy-making and Islam: discourse and institutions

This study analyses the ways in which institutionalised regimes of government shape public policy making processes around Islam in France and the Netherlands. Public policy responses have been defined generally, as all actions engaging public authorities, including decisions not to act, that are developed in view of accommodating Islam and Muslim populations. I focus in particular on public policy responses towards the creation and functioning of mosques.

Institutions of government in all their diversity – including institutions of political authority and decision making, judicial institutions, public administrations at different levels, bureaucracies and public services – regulate social processes and situations. They operate in view of public policies that are developed intentionally. Understanding the formation of public policies and policy responses requires an analysis of the process in which situations are being converted into policy-related issues that need and can be acted upon. It means analysing the “culture of public problems” and the narratives and images leading up to government regulation.

26. See also Lucassen 2005.

27. The dialectical relations between the development of church-state regimes and colonialism in Britain and India has been analysed by Van der Veer (2001a).
The social construction of public issues is a political struggle involving alternative definitions of social problems and different suggestions about appropriate courses of action. Competing groups of actors and stakeholders articulate and defend definitions of what the problem shall be taken to be, and thereby they include the concerns of some and exclude those of others, they distribute responsibilities for past failures and future measures, they invent and support possible courses of action and indicate what institutions can regulate problems well, and they seek to position the stakeholders and their respective interests. Some definitions of reality and understandings of social phenomena gain dominance, while other understandings are simultaneously being discredited (Hajer 1995: 43-44).

Political struggles around policy making take place at the level of public policy discussions, a specific type of public and political discussions. These discussions are oriented towards intentional action, meaning that ideas, statements of facts, theories and normative judgements are being articulated, not in the abstract, but in view of acting in order to address situations and social problems. In addition, public policy discussions are oriented towards institutions of government that can, and possibly should, address these situations and problems. Public policy discussions are not the exclusive domain of politicians or policy makers. They also emerge from interactions between individuals, local interest groups, broader social movements and institutions (Rein and Schön 1993: 145).

Public policy discussions are of an argumentative nature. Ideas are being articulated with the purpose of persuading others, to make them agree with specific constructions of reality, definitions of problems and conceptualisations of legitimate concerns and interests, and meanwhile to criticise counter-positions, discredit other views, and downplay the concerns and interests of others. Speaking of argumentative interactions does not mean that public policy discussions only consist of arguments and well-ordered propositions. Actors can draw upon a wide variety of discursive styles and representational devices. Public policy discussions comprise arguments and empirical observations, images and figures of speech, and categorisations of all sorts. A well-known example is politicians that evoke the image of “waves of immigrants overflowing the country” to justify a tougher immigration policy.

Discussions comprise regularities that build up specific ways of talking and thinking about reality. In theoretical traditions indebted to the work of Michel Foucault, these structured ensembles of discursive elements are called discourses, defined as “specific ensembles of ideas, concepts and categorisations” (Hajer 1995: 44; Foucault 1991). The analytic reconstruction of structured ensembles – discourses – in discussions can be done at different levels of abstraction and generality, meaning there are many possible ways to break down discussions and texts into a number of distinctive discourses. In the context of public policy discussions these cohering ensembles can be labelled policy discourses. They help actors to convert problematic situations into policy-related issues that can be acted upon.

An alternative way of conceptualising the regularities in discussions is through the concept “frame”. A frame is “an interpretative schemata that signifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and

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28. Political scientists have analysed these processes in light of theories on “agenda setting”. Well known is Schattschneiders famous definition of politics as about the “mobilization of bias”. For social-constructivist theories on the formation of public, political and policy agendas see Fischer and Forester (eds) 1993 and Hajer 1995.
sequences of action in one’s present or past environment” (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). In the context of the policy sciences the crucial concept is that of a policy frame:

a set of cognitive and moral maps that orients an actor within a policy sphere. Frames help actors identify problems and specify and prioritise their interests and goals, they point actors toward causal and normative judgements about effective and appropriate policies in ways that tend to propel policy down a particular path and to reinforce it once on that path, and they can endow actors deemed to have moral authority or expert status with added power in a policy field, in this way, frames give direction to policy making and help account for policy outcomes (Bleich 2002: 1063-64).

Policy frames function as searchlights, similar to the way a picture-frame brings out what needs to be looked at by setting it apart from its amorphous background. A policy discourse can comprise several policy frames, or alternatively several policy discourses can be structured around a particular policy frame.

Some approaches to the study of frames and framing in public policy making have been lured to a realist view of politics. Realists argue that policy choices reflect the relative power of different interests in society and that politics is about strategic interactions between rational actors that pursue their respective interests (Dobbin 1994: 5). The activity of framing then becomes primarily an aspect of political strategy. In this perspective discourse serves as a strategic wrapping to communicate ideas, interests and beliefs successfully. These kind of strategic forms of framing certainly exist and they are becoming more important given the growing role of mass media, audience democracy and communication techniques. However, as an overall perspective on the role of language for human agency and social reality the realist view is not credible, and it obviously exists in tension with the earlier mentioned social-constructivist understanding of public policy making. It seems more plausible to think that people have learned to define and experience what they believe and think in discussions with others and on the basis of cultural understandings in the society in which they live. In addition, although many aspects of human agency can be said to be strategic, this is not the case for all forms of human understanding and action, and importantly it also does not mean that humans can manipulate at will all the structures that build up their social existence. The relations between social structures and individual and collective human agency can better be understood in terms of a “duality of structure” (Giddens 1984).

The idea of a duality of structure is that “social action originates in human agency of clever, creative human beings but in a context of social structures of various sorts that both enable and constrain their agency” (Hajer 1995: 58). When applied to the level of discussions, constraints entail rules of grammar and syntax of a particular language, but also already configured ensembles of ideas, categorisations and concepts that structure what can be said meaningfully in a given social domain. Even though these rules and configurations are in the end also human products, they have obtained a relative autonomy and thereby they shape the ways individuals talk and think. At the level of public policy discussions, actors will articulate their ideas and concerns about social situations in light of all kinds of assumptions about modalities of problem-solving

29. Frame-theory has been incorporated in various social science traditions, including discursive psychology, sociology, media studies and social movements literature. See Snow and Benford 1992;Gamson and Modigliani 1989; and Gamson 1992. For a discussion of various approaches see Bader 1991; Entman 1993; and Steinberg 1998.
that are taken for granted. Deliberations on particular policy proposals will thus be shaped by existing “policy paradigms”. These interpretative frameworks consist of ideas and standards that specify “not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing” (Hall 1993: 279).

Some researchers have argued that studying the role of discourses and frames in policy analysis comes down to analysing the “role of ideas in policy processes” (cf. Stone 1989: 282; Bleich 1998). Yet, the understanding of discourses as “ensembles of ideas” takes insufficient notice of the particular social context in which discourses are being articulated. It readily translates to a cognitive understanding of policy-making as a process in which “ideas” are exchanged and in which policy makers and societies become increasingly able to identify the most effective and efficient ways of addressing a social problem. Despite the fact that learning processes are an important aspect of policy making – they better be – the cognitive bias risks obscuring the political nature of policy discussions. In addition, a focus on “ideas” risks making less visible the relations between discourses and non-discursive elements of social reality. Social structures are made meaningful in discourse, but this does not mean that they do not exist other than “as discourse” (Bader 1991: 162ff.). Such an idealistic view of language fails to see the ways discourses can become plausible and resilient because of the ways they are associated with non-discursive aspects of reality and with social practices. Of particular relevance for this study, are the ways policy discourses are associated with social practices of regulation and institutions of government. Discourse can then be defined as: “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer 1995: 44).

1.3.2. Policy discussions and the role of institutions

Over the past decades there has been renewed interest in the role of institutions in social life. Institutions consist of the formal rules and informal constraints that form the framework within which human interactions take place and that structure everyday life. They are “humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” and thereby build social orders (North 1990: 3). Institutions “by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible” (Berger and Luckmann 1991: 72). Without institutions human beings would experience reality as a bewildering chaos and they would continuously have to

30. Social structures are also, for example, being reproduced via dispositions of the body (habitus) that are formed in processes of socialisation that are not merely discursive (Bader 1991: 96ff.). Another famous critique of the idealist view of the power of language is Bourdieu’s deconstruction of Austin’s suggestion that the phrase “I baptize this ship” could in itself be understood as a speech act, altering the order of things. As Bourdieu observed, the speech act was only effective because it occurred in a particular social setting, during a ceremony, and because it was being performed by a person who had been authorised to perform this act and had sufficient social prestige to do so (Bourdieu 1999). Of course, “ceremonies”, “authorisation” and “social prestige” also only exist as meaningful phenomena through discourse, but this does not mean that they merely exist as discourse and that their social effectiveness stems from their discursive power.

31. As Hajer (1995) argues the analysis of the relations between discourse and social practice is strongly indebted to the later work of Foucault. See Foucault 1975 and 1991. See also Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982.
re-invent ways of doing and modes of action-coordination. Institutions establish how in a particular situation individuals should act according to pre-defined roles and rules. An important mode of action-coordination over time is routinisation. Institutions guide human interactions via a “logic of appropriateness”, meaning they encourage human beings and organisations to associate new situations to situations for which rules already exist and to do what is “appropriate” (March and Olsen 1989: 160). The distinguishing way in which a distinctive institution or institutional arrangement structures human interactions and shapes social processes can be called its (institutional) “logic”. But institutions also leave room for creativity and human agency. Rules and regulations need to be interpreted, situations need to be assessed and categorised, and actual interventions upon reality require flexible and contextual understandings. For their continued existence institutions depend on human agency because they also function to the extent that they are constantly reproduced in actual practices. Still, “routinised institutional practices tend to have a high degree of salience” (Hajer 1995: 57-58).

Institutions and discourses are dialectically related. Institutions coordinate actions and behaviour in a meaningful, not in a mechanical way. Institutions “make sense” through discourse. Institutions also need discourses for their legitimation, both in terms of the cognitive validity of the meanings they establish and of the normative dignity of their practical imperatives (Berger and Luckman 1991: 111). Well-institutionalised sectors of society are legitimated in terms of relatively specialised, coherent and elaborate discourses or theories. These discourses “provide fairly comprehensive frames of reference for the respective sector of institutionalised conduct” (Berger and Luckmann 1991: 112; Bader 1991: 174ff.). At the same time discourses that are associated with established institutions gain in plausibility and become increasingly taken for granted. Forms of talking are associated with habits of doing and together they build up the “ways things are done”.

This more general discussion of the relations between discourse, institutions and social practice can now be focussed upon the level of policy making processes. In that case, the type of institutions under study are public policy institutions or straightforwardly institutions of government and governance.\(^\text{32}\) These are all institutions that make up “the state”, understood very generally as including a wider variety of institutions of distribution of authority, political decision making, accountability and democratic representation, different branches of the executive power, different levels of administration, bureaucracies, public services and more independent organisations and service providers. Institutionalised regimes of government and governance are configurations of public policy institutions that are organised in a distinguishable way and that function according to specific institutional logics (Bader 2007b: 872).

These institutionalised regimes of government and governance can be analysed at a highly aggregate level, for example at the level of entire states. At that level one can distinguish between polity forms that function according to their respective – very broadly defined – institutional logics (Jepperson 2002).\(^\text{33}\) At this general level one can also speak of a nation’s political logics.
culture, that is embodied in public policy institutions. Political cultures shape ideas about conceivable policy options, which are in turn informed by cultural notions of meaningful relations between causes and effects (Dobbin 1994: 228).  

At a less aggregate level, one can analyse institutional arrangements that regulate social processes and coordinate action in distinctive societal sectors, such as education, health, industrial relations, or religion. At this level distinguishable institutional logics inform public policies in the respective sector. In this sense one can speak of country-specific institutionalised regimes of government, education, health, industrial relations, or religion. Institutionalised regimes of government can be further disaggregated. Policy strategies that become institutionalised in a particular sector generate particular “organisational avenues for problem solving” within, and possibly beyond, that sector (Dobbin 1994). An institutionalised regime of government can also be said to generate and sustain various policy regimes that shape “policy packages” developed to address specific issues (Pierson 2004: 150). Actors that are involved in practices of regulation and policy making in a particular sector will draw upon existing policy strategies and institutional repertoires to talk, think and act on the basis of routine-like rules and regulations.

Institutionalised regimes of government and governance also shape public policy discussions. In their attempts to suggest possible ways to convert social situations into policy-related issues that can be acted upon, actors will try, though not necessarily in the same way, to allocate situations and issues to particular institutional fields with which they are already familiar. At the same time their various – overlapping as well as diverging – understandings and perceptions are being guided by the categories and ideas that are generated and sustained by existing institutionalised regimes of government. This is not merely an analytical search for the right solution and the correct mode of regulation, but a struggle of competing and crosscutting definitions of reality and suggested strategies for government. Even though the policy frames and competing policy discourses are associated with social structures and institutional environments, there remains more than enough room for agency and political struggle at all levels: in the selection of institutional repertoires, in the social construction of problems, the normative evaluation of situations, and in the interpretation of facts and regulations.

However, institutional repertoires and policy frames that somehow gain dominance and are being translated into effective public policy responses and measures will tend to be self-reinforcing. Perceptions and understandings of situations are being shaped by the discourses and regulatory activities that are generated and sustained by institutionalised approaches. For example, once a particular social phenomena – say mosque creation – is framed as about town

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34. For example, in the 19th century the political culture of the United States, Britain and France “shaped new industrial and economic strategies principally by determining the kinds of economic and industrial problems nations would perceive and by delimiting the solutions that nations would conceive to those problems” (Dobbin 1994: 20, italics in original, M.M.).

35. Country-specific regimes of government need not be represented as internally homogeneous and unchangeable. Institutional regimes are themselves historical products that “as such inevitably contain within them multiple lines of reasoning and emotion, developed in counterpoint to each other, and in tension if not in contradiction with one another” (Bowen 2007: 1005). Speaking of institutional repertoires underlines the ways institutional regimes guide and shape the acts and understandings of individuals and organisations in a particular societal sphere (Scott 1987: 500).
Constructing Mosques

planning it will tend to be defined and categorised in the terms typical of institutions associated with planning. Problems that may arise are being addressed with the prevailing policy instruments and if problems persist or re-appear actors will be inclined to improve the governing strategies which had been defined as appropriate, not to immediately dismiss these arrangements. In addition, changing directions will inevitably bring extra political and economic costs. It may risk re-opening complex political negotiations, but it will also put at risk all kinds of investments that have been made in dealing with the situation. Despite the fact that there continues to be room for discussion and creative agency, options and alternative routes are being narrowed down progressively and concerns that cannot be addressed with the prevailing policy paradigm are being deflected. The different levels of structuration of public policies and public policy responses are shown in scheme 1.

1.3.3. Institutionalised regimes of government, public policy and social situations

When actors react to situations they find support within the institutions in their society that encourage them to go on as before. Sometimes social or physical phenomena are represented and experienced as a challenge to crucial institutions. Attempts to face these situations may result in strained and even violent efforts to uphold the institutional order. But they may also lead to institutional change, revolutionary or more incremental. Major transformations of institutional orders require the invention of new theories of legitimation and the social-construction of new symbolic universes that can again “integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality” (Berger and Luckmann 1991: 112). Because modern societies are increasingly differentiated into various institutionalised spheres and complete subsystems, the role of symbolic universes and grand narratives as integrative forces at a meta-level has changed. In a globalising world, post-industrial societies are learning to live with higher levels of contingency, diversity, fragmentation and incomplete integration of symbolic, moral, cultural, social and institutional universes. Multiple integrative discourses and symbolic universes now have to co-exist and they have tended to become internally pluralized. Nevertheless, situations in which societies need to address social problems and develop public policies in an “institutional void” continue to be unsettling. Governments have difficulty in drawing on routines and need creative ways of framing situations, inventing new strategies of regulation and possibly creating new institutional arrangements (Hajer 2003). In addition, the institutions of government will in these situations usually operate under conditions of increasing societal pressure, which can be sparked off by social and economic crises, “moral panics” and feelings of unrest among citizens.

Frequently phenomena or situations are (perceived as) a challenge to some aspects of institutionalised regimes and to existing policy paradigms, but without being (seen as) a threat to the wider institutional order of a society as a whole. For example, in the 1970s rising rates of inflation and stagnation of growth and unemployment destabilised the institutionalised order of macro-economic policies in Western Europe that were based on a Keynesian paradigm. However, a new paradigm was found in monetarist economic doctrines. These allowed for a recreation of meaningful ways of regulating national economies and for the development of appropriate tools to address the new economic phenomena, and these were then institutionalised (Hall 1993). At the level of sub-systems and institutionalised sectors there are these kinds of efforts to re-embed situations into meaningful institutional arrangements and thereby to reproduce social order. A repeated failure to address a situation or problem within an institutional field may
result in it unsettling more encompassing institutional arrangements. If broader institutional arrangements are also incapable of regulating situations and processes in a satisfactory way, this may lead to further destabilisation of the entire institutional order.

The various kinds of challenges to institutional arrangements – from minor policy issues to (perceived) threats to crucial institutional arrangements – are articulated, defined and fought over in public policy discussions. Against a background of an existing institutional order actors move back and forth between institutions and discourses as meaningful repositories of experience. When coalitions of meaning around a particular definition of the public problem become dominant and corresponding strategies of regulation are agreed upon a process of “discursive closure” occurs that allows uncertainties to be settled for the time being (Hajer 1995: 61ff.). This will allow for more routine-like policy making and for institutions to regain their taken-for-granted status.

The presence of Islam and Muslim populations in Western Europe – in a variety of ways and for reasons that are contingent – can be represented as relatively “new” and can set off processes of public policy formation that can (but need not) challenge institutional arrangements at the level of particular policy spheres, and can (but need not) also challenge wider institutional arrangements and institutional orders in a given society. Seen in this light, a clearer conceptualisation of the kind of dynamics occurring in policy making processes around Islamic presence becomes possible. The issue of the accommodation of Islamic ritual slaughtering may serve as an illustration thereof.
For whatever reason, ritual slaughtering may become an issue on a public policy agenda. One could imagine a society that is completely unfamiliar with the whole concept of “people doing things with animals for religious purposes” and that, by consequence, would have great difficulty in developing plausible strategies of regulation. In the context of Western Europe, however, the practice of ritual slaughtering would probably be framed in light of the religious practices of a particular minority and as such it would be likely to categorize the demands of Muslims together with those of Jews. Still, it is not immediately clear what is to be done. Around the issue of ritual slaughtering various policy discourses have been produced that are supported by different groups of actors. Some groups in the host society will talk about ritual slaughtering in light of animal welfare and cruelty, other will link this practice to issues of hygiene and meat production. One of the major accomplishments of existing institutional arrangements for the regulation of ritual slaughtering is that they function as repositories of experience and comprise ways of balancing various perspectives, concerns and interests. Thus Muslim ritual slaughtering is seen as something that is relatively familiar because it is perceived through lenses coloured by experiences with kosher slaughtering. Institutional repertoires are immediately made available to regulate this “new” situation and the balancing of interests need not be done from scratch but can build on experiences. Strategies of governance can build on existing arrangements. Of course, this remains a “negotiated order” and arrangements can become subject to new rounds of public contestation. This may happen if new knowledge about animal suffering or new techniques of stunning become available, because value orientations change, or because at some point someone plausibly argues that Muslim and Jewish ritually slaughtering are actually very different phenomena.

The example of the accommodation of ritual slaughtering also hints at another difficulty surfacing in processes of converting situations into policy-issues. In modern societies, the regulation of the practice of ritual slaughtering inevitably cuts across a number of relatively autonomous and well-institutionalised spheres, including institutional arrangements to regulate animal welfare, religious freedom and food production. Stakeholders and actors with different institutional backgrounds will bring in their own legitimate orientations and concerns and various groups of actors will frame the practice of ritual slaughtering in very different terms. “Frame-conflicts” can easily result because the very perception of the situation of someone cutting a sheep’s throat is fundamentally different: an animal rights activist will see an act of unnecessary cruelty, a religious person may see an age-old ritual and an inspector of food-safety will see a risk to public health. In this way reaching agreement on facts, values and possible solutions will be extremely difficult. Furthermore, in trying to articulate their perceptions and value-orientations the actors will bring their “own mode of talking too” (Hajer 1995: 46). Actors may not only disagree with the concerns and value-orientations of others, it may well be that they don’t fully understand the very language in which other stakeholders articulate their points of view and that they fail to comprehend, let alone sympathise with, the deeper motivations for the other’s point of view.

Developing and agreeing upon public policies in situations in which these kind of “frame-controversies” play a role and in which problem-definitions cut across institutional spheres, is complex. Still, decision making cannot always be evaded and democratic ways of reaching some form of accommodation have to be found. Political theorists have developed normative models that comprise guidelines for ways to conduct public policy discussions and reach collectively binding decisions in these circumstances. Models of aggregative democracy will argue that in the end controversies can be solved through a majority vote, also if it may mean that the
perspectives and concerns of some groups will be excluded from the actual policy. Consensual models of democracy suggest that actors continue searching for a common framing of the policy issue until they are able to agree on the relevant facts and moral issues and subsequently base the policy on that. Deliberative approaches will invite actors to become “reflective” of the ways their orientations are being shaped by frames, to identify more fundamental and less important disagreements, to search for “second-order agreements”, and to be willing to adjust definitions of facts, values and interests during deliberations. Empirically it turns out another strategy is also available to bridge deep divergences through the forming of so-called “discourse coalitions”.

A discourse coalition is a group of actors that share a social construct and that can act upon a suggestion of commonality based on a superficial and metaphorical understanding which is produced and reproduced through the repeated evocation of the same crisp statement, catchy one-liner or analogy (Hajer 1995: 58ff.). These kind of crisp statements can be a comprised narrative or “story line”, for example a saying such as “what goes up must come down”, but is can also be shared sets of key concepts that can structure public policy responses, for example when a group of actors starts defining immigrants’ houses of worship as regular “neighbourhood facilities”.36 The suggestion of common understanding suffices to create a discourse coalition and “the loss of meaning” is actually enabling because it allows “to create communicative networks among actors with different or at best overlapping perceptions and understandings” (Hajer 1995: 63). Discourse-coalitions can play a role in linking understandings and value-orientations emanating from distinct institutional sectors. They can help to interweave regulatory practices that stem from different policy fields and that may be rooted in different, and possibly even conflicting, understandings of situations and social processes. If these kind of discourse-coalitions begin to structure a particular issue-field they can inform strategies of regulation that are not based on congruent understanding of issues or on deep levels of normative agreements. This kind of co-operation and more shallow common understanding may sometimes be helpful and may open up possibilities of collective action that allow overcoming a deadlock. In addition, the phrasings and images that form the cement in discourse coalitions may progressively come to shape understandings.

The earlier mentioned example of the accommodation of ritual slaughtering may help illustrate the ways discourse-coalitions can provide a way out of situations of frame-controversies. Recent developments in accommodation policies around ritual slaughtering are attempts to regulate what is called the “market of religious products”. The use of the concept “religious products” has helped to create communicative networks to develop a new perspective in which unexpected overlaps of interests and concerns become possible and novel types of regulatory practices are introduced. In the aftermaths of the BSE-crisis new techniques were implemented to regulate consumer markets, trace the provenance of meat products and re-establish consumer trust through certification of products. Similar institutional arrangements have now been installed to regulate the production, distribution and consumption of halal products (cf. Bergeaud-Blackler 2007). This governance strategy builds upon, and in turn strengthens, an overlap in the

36. Hajer (1995) uses the concept “story-line” as the general concept to refer to the kind of social constructs that can function as “the cement” in discourse coalition. However, it is not entirely clear whether and why discourse coalitions can only be formed around (aspects of) narratives or “stories” as this term seems to suggest. I will therefore avoid using the term “story-line” and simply speak of social constructs that can serve as the cement in discourse coalitions.
concerns of consumers of halal products, institutional actors concerned about food safety and organisations that are concerned about animal welfare. They can all agree that a good certification process is valuable, because it allows better monitoring of slaughterhouses and creates possibilities for respect of religious and animal-welfare proscriptions. The institutionalisation of arrangements to regulate the production and distribution of halal meat “from farm to fork”, creates incentives for the formation of complementary institutions, for example supermarkets that specialise in selling “religious products” and that only collaborate with certified slaughter houses. In this ways the understanding of the policy-issue ritual slaughtering as being about regulating production and consumption of “religious products”, becomes increasingly plausible. Moreover, standards and ways of doing will spread as in a self-reinforcing manner, because the more people apply a norm the more it becomes taken for granted (Pierson 2004: 39). It is to this tendency of institutional arrangements to be self-enforcing that I now turn.

1.3.4. Institutional logics and path dependencies

Institutions tend to inertia because they establish norms of appropriateness and encourage actors to associate new situations with existing ones and to continue practices simply because they are the ways things are done. Institutions also guarantee stability over time. The interpretative frames they generate and sustain are flexible enough to incorporate new observations, but they also guide perceptions by filtering out those aspects of reality that risk destabilising the social order. Interests and ideas of policy makers are thus being shaped by policy legacies. However, the reproduction of institutions over time and the self-reinforcing qualities of institutionalised arrangements is not merely a result of cultural or cognitive factors. In a more fundamental way institutions play a role in path-dependencies. These are social processes that generate “branching patterns of historical development” (Pierson 2004: 21).

Institutions are subject to a dynamic of “increasing returns” and of “positive feedback”. This means that once a particular institution has been introduced it becomes relatively less costly to continue it than to replace it and that “outcomes in the early stages of a sequence feed on themselves, and once-possible outcomes become increasingly unreachable over time” (Pierson 2004: 21). Some actors will also have vested interests in maintaining institutions and those who have “invested” in an institution will resist change. An institutional arrangement may induce the forming of complementary organizational forms, “which in turn may encourage the development of new complementary institutions”. In this way path-dependent processes will develop at “a more macro level that involves configurations of complementary organisations and institutions” (Pierson 2004: 27; North 1990: 95). Well institutionalised regimes of government and their respective institutional logics will stretch out to a broad range of complementary institutions. In this way the earlier-mentioned underlying logics of polity forms can be said to have emerged, and subsequently to have begun informing governing strategies across all public policy institutions in a given society.

37. This has also been observed by Bowen 2007: 1012.
38. History is inherently path-dependent because constraints from the past impose limits on current choices (North 1990: 137).
Because of the tendency of institutional arrangements to be self-enforcing and produce path-dependent patterns, the analysis of the regulation of relatively new social situations over time needs to be historically sensitive in two distinct ways. It needs to look at the particular institutional logics that are already in place within the institutional sector to which the regulation of that situation is being allocated in a given society. This means essentially that institutionalised regimes are analysed in view of the historical process of which they are the result. It is to be expected that institutional logics and actual patterns of regulation are being reproduced and that in a given society the ways things are regulated in the present often is an imitation of the ways things were regulated in the past. On the other hand, it means that the introduction and development of a particular institution and of particular strategies of governance are also analysed as processes that unfold over time. Institutional arrangements that are introduced will tend to be continued, choices made at a certain moment will affect possible choices at a later moment and the development of a pattern of accommodation of Islam shapes the development of subsequent patterns.\(^{39}\)

Now that the relevance of the historical perspective has become clearer, the two institutional regimes that (for contingent reasons) have been of particular relevance in the formation of policies of accommodation of Islam in Europe can be further discussed. These are institutionalised church-state relations and regimes of government of national integration and immigrant incorporation. Institutional arrangements in the sphere of religion in France and the Netherlands can be described on the basis of existing church-state theories, many of which have also analysed the historical development of these institutions.\(^{40}\) However, when it comes to analysing institutional arrangements in the sphere of immigrant incorporation and national integration, the existing typologies of country-specific institutional regimes cannot without further clarification be used for this study. As I have argued these typologies have been unable to take sufficient notice of the important variations within these national regimes both between different groups of immigrants and between different time periods. Existing typologies of regimes of integration and citizenship have been insufficiently historically sensitive and by consequence they have failed to explore, let alone explain, why the same countries have over time developed such widely diverging policies to incorporate different immigrant ethnic minorities (cf. Bader 1997: 1).

One step towards a more adequate view of this matter is to look at the way immigrant policies are crucially shaped by different types of host-stranger relations (Alexander 2006). Immigrants can be categorised and subject-positioned in various ways: as transient sojourners, seasonal workers, colonial workers, temporary guest workers, refugees, illegal migrants, denizens, ethnic minorities, newcomers, allochtonen, or citizens. These categorisations are fundamental for the emergence of particular institutional arrangements to incorporate ethnic immigrant groups and they have important consequences for the rights and entitlements of immigrants in the host society. There are three main subject-positions that have been attributed to Muslim immigrants in 20th century France and the Netherlands: the subject-position of colonial subject, guest worker and citizen. Following these three subject-positions three institutional

\(^{39}\) Snap-shot views cannot capture the relevant factors that shape these processes. An example is given by Rath et al. (2001: 177 and 191) who speak of a “dominoes effect” in public policy development, meaning that Islamic institutions were set up and recognized in one social sphere after another. Gradual normalization and administrative acceptance of Muslim schools also made it easier for other Islamic institutions to be created.

\(^{40}\) See Monsma and Soper 1997; Fetzer and Soper 2005; Bader 2007a. The particular institutionalised regimes of the government of religion in France and the Netherlands will be elaborated in chapter 2.
regimes of incorporation of immigrant ethnic minorities can be distinguished: a colonial regime, a guest workers regime and a citizenship regime. All regimes of government are characterised by distinctive institutional logics that regulate the incorporation of immigrants and generate societal integration. These institutional logics will be further explored empirically in the course of this study, but the more general characteristics of the three regimes are already mentioned here.

The colonial regime developed within the model of geo-political organisation that was characteristic of modern imperialism. The empire was conceived of as an entity that encompassed a European heartland and its overseas territories. Different societies, cultures and peoples were joined together into a colonial order that was organised around the principle of superiority of European culture and the right of Europeans colonisers to rule over indigenous peoples and societies. Among the more constant motives of colonial rule were the will of European countries to gain international prestige, to extract wealth from colonised territories and to civilize and modernise non-European populations. Colonialism can be understood as an institutional “regime of incorporation” because of the way it organised the integration of indigenous subjects and populations into a larger entity with its centre in Europe. It can also, more narrowly, be understood as a regime of incorporation for immigrants from the colonies who came to Europe to work or serve in the military. Colonial governing strategies and public policies to accommodate Islam and Muslim populations were developed dialectically between administrations in Europe and those in the overseas colonies and they were also shaped by contentious encounters with the colonised.

The second institutional regime of incorporation of immigrants is the guest workers regime. Historically, it emerged as institutional arrangements in specific periods, for example in France in the 1930s and in various West-European countries in the 1960s. It was developed when governments and employers bound together to recruit a foreign workforce to provide for labour shortages in specific sectors of the national economy. Guest workers were permitted to work in Europe on temporary work contracts and when there was no more work they were encouraged to return home and reintegrate in their society of origin. One of the guiding principles in a guest workers regime is differential exclusion, meaning that temporary immigrants can participate in some spheres of the host society while being excluded from others (Castles 1995).

The third regime of incorporation is citizenship, understood here as a particular institutional arrangement to permanently incorporate immigrant ethnic minority groups and create societal and political integration based on liberal-democratic principles such as freedom, inclusion and equality. Within the general type of a citizenship regime European liberal-democratic states have developed distinctive approaches to immigration and ethnic diversity. The familiar typologies of integration regimes can help to analyse these distinct institutional arrangements and distinguish for example between pluralist or multicultural and assimilationist regimes, and between different normative immigrant-integration policy-models. In the real world these three institutional regimes of incorporation do not exist in their ideal typical form, but only in the form of national variants. There are British, French, Dutch or

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42. See Clancy-Smith 1994; and Van der Veer 2001a.
43. See Freeman 1979; Cross 1983; Castels 1985; and Alexander 2006.
Portuguese colonial regimes, German, French or Dutch guest workers regimes and many types of citizenship regimes that function according to distinctive institutional logics. In addition, the national variants are internally heterogeneous and change over time, also because they are shaped in the interactions with the respective ethnic minority groups. I therefore choose the strategy of analysing the characteristics of each regime in a discussion of the historical development of the French and Dutch institutional arrangements and policies. For the moment the three-fold distinction of regimes of incorporation of ethnic minorities functions as an analytical grid and helps to more accurately focus on the role of specific institutional logics that shape public policy responses. The distinction between these three regimes also helps to more clearly delineate time periods in the development of public policy responses with regard to Islam in 20th century France and the Netherlands. It makes possible the analysis of the intersections between the respective regimes of incorporation of immigrant ethnic minorities and church-state regimes (see scheme 2).

Distinguishing between three regimes of incorporation also allows us to see whether governing strategies and public policies developed within the framework of previously existing regimes of incorporation have continued to shape public policies at a later time. Of particular relevance are mechanisms of institutional diffusion. These comprise the ways institutional repertoires are being carried over from one setting to another (Koenig 2005: 230). I will look at the ways institutional repertoires are being diffused geographically, for example from colonial societies to Europe and vice versa, and at the ways institutional repertoires have been diffused across time, most importantly between the different regimes of incorporation. Mechanisms of diffusion of institutional repertoires can be cognitive and cultural. In that case specific interpretative schemes, representations and understandings are being imitated, reproduced and employed within a different institutional environment or within a different period. Specific people may serve as “carrier groups” for this kind of cognitive and cultural diffusion and bridge different institutions and periods (Koenig 2005: 231). Mechanisms of diffusion can also be institutional. This is the case when institutions are maintained in different circumstances or when the same type of institutions is set up, for example a specific facility for the housing of workers or a public policy to enable immigrants to maintain their cultural practices. The focus on continuities and discontinuities and the relevant mechanisms of diffusion will also help to establish whether for historical and structural reasons the situation of Islam and Muslim populations in some West European is indeed different from that of other immigrant-origin minority religions, and whether there are significant differences in that respect between France and the Netherlands.

1.3.5. Case-study approach and public discussions on mosque creation

It is now possible to return to the logic of focussing on the issue of mosque construction as a suitable means for exploring the theoretical issues discussed above. The creation of prayer spaces has been among the key concerns of Muslims in Western Europe and houses of worship make a claim on space, even though the actual ways they do – geographically, socially and symbolically – can vary greatly. Given the paths of European history, throughout the 20th and 21st century the building of mosques in France and in the Netherlands remained something out of the ordinary. The development of public policy discourses on mosque creation was one aspect of making the presence of Islam meaningful and finding appropriate ways of accommodating what was often seen as one of its central institutions. By studying public policy discussions on mosque creation this study aims to gain understanding of the wider social process of Western European societies.
SCHEME 2 – Institutionalised regimes of government, levels of structuration of public policy responses to mosque creation and path dependencies

Church-State ↔ Colonial Regime

- Policy discourses
- Governing strategies
- Policy paradigms

Public policy discussions

Public policy responses to mosque creation

Church-State ↔ Guest Workers Regime

- Policy discourses
- Governing strategies
- Policy paradigms

Public policy discussions

Public policy responses to mosque creation

Church-State ↔ Citizenship regime

- Policy discourses
- Governing strategies
- Policy paradigms

Public policy discussions

Public policy responses to mosque creation

Diffusion of institutional repertoires across time and forming of path dependent patterns

The arrows indicate directions of processes of structuration and shaping of public policy responses. Feedback processes are not included in the mode.
seeking to regulate the incorporation of Islam and Muslim immigrant populations. The theoretical framework outlined above suggests that, in the realm of public policy making, French and Dutch societies define and experience the “reality of mosque creation” via discourses that are associated with institutionalised regimes of government and governance. These institutionalised regimes build up to an – internally plural and negotiated – institutional order that is seen as both meaningful and legitimate. However, institutional regimes and the wider institutional order in a given society do not merely “exist”. They are products of human history, but they are also meaningful and negotiated orders that can be challenged as well as justified, that are resilient as well as adaptable. Seen in this light, public policy discussions on mosque creation bring into focus the politics of the meaningful incorporation of Muslim populations and Islam in France and the Netherlands, and the ways these societies have changed in the process.

1.4. Public policy responses and the creation of mosques in France and the Netherlands: a comparative case study

The selection of France and the Netherlands for this comparative study is appropriate because it guarantees important variations at the level of the institutional arrangements that have been identified as relevant, being on the one hand distinctive regimes of incorporation of ethnic immigrant minorities (regimes of colonialism, guest workers and citizenship) and church-state regimes. The French colonial regime and its “mission to civilize” has often been contrasted to the Dutch colonial model of indirect rule and priority for economic gain and commerce. The French regime of citizenship and national integration and its emphasis on Republicanism and cultural assimilation is repeatedly contrasted to Dutch pluralism and multicultural integration policies. French church-state institutions that are organised around the principle of laïcité, are seen as crucially different from the Dutch regime with its heritage of pillarisation. Only in the case of the guest workers regime the literature does not provide a clear idea about possible institutional differences between the countries. Whether or not these crude images of national regimes correspond to the institutional logics that characterise the various institutionalised patterns of government and whether these and other logics come out in effective public policies will be discussed in the course of this study.

A comparison between these two countries is also pertinent because both have in the past been important imperial powers that ruled over Muslim societies. They both have incorporated significant Muslim immigrant populations over the past 30 years. At present, statistics estimate that roughly five to seven percent of the total population of France and the Netherlands stems from immigration from Muslim countries. An important difference in this respect is that many Muslims in France originate from the former French colonies, whereas in the Netherlands the majority of Muslims are of Turkish or Moroccan origin. Whether that difference is relevant for the impact of the institutional and policy legacies of the colonial regime upon subsequent regimes of incorporation will be discussed in the course of this study.

The study corresponds to a “most different cases” research design. It explores whether the above mentioned differences in institutional arrangements have resulted in distinctive accommodation policies, and, if so, how and why. However, my aim is to explore institutional arrangements in light of their historical development and internal heterogeneity and thereby to develop more adequate models of country-specific regimes of incorporation of immigrant ethnic minorities and church-state regimes. I focus on “inductive generalisation” and seek to identify distinctive institutional patterns and causal mechanisms in social processes that are complex and that are also shaped by several situational factors (Bader 2007b: 876). This means that my qualitative description of the ways distinctive institutional regimes shape the formation of public policies of accommodation of Islamic presence will be historically sensitive, detailed and contextual. It will be historically sensitive by analysing the ways institutional regimes of incorporation and church-state as themselves historical products, consisting of various elements and traditions, and because I study the development of accommodation policies towards Islam as one internally extremely heterogeneous, social process that unfolds over time. My approach will be detailed because it focuses on a particular issue – policy discussions around mosque creation – and therefore in particular analyses those elements of institutional regimes that are most relevant for this issue. I will, for example, in more detail describe those aspects of church-state regimes that are most relevant with regard to the creation of houses of worship, which is notably the issue of state subsidies for building and maintenance costs. This also means that because many aspects of mosque creation are dealt with at the municipal level I will focus in particular on the specific public policy discussions in Marseilles and Rotterdam. Both these cities have been at the frontline of debates on Islam in their respective countries, and they are home to substantial Muslim populations. I should hasten to add that Rotterdam and Marseilles are not claimed to be representative for the wider approaches in the Netherlands and France. National regimes of government structure important aspects of the formation of public policies in those cities, but other institutional arrangements that are relevant for accommodation policies with regard to mosques will come into play at the local level, such as town planning regulations and municipal approaches to immigrant integration (see scheme 3).

A larger number of case-studies in both countries would have allowed for firmer conclusions on the distinctive relevance of national as opposed to municipal institutional regimes and wider governing strategies, but this would have come at the cost of the more detailed historical analysis and the interpretative study of actual policy discussions. Finally, my approach is contextual because institutional arrangements, governing strategies and public policy discussions are situated within their wider historical and political context. That context inevitably includes situational factors, which should not be abstracted away in order to test theoretical models. Situational factors include significant events, such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and broader conjunctures and trends, such as shifts in public opinion, integration processes and political developments (Bader 1991: 326ff.). In addition, a contextual analysis also means that the focus lies on the ways legal and constitutional regulations, policy frames and policy guidelines and normative ideas are being interpreted and applied in social practices and in view of acts of regulation.

To summarise, the leading research questions of this study are:

1. How have institutionalised regimes of government of incorporation of ethnic immigrant minorities and of church-state relations shaped accommodation policies with regard to the founding, development and functioning of mosques in France and the Netherlands, and what important variations are there in this respect?
2. In what ways did public policy discussions around mosque creation develop over time in 20th and 21st century France and the Netherlands, and in particular in Marseilles and Rotterdam, and what particular meanings were given to (aspects of) institutional arrangements in varying, internally heterogeneous and competing policy discourses?

3. In what ways are institutional logics and interpretative schemes diffused from one institutional setting to another and/or from one institutional regime of incorporation of ethnic immigrant minorities to a subsequent regime, and what are the effects thereof for the development of path-dependent patterns and policy legacies shaping public policies with regard to the presence of Islam and mosque creation in France and the Netherlands?46

Two aspects of the processes of argumentation and representation around mosque creation in the Netherlands and France, and in particular in Marseilles and Rotterdam, will be of central

SCHEME 3 – Institutionalised regimes of government shaping (local) public policy responses to mosque creation within citizenship regime

![Diagram of institutionalised regimes](image)

The arrows indicate directions of processes of structuration and shaping of public policy responses. Feed-back processes are not included in the model.

46. Please note that this study does not include the analysis of the diffusion of institutional logics and interpretative schemes from one national context to another. As Koenig (2007) has demonstrated trans-national institutional processes and mechanism of diffusion of repertoires in Europe play an important role in shaping policies of accommodation of Islam. I thank Ralph Grillo for bringing this to my attention.
relevance. From one perspective, the ways mosque creation and the functioning of mosques are being associated with prevailing ideas, institutionalised regulatory practices and public policies concerning the incorporation of immigrant ethnic groups. From another, the ways public responsibilities with regard to mosque creation are being defined and whether or not institutional church-state arrangements are made to be relevant and to what consequences.

Public policy discussions on mosques comprise all kinds of different forms of speech and text around the creation and functioning of Islamic houses of worship. This study is therefore based on an analysis of a very heterogeneous dataset that included newspaper clippings, policy memorandums, transcripts of municipal hearings and information evenings, qualitative interviews, political speeches and pamphlets, mosque building project descriptions and television broadcasting. The internal diversity of the dataset further increased because this study covers a time frame of more than a century. As a result I have had to rely on secondary sources and fragmentary archival material for some periods, whereas for other periods documentation was more readily available. In addition, the arena’s in which mosque creation was discussed varied largely, both across time and between the two countries and cities. Sometimes mosque creation is discussed in written media, for example in national and local newspapers, at other times policy makers produce extensive policy memoranda outlining a municipal approach to the housing of mosques, while sometimes there is hardly any public discussion on mosques. In the face of such a diverse data set any attempt at quantified analysis is bound to fail. I have therefore chosen to analyse the date in an interpretative way and to gradually develop my conceptualisations and categorisations in a series of readings of the material.47 Thereby I have sought to always understand discussions in light of their wider historical, political and policy context and key situational factors. Of crucial importance in that process was the study of different phrases and figures of speech that pointed to specific framing of mosque creation. The example of the analysis of the fragment of an editorial published in *Le Monde* below gives an impression of the way I have carried out the interpretative analysis of the data.

In the following chapters I discuss the findings of this study. In chapter 2 I introduce French and Dutch church state regimes in a historical perspective and pay in particular attention to the regulations for the financing of houses of worship. The other chapters are organised following the different regimes of incorporation. Chapter 3 and 4 discuss French and Dutch colonial regime and chapter 5 and 6 do the same for the guest workers regimes. In chapter 7 and 8 I discuss the results of the more in depth analysis of policy discussions in Marseilles and Rotterdam that took place within the citizenship regime and shifting concerns about immigrant integration and Islam in both countries. In the chapter 9 I draw the main conclusions from this study and compare the two countries in light of the research questions introduced above.

47. For a discussion of the methods of interpretative policy analysis see Yanow 1996.
**SCHEME 4 – Illustration of interpretative analysis of texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text-fragment</th>
<th>“is it admissible that the worshippers of the second religion in France, Islam, are still forced to pray in houses of worship that are too small and uncomfortable? And that the Muslims (…) spread out their prayer rugs on the pavement of our cities ? (...) the incorporation of a ‘Cathedral-Mosque’ in the urban landscape stimulates the integration of Muslims, many of whom have French nationality. Because, beyond the needs of the worshippers, the establishment of a Grand Mosque is first and foremost a symbol: it represents the integration and the recognition of Islam”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper:</td>
<td>Le Monde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>March 10 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text type:</td>
<td>Editorial</td>
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| Labeling, key terms, figures of speech | Muslims/Islam as second religion in France  
Our cities  
Incorporation in the urban landscape  
Muslims with French nationality  
A Symbol |
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| Definitions of problems and solutions | (problem) Inadequacy of prayer space  
(problem) Worshipping on the pavement  
(problem) the situation is still problematic  
Integration of Muslims (solution)  
Grand Mosque represents “integration and recognition” (solution)  
“needs” are a problem, but beyond that there is the symbolic issue of recognition (unclear whether this is a demand of Muslims, who wants “recognition”?) |
| --- | --- |

| Representations of mosques and Islam | Houses of worship: too small, uncomfortable  
Praying “on the pavement”  
Cathedral Mosque  
Grand Mosque  
A symbol (of integration and recognition), providing for “needs” is secondary |
| --- | --- |

| Framing in light of public issues and responsibility | Rhetorical question: it is not admissible in “our cities” that Muslims who “have French nationality” and who “belong to the second religion in France” have to worship on the pavement and in inadequate conditions (i.e. this calls for action)  
A Cathedral Mosque can be incorporated into urban landscape: (implicit) helps to address needs, but (emphasis) is a symbol of integration and recognition: (i.e. public responsibility is focused on the latter issues, leaves open whether the creation of this symbol of integration and recognition is or should be initiated by French (authorities, society) or in reaction to Muslim demands |
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2.1. Introduction

National models for the governance of religion are a policy legacy that has grown out of a history of relations between church and state and that has become entrenched in a country’s political culture and institutions, including constitutional and legal regulations. National models can be analysed at the level of principles “that work together to create an approach to church-state relations” (Monsma and Soper 1997: 156). In that perspective the French church-state regime can be said to correspond to an ideal-typical model of strict separation and the Dutch regime to one of structural pluralism. However, in the real world national models are not uniform and straightforward. Because they have developed over time and are shaped by the interactions between various traditions, church-state regimes are internally heterogeneous and fairly ambiguous. In addition, religious policies and guiding principles vary between societal spheres and policy domains. Focussing on these observations, the introduction of French and Dutch church-state regimes in this chapter situates foundational principles in the context of several historical traditions and their development over time, and discusses ambiguities that are a part of these national models. The institutional framework for the financing of houses of worship are discussed more elaborately because this aspect of church-state regimes is of particular relevance for public policy responses to mosque creation.

2.2. Church-state relations in France: institutional repertoires and principles in their historical context

The French church-state regime is usually described in terms of the principle of laïcité, or secularism. I will argue that in actual fact three principles work together, though not necessarily in harmony, to create a distinctively French approach to the governance of religion.\(^4\) Firstly, the French state traditionally, and in varying ways and degrees, regulates and controls organised religion (le culte). This “Gallican” element goes back to the tradition of the Gallican Church, but it also underlay the Napoleonic approach and has continued to justify state intervention in the sphere of religion after 1905. The second element is Republicanism, a particular way of thinking about the individual, the state, and society. Republicanism has shaped French ideas about the appropriate place and boundaries of religion in society, including the distinction between organised forms of religion (le culte) and private forms of belief and faith (croyance) (Bowen 2006: 11-

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Third, the idea that principles such as equal treatment, state neutrality and the separation of church and state should be interpreted in a strictly secularist way. Many in France will argue that strict secularism means that religion belongs to the private sphere. A historical reconstruction can help to understand the way these principles work together to create an approach to church-state relations that is distinctively French, without it necessarily being unequivocal (Bowen 2007).

The tradition of state control over organised religion began with the continuous struggles between the French monarchs and the popes in Rome over spiritual and temporal authority, going back at least as far as the reign of Philip Le Bel (1268-1314). The formation of a Gallican or French Church enabled the sovereign king to control the affairs of the church. Another formative experience in the early modern period were the religious wars (1562-1598) resulting from the Reformation and Counter-reformation. These violent reactions to the emergence of religious diversity within European Christendom not only contributed to the failure of the reformation in France, but also hindered the formation of experiences of mutual adaptation and religious toleration as happened elsewhere in Europe. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685 led to a new period of religious violence and the religious dominance of Catholicism was maintained by force until late in the 18th century. In the period before the revolution of 1789 there had hardly been any experience with peaceful accommodation of religious pluralism in France. There was also no outspoken French philosophical tradition of defence of religious tolerance. Instead, the French Enlightenment came to be known for its critiques of the church.

The French Revolution greatly affected the subsequent developments of church-state patterns, notably by its individually-oriented understanding of the value of religious freedom, its Republican view of the democratic process, and the view of outwardly expressed religion in the public sphere as a threat to the political order. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789) mentioned religious freedom in article 10, but significantly emphasised individual freedom of conscience and expression: “No one may be troubled on account of his or her opinions, even religious ones, provided that their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law”. Another important element in the Revolution was the establishment of Republicanism as a political doctrine and the related unsympathetic view of the public role of organised religion. The French republican tradition, strongly indebted to the political philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, claimed that the state could liberate the citizens from their particularistic – regional, religious, communal – group loyalties and make them into “universal” members of the sovereign nation. Organised religion risked destabilizing the political community because it gave the

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49. The formation of a Galician church was confirmed in the Concordat of 1516 and restated in the Declaration of the Clergy of France in 1682. Rulings of the pope required royal consent in France (Le Tourneau 2000; Bowen 2006: 21ff.).
50. See Martin 1978.
52. Baubérot (2000: 6ff.) observes that the French declaration of 1789 does not mention God as the founder of human rights. This in contrast to the American declaration of independence of 1776 (“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”).
53. Koenig (2003: 98) observes that Republicanism comprises the idea that the individual should “unabhängig von seinen sonstigen zivilgesellschaftlichen Bedingungen in den durch die souveräne Nation legitimierten Staat einbezogen würden”.

44 Constructing Mosques
people “two codes of legislation, two rulers, and two countries” (Rousseau 1973: 272). The Civil Constitution of the Clergy of 1790 required priests to take a new oath to uphold the constitution. The Revolution also abolished the Christian calendar and introduced a so-called “religion of the Republic” with its own ceremonies, cults and goddess of Reason (Fetzer and Soper 2005: 69). During the period of Terror anti-clerical elements gained in influence: the possessions of the Catholic Churches were disowned, Catholic congregations were outlawed and thousands of priests who refused to plead allegiance were deported or murdered.

The relationships between church and state were altered when Napoleon Bonaparte acceded to power in 1799 (the 18th Brumaire) and concluded a Concordat with Pope Pius VII in 1801. In this agreement the French government recognised Catholicism as the “religion of the great majority of French people”. The French government would appoint Catholic bishops, but these would be canonized by the pope. Besides the Catholic Church, the Lutheran and Calvinist religions were also officially recognised as organised religions (cultes) in 1802, through articles that Napoleon attached to the text of the Concordat, and Judaism followed in 1808 (Bowen 2006: 23). The state would from now on pay the salaries of the Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Jewish clergy.

In the course of the 19th century a series of conflicts around religion pitted supporters of the Catholic Church and the Monarchy to liberal and anti-clerical factions supporting the Republic. The political effects of their disagreements were all the more destabilising because the state itself moved back and forth between republican and monarchical regimes: the July Monarchy (1830-1848) was succeeded by the Second Republic (1848-1851) that in turn gave way to the Second Empire (1851-1871), which finally was replaced by the Third Republic (1871-1940).

The school struggle of the second half of the 19th century was crucial for the formation of French ideas about church-state relations, which have remained of great relevance up to the present day. These were also the formative years of the so-called “militant secularism” (laïcité de combat) that insisted that the state should uphold a secular, republican ethic and play a role as educator and source of spiritual inspiration. In 1882, one year after the anticlerical factions had formed a government, the Minister of Education, Jules Ferry, introduced legislation to establish a more complete separation of church and state in the sphere of education. Local priests no longer would have the right to inspect education. The idea that religion should be marginalized in the private sphere also underlay a law of 1884 forbidding religious signs in public cemeteries (Bowen 2006: 24).

The 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State put an end to the Concordatian model based on official recognition of religions. However, this did not signify the end of state regulation of organised religion. The 1905 law set boundaries as to what organised religion could be. For an association to be recognised as religious or cultic (cultuel) it was required that “its followers come together in formal ceremonies, that the beliefs contain universal religious

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54. Rosanvallon argues that the image of French political culture as solely consisting of the Republican, centralizing and Jacobin traditions downplays the significance of another French political tradition that emphasises the importance of civil society and civic associations. See Rosanvallon 2004; and Bowen 2006: 28.
55. In 1806 the Gregorian Calendar was re-established.
56. This was with the exception of the departments of Moselle, Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin that were under German rule in 1905. I do not include as discussion of the special legal regimes in Alsace-Lorraine and Moselle and in the overseas territories. See the report of the Machelon Commission (2006) and recently Baubérot et al. (eds) 2008.
principles, that the group has a long existence, and its activities do not threaten public order” (Bowen 2006: 18). The various struggles over the consequences and interpretations of the 1905 law throughout the 20th century illustrate that underneath the agreement on the centrality of laïcité there lies a disagreement between advocates of militant secularism (laïcité de combat) and supporters of moderate secularism (laïcité modéré) that has continued to influence political arguments on religious issues in France (Baubérot 2000 and 2005; Fetzer and Soper 2005: 73).

Those who see the 1905 law as a symbol of the clear choice for strict secularism and separation tend to put the emphasis on the second article, stipulating that from now on the state would “neither recognize nor pay salaries or other expenses for any form of worship [culte]” (Fetzer and Soper 2005: 70). They argue that this edict means that there should be no form of direct or indirect financing of religion and that the public sphere and public institutions should be free from religious influence. By contrast, the supporters of moderate secularism tend to put the emphasis on the first article of the 1905 law, which stipulates that the Republic “guarantees freedom of conscience and the free exercise of organised religions (cultes)”.

57. Recently the Stasi Commission (report in 2003), the Council of State (report in 2004) and the Machelon Commission (report in 2006) have discussed extensively the meaning of laïcité and the 1905 Law of the Separation of Churches and the State. These reports will be discussed in chapter 7.


2.3. Legal regulations concerning the financing of houses of worship

The Concordatarian system had combined state regulation of organised religions with official recognition and public financing of religion. The will to break with this system lay behind the axiomatic phrasing of the second article of the Law on the Separation of Churches and the State, stipulating that the state will not finance worship (le culte). Article 2 laid down that the public religious bodies (établissements publics du culte) would cease to exist and were to be replaced by private religious associations. State, departmental and municipal budgets for religious purposes were abolished. However, the state would continue to finance the costs of chaplaincies in public establishments such as schools, asylums, hospices and prisons. One of the most important forms of financial ties between the state and churches concerned real estate and the
ownership and maintenance costs of houses of worship and other buildings and premises, such as seminaries and vicarages.\textsuperscript{59}

Religions were to reorganise themselves in the form of private cultic associations within one year of the promulgation of the 1905 law. Once these cultic organisations were founded they would, free of charge, become the attributaries of the buildings and premises that until then were owned by the public religious bodies. As private owners, the cultic associations would also have to carry the financial weight of debts and maintenance costs of the buildings. Those premises not claimed before December 1906 would be confiscated by public authorities and were to be used to cater to museums and libraries or given in use to public associations of assistance or \textit{bienfaisance} (article 9). When Calvinist, Lutheran and Jewish cultic associations had been founded these effectively became owners of their respective houses of worship in December 1906. However, the Vatican refused to accept the new law and the unilateral cessation of the Concordat by the French government. In August 1906 Pope Pius X ordered Catholics in France to refrain from creating private cultic associations. Facing the possibility that Catholic worship would become impossible, the French government decided that the buildings in use for Catholic religious activities would be attributed to public authorities – municipalities and the state - and that these would then be given, free of charge, for use by the respective believers.\textsuperscript{60}

With respect to the costs of building new houses of worship, the 1905 law established the principle of private financing by the communities of believers (Hafiz and Devers 2005: 111ff.). However, various legal regulations exist that allow for forms of indirect subsidies for the creation of prayer houses, notably via public authorities financing the acquisition of land and building sites. Houses of worship can be built on land that is leased for the market price and governments can give a guarantee for a loan in the form of a mortgage to enable the building of houses of worship. Of greater importance, there is the possibility for municipalities to give long term leases (\textit{bail emphytéotique}), usually for a period of 99 years and for a symbolical amount. This practice is the result of an agreement made in 1936 between Léon Blum and the archbishop of Paris to allow for the building of new churches in the Paris region, hence the phrase the “Cardinal’s building sites” (\textit{Chantiers du Cardinal}). This practice exists in tension with Article 2 of the 1905 law, because it comes down to municipalities financing the costs of acquisition of building plots and cultic associations obtaining the effective ownership of the land. One of the rationalisations for this practice is that religious buildings make a valuable contribution to the municipality’s real estate (\textit{patrimoine immobilier}).\textsuperscript{61} The Law on the Separation of Churches and the State introduced an important inequality between religious associations housed in churches built before 1905 and those housed in churches built later. Religious associations that have built houses of worship anew after 1905 have had to finance these themselves.

Another important aspect of the financing of houses of worship involves maintenance and renovation costs. At this point the Law on Separation of Churches and the State also created

\textsuperscript{59} For further details on legal arrangements see Boyer 1993; Basdevant-Gaudemet 1996; and Hafiz and Devers 2005.

\textsuperscript{60} In 1907-1908 new laws were passed turning the church buildings over to town governments, whereas the Cathedrals remained the property of the state (Bowen 2006: 27). The Vatican and the French government finally reached a compromise in 1923-1924 and private Catholic religious associations were created. However, the public ownership of the Catholic churches that had been built before 1905 was maintained.

\textsuperscript{61} Of the 1,800 churches that were established in France since 1905 almost one quarter have been on land given out in long term lease (Hafiz and Devers 2005: 115).
an important inequality, this time to the benefit of Catholic associations. Cultic organisations that are the proprietors of their houses of worship are also themselves responsible for the costs of maintenance and upkeep of these buildings. However, the maintenance and renovation of Catholic churches built before 1905 is financed by public authorities, because these buildings are owned by the state or municipalities. A law that was issued in 1942 and added to Article 19 of the 1905 law has somewhat attenuated the inequalities with respect to the financing of costs of upkeep of buildings for different religious associations. It stipulates that funds attributed for the reparation costs of buildings catering to public worship are not to be considered as subventions, irrespective of whether the building in question is classified as historically valuable.

There are also other forms of indirect subsidies for religious associations, both those set up as cultic associations under the 1905 law and those set up as cultural associations under the 1901 law. For example, places that are open to the public and are not in use for private purposes are exempt from residential taxation (taxe d’habitation). Cultic associations (i.e. 1905 associations) have the additional advantage that the houses of worship that they have in use are exempt from real estate taxes (taxe foncière) and that these associations can benefit from a reduced tariff of taxation with regard to private donations. Religious activities are also exempt from professional taxation. Finally, it is possible for associations to receive financial contributions from governments for cultural activities. Usually a cultic association will create a twin cultural association under the 1901 law that can receive these subsidies.

2.4. Church-state relations in the Netherlands: institutional repertoires and principles in their historical context

Over the past 40 years Dutch church-state traditions have been altering under the influence of various social and political trends. These trends include accelerated secularisation, individualisation, de-pillarisation, and the emergence of new political cleavages and changes in political culture. The will to introduce more institutional differentiation between churches and the state underlay a change of the constitution in 1983 which ended various forms of direct state subsidies for religion. A lucid conceptualisation of Dutch church-state traditions was developed by two American political scientists, who describe the Dutch approach as a model of structural or principled pluralism (Monsma and Soper 1997). Largely indebted to their interpretation, I posit that the Dutch approach to church-state relations can be understood in light of three principles.

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62. Another exceptional measure was a special regulation created in 1962 to finance the creation of churches for pieds noirs communities in the period following the independence of Algeria. See report of the Machelon commission 2006.
63. In recent years, there is also a renewed interest in Dutch church-state relations. See Harinck 2006; Van den Donk et al. (eds) 2006; Van Bijsterveld 2006; Maussen 2006; and Knippenberg 2006b.
64. For an overview of social and political trends in the Netherlands in the 20th century see Lijphart 1968; Stuurman 1983; Kennedy 1995; Blom 1996; Te Velde et al. 1999.
65. For my discussion of the Dutch approach I have mainly used the following sources: Den Dekker-Van Bijsterveld 1988 and Van Bijsterveld 1994 and 2005; Knippenberg 1992 and 2006; Van Rooden 1996; Harinck 2006. For a
First, the Dutch approach is based on the idea that principles such as state neutrality, equal treatment of religions and separation of church and state should be interpreted in a non-secularist way. Secularism and liberalism are seen as particular worldviews in themselves and by consequence a state that aims to be truly neutral should not itself embrace a secularist viewpoint. Justice requires the state to act in an even-handed manner with regard to all citizens, whatever the “philosophy of life” (levensovertuiging) these citizens adhere to. Second, the Dutch approach is based on the idea that organised religions and other ideology-based associations are constitutive of a robust and independent civil society. In the Dutch tradition it is not legitimate for the state to dominate the public sphere and, unlike in French Republican thought, the public sphere is not seen as a neutral sphere that is created by the state. It is acknowledged that religion inherently has public dimensions, meaning that visible expression of religion is legitimate and that organised religions can play a role in media, education, (health) care and recreational activities. Thirdly, the Dutch model is supportive of religious freedom, both in the sense of negative and positive freedom and in the sense of individual and associational freedoms. Citizens should not be hindered by the state or by others to live according to their philosophy of life and to practice their religion. In addition, citizens should have the effective possibilities to “live out their religious faiths”, i.e. they should also have positive freedom of religion (Monsma and Soper 1997: 8). Religious freedom is also seen as the right to belief and practice in community with others and as including collective freedoms and associational autonomy (Ferrari 2000: 8; Bader 2007a: 130ff.).

When the Low Countries revolted against the Spanish king Philips II and the Eighty Years War began, a process of state formation began that would take the form of a national revolution that “united internally against an external threat” (Martin 1978: 16 and 49ff.). The founding of the Dutch Republic was a reaction to discontent with the authority of the Habsburgs, notably among the local nobility and urban patricians as well as a result of emerging national sentiments that were organised by Prince William of Orange (Knippenberg 2006: 318). The Dutch Revolt was also a result of the success of the Calvinist Reformation and the repressive reactions of Catholic Spain to the Reformation greatly fuelled anger and unrest in the Northern parts of the Low Countries (cf. Selderhuis (ed.) 2006). In this context the Union of Utrecht (1579) laid down the principle of individual freedom of religion, meaning the freedom to have a religious opinion and a ban on the Inquisition. The United Provinces became a safe haven for Jews, protestants and dissenters fleeing religious wars elsewhere in Europe.

However, the Republic of the United Provinces (1588-1795) did not yet realise the freedom of public exercise of worship and of outward expression of religious dissent. The Dutch nation was a Calvinist nation and the Reformed Church functioned as the leading church that was authorized to be present in a public sphere from which other denominations were excluded. Membership in this church was required for public offices. This period in Dutch church-

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67. In 1648 the Republic of the United Provinces was officially recognised as a result of the Peace Treaty of Münster (Knippenberg 2006: 318).
state history has been characterised as that of the “Confessional State” (Van Rooorden 2002). Importantly in the Netherlands the national revolution set off “beneficent circles of internal compromise” and this helped to avoid attempts of governments and majority groups to establish religious homogeneity by force (Martin 1978). In addition, important European thinkers, such as Locke, Descartes, Spinoza and Bayle, found refuge in the Holland and articulated a more principled defence of religious tolerance. The Dutch Enlightenment that flourished in the mid and late 18th century was also not anti-clerical (Harinck 2006: 107).

The Batavian Revolution (1795-1798) introduced liberal and modern views with more force in Dutch politics. The exclusion of Catholics, Jews and Protestants from public office was abolished and the Reformed Church was deprived of some of its privileges. In all, the French Period (1795-1814) resulted in a further development of the legal basis for institutional differentiation of church and state and established some degree of religious pluralism, equality of religions and recognition of various denominations. The government still thought it had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of the churches, in particular those of the Reformed Church. The Constitution of the United Netherlands of 1814 stipulated that the Christian Reformed Religion was the religion of the Sovereign King. The Constitution of 1815 upheld the recognition of religious pluralism developed under French rule, and laid down that all existing religions were entitled to equal protection and public exercise of religion. The government developed administrative and financial relations with existing religions and gave them the task to “augment Christian morals, respect of order and unity, and the education of love for King and Fatherland.” 68 King William I (r.1815-1840) sought to expand interference of the state with church bodies and demanded also that all church bodies had an official internal regulation (bestuursreglement) that was approved and signed by the King. 69

In 1848 the Netherlands developed a constitution that laid the foundations for a modern, liberal state. Drafted by the legal scholar Thorbecke, this constitution introduced a more principled respect for religious freedom and a more complete separation of church and state. State approval for the founding of church bodies (kerkgenootschappen) was abolished and article 1 of the Law on Church Bodies (Wet op kerkgenootschappen) stipulated that the “state should refrain from interventions in the internal matters” of churches (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 57). In many respects the constitution of 1848 was more liberal than Dutch society at the time and it took some time for that society to adapt itself to the new legal environment. In the domain of religion an important issue was widespread anti-Catholic sentiment.

In the second half of the 19th century Dutch society was deeply transformed, politically, demographically, culturally and also economically, even though the Industrial Revolution in the Netherlands began relatively late and developed slowly. Liberal and conservative elites had managed to take a leading role in government affairs and politics, but in the second half of the 19th

68. [“de bevordering van christelijke zeden, de bewaring van orde en eendragt, en de aankweking van liefde voor Koning en Vaderland”] (cited in Harinck 2006: 107, the English translation is mine, M.M.).

69. Such regulations were established for the Reformed Church (1816) and for some of the Lutheran Churches, which had been split during the French Period. The Consistory that was signed by the King in 1814 had a similar function for the Jewish community. The Roman Catholic Church remained opposed to the attempts of the government to gain more direct influence on the internal affairs of religious bodies and the founding of congregations. The efforts of King William I to intervene in the education of Roman Catholics would play an important role in the conflict leading to the segregation of Belgium in 1830 (Harinck 2006: 108ff).
In the 19th century they were challenged in that position by socialist and confessional groups. The fact that two denominational groups, the Roman Catholics and the orthodox Protestants, would more or less simultaneously challenge the dominant position of liberals would have great consequences for the subsequent development of a pillarised society. Ideological and denominational differences deepened and they became intimately linked to emerging political parties. This resulted in clearer boundaries between the various confessional groups. Under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper orthodox Protestants developed their own institutions, including the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) (founded in 1879), the Orthodox Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken) (formed in 1892) and the Free University (founded in 1880). Additionally, confessional groups would come to be united in opposition to liberal factions, notably around the issue of education. The 1857 school law had secured the freedom of parents to establish their own schools, but in 1878 the liberal Kappeyne van de Coppello introduced a school law which mandated higher standards for all schools but proposed only to finance subsidies for public schools to pay for these improvements. Protest against this law would bring confessional factions together in opposition to liberal factions and resulted in an alliance of orthodox Reformed groups and Catholics (Monsma and Soper 1997: 57; Koch 2007). The confessional factions would a decade later, in 1889, succeed in adapting this law, which was seen as unfair towards confessional schools, and government subsidies for confessional schools were introduced. This further legitimised the idea that various groups in society were entitled to create their own institutions (Harinck 2006).

The second half of the 19th century was also a period in which some of the foundational ideas of the Dutch approach to church-state relations were being theorised. Intellectuals and politicians such as Groen van Prinsteren, Herman Schaepman but above all Abraham Kuyper challenged the idea that the liberal worldview was neutral and that it alone should form the basis of government and shape public institutions. Religious communities also had as much right as the liberals to educate and socialize their members in their own institutions. Kuyper grounded his political doctrine firmly in Calvinist theology and argued that democratic thought and practice was very much indebted to Calvinism. Kuyper developed the idea of “sphere sovereignty”, meaning that the state should intervene as little as possible in societal spheres and institutions that could function independently, such as schools and churches. He also defended the existence of a “free Church, in a free State” and “parallellism”, meaning the “right and freedom of differing religious and philosophical perspectives and movements to develop freely on separate, parallel tracks, neither hindered nor helped by the government” (Monsma and Soper 1997: 60; Harinck 2006: 111).

The emancipation of Catholics and orthodox Protestants and the growth of socialist movements would create the social and political pre-conditions for emergence of a pillarised society in the first decades of the 20th century. The social imagery of the Dutch nation had also been changing in the process. The Protestant or Calvinist nation had now become a nation composed of people belonging to different groups and “alliance to the nation could only be expressed by means of the membership of these groups” (Van Rooden 2002). This situation informed specific

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70. Already in 1834 several orthodox ministers had left the Dutch Reformed Church and created new local churches. This was known as the separation (Afscheiding).

71. See on Kuyper also Harinck 2006 and Koch 2007.
ideas about state neutrality, which was understood as the state governing on an even-handedness basis and respecting the different religious and secular worldviews.

The Constitution of 1917 further established pluralistic principles, by introducing general suffrage and proportional representation and by guaranteeing the equal funding of all schools, which was elaborated in the 1920 Primary School Act. The ideas of “parallelism” legitimised the further development of dense networks of denominational organisations and institutions, including labour unions, modern political parties, associational life, the broadcasting agencies, newspapers and other media. Between 1900 and 1967 Dutch society was pillarized, meaning that most citizens lived a fair share of their social life in their respective Catholic, Protestant, Socialist or Liberal pillar institutions and spheres.

The pillarised system survived the Second World War intact. In 1946 a Commission of State on Religions (Staatscommissie van de Erediensten) was installed to advise on the future regulation of financial relations between the state and church bodies, the so-called Commission Van Walsum. This commission only issued a report twenty years later, in 1967, and proposed a general regulation of state subsidies for all church bodies. However, by this time ideas about the relations between church and state had already begun to change. Accelerated secularisation had rapidly undercut the basis of the confessional pillars. Modern mass media created new opportunities to share interests, sympathies and entertainment with members of other groups. Individualisation, social mobility and the expansion of the welfare state further eroded existing cleavages.

One of the effects of de-pillarisation was a reconsideration of church-state relations and traditions. Traditionally, religious freedom had been understood as the state respecting the autonomy of religious communities and refraining from intervening in the internal affairs of church bodies. Increasingly, however, religious freedom was also seen as the right of the individual to be free from the tutelage and authority of religious elites and oppressive communities. Moreover, the many existing direct financial relationships between the state and churches were increasingly perceived as inappropriate. A constitutional revision in 1972 abolished article 185, which had formed the legal basis for the financing of religion. A precondition for the actual ending of financing was that an agreement would have to be reached with representatives of the churches, which occurred in 1981.

The Constitution of 1983 now forms the basis of church-state relations in the Netherlands. Article 6 on religious freedom states that “everyone shall have the right to manifest freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law” (Van Bijnsterveld 2005: 371). Other articles lay down the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination (article 1) and the freedom of education and equal funding of denominational schools (article 23). The principle of separation of church and state does not figure in the 1983 Constitution. It does, however, have clear significance for organisational independence of religious organisations and for financial relationships between churches and the state (Van Bijnsterveld 2005: 374).
2.5. Legal regulations concerning the financing of houses of worship

The Constitution of 1815 had guaranteed the public exercise of religion to all existing churches. King William I not only sought to further regulate the internal organisation of church bodies, he also thought the state should play a leading role in the creation of church buildings, believing this would increase the obedience of church bodies to the government (Bakker 2000: 56). A Royal Decision of 1824 stipulated that Royal approval was required for the building and refurbishment of church buildings. The boards of local church organisations (kerkbesturen) should deal with civil servants of the Ministry of Public Works (Rijkswaterstaat)\(^\text{72}\) to carry out their building plans. Thus, a great number of churches were built under the aegis of civil engineers of this ministry, that came to be known as the “Ministry of Public Work’s churches” (waterstaatskerken).\(^\text{73}\) The state provided subsidies for the building of these churches. In 1868 the Royal Decision of 1824 was revoked and thus ended the period of the building of churches under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works.\(^\text{74}\)

However, governmental support for the building and refurbishing of churches remained important. Since 1884 the budget of the Ministry of Finance included a special entry called “subsidies for the building and renovation of churches, church buildings and vicarages” (Den Dekker van Bijsterveld 1988: 40). In the early 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century the budget of the State Mining Company (Staatsmijnbedrijf) became another source of government subsidies for church building. Church communities in the rapidly industrialising mining region in the Southern Province of Limburg were confronted with rising costs. As owner of the state mining company, the state acted as an employer and subsidies for church building were seen as a normal way for employers to provide for some of the costs for spiritual care for their workers. Another form of direct state subsidies for the creation of churches concerned the churches that were built in the new IJsselmeer polders.\(^\text{75}\)

Another important source of public support for the creation and maintenance of houses of worship were the municipalities. These municipal subsidies continued in the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century and between 1946 and 1960 municipal contributions for the founding of churches rose to no less than 19 million guilders (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 30). However, in the 1950s discussion arose because of important differences between municipalities. In 1957 a special commission was created to advise on a possible national regulation for the financing of church building, known as the commission Sassen. This commission advised the creation of a general subsidy regulation

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\(^{72}\) When notice is taken of the various responsibilities of this Ministry its name can also be translated as the Department for Maintenance of dikes, roads, bridges and the navigability of canals.

\(^{73}\) See Von der Dunk 1992; Bakker 2000; and Endedijk and Vree (eds) 2002.

\(^{74}\) See also Selderhuis (ed.) 2006.

\(^{75}\) Subsidies for church building had been included in the budget of the Zuiderzee Fund since 1928, and in 1955 a special regulation saw to the financing of churches in the Noordoostpolder. In 1962 a general regulation was created for the other polders, called the Regulation Financing Church Building in the IJsselmeer polders (Regeling financiering kerkenbouw in de IJsselmeer polders). Finally, two additional special post-war regulations need to be mentioned. These are the Regulation for War-damage of Church buildings (Oorlogschaderegeling kerkelijke gebouwen) that was created in 1949 and that provided up to 75% subsidies for the cost of damage to church buildings caused by the war. In 1953 the Law on the Damage of the Flooding (Wet op de Watersnoodschade) guaranteed financial support for the rebuilding and renovation of churches that had been damaged or destroyed in the flooding in Zeeland and South-Holland that year (Verplanke 1963; Hirsch-Ballin 1988).
that would provide substantial resources to church communities, without however weakening the “independence of churches”. The commission justified such a regulation by arguing that the Dutch population believed that church going and attendance of divine services (een sterk kerkelijk leven) were of public interest. The advise of the commission Sassen led to the creation of the Church Building Subsidy Act (Wet Premie Kerkenbouw) in 1962. This was a temporary regulation to subsidize 30% of the costs of church creation.76

Both the Commission Sassen and the Commission of State on Religions, that issued a report in 1967 (the Commission Van Walsum, see above), argued in favour of direct state support for religion. Both commissions emphasised the importance of effective freedom of religion, the general value of religious life and the need for the state to finance religion without infringing on the autonomy and internal organisation of church bodies. In this respect both reports were based on the kind of understanding of church-state relations which had existed during the period of pillarisation. However, as argued before, in the course of the 1960s societal changes had begun to erode prevailing ideas about church-state relations and about financial support for religion. The government decided not to comply with the advise of the Commission Van Walsum and, instead, to seek to end remaining direct financial relationships between churches and the state. These relationships included notably the salaries and pensions of ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, on which an agreement was made in 1981, and the financing of church buildings. The Church Building Subsidy Act of 1962 was suspended in 1975, only to be formally abolished in 1982.

In the Netherlands this re-conceptualisation of the possibilities, outer limits and justifications for financial support for church building took place in a period in which new immigrant-origin religions, including Islam, had only just begun to be formed.77 Based on the above, there were good reasons to expect that the Dutch government would think about possible ways of financing the houses of worship of religious newcomers. Subsidy schemes had existed since the early 19th century and at several occasions in the early and mid 20th century generous financial regulations had been created because of “special circumstances”. The Church Building Subsidy Act had, true to the spirit of principled pluralism, laid down that subsidies were available for all religions and denominations, including secular ones and, interestingly, also for the “Mohammedan religion”. In the 1980s special commissions were installed to investigate whether there were reasons to subsidise the costs of housing of immigrant religious groups. One of these commissions, the Hirsch-Ballin State Committee, argued in 1988 that the Constitution of 1983 did not preclude that authorities gave support to religions, including direct financial support if this was necessary to protect the effective religious freedom of specific groups (Rath et al. 2001: 51). Whether or not a subsidy scheme was developed for the building of mosques will be discussed later on in this thesis.

Besides these legal regulations allowing for direct financial support for church building, most of which had been abolished by the mid 1970s, there are also possibilities for indirect support. The Dutch state finances some of the costs of maintenance of houses of worship that are classified as “monumental” under the Monuments Act (Den Dekker van Bijsterveld 1988: 283-
285). In addition, religious organisations and other ideological associations can be exempted from real estate taxes since 1971. Municipalities also have a fair amount of discretion to decide on possibilities to lease out land to allow for the building of prayer houses, and religious communities can benefit from similar regulations as other secular or private actors when they need to be relocated. The principles of non-discrimination and even-handedness oblige government not to exclude religious organisations when subsidies are allocated for a specific type of activities. Also in this respect religion and non-religious denominations should be treated equally (Monsma and Soper 1997: 64; Den Dekker van Bijsterveld 1988: 287ff.).

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced French and Dutch church-state regimes in a historical perspective. It is clear that the respective national models comprise several principles that work together to create a distinctive approach, but that they are also evolving institutional arrangements that have changed in light of historical circumstances. The ways France and the Netherlands have dealt with the financing of houses of worship in the past has been discussed, as well as the existing legal regulations for direct and indirect financing of the founding and functioning of prayer houses. The remainder of this thesis will explore in what ways these institutional arrangements for the government of religion have interconnected with regimes of incorporation of Muslim immigrant populations in shaping strategies of accommodation of Islam, in particular with regard to the formation of public policy responses to mosque creation.
3.1. Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century the French colonial empire included colonies and protectorates in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. French governing strategies towards Islam in these overseas territories, and particularly in Africa, are discussed in relation to the accommodation of Islam in France in the period from 1900 to the 1960s. French colonial religious policies and attitudes towards Islam and Muslim populations in North and West Africa are complex. They were developed over a period of about 130 years, in dissimilar African societies. They were also informed by political developments and changing ideas and ideologies, and they developed in contentious encounters with the colonized. Speaking of French “policies” and “strategies for government” towards Islam is already somewhat misleading, because many measures and arrangements were developed along the way. Any attempt to reconstruct underlying conceptual frameworks that guided colonial regulatory practices therefore suggests more coherence than existed in practice.

The reconstruction of French colonial policies with regard to Islam in this chapter serves three purposes. First, to explore similarities, differences and linkages between French colonial policies towards Islam that were developed in three crucial sites – Algeria, West-Africa and France – in more or less the same historical period (the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century). Second, to discuss public policy responses to mosque creation in France and in Marseilles in the first half of the 20th century and to situate these in their historical, ideological and political context. Third, to begin tracing French governing strategies towards Islam and mosque building and to create the possibility to explore whether and if so how, policies developed in the framework of colonialism have been relevant for those developed in subsequent periods.

78. A comprehensive discussion of French colonial policies towards Islam would, of course, also have to include a discussion of the situation in the non-African colonies with Muslim populations. Moreover, one could argue that colonial policies in the Comoro Islands, Madagascar and French Equatorial Africa or in those territories that are still under French rule (such as Île de la Réunion and the collectivité d’outre-mer La Mayotte) deserve particular attention (cf. Baubérot and Regnault (eds) 2008). Such an overview and discussion is beyond my capacities and also unnecessary for the purposes of this thesis. On the other hand, recent studies that discuss (dis)continuities between French policies towards Islam in the colonial and post-colonial period focus exclusively on French policies in Algeria (see Bowen 2006; Sellam 2006; Geisser and Zemouri 2007). As I argue in this chapter, however, specific aspects of the governance of Islam in West Africa were also important for French policy responses towards Islam in France, both during and after the colonial era. The studies I have found most useful include, for French Algeria: Ageron 1979, 1980 and 2005; Stora 1991; Lorcin 1995; Achi 2004, 2005 and 2006; Prochaska 1990; Silverstein 2004; and Bozzo 2006. For French West Africa: Cruise O’Brien 1967; Harrison 1988; Conklin 1997; Robinson 2000; Amselle 2003; and Triaud 2006. Other important sources include Girardet 1972; Rivet 2002; MacMaster 1997; Weil and Dufoix (eds) 2005; Blanchard et al. (eds) 2005; McDougall 2006; and Luizard (ed.) 2006.

79. On these contentious encounters see for example Colonna 1974; Clancy-Smith 1994; Robinson 2000; Babou 2005; Jonckers 2006; and Daughton 2006.

3.2. French colonialism and Islam in Africa

When the French began occupying and ruling over important parts of the African continent, they thought of themselves as the heirs of Rome. French rule could serve to return Africa — in particular the Maghreb — to Latin and Western civilisation. In North Africa the French military campaign started in 1830 as a punitive expedition against the Dey of Algiers. In West Africa military expeditions began later, in the second half of the 19th century, when French authorities sought to protect the interests of French merchants who were involved in the lucrative trade in gold and gum at trading posts on the coastline.

The economic, administrative and political development of the African colonies by the government of the newly established Third Republic resulted in dissimilar forms of colonial administration and rule. Algeria was aligned administratively with France and in 1881 it became an overseas extension of France. Because of the massive influx of European settlers — French, Italians, Maltese and Spaniards — Algeria developed into a settler colony. By the end of the 19th century the European populations profited from all kinds of economic, political and juridical privileges and even outnumbered the indigenous population in major port cities such as Algiers, Oran, and Bône. In West Africa the territories that had come under French control during the military conquest were united administratively in the Federation of French West Africa (AOF) that was formally established in 1904 and presided over by a government based in Dakar.

In the first half of the 19th century a guiding idea in French colonial government was that the Africans could be assimilated into French culture and that the colonies were social laboratories. Political and economic doctrines and interventions and corresponding public policies were first and foremost elaborated in Algeria. In the course of the 19th century strategies were being reoriented around the idea that the French should respect indigenous institutions and cultures and aim at the improvement of what was already there (Lorcin 1995: 171). Experience showed that attempts to simply replace indigenous culture, institutions and religions by French civilization and law were usually met with resistance and hostility. The new doctrine of association


82. In 1879 an administrative reform aimed to decrease the importance of the military administration in favour of civil administration. Three different types of “communes” were created: the “communes de plein exercise”, the “communes mixtes” and the “communes indigènes” (Bozzo 2006).

83. French West Africa (Afrique Occidentale Française, AOF) grouped together the present-day states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

84. Spatial interventions, such as the creation of railroads, city and agricultural planning and restrictions on nomadic practices, served simultaneously to stimulate the economic exploitation of the colonies, and to pave the way towards a progressive assimilation of the indigenous population into European habits. French expansion into Algeria was accompanied by the establishment of a Scientific Commission for the Exploration of Algeria which included artists, biologists, archaeologists and ethnographers. Military officers and colonial administrators were influenced by the Saint-Simonian doctrine of the achievement of well-being through economic endeavour under the paternalistic guidance of a natural elite (Lorcin 1995: 50). According to the French, Algeria was a social laboratory for a new society which would be based on merit and scientific development. In 1953 the colonial historian Georges Hardy wrote that Algeria served as a testing ground for political and economic doctrines in the French African colonies (cited in Harrison 1988: 15).
stipulated that the civilizing mission could only be successful if French policies were adapted to local customs and practices. The tendency to differentiate and adapt public policies to the stage of development of the indigenous was further legitimised by racist ideologies of the second half of the 19th century that questioned whether Africans could ever really rise up to the level of French civilization.  

3.2.1. Governing Islam in Algeria (1830-1900): Cultes reconnus in a colonial context

The Convention of Bourmont had marked the surrender of Algeria’s Dey in 1830 and assured that the French would guarantee the right to Islamic practice in Algeria. Nevertheless, in the first years of the French conquests many mosques and Muslim cemeteries were destroyed or damaged. Christian missionaries who had hoped to see French authorities continue destroying mosques or dismantle the Muslim tribunals and impose Christian education, were opposed by colonial administrators who favoured secular education and respect for indigenous customs.

The success of colonial rule required – in the words of Marshall Bugeaud – that the Algerian Muslims had the assurance “that we would preserve their laws, their property, their religions, their customs” (Bugeaud cited in Amselle 2003: 61).

The French however, also sought to gain control over Islam. The officers of the Bureaux Arabes, regional administrative bureaus which informed and advised the colonial administrators, were given complete authority over all matters touching on Islam (Ageron 1980: 19ff.). The French expropriated most of the land and real estate of the religious foundations (habous) that until then had served to finance the costs of religion. They also sought to weaken the Islamic confraternities, the Koran schools and other traditional institutions. By the mid 19th century the Muslims in Algeria had been effectively deprived of most of the means to finance their religious institutions and practices. In 1851 a ministerial decree laid the foundations for a more coherent governance of Islam in Algeria. The colonial administration became the owner of the main mosques that were administrated by so-called “public religious bodies” (établissements publics)

85. The so-called “Kabyle Myth”, for example, stipulated that it was crucial to distinguish between the Berberophone Kabyle and the Arabs when governing the indigenous population of Algeria. The Kabyle were said to be sedentary mountain dwellers, who were courageous, hard working, egalitarian, honest, and only superficially religious. By contrast, the Arabs were represented as a nomadic people, who were fanatically religious, untrustworthy and lazy and who resisted the civilizing mission because of their religious fervour (Lorcin 1995: 20).

86. Colonial administrators even gave official preference to Islam to express an anti-clerical point of view and as a way to frustrate the priests (pour embêter les curés) (Cruise O’Brien 1967: 307). When Charles Lavigerie became Archbishop of Algiers in 1867 and announced his plans to evangelise Algeria – by creating Christian villages and the monasteries of the Pères Blancs – colonial administrators feared that these plans might contribute to hostility against French rule. Efforts were made to restrain the proselytising activities of the new archbishop. Nevertheless, the emergence of a large community of European settlers did give a strong impulse to Christian presence and institutions in Algeria, which was illustrated by the building of new churches and the new Cathedrals that were built in Algiers, Oran and in Tlemcen (see Ageron 2005: 302ff.).

87. In domains such as family law and inheritance law Muslim religious law and customary law were to some extent respected. Whether Muslim law or French law applied depended on the legal status of the person in question. In order to be governed by French law North Africans had to renounce statutory rights to Islamic law (Lorcin 1995: 71ff.).
Further copying the Concordatian model religious personnel of the different religions all became “agents du culte public”. In 1850 the French colonial administration also began to set up Franco-Arab universities in Algiers, Constantine and Tlemcen, where both the French language, science and Islamic doctrine and law were taught, free of charge. Only people who had been educated in the Franco-Arab Madrasas could be selected for the different officially recognised Islamic religious functions, such as mufti, imam and muezzin (Bozzo 2006: 208). The colonial administration not only sought to control the nomination of Muslim religious personnel, it also controlled the sermons in the “official mosques”. In addition, the French looked for support from selected Sufi orders and confraternities (Ageron 1980: 63). Those who agreed to cooperate were given authority and privileges including, for example, a sponsored pilgrimage to Mecca.

The French also became involved in the upkeep of mosques, though in a very unforthcoming way. Between 1830 and 1860 five new mosques were built in Algerian cities, which was far from being sufficient to compensate for the mosques that had been destroyed during the French conquests. Based on the inventory of the total mosques the French decided to classify only 78 mosques as buildings that deserved to be “preserved” (à conserver), whereas 1494 mosques were left to the worshippers to maintain (Ageron 2005: 297). Many of the colonists believed it was unnecessary to rebuild the mosques that were damaged because, so they argued, the Algerians, and most of all the Kabyles, did not genuinely care about religious practice.

The administration of religion in Algeria was thus organised in a way that resembled the Concordatian model in France, with its recognised religions (cultes reconnus) and with the state paying the costs of building and upkeep of houses of worship, and nominating and remunerating religious personnel. However, in the context of colonial rule the actual functioning of this model differed greatly. First, in colonised Algeria, the political imperative for the state to maintain control over religion was far stronger than in France. In the case of Islam, by far the most important indigenous religion, the will to control and manipulate was most outspoken and urgent, if only because the “spectre of Islam as a belligerent religion was ever present in Algeria” (Lorcin 1995: 53). The Concorditarian format was etched upon colonial strategies designed to suppress and exploit the indigenous population. The unequal treatment of Muslims and Islam became increasingly clear. The support that imams received was extremely low and the funds available for the upkeep of mosques were completely insufficient. The so-called Crémieux laws of 1870 naturalised the Jews in Algeria, and the naturalisation law of 1889 granted automatic French citizenship to all Europeans born in Algeria. By contrast, the Muslims were denied French citizenship unless they renounced statutory rights to Islamic law (which amounted to leaving Islam altogether) (Lorcin 1995: 181). The indigenous Muslim population was subject to the so-called native code (code de l’indigénat) since 1874. Muslim Algerians were denied the right to travel without a permit, even outside their communes, and there were strict controls on the sort of clothes Muslims could wear (Rosenberg 2004: 641). The Concorditarian and Gallican traditions of religious politics, that were based on official recognition, selective cooperation and

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88. Algeria was divided into 95 religious districts (Achi 2006: 239). In 1900 there were 149 official imams (Ageron 2005: 892).

89. In the 1830s Abdelkader had already invoked Islam and Jihad to mobilise support for the war of resistance against the French. The control exercised over the other religions was necessary, for example, in order to oblige them to contribute to legitimising colonial rule.
state regulation were mixed with strategies to co-opt indigenous leaders who were supportive of French colonial rule. French strategies thereby led to conflicts between the confraternities, the “official clergy” and the “independent” ulama (Bozzo 2006: 206ff.).

3.2.2. Governing Islam in West Africa: Islam as a source of cultural progress

In West Africa the appreciation of Islam and indigenous culture was different. French scholars and colonial administrators thought Islam was “the only serious religion in West Africa” and that the Muslims were culturally more advanced than those who practiced animist religions. They used Arab as a lingua franca in West Africa and gave a crucial position to Muslim leaders and Marabouts (living descendants of saintly lineages) as intermediaries in negotiation and administration. Islam was thought to be an intermediary stage in progress and cultural evolution from “pure barbarism” to “the understanding of higher French civilization” (Cruise O’Brien 1967: 305). As early as 1836, a military officer suggested that the French should establish a mosque in Senegal because this would constitute “a first step towards progress in this colony” (cited in Harrison 1988: 7). A mosque in St Louis was built in 1847. Governor Faidherbe of Senegal demonstrated his respect for Islam by employing local Muslim notables and by issuing a decree allowing for the establishment of a Muslim Tribunal in 1857.

3.2.3. The early 20th century: La Politique Musulmane and an “Islam fabriquée par nous”

During the First World War the French had been confronted with a German-Ottoman propaganda campaign, which set out to establish an image of imperial Germany as the global champion of Islam that would help drive the infidel French from the Middle East and North Africa (MacMaster 2002: 72). The French sought to protect their interests in the region by mobilizing French prestige in their role as a Muslim power, meaning an imperial power with Muslim subjects. In 1916, during the war, general Hubert Lyautey suggested establishing a pro-French Islamic Caliphate:

... it is not a question of knowing whether the religious unity of French Islam is good or bad but rather of knowing whether this unity isn’t the only guarantee against a greater evil, namely the unity of all Islam, including our own, under the primacy of a foreign or enemy chief (cited in Harrison 1988: 124).

90. In 1910 a French scholar observed: “… it is universally recognized that the Muslim peoples of these regions are superior to those who had remained fetishist, in social organization, intellectual culture, commerce, industry, well-being, style of life and education” (Quellien cited in Cruise O’Brien 1967: 305).
92. See also Peters 1979: 90ff.; and Harrison 1988: 49.
93. Robinson (2000: 75) argues that the origin of the idea of France as a Muslim Power goes back to Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt. See also Le Pautremat 2003.
94. One of the reforms by Kemal Atatürk was the abolishment of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924.
Another motive to reconsider governing strategies towards Islam in North Africa was the growth of resistance to colonial rule. French authorities were highly concerned about the growing nationalism in Egypt, Tunisia (a French protectorate since 1881), Algeria and Morocco (a protectorate since 1912), and they worried about what might come out of the mixing of Islamic reformist and nationalist ideas. France tried to show that it was concerned about the well being of the indigenous peoples and that France was a “friend of Islam” (*La France, amie de l’islam*). It also sought to develop a more consistent approach towards Islam in the form of a cohering French Muslim policy (*Politique Musulmane*). Again, Algeria would serve as a social laboratory to create, in the words of Le Châtelier, an “Islam that is unique in the world, fabricated by us in Algeria”.95

Changing governing strategies were also being informed by wider developments in Europe. Around the First World War and in the 1920s France had to lean both demographically and economically upon its overseas colonies. Under the new Minister of the Colonies, Albert Sarraut, the guiding principle for French colonial policy became the development of the economic profitability of the colonies (the *mise en valeur*), through economic reform, the improvement of transportation systems and education.96 On the other hand colonial authority also became more repressive, because the French sought to combat the nationalist movements and root out anti-colonial resistance.

The French also wanted to show that they were at least as able to develop a cohering and effective Muslim policy as other imperial powers, such as Britain and the Netherlands.97 Such a policy would be based on scholarship and respect for the indigenous and would result in the ability to govern the colonies effectively and profitably. Governing strategies should be based on the doctrine of association, which implied collaboration with the indigenous populations. In 1911 the *Commission Interministérielle des Affaires Musulmanes* (CIAM) had been created to develop proposals for such measures and to inform the different administrators, diplomats and officers. The commission took an interest in policies on Islam in the colonies, in French foreign policy in the Muslim world, and in the accommodation of Muslims who were living in France because of the war effort. The CIAM, that existed from 1914 to 1937, developed into a key mechanism of institutional diffusion bridging these different policy fields.98

### 3.2.4. Algeria: official Islam and priority of colonial imperatives over secularism

In Algeria the French continued their strategy of creating and supporting an official Islam. For colonial religious policies a new problem presented itself with the issuing of the Law on the...
Separation of Churches and the State in 1905. Because Algeria was an integral part of France, and given that secularism and the separation of church and state were among those high values of modernity championed by the French civilizing mission, it seemed reasonable to expect that the new secularist legislation would now also be implemented in Algeria. In 1907, however, a special decree was issued which laid down a modified application of the principle of separation of state and religion in Algeria. On the basis of this decree the French colonial authorities continued to remunerate the 400 official imams or “agents du culte musulman” in Algeria and sponsor the mosques and Madrasas (Achi 2006).

Abolishing public subsidies for Islam and mosques would put the regime based on strategic co-optation at risk. French authorities wanted to maintain the remuneration of the Catholic clergy in Algeria, because clerics who were loyal to France could contribute to the religious legitimisation of the colonial order. Finally, when the administration continued to finance religion there were also more opportunities for direct control and surveillance of Islam. Between 1900 and 1915 the colonial government implemented a so-called policy on the construction of mosques. In this period 15 new mosques were built with help of the state in the whole of Algeria. The total number mosques that were maintained by the state was 174 in 1902 (Ageron 2005: 893).

Thus, in flagrant contradiction of the principle of strict separation celebrated in the 1905 law, in Algeria the involvement of the French administration with Islam became ever more intense. Since the 1920s the official imams were selected on the basis of an exam and a dossier, which should serve to determine whether the candidate had sufficient degree of “loyalty towards France” and whether he had some influence upon his fellow believers. In the 1930s the protests of reformist Muslim scholars against these interventions of the French colonial state in the religious sphere increased. They started to create “free” mosques and schools that were not financed by the French colonial administration. They advocated not only a return to Islam but also to the Arab language and culture.

3.2.5. West Africa: A French Islam or shielding African Islam?

In West Africa the French finally opted for a governing strategy grounded in the idea that African Islam needed to be shielded from Arab influences. By the late 19th century, colonial administrators had become increasingly worried about the spreading of Islam in West Africa, in particular because of the growing influence of nationalist movements. The colonial administrators worried that pan-Islamism might reach West Africa through the Arab language press, through the

99. Article 43 of that law had stipulated that the precise conditions under which the law would be applied in Algeria and in the colonies would be subject to specific administrative regulations. In this section I draw extensively on Achi 2005 and 2006. See also Sbaï 2006; and Bozzo 2006.

100. In 1910 a French commission classified two mosques in Algiers as historical monuments, thus obstructing plans for their demolishment (Ageron 2005: 897ff.). Between 1898 and 1905 a mosque was also built in Saint-Denis de la Réunion. This mosque was financed by commerçants from Gujarat who settled on the Island in the mid 19th century. Because Île de la Réunion is today still a part of France this mosque counts “officially” as the oldest mosque in France. See “La première mosquée de France est réunionnaise” in Témoignages September 13 2007.

organization of a Sufi order, or through travelling priests. Moreover, the preferential treatment for Muslims by colonial administrators seemed to have led many West Africans “to adopt Islam in order to win the favour of the French” (Cruise O’Brien 1967: 304).

One possible way of addressing these challenges was to copy the Algerian model in West Africa and thus to create and support an official Islam under French tutelage. The French Islam scholar, Xavier Coppolani, thought that France should first establish confidence between religious leaders and French administrators and then proceed “with great delicacy, the work of improving Islam and moving it in the direction of our civilization” (cited in Robinson 1999: 117). In the early 20th century Madrasas were established in West Africa staffed with teachers that were recruited in Algeria. These Franco-Islamic schools could contribute to the “laication of Muslim education”, which meant “that the obscurantist marabouts would be replaced by a new generation of open-minded, free thinking Muslim teachers” (Harrison 1988: 64). The idea that “Franco-Islamic schools” should contribute to “secularisation of Muslim education” was itself illustrative of the contradictions in colonial policy. There was paternalism and the will to civilize, vying with the proclaimed principles of religious neutrality and secularism.

At the beginning of the 20th century the French had become convinced that Black or African Islam (‘l’islam noir) differed fundamentally from North African and Arab Islam. This view had found further legitimacy because the work of French ethnographers induced a reappraisal of animist religions. William Ponty, the governor general of West Africa, introduced the so-called politique des races in 1908, which aimed to “preserve ethnic particularism by ensuring that each ethnic group had chiefs appointed from its own people: the territorial principle of administration was to be replaced by a racial principle (…) it would safeguard non-Muslim peoples from being ruled by French-appointed Muslim chiefs from other groups” (Cruise O’Brien 1967: 314). Ponty also restricted the use of Arabic in juridical and administrative matters, arguing that French was a far easier language for Africans to learn. In 1912, he also issued a directive on the “surveillance of Islam” (Triaud 2006: 275). The French would try and resist pan-Islamism, by shielding African Islam from further Arab influences and by supporting the particularities of local religious customs. Islam scholar Joseph Clozel advised colonial administrators in West Africa to use local customary law in preference to Muslim law:

in this mosaic of peoples and brotherhoods no attempt at unification … should be risked. Such an action would amount to organising ourselves the Muslim dream and creating the lever which has always eluded the leaders of Holy War, to succeed in a general uprising of West African Islam (cited in Harrison 1988: 125).

In 1923, captain André Mission, chief adviser to the Governor General of West Africa on Islamic affairs, warned against the attempts of “Muslims to create a world-wide Islamic milieu and to form states within states” (cited in Harrison 1988: 158). The Minister of Colonies observed,

102. In 1902, Emile Combes, the strongly Republican and anticlerical French minister, suggested making Islam into an official established religion in the African colonies. He proposed: “placing the spiritual and temporal heads of the religious brotherhoods under our direction” and to “establish a sort of regular clergy at the head of which we would place the Chioukh-El-Islam, supreme heads of the Muslim religion, who would be intermediaries with an interest in aiding our work of surveillance and moral reform” (cited in Cruise O’Brien 1967: 308).

103. I thank Frances Gouda for bringing this to my attention.
however, that it would be difficult to shield African Islam from foreign influences, because of the growing importance of communications, increasing frequency of travel and the development of education which were all abolishing the frontiers (Harrison 1988: 162).

Against the background of these considerations the French developed a number of strategies to maintain the specific features of African Islam and to encourage the development of a liberal Islam in West Africa. The French wanted to support what Ponty, the governor general of the OAF, had called in 1909, a “modern Islam” which “does not permit tyranny and which abolishes captivity” (in Harrison 1988: 77). According to the reified representation the French had of l’islam noir, Islam in Africa was “still half confused with fetishism”, and it should “not evolve in the sense of Turko-Egyptian nationalism nor in the traditions of Muslim states, but in the sense of French ideas” (Arnaud cited in Harrison 1988: 97). Additionally, the French should support the particularities of African Islam by conducting a sensitive policy which was adjusted to local religious traditions. Finally, since the 1920s the French sought to establish strong alliances with selected leaders of the Muslim communities (Conklin 1997: 174ff.; Robinson 2000).

In 1904 the colonial administration subsidised the building of two mosques in Ivory Coast (Triaud 2006: 274). Between 1907-1909 the Great Mosque of Djenné in Mali was rebuilt under the aegis of French administrators. The design was based on a reconstruction by Félix Dubois from the ruins of the original mosque, and was also inspired by the newly created French military Résidence at Ségou. The French resident administrator in Mopti, M.Cochetaux, was inspired by the mosque in Djenné and supported the building of a Great Mosque in 1935. De Coppet, who became governor general of the AOF in 1936, encouraged his administration to show greater respect towards Islam, and in 1937 he sponsored the construction of a new principal mosque in Dakar (Harrison 1988: 188). De Coppet also supported the building of a new mosque in the town of Kaolack in 1938. When this initiative led to protests from the inspector of Public Works (who pointed out that a similar request for the creation of a church had been turned down), De Coppet insisted that French support for the building of a mosque was more appropriate: “One cannot liken the construction of a mosque, which meets the needs of the majority of the population of a Muslim town like Kaolack, with a church destined to be frequented mainly by Europeans and a small number of newly converted natives” (cited in Harrison 1988: 188).

3.2.6. Governance of Islam in Africa in the closing decades of colonial rule

During the Second World War, young men from the West African colonies, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Indochina fought in the French armies and thousands lost their lives on the African and European battlefields. At the Brazzaville conference in 1944, De Gaulle promised that the colonies would obtain a greater measure of autonomy, that the indigénat would be fully abolished, and that more funds for social and economic development would be made available. The

104. Prussin (1987: 184) writes on this mosque: “Built under the aegis of French administration, with French funds and according to the advice of French military engineers, not only was the choice of site a reflection of colonial politics but its very organization reflects French influence. Most importantly, the mosque at Djenné became the symbol of French colonialism and a prototype for a ‘neo-Sudanese style’”. I thank Eric Roose for bringing this publication to my attention.
idea that the colonial empire could be maintained by granting concessions to the colonized and by accommodating certain demands for reform, would turn out to be a miscalculation. In West Africa the readiness of the British to adapt policies to nationalist pressures had consequences for the neighbouring French colonies (Hargreaves 1988: 138). Protest and revolts against French rule – inspired by ideological forces such as the négritude movement and nationalism – occurred in Senegal, Ivory Coast and Cameroon in the 1940s. Confronted with the struggles for independence France would eventually conduct two wars in an attempt to maintain its colonial possessions, in Indochina (1945-1954) and in Algeria (1954-1962). In comparison to the savage warfare of the guerre d’Algérie, the West African colonies gained independence relatively peacefully in a series of votes in the late 1950s and in 1960.

After the Second World War a new law was issued in Algeria in 1947 which was to give more guarantees for the independence of Islam vis-à-vis the state. A special commission on the regulation of Islam in Algeria was also established. This commission suggested creating a single council representing Algerian Islam and to let this council be in charge of the places of worship and the management and financing of Muslim religious practice. However, this idea of an official Muslim council was now rejected both by the ulama and the French Council of State as an infraction upon the principle of the separation of state and religion (Achi 2004 and 2006). Interestingly, the French Council of State and the leaders of the oppositional Muslim reformist movements in Algeria now both objected to the kind of state control over Islam which had always been fundamental to French colonial rule.105

Fearing that the complete separation might possibly jeopardize French colonial rule in Algeria, the Algerian subdivision of the French Ministry of Interior issued a text in 1950 which discussed the implications of the principle of separation of state and church for the North African colony. This text suggested that the principle of laicism could not be fully applied to Islam in Algeria. The reason for this was that there were “some resistances” amongst the native populations, who “remain faithful to the concept of a theocratic State, which controls both earthly and spiritual matters, which is the traditional conception in Islamic countries”.106 The French could now argue that the Muslim believers still needed to go through a process of learning in order to understand what laicism was all about, and therefore it was far better to maintain the status quo. One can also argue that the ulama understood perfectly well what state neutrality and non-interference implied and drew upon French Republican discourse to demand equal treatment of Islam. The French colonial administration, however, continued to financially support and foster a co-opted, loyal Islam in Algeria until the country became independent in 1962.

In West-Africa the abolition of the indigénat in 1946 gave citizenship to the indigenous population. In West Africa religious politics in the decade following World War II were by and large a continuation of the previous period. The financial support and co-optation of certain confraternities, notably in Senegal, had been developed into an alliance preventing other religious or political forces from becoming influential (Triaud 2006: 276ff.).

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105. See also Ageron 1979: 579ff.
3.2.7. Concluding observations on French colonial governance of Islam in Africa

In governing Islam in the colonies the French were constantly making emphatic distinctions between different forms of Islam, usually dichotomised as “good” and “bad” Islam. The French thought positively about an Islam that was “only a religious belief” and preferred this interpretation over an Islam which included all aspects of social, cultural and political life and that aspired at becoming “a state in the state” (Harrison 1988: 67, 97, 158). The fact that some of the indigenous did not perform prayer, stopped wearing beards, dressed in European clothing or smoked tobacco was seen as a sign of progress and modernisation (Ageron 2005: 905).

The dichotomous mapping of forms of Islam functioned as an interpretative grid underlying multiple governing strategies. This included a strategy of supporting “good Islam” via co-optation and selective collaboration and, most outspokenly in the case of Algeria, via the institutionalisation of an official Islam. The French also tried to govern the colonies by co-opting Muslim religious leaders who supported French rule and who seemed willing to support the Islam that was promoted by the colonial administration. There also was a strategy to “shield” those forms of Islam that the French thought to be more “liberal”. In Algeria this was the case of the Islam of the Kabyles, which was seen as less “fanatic” than the Islam of the Arabs. In West Africa the strategy of shielding African Islam from further foreign influence was shaped by the idea that this form of Islam was “syncretic” because it was mixed with animist elements and existing local cultural practices. This more “culturalised” Islam could be further developed based on French ideas. Finally, the support for a moderate, loyalist Islam and the shielding of syncretic forms of Islam was complemented with a policy of surveillance. In the colonies nearly all aspects of Islamic practice had to be negotiated with the French administration. Specialised institutions were created to control Islam in the different colonies and the French also kept a close eye on travelling marabouts (Harrison 1988: 43; Ageron 2005: 306).

3.3. Muslims and Mosques in France and Marseilles in the first half of the 20th century

The relationships between France and the Muslim colonies had become increasingly intimate in the first half of the 20th century for a number of reasons. Because of growing relations of commerce and the extraction of wealth from the colonies there was a constant flow of people, goods and information between metropolitan France and these overseas territories. Between 1900 and 1931 five national colonial exhibitions were organised in France, aimed at informing a French audience about the colonial empire and to create more interest and enthusiasm for it. Large numbers of Muslims came to work in France as colonial workers, or they were recruited as soldiers to fight in the First and Second World War. France’s ambition to be recognised as a Great Muslim Power led to the wish to further develop strategic alliances with selected religious leaders in the colonies, and with religious and political rulers in the Levant, North Africa and the Middle East.
3.3.1. Colonial workers in France and in Marseilles 1900-1918

At the end of the first decade of the 20th century French industries began to recruit workers in the North African colonies. The controls on migration of Algerians to France had been liberalized in 1905 and in Algeria a large reservoir of underemployed and poor peasant-labourers was available. In Marseilles oil and sugar refineries started to recruit Kabyles as strike breakers and to replace European immigrant workers who had become increasingly unionised.

Around World War I public authorities also became more actively involved in the recruitment of workers from the colonies and protectorates. They would help ameliorate the labour shortages created by the war efforts. State initiated recruitment of colonial workers began in 1914 and two years later the Service de l’Organisation des Travailleurs Coloniaux (SOTC) was created to centralise the demand for labour. Special collection centres were created for newly arriving colonial workers, most notably in Marseilles. The vast majority of colonial workers were actively recruited and came on temporary contracts that had to be renewed every six months, but there were also the so-called “free workers” (travailleurs libres) from the colonies who came at their own initiative. When colonial workers were employed in state owned factories, notably in the arms industry, French authorities would provide for their housing and nourishment. When they worked in private industries this was an obligation of the employers. In total about 119,000 Algerians came to work in France during World War I, of whom 89,000 had been recruited by the French administration. In addition, about 35,500 workers were recruited in Morocco and 18,500 in Tunisia. In 1918 after the war, the quasi totality of these colonial workers were repatriated, also under pressure of the colons, who had repeatedly protested against the recruitment of “their” indigenous workers by French industries.107

Another important group of colonial migrants were the soldiers who were recruited massively before and during World War I. Estimates speak of a total number of between 535,000 and 607,000 colonial soldiers who were mobilised between 1914 and 1918, including 181,000 Senegalese, 170,000 Algerians, 50,000 Tunisians, 37,000 Moroccans (voluntaries), 49,000 IndoChinese and 41,000 Malagasy.108 Colonial soldiers and workers were as a rule housed in camps set up by French authorities. In Marseilles the camp Mirabeau contained barracks destined for soldiers and colonial workers and the camp Sainte-Marthe housed battalions of Senegalese tirailleurs (Attard-Maraninchi and Temime 1990: 48-49).109

The reception of different groups of immigrants who disembarked in Marseilles – political refugees from Greece, Russia and Armenia, European labour immigrants and colonial workers – differed according to the ways the immigrants were categorized. Colonial workers were kept at a distance from the French population.110 The camps for colonial workers were run

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109. Tirailleurs were indigenous infantries consisting of recruits from the French colonies who were always under French commanders. The fist battalion of Senegalese tirailleurs had been created in 1857. They had already fought in the war in Mexico (1862-1867) and in the Franco/German war (1870-1871) but not on the scale as in the First World War. Military conscription had been introduced in Algeria in 1912 (Le Pautremat 2003: 146).
110. Péraldi (1990: 32) describes what happened when colonial workers disembarked in Marseilles: “everything is done to avoid contacts between these colonial workers and the populations. Throughout their voyage, these Indochinese, Malagasy, Moroccan or Algerian workers, are under the responsibility of the military authorities.
mostly by military personnel or administrators who had served in Algeria. For the Algerians the native code applied during their stay in France and constituted an explicit manifestation of their inferior status when compared with reception of Italian and Maltese immigrants (Péraldi 1990: 44).

In 1913 a private company, La Maison Familiale, had been established in Marseilles. The company specialised in the construction of “salubrious workers housing” (habitations ouvrières salubres). The construction of workers villages and company towns, it was hoped, would also contribute to morally uplift the workers (Silverstein 2004: 92ff.). Several French companies established these kinds of villages for their workers and also tried to attract immigrants by advertising the availability of company accommodations. Employers thought that workers villages would lead to some sort of social stability and would prevent single male migrant workers from living an undisciplined and morally degenerate life.\footnote{I will return to the creation of workers villages when discussing the French guest workers regime in chapter 5.}

The construction of “model villages” had also been experimented with in the colonies.\footnote{Ideas and institutional arrangements travelled back and forth between France and the colonies. An interesting example was the case of the Alsatian industrialist Jean Dollfus. He had a workers village built for his workers in Mulhouse but also sponsored the establishment of a village for his French employees who worked in his overseas factory in Algeria. This village, that was created shortly after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, was built in an Islamic, neo-Arab style which was thought to be appropriate to its North African surroundings (Leprun 1992: 102).}

In this ideological and social context the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles deliberated in October 1916 about the possibility of creating a new village or a neighbourhood in which to house the North African workers. The Chamber decided to develop a report for a Preliminary Project for the Establishment of a Management Association for the Construction and Exploitation of a Muslim Village.\footnote{Avant-projet de création d’une société d’exploitation pour l’édification et l’exploitation d’un village musulman. This account is based on reading of the original file on the “Avant-projet de village arabe et kabyle” archived in the Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille. Série ML 4274, 1916-1917. In the different documents the village is referred to as “Arab”, “Kabyle” and “Muslim”. See also Péraldi 1990, Leprun 1992 and Granet 1993.}

Between October 1916 and February 1917 the director of the technical service, Mr. Chapusot, drew up a file for the project. The Chamber of Commerce wanted to investigate the possibilities of establishing the village on a plot of land of some 41,000 square meters, owned by the refineries and located outside the city, near the harbour and the industries and close to the national road that connected Paris via Lyons to Marseilles. Mr. Resplandy, a French architect based in Tunisia, was asked to make an outline for the village, which would serve to accommodate both Kabyle and “Arabs of different tribes”.

In December Resplandy presented his ideas. The village would contain 400 houses each of which could accommodate 6 single male workers and 50 houses for married couples. The village would be built in the image of the mountain villages in Algeria and near the typical Kabyle who escort them. They disembark at night in the city and are immediately taken to camps, which are placed under military authority, where they are subjected to medical exams, disinfections and are systematically rid of their fleas”. [“tout est fait pour éviter les contacts entre ces travailleurs coloniaux en les populations. D’un bout à l’autre de leur voyage, ces travailleurs, indochinois, malgaches, marocains ou algériens, sont pris en charge par les autorités militaires qui les convoient. Ils débarquent de nuit dans la ville et sont aussitôt emmenés dans des camps, placés sous autorité militaire, où ils sont soumis à des examens médicaux, une désinfection et un épuillage systématique”].
houses there would be a mosque, a Moorish Bath, some Arab fountains and grocery shops, and a central square where the typical assembly of the adult men of the community (the djemâa) could take place in the open air. The architect explained the function of the different elements of the village for the daily life and needs of the Algerian workers. The Moorish Bath would be used on the occasion of major Muslim celebrations, but on normal days it would be little frequented since “the indigenous peoples, and the Kabyle in particular, have, with good reasons, the reputation of being very filthy (fort sales)”. The Arab fountains would serve as decoration, but they would also be very “useful for the indigenous who are used to drink there and wash themselves”. These sanitary facilities were necessary to prevent the village in Marseilles from becoming just as dirty as the ones in Kabylia. Resplandy also thought that the central square would be useful as a place where the Kabyles could discuss their interests, and perhaps elect a village representative. Such a village representative might also be recruited in Algeria, and he could then become an intermediary for “the management of the village and the contacts with the administration” (idem). Finally, Resplandy thought that the village would not only provide for practical needs, but that because of its “artistic style and purely Arab character”, it could also become “another attraction for which the city of Marseilles will be indebted to the Chamber of Commerce”.

In February 1917, the Service des Hangars et de l’Outillage presented its final report on the Kabyle and Arab village. The village would have both “the Muslim architecture that will remind the indigenous of the country that they have left” and “the hygienic conditions of our modern cities, streetlights, water, and everything with sewers (le tout à égout)”. The original idea to establish a mosque had also been maintained. Despite the fact that the governor general of Algeria had mentioned – true to the Kabyle Myth – that “the indigenous of the country side, and most of all the workers, do not care much about prayer”. According to the governor general, a mosque was also unessential because the workers could worship in every place that was clean and proper. Nevertheless, the Chamber of Commerce wanted to establish a typical North-African mosque with arched windows and a 20 meters high square-shaped minaret and an accommodation for the Muezzin. The idea was that the village would function for about 30 years, and accommodations would be rented to the workers for 100 francs a year. Marseilles would be the first city to “receive the children of Algeria in such conditions that they will accept the voluntary exile that they impose upon themselves”.

Despite the elaborate and detailed plans for the Kabyle village in Marseilles, the project was never carried out. It is not altogether clear why, but it may well have been because of the war (Granet 1993). As a public policy response the project is important and interesting nevertheless

115. The idea that the social and political organisation of the Kabyle villages resembled the egalitarian forms of democracy of the Greek polis was part of the Kabyle Myth, in which it was opposed to the hierarchic and despotic political organisation of “the Arabs” (Lorcin 1995).
116. “Tout à égout” was the slogan of modernist movements concerned about hygiene in France in the late 19th century (De Swaan 1996: 143).
117. “[La prière, assez négligée par les indigènes des campagnes et surtout par les ouvriers, peut se faire dans tout endroit exempt de souillures... ]” (Renseignement fourni par le gouvernement de l’Algérie).
118. The future residents would not hesitate to “become acclimatised” (s’y acclimater) if they would find “a milieu which is similar to the one they leave behind” (un milieu semblable à celui qu’ils quittent). Citations from “Avant projet d’un village Arabe et Kabyle” February 1 1917.
because of the way several foundational ideas of the French colonial regime were being combined in framing the creation of the village. First, there were the modernist ideas on order and hygiene and on the possibilities of improving the living conditions and social habits of populations via urban planning and architecture. In the colonies, these modernist ideas had become embroiled with the ideology of a civilizing mission.\(^\text{119}\) The Kabyle village in Marseilles was in that sense a unique opportunity to design anew a village which was both traditional and modern but which would not copy the flaws of the original version, such as the tendency to be “very dirty”.\(^\text{120}\)

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\(^\text{119}\). Marshall Thomas Robert Bugeaud, for example, initiated the construction of model villages in Algeria in 1838 and 1845, which would help attach the Arabs to the land and encourage agricultural pursuits. The French were involved in the construction of houses and public utilities, such as fountains, wells, public baths and markets. In West Africa French colonial administrators intervened to establish model native cities with roads, potable water, sewers and electric lights, or they tried to modify the appearance of African villages. Lorcin 1995: 38; Çelik 1997: 123-124. See Ageron 1980: 25ff; Lorcin 1995: 80; Conklin 1997: 50 and 70; and Amselle 2003: 60ff.

\(^\text{120}\). A similar project for a village for Algerian workers was developed in Lyons in 1927. This project was called the \textit{Cité-jardin kabyle moderne} (Granet 1993: 35-37). A wooden mosque also existed in Toulouse in the 1920s (Frégosi et al. 2006: 42).
for North-African immigrants (Sbaï 2006: 232). The impermanent barracks camps and hostels were usually located at a distance from French society.\textsuperscript{121}

Third, the idea of establishing a separate village together with a small mosque, was also to be understood in light of policy efforts to accommodate the religious needs of Muslim colonial soldiers.\textsuperscript{122} Against the background of Turkish-German propaganda\textsuperscript{123} and in an attempt to strengthen the morale of the colonial soldiers, French authorities sought to make use of Muslim religious personnel and created facilities for Islam in France.\textsuperscript{124} At the end of 1914 the chérif Si Ibrahim Ben El-Hadj Mohammed visited wounded Muslim soldiers in France, accompanied by fifteen Moroccan soldiers (goumiers), for which he later received the \textit{Légion d'honneur}. Military officers had instructions to respect the Muslim religious funeral rites and dietary obligations and in 1917 a \textit{Journée de l’armée d’Afrique et des troupes coloniales} was organised to collect funds for war casualties among the colonial soldiers. In 1914 a hospital had also been created in the “colonial garden” of Nogent-sur-Marne which catered to Muslims, and in 1915 the CIAM had suggested the construction of a wooden mosque. The temporary mosque was inaugurated in April 1916 and was financed with a subsidy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of War as well as with gifts collected among Muslims in the colonies.\textsuperscript{125}

Fourth, the Kabyle village was also represented as “an attraction” that could occasionally be visited by the French population of Marseilles. The village therefore was seen as a kind of genuine version of the replica villages that were being displayed at the colonial exhibitions. It is to these exhibitions that I now turn.

\subsection*{3.3.2. Representations of Islam at the colonial exhibitions in Marseilles}

From the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century onwards the display of colonized territories and cultures became an increasingly important aspect of the World Exhibitions. Colonial sections were created for the first time at the exposition in Amsterdam in 1867 and special colonial exhibitions were held in Paris and Marseilles (both in 1906), Marseilles (1922), Strasbourg (1924), London (1924-1925), Paris (1931) and Porto (1934).\textsuperscript{126} The exhibitions served to inform the general public about indigenous societies and the overseas colonies as well as to develop and cultivate support for colonial endeavours. France had to make considerable military and economic sacrifices in order to establish and maintain a colonial empire, but until the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century the colonial empire met with overt scepticism and indifference by the French public and political classes (Andrew and Kanya-Forstner 1981: 12ff.). But the exhibitions would also

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} As MacMaster (1997: 84) observes: “A key feature of the social, political and economic organisation of the Algerians in France was their spatial location in dense ‘micro-ghettos’ or urban enclaves”.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Le Pautremat 2003: 152. See also Recham 1996.
\item \textsuperscript{123} The Germans had set up a camp in Zossen where Muslim prisoners of war were incarnated and where they would find all necessary religious facilities, including a mosque (Le Pautremat 2003: 329).
\item \textsuperscript{124} These efforts were based on advises by the CIAM (Le Pautremat 2003: 152).
\item \textsuperscript{125} On the mosque in Nogent-sur-Marne see Le Pautremat 2003: 332; Granet 1993: 26; and Kepel 1991: 68. For further discussion on Algerians in the French army see Recham 1996.
\end{itemize}
offer a pleasant pass-time to their visitors. They were not only places of instruction but also of amusement.

Marseilles hosted national colonial exhibitions in 1906 and in 1922. In 1902 the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles and the Conseil Général des Bouches-du-Rhône, developed plans for a colonial exhibition that would show more fully the human and economic potential of the colonies. Jules Charles-Roux, who presided over the local Union Coloniale and was a close friend of general Hubert Lyautey, was selected as the general commissioner of this national colonial exhibition. On a site of 24 hectares at the Place du Prado, 50 palaces and pavilions were displayed. The visitors could admire a number of typical scenes of indigenous villages, a life-size replica of the Cambodian temple of Angkor Wat and the minarets of the Algerian and Tunisian pavilions. With almost two million visitors the exhibition was a great success.

The success of the 1906 exhibition led to the idea of organizing a decennial update in Marseilles, which however was postponed because of the war. When the second exhibition in Marseilles was held after all in 1922 it was even more successful than the first. Under the presidency of Adrien Artaud the exhibition site at the Parc du Prado was enlarged to 36 hectares. When the exhibition closed in November 1922, three million people had been able to admire the displays of everyday village life in the replica West African villages, visit the 57 meters high West African tower, or wander around in the Near Eastern compound with its Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian palaces. Colonial troops from Indochina, West Africa, Morocco and Algeria paraded at the exhibition site, where they were praised for their loyalty to France and bravery in combat.

For Marseilles the colonial exhibitions were a unique occasion to articulate the special relations between the city and the French colonial empire. The city was spoken of as the Gateway to the Orient (Porte de l’Orient) and as the Capital of the Colonies (Capitale des Colonies). The sobriquet “Gateway to the Orient” illustrated – as Yaël Simpson-Fletcher argues (1999a: 105ff.) – that Marseilles was both exit, entrance, and transit point for the Orient. Speaking of the “Capital of the Colonies” created an image of a city that was essentially a part of the colonies. More than in other French cities the colonies were tangibly present in Marseilles in the forms of peoples, smells, images and sounds. The realistic evocation of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia in the form of replica streets and pavilions owed its success in part to the fact that the Mediterranean sun and the mountainous landscape constituted the natural décor for a colonial exhibition. While walking around in the Tunisian pavilion, the journalist André Dubosque (1922: 202) had the feeling of actually being on the other side of the Mediterranean. A reviewer commenting on the exhibition of 1922 wrote: “The Mediterranean does not separate, it unites for ever these two provinces that Rome has handed down to France, the Provence and Algeria”.

Marseilles provided a décor that could help to bridge the tensions that were invariably part of the staging of colonized societies for a European audience. French visitors could admire the

127. In this part on the colonial exhibitions in Marseilles I draw extensively on Simpson-Fletcher 1999a and 1999b. See also Leprun 1986.
128. The monumental stairs of the St Charles train station, which were built to commemorate the 1922 colonial exhibition, included statues that represented the Asian and African colonies and a statue entitled Marseille Porte de l’Orient.
129. “[La Méditerranée ne sépare point, elle unit à jamais les deux provinces que Rome a légées à la France, la Provence et l’Algérie]” (Ripert 1922: 546).
Constructing Mosques

Arab houses or the West African villages, where they would see African families from Mauritania, Senegal, the Ivory Coast and French Sudan engaged in everyday activities of village life. Western objects, even if commonly used in the colonies, were rigorously excluded from the picture (Simpson-Fletcher 1999a: 137). At the same time the exhibitions meant to show how, thanks to hard work, indigenous society and economy had been developed. The journalist Émile Ripert argued that the Algerian pavilion at the exhibition in Marseilles invited the visitors to contemplate “the results of eighty years of French colonisation”. French visitors could see how indigenous craftsmanship had been improved, and how the French had “fertilised a ground that had for such a long time been ravaged” and developed a flourishing wine industry in Algeria, even though “good Muslims ought not drink wine” (Ripert 1922: 542). The representations of Islam and of mosque buildings at the exhibitions was also characterised by the tension between the will to display authentic indigenous life and the will to show the beneficent results of French colonial rule.130

At the universal exposition in Paris in 1878 for the first time an Algerian pavilion was built, which contained a Moorish café as well as a reproduction of a mosque in Tlemcen with a minaret of 30 meters. Small Islamic houses of worship were also displayed as parts of the Senegalese villages at the exhibitions in Paris in 1889 and in Lyons in 1894.131 These small mosque buildings were fully absorbed in the replicas of African villages and to complete the picture indigenous peoples would worship in the imitation mosque. This was entirely different in the case of the “spectacle mosques” (Leprun 1986). These kind of replicas of large and purpose built mosques started to appear at colonial exhibitions in the late 19th century. In Marseilles the Algerian pavilion in 1906 had a minaret. In 1922 mosques could be seen in the Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan sections.

The display of replicas of purpose-built mosques served the curiosity of the audience for typical Islamic architecture. But now that France was positioning itself as a “friend of Islam” and as a Great Muslim Power, the way symbols of Islam were being displayed had become an important and sensitive issue. It would seem inappropriate, for example, to create the kind of spectacle as had been done in Paris in 1889 when the mosque was only the façade for a dance hall. At the 1922 colonial exhibition a mixture was made between a display of prestigious mosque architecture and the will to show respect for indigenous culture and religion. Thus in the Tunisian section a muezzin called out for the hours for Muslim prayer, and the functioning mosque was accessible only to the faithful (Simpson-Fletcher 1999a: 163).

130. The mis en scène of colonial societies and indigenous culture through architecture and representation moved between two extremes (Leprun 1986). On the one extreme the organisers could choose to display true and accurate copies of indigenous architecture and to reproduce as authentically as possible indigenous houses, villages, mosques or temples. On the other extreme stood the possibility of using the exhibitions to display fantasy buildings, which combined elements taken from different places to give a synthetic representation of an architectural culture, in the form of quasi Arab palaces, composite assemblages and fairy tale palaces (Leprun 1986: 96). The kind of architecture that would dominate at a particular exhibition would also depend on the ideas of the organisers. One mode of display which combined authenticity with amusement, was the rue spectacle which could be seen at the 1889 exhibition in Paris. At this exhibitions a remake of an Arab street could be seen which was deliberately made dusty and dirty to create an authentic atmosphere. Walking down the street the visitor could also see an authentic façade of a mosque, but when he or she would actually enter the “mosque” it would turn out to be a bar and dance hall. Critics who objected to the exhibition becoming a vulgarised spectacle insisted that a strict separation should be made between the didactic aims and the ludicrous aspects of the colonial expositions (Leprun 1986: 108).

131. See also Bergougniou et al. (eds) 2001 and Blanchard and Boëtsch (eds) 2005.
The story of the West African pavilion is also informative about the ways colonial representations and ideologies were being articulated. In 1906, the organisers erected a typical sand tower, 35 meters high, in the West African pavilion. However, in 1922 the organisers decided to build a larger construction, inspired by the mosques of Djenné and Timbuktu. As Prussin (1987: 18) has observed, representations of African architecture at the exhibitions often underlined “the Islamic character of the African empire”. These particular mosques had been renovated and rebuilt under the directive of French colonial authorities and engineers. The imitation tower was 57 meters high, and the building itself was three times bigger than the original mosque in Djenné. Thus the French displayed their technical superiority over indigenous African architecture and craftsmanship three times: the mosque in Djenné had been renovated and improved with the help of the French between 1907 and 1909; the replica mosque in Marseilles was designed by French engineers; and the replica was far bigger than the African original (cf. Simpson-Fletcher 1999b).

The fact that the expositions took place in European cities also created opportunities to protest against colonialism. In May 1922, a communist orator protested against the colonial exposition, by declaring that it “symbolized all the thievery, all the murders, all the plundering [that took place] in the name of civilization” (cited in Simpson-Fletcher 1999a: 183-184). Protesters also held a gathering around the celebrations of the building of a mosque in Paris only a few years later.

3.3.3. France as a Great Muslim Power: A monumental mosque in Paris

The construction of the Paris Mosque, between 1922 and 1926, was a key event in the articulation of relations between French colonialism and Islam.132 The idea to build a mosque in the French Capital originated in 1846 in discussions of the Société Orientale on the possibility to

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132. This section is based on Kepel 1991; Boyer 1992; Granet 1993; Bayouni 2000; MacMaster 2002; Le Pautremat 2003; Bowen 2006; and Sbaï 2006.
create at the same time a mosque, a Muslim cemetery and a college in Paris and in Marseilles.\textsuperscript{133} The same year a commission created by the \textit{Société} handed over a report on the matter to the Undersecretary of State on Religion (\textit{ministre secrétaire d’État au Culte}) arguing that the assimilation of the Algerians to the French required a form of religious assimilation that could be facilitated by the construction of a mosque in Paris. After the capitulation of Abdelkader in 1847 the Minister of Foreign Affairs put an end to the further discussion of the project. In 1894, however, Charles Rouvier, resident general in Tunis, again suggested the construction of a mosque in Paris as a sign of the generosity and goodwill (\textit{bienveillance}) of France. The project was supported by the French colonial party and Orientalists who set up an association that collected gifts and in 1895 a \textit{Comité de l’Œuvre de la Mosquée} was created. However, the project disappeared from the agenda due to the Armenian massacre in 1896, the political instability in Algeria and the political conflicts between Republicans and Catholics around the Dreyfus Affair.\textsuperscript{134} In 1916 the project emerged anew, this time in the context of the development of a Muslim Policy (\textit{Politique Musulmane}) and the need for the French government to care for the Muslim soldiers and to provide for their moral and religious needs. With the support of the CIAM a \textit{Comité de l’Institut musulman à Paris} was established, which supported the creation of a “reunion centre”.\textsuperscript{135} The committee was a French initiative and the French government was willing to make a financial contribution. The idea was that the Muslim centre would be a recognition of the sacrifices made by Muslim soldiers. The colonial administration in Algeria objected to the plans and argued that a public subsidy for the creation of a mosque was a violation of the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State. However, in 1920 the government presented a bill for the creation of a Muslim Institute in Paris and in 1921 the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places (\textit{Société des Habous et Lieux saints de l’Islam}) was charged with carrying out the project. This association had been created in 1917 to aid Muslims in their pilgrimage to Medina and Mecca. By leaving the execution of the initiative to this association the principle of separation of church and state was formally respected and French authorities also hoped to avoid the appearance that they merely tried to manipulate Islam for their colonial propaganda (Kepel 1991: 67-68).

The president of the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places, Abdelkader Si Kaddour Ben Ghabrit, was to become the rector of the Muslim Institute of the Paris Mosque, a post he occupied until his death in 1954. The financial resources to establish the mosque included a gift of 500,000 francs from the French State and two donations of the City of Paris, one of 1,620,000 francs and one of 175,000 francs.\textsuperscript{136} Ben Ghabrit managed to collect 5 million francs.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{133} According to \textit{Le monde colonial illustré} the beginnings of the project date even further back and resulted from a treaty between Louis XV and Moulay Ismail of Morocco of 1767 (Bayoumi 2000 : 275).
\item \textsuperscript{134} Bayoumi (2000: 276) mentions that the project of 1895 was meant to be designed in the Ottoman-Turkish style. The project met with hostility in the French press (Sbaï 2006: 227ff.).
\item \textsuperscript{135} The naming of the project led to debates. Suggestions were made to call it a Muslim University, a Muslim Institute, a Muslim College, a Muslim Foundation or a Muslim Circle. According to Gonsalve Lyautey and Augustin Bernard, who was a member of the CIAM, a name that suggested a Muslim education centre should be avoided. According to Lyautey a mosque would be a public building that could easily be controlled, but speaking of a Muslim institute should be avoided. He argued that a Muslim educational institute in Paris risked to expose the young Moroccan Muslims to all the “global and social influences” that were concentrated in Paris (in Le Pautremat 2003: 338; Sbaï 2006: 230). However, the CIAM decided in favour of the name Muslim Institute.
\item \textsuperscript{136} In 1929 Ben Ghabrit successfully asked the Minister of Finance to exempt the mosque of all real estate tax and direct taxations. This decision was confirmed by two decision of 1931 and 1932 (Le Pautremat 2003: 341).
\end{itemize}
francs via subscriptions in North Africa and in the Arab world. Additional contributions were made by the administrations of the protectorates in Morocco and Tunisia as well as by those of other African and Asian colonies. The Sultan of Morocco promised to provide the carpets, the chandeliers and other decorative objects for the mosque (Le Pautremat 2003: 339ff.).

Between 1922 and 1926 the Paris Mosque, designed by two French architects and built by native North African craftsmen, was established in the fifth arrondissement in the centre of Paris across from the Jardin des Plantes. It was built in a Maghrebi style with “an airy courtyard flanked by arcades of columned arches and a green and white minaret” standing at 32 meters (Bayoumi 2000: 275). Besides a prayer room, the mosque complex provided a place for ritual ablutions, a library, conference rooms, housing for the mufti and imam, a bathhouse (hammam), a boarding house and a Moorish café.

In 1922 the ground breaking ceremony took place in the presence of, among others, the Sultan of Morocco, Moulay Youssef, and the governor general of Morocco, Hubert Lyautey. Four years later, in July 1926, the official opening of the Muslim Institute was attended by the president of the Republic, Gaston Doumergue and Moulay Youssef. In August 1926 the Bey of Tunis, Sidi Mohammed El Habib Pacha, inaugurated the conference room. The distinguished visitors, the speeches and declarations around these events are illustrative of the particular significances that were attributed to the Paris Mosque. The president of the municipal council of Paris, Pierre Godin, declared in 1922:

137. See Bayoumi for a detailed description of the mosque’s architecture, and see the website for pictures of the construction of the mosque: http://www.mosquee-de-paris.org/ accessed on September 27 2005.
This foundation shows our brotherly affection for the Muslim populations who are part of our colonial empire (…) Ever since it has put foot in Africa, taking up the civilising work, of which Rome has handed over the tradition, France is a Great Muslim Power.\textsuperscript{138}

Ben Ghabrit declared that the new mosque would certainly not become a place of Islamic anti-colonial opposition: “[F]rom this place of meditation, work or prayer, political agitation will be rigorously excluded because our thought is to bring together and not to divide” (cited in Bayoumi 2000: 283).

Another element of the framing of the significance of this mosque was that it could be a symbol of gratitude for the colonial soldiers. Municipal council member Paul Fleurot even compared the new Muslim Institute to the neighbouring Panthéon, the crypt in which the French state honoured its most notable political leaders and personalities.\textsuperscript{139} Special sections for the Muslim soldiers were created in (military) cemeteries, such as those in Arras, Douaumont and Arcachon.\textsuperscript{140} In Fréjus, where a camp and a military hospital had been constructed during the war to cater for Senegalese tirailleurs a memorial was built in 1930, which also contained a replica of the mosque in Djenné.\textsuperscript{141}

The Paris Mosque would accommodate travelling notables from friendly Muslim states and Muslim elites who visited Paris. With its boarding house, library, bathhouse and prayer room it was planned to function as a display window and an embassy of an Islam of France (Sbaï 2006: 231). Because of the conference rooms, library and restaurant it was said to be a “cultural centre” allowing the French government to argue that public subsidies did not violate the 1905 law. Just like the replica mosques at colonial expositions the new mosque of Paris was also to be enjoyed by the Parisian bourgeoisie. The French upper classes could visit the steam baths or drink coffee or mint tea in the Moorish café. This combination of meanings and functions explain why this purpose-built mosque was widely celebrated in France as a beautiful monument adding to the prestige of Paris.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{138} [“Cette foundation traduit notre affection fraternelle pour les populations musulmanes qui font partie de notre empire colonial (…) Depuis qu’elle a mis pied sur le sol de l’Afrique, reprenant l’œuvre civilisatrice dont la Rome antique lui a transmis la tradition, la France est devenue une grande puissance musulmane”] (cited in Granet 1993: 28). The original transcript of the speech is included in the brochure “Fondation de l’Institut musulman et la Mosquée de Paris”, Thouars. Imp. Nouvelle, 1922, p.32. See also Bayoumi 2000 : 285.

\textsuperscript{139} Estimates speak of between 66,000 and 71,000 colonial soldiers killed in World War I, including between 28,200 and 36,000 North Africans and between 30,000 and 35,000 Senegalese (Le Pautremat 2003: 173).

\textsuperscript{140} In June 2006 president Jacques Chirac inaugurated a commemorative monument at the cemetery of Douaumont for the Muslim soldiers who were killed in World War I.


\textsuperscript{142} There were some protests, however, against the building of a mosque in Paris. Granet (1993 : 31) cites a certain man named Bertrand writing in 1922: [“Comme si les musulmans n’avaient pas déjà trop de tendance à s’aboucher en concilables séditieux, il faut que nous-mêmes nous leur fournissions les moyens de se voir et de se comploter ensemble en toute sécurité, à notre barbe, avec l’estampille administrative!... Il faut qu’en plein Paris nous fondions ce qu’on appelle ridiculement une Université musulmane pour permettre aux gens de Boukhara, de Delhi de venir prendre langue, chez nous, avec ceux de Rabat ou de Marrakech! Au lieu de les européaniser à Paris, nous les convions à s’y musulmaniser davantage! Sommes nous fous ou imbéciles?”] (L.Bertrand in the Revue des Deux Mondes, July 15 1922).
including 60,000 Algerian migrant workers in the Paris region, were discouraged from using the mosque. Immigrant workers were sometimes turned away because of their shabby clothing when they wanted to enter the mosque (MacMaster 2002: 74). Colonial workers were expected to make use of other prayer halls, such as the places in the hostels located in the suburbs.

The most outspoken protests against the construction of the Paris Mosque came from those who cared primarily about the plight of the colonial workers in Paris and who challenged the colonial system itself. The leader of the nationalist movement Étoile Nord Africaine (ENA), Messali Hadj, organized a protest against the opening of the mosque in 1926 attended by some 2000 migrant workers. A communiqué proclaimed: “The so-called mosque will be inaugurated … The Sultan Moulay Youssef and the Bey Si Mohammed el Habil will banquet with the Lyauteys, the Saints, the Steegs, etc. All of them still have red hands from the blood of our Muslim brothers. We must unmask the game of imperialist France and make the treacherous leaders wither” (cited in Bayoumi 2000: 287).

3.3.4. Native management (encadrement) and Islam in interwar France

In the interwar period North African workers, mostly from Algeria, once more came to France to find temporary work. In 1921 there were about 36,300 North Africans in France, in 1926 about 69,800, in 1931 about 102,000 and in 1936 about 110,000 (Le Pautremat 2003: 289; Sbaï 2006: 233). They were for the most part housed in the most cost-effective buildings, sheds, ex-army barracks and abandoned factory buildings. In 1924 a special service was created to survey, assist and protect the Algerian population and cut short the activities of nationalist movements: the Service de Surveillance, Protection, et Assistance des Indigènes Nord-Africains (SAINA). Foyers for North African Muslims were created beginning in 1926, especially in the Paris region, which contained prayer rooms and cafés. In 1936 the City of Paris ordered the building of foyers for North African workers that could accommodate in total 1,250 immigrants. Besides a Muslim hospital in Bobigny, created in 1935, other nurseries and dispensaries exclusively treated North African workers in France.143 A recent study concluded that during the interwar years the Muslim hospital was “an integral part of a surveillance effort that treated every North African as a potential threat, both physically and morally” (Rosenberg 2006: 197).

In Marseilles many Algerians were housed in a squalid reception camp that had been used during the First World War for workers and soldiers in transit. Algerian workers could also be found in the centre of Marseilles, for instance in a hostel on boulevard Brunel where a small barrack was in use as a prayer room. A foyer colonial was created in 1928, the same year a bureau of SAINA was set up in the city.144 Algerian immigrant workers were constantly subject to special institutional arrangements. There could be no question of family migration and only single male workers could come to live in France temporarily. This meant that the Algerian and other North African immigrants could not establish themselves as immigrant communities in Marseilles in the way other immigrants from Italy, Spain and Armenia had done in the interwar


Besides being subject to hard working conditions, exclusion, segregation and constant surveillance, the 10,000 Algerians who lived in Marseilles in the 1920s and 1930s also were confronted with increasing xenophobia. The few Algerians who managed more or less to stay at a distance from the institutional arrangements and the practices of surveillance and *encadrement* were the *commerçants*, such as those who had established Moorish cafés in Marseilles. These occupied a central role in the social life of the North African migrants. In the interwar period these cafés became meeting places for the members of the anti-colonial resistance and of the nationalist movement ENA (MacMaster 1997: 98ff.). One of the Algerian shop-keepers became involved in plans to build a mosque in the city.

### 3.3.5. Projects for a newly built mosque in Marseilles 1937

Ideas to honour the Muslim soldiers and casualties by building a monumental mosque in the image of the one in Paris also came up in other cities, such as Bordeaux, Lille and Marseilles. In 1937 the founder of a real estate group in Marseilles, Louis Cottin, created a *Comité marseillais de la Mosquée de Marseille*. He made an alliance with the local section of the *Congrès musulman* founded earlier that year and presided by an Algerian war veteran and shop keeper, Mohamed Talmoudi. The two men wanted to establish a mosque and a hostel for North African workers. The Mayor of the city, Henri Tasso, not only agreed to become the president of this patronage committee, but also offered a property for the construction of the mosque next to the St. Charles railway station. Cottin wrote a letter to the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, in which he requested his approval and invited him to join the committee. He explained the initiative as follows:

> Our attention has been drawn repeatedly to the miserable condition of Muslims who transit our city and we have thought that it was an obligation for Marseilles to offer our Arab brothers a testimony of our affection by reserving a hostel for them. Moreover, the 20,000 inhabitants in our city are deprived of the possibility of practising their religion because of the absence of a sanctified building (*sic*) … The Mosque of Marseilles will be a testimony of the French gratitude towards our Muslim brothers who have died for the fatherland.

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145. I discuss this further in chapter 5.
146. See also Renard 2000; and 2005 for Marseilles.
147. See Bergeaud 2000.
149. Talmoudi was to become a militant of the FLN during the Algerian independence war. See “Cette mosquée qui ne vit jamais le jour” in *Le Méridional* November 13 1989.
150. [“Notre attention a été attirée a maintes reprises sur la condition miserable de certains musulmans de passage en notre ville et nous avons estimé qu’il était du devoir de Marseille de donner à nos frères arables un témoignage de notre affection en leur réservant un foyer. De plus, les 20,000 résidents an (*sic*) notre ville se trouvent privés des secours de leur culte, par suite de l’absence d’édifice consacré” (…) La Mosquée de Marseille sera le témoignage de la reconnaissance française à nos frères musulmans morts pour la patrie.”] Letter of the “comité de patronage” dated on the 22nd of June 1937, included in Falanga and Temin (1990). In *Dépêche Tunisienne* of August 29 and September 14 1937 Cottin is also mentioned saying: [“... Soucieux de donner la plus haute portée
Interestingly, Cottin underlined that the initiative, which he had developed with two Algerians living in Marseilles, was primarily motivated by the will to improve the miserable conditions of Muslims who transited or lived in Marseilles. Cottin also argued that the Islamic inhumation rituals had to take place in a mosque, mentioning that only those who had been purified in a mosque could have access to “Allah’s Paradise”. Moreover, the mosque could help to “morally unite the 22,000 North African indigenous people living by our sides.” The association started to look for financial contributions, both within the city and from different sources in North Africa. The detailed plans that were made by three architects André Dévin, Paul Duclos and Jacques Garnier and which are kept in the archives of the Bouches-du-Rhône department, showed a mosque complex that included a hostel, an office, a restaurant, several dormitories, a meeting-room and medical facilities. Inspired by the Paris Mosque, a traditional Maghrebi design was made with a square-shaped minaret of about 30 meters, a small dome and a courtyard with a gallery covered by arches.

However, Cottin still had to discuss the project with Muslim religious leaders and above all with Abdelkader Ben Ghabrit, the rector of the Paris Mosque. In a meeting the rector gave his approval, but insisted that the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places that Ghabrit presided over would also become the proprietor and overseer of the mosque in Marseilles. Agreeing with this demand would put Cottin in a difficult position, because the North African religious leaders that supported the project in Marseilles, such the ulama of Cairo, had declared that the presidency of the co-opted Ben Ghabrit was unacceptable to them. In his memoirs, published in 1977, Cottin wrote that after their meeting Ben Ghabrit had used his influence on the leaders of the French protectorate in Morocco and on the European elites in Algeria to obstruct the establishment of a mosque in Marseilles if this mosque would not be under the control of the Paris Mosque (Renard 2000: 145).

However, there was another reason for the failure of the project. In Marseilles the Parti populaire français, a political movement close to the Communist Party which was led by Simon Sabiani, was engaged in a political campaign to gain support among the Algerian shopkeepers and the Algerian workers in the city. Sabiani claimed that he had been supporting the creation of a North African hostel and a mosque for a long time. According to Sabiani, Louis Cottin, who had recently left the Parti populaire and a local newspaper that Sabiani directed, merely tried to frustrate Sabiani by presenting an alternative mosque project. According to a secret report of

152. Cottin in an interview of 27th of August 1937, cited in “Cette mosquée qui ne vit jamais le jour” in Le Méridional 13 November 1989
153. Simon Sabiani had left the Communist Party in 1923 to found his own Social Communist movement under the name Parti Populaire Français. He was mayor of Marseilles from 1931 tot 1935. He is known as one of the founders of the networks and practices of patronage and corruption in Marseilles, drawing heavily upon the clan structures to gain support in his struggle for power and control over the workers movements in Marseilles. This form of corporate communism with fascist elements is known in Marseilles as “Sabianisme”. Its disastrous rule, financial mismanagement and corruption paved the way for the receivership under which Marseilles was placed in 1939 (see Sanmarco and Morel 1985: 42-47; Jankowski 1989).
July 1937, written by the chef of the Services de police spéciale that policed the North African nationalists in Marseilles, Sabiani actively tried to obstruct the project of Cottin. An additional reason for the failure of the projects in the late 1930s therefore was that they had become controversial in the struggles between different political factions of the Left in Marseilles.\textsuperscript{154}

![Picture 3.5 Project Mosque Marseilles 1937](image)

### 3.3.6. The project of 1942-1949\textsuperscript{155}

The idea to build a mosque in Marseilles reappeared during the war. In October 1942, the municipal council of Marseilles discussed whether the city could participate in the acquisition of a terrain for a mosque. The minutes of the deliberations mentioned:

> At this time there is a project to construct a mosque in Marseilles, meant for the North Africans who live in the city and for those who transit Marseilles when travelling between France and North Africa. The government thus wants to give a tangible proof of its concern for the Muslim French subjects and to strengthen the ties that unite the métropole and the Empire.\textsuperscript{156}

Interestingly, once again the mosque would primarily provide for the needs of ordinary North African Muslims. This in contrast to the Paris Mosque, that was mainly to be enjoyed by Muslim notables and the Parisian bourgeoisie. In 1943, when a Muslim cemetery was created in Marseilles, the authorities had linked the possibility of constructing a symbol of Islamic presence to the need to provide for religious rituals. The cemetery had been given a North African look


\textsuperscript{155} In this section I draw upon a file kept in the municipal archives of the city of Marseilles, entitled Dossier sous série 423, Numéro d’article W34, “Projet d’Édification d’une Mosquée à Marseille”. See also Renard 2000 and 2005.

\textsuperscript{156} [“Il est à l’heure actuelle projeté de construire à Marseille une mosquée, destinée aux Nord-africains habitant la ville et à ceux qui voyageant entre la France et l’Afrique du Nord, transitent par Marseille. Le gouvernement désire ainsi donner preuve tangible de la sollicitude qu’il porte aux sujets français de religion musulmane, et resserrer les liens qui unissent la métropole et l’empire”]. In dossier sous série 423, Numéro d’article W34, “Projet d’Édification d’une Mosquée à Marseille”.

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by building a typical *Koubba*, a dome that is placed on the grave of a marabout.\(^{157}\) The mosque of Marseilles should not merely cater for prayer, it was also seen as an opportunity to construct some typical Muslim architecture:\(^{158}\)

The realisation of such an architectural ensemble will contribute to the enhancement of the artistic patrimony of our city, while at the same time it will assert the primordial role that our city must play in the relations between France and North Africa [it will also illustrate the gratitude of France towards, my insertion, M.M.] the Muslim subjects for the effort they have made since 1940 and for their participation in the final liberation of the country.\(^{159}\)

In 1944 the project was taken up by a French *Comité de reconnaissance aux soldats musulmans ayant combattu pour la France*. North African Muslims who lived in Marseilles also wanted to have a say in the project and a delegation of Muslim representatives addressed itself directly to the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône, Mr. Baylot. The prefect had a reputation for being sympathetic and helpful for the Muslim community in Marseilles. In a letter written to the mayor of Marseilles in 1948 he mentioned that a Muslim delegation had come to see him and had expressed the desire to see a mosque built in Marseilles (Renard 2001: 150). The Muslim delegation had also suggested that a Muslim secretariat would be established at the City Hall that would employ an Arab-speaking civil servant.\(^{160}\) The municipality decided to make a reservation of a terrain for the development of the project, located close to the Boulevard des Dames in the centre of the city.\(^{161}\)

When a new design had been made by one of the architects of the 1937 project, Roger Dévin, and when a number of subventions and gifts had been collected by the committee, everything was ready for the mosque to be built in 1949. Municipal authorities even urged the

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\(^{157}\) Marseille was occupied by the Germans at the end of 1942, after the allied troops had landed in North Africa (Simpson-Fletcher 1999a: 364ff.). The Muslim cemetery was created in the city at the initiative of M.Bourgeois, the president of the SAINA, and consisted of a square (*carré*) capable of containing 1000 places in the cemetery St-Pierre in Marseilles. The *Koubba* that was built by the technical service of the cemetery, was to give the cemetery “the same ambiance as our Muslim cemeteries in North Africa” (cited in Renard 2000: 148). The direct motive to create a Muslim cemetery was the important number of deaths in the camps in Marseilles. The bodies could no longer be repatriated to Algeria because of the German occupation. The cemetery was only officially inaugurated when the *Koubba* had been completed, which was after the German capitulation in 1945 (Attard-Maraninchi and Temime 1990: 152).

\(^{158}\) The cityscape of Marseilles already included a number of prestigious buildings following an oriental architectural design. Three religious buildings which were built in the 19\(^{th}\) century, the cathedral *La Major* (built between 1852 and 1893), the basilica *Notre Dame de la Garde* (built between 1852 and 1880), and the Jewish Synagogue (built between 1862 and 1863), all express an oriental inspiration and Roman-Byzantine style. See Barry Bergdoll 1995.

\(^{159}\) “[*La réalisation d’un tel ensemble architecturale contribuerait à enrichir le patrimoine artistique de la ville en même temps qu’il affirmerait le rôle primordial que doit jouer notre cité dans les relations entre la France et l’Afrique du Nord et plus généralement ses sujets de religion musulmane pour l’effort qu’ils n’ont cessé de fournir depuis 1940 et leur participation à la libération définitive du pays*]”. “Extraits des registres des délibérations de la délégation municipale” December 19 1944.

\(^{160}\) Letter of the prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône to the Mayor of Marseilles, dated 27 December 1948.

\(^{161}\) Soon it became clear that the municipality only owned a part of the parcel. Because the municipality did not succeed in expropriating the private owner it was decided to reduce the size of the project.
committee to start the construction, so that some of the unemployed in the building sector could find a job. In August 1949, the mayor of Marseilles, Michel Carlini, already invited members of the French government to come and attend the ground breaking ceremony and in a letter to the prefect he insisted that the French president should also give *acte de présence* at that occasion. It seemed that finally the building of a mosque in Marseilles seemed nearby… had it not been for the rector of the Paris Mosque.

In 1949 the mosque’s architects had mentioned to the mayor of Marseilles that they had refrained from consulting the leaders of the Paris Mosque. They were afraid that the rector, Ben Ghabrit, would once again insist on controlling the mosque project in Marseilles.\(^{162}\) Apparently Ben Ghabrit did not like being sidelined for he himself organised in November 1950 a meeting in Marseilles with municipal officials. At that occasion he said that it was “against the Islamic tradition” to build a mosque on land that had been given in lease to a non-Muslim association. According to Ben Ghabrit the municipality should reconsider its gift, and further pursuing his strategic interests, the rector suggested that the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places might build a mosque in Marseilles instead.\(^{163}\)

The *Comité de reconnaissance aux soldats musulmans ayant combattu pour la France* now decided to return the land lease. However, in the meanwhile the Algerian shopkeeper Talmoudi – the partner of Louis Cottin’s in the mosque project of 1937 – had founded a new *Comité musulmane pour la mosquée*. The municipal council of Marseilles decided to give the property and a donation of 2 million francs to this new committee. This decision meant that the project for the construction of a mosque in Marseilles was now in the hands of independent local Muslim Algerians. This was in contrast to the wider governing strategies, in which the financing of Islamic worship and mosques had always been the correlate of co-optation, surveillance and control.

At this point the national government decided to intervene directly. It was now said that the municipal subvention violated the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State. This was of course a partial interpretation of the law, because the Paris Mosque had also benefited from public subsidies for its construction and continued to be subsidized by the French state and the municipality of Paris. A report by the French Secret Services, dated 21 April 1951, mentioned that French authorities feared that nationalists might abuse the mosque project in Marseilles. A mosque that was not controlled by the co-opted Ben Ghabrit might become an enclave where “Arabs” might engage in “non religious activities” that would be against French interests. Only the personality of Ben Ghabrit, “*ami de la France*”, was a guarantee against such developments (Renard 2000: 152).\(^{164}\) When, in addition, the secretary of the Muslim Committee fled to Tunis in August of the same year to escape from his creditors, the last chances of establishing a Grand Mosque in Marseilles during colonial times vanished. A few years later the municipality of Marseilles returned the funds that had already been made available to the contributors.

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163. Délibérations conseil municipal, April 9 1951.
164. Renard (2000: 152) argues that the strategy of the Paris Mosque was to keep control over mosque projects in the 1940s in Marseilles, Lille and Bordeaux.
3.4. Direct policy legacies of colonial rule for the government of Islam in France

The closing stages of the French colonial empire were characterised by savage warfare, notably in Indochina and in Algeria. Despite these hostilities, France managed to establish new political, economic and cultural bonds with the former colonies. Successive French governments invested in the promotion of French civilization and its continued influence in Africa and elsewhere, and generously sponsored French cultural institutions. An important issue that presented itself after the ending of colonial rule was to untangle the linkages between the government of Islam in Algeria and in France. In this respect two issues were of particular significance: the accommodation of “Muslim French” or harkis who immigrated to France and defining the legal and administrative status of the Muslim Institute in Paris in the post-colonial period.

3.4.1. The harkis

The Algerian war of independence ended officially with the signing of the Evian Accords. However the violence and atrocities of the war did not stop in 1962. During the war the Moudjahidin of the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale) (FLN) had terrorised the Algerian countryside. In 1962, the FLN started a systematic campaign to kill those who had sided with the French. The exact numbers of casualties of these massacres are still not known, but estimates go from 15,000 to 150,000 peoples. The main target of these killings were those known as the harkis.

In a strict sense the term harki referred to the members of the military support units which were recruited by the French, the so-called harkas which consisted of 25 harkis under the command of an Algerian military officer. However, the term harkis was also used to refer to pro-French elites, indigenous notables who worked in the colonial administration and civilians who provided services for the military (the moghazis). The French had recruited about 200,000 harkis during the war. In 1962, the French government initially refused to repatriate the harkis arguing that it was already difficult to provide for the needs for housing of the pieds noirs who massively left Algeria to settle in France. Eventually the French government did decide to repatriate some 25,000 harkis who were officially called “Repatriated Muslim French” (Français musulmans rapatriés). Some 53,000 others managed to reach France on their own initiative.

Almost all the harkis-immigrants arrived in Marseilles, where they were temporarily housed in the Sainte-Marthe camp and then dispersed to other camps, such as the camp Larza (in the Aveyron region) and to camps in the regions around Arles and the Pyrenees. In 1963 and 1964 the French government started building barracks in some camps, as well as special villages for harkis and forestry hamlets (hameaux forestiers), where the newcomers could live with

166. Already in 1963, for example, the Cultural Association France Algeria was established. See Hargreaves 1988: 172.
their families for a few years and work in forestry and agriculture. The housing of the harkis in special camps and villages that were managed by French war veterans and pieds noirs resulted from the need to provide rapidly some sort of housing for the newcomers. But the creation of special resorts in the French countryside for the harkis, and not for the pieds noirs for example, was also based on estimations that the Algerians were unable to live in French neighbourhoods or cities (Jordi and Hamoumou 1999: 95).

The harkis were called “Muslim French”, but the term “Muslim” primarily referred to the North African or Algerian origins of the newcomers. Many of the pro-French Algerians did not practice Islam. In the 1960s some harkis even protested against the label “Muslim French” and demanded to be seen and treated as regular French citizens. Still, the administrative institutions that were to facilitate the insertion of the harkis in France took their religious needs into account. However, to my knowledge, there was no policy to create mosques for the harkis in France in the period immediately following their settlement. In the late 1970s and 1980s, many of the first generation harkis began to practice Islam again, which was often also related to the desperate situation in which they found themselves and the lack of interest of French authorities in their plight. Many of the newly founded associations of harkis now included the terms “Muslim” or “Islamic” in their names (Kepel 1991: 324ff.). In contrast to many of the post-war labour migrants in France, the harkis had French citizenship, and they could therefore take the lead in demanding religious freedom for Muslims. Many harkis became the favoured interlocutors for French municipal authorities in the 1970s and 1980s and tried to position themselves as the leaders of the newly emerging Muslim communities in France. In 1978 the Commission consultative des Français musulmans was created which discussed the possibility of creating Muslim cemeteries to be used exclusively for harkis (Geisser and Zémouri 2007: 44).

3.4.2. The Paris Mosque

The existence of the Muslim Institute of the Paris Mosque also immediately presented a challenge to French authorities. The management and administration of the institute had to be taken care of, but there was also the issue of defining how this symbol of France as a Great Muslim Power was to be understood now that the French no longer were an imperial power. In 1954 the death of the rector of the mosque, Si Kaddour Ben Ghabrit, had coincided with the beginning of the war in Algeria. Ben Ghabrit had designated his nephew – Ahmed Ben Ghabrit – to become the new rector. In 1957 the French government decided however to replace Ahmed Ben Ghabrit with Si Hamza Boubakeur, who was seen as more loyal to France (Boyer 1992: 37). After the independence of Algeria, the new rector opted for French nationality, which he obtained in 1963.

Because Algeria was no longer a part of France, the status and the ownership of the Paris Mosque was subject to discussion, which now also involved the government in Algiers. The French government insisted that the mosque should remain a French institution and could not be handed over to the Algerian government. The status of the Mosque remained somewhat unclear but officially it continued to be owned and administrated by the Society of Pious Trusts and Islamic Holy Places. The city of Paris and the French Ministry of Interior also continued to

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subsidize the Muslim Institute. The French government thought that the mosque should provide for “Muslim French” and in the 1960s the visitors were mainly the harkis who lived in Paris (Kepel 1991: 94).

In the late 1960s the composition of the Muslim population in France began to change because of labour immigration, especially from Algeria. Older conflicts re-emerged in France between Algerians who had sided with the French and those who had sided with the FLN. In this context the Paris Mosque became seen as a symbol of the French colonial state. The opposition of Algerian nationalists and Muslims against the rector, Si Hamza Boubakeur, became more intense in the 1970s. The rector was accused of using the Muslim Institute to enrich himself. This led to protests, especially because the vast majority of the ordinary Muslim immigrants in the Paris region were obliged to worship in poorly maintained prayer spaces. In 1982 the ownership of the Paris Mosque was handed over to the Algerian government. In the same year the Algerian Cheikh Abbas, who did not speak or understand French, was installed as the rector of the Muslim Institute (Kepel 1991: 314). Since then both the French and the Algerian government had sought to employ the Paris Mosque to exercise influence on the development of Islam in France. These and other aspects of French governing strategies with regard to Islam in the post-colonial period will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

3.5. Conclusion

Over a period of more than one hundred years the French developed a series of strategies to govern Muslim societies in North and West Africa. One strategy was the co-optation of those Muslim elites and confraternities that were willing to collaborate with the French administration. They acquired the prospect of administering a regular form of Islam, compatible with colonial rule and enabling the French to demonstrate their respect for the religion of the indigenous. In the early 20th century the French grew more ambitious in their role as a Muslim Great Power. They strove to develop their diplomatic role in the Levant, North Africa and the Middle East and even envisaged taking the lead in developing a more modern and liberal brand of Islam. Another strategy for governing in Africa was the shielding of those forms of Islam that were believed to be superficial and syncretic. This was thought to be the case with the worship of the Kabyle and with l’islam noir. Colonial governments sought to “protect” these local forms of Islam from doctrinal and cultural purification under the influence of reformist movements. Finally there was the strategy of constant surveillance and repression of all forms of “bad Islam”, usually equated with “Arab fanaticism” and seen as a source of inspiration for united opposition against “infidel rule” in the colonies.

The significance of French church-state traditions for the governance of religion in North and West Africa can only be understood in light of these broader strategies aimed at securing colonial rule. The Napoleonic Concordatian regime of the 19th century was exported to Algeria where a system of official clergy and official religious institutions enabled the state to employ religion to sustain colonial rule. The colonial administration compensated the official Muslim clergy and paid some other costs for the maintenance of Islamic practice. These forms of support remained fairly minimal, especially when compared to the more generous state support for the religious needs of European settlers. The 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State
created a challenge for colonial government. Strict secularism undermined the Gallican element in French church-state traditions because it guaranteed privately organised religions more freedom from state interference. The French decided to refrain from implementing the new secular regime in Algeria. Between 1907 and 1962 they essentially continued the Concordatian-styled regime and even intensified practices of surveillance and control over Islam. Paradoxically, this strategy was justified by suggesting that Muslims were unable to understand and accept the principle of separation of church and state. In West Africa the governance of Islam remained primarily organised around cooperation with selected confraternities and Muslim elites. The French sought to respect the various ethnic and localised religious traditions, and they used financial support for mosque building and pilgrimage sporadically and strategically to sustain practices of co-optation.

The building and renovation of Islamic houses of worship was incidentally an issue. In Algeria the colonial administration grudgingly accepted a little responsibility for the maintenance of some existing mosques, but the vast majority was left to Muslims to maintain. The Muslims were clearly worse off, given that the French had not only destroyed many mosques during the occupation of Algeria but had also deprived the religious foundations of their means to finance the costs of religion. In the first two decades of the 20th century intensified control over Islam was combined with French involvement with the accommodation of religious facilities and support for the creation of 15 new mosques in Algeria. These newly built and more prestigious mosque buildings served to demonstrate the superiority of Western building techniques, concern for the needs of the Muslim population and respect for Islam. The mosques were also represented as offerings to Muslim communities and as illustrations of the good will of French authorities.

In Europe, the traditionally styled, pastiche mosque buildings erected at the colonial exhibitions fulfilled a function similar to their genuine versions in the African colonies: they stood to show how the French respected Islamic culture. These embellished displays of Islamic worship stood in glaring contrast to the ways thousands of Muslim colonial workers and soldiers were living in France in the first half of the 20th century. They were mostly housed in make-shift accommodations, segregated from mainstream French society and subject to government strategies that mixed social assistance with strict surveillance. A primary belief was that Algerians were inassimilable and that they should remain rooted in their Muslim culture during their temporary sojourn in France. The plans for a Kabyle village in Marseilles should be understood in the light of these strategies, even though it also drew upon the imagery of the typical Muslim villages that were re-built in the colonies and displayed at the exhibitions.

The creation of a prestigious Muslim institute and a traditionally styled mosque in the centre of Paris in the 1920s was an altogether different event. The building served to show that France was a Great Muslim Power and that it honoured its Muslim soldiers who had died during the First World War. Because it was located in the centre of Paris and because it was combined with annex facilities, including a bathhouse and Moorish cafe, the centre could also offer a pleasant diversion to the Parisian bourgeoisie. Ironically, these functions of the Paris Mosque did not go well with it actually functioning as a house of worship for ordinary and poor Algerian Muslims. From the moment of its creation the Paris Mosque was a contested symbol in the eyes of those who opposed French rule. In Marseilles there were also plans to create a central mosque in the interwar period and shortly after World War Two. In the “Capital of the Colonies” a mosque would also provide for the needs of local Muslim communities. The plans
were developed by local French elites together with leading men among the Algerian community in Marseilles. However, the French government and the rector of the Paris Mosque intervened directly to prevent the mosque in Marseilles being built in the 1930s and early 1950s. In the post-colonial period the French government and the leadership of the Paris Mosque would continue to join together in order to prevent the formation of autonomous Islamic institutions in Marseilles.
4.1. Introduction

The Dutch East Indies were by far the most important Dutch colony. It was also the only colony where a purposeful policy towards Islam was developed and this aspect of Dutch colonial policy in particular attracted attention from other imperial powers. In 1939 the French scholar Georges Henri Bousquet began his *A French View of the Netherlands Indies* by recalling that: “No other colonial nation governs relatively so many Moslem subjects as do the Netherlands”. In reconsidering their colonial policies the French had often looked at the Dutch Indies as a source of inspiration and between 1891 and 1904 twenty five French study missions visited the Dutch colony (Gouda 1995). The French also immediately translated *The Netherlands and Islam* by the Dutch Islam expert Snouck Hurgronje when it was published in 1911.169 The literature on the institutionalisation of Islam in the Netherlands in the post-war period, however, has by and large ignored the colonial period. There seemed to exist a consensus that Dutch colonialism and responses to the “new” Islamic presence in the Netherlands had nothing to do with one another.170 A few years ago the Dutch anthropologist Peter van der Veer observed provocatively that many people seemed to have forgotten that until 60 years ago the majority of people in the Greater Netherlands were Muslim (Van der Veer 2001b). In this chapter I discuss Dutch colonial policy towards Islam in the East Indies as well as the ways Islam was represented and regulated in the Netherlands during the colonial period.171 I explore whether the Dutch were involved in the reception and accommodation of Muslim populations in similar ways to the French and what patterns of Muslim immigration developed. This reconstruction prepares the way for an analysis of policy legacies created within the colonial regime that may have shaped public policy responses with regard to Islam in the Netherlands in later periods.

169. My discussion of Dutch colonial policies towards Islam is limited to their policies in the East Indies and I leave aside the responses to Islam in Surinam and the Antilles. There were also Muslim communities in Surinam and the Antilles, but these were mostly (descendants) of immigrant workers from the Indian subcontinent. See M.Nurmohamed *De geschiedenis van de islam in Suriname* (1985).

170. See for example Landman 1992; Rath et al. 2001. The colonial history is mentioned in Douwes et al. 2005 and in Maussen 2006.

171. For this section I have in particular made use of the following studies: Snouck Hurgronje 1915; Bousquet 1940; Benda 1958a and 1958b; Wertheim 1978; Steenbrink 1993; Van Doorn 1994; Gouda 1995; Federspiel 2001; Bowen 2003; Laffan 2003; and Meuleman 2005. Other studies on Dutch colonial policies towards Islam in the East Indies include Van der Plas 1934; Kernkamp 1946; and Pijper 1955, 1961 and 1977. See also the forthcoming book of Wim van den Doel on the Netherlands and Islam between 1800 and 1950. I would like to thank Martin van Bruinessen for his useful advices in identifying these sources.
4.2. The Dutch Indies and Islam

4.2.1. Expansion of Dutch rule and encounters with Islam

When the Dutch became involved in Indonesian affairs in the 17th century the victory of Islam “was well-nigh complete over the greater part of Indonesia” (Benda 1958a: 9; Steenbrink 1993). Until the arrival and spread of Islam, the most important religions in the Archipelago had been Buddhism and Hinduism, which had developed between the 9th and 13th century. Islam had reached the Indonesian Archipelago by the 13th century via traders and international scholarly networks such as Sufism, and it could spread because Southeast Asian princes converted to Islam (Meuleman 2005: 32; Federspiel 2001). The development of trade and communication had contributed to the spreading of Islam.172

The development of trade and communication had contributed to the spreading of Islam.173 Scholars in colonial times were well aware of the fact that Islam had arrived relatively late in Indonesia, and this was important for their perception of Islamic culture. Until the mid 19th century the Dutch attitude towards Islam was based on the idea that Islam was organised in a similar way as Roman Catholicism, with a hierarchical clergy that owed allegiance to the Turkish Caliph who, so the Dutch thought, had great influence over Indonesian Muslims. Religious politics were not of crucial importance for the emerging Dutch system of rule over the East Indies. The Dutch presence in Southeast Asia was aimed at the extraction of wealth and the creation of commerce primarily, and – unlike the strategies of the Portuguese for example – not at Christianisation. The instruction for the governor general of the East Indies of 1803 laid down the principle of state neutrality in the domain of religion, which implied that officially there should be no preferential treatment of Christianity over Islam (Kernkamp 1946: 195). Nonetheless, the Dutch government allowed for Catholic and Protestant missions in Indonesia even though the governors and plantation owners tended to fear that overt support for the Christian missionaries would add to hostility and resistance to Dutch rule.

In the course of the 19th century more became known about Islam in the East Indies. The Dutch, however, continued to view Islam as merely one among several composite layers of indigenous culture. European scholars were inclined to highlight the syncretic, superficial or derived nature of Southeast Asian Islam (Meuleman 2005: 23). That view was not altogether incorrect because, for example on Java, “Islam had been forced to adapt itself to centuries-old traditions, partly indigenous, partly Hindu-Buddhist, and in the process to lose much of its doctrinal rigidity” (Benda 1958a: 12). The Dutch had sought to create alliances with those elements in Indonesian society that seemed only nominally Muslim: the priyayi, the Sultans and the adat-chiefs (Benda 1958a: 19). In the main, the priyayi constituted first and foremost an aristocratic civilisation of their own. A new santri civilisation had developed around the religious leaders, the ulama, who had become counsellors, judges and religious teachers and began to have

172. Meuleman (2005) argues that the presence of Islam in the archipelago already dates back to the 8th century.
173. The Dutch architect Hendrik Lucasz, for example, designed a mosque in Java in the 17th century, which included a minaret that resembled a European lighthouse and was modelled on contemporary buildings in Holland (O’Neill 2002: 235). According to Van Dijk (2005: 17) it is not altogether certain that Lucasz was the architect of this mosque.
increasing impact on the religious, social and political life of Indonesia (Benda 1958a: 14-15). In contrast to the priyayi the ulama had more religious prestige and as they were not co-opted by the Dutch they were not part of the system of exploitation of the local populations. Islam became an important rallying point in the opposition to Dutch rule, especially in the second half of the 19th century when the Dutch, who until then were mainly present in Java, also established their authority in other parts of the archipelago.

4.2.2. Liberal Policy and reformist Islam

In the second half of the 19th century the Dutch had begun to develop the rubber and tobacco plantations in Deli, on the east coast of Sumatra. The Treaty of Sumatra, concluded with the British in 1871, enabled the Dutch to try to establish their power in northern Sumatra. The conquest and annexation of this part of Sumatra – notably of the province of Aceh – involved some forty years of military struggle against local sultans, who called upon their subjects to fight a “Holy War” (Jihad) against Dutch military forces. Despite indigenous resistance, the Dutch managed to incorporate the other islands of the archipelago into the colonial structure between 1884 and 1912.

In the closing decades of the 19th century the system of indirect rule came under increasing pressure. One of the reasons to rethink colonial governing strategies was the changing influence of Islam, which was also fuelling resistance against Dutch rule, as had become clear in the Aceh war. From the latter part of the 19th century onwards Indonesian Islam “started to shed its

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174. See Laffan 2003: 7ff. for a discussion of the classification of Indonesian Muslims as developed by Clifford Geertz.

175. As Benda (1958a: 16) observes: “Priyayi officialdom, eager to please the alien overlords, was careful to avoid any suspicion of religious ‘fanaticism’, and in so doing not only became a target for the ridicule and hostility of many Ulama, it also lost touch with Indonesian Islam altogether”.


177. The Aceh war consisted of a series of military conflicts between 1873 to 1913. At the beginning of the war Sultan Mahmud Syah (r. 1870-1874) was able to organize a well-armed and determined resistance. The new leader Sultan Ibrahlim Mansur Syah (r. 1875-1907) also helped to unify opposition against the Dutch (See Bakker 1993; Reid 1969, Van ‘t Veer 1969; and Federspiel 2001: 11).

178. Indirect rule remained the predominant form of colonial authority over the expanded territory and a decentralised system of self administration was introduced in the Outer Islands. The Dutch sought to develop the overseas territories without intervening very much in the daily routines and customary practices of indigenous society (Reid 1969: 21ff.).

179. There were other important reasons as well for the system of indirect rule to come under pressure. The idea of the East Indies being administrated indirectly by a rotating class of European rulers, for example, came to exist in tension with the factual emergence of a mestizo civilisation (Gouda 1995: 28ff. and 157ff.). Dutch government was also no longer exclusively motivated by the pursuit of profit. The Dutch came to take more pride in showing their ability to administer their empire “with more wisdom and discretion than other colonizing powers” (Gouda 1995: 23). Finally, the idea developed that beyond the simple exploitation of the East Indies, the Dutch should also care about uplifting the indigenous populations and help the East Indies become a modern society, although at its own pace. The destructive effects of the Culture System and the Liberal Policy on the local economy and on the standards of living of the peasantry, notably on Java, became increasingly visible in the second half of the 19th century and the publication of Max Havelaar in 1860 added to the critique of the exploitation of the indigenous population.
The contacts with Mecca intensified and a greater number of people went on pilgrimage or to study in the Middle East and sometimes returned to Indonesia as reformers of Islam (Laffan 2003). Village unrests and anti-Dutch sentiments often found a leadership in Muslim reformers and a rallying cause in Islam. Colonial administrators were ill prepared to face the increasing militancy of Indonesian Islam which they encountered especially during the war in Aceh. An interesting illustration of the ways the Dutch sought to respond to the challenge of Islam-inspired resistance occurred around the destruction and rebuilding of the great mosque of Kota Raja (now Banda Aceh), the capital of the province of Aceh.  

During the Second Aceh Expedition (1873-1874) the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger) (KNIL) bombarded the sultan’s fortified palace, the Kraton (dalam) and managed to capture the Great Mosque. The mosque was largely destroyed during the attack. Some years later, claiming that the war was over, the Dutch wanted to start a policy of goodwill, which would be “symbolized by the rebuilding of the Great Mosque destroyed in the second expedition” (Reid 1969: 184). A new mosque, which followed the design of a European architect, was built between 1879-1881. However, the Acehnese protested against the new mosque building and its architecture, and they argued that the building was alien, inappropriate and unsuited for their purposes. One reason for these protests was that the architect had made a design in the so-called Indo-Saracenic style that the British developed in India. Thus the new mosque had a dome which was uncommon for indigenous mosques. Commenting on this colonial encounter around mosque architecture, Hugh O’Neill explains the reactions of the Acehnese:

It was always said that they wouldn’t use the mosque until the beginning of the 20th century because it wasn’t a proper mosque. It didn’t look like a mosque and it was totally unfamiliar and of course it was a reaction to the bombardment of the city – they didn’t really want to be involved (…) with a Dutch architect –the Dutch thought they were doing a marvellous thing, putting up a new mosque for them, a lovely shining proper mosque, and of course the Indonesians didn’t feel like that at all.


181. In 1935 two more domes were added and in 1958 the work on another two was started. During the second extension two minarets were also added (Van Dijk 2005: 22).
Indigenous mosques were characterised by tiered roofs made of timber which were open at the upper levels, allowing for ventilation, making the house of worship suited for the hot climate (O’Neill 2002; Van Dijk 2005). But the protest were not exclusively aimed at the inappropriate architecture of the new building. As Anthony Reid remarks:

It was (…) I believe, the first time the Dutch had built a mosque in their colony. I mean it was quite a remarkable step. A way of trying to woo the Muslims into the project in a way by suggesting that here is modernity as well as Islam. For the Dutch as well as for the Acehnese, the site had become a sacred place, because this is where the initial Dutch commander had been killed, this was where so many Dutch soldiers had fallen in the subsequent attacks as well. Thus, they built it in a quite novel style but in front of it they put a plaque commemorating the heroic Dutch soldiers who died in conquering the site, not a commemoration of the heroic Acehnese who fell defending the site. The Acehnese, of course, saw it as simply a monument built by the invaders with money of the infidels and with this commemoration of the Dutch in front of it, the Acehnese, at least initially, avoided it.

This somewhat clumsy effort at reconciliation is, of course, but an anecdote. Yet it should be situated against the backdrop of the growing unease of the Dutch administration about how to deal with Islam. The Dutch tried to halt the spread of Islamic religious law as well as contacts between Indonesian Muslims and Muslims outside Indonesia (Meuleman 2005: 36; Laffan 2003). They had sought, but had ultimately failed, to place restrictions on the pilgrimage to Mecca, seeing the pilgrims as a major cause of agitation (Benda 1958a: 20). The Dutch authorities wanted to base their policies and administration on more knowledge about Islam. The man for the job was Christian Snouck Hurgronje, a renowned expert on Islam who had been in Mecca and had published a book on the Hadj in 1888. He was to become the architect of Dutch policies towards Islam in the East Indies.182

In 1898 Snouck Hurgronje became Adviser for Native Affairs (Advizeur voor Inlandsche Zaken), a function he would fulfil until 1907 when he returned to the Netherlands, embittered by the harsh military government of Van Heutsz (Laffan 2003: 95). Only in 1911 after his return to the Netherlands where he became professor at the University of Leiden, Snouck Hurgronje published The Netherlands and Islam in which he further elaborated his ideas about Dutch policies towards Islam. Many of these ideas had already been developed and implemented during the previous period.

Snouck Hurgronje’s first contribution was to correct many of the misunderstandings which had informed Dutch governing strategies. For example, the idea that there was a clerical establishment in Islam or that all Indonesian Muslims who went on pilgrimage automatically turned into rebellious fanatics (Benda 1958a: 21ff.). Snouck Hurgronje thought that the colonial administration should adhere to the principles of religious neutrality and toleration towards Islamic practice, and he advised against efforts at large Christianisation. However, he did think

that there was a real danger of Islam becoming a major enemy of Dutch rule, not as a religion but as “a political doctrine, both in the shape of agitation by local fanatics and in the shape of pan-Islam, whether or not it was in fact inspired by Islamic rulers abroad, such as the Caliph” (Benda 1958a: 23). This led him to argue that the administration should very clearly distinguish between the regular aspects of Islamic religious activity or “Islam as worship” – such as the five pillars of Islam – and those ideas and practices that belonged to fanatic movements and pan-Islamism or “Islam as politics” (Bowen 2003: 48). Islam should be banned from the political sphere.¹83 Snouck Hurgronje suggested that the pilgrimage should be allowed and that there should be room for the social elements in Indonesian society that supported standard religious belief. If the Dutch would be accommodating towards regular aspects of Islamic belief and practice this would help lessen the chances of Indonesians adopting fanatical religious beliefs inimical to Dutch rule (Federspiel 2001: 13). The support for regular Islamic practice, was to be complemented by the containment of “fanatic” Muslim practices and attitudes.

The application of Snouck Hurgronje’s advice, from the last decade of the 19th century onwards, had considerable success. Military action against “fanatical” ulama, support for adat–chiefs and religious neutrality towards Islam contributed to the lessening of revolt (Benda 1958a: 29-30). Despite the fact that Snouck Hurgronje thus defended religious freedom for Muslim he also thought that in the longer run Indonesia would and could become a more modern society. This ultimate aim could only be achieved gradually, via a process of the association of the Indonesians with Dutch culture. A key to this gradual association was Western education, which should be made available, first to the elites but then also to more Indonesians. They should increasingly be given a share in the administrative affairs of the Dutch East Indies. These ideas about the possibilities of a gradual but progressive association also underlay the Ethical Policy which was inaugurated in 1901.

4.2.3. Ethical Policy and association

Ethical Policy was formally inaugurated as a new stance in colonial policy when Abraham Kuyper, the leader of the Dutch Orthodox Protestant Party (Anti-Revolutionaire Partij, ARP), came to lead a new government in 1901. Ethical Policy aimed to raise the level of prosperity of the people in the East Indies, by improving housing and education of the urban kampong communities in Java, and establishing schools and sanitary facilities (Gouda 1995). Ethical Policy also created opportunities for official support for the refurbishment of existing mosques, particularly in Java and Madura (O’Neill 2002: 239). In 1927 the Dutch Deli Maatschappij financed the building of the modern Azazi mosque in Tanjung Pura (Sumatra) that was commissioned by the Sultan’s family (Van Dijk 2005: 25). European architects and engineers were also involved in the construction of mosques, for example the Dutch officer Theodoor van Erp, who supervised the restoration of Borobudur and built the Al-Mashun Grand Mosque in Medan (Sumatra) between 1906 and 1909 (idem).

¹83. James and Schrauwers (2003: 65) argue that Christian missions in the East Indies, which were seeking to expand the role of religion in civil society and setting up associations with social welfare and cultural ends, opened the way for similar Islamic associations. Thus paradoxically the growing role of Islam in civil society was indirectly stimulated by the Christian missions.
4.2.4. Ethical Policy deformed

Despite its high flown ambitions, the output of Ethical Policy came to be obscured, beginning in the 1920s. The hope that a new Western educated middle class would become allies of the Dutch proved to have been a miscalculation, because “instead of identifying themselves with their overlords and Dutch culture, the leaders of this new class, torn between the harsh reality of colonialism and the egalitarian and libertarian promises of Western education, turned into vociferous opponents of the colonial status quo” (Benda 1958a: 39). Related to the above, opposition to Dutch colonial rule grew in the first decades of the 20th century. Political parties were founded, such as the Islamic Union (Sarekat Dagang Islam), founded in 1911, and the Partai Nasional Indonesia founded in 1927. Beside, the growing influence of “secular” nationalism, Islam also inspired further resistance to Dutch rule, both in the form of the growing importance of reformist Islam and in the form of ulama-led village unrest (Benda 1958a; Laffan 2003). Communist insurgencies on Java and the collective fear of the nationalist and Islamic movements would soon lead Dutch governors to further distance themselves from the doctrine of association (Gouda 1995: 26).

From the 1920s onward, the Dutch set out to combat anti-colonial resistance, in particular by exiling the leaders of different oppositional movements. Even though the aim of improving the welfare of the indigenous population remained a part of colonial policy, its guiding principle moved from further association of Indonesians in the administration, to the maintenance of “Tranquillity and Order” (rust en orde). Policy practice and implementation in the domains of cultural, legal and religious policies moved away from the ideas and recommendations of Snouck Hurgronje, even though he continued to be celebrated as the “architect of Dutch Muslim Policy”.

A crucial factor in the reorientation of governing strategies in the domain of law, culture and religion was the growing influence on colonial policies of conservative legal scholars, especially those scholars working at the Indological Faculty of the University of Leiden. The dean of the Adat Law School was the renowned expert Cornelis van Vollenhoven who worked at the University of Leiden from 1901 to 1933. The idea that each region in the Indies functioned according to its own specific cultural matrix led adat scholars since the 19th century to understand their scholarly work as an effort to uncover and describe this cultural matrix for the various regional societies in the East Indies (Gouda 1995: 70ff.). Translated into policy directives this meant that colonial officials could sanction specific identities and particular traditions corresponding to the adat law areas.

In the specific context of Indonesian society in the 1920s and 1930s the constant efforts to maintain the particularities of the different regions also seemed an effective instrument to oppose the two major ideological forces of unification: on the one hand Islam and Islamic law, and on the other hand Indonesian nationalism. Another important change in Dutch colonial thinking concerned ideas about the way Indonesian culture could evolve. The Dutch colonizers came to think of themselves as guardians who should “accompany the Indonesians on their evolutionary journey, because they were knowledgeable about the path’s obstacles and pitfalls” (Gouda 1995: 138). This paternalist approach aimed at shielding indigenous culture from deformation by the West stood in glaring contrast to the more interventionist, but also more ambitious, French
civilizing mission in North Africa. Not altogether surprisingly the French scholar Bousquet writing in the late 1930s was stunned by the fact that “the transmission of European social institutions from their mother country to the natives of their colonies does not interest the Dutch” (Bousquet 1940: 11).

The growing influence of the ideas of Van Vollenhoven’s adat-school resulted in a shift in religious policies. Out of fear for reformist Islamic movements, the government again sought to restrict the pilgrimage to Mecca and imposed controls and limitations on Indonesian pilgrims. In 1925 the so-called Guru Ordinance tightened administrative control over Islamic education, much to the dislike of Muslim instructors (Benda 1958a: 74). For some years the colonial government sought to support the orthodox ulama in the villages in order to oppose the growing influence of reformist-inspired Muslims, but this strategy was abandoned again in the 1930s. Following the advice of the adat-scholars, a key governing strategy was to seek to strengthen adat and the authority of the aristocracy in order to shield the village communities from further influence of reformist Islam. This had the odd effect of giving the priyayi more administrative control over Islamic life, an authority they did not have until then, and that in the eyes of Muslim leaders they certainly did not deserve. The efforts of the Dutch to support customary law in order to obstruct the further spreading of Islamic law also met with opposition. This became more clear in the conflicts about the reform of religious law, undertaken in a series of ordinances between 1929 and 1937. The proposed changes would lead to important restrictions on Islamic law, notably on inheritance matters and marriage, and they were seen as an unjustifiable invasion of Muslim affairs. Fierce protests led the government to withdraw some of its proposals and to adopt a slightly different stance towards Islam since the 1930s (Benda 1958a: 82ff.). Policies against reformist Islam were relaxed again. In 1939 it was even decided that “schools with the Koran” were eligible to public subventions (Kernkamp 1946: 205). Specifically Islamic issues came to play only a minor part in overall colonial policy from the 1930s onward (Benda 1958a: 68). The overall guiding principle was abstention and non-interference. The Japanese occupation of the East Indies (1942-1945) would create new opportunities for Indonesian nationalist movements and the war would speed up the progression toward self-government in Indonesia. Despite new military efforts of the Dutch – still hoping to regain control over the colonial possessions – Indonesia became independent in 1949.


185. In 1937, for example, the government “removed jurisdiction on Java over inheritance from the Islamic courts and gave it to the civil courts” (Bowen 2003: 49).

186. Governmental subsidies for the Muhammadiyah’s Western style schools were available. As Benda argues (1958a: 77) these subsidies for Islamic education were an abandonment of Snouck Hurgonje’s ideas about abstention from interference in religious life. The French student of Dutch Muslim policy, Georges-Henri Bousquet, wrote (1940: 17): “According to Dutch custom, a school which meets certain stipulated conditions is subsidized to the same extent as free European schools, but this almost never occurs in the Indies”.

98 Constructing Mosques
4.3. Dutch colonialism and Islam in Europe: architecture, peoples and exhibitions

I have demonstrated in the preceding chapter how French foreign policy in the Muslim World, its policies towards Islam in the colonies and policy responses to the presence of Islam in France developed in tandem in the first half of the 20th century. In this section I explore whether there were similar linkages between Dutch approaches to Islam overseas and responses to the presence of Islam in the Netherlands. A first issue to explore would be the reception and accommodation of colonial subjects and elites in the Netherlands. At this point, however, there were important differences between France and the Netherlands. Compared to the situation in France the number of Muslim migrants who came to the Netherlands was virtually non-existent. But the differences were not only a matter of number of immigrants, it was also a very different type of migrants. In France there were regiments of Muslim soldiers and large numbers of low-skilled colonial workers. In the Netherlands colonial migrants were either secularised elites who came to the Netherlands with the intention to be immersed in Dutch culture and education, or they came to work as maids or servants in family homes. For these reasons the number of migrants who would want to practice Islam during their stay in the Netherlands was very small and the likelihood that some kind of commonly defined need for facilities for Islamic worship would emerge was very low.

A small community of mostly working-class people from the East Indies (maids, sailors, navy personnel) created a Muslim organisation in the Hague in 1932 and regularly came together for prayer. The association had about 300 members in the 1930s and succeeded in creating a small Muslim section on a cemetery in The Hague in 1932 (Landman 1992: 21). Another form of Islamic organisation and presence in the Netherlands in the early 20th century, was the Ahmadiyya movement, a sect which was established in British India in 1889 and which had its European headquarters in London (Landman 1992: 24ff.). The leader of the movement, Mahmud Ahmad, sent missionaries to the Netherlands in 1924 to give lectures on Islam and a stationary missionary post was established in The Hague in 1947 (Roose 2005: 9).

The Dutch colonial empire in Southeast Asia was also present in Europe in the form of scholarly institutions, universities, museums and, of course, the exhibitions. The display of the Dutch colonial possessions at the World Exhibitions and at the Colonial Expositions in Europe was an opportunity to show and explicate the specific nature – and the success – of the Dutch style of colonial rule. One of the main messages the Dutch tried to get across at the colonial exhibitions was that their colonial style and regime were based on profound knowledge and serious study. A key mode of representation used by the Dutch was the staged display of ordinary life in the colonies. The most remarkable elements in the Dutch exhibition sites were the replicas of Javanese villages that were inhabited by Javanese who were brought to Europe for these occasions. Replica villages were established in the Dutch sections at the international colonial exhibition in Amsterdam in 1883, at the exposition of women’s labour in The Hague in 1874, and at the World’s Fair in Philadelphia in 1876.

187. The movement was founded in 1889 by the followers of Ghulam Ahmad (1830-1908) who claimed to be the promised Messiah who was sent to purify Islam from worldly corruption. The movement was seen as un-Islamic and in 1974 the World Muslim association asked Muslim governments to declare the Ahmadiyya “non-Muslims” (Roose 2005: 6-9).

188. For this section I primarily draw upon Gouda 1995 and Bloembergen 2001.
1898, at the colonial section of the exposition universelle in Paris in 1889, and at the World Fair in Brussels in 1910. Some attention was also given to indigenous architecture and arts. The Dutch preferred to display the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups within a single pavilion, showing how well the Dutch colonial system was able to manage cultural diversity. In the case of Islamic culture there were important differences between the Dutch and the French sections at the colonial exhibitions. Both countries displayed at such occasions village mosques, replicas of simple wooden or clay buildings that completed the picture of African village or Javanese villages. The display of these mosques did not so much serve to show the value of Islamic culture, but as an illustration of an aspect of daily life in the indigenous village.

The French had also built huge replicas of mosques at the colonial exhibitions. Especially in the 20th century these reproductions served to illustrate the greatness of Islamic culture and architecture, improved with the help of French engineers and architects, and demonstrate the respect of La France, amie de l’islam for Islamic culture. In the Dutch sections at the exhibitions there existed no equivalent of these attempts to display Islam and its cultural, artistic or architectural achievements. Most Dutch scholars and architects agreed that Islam and the “Mohammedans conquest” had caused a period of cultural downfall in the East Indies, especially in comparison to the earlier Hindu and Buddhist civilisations that were grounded in the glory of Borobodur and Prambanan. At the exhibition in Amsterdam in 1883 the Dutch displayed a small model of the mosque which they had established themselves in Aceh. At that same exhibition visitors could also admire a palace built in a quasi Islamic style with imitation minarets (Bloembergen 2001: 83ff). This palace was widely criticized. Critics argued, not incorrectly, that the Moorish style had nothing to do with indigenous culture or Islamic architecture in the Indies. But they also insisted that to visualize the cultural and architectural accomplishment of Indonesian culture the choice should not have fallen on Islam, but on Buddhist or Hindu culture and artefacts. The near absence of Islamic elements in the display and representation of the culture of the East Indies was striking.

At the exhibition in Paris in 1900 the contrast between the attention to Islam in the Dutch and French sections was even more remarkable. The French had displayed numerous artefacts representing Muslim arts and architecture and had built two large replicas of mosques in Algeria and Tunis in their section. In the Dutch section however, no visual reminders of Islam in Indonesia could be found. The Dutch journalist Diederik Baltzertd wrote in 1910 that the artefacts which were being displayed at the exhibition in Brussels, hid from view the fact that “30 million people in Java practice Islam” (cited in Bloembergen 2001: 209-210).

4.4. Direct legacies of colonialism and Islam in the Netherlands

It should be clear that, unlike what happened in France, there were very few opportunities and mechanism of diffusion allowing ideas and governing strategies with regard to Islam in the East Indies to become of relevance for policy responses the Netherlands. Did the more immediate

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189. There was no tableau vivant of a Javanese village at the World Exhibition in 1900 (Bloembergen 2001: 216).
190. See chapter 3.
post-colonial period, which also in the Netherlands involved large scale immigration from the former colony, necessitate policy responses to accommodate Islam in the Netherlands then?

The independence of the United States of Indonesia in 1949 and the creation of the Republic of Indonesia in 1950 meant the end of 350 years of direct Dutch involvement in the Indonesian Archipelago. The ties between the two societies and countries were almost completely dismantled within a period of little more than ten years (Van Doorn 1994: 49-50). Between 1949 and 1962, when Western New Guinea became part of Indonesia, virtually all people with Dutch nationality left Indonesia, including not only the white repatriates but also the Eurasians who were now spoken of as the “Indonesian Dutch” (Schuster 1999: 83ff.). The Indonesian Dutch usually had received a European education and held, relative to the native population, privileged positions during colonial times. In the new Republic of Indonesia, however, the Dutch Indonesians faced discrimination and unemployment. In total almost 300,000 people from the former East Indies migrated to the Netherlands. Their rapid integration in Dutch society was related to a variety of factors, including their relatively high level of education, familiarity with the Dutch language and culture, policy responses, including the dispersion of immigrant families over the country, and the growing of the Dutch economy in the second half of the 1950s (Van Amersfoort 1982).

Most of the newcomers were Christians or agnostics and belonged to the Westernised elite class. Their settlement in the Netherlands did not lead to any firm organisation formation on the basis of Islam (Landman 1992: 22).

The successful and rapid integration of the Indonesians is usually contrasted to the very painful and difficult incorporation of another group of post-colonial migrants who came to the Netherlands in the wake of the independence of Indonesia. These were the Moluccan soldiers who had fought in the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) and their families. In 1951 about 12,500 Moluccans arrived in the Netherlands. The immediate reason for the immigration of this particular group was the political situation in Indonesia at the time. Moluccan leaders had hoped to create an autonomous political entity within a federal Indonesian state, but when this appeared impossible, some leaders had in 1950 declared the founding of the independent Republic of the South Moluccas or the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS). The Indonesian government did not recognise the new state and invaded the islands in November 1950. The situation of the Moluccan soldiers was delicate because they had fought in the Dutch army against the Indonesians during the colonial war and because there had been conflicts between KNIL-soldiers and Indonesian soldiers on Java in 1950. The Dutch government continued to think that in due time the Moluccan soldiers could live in Indonesia but, being unable to demobilise them in Indonesia, it nevertheless decided to bring the soldiers and their families temporarily to the Netherlands to demilitarise them in Europe, away from political upheavals in Indonesia.

During the transport the Dutch government decided to discharge all Moluccans from the army. Upon their arrival in the Netherlands the soldiers and their families were housed in

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191. Many of the Chinese who had been co-opted by the colonial administration also left Indonesia after independence
192. See also Van Amersfoort and Niekerk 2006; Willems 2001.
193. There was another Javanese Muslim organisation in the Netherlands the Perkumpulan Ummat Islam. This was a very small organisation, a continuation of the association founded in 1932 (see above), which now used a prayer room in the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague (Roose 2006: 15).
194. See Smeets and Steijlen 2006.
a demobilisation camp in Amersfoort, and later on they were transferred to special barracks camps. The camps for Moluccans were put under the control of a Dutch staff, preferably consisting of military officers who had served in the East Indies, and who governed the camps jointly with a representative board of Moluccan residents. The Moluccans were housed in camps in the Netherlands arbitrarily and without taking into account differences of clan, villages and religions. These differences would soon lead to tensions. One solution was to concentrate like-minded groups in special enclaves.Already in 1952 the leader of the Moluccan Muslim community in the Netherlands – Ahmed Tan – had asked Dutch authorities to establish a separate residential enclave for Muslims. Tan, who was an ethnic Moluccan who had received a Dutch higher education, insisted that Dutch authorities should also recognise Muslim marriages, and provide for Muslim religious education and a mosque. Brawls between protestants and Muslims led to the will, shared by Moluccans and Dutch authorities, to create a special camp for the Muslim families. In 1954 a special camp – Wyldemerck – was established near Balk a small village in Friesland.

The camp in Wyldemerck was set up “along the lines of a traditional Moluccan Muslim kampong, led by a secular leader, the Raja, and a spiritual leader, the Imam” (Roose 2006: 6). Ahmad Tan in fact fulfilled both functions and became the key spokesmen of the camp’s residents, allowing him to further persevere in the demand for a mosque. The Moluccan Muslims received some help from the Aymadiyya movement in The Hague to provide for their religious needs. With the help of their fellow Muslims and with a subsidy of 50,000 guilders from the Directorate of Care for Ambonese (Commissariaat Ambonezenzorg) (CAZ), a mosque was established in Wyldemerck in 1956.

The mosque was made of white painted asbestos plates, it served as a place for ritual ablution and had a small minaret built next to it. After a reconstruction of the design process of the mosque the researcher Eric Roose (2006: 15) concludes that Ahmad Tan deliberately had tried to use the mosque architecture to contribute to the creation of a recognisable Moluccan Muslim kampong. The mosque would be in use until the camp was closed down and the barracks demolished in 1968. It had a capacity of some 150 persons. A small Muslim cemetery was also established on the local cemetery, where Ahmed Tan was buried after his premature death due to illness in 1957. Besides subsidizing the building of the mosque the Dutch authorities also remunerated the imams of the Moluccan community and provided for other religious needs (Van der Hoek 1994: 184-185).

The fact that Dutch authorities ended up helping to create facilities for Islamic worship was in large part a result of the fact that they were caring for the religious and cultural needs of all Moluccans irrespective of their religion. The great majority of the Moluccans were Christians, 93% were protestant and 4.5% were Catholics. In fact only 2.5% were Muslims, at a total of 300 people (about 80 families) (Smeets and Steijlen 2006: 99ff.).


196. The leaders of the movement managed to establish close contacts with members of the Dutch establishment, including Queen Wilhelmina and the Mayors of The Hague and Rotterdam. The Ahmadiyya established the Mobarak mosque in The Hague in 1955, a small building which is colloquially known as the first mosque in the Netherlands. For a detailed discussion on the architecture of this mosque see Roose 2005.

197. Eric Roose has recently discovered that the mosque has been reassembled to be used for storage and now has taken an initiative to see the mosque reconstructed in its original guise.
authorities to create religious facilities for Moluccan immigrants should also be understood in light of four situational factors. First, the sense of responsibility of the Dutch government for this particular group of immigrants was extremely strong. Not only had they been allies of the Dutch, they had also been demobilized and repatriated largely against their will and they had been disappointed in the hope they had invested in the Dutch government to support the struggle for an independent Moluccan state. For various reasons, then, the Dutch government accepted it had a “debt of honour” towards the Moluccan communities in the Netherlands. Second, the housing of Moluccan families in barracks camps resulted in the Moluccan communities becoming totally dependent on the care of Dutch authorities. Moreover, oftentimes the leaders of the communities were also opposed to further integration and contacts with Dutch society, fearing that this would jeopardize internal cohesion and undermine the common rallying cause of a return to a free Moluccan state. Given these circumstances it was inevitable that the responsibility for the creation of the necessary facilities would fall upon the Dutch state, including the creation of religious facilities. Third, government support for religion was still a common phenomenon in the Netherlands in the 1950s. Fourth, policy advisory reports on the situation of the Moluccan communities in the Netherlands had emphasised the importance of religion for the psychological well being of the uprooted Moluccan families (Van der Hoek 1994).

198. In the case of the protestant Moluccans, army chaplains (legerdominees) had accompanied them on their voyage from Indonesia to the Netherlands. Dutch authorities had asked the Council of Churches to provide spiritual care for these Moluccans. In the case of the Catholics they were usually provided for by the diocese in which their camp was located (Smeets and Steijlen 2006: 100ff.).
In 1959 the Dutch government decided to relocate the Moluccans to regular quarters in various cities spread over the Netherlands, thinking that it was likely that their stay in the Netherlands would be longer than foreseen.\textsuperscript{199} The idea was that the communal structures would be maintained by relocating specific groups to special neighbourhoods, a wish which was also articulated by most of the families themselves. The Muslim Moluccan families mainly moved to Waalwijk in 1964 and to Ridderkerk in 1966. One aspect of the negotiations with the Moluccans was that they would only move to the new quarters if church buildings and community spaces would be made available. The regulations for the construction of these Moluccan neighbourhoods stipulated that communities of more than 30 families were entitled to a house of worship that would be built at the costs of the Dutch state. The Muslim communities in Ridderkerk and Waalwijk only passed the “30 families threshold” in the 1970s. The imam of the Muslim community in Ridderkerk wrote a letter to the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM) in 1976 with the request for a newly built mosque, and in 1978 the community in Waalwijk also began negotiations with the Ministry to be given a new mosque (Roose 2006: 18ff.). The request for a new, state-funded mosque was only made after the Church Building Subsidy Act had been rescinded in 1975, and it came in a period when negotiations were going on concerning the ending of financial relations between churches and the state in view of the revision of the constitution in 1983 (see chapter 2).

These developments did not get in the way of the earlier agreement made with the Moluccan communities promising them that houses of worship would be built in the new neighbourhoods. Maintaining this agreement was not only a result of the idea of a “debt of honour”, but also of the fact that hostage takings by young Moluccans in the 1970s had created a political climate in which most political parties supported the establishment of facilities that could appease the Moluccan communities in the Netherlands (Hampsink 1991: 18-20). Thus it was decided that the Ministry of CRM (that became the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture (\textit{Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur}) (WVC) in 1982) would make a reservation of 12.6 million guilders that would be used for a Maintenance Fund for Moluccan Churches, and that also served to finance the building of the two mosques.

Two mosques were built for the Moluccan Muslims communities at the costs of the Dutch state, one in Ridderkerk that opened in 1984 and one in Waalwijk that opened in 1990.\textsuperscript{200} The mosque in Ridderkerk was built by the \textit{Rijksgebouwendienst} Zuid-Holland and Zeeland and financed with a public subvention of 1,800,000 guilders for the building costs and with 330,000 guilders for the maintenance costs. The new mosque in Waalwijk, that was also built and financed by the Dutch state, was opened by Minister d’Ancona in 1990. At this occasion she said:

\begin{quote}
… the relations between the state and the Moluccan Muslim community in the Netherlands, in the religious domain, have now been normalized (…) You now have the space to practice your religion on this spot. But also in a metaphorical way, you now have the space, independent from anyone and under your own responsibility, to give this mosque the particular
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{199} This decision followed the report \textit{Ambonese in the Netherlands} (1959) written by the commission Verwey-Jonker (Smeets and Steijlen 2006: 156).

\textsuperscript{200} See Roose 2006 for a detailed discussion on the architecture and negotiations around these two mosques.
place in your community and Dutch society that you wish it to have (cited and translated in Roose 2006: 43-44).

The opening of the second newly built Moluccan mosque was also the execution of a “debtor of honour”. In that sense it was also a colonial legacy that continued to be at work 40 years after the independence of Indonesia. It was paradoxical that this colonial institutional logic could help produce a policy response – the Dutch financing the building of a mosque – that was in contradiction with the new regulations that no longer allowed the direct financing of religious buildings.201 It was even more paradoxical because at the time, in the late 1980s, the government was turning down requests of other Muslim minority groups for financial support for the building and refurbishment of mosques.

### 4.5. Conclusion

It is possible to characterise the Dutch approach to Islam in the East Indies in light of two broader strategies of government. On the one hand, there was a strategy of abstinence from an all too direct regulation of Islamic practice, education or issues of religious authority. When they developed a more articulate view on Islam in the closing decade of the 19th century, the Dutch tried to follow the advices of Snouck Hurgronje, in reality more a “philosophy” than a set of policy guidelines, and sought to steer the development of Islam without taking its regulation in their own hands. The influence of “fanatical” Islam could be opposed by obstructing attempts of Islam to enter the political sphere, by preventing reformist movements to reach some parts of the archipelago, by fighting rebellious Muslim leaders and by preventing individual Muslims from coming into contact with “fanatical” ideas via the pilgrimage and contacts with other Muslims outside the East Indies. In addition, the system of indirect rule was based upon the co-optation of members of the indigenous aristocracy, not religious authorities and Muslim leaders. On the other hand, there was a strategy of shielding and protecting indigenous cultures and adat communities from outside influences. Islam in the East Indies, and especially on Java, was perceived as a moderate brand of Islam precisely because of its syncretic nature. Protecting this syncretic nature of local Islam seemed a good way of stopping the spread of “fanaticism”, but it could also be seen as a way of protecting indigenous culture from foreign influences, notably form the Arab subcontinent, that risked destruction of its internal complexity and unique composition. This strategy gained more legitimacy in the early parts of the 20th century with the growing prestige of adat-scholars.

Another question is whether the colonial government of Islam was shaped by the Dutch church-state regime and notably by foundational doctrines underlying pillarisation such as “parallelism” and “sovereignty in one’s own set”. The idea of government neutrality, the need for the state to refrain from direct interference in religious matter did play a role in colonial

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201 In a report addressed to the Queen the Minister of WVC argued that the regulation would create no precedent given the unique position of the Moluccan communities (Hampsink 1992: 19).

religious policies and lip-service was also paid to the principle of even-handedness. However, in the East Indies the Dutch church-state traditions were being mixed with colonial ideology and they were being greatly deformed in the process. In the Netherlands denominational political parties functioned as the “roof” over a pillarized society, but in the East Indies the political organisation of Islam was seen as a sign of religious fanaticism. Christian schools and missionaries received far more financial support than Muslim schools, and more money was spent on building churches than on renovating or constructing mosques. Colonial government was not based on genuine equal respect for various denominations but on the idea that Dutch and Christian culture were superior.

When the East Indies “came” to the Netherlands – in the form of peoples, stories or objects – Islam was virtually absent. The need to accommodate Islamic practice in the Netherlands did not present itself in the colonial era. Also at the colonial exhibitions it seemed as if the Dutch aimed to downplay the significance of Islam in Indonesian society and culture. The Dutch contributions to the exhibitions were first and foremost to illustrate the success of their ability in protecting, maintaining and orchestrating cultural differences.

In many respects the East Indies and Islam were much more distant from the Netherlands than the African colonies were from France. Geographically, of course, but also with respect to the system of rule and administration and because of the comparatively small numbers of colonial subjects who travelled to Europe. Because of this there were hardly any reasons or mechanisms to diffuse accommodation policies with regard to Islam from the East Indies to Europe. The fact that, paradoxically, the Dutch state became involved in the creation of mosques for post-colonial Muslim immigrants from the Moluccas was in large part due to the particular history of this group of post-colonial immigrants. Whether the colonial regime and its accommodation policies left significant institutional and policy legacies for subsequent strategies of government of Islam will be explored later on.
5.1. Introduction

When speaking of labour migrants in France the terms typically employed are “foreign workers” (travailleurs étrangers) or “immigrant workers” (travailleurs immigrés). Those terms however, do not take notice of the different regimes of incorporation of immigrant ethnic minorities and the different accommodation strategies for different categories of labour immigrants such as “colonial workers”, “seasonal workers” and “guest workers”. In chapter 1 I characterised a guest worker regime as a distinctive regime of incorporation of immigrant ethnic minorities. Historically it developed in Western Europe when companies and governments created special recruitment schemes to provide industries and agriculture with a foreign workforce. This kind of regime was first set up in interwar France to recruit European workers and provide for specific labour shortages. It was set up for a second time in the post World War II period.

In the interwar period the institutional arrangements to incorporate European guest workers existed in parallel with the arrangements developed for North-African colonial workers. That situation was reproduced in the period after World War II and continued to exist until the independence of Algeria in 1962.\(^\text{202}\) Only from then onwards did Algerian workers come to be subject-positioned as guest workers and no longer as colonial workers. The historical development of these regimes of incorporation also created immense opportunities for the diffusion of representations, institutional arrangements and governing strategies from colonial to guest workers regimes. In the 1960s and 1970s the issue of Muslim religious needs and the creation of prayer spaces would present itself in France primarily within the specific institutional arrangements to accommodate North and West African migrant workers. The ways the French sought to develop public policy responses will be explored in this chapter.

5.2. Migrant workers in France and the emergence of a guest workers regime

Migrant labour had become a common phenomenon in 19th century France. Most migrant workers were either frontaliers – young men from Italy, Spain, Belgium and Germany, who crossed the borders to work temporarily in French industries, construction, mining or agriculture – or seasonal workers, usually peasants from poor regions in Europe or North Africa. A temporary stay in France allowed migrant workers to bring back much needed external resources to their families. In the late 19th and early 20th century an increasing number of migrant workers –especially those

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\(^\text{202}\) I take 1962 as a limit because I will focus in particular on the accommodation of North African immigrants. In the case of the Comoro Islands, for example, colonial rule lasted until 1975.
from Italy, Belgium and Poland – began bringing their families to France. Employers usually welcomed family migration, fearing that single male foreign workers were prone to indiscipline, alcoholism and rapid turnover. Many of the Italian and Spanish workers settled permanently in France and formed families. They also became increasingly organised and unionised, and therefore had more opportunities to ask for higher wages and protest against bad working conditions. In the first decade of the 20th century confrontations with European foreign workers led French industries to also turn to the North African colonies to recruit workers (MacMaster 1997: 80).

Around World War I, French authorities became more actively involved in the recruitment of workers from the colonies and protectorates. Unregulated immigration continued in the 1920s. During the First World War the French had relied massively on colonial workers, but now they aimed at recruiting Europeans. The workers would be selected based on their professional skills and on their “ethnic orientation”, which would facilitate assimilation into French society. Georges Mauco, an important policy advisor, argued that the assimilation of Asians and Africans was impossible, and “physically and morally undesirable” (Mauco cited in Weil 2004: 38, my translation, M.M.). A more fully developed guest workers regime was set up between 1930 and 1939. It included the development of a recruitment program implemented jointly by the French government and private industry. It also entailed public policy measures such as the development of institutions to accommodate workers during their stay abroad (housing, medical care, nourishment) and the creation of opportunities for guest workers to maintain their culture. Guest workers regimes developed around the idea of differential exclusion, meaning that foreign workers would only be temporarily a part of society as economic subjects, but without being a part of society socially, culturally or politically.

One institutional arrangement to house guest workers was the “workers village” and “garden cities”, which had been experimented with in France and in the colonies in the late 19th century. With regard to guest workers an additional advantage was that this type of isolated housing could help them maintain their linguistic, cultural, religious and social practices during their temporary stay in France. In the 1930s Polish workers and their families in the Pas-de-Calais region and in the north of France had been accommodated in company housing and villages, where they could benefit from their own schools and clubs and where spiritual care and religious ceremonies were provided by Polish Catholic priests (MacMaster 1997: 85). In the case of European workers, the French believed that a strong sense of collective ethnic identity and ethnic organisations was helpful in view of the future process of re-integration when workers returned to Poland, Spain, Yugoslavia or Italy (Ireland 1994).

Another possibility for the European immigrant workers was to settle in France and gradually assimilate into French society. Immigrants who would choose this option would primarily have to rely on their own social networks. In Marseilles many of the Italian and Corsican immigrants who decided to stay found lodging in the poorer and more run-down areas of the city, such as the Le Panier (The Basket) a neighbourhood of small curving streets on the hill across from the Vieux Port. Those who had settled would help newly arriving migrants to find a job and a place to live and this kind of assistance was usually provided by the use of family and kinship relations. In this way the social structure of villages in Italy or Corsica was being reproduced.

203. See chapter 3.
in Marseilles. The ethnic community infrastructure was further developed around the many Catholic village parishes that existed in Marseilles. In the 1920s Corsican and Armenian migrants established several ethnic organisations around local parishes – the so-called “Church Bell associations” (associations de cloche), kinds of social clubs. The crucial role of religious institutions in the life of ethnic immigrant communities in the early decades of the 20th century resembled that of the Jewish immigrants in the city who had built a central synagogue in the centre of Marseilles between 1862 and 1863. A narrative on immigration was woven into the “imagined past” of Marseilles, according to which migrants had managed to overcome their hardship and difficulties by setting up their own associations and religious institutions and by building a central church. A confirmation of that pattern was the building of an Apostolic church by the Armenian Christian community on the Avenue du Prado between 1928 and 1933. The image of self-supporting ethnic communities and a flourishing religious life also served as a counterweight to the challenge of the dominant view of Marseilles as merely a city of immigrants, villains and networks of patronage.205

It is important to recall how different the situation was with the colonial immigrant workers who lived in France and in Marseilles in the same period. The North African workers were not particularly welcome and other migrant workers saw them as competitors, but also as strike breakers.206 North Africans were also perceived as more culturally different because of their skin colour but also because of their Muslim religion. French colonial officials and military officers in North Africa repeatedly warned their colleagues in France to keep a close eye on the workers because there was a great risk of intemperance when they “escaped from the Muslim environment”.207 Even when similar types of institutions existed to accommodate colonial and European workers they often functioned in radically different ways. The temporary barracks camps catered to all kind of refugees and labour migrants, but in the case of the Algerians these institutions were administered by an organisation that had been especially created in 1924 to provide assistance to the Algerian population and subject them to disciplinary controls (the Service de Surveillance, Protection, et Assistance des Indigènes Nord-Africains) (SAINA). Another major difference concerned the control of migration to and from France. The regulation of immigration of colonial workers from Algeria to France was increasingly strict and was carried out by specialised institutions such as the Service de l’Organisation des Travailleurs Coloniaux (SOTC) and the SAINA. Institutional arrangements for surveillance, control and assistance of North African immigrants were further developed in the 1930s (Le Pautremat 2003: 302ff.; Rosenberg 2006). Another difference was that European immigrants could eventually decide to settle and be absorbed into French society, whereas the North African workers were

205. In the 1930s French journalistic, literary or cinema-graphic discourse –mostly produced in Paris- portrayed Marseilles as an obscure and corrupt city inhabited by immigrants, Italian criminals, revolutionaries, and sailors. Illustrative was the movie “Justin de Marseilles” of 1934 in which the criminals were Italians and the murderer was an African (Attard-Maraninchi and Temine 1990: 84). In 1939 Marseilles was placed under tutelage of the national government (Jankowski 1989).

206. This occasionally led to brawls between Italians and Algerians in Marseilles in the first years of the 20th century (Lopez and Temine 1990: 154-155).

207. The resident general in Tunis, Gabriel Alapetite, for example recommended in 1915 that French employers strictly survey North African workers because of the risk of “intemperance” when they “escaped from the influence of the Muslim environment” (cited in Le Pautremat 2003: 283).
kept segregated from mainstream French society. French authorities were particularly apprehensive of the idea of French women marrying Muslim men (Le Pautremat 2003: 287). French authorities preferred Kabyle seasonal workers to rotate between Algeria and France, thinking this would enable them to remain firmly rooted in Kabyle culture and therefore to more easily re-adapt upon the return to Algeria. Finally, the Algerian migrants also lacked the social, legal and political power to organise and protest against their treatment, and to create institutions or organisations and community infrastructures of their own. North Africans remained a separate category, of mostly single men whose lot was largely in the hands of French authorities.

5.2.1. The post-World War II period

France once more developed institutional arrangements for the recruitment and incorporation of guest workers between the 1950s and 1973. A directive (ordonnance) of November 2 1945 established a legal framework for immigration and the regulation of foreigners in France which would continue to function until 1975. A new National Immigration Office (Office national d’immigration) (ONI) was created that obtained the monopoly of recruiting foreign workers and their families, and of receiving them in France. The post-war Monnet Plan for economic recovery issued in 1947 had proposed a future recruitment of no less than 200,000 Algerians (MacMaster 1997: 185). However, the new government preferred to stimulate the immigration of European families, notably from Poland and Italy (Weil 2004: 82ff.). Whereas French authorities had been relatively successful in creating housing and facilities for guest workers before the war, they did not immediately undertake the infrastructural adjustments that were needed to cope with the rapid increase of immigrant workers in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Because of the lack of adequate housing, many newcomers ended up living in shantytowns (bidonvilles) and in concentrated areas with dense immigrant populations. In Marseilles, for example, a hostel for migrant workers was established in 1953. But because the construction of public housing could not keep up with the speed with which newcomers arrived, many migrant families eventually found accommodation in shantytowns, which would continue to exist until the 1970s. This largely uncontrolled process of settling immigrants led to a concentration of ethnic groups that in turn developed a strong sense of collective identity. The government was supportive of attempts of guest workers to retain their cultural identity and in the 1950 it set up Spanish Houses (Casas de España) in major French centres of Spanish settlement (Ireland 1994: 39ff.).

After the war, the government had wanted to put a curb on immigration from North Africa. However, the opportunities to effectively stop this immigration had been reduced, notably

208. The ordonnance of 1945 also facilitated the regulation and surveillance of migrant workers in France on the basis of their legal status, by linking the carte d’identité, the titre de séjour and the titre de travail. From now on migrants in France needed a resident permit (titre de séjour) which was delivered by the Ministry of Interior, and a working permit (titre de travail) which was delivered by the Ministry of Labour. A dossier de séjour was made for every migrant and the main criterion for deciding on the legal status of migrants, on the renewal of their working and residence permits and the possibility to obtain French nationality, became the duration of stay (durée de séjour) in France (Spire 2005: 30).

because the constitution of the newly founded Fourth Republic had introduced the “citizenship
of the French Union” (citoyenneté de l’Union française). Since 1947 the native Algerians or
Muslim French (Français musulmans)\textsuperscript{210} had, at least formally, the same citizenship status as
French citizens (Spire 2005: 199). Growing numbers of migrants from Algeria arrived who were
unskilled and illiterate peasants who had no previous experience of life and work in France.
Officials feared that there was a risk of Algerians in France becoming uprooted and losing
their cultural, social and moral sense of orientation. Official studies on the situation of Algerian
immigrants in France suggested that the best way to prevent Algerian workers from becom-
ing uprooted was by preserving the traditional “tribal” structures during their stay abroad.\textsuperscript{211}
Support for Islamic institutions was advocated as a way of enabling Algerians to maintain their
culture (MacMaster 1997: 188). New organisations and institutions were introduced to exercise
special control on Algerian immigrants in France. In 1945 the special North African brigades
of the Préfecture de Police had been dismantled, but in practice the officers who spoke Berber
and Arab and who were seen as experts in “native management” (encadrement) continued to be
charged with the surveillance of Algerians (Spire 2005: 195ff.).

In 1956 the free circulation of Algerians to and from France was ended because of the
Algerian War.\textsuperscript{212} The development of uncontrolled enclaves of Algerian workers in shantytowns
was seen as threatening. In the context of the war, French authorities wanted to be able to control
the Algerian population in order to prevent the squatter camps becoming bastions of the National
Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale) (FLN). Algerians in France were accommod-
dated in camps and foyers, where social assistance was once again combined with strict policing
and surveillance (Spire 2005: 200ff.). In this context, a semi-public property management or-
organisation was set up in 1956. It was responsible for worker housing and was created to finance,
build and equip foyers (hostels or homes) for Algerian migrant workers. It was called Société
nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs algériens (SONACOTRAL). The
company initially only served to manage housing of Algerians and only after 1962 other foreign
workers could also be housed in its hostels and its name changed to SONACOTRA.\textsuperscript{213}

When the Evian Accords were signed between representatives of the French Republic and
the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic in March 1962 there were about 350,000

\textsuperscript{210} Please note that the term Français musulmans here refers to native Algerians, and not to the so-called Français
musulmans rapatriés or the harkis.

\textsuperscript{211} Several studies were commission on Algerian immigrants in France between 1945 and 1955, including J.J.Rager
Les Musulmans Algériens en France et dans les Pays Islamiquest (1950) and L’Emigration en France des
Musulmans d’Algérie (1956); and R.Montagne L’émigration nord-africaine en France : son caractère familial

\textsuperscript{212} In 1958 Maurice Papon became préfet de police in Paris. This former colonial administrator, who under the
Vichy regime had been responsible for the deportation of French Jews, was to oversee the establishment of
the administrative institutions that were to survey and police Algerians in France, and that eventually became
responsible for the increasingly violent repression of Algerian nationalists. Maurice Papon also ordered the
violent repression by the Paris police of a peaceful demonstration of Algerians in Paris on October 17 1961.
The French police murdered about 200 Algerian civilians that day, many of whom were dumped in the Seine
(MacMaster 1997: 199ff.). See also “17 octobre 1961: les enjeux cachés d’une manifestation” in Le Monde

Algerians living in France (MacMaster 1997: 203; Shepard 2006). The independence of Algeria coincided with the beginning of a period of expansion of the French economy and soon labour shortages began to re-emerge. French authorities again were reluctant to see Algerian migrant workers meet the labour demand and tried to “repatriate” Algerian workers who were suspected of nationalist sympathies. Whereas the French government tried to stem immigration from Algeria, labour immigration from Portugal was encouraged. In 1963 labour recruitment agreements were also signed with Tunisia and Morocco and in 1965 with Yugoslavia and Turkey (Weil 2004: 89-90). But immigration from Algeria would rebound in the 1960s. The new Algerian government soon realised that it depended on France for economic and technical assistance, as well as on the revenues that Algerian emigrant workers in France could send back to their families (MacMaster 1997: 202). The French government established and maintained diplomatic ties with its former North African colony and French industries began to recruit Algerian workers anew.

5.3. Native management (encadrement) and the reproduction of colonial institutional arrangements: the foyers

For generations Africans had been immigrant workers in France, but in the 1960s and 1970s they arrived no longer as “colonial subjects” but as guest workers. However, for North African and West African immigrants the guest workers regime was by and large a continuation of the institutional arrangements that had existed during the colonial period. One of the key factors thereby was that, despite the fact that Algeria became independent, labour migration from Algeria to France continued. Therefore there was no pause that (counterfactually) might have led to a more profound change of perceptions and institutional arrangements for the accommodation of Algerians in France. But there were also specific mechanisms of cultural and institutional diffusion that were directly related to the ways French authorities sought to accommodate North African immigration after 1962, and which explain the continuation of colonial arrangements. In the first place, there was the continued importance of anti-Algerian racism, which was fuelled by the massive return of pieds noirs to France. In the second place, many institutions to accommodate North African workers were already in place and continued to function as they had in the past. The foundational ideas, values and routines that these institutions embodied were thereby being reproduced. This was the case of institutions such as the hostels, immigration services and the police. In the third place, the handling of immigration and the accommodation of North African immigrants in France since the 1960s was in a significant part carried out by people who had been formerly employed in the administration and services of colonial rule. One occupation for which these veterans were seen as extremely good candidates was to become directors of hostels for immigrant workers, because

214. In the early 1960s nearly all of the remaining one million European settlers left Algeria for France. About 80,000 Algerians who had worked in the French colonial administration or who had fought in the French army (the harkis) also came to France, escaping persecution in the newly created Algerian state. The Evian Accords made it possible for Algerians to demand French citizenship until 1967. See chapter 3.

215. For an overview see Stora 1992; and MacMaster 1997.

216 For an overview see in particular Noiriel 1988; and Hargreaves 1995.
they were used to having foreigners under their command (Ginésy-Galano 1984: 128). In fact, the foyers functioned as one of the crucial mechanisms of diffusion of institutional repertoires acting as a bridge between colonial and guest workers regimes of incorporation in France. This would have important consequences for North African immigrants.

In the 1960s the number of foyers had grown rapidly and by 1975 there were 403 foyers-hôtels in France, which were housing more than 100,000 migrant workers. People who lived in a hostel were called “residents” (résidents) and not “tenants” (locataires). The residents usually had a small room for themselves and they could use a number of common spaces such as kitchens, dining rooms and sanitary facilities. They were subjected to a strict discipline, which was based on an internal regulation (règlement intérieur). These regulations stipulated, for instance, that the residents had to pass a medical exam every six months, they could not receive female visitors, they were not allowed to hold political meetings or distribute pamphlets, and the director of the hostel was entitled to enter the rooms at any moment (Ginésy-Galano 1984: 114ff.). In 1975, 144 out of 151 hostel directors working for the SONACOTRA were army veterans, and 141 of them had worked in North Africa.

Another continuity in the ways North Africans were being accommodated in France in the post-colonial period was the supportive attitude of French authorities and employers towards the maintenance of cultural identity. There was however, a major difference. In the colonial period the French officials in Algeria, the colons and self-styled experts on “indigenous culture” had been among those who proclaimed to one and all that colonial workers should be enabled to maintain their identity and culture while in France. In the post-colonial situation, a new advocate of such a policy approach had been found in the form of the governments of the newly founded postcolonial states. Countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria needed the economic revenues migrant workers in Western Europe could provide. They encouraged their compatriots in France to retain their cultural identity and nationality, also fearing that Western Europe might become home to all kinds of political and religious oppositional movements that were being repressed by the authoritarian regimes at home. In 1962 the Algerian government established the Fraternal Association of Algerians in Europe (Amicale des Algériens en Europe) (AAE). The Amicales explicitly “strove to nurture national identity and to prevent the assimilation and acculturation of Algerians into French society” (Ireland 1994: 38). That strategy meanwhile did not conflict with the idea of French authorities who also thought it would be best for guest workers not to assimilate into French society.

It was in this particular political and institutional context that the issue of Muslim religious needs presented itself anew in France. For some of the North and West African guest workers religion and religious practice became a source of hope, consolation and serenity during a stay in France that was characterised by hard work in poor conditions, poverty, solitude and discrimination. Prayer rooms represented specific meanings for migrant workers and in the hostels they often became key sites for migrant workers to appropriate a demarcated cultural and religious sphere. Prayer rooms became “alternate social totalities and subjectivities on the embers of built and dilapidated urban forms” (Silverstein 2004: 78). Based on interviews with residents of foyers in Marseilles conducted in 1985 French researchers concluded: “The territory of the ‘mosque’ is perceived, in principle, as a base that belongs to all Muslims, and as such,

217. See Freeman 1979: 168ff.
it is a symbolic place of safety” (Diop and Michalak 1996: 82). French authorities provided the Muslim residents with some money to celebrate the Islamic new year and the al-Kabir (Diop and Michalak 1996: 81). However, until the mid 1970s there was no detailed policy response or clear idea about ways to accommodate for Muslim religious needs. It was mainly a matter of immigrants themselves creating minimum facilities, sometimes with some help from foyer directors, French caretakers, churches, the Amicales or administrators.218

5.4. Public policies and final efforts to encourage return

Following the oil crises of 1973 and 1974 the French economy entered a period of recession. The social climate for foreign workers had deteriorated. Public opinion was increasingly hostile to immigrants. In Marseilles the xenophobic Comité de défense des Marseillais was created in 1973, a local initiative that was supported by the Front National, which had been founded a year earlier.219 In the autumn of 1973, 11 North Africans were assassinated in the Marseilles region. The Algerian government unilaterally decided to stop emigration to France in September of that year, arguing that because of the racist attacks Algerians were no longer safe in France. The French government ended the immigration of foreign workers in 1974. Since then French policy measures in the domain of immigration developed around the idea of controlling new immigration, stimulating the return of the migrant workers and eventually planning ways of integrating those migrants that would stay in France. The government refused to prolong residence permits, developed plans for a forced return of migrant workers and tried to conclude repatriation agreements with the governments of countries of origin.

In 1976 the Under-Secretary of State for Migrant Workers, Paul Dijoud, came up with the idea that the individual migrant should have the opportunity to “choose his destiny” (choisir son destin). He thought that “for those who prefer to let their stay in France be temporary” it was in the best interest of the French government to “facilitate the maintenance of religious traditions, cultural ties, or the expression in the mother tongue” (in Weil 2004: 127, my translation, M.M.). Special language and culture classes for the children of migrants (Enseignement de langues et cultures d’origine) (ELCO) had been made available in public schools since 1973, and they could prepare the children for a return to the home countries.220 These policy measures that served to help immigrants maintain their cultural identity in view of a return were combined with other measures that were meant to obstruct their further integration in French society. Facilities that could help migrant workers to participate in French society, such as alphabetisation

218. See De Galembert 1993 on the role of the churches in providing prayer spaces and help to Muslims in France and Germany.

219. The extreme right had a large electoral basis in the Bouches-du-Rhône and in Marseilles, partly because of the presence of a large community of army veterans and pieds noirs, who “returned from Algeria conditioned by brutal actions against the civilian population, by the coarse barrack-room ‘humour’ and racism of the platoon and by the values and practices of colonial society” (MacMaster 1997: 212).

courses and French classes, were abolished. In 1977, under the new Under-Secretary of State on Migrant Workers, Lionel Stolèru, the Social Action Funds available for migrant workers (Fonds d’action sociale pour les travailleurs migrants, FAS) were radically reduced (Weil 2004: 148). The measures taken to provide for immigrants social and cultural needs were thus increasingly focussed on facilitating return. Moreover, the simultaneous downscaling of the funds that were available to support and help immigrant workers in France showed that the French government had set out to dismantle the guest workers regime.

5.5. Muslim religious needs and policy responses in the late 1970s

Migrant workers in France in the 1970s not only continued to work in harsh conditions for low wages, but they were now also increasingly confronted with hostility, violence and discrimination. The military discipline that was maintained in the foyers and the fact that directors often discriminated against the North African residents was an important factor leading to the protests of foyer-residents that swept through France between the mid-1970s and early 1980s. In 1975, a nation-wide protest movement developed when tenants refused to pay the rent, and demanded the improvement of their housing, the right to receive visitors and the lowering of the rent (Ginésy-Galano 1984: 188ff.). Another central demand of the residents was to have facilities for Islamic practice, such as prayer rooms and ritually prepared food (Kepel 1991: 132ff.). The protest movements in the hostels were followed in 1982 by protests by North African migrant workers in French industries. Strikes were held in the automobile industry of Renault and Citroën. The strikers eventually succeeded in getting their employers to comply with their demands for prayer rooms, ritually prepared food and special breaks to allow them to accomplish the daily prayers (Kepel 1991: 145-159). The religious needs and concerns that arose in the context of economic institutions – factories and industries – could be dealt with by private employers. In order to find recognition for their religious needs and concerns the Muslim workers who lived in hostels, however, had to address their demands primarily to the public officials who were in control of their accommodations, i.e. the administrators of the foyers. The administrators of the foyers came to think that the possibility of having adequate prayer rooms would be perceived as a significant symbolical gesture by the Muslim residents. It would therefore help to keep social peace at relatively low costs (Kepel 1991: 126). Between 1976 and 1986 80% of all foyers in France were equipped with prayer rooms. This operation was subsidized by the public-private property management organisations that were responsible for workers housing.

Other types of prayer houses, by contrast, were illustrative of changes in the nature of the presence of Muslim populations in France. Much as in other West European countries groups of Muslims had at their own initiative managed to create prayer houses here and there, in disused warehouses, derelict factories, chapels or parish facilities.221 One of the first Islamic houses of prayer in Marseilles was established in 1953 in a small house in the neighbourhood of l’Estaque.

221. Sometimes the churches would help to finance or find spaces. Between 1962 and 1995 the Catholic Church helped to create 20 mosques (De Galembert 1993).
in the north of the city. The total number of Islamic prayer spaces in France increased from about 100 in 1970 to about 274 in 1980. Many of these included prayer spaces created in the so-called Cités HLM or complexes of Low-Cost Social Housing (Habitations à Loyer Modéré, HLM). They foreshadowed that immigrants were settling permanently in France, despite the fact that at the moment of their creation most Muslim immigrants continued to believe their stay in France was temporary.

Many French cities experienced tremendous urban growth since the 1960s as new urban zones were being developed. For migrant families in a precarious position the relocation to a public housing complex signified an improvement, even if they would end up living in the less desirable units. The combination of continued immigration and the rapid development of huge public housing projects would have a tremendous effects upon the social and physical structure of French cities. Patterns of social and physical segregation of immigrants in France were reproduced and created a burdensome legacy for later generations. In the cités-HLM migrant families had access to community centres, libraries, and leisure and sports activities. Confronted with the demands of Muslim residents for a prayer space, the boards of the cités often made a two person apartment or a garage available. These spaces were then renovated by the residents, who would often find some material and financial support from French organisations (Kepel 1991: 168-175). Many of Islamic houses of worship that were created in France in the 1970s were these kind of small and “invisible” places that were entirely absorbed in public housing complexes that functioned like self-contained systems. They were almost exclusively used by Muslim men who performed their prayers with one of their fellows acting as a “working-class imam” (imam ouvrier). Thus, in the 1970s the typical pattern of Islamic prayer spaces in French cities would consist of prayer rooms in foyers and cités-HLM and some storefront mosques in existing premises. In Marseilles most of the 30 prayer spaces created between 1950 and 1985 were located in the foyers, the cités-HLM or in abandoned premises converted for the new function. Speaking of the significance of these spaces of worship in this period and why they were on the whole experienced as adequate the president of one of the larger mosques in Marseilles tried to describe the state of mind of Muslim immigrants: “At the time…to be able to allow the Muslim culture to endure… and their Muslim faith… they wanted to maintain that value, because they are temporary… preserve in order to return there”.

222. For these numbers see Frégosi et al. 2006: 44 and Kepel 1991: 229.

223. The new complexes included high tower apartment buildings, schools, public service facilities, recreational facilities, and commercial centers. The housing projects were targeted to host a socially-diversified population, including French residents seeking more spacious and modern apartments and foreign workers who had settled in France for many years, such as Polish, Italian and Portuguese communities (De Galembert 2005: 1144-1145). By the end of the 1960s in several French cities there were signs of North and West African immigrants settling in the subsidised housing complexes.

224. In Marseilles, for example, the population grew between 1954 and 1975 from 650,000 to 914,000, mainly as a result of immigration. The modernist housing projects destroyed the village-like character of Marseilles that had been so crucial to its social structure at the beginning of the century. Migrant families would gradually find their way to the low cost cités-HLM. In 1975 35,000 Algerians, 2682 Moroccans and 6273 Tunisiens lived in Marseilles (Sayad et al. 1991: 121).

225. [“à l’époque…pour pouvoir perdurer leur culture musulmane…et leur foi musulmane…ils voulaient maintenir cette valeur, parce qu’ils sont provisoires…conserver pour ensuite se retrouver là bas”]. Interview with Mohand Alili, March 22 2002.
In 1976 a report was published with the results of a study on the situation of Islamic prayer houses in 65 départements in France. This same year, the draft policy on a new immigration policy that was mentioned above, spoke of the risk of North African immigrants in France becoming “uprooted”. This was said to result from social and cultural isolation. Many immigrants were living in cities while they originally had come from rural areas and they were also cut off from the spiritual ties that in “Islamic countries play an essential role in the collective and individual equilibrium”. Seen in this light: “Religious practice and being able to have access to a place of worship would help the Maghrebis to recreate in France one of the important moments of their daily life” (cited in Kepel 1991: 141, my translation, M.M.). The earlier mentioned Under-Secretary of State, Dijoud, planned to provide for the religious needs of Muslims by creating a Muslim television broadcast on Sunday mornings, creating possibilities for Muslim spiritual care in hospitals and prisons, encouraging municipalities to create Muslim cemeteries and encouraging company directors to facilitate respect for Muslim religious rules with respect to dietary requirements and prayer. In 1976 he sent out a directive which laid down a program in favour of cultural action for the immigrant population. This program included among its headings “Support for the establishment of houses of worship” (Aide à l’implantation des lieux de culte). In the neighbourhoods where many Muslims lived places of worship were to be put at the disposal of the believers because “traditionally, for the Muslims, the cultural life cannot be separated from the religious duties” (cited in Kepel 1991: 143, my translation, M.M.).

Because Under-Secretary of State Dijoud disappeared from the scene for political reasons, even before the text explaining the New Immigration Policy was published in 1977, the implementation of these ideas was gravely compromised. The idea of developing a nation wide effort to help create prayer houses as part of a “promotion culturelle” was not really executed. It is important to reiterate, however, that French public authorities and semi-public institutions such as the directors of the SONACOTRA and the cités-HLM, did think they should be of help in creating the necessary facilities to enable the immigrant workers to maintain their cultural and religious practices. Local housing authorities and municipalities would on an incidental basis make funds or facilities available, such as the municipality of Mantes-la-Jolie that provided the Muslim community a tent to hold holiday services (De Galembert 2005: 1146). These forms of support were not primarily seen in terms of public authorities financing religion or of public officials responding to Muslim claims for recognition. They were motivated both by the idea that helping immigrants to retain their religion and culture might facilitate their return to the countries of origin, and by the idea that helping Muslims to create and equip elementary religious spaces was not fundamentally different from helping to provide for other socio-cultural needs.

226. The report distinguished between mosques (31 of which 22 at the planning stage), masjids (52 of which 10 at the planning stage), socio-cultural centres (4 of which 1 at the planning stage) and 5 prayers spaces at the planning stage without further precision (Frégosi et al. 2006: 44, footnote 51).

227. This text had been written by Paul Dijoud, but it was only published in 1977 when he had already been replaced by Lionel Stoléru. The latter would in part implement the policy proposals, but he also opted for a tougher policy aimed at stemming immigration (Kepel 1991: 141).

228. A series of failed measures would lead French officials and politicians to acknowledge that a massive return of the guest workers was unlikely to occur. These included the failed ban on family migration (because of a ruling of the Council of State in 1976), the plans for premium on return (rejected in 1977), and the failure to conclude an agreement with the Algerian government on a massive repatriation scheme involving some 500,000 immigrant workers in 1978 (Weil 2004: 159).
5.6. Escaping from *encadrement*: Islam and the formation of ethnic communities

In the course of the 1970s the increased importance of family-based immigration had begun to affect social, cultural and religious needs of immigrants. Muslim parents also wanted to be able to transmit religious values and knowledge to their children in the perspective of a more long-term stay. Houses of prayer began to cater to other activities, such as religious instructions and language classes, and they played a role in expediting the formation of communities. The informal associations that administrated houses of worship became more established and began to function as ethnic organisations. Some associations could now assume the ownership of houses of worship, sometimes with financial funds from OPEC countries (Kepel 1991).

However, it was not only the Muslim immigrants who began to see their presence in France in a new light. This also happened among native French populations and public authorities. French public opinion was on the whole anxious about the settlement of immigrants in France and in particular they were concerned about the possibilities of North and Black African immigrants to “adapt to French life” (cf. Freeman 1979: 269ff.). Xenophobia and the existence of extreme right organisations were not new, but what was new was that Islam became more of an issue in xenophobic rhetoric. The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 led, much as in the rest of Europe, to an increased public concern about the activities of Muslim fundamentalists.

In Marseilles a larger mosque had been established in 1977 in a former post office, located between the Rue Bon Pasteur and the Rue Camille Pelatan near the *Porte d’Aix* in the centre of the city. In the 1980s it would colloquially become known as the Grand Mosque of Marseilles. The Algerian owners of the mosque, who ran a restaurant located next to it in Rue Bon Pasteur, approached a municipal official, Pierre Rastoin, in the beginning of 1980s to discuss plans to enlarge the mosque. The house of worship was too small to cater to the numerous worshippers during Friday prayer and at that occasion many worshippers were forced to pray in the street. The façade of the building was still that of the original 18th century post office, but the members of the Mosque Committee had asked a local architect to make sketches for a new façade which would give the mosque a more “Islamic appearance”.

The chairman of the Mosque Committee, Hadj Alili, explained his ideas about the renovation of the mosque in an interview, which was conducted some years later by a French researcher:

[Marseilles] wants to be the revolving door, the window, the Gateway to the Orient … I don’t know how, with what, if it is not with the elements that it holds in its hands. Even today there is a South Mediterranean colloquium which brings together all the countries of the Maghreb. Ambassadors and officials meet at the Chamber of Commerce, and I know that the majority of them are Muslims. And God knows that, at the present day, one cannot

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229. In 1981 the 1901 Law on Civil Associations was modified creating possibilities for non-nationals to set up civil associations.

230. The post office had been built in the 18th century and its façade was classified as a monument. This was also important for the reaction of the municipality to the plans of the mosque association to renovate the exterior of the building (Mazzella 1996).
show them a single place (…) which is worthy of the city, [a city] that wants to be the open-
ing, the revolving door of the Mediterranean… 231

The first time possibilities of symbolically marking the presence of Islam in Marseilles were being discussed in the post-colonial period the building of a mosque was immediately linked to the familiar tropes of the colonial period. Marseilles was close to North Africa, it was a Mediterranean city and it should be able to offer Muslim visitors an appropriate place to worship. However, in Marseilles of the 1980s the creation of a more prominent mosque had different significances as well. According the municipal official it was unwise to create a stir by allowing for a larger mosque in the city centre, because of the rise of the Front National and in the context of international terrorism aimed at French policy in the Middle East (Rastoin 1985: 69). 232 When the Mayor of Marseilles, Gaston Defferre, was informed of the idea of making the mosque in Rue Pasteur more prominent and visible, he reportedly said to the chairman of the Mosque Committee: “Make a place… but don’t make it there… it is the entrance of the high way… I don’t want the tourists who come to Marseilles to see the Arabs leaving the mosque”. 233

5.7. Conclusion

Temporary foreign workers in France were mostly housed in impermanent and separate accommodations, allowing them to remain at a distance from mainstream French society, socially, physically and culturally. They were encouraged to maintain their own social, cultural, linguistic and religious practices to facilitate their reintegration in the society of origin on the day of return. A guest workers regime was developed in France when the colonial empire still existed. This allowed colonial representations and regulatory practices to feed into newly emerging arrangements for labour migrants. It also institutionalised a differentiated and unequal treatment of European and colonial workers. Just like the Europeans, colonial workers were segregated from mainstream French society and they were also encouraged to maintain their culture in view of their re-insertion into the “colonial order”. However, they were not allowed to bring their families and to settle in France. French authorities did not like seeing French women marry Muslim men. For the Algerian colonial workers special foyers were built where they were subject to strict discipline and surveillance, the latter becoming more intense during the Algerian

231. [“Elle [Marseille] se veut la plaque tournante, la fenêtre, la Porte de l’Orient, je ne sais pas comment, avec quoi, si ce n’est pas avec des éléments qu’elle a en main. D’ailleurs pas plus tard qu’hier y a un colloque sud-méditerranéen qui rassemble tous les pays du Maghreb au niveau des ambassadeurs et des personnalités qui se réunissent à la chambre de commerce, et que je sache la majorité sont musulmans et Dieu sait, qu’hier, on ne peut leur montrer un lieu qui nous dit de la ville, voyez, je ne parle pas des autres, mais digne de la ville qui se veut être l’ouverture, la plaque tournante de la Méditerranée”] (cited in Mazzella 1996: 141).


233. According to Mohand Alili, the son of Hadj, the Mayor at the time, Gaston Defferre, had said: [“Faites un lieu… mais ne le fait pas là bas… c’est l’entrée de l’autoroute… je ne veux pas que les touristes venant à Marseille voient les Arabes sortir de la mosquée”]. Interview with Mohand Alili March 22 2002.
war. Since the 1960s North African workers no longer came from the French colonies or protectorates but as citizens of North African states. Nevertheless they, and especially Algerians, experienced their treatment as a continuation of a defunct colonial status. The vast majority of foyer directors were army veterans who had worked in North Africa and who were seen as experts in “native management”.

Muslims were in a more disadvantaged position to perform religious practices and duties or to maintain cultural practices, compared to the Polish, Italian and Portuguese workers. Residents created prayer rooms in the foyers and in barracks camps and factories at their own initiative and these spaces were often experienced as safe havens in an otherwise inhospitable social and physical environment. Between the 1950s and the early 1970s there existed no coordinated public policy with regard to the religious needs of Muslim guest workers. Rather paradoxically, however, the French guest workers regime did produce more elaborate public policy responses to provide for the religious needs of Muslim guest workers when the French government was doing its utmost to encourage a large scale return of migrant workers to their countries of origin. One explanation for the timing of these policy response was that it was a reaction to social protests of immigrants who had managed to bring the issue to the attention of their employers, the boards of the foyer owning companies and French authorities. Following a movement of strikes of the residents the SONACOTRA company and other property management organisations responsible for worker housing set out to equip nearly all foyers in France with prayer rooms between 1976 and 1985. A second explanation can be found when one takes into consideration the motivations underlying this support. In the first place, French authorities and officials (foyer directors, boards of cités-HLM, social service organisations) framed their support for the religious needs of immigrants in a manner not fundamentally different from other forms of social and cultural support for a poor and powerless population. It was therefore not primarily seen as a way of “subsidizing religion”. Second, there was a (brief) period in which progressive ideas about the “promotion culturelle” of immigrant workers was seen as a contribution to their human flourishing. Third, the willingness of French authorities to contribute to creating possibilities for immigrants to retain their culture and religion was an attempt to help sustain the possibility of a successful return of immigrants and their families to the country of origin. Ironically public funds and policy efforts that were dedicated to the creation of Islamic prayer rooms were motivated by ideas associated with a guest workers regime, but were only being advocated and (in part) implemented when the institutional arrangements of that regime were being dismantled. By the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s the number of small places of worship that were created in discarded factories, former chapels and in the basements of the cités-HLM had grown considerably. Most of these religious spaces remained “invisible” and were part of largely self-contained urban forms where immigrant communities were concentrated, such as the cités. When Muslims wanted to create more permanent, larger or more prominent prayer houses they would often be confronted with lack of interest or outright hostility.
CHAPTER 6

Guest workers and Islam in the Netherlands

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss policy responses to the construction of Islamic prayer facilities in the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s. In the literature on the institutionalisation of Islam this period is usually dealt with in an extremely cursory way. Most authors argue that the presence of Islam in the Netherlands only became a policy issue later on, when Muslim organisations began to articulate demands for recognition of their religious needs in the 1980s.234 It is true that in the 1960s and 1970s the creation of basic facilities for Muslim religious practice and the introduction of subsidy schemes for the creation of Islamic prayer spaces were not hotly debated public issues in the Netherlands. However, in my view, this lack of public discussion and concern was also a result of the specific ways of understanding the presence of Muslims and Islam. More specifically, it was a result of frameworks for dealing with the cultural and religious needs of immigrant workers, and of ways of defining the nature and outer limits of governmental responsibilities with respect to this population.

6.2. Immigrant workers and Islam in the Netherlands

Until the late 19th century there were few immigrant workers in the Netherlands. Some foreigners worked as servants, maids or sailors, and there were also seasonal workers who came to work in agriculture or in infrastructural works such as the construction of dikes, canals and other excavations (Lucassen and Penninx 1997: 49ff). In the early 20th century the mining industry in South Limburg employed German, Polish, Italian and Slovenian workers.

In the 1950s a period of rapid economic expansion began that soon led to structural labour shortages in metal, shipbuilding, mining and textiles industries and in some agricultural sectors. Other European (former) imperial powers, notably France and Great Britain, turned to their colonies and former colonies to fill in some of the labour shortages. This was not the case in the Netherlands. In colonial times the Dutch, unlike the French, had never made use of a labour force of colonial workers. Also in the post-colonial period there was no substantial labour immigration from the former colonies. In the 1960s a number of Surinamese teachers, nurses, skilled workers and administrative personnel migrated to the Netherlands, but this was the proverbial exception that proved the rule.235

Dutch industries began to recruit Italian workers in the 1950s, and later young men from Spain, Portugal, Greece, Yougoslavia, Turkey and Morocco. Between 1960 and 1969 the number of foreign workers in the Netherlands grew from 5,700 to 68,900 (Van Twist 1977: 20). Foreign workers received a temporary residence permit that was delivered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that had to be renewed every year, supposedly allowing the adjustment of immigration to the demands of the labour market (Lucassen and Penninx 1997: 70).

The government argued that the recruitment of foreign workers was done at the initiative of private companies and consequently those companies were held responsible for providing housing, income, medical insurance and other necessary facilities. The Italians who came to work in the mines, were sometimes housed in barrack villages which had been built during the war for forced labourers. North of Amsterdam, Camp Atatürk was set up in 1966 in a former refugee camp, and it housed 400 to 500 Turkish workers who were recruited by NDSM, a shipbuilding company. Similar barrack villages existed in Rotterdam, Almelo, and Enschede. Other migrant workers were housed in private guest houses (kosthuizen). Dutch women would cook at night and came to be known colloquially as “Italian mamas” or “Turkish mothers”. Other foreign workers found lodging in hostels (pensionnen) or in workmen’s houses (gezellenhuizen).

One of the first groups to take an interest in the situation of the foreign workers, besides the employers, were priests and other socially active Christians. Missionaries who had worked in the colonies became involved and tried to put their experiences abroad to use (Van Twist 1977: 100). Priests would organise special Catholic masses and celebrations that were often conducted in the native language of the workers (Tinnemans 1994: 21ff.). One motivation for doing this was the fear that the foreign workers would be tempted by alcoholism and prostitution, and that they were prone to “moral disorientation”. In 1967 Mr. R.Wentholt, a professor of social psychology at the university of Rotterdam, published a book on foreign workers in the Netherlands that became quite influential. He argued that foreign workers wanted to maintain their personal identity which – according to Wentholt – was “culturally determined” (cultureel bepaald). This also implied that migrant workers wished to be left alone, and that wish should be respected by the authorities. The Dutch were called upon to take notice of the difficult living situation of the guest workers and to learn about their culture and understand that the young men should be seen as children. Only “careful guidance” (zorgvuldige begeleiding) could help to avoid failure and human suffering (Rath 1991: 150-153).

These ideas did not develop in a void. Since the creation of the Ministry of Social Assistance (Ministerie van Maatschappelijk Werk) in 1952 government involvement with the well-being of various social groups had increased. Those working in this field tried to build on new insights of sociologists and psychologists. One idea was that the social, intellectual and

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236. Recruitment agreements were signed with the governments of Italy (1960), Spain (1961), Portugal (1964), Turkey (1964) Greece (1967), Morocco (1969) and Yugoslavia (1970) (Van Amersfoort 1982: 184ff.)

237. The involvement of public authorities with guest workers focussed on the signing of recruitment agreements, and on the application of the Aliens Law (Vreemdelingenwet) and a new Law on Working Permits for Aliens (Wet Arbeidsvergunningen Vreemdelingen), which had been issued in 1969 (Schuster 1999: 169-173).


moral qualities of members of the lower classes could be improved via community organisation and the improvement of their social environment (cf. Van der Haar 2007).

In 1965 the policy responsibilities of the former Ministry of Social Assistance were allocated to a new Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM). This Ministry was responsible for the more general societal consequences of the presence of foreign workers, including the coordination of welfare and social work (welzijnswerk) for immigrant groups (Penninx 1979: 147ff.). Thus a close institutional linkage was created between social work and the accommodation of guest workers. In the late 1960s a new department was established within the Ministry of CRM to deal with migrant groups. That policy category included “problematic groups” such as the caravan dwellers and different groups of immigrants: guest workers, Moluccans, Surinamese and Antilleans. For these groups there existed specific “categorical social work” (categoriaal opbouwwerk) (Rath 1991: 160). A “categorical approach” was considered appropriate because each group needed specific social services such as specialised care and guidance. In the case of immigrants social work included tasks such as providing information, contributing to “environment construction” (milieu opbouw), i.e. encouraging the organisation of social, cultural and recreational activities, and establishing relations with the wider Dutch society (Penninx 1979: 148ff.).

The conceptual, policy and institutional framework for the accommodation of guest workers was developed in close relation with social work, a sector that was rapidly expanding. This did not mean, however, that the government now intended to take full responsibility to provide and care for the foreign workers. Preferably this would remain a task of employers and semi-voluntary associations. In the mid 1960s local organisations of support for foreign workers had been further institutionalised into a system of regional Foundations for Foreign Workers (Stichtingen Welzijn Buitenlandse Werknemers). Since 1964 subsidies were made available for these Foundations, which were progressively extended so that by 1975 the government was subsidising all the costs of these associations (Rath 1991: 157). They were the main social instruments to implement policies in the domains of social welfare and culture.

In this particular institutional and ideational context the religious needs of guest workers from Turkey and Morocco came to be an issue. In the 1960s the Muslim immigrant workers who had decided to continue to practice Islam would mostly perform their daily prayers in their own rooms or they would roll out their prayer rug in a discrete corner of the factory. Muslim migrant workers had also created makeshift prayer rooms in factories, dwellings and hostels. When the religious needs of Turkish and North African workers came to be noticed most of the Foundations for Foreign Workers also made a provision for the Muslim Friday Prayer. At the occasion of the Ramadan or the Sacrifice Feast, Dutch volunteers and some of the Muslim workers organised larger gatherings that brought together Muslims from all over the Netherlands.240 Turks and Moroccans were also helped out by Christian supporters, who would sometimes make a church building available on Fridays or during the month of Ramadan.241

There were no Islamic houses of worship in the Netherlands at the time however, with the exception of the small Mobarak Mosque in the Hague. This mosque was primarily used by

Ahmadiyya Muslims. The fact that the only already existing mosque in the Netherlands was not used by the newly arrived groups of Muslims was but a small illustration of the historical fact that the Dutch colonial past did not play a role in these early forms of accommodating the religious needs of guest workers. This may seem puzzling, given that the Netherlands took so much pride in its Islam policy and the perceived wisdom with which Islam had been approached in the East Indies, based on the insights of the renowned Islam expert Snouck Hurgronje.

A number of historical factors have to be taken into account to explain this discontinuity. First, in the Netherlands the guest workers “who had Islam as their religion” did not come from the former Dutch colonies, but from countries such as Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia, which had no previous relationships with Dutch society. Second, there had been a period of almost 20 years between the independence of Indonesia and the arrival of important numbers of guest workers from Muslim countries. This time gap constituted an obstacle for the possible diffusion of representations and institutional arrangements. Moreover, it should be remembered that the post-colonial immigration from Indonesia had hardly led to the formation of Islamic institutions and organisations, mostly because most immigrants had been Christians or secularised people. Third, public and policy discourses on the needs of guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s focussed first on their economic identity as migrant labourer. If issues related to cultural differences played a role at all when talking about the immigrant workforce it was usually in discourses mixing stereotypical observations about differences in language, looks and skin-colour, eating habits, dress codes, culture and religion.

These three historical facts can, when taken together, explain why there were fewer opportunities for the discursive and institutional reproduction of colonial repertoires and arrangements. Counterfactually, diffusion of repertoires would have required a conceptualisation of the cultural differences and specific needs of guest workers from Turkey and Morocco in such a way that a comparison with the situation of the indigenous in the East Indies seemed plausible. Such a conceptualisation could, for example, have focussed on issues such as Islam and on the distinctions between regular Islamic practice, “fanatical Islam” and (Turkish or Moroccan) culture. In the absence of such a conceptualisation, it seemed implausible to argue that there was much to learn from Dutch colonial practice. There were also few opportunities for diffusion via the expertise of officials and bureaucrats who had been employed in the colonial administration. In France many civil servants and army veterans returning from the colonies in the 1960s were employed in specialised institutions such as the hostels for immigrant workers, special police services and the immigration services. The colonial administration in the East Indies, by contrast, had always been relatively small and most of the “repatriates” had already found

242. Guest workers from Turkey and North Africa tended to see the Ahmadiyya movement as a sect (see chapter 4). Moreover, because of differences in ethnic and social background and language there were not many opportunities or incentives for newly arrived guest workers and the mostly Indonesian and Pakistani members of the Mobarak mosque congregation to see if they had common religious needs.

243. As I have shown in chapter 5 the Paris Mosque was also not much used by Muslim guest workers in the Paris region in the 1960s and 1970s. However, this was primarily because of ideological, political and practical reasons, such as the distance immigrants had to travel to reach this mosque in the centre of Paris. In terms of language and ethnicity of the mosque congregation the Paris Mosque could very well have catered to the needs of North African immigrant workers at the time.

244. See chapter 4.
new jobs before the recruitment of guest workers took off in the 1960s. It also mattered that in the Netherlands the accommodation of guest workers was seen as primarily a responsibility of private companies and civil society organisations. In contrast to the French case then, the Dutch colonial past was largely irrelevant in the development of a guest workers regime and in developing institutional arrangements public authorities found their conceptual maps in other domains, notably in the sector of social work.245

6.3. Policy responses to the presence of Islam in the 1970s

In the course of the 1970s the situation of immigrant workers in the Netherlands changed in a number of respects. The immigrant population now included a greater number of families and children.246 More immigrants had found housing in hostels or regular dwellings, mostly located in the older and more run down neighbourhoods of the bigger cities. In 1970 the Dutch government issued a Memorandum on Foreign Workers (Nota buitenlandse werknemers) to respond to demands for a better regulation of labour migration. The starting point for policy was to be that the Netherlands with its dense population was not, and should not become, a country of immigration. The Minister of Social Affairs, Bouke Roolvink (Orthodox Reformed Party, ARP), suggested a rotation system, which would oblige foreign workers to leave the Netherlands after two or three years in order to be replaced by new immigrants. After the first oil crisis the recruitment of foreign workers was stopped altogether. In 1974 a proposal was developed for a “premium on return” of 5,000 guilders to encourage migrant workers to return to their country of origin.

The policy guidelines that were issued in the early 1970s by the national government, and particularly by the Ministry of Social Affairs, still were by and large based on the assumption that the guest workers would en masse return to their countries of origin (Entzinger 1984: 87ff.). In the bigger cities, however, there were clear signs that a process of settlement of immigrants had begun. Consequently municipal governments began to reorient their policy approaches by the early 1970s, seeking to respond to all kinds of social issues that presented themselves in this new situation. These diverging assumptions underlying national and municipal approaches would lead to some tensions, notably in the domain of housing. However, quite surprisingly, in the domain of religion and culture a broad consensus emerged around the need to allow labour immigrants to “retain their culture”, irrespective of whether they would eventually decide to return home or settle in the Netherlands.

In 1971 the Minister of Housing issued a directive that offered municipalities possibilities to build suitable housing for foreign workers. The dwellings for foreign workers would be

245. In a book published in 1995 the Dutch sociologist Jacques van Doorn suggested that Dutch Minorities Policy could learn from the colonial experience and from the Islam policy in the East Indies to respond to new challenges of multiculturalism as a result of immigration from predominantly Muslim countries such as Turkey and Morocco. See Van Doorn 1995: 79ff.

246. In the course of the 1960s more and more Italian and Spanish guest workers sought to bring their families to the Netherlands. Italian and Spanish migrants had the right to reunite with their families after a stay of one year, and Turkish and Moroccan migrants could do so after a stay of two years (Tinnemans 1994: 75).
created in such a way that they could very easily be transformed into a regular house for a Dutch family once the guest workers would have returned (Tinnemans 1994: 111).\textsuperscript{247} A public official in Rotterdam developed an analogous idea in 1972 and suggested in an annex to a “Memorandum concerning the problematic around housing foreign workers in Rotterdam” that foreigners should best be housed in “somewhat remote locations”. As he explained, foreign workers were entitled to a humane existence, but the style of social life in the Netherlands should not “seduce [the foreign worker] into abandoning the original plans to return to his home country” (in Tinnemans 1994: 118, my translation, M.M.). However, no follow up was given to this idea. Municipal policy makers had already begun to base their policy approach upon the idea that the key challenge was to smoothen the progressive incorporation of a new immigrant population in the neighbourhoods.

Employers were only obliged to provide housing for guest workers during the first one or two years of their stay. Therefore immigrants entered the regular housing market relatively soon and in relatively large numbers. Almost in the same period many of the more well off Dutch residents in the larger cities began to move to newly built residential areas. The remaining Dutch residents in those neighbourhoods were usually either very attached to their neighbourhoods or they simply could not afford to leave. Increasingly immigrants came to live in these neighbourhoods, which often led to social tensions. In Rotterdam, for example, landlords would sometimes end the renting contracts of Dutch residents in order to transform dwellings into more profitable hostels for foreign workers. Tensions between hostel owners, immigrants and native Dutch residents came to a head in the so-called “Turk riots” (Turkenrellen), in Rotterdam in the summer of 1972.\textsuperscript{248} Fights between some of the Turkish and Dutch residents and attacks on several hostels lasted a week. The riots were not only illustrative of growing tensions between native Dutch and immigrants, they also showed that an increasing number of migrants and their families was in fact already living in the older neighbourhoods.

Another important issue concerned the cultural, educational and religious needs of immigrant workers and their families. The government had in its 1970s memorandum promised to help provide for migrant workers’ spiritual needs and spiritual welfare (geestelijk welzijn) (Rath et al. 2001: 45). In 1973 a new government of the Left finally took up again the further development of the memorandum and issued a new policy text called the Memorandum in Reply (Memorie van Antwoord) in 1974. The government held to the idea that the Netherlands was “definitely not an immigration country”. Nevertheless, the basic needs of immigrant workers should be provided for (Schuster 1999: 190ff.). At closer look three different motivations and perspectives were underlying the idea that the cultural needs of immigrants should be provided for. First, the national government argued that support for cultural life might help in sustaining the possibilities for guest workers and their family members to successfully re-integrate upon the return to the home country. Second, there was the view, which was particularly popular in

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\item[247.\hspace*{1em}] This directive was at odds with the conclusions of a report on the housing needs of immigrants that had been issued in 1969. That study suggested that many immigrant families were looking for a more permanent accommodation. On the kind of policy responses in the domain of housing that are typical for guest workers regimes see also Alexander 2006.
\item[248.\hspace*{1em}] At the time the total number of legal and illegal hostels in Rotterdam in 1972 was about 750. On the riots in Rotterdam see Blokland Potters 1998: 270-274; Bovenkerk et al. 1985; and Buijs 1998. Brawls between foreign workers and Dutch populations also occurred in other Dutch cities in the 1960s and 1970s.
\end{itemize}
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the sector of social work, that special groups could benefit socially and psychologically from specialised attempts at “community building” (samenlevingsopbouw). When applied and attuned to the particular situation of immigrants this became understood as “building up a cultural milieu” (culturele milieuopbouw) (Van Twist 1977: 101). Third, there was a view that was more emancipatory in its orientation and argued that foreign workers were entitled to find respect, tolerance and support for their cultural needs. Since the late 1960s solidarity movements supporting the foreign workers had begun to demand a more humane treatment of foreign workers, which included more room for immigrants’ cultural identity. These different perspectives could connect around the idea of developing policies and facilities allowing immigrant workers “to retain and develop their cultural identity”.

The catch-phrase “integration with retention of cultural identity” came up in the 1970s and it would become increasingly popular in Dutch Minorities Policy. In the mid-1970s, however, the basic idea was to develop a “dual policy” (tweesporenbeleid) that would simultaneously create opportunities for a successful re-integration of immigrants who decided to return, and to equip those who decided to stay with a strong and positive sense of identity that was seen as a pre-condition for successful integration. In terms of policy this resulted, for example, in additional subsidies for community centres organising cultural activities for Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. In 1974 a program for teaching of community language for Mediterranean children was established that could serve to facilitate the reintegration of children in the society of origin after the supposed return.

6.3.1. Religious needs, immigrant mobilisation and policy responses

In the course of the 1970s more and more groups of Muslims sought to create prayer spaces themselves. In 1974 in Rotterdam, for example, Turkish Muslims created a prayer room in a dwelling and later that year Moroccan Muslims created a prayer house in a garage (Sunier 1996: 85-87). The committees that administered these prayer houses of worship were among the earliest forms of self help organisations of Muslims in the Netherlands. In February 1974, the Turkish Muslim Hasip Turan spoke in the Rotterdam municipal council and requested that a Roman Catholic church, which was to be demolished, be given to the “Muslim community in Rotterdam”. According to Turan, the Muslims had come to the Netherlands to contribute to the Dutch economy and therefore it seemed reasonable that religious facilities should now be created for them (Buijs 1998: 12). In Rotterdam Turkish Muslims organised a protest march

249. This motto was especially important for the policies developed by the Ministry of CRM in the 1970s, where it gradually developed into the concept of “integration with retention of identity” (Entzinger 1984: 88; Penninx 1979: 148).

250. These courses were given during school hours, a practice that continued until the late 1990s. In 1981 the objective of this form of language instruction was being reformulated. It was now no longer presented primarily as a way of preparing children for a return to the countries of origin, but as a way of creating a “positive self-image” that would contribute to the improvement of their social position (Vermeulen and Pennix 2000: 27).

251. Many Muslim immigrant workers from Turkey and Morocco believed it was a task of the state to provide religious facilities. This expectation was, according to Ruud Strijp, in part a result of policies in the countries of origin and also of experiences with French colonial rule (Strijp 1998: 86).
to underline the need for a mosque in the city. In Utrecht the Dutch Muslim convert and spokesman, Abdullawid van Bommel, asked rhetorically in a pamphlet issued in 1973:

Whether it would not be a sign of high spirit if in the Netherlands the relevant bodies, as host to the guest workers (als gastheer van de gastarbeiders), would more seriously take up the issue of religious guidance, exemplified in a material compensation, which would allow this specific group of the population, that generally speaking is performing the most heavy and dirty work, to spiritually reach a better way of life.\[252\]

In Almelo, a middle-size town in the eastern part of the Netherlands, Turkish workers had come up with the idea of building a new mosque. A special Mosque Founding Committee was established in 1972 which brought together Turkish and Dutch workers, employers, a Turkish teacher, the secretary of the Regional Convent of Churches, the wife of the mayor and some other individuals (Hampsink 1992: 31). The committee managed to raise the necessary funds through contribution of Turkish guest workers, private donations and a gift of the employers. There was also a successful application made for a state-subsidy on the basis of the Church Building Subsidy Act of 1962, just before the latter was suspended. The mosque in Almelo would become the only Islamic house of worship to benefit from the Church Building Subsidy Act. The new mosque, a white building with a dome and a small minaret, was designed by a building expert of Nijverdal-Ten Cate on the basis of postcards and an encyclopaedia. The personnel manager spoke of the establishment of an Islamic house of worship in terms of what “we Dutch do when we settle somewhere in a foreign country: ‘building a church’” (Slettenhaar 1977: 321.).

The statements and images surrounding the construction of the mosque in Almelo were illustrative of a growing uncertainty about the meaning of the presence of Islamic institutions. The

\[252\] [“Zou het niet op grootheid van geest wijzen als in Nederland de desbetreffende instanties, als gastheer van de gastarbeiders, de religieuze begeleiding, uitgedrukt in een materiële tegemoetkoming, serieus ter hand namen, waardoor deze bijzondere bevolkingsgroep, die over het algemeen toch het zwaarste en vuilste werk opknapt, geestelijk in een beter klimaat zou komen”] (cited in Theunis 1979: 394).
personnel manager spoke of the mosque as “a symbol of settlement”, but the Turkish guest workers were still living in a separate and impermanent resort outside the city. Employers had contributed financially hoping that the construction of a house of worship might help prevent further strikes among the guest workers. The Dutch caretakers spoke of their involvement in the construction of the mosque in light of “Christian charity”, “compassion” (medelijden) and the will to “help the weak”. The Dutch Minister of Social Affairs, the orthodox protestant Jaap Boersma, who had in 1974 suggested encouraging guest workers to leave the Netherlands by giving them a “premium on return” (vertrekpremie), in January 1975 proudly performed the ceremonial opening of the new and permanent mosque in Almelo. The municipal government was even more outspoken in its desire to show that the mosque should be seen as an important step in welcoming the Turkish immigrants in the city. According to the board of Mayor and aldermen this mosque “belonged in the city centre” and it should be visible, not concealed (Slettenhaar 1977: 321). Another important issue for municipal governments to deal with was to decide whether or not they should make a financial contribution to the creation of Islamic prayer houses. Whereas some municipalities, such as those of Rotterdam, Amsterdam or Tiel incidentally subsidised some of the construction costs of Islamic houses of prayer in the 1970s, others, such as the municipality of Utrecht, refused to do so. These differences among local governments were an extra incentive for the Dutch government to develop a regulation for subsidies for facilities for religious practice.

6.3.2. National policy responses and subsidies for the creation of Islamic prayer spaces

In August 1975, a study on the need for spaces for worship among Muslims in the Netherlands, that had been commissioned in 1974, was published. The report demonstrated that there was a great need for religious spaces among immigrants. The researchers advised that subsidies be made available for local Muslim associations that wanted to establish small houses of worship and that local authorities should stimulate the creation of prayer rooms in hostels. The national government would then focus on the establishment of a “large” mosque in each of the four main cities. The size of the mosque of Almelo – that provided for 200 worshippers – could be taken as a guideline. The researchers suggested consideration of prayer rooms as comparable to other kinds of facilities and provisions for foreign workers, such as the “meeting centres” (ontmoetingsscentra). In this light they suggested the development of a subsidy scheme similar to the existing regulations for subventions for these meeting centres. This came down to the government financing the total costs of the construction or renovation. The researchers put forward several arguments, including:

1) The forced nature of their migration refers to the moral responsibility of the state to create adequate facilities, in this case religious ones.

254. See Behoefstenonderzoek Moslims (Samuels and Gransbergen 1975: 2).
2) For the Muslim Islam occupies an essential place in his life. In the framework of environment-construction (milieu-opbouw) this part of his cultural identity should be respected. They also pointed out that the Muslim were a relatively large group among the immigrant workers and that they were economically weak.

In reaction to the report the government decided to develop a regulation that refused to carry the full weight of the building costs of mosques. Instead the subsidy regulation of the Church Building Subsidy Act was taken as a model, which meant that public subsidies could cover up to 30% of the foundation costs of houses of worship. A regulation was enacted for a period of 5 years (1976-1981), the General Regulation for the Subvention of Prayer Houses (Globale Regeling inzake Subsidiëring Gebedsruimten). The subventions were only made available for “Mediterranean Muslims”, being the Muslims among the labour immigrants from Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia. The subsidies were used to cover a part of the costs of the creation of Islamic prayer houses in 25 municipalities. The subsidy scheme was prolonged for two years in 1981 and finally expired in 1983.

In the literature on Islam in the Netherlands it has been repeatedly observed that the effective financial contribution of the Dutch state spent on the creation of Islamic prayer houses was modest, but it remains interesting to see the specific argumentations that were invoked to justify a subsidy scheme for the creation of mosques. An analysis of these argumentations reveals a mixture of different understandings of the meaning of mosque creation and of reasons for the government to be involved.

First, the creation of prayer spaces was put on a par with other efforts to provide for the needs of guest workers, for example by providing language courses, medical care or leisure time activities. This particular kind of governmental responsibility could be justified for those Muslims who had been recruited as guest workers, hence the introduction of the new category “Mediterranean Muslims”. Second, the founding of mosques could also be seen as illustrative of the emergence of a new religious community in the Netherlands. The decision to take the subsidy regulation of the Church Building Subsidy Act as a guideline for the new subsidy scheme

255. [“1. Het gedwongen karakter van hun migratie verwijst naar de morele verantwoordelijkheid van de overheid om adequate voorzieningen, in dit geval religieuze, te creëren. 2. De Islam neemt voor de Moslim een essentiële plaats in zijn leven in. In het kader van de milieuopbouw dient recht te worden gedaan aan dit gedeelte van zijn culturele identiteit.”] (Samuel and Gransbergen 1975: 27).

256. See Hampsink 1992; Landman 1992; Shadid and van Koningsveld 1993; and Rath et al. 2001 for a discussion on various aspects of the regulation.


258. As a result the relatively large group of Surinamese Muslims was not entitled to receive subsidies for the creation or refurbishment of mosques. Around the time of the independence of Surinam in 1975 the number of Surinamese immigrants to the Netherlands had increased dramatically. In 1974 and 1975 alone, more than fifty thousand Surinamese arrived in the Netherlands. Whereas in this period the government accepted some form of public responsibility to provide for the religious needs of the Moluccans (see chapter 4) and for the Mediterranean guest workers, it did not do so for the Surinamese, nor for other ethnic groups. Rath et al. (2001: 46) provide another, or additional, explanation for the exclusion of Surinamese Muslims. According to an official working at the Ministry of CRM there was a disagreement on the appropriateness of a subsidy regulation between the Section for the Welfare of Foreign Workers and the Section for the Welfare of Moluccans, Surinamese and Caravan Dwellers, both part of the Ministry of CRM. This official also declared that the regulation had been necessary to win the Muslims over for the integration policy.
for Islamic prayer houses gave further support to the idea that the government understood that it was not merely subsidising another facility for guest workers but was also making available financial support for the housing of a new religion.\textsuperscript{259} The view of mosques as symbols of a “new religion” could also function as an anchor point for protests. In 1974, for example, during the parliamentary discussions on the proposal to finance the creation of Islamic prayer halls, Bart Verbrugh, a representative of one of the smaller Christian fundamentalist parties (\textit{Gereformeerde Politiek Verbond}, GPV), had raised objections. He argued that the state should refrain from “organising spiritual life” and he also did not want the Dutch state making a financial contribution to the “Moorish building style – a mosque or a minaret- starting to influence the Dutch city or village scene” (cited in Landman 1992: 278, my translation, M.M.). Third, the founding of mosques could be seen as illustrative of the formation of immigrant communities seeking to set up an ethnic community infrastructure. The founding of prayer houses thus showed the ability and willingness on the part of immigrants to take their future in their own hands. From this perspective financial support by Dutch authorities could also be defended, not as a result of care for guest workers or as a result of support for religion, but as an aspect of policies to encourage the emancipation and integration of immigrants. Public financial support for the creation of Islamic houses of worship could then be understood as a part of efforts to stimulate “integration with retention of identity”.

6.4. The presence of Islam and local society: mosques in Rotterdam in the 1970s

The introduction of a national Regulation for the Subvention of Prayer Houses did not end the need for municipal authorities to define their own attitude towards the creation of prayer houses. The funds that were made available by the government were far from sufficient to cover even a fraction of the actual costs of improving existing prayer spaces. Some municipalities decided to add additional funds from the municipal budget. In 1975, the public authorities of Rotterdam investigated the possibilities of creating two larger mosques in the city, one catering for 800-1000 worshippers in the centre and one for 400-600 worshippers on the south side of the city. At the end of 1976 the municipal authorities even promised to examine whether the government of Saudi Arabia might be willing to make a financial contribution to buy an old church building and convert it into a mosque (Buijs 1998: 12-13).\textsuperscript{260} In 1977, a municipal subsidy of 36,000 guilders was made available for the establishment of a Turkish mosque, which was justified as illustrative of the municipal “duty of care” (\textit{zorgplicht}) for the new Muslim residents (Buijs 1998: 19).

\textsuperscript{259} It would have been very difficult to defend a new regulation to subsidize the founding of prayer houses if such a regulation had been primarily understood as a way of the Dutch state financing religion. Following the modification of the constitution in 1972, article 185 that formed the constitutional basis for direct state support to religion, had been abolished. The Church Building Subsidy Act had been suspended in 1975. Therefore it was important to emphasise that these new regulations were primarily meant as a way of helping to address the urgent cultural, spiritual and religious needs of immigrant workers.

\textsuperscript{260} See “Saoedi-Arabië geeft 7 ton voor moskee in Rotterdam” in \textit{Het Vrije Volk} January 19 1978.
The fact that more Islamic houses of worship were being created was seen by Muslim immigrants and native Dutch residents alike as an important sign of the settlement of immigrants in the Rotterdam neighbourhoods, but they had diametrically opposed feelings about this trend. The residents associations protested against the growing influence of “the foreigners” in the neighbourhood, exemplified by the growing number of hostels, ethnic shops, Islamic butchers, Turkish teahouses and mosques. The native residents accused municipal authorities of stimulating the creation of mosques by giving subsidies for their establishment. In a response to these publicly voiced protests the alderman of Urban Renewal, Van der Ploeg (Social Democrat Party, PvdA), acknowledged that there should be a “balance in the neighbourhood”, but he also insisted that “these people who are not from Rotterdam” (literally non-Rotterdammers, M.M.) should not be “discriminated against” when they wanted to practice their religion (Buijs 1998: 19). The alderman explained that the municipal subsidy had been given to support “the social and cultural integration of the Turkish Rotterdammers”.  

In 1978 the municipality issued a memorandum entitled Migrants in Rotterdam. Herein the city was represented as an “ensemble of citizens” consisting of “old and new Rotterdammers” who had “rights and duties” (1978: 5 and 81). Municipal authorities wanted to deal with immigrant integration in a “pragmatic and realist” way. Muslims in Rotterdam were spoken of as a “large group” for whom “the whole existence is imbued (doordrenkt) with religion”. Islam was represented as “a conservative religion” and reference was made to the subordinate position of Turkish and Moroccan women and to organisations such as the Grey Wolves and the Amicales which tried to control the immigrant population by “infiltrating mosque associations”.  

The memorandum Migrants in Rotterdam was an important turning point in the development of policies towards immigrants in Rotterdam. It put the emphasis on the need to encourage participation and integration of newcomers and explicitly broke with policy frames typical for a guest workers regime. Thus, various aspects of the presence of immigrants – and of Muslim immigrants in particular – came to be seen in a different light. One such aspect was the significance of transnational ties and organisations linking immigrants in Rotterdam to their societies of origin. In public and policy discourse the slightly paternalist and exoticised view of Islam as a part of the culture of immigrant workers, gave way to the image of a conservative and sexist religion that risked slowing down immigrant integration and prevent the emancipation of women. Also the responsibility of municipal authorities in facilitating Islamic practice and possibly in helping Muslims to create prayer houses was being redefined. The issue was now presented as one involving the relations between state and religion. The municipality announced that it intended to approach the newly emerging mosque associations “with goodwill but not naïvely”. In general terms it was acknowledged that it was necessary that Muslims should have space for worship in Rotterdam and the municipality was willing to see it “as one of its responsibilities” to offer support. But to avoid misunderstandings and false hopes, immigrants and

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262. The Moroccan consulate had set up and helped run regional and local Amicales organisations in the Netherlands since 1974, followed by a national Fédération des Amicales des Marocains, beginning in 1975. The Amicales tried to gain influence among the migrant population by occupying positions in mosques and in the Federations for Foreign Workers (Theunis 1979: 449-459). Dutch social workers, employees of the Foundations for Foreign Workers, journalists and politicians often associated the activities of the Amicales and the Turkish Grey Wolves with espionage, violence and intimidation.
potential future citizens should understand that “the state bears no responsibility for the Church, also no financial responsibility” (1978: 71).

6.4.1. A central Rotterdam mosque?

In 1978, the same year in which the municipal government issued the memorandum Migrants in Rotterdam, a few leading men in the Muslim community in Rotterdam, Ibrahim Spalburg, Sait Sahan and Fawzi Farouk, created a Foundation Islamic Centre Rotterdam. The foundation aimed to integrate the Muslims community “with the Dutch society without losing the Islamic faith.” At the request of this foundation the Dutch Muslim architect Latief Perotti, made a design for a mosque. The design showed a building of 77 meters long, with a ground surface of nearly 4,500 square meters, with two minarets of 33 meters and a dome of 15 meters.

Inside the building there would be a Koran school for children, a space for the ritual ablution, a separate praying room for women, a fountain, a mortuary and also separate rooms where different

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263. The English name “Foundation Islamic Centre Rotterdam” is used in a brochure entitled “Moskee Rotterdam” (1979). The official name of the foundation was “Stichting Internationaal Comité Islamitisch Centrum Rotterdam” (See Landman 1992: 49). This account is also based on newspaper articles, notably “Moskee wordt nieuwe toeristisch attractie” in Rotterdams Nieuwsblad July 28 1979 and NRC-Handelsblad July 6 1979. Also Buijs 1998. All citations are taken from the brochure.

264. See the brochure “Moskee Rotterdam” written in English and in Dutch.

265. Perrotti had designed the plans for the Moluccan mosque in Ridderkerk a year earlier. For a discussion see Roose 2006.
national groups (Turks, Surinamese, Moroccans) could have sermons in their mother tongue. The mosque could cater to some 3000 worshippers and it was to be built in the centre of Rotterdam. The proximity of a subway station would allow Muslims from all parts of the city to reach it. The central mosque would cater to the religious needs of Muslims, it would help migrants to “maintain their own identity” and it could also function as a “meeting place” (*ontmoetingspunt*). The Rotterdam Mosque would also be “a clear manifestation of the presence of tens of thousands of Muslims in this city” and it could function as a centre where information about Islam could be given to non-Muslims. According to the founding fathers there was a need to do something about the climate of distrust and prejudice regarding Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands. The headline of a newspaper article said: “Mosque will become new tourist attraction”.

The initiators claimed that the government of Saudi Arabia was willing to contribute 300,000 dollars to construct a mosque in Rotterdam. The municipal authorities initially responded more or less positively to the idea of building this central mosque. Even a land reservation was made.

However, problems would quickly arise. There was internal strife in the foundation and it appeared that the large financial gift from Saudi Arabia was perhaps not forthcoming. It also turned out that the municipality did not intend to donate the land for free, as the originators had somewhat idealistically presumed (Buijs 1998: 30). Even though this project for a Central Rotterdam Mosque would never materialise, it is interesting because of the ways ideas about the incorporation of Islam were being linked together. Some of these ideas already figured on the local public agenda in the late 1970s, such as the need for better prayer facilities. Other ideas, however, would only reappear in the debate many years later; for example, the possibility of thinking of the building of a mosque that could function as a clear manifestation of the presence of Muslims in Rotterdam. That idea only re-emerged in the 1990s. Something similar can be said about the idea of creating an institution that could also provide information about Islam and that could thereby help to diminish distrust and prejudice. The idea that larger mosques would provide opportunities for women in terms of social contacts and spaces for recreation would also return in the debates in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The idea to build a Rotterdam City Mosque did not stand alone in the 1970s. In Amsterdam a project was developed in the early 1970s to build a mosque for 4000 worshippers. The Amsterdam municipality already made a land reservation for the mosque to be built upon, but the initiative stagnated in 1975 because of financial problems. In 1978 the chairman of the Islamic Centre Gelderland presented a project for a new mosque following the design of the Indian Taj Mahal. This mosque, which was to be established in Arnhem, would be built in an oriental style, with six minarets and a surface of 4000 square meters. It would be combined with a swimming pool, a sports centre, a library, an amusement park for children and a ritual slaughter house.

As Landman (1992: 49) rightly observes, these projects were often “castles in the air”. Often these projects were developed by ambitious individuals without it being clear whether there was actually any demand among ordinary Muslims for this type of mosque. The assumption that mosque projects could be financed with readily available and unlimited funds from countries in the Middle East turned out to be somewhat naïve. Moreover, the chances of

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Dutch public authorities welcoming these kind of gifts from countries such as Saudi Arabia and Libya were decreasing.\(^{269}\)

Crucial, however, was the overt scepticism towards plans for City Mosques among the leaders of the different ethnic mosques which already existed. In Rotterdam a municipal official had already investigated in 1978 whether there was any support among Muslims for the plans to build two large mosques in the city. He concluded that the different denominational and ethnic groups preferred to create their own house of prayer in the neighbourhoods. Differences, in particular between Turkish and Moroccan Muslims and between different groups among Turkish Muslims, were a major obstacle to the founding of a large mosque to cater to different groups of Muslims.\(^{270}\) In their approach towards the Muslim population Dutch authorities also sought to take notice of differences between ethnic groups and attune their policies accordingly.

### 6.5. Conclusion

In the Netherlands guest worker recruitment schemes only came to be fully developed beginning in the early 1960s. Initially the government assumed that it only carried a responsibility for legal and administrative tasks. When public services and institutions became more involved in the reception of guest workers this was often under the umbrella of social work and welfare policies. Since the late 1960s, in the domain of culture and religion, there was a convergence around the idea that policy responses should allow for the “maintenance of cultural identity”. Such a “dual policy” could both contribute to prepare immigrants for a return home and it could be of help for those who eventually would decide to stay.

The religious needs of Muslim guest workers became an issue on the national policy agenda in the mid 1970s. The government decided in favour of a subsidy scheme for Islamic prayer houses in 1976. The introduction of this new regulation would be seen as a way of the government helping to improve the conditions for religious practices of immigrants who had been recruited as guest workers. Nevertheless, the argumentations around this regulation showed a variety of understandings of mosques: seen as facilities for guest workers, as symbols of a new religion and as aspects of immigrants trying to create institutions to integrate with retention of cultural identity. In the 1970s, defining the significance of mosque creation was not only of concern to policy makers, it was also a process occurring in the neighbourhoods of Dutch cities. Immigrants and their families found themselves in the midst of a Dutch population. Prayer spaces that were created in the older neighbourhoods soon came to be seen as illustrative

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269. See Landman 1992; and Maussen 2006: 239.

270. One of the problems of establishing a single large mosque in Dutch cities was that Turkish and Moroccan Muslims preferred to have their own places of worship. Sometimes the Turks and Moroccans would take turns for prayer or divide the prayer room by a partition. Because of differences in language, Islamic (legal) traditions and ethnicity, Muslims preferred to establish separate mosques as soon as this became feasible. See Landman 1992: 44-47; Strijp 1998: 90-91; and Samuels and Gransbergen 1975: 30. For Rotterdam see the article of reverend Reedijk (1977) “One mosque for Rotterdam or just the reverse?” [Één moskee voor Rotterdam of juist niet?] in Kosmos en Oecumene 11(10): pp.317-320.
of a process of settlement. Municipal authorities were now obliged to develop policy responses which would simultaneously address the lack of adequate prayer spaces and growing tensions between native Dutch residents and the immigrants. In addition, in the late 1970s Islam gradually became one of the more controversial issues in discussions on immigrant integration. In the new context the Rotterdam municipality was reluctant to become all too directly involved in improving the housing situation of Islam and declared that immigrants should understand that in the Netherlands the state bore no responsibility for religion.
7.1. Introduction

In France colonial and early guest worker regimes institutionalised and legitimised unequal treatment, segregation and hierarchy between Muslim immigrants and the host society. When Muslims became permanent members of French society and acquired French citizenship these representations and practices had to be redefined. This chapter discusses the way successive French governments developed policy responses to accommodate the presence of Islam since the early 1980s. In most studies France is the negative example. Muslims are said to have encountered strong resistance with regard to their claims for recognition. Successive French governments are said to have been unwilling to accommodate Muslim religious practices and needs. In this chapter I describe the actual governing strategies and policy responses, focusing on the issue of mosque establishment with special emphasis given to public policy responses in Marseilles. My first goal was to see whether French policy responses had indeed been similar across time. A second goal was to see whether French national and municipal governments had thought of mosque building in specific ways and whether policy responses had differed at these administrative levels. A third goal was to explore possible (dis)continuities of governing strategies of the colonial and guest workers regime.

7.2. Cathedral Mosques

In 1981 the French Minister of the Interior and simultaneously the mayor of Marseilles, Gaston Defferre, said at some point in a visit to Algeria: “The Algerians who come to France do not intend to establish themselves definitively and melt [se fondre] into French society. They are migrant workers and not immigrants” (cited in Brubaker 1992: 142). The statement was an illustration of the lack of willingness to think about the integration of newcomers. At the same time, a variety of actors and institutions – employers, social workers, personnel and management of dormitories and social housing companies – had long acknowledged that most migrant workers constantly postponed the planned return home, that families were being formed and that immigrants settled in low-cost housing in concentrated areas of the cities that were being deeply transformed in the process. The overall orientation of institutional and policy responses was pragmatic (Grillo 1985; Favell 1998: 46ff.).

The early 1980s also were a period in which new forms of immigrant organisation developed. In October 1981 the 1901 law on associations had been modified and non-nationals had obtained the right to create civil associations. A well-known example was the mouvement beur, a movement that developed around protest marches by young North Africans. With their social demands concentrated around concerns about equal treatment, respect and solidarity these
forms of immigrant organisations were not unfamiliar to French political culture. Political contestation about immigration and integration concentrated on issues such as tolerance and the need to fight discrimination and exclusion. Confronted with a rise of racist violence and the re-emergence of extreme right political movements, anti-racism became an important new rallying cause for progressive political forces in France. The change of the law on civil associations had created opportunities for formation of immigrant social organisation on a religious basis as well. Mosque associations sought to legalize and further institutionalise their organisational structures.

Islam not only became a public issue around demands raised by Muslim associations, it also emerged as a controversial issue in the newly emerging discussions on the integration of immigrants, in particular those from Northern Africa. One factor contributing to an increased focus on Islam was the political breakthrough of the Front National in the course of the 1980s, a period in which the party used Marseilles as a home base for its political campaigns. Political campaigns of the Front National in the 1980s spoke of the growing “Islamisation of French society” (Étienne 1989: 203ff.).

Social scientists had also begun to take more interest in Islam in France. A major research project was conducted between 1984 and 1987 in the Paris region and in Bouches-du-Rhône, the latter focussing foremost on the situation in Marseilles. Given the important role of intellectuals and academics in French public debate, the new “Islam experts” would soon start to play a major role in shaping ideas about Islam in France. Most of them were opposed to France embracing a form of multiculturalism. Terms such as “communalism” (le communautarisme) and the “tendency to fall back on ethnic ties” (répli identitaire) began to dominate academic and public discussions. Yet, researchers stressed that it would be wise to help Islam to further institutionalise itself in France, play down the influence of foreign governments and international organisations, and encourage Muslims to orient themselves more

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271. Newcomers and immigrants had often been incorporated in France as a result of their own mobilization and in the interwar period the trade unions and the Communist Party had functioned as “integration machines” for the Italian and Spanish workers. See Ireland 1994; Noriel 1988; Geisser 1997; and Withol de Wenden and Leveau 2001.

272. Several anti-racist organisations were created in the mid 1980s, such as SOS-racisme and France Plus that were both founded in 1985. See Geisser 1997.


274. In 1987, a year before the electoral breakthrough of the Front National, Le Pen held a speech in Marseilles in which he caricatured the famous speech of general De Gaulle at the liberation of Paris: “[Marseilles disfigured, ruined, occupied! … But Marseilles soon liberated! Liberated from its enclaves which are today foreigners, but tomorrow they will be enemies … Marseilles is … the symbol of France which wants to express its will to be itself, its resistance to the decadence and to the foreign occupation”. “[Marseille défigurée, ruinée, occupée ! … Mais Marseille bientôt libérée ! Libérée de ses enclaves aujourd’hui étrangères, demain ennemies… Marseille est … le symbole de la France qui veut affirmer sa volonté d’être elle-même, sa résistance à l’occupation étrangère…]” (cited in Sayad et al. 1991: 176).

275. This pioneering research project led to an important number of publications on Islam in France in the late 1980s, notably those of Étienne 1984, 1989, 1990 (a volume on Islam in France edited by Étienne which was originally published in 1988); Leveau 1988; Kepel 1991 (first edition 1987); and Cesari 1994.

276. On the role of intellectuals in French public debate and policy discussions see Favell 1998 and Bowen 2006.

within a French social context. The best way to incorporate Islam was via the development of an “Islam of France” (*un islam de France*) or a “French Islam” (*un islam français*). This French Islam was opposed to an Islam which was merely “in” but not “of” France (Étienne 1989: 201ff.).

Compared to their European counterparts the successive French governments of the 1980s were slow in developing policies to deal with immigrant integration issues. The pragmatic orientation of policy efforts, guided by the notion of “immersion” (*insertion*), had, for a very brief period in the early 1980s, been coupled with ideas about anti-racism and immigrants’ right to cultural identity. In anti-racist organisations such as SOS-Racisme there was support for the idea that immigrants had a “right to be different” (*droit à la différence*). However, by the time French government would begin articulating more comprehensive views on immigrant integration and cultural diversity – in particular during the reform of the nationality code between 1986 and 1988 – issues of national integration and cultural diversity had become more complex and controversial. There was an ongoing discussion on the need to give more autonomy to some regions in France, enabling the populations in the Basque, Breton, Corsican and Provence regions to maintain their languages and culture. In the mid 1980s there was debate on a proposed reform of the education system that threatened to endanger the opportunities for private denominational schools to receive state support. Finally, the ongoing process of European economic and political integration was seen as a threat to French governing traditions (Favell 1998: 50ff.). These developments and political trends could easily be taken to mean that the French political model as a whole, with its emphasis on unitary government and national integration under leadership of the state, was under threat.

As Adrian Favell has demonstrated, in this particular context the republican tradition was reinvented and rearticulated as a comprehensive and uniquely French approach to handle immigrant integration issues (Favell 1998: 58ff.). The French model was presented as based on the full integration of individual immigrant newcomers via their participation in a neutral and secular public and political arena. In France, immigrants should emancipate and integrate as citizens and they should not create their own ethnic and religious institutions and organisations. The mainstream political Left and Right joined in the defence of “the French model”. It allowed the mainstream parties to intervene in debates on immigrant integration while distancing themselves from other European approaches, notably from “Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism”, and while drawing a clear boundary between their own positions and those of the Front National.

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278. For example, when Bruno Étienne was consulted by the Parliamentary Committee on the reform of nationality code in 1987, he suggested that a kind of French “Muslim Church” could be established at the image of the religious institutions that had been created under the Concordat, such as the French Protestant Federation and the French Israelite Consistory. See “Les auditions publiques de la commission de la nationalité présidée par Marceau Long – Audience de Bruno Étienne” September 18 1987.

279. In the mid 1970s there had been public support for the maintenance of immigrants’ religious and cultural practice and in the early 1980s mother-tongue teaching programs still existed that had been developed thinking that immigrants and their children should “retain their cultural patrimony” in view of the return home (Grillo 1985: 193). See also the policy report issued by the Ministry of Culture in 1982 entitled *Démocratie culturelle et droit à la différence*. Report for Jack Lang, Minister of Culture.

280. This Catholic-led opposition resulted in a protest march in favour of religious based education that brought more than 1 million people in the streets of Paris in 1985. See Baubérot 2004; and Bowen 2006.
that were portrayed as undemocratic, anti-Republican and xenophobic.\textsuperscript{281} The articulation of immigrant integration policies developed in tandem with ideas about the need to encourage the emergence of an “Islam of France”.\textsuperscript{282}

\section*{7.2.1. Mosques as a public issue in France in the 1980s and the need for a Cathedral Mosque in Marseilles}

Now that the idea took root that Muslim immigrants were becoming a part of French society the existing spaces of worship increasingly seemed inadequate, both in the eyes of the Muslim believers and in the eyes of French society as a whole. About 800 prayer houses existed in France in 1985 but they were often too small and lodging was poor, unhygienic and sometimes even dangerous.\textsuperscript{283} To deal with this problem there had on some occasions been plans to construct new mosques.

One of the cities where such plans had emerged relatively early was Mantes-la-Jolie. In 1979 the mayor, Paul Picard, had defended the building of the mosque in an address to the members of the City Council. The new building would become illustrative of “the sense of responsibility and tolerance on the part of all Mantes-la-Jolie residents” and their willingness to

\textsuperscript{281} This reinvention of the French Republican tradition in terms of a model of immigrant integration was at first developed around the reform of the nationality code and in the report published by the Commission on Nationality that was entitled \textit{Être français aujourd’hui et demain} (1988). Since 1988 governments of the Left further developed the French model. See for example the report of the Marchand commission \textit{L’intégration des immigrés} (1990). In 1990 the High Council on Integration (\textit{Haute Conseil à l’Intégration}) (HCI) was created. As Favell observes, three countries functioned as models of the antidote of the French Republican model: Germany with its \textit{Völkish} conception of citizenship and organic view of the nation; the UK with its monarchical tradition, lack of constitution, liberal concept of civil society and laissez-faire governing tradition; and the United States as an example of a society characterised by socio-economic segregation, racism and ethnic breakdown (Favell 1998: 61). See also Brubaker 1992 and Feldblum 1999. French academic studies of the early 1990s that were important for the idea that a unique French model of integration existed included Schnapper 1992 and Todd 1994. For a discussion see also Joppke 1999.

\textsuperscript{282} In these early attempts to create Muslim institutions and representatives that could function as interlocutors for French authorities there was an important difference between the approach followed by the government of the Right and the Socialist government that came into power in 1988. Of crucial importance was the role of the Paris Mosque. Since 1982 the Algerian government had become increasingly involved in the organisation of Islam in France and staffed mosques in France with imams that were remunerated by the Algerian state. This development was welcomed by Charles Pasqua who was Minister of the Interior in Chirac’s government (1986-1988) and who intended to work together with the governments of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco to ensure that Islam in France would be shielded from fundamentalist influences (Kepel 1991: 381). Pasqua wanted the leaders of the Paris Mosque to become the privileged interlocutor for the French government and thought the institute could function as the main guarantee for the emergence of a moderate and liberal Islam in France (Kepel 1994: 266). However in 1988 a new Socialist Minister of the Interior appeared on the scene, Pierre Joxe, who had very different ideas about the ways to create an “Islam of France”. Joxe wanted to create French Muslim institutions that would function independently from the influence of governments of the countries of origin, notably those of Morocco, Tunisia and above all Algeria. In order to develop these kind of institutions the Minister invited six “personalities” in March 1989 to join in a “mission de réflexion” on the organisation of Islam in France. A year later, in March 1990, nine other personalities were invited to join in the so-called \textit{Conseil de Réflexion sur l’islam en France} (CORIF) that should function as an interlocutor for the authorities. Even though the rector of the Paris Mosque was a prominent member of the CORIF, the new council aimed at weakening the influence of the Paris Mosque, and thereby of the Algerian government, on Islam in France (see Kepel 1994: 283ff.; Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 46ff.).

\textsuperscript{283} See for a discussion Étienne 1984; and Cesari 1994.
respect “the freedom to practice a faith and to found a place of worship” (De Galembert 2005: 1153). Despite protests of neighbouring residents, the mosque of Mantes-la-Jolie was built on the outskirts of the city in 1981. It was the first newly built mosque in France since the colonial period and it had an 18-metre-high minaret.284 In 1987 another new mosque was built in Évry, one of the so-called “new cities” (villes nouvelles) that had been created to the south of Paris. This time the building costs were financed with a gift from the World Islamic League, supported by Saudi Arabia (Kepel 1991: 219).

In most French cities, public authorities, political parties and neighbouring residents took a far more hostile approach to the possible building of mosques. Fierce confrontations were recorded in the 1980s in cities such as Lille-Roubaix, Rennes, Romans-sur-Isère and Sevran (Kepel 1991: 294ff.). In the suburb of Charvieu-Chavagneux near Lyons, the Mayor even had a house of worship destroyed by a bulldozer in August 1989 after having refused the Muslim association the possibility of establishing a mosque elsewhere (Kepel 1994: 269).285

Thus by the mid-1980s the creation of mosques had become a political issue. There was the idea that there was an urgent need to create adequate prayer houses to guarantee Muslims’ right to religious freedom and also as a sign of tolerance of host society. There was the idea that enabling Muslims to construct more adequate and more beautiful mosques might be experienced as a form of recognition that would stimulate further integration and the development of an “Islam of France”. Finally, the fact that the construction of houses of worship could be financed by donors from Middle Eastern or North African countries was looked upon with suspicion.286

In Marseilles, North African and Muslim immigrants had not been allowed to establish themselves as one of the immigrant and religious communities.287 However, in the mid-1980s the idea arose of making space for a “Muslim community”.288 In 1986 Gaston Defferre who had been the mayor of Marseilles since 1953, died. During the funeral ceremony in the Cathedral La Major the representatives of all religious communities were to pay their respects to the late Minister of the Interior. Reportedly at the last minute someone thought of also inviting Mr. Abdelahi, imam of the mosque in rue Bon Pasteur. Thus during the ceremony the imam stood next to the Cardinal, the Grand Rabbi and the representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Orthodox Church, the Maronite Church and the Protestant Church. Remembering the event three years later, the president of the mosque, Hadj Alili, observed: “The Mayor had to die to allow us to be recognised in the end”.289 Older immigrant communities had been able to integrate into the local society by creating their own community infrastructures and by being able to delegate a representative of the community to important public ceremonies. This possibility had been denied to the Muslim populations in Marseilles, but now, at the occasion of the funeral of Defferre, a representative of the Muslim community was present. The possible

285. This event has been cited countless times to serve as an illustration of the lack of willingness of French authorities to accommodate Muslim claims for recognition.
286. A report of the Parliamentary Commission on Immigration issued in 1990s had suggested to temporarily allow for the direct financing of the building of mosques by the state in order to facilitate the construction of mosques. No follow up was given to this suggestion. See Cesari 1994: 151.
287. See chapter 3 and 5.
289. [“Il a fallu la mort du maire pour que nous soyons enfin reconnus”] cited in Le Monde November 15 1989.
incorporation of the Muslim community into the “Marseilles model” soon became linked to the need for a central mosque in the city.

In October 1989, Robert Vigouroux, the new mayor of Marseilles, said in an interview in Profession politique, that he was in favour of the construction of a “real mosque of the dimension of a Cathedral or the one of Paris”. He added:

I want it to be beautiful. In the first place for the city. Moreover, such a mosque must be a symbol for the Muslims of Marseilles. A bit like the Cathedral is for the Christians. Mosquées-hangars are perhaps still necessary, but they are disgraceful. I want the people, the Marseillais, the tourists, the foreigners to go and see that mosque, and not only the Muslims. That it will be an object of curiosity.

The term “Cathedral Mosque” (Mosquée Cathédrale) was of an older date and could be used to refer to a mosque that was intentionally designed as such and therefore beautiful and typical. The expression was also used to translate the familiar distinction in Muslim countries between Main, City, Friday, Grand or Great Mosques and so-called neighbourhood mosques, the latter being houses of worship that serve primarily for the five daily prayers. In the specific context of France in the late 1980s however the expression carried additional significances. First, the expression “Cathedral” suggested something more than the concept “Great Mosque” and by borrowing from the Catholic tradition in which the Cathedral functions as the institutional centre of the diocese, it linked the building of a mosque to the issue of organising local Islam. Second, by contrasting a real mosque that would be beautiful and large to the disgraceful “mosquées-hangars” it was made clear that the Cathedral Mosque should also be a symbol of recognition for the Muslims of Marseilles. Third, a beautiful mosque could also be visited by non-Muslims who might take interest in its architecture and in Islamic culture.

Even though the statement of the mayor of Marseilles thus made sense in the wider context of debates on Islam and mosques in France, it strangely enough did not necessarily make immediately sense in Marseilles. No local Muslim association was lobbying for a new central mosque. Some larger prayer halls existed, such as the mosques in Rue Bon Pasteur, at La Capelette (created in 1983), near the Flea Market (created in 1989) and on Boulevard National (created in 1983).

290. Kepel writes that the first statement of Vigouroux in favour of a Great Mosque was dated on July 13 during the Sacrifice Feast, that is only three weeks following the declaration of Michel Noir (1994: 274). Falanga and Temin 1990 and Cesari 1994 mention September 1989.

291. [“Je désire qu’elle soit belle. D’abord pour la ville. Et puis une telle mosquée doit être un symbole pour les musulmans de Marseille. Un peu comme l’est une cathédrale pour les chrétiens. Les mosquées-hangars, c’est peut-être nécessaire mais c’est critiquable. Je veux que les gens, les Marseillais, les touristes, les étrangers aillent voir cette mosquée, et pas seulement les musulmans. Qu’elle soit un objet de curiosité.”] cited in Profession Politique, No 52, October 29 1989. The mayor had made a similar statement in a radio interview on France 3 in September that year.

292. In Catholicism a Cathedral is the church of a bishop where the Cathedra is located; that is, the seat of the diocese and a symbol of episcopal authority (Ternisien 2004: 70).

293. In Marseilles these mosques are referred to by the name of the street or neighbourhood where they are located. The official names of these mosques are respectively: Al Nasr (Mosque at la Capelette), Al-Islah (Mosque near the Flea Market) and At Taqwa (Mosque at Rue Bon Pasteur).
Less than 10 days after the statements of the mayor, one of the wealthiest Algerian businessmen in Marseilles, Mustapha Slimani, the owner of a chain of slaughterhouses providing ritually prepared meat, presented a mosque-project.\textsuperscript{294} The project was named the Study Centre on Islamic Civilisations in Marseilles (Centre d'études sur les civilisations Islamiques à Marseille), and planned a multipurpose religious, commercial and cultural complex. The prayer hall itself would have a ground surface of 9,000 square meters, a flattened dome and minaret rising 50\textsuperscript{295} meters in the sky, and it would be able to cater between 15,000 to 17,000 worshippers. According to Slimani the mosque would provide for the religious needs of the immigrant population and those of the “Muslim French population”. The whole complex would also contain a media centre, a bathhouse, a parking lot, a cinema, a language school, a fountain, commercial centres, a restaurant, teahouses and facilities for the yearly Sacrifice Feast. It was to be established on a terrain of 12 hectares, located somewhere “sufficiently close to the centre of the city” but “nevertheless sufficiently distant to avoid certain polemics”.

Slimani had elaborated the project without consulting any of the chairmen of the existing Mosque Committees in Marseilles. However, Slimani was an important businessmen and the consumers of his commercial goods were mainly North Africans who lived in Marseilles or who crossed the Mediterranean especially to purchase goods in the city. Because of its size and multiple purposes Slimani’s project for a Study Centre on Islamic Civilisations hardly seemed to correspond to the ideas and expectations of the representatives of Muslim associations. Unfortunately, however, in public discourse this project soon came to be seen as illustrative of the future Cathedral Mosque of Marseilles.

Between October 1989 and February 1990 a public polemic and debate took place in the local and national media. Two longer newspaper articles started off the discussion, one in the local \textit{Le Méridional} on 18 October and one in the national Catholic newspaper \textit{Le Soir} on 31 October. Both articles were illustrated with photographs of Muslim men worshipping outside in Rue Bon Pasteur, the narrow street that gave access to one of the entrances of the mosque near the Porte d’Aix.

\textit{Picture 7.1 Men worshipping in Rue Bon Pasteur, Marseilles 1989}

\textsuperscript{294} This part is based on the descriptions and drawings of the project of Slimani included in the annex of the MA thesis of Oliver Falanga and Isabelle Temin (1990). The citations are from the description of the project.

\textsuperscript{295} According to Cesari the minaret would only be 18 meters high (1994: 116). However, the idea of plans for a minaret of 50 meters were mentioned in the newspaper articles in 1989.
These photographs supposedly spoke for themselves and showed that Muslims in Marseilles had to pray on the street. However, it was not only the lack of sufficient prayer space that was seen as a problem. Philippe Larue, a journalist of Le Provençal wrote: “thousands of believers are waiting for a decent mosque, and today they worship in basements or in spaces at the ground floor of the HLM public housing projects. This is an obstacle to a real integration and an image that the Muslims in Marseilles no longer want to show to the regard de l’autre”. A local architect suggested in addition that the new mosque could bring Muslims and non-Muslims together and it would also enable public authorities “to control the mosque, to place it within civil society”. 

Another way of arguing in favour of building a Great Mosque focused on its symbolic meaning and on local narratives and traditions. In this perspective the new mosque could contribute to the incorporation of Islam in Marseilles because the mosque would recognise Muslims as one of the religious communities in the city. This view of the need for a symbolic Central Mosque could garner the support of key spokesmen of the Muslim community and of representatives of other religious communities. Slimani’s multipurpose project, however, did not correspond to this idea of a Central Mosque. The president of the Mosque Committee at La Capelette, Bachir Dahmani, said that the Muslims of Marseilles had waited several years to establish “a real mosque” (une véritable mosquée) but underscored that it should “be nothing but a place of prayer and spirituality”. The president of the mosque in Rue Bon Pasteur, Hadj Allili, said that one “should not use the minaret to attract chicken salesmen” and insisted that the mosque should be a religious place and should not become a kind of “museum”.

**Protest**

Despite the fact that it remained somewhat unclear whether a viable plan for a Great Mosque would be developed, the suggestion of the Mayor that he was in favour of it provoked resistance. Opponents found a forum in the conservative newspaper Le Méridional. A lead article on 17 November 1989 presented the results of a survey held by the journal in capitals on the front page: “Mosque: 57% NO, 40% YES”. The following day journalist Marc Alvarez wrote in a commentary:

> Of course, behind this project for a mosque the problem of immigration can be seen with, as its corollary, that of integration (…) And although the majority of Marseillais, of course, recognises the right of Muslims to practice their religion, they are by contrast shocked to see the First Magistrate of the city take more interest in the establishment of a super Hollywood-like mosque, than in the patrimony of the city.

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296. [“une mosquée décente est attendee par des milliers de fidèles qui prient, aujourd’hui, dans des caves ou des locaux au rez-de-chaussée des HLM. Un obstacle à une réelle intégration et une image que les musulmans de Marseille ne veulent plus offrir aux regards de l’autre”]. See “L’ombre du minaret” in Le Provençal November 1 1989.

297. [“pour les pouvoirs publics de contrôler la mosquée, de la placer dans la vie civile”] in Le Provençal November 1 1989.


300. [“Bien évidemment, derrière ce projet d’une mosquée se profile le problème de l’immigration avec, en corollaire, celui de l’intégration… Et si, en grand nombre, les Marseillais reconnaissent naturellement le droit
The Front National and the residents associations in the Northern part of Marseilles – a possible location for the Cathedral Mosque – protested vehemently against the idea of building a mosque. In the various statements four arguments kept returning. First, the protesters insisted that the construction of a mosque in Marseilles should be talked about in relation to the “problems of immigration and integration”. More in particular what was at stake was the concentration of disadvantaged immigrant populations in the Northern districts (les quartiers nords). During a protest march against the new mosque that was organised on 18 November 1989, one of the banners read “Mr. Vigouroux don’t make a ghetto out of Marseille Nord”. Slimani’s project was now being spoken of as an entire “Muslim city”. Second, the protesting representatives of residents associations made use of the same kind of populist rhetoric that was deployed with great talent by the Front National. They argued that the vast majority of native residents – the Marseillais de souche – were opposed to this new project. In Le Méridional the mayor was said to be the “representative of the Muslim and non-Marseillais community”. The newspaper spoke of “the mosque of Vigouroux” and portrayed the mayor as an intellectual who spent more time in Paris and abroad than in Marseilles. By contrast the Front National was willing to listen to the Marseillais de souche and did not think they were racists. The Front National called for a referendum to decide on whether or not a mosque should be built.

Third, the critics argued that building a “super mosque” – a direct reference to Slimani’s project – was problematic because other religious symbols and buildings more truly represented the identity of Marseilles. The churches were the real “patrimony” of the city and the Mayor should be concerned about their upkeep. The idea of building a minaret rising 50 meters in the sky was, in the words of Front National municipal council member Daniel Domenech, “a provocation”.

A cartoon was published in Sémaine Provence in October 1989 (see picture 7.2). On the left side of the cartoon rises the Notre-Dame de la Garde Basilica that was built between 1852 and 1880. It is a large church 162 meters high located on the hill overlooking the harbour. Together with football club Olympique Marseille and the Vieux Port the Basilica is one of the key symbols of the city. On the right side of the cartoon there is what appears to be a duplicate of the building, but the ornaments and the statue have been altered and have been substituted by a half moon and domes. The picture on the right represents the new mosque, which according to the Mayor was to be “like a Cathedral”. The subscript reads “While copying his drawing our cartoonist deliberately has made some mistakes. Can you find them?”. The cartoon figured alongside an article in which the Archbishop of Marseilles justified the construction of a real mosque in Marseilles by comparing the building of an Islamic house of worship to that of a

aux musulmans de pratiquer leur religion, ils sont choqués, en revanche, de voir le Premier magistrat de la ville s’intéresser davantage à l’édification d’une super-mosquée hollywoodienne qu’au patrimoine de la ville”]. Marc Alvarez in Le Méridional 18 November 1989.

301. [“la capacité d’accueil de nos quartiers a déjà atteint le niveau de saturation”] and [“Mr. Vigouroux ne faites pas de Marseille Nord un ghetto”] in Le Provençal “Les CIQ du 15e contre la mosquée” November 19 1989.

302. [“Le sénateur-maire est le représentant de la communauté musulmane et non marseillaise”] in Le Méridional November 20 1989.


305. Le Méridional October 18 1989.
church. The cartoon therefore invited the reader to understand that in the context of Marseilles that comparison was “a mistake” (une erreur).

Fourth, protesters against the “Cathedral Mosque” argued that their opposition should not be equated with the refusal to grant Muslims religious freedom. Often protesters said that “of course” Muslims were entitled to practice their religion. At closer look the protesters also articulated a different view of the smaller places of worship in Marseilles. The advocates of the building of a Cathedral Mosque had spoken of the smaller houses of worship as “mosquées-hangars” and as grungy prayer spaces in “basements and garages”. Protesters, on the other hand spoke more positively about “neighbourhood mosques” (mosquées de quartiers) and suggested to cater to Muslim needs via the construction of “a number of smaller mosques” (plusieurs mosquées de moindre importance).

306. As Le Pen put it “Yes to the mosque…but in the countries of origin” [“Oui à la mosquée… mais dans le pays d’origine”] in Le Méridional 24 November 1989.
307. La Marseillaise November 5 1989.
During the months of October and November 1989 those who protested against the building of a Great Mosque in Marseilles had the wind of public opinion in their sails. The expulsion of two Muslim girls from a public school in Creil in early October led to the first so-called headscarves controversy and led to a wider public debate on Islam, *laïcité*, integration, women’s emancipation and fundamentalism. In the first round of the legislative elections held in the Bouches-du-Rhône department on November 26 1989, Front National candidates won over 30% of the votes in several electoral districts in Marseilles. The headline of an article in *Le Monde* on the outcomes of the elections read “Marseilles: the mosque effect”.

The mayor explains the motives and sets the conditions

On November 27 1989, the mayor of Marseilles spoke in the municipal council, in response to questions raised by the Front National. Vigouroux declared himself to belong to those people “who have never understood what a racial prejudice can mean” and for him, a doctor by training, “mankind was one” (*l’humanité est une*). He cited articles 10 and 11 of the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789 that speak of religious freedom, freedom of conscience and freedom of speech. It was illustrative of the polarised structuring of debates on immigrant integration issues in France in the late 1980s that the issue of building a mosque was framed as being about a confrontation between defenders of Republican and humanist ideals versus political forces representing those who were racially prejudiced and refused to recognise the religious freedom of Muslims. This struggle was then linked to the particular history and handling of diversity in Marseilles.

The mayor mentioned that since 1953 20 Catholic churches and 10 Chapels had been built in the city, 25 synagogues and 4 protestant churches, as well as Armenian, Greek-Orthodox and Russian-Orthodox churches, and a Buddhist pagoda. Enabling the Muslims to construct a Grand Mosque thus seemed to be a matter of fairness and equity. Moreover, so he underlined, one could not talk about building a mosque in France without “also mentioning all those Muslims who have died for our country during the First and Second World wars, and how could we forget those who chose our nationality in difficult times, whilst maintaining their religion”.

In presenting the issue of mosque establishment in these terms the mayor had put a lot of emphasis on the symbolical importance of the project. Building a mosque was about the great moral values of humankind and about the tradition of tolerance that was characteristic of Marseilles. The mayor, however, formulated a number of preconditions for the project to be carried through. These preconditions reflected the wider concerns about the need for an “Islam of France” and for progressive assimilation of newcomers. The mosque would only be built when there was a request of the representatives of Islam in Marseilles. The new building would be “a mosque as a place of worship… and nothing else” and the municipality would not finance its construction. Furthermore, the mosque should become an “instrument of integration” (*outil d’intégration*) not “a hideout of fundamentalists creating divisions” (*un repaire fractionniste*).

310. See Kepel 1994; and Bowen 2006.


312. [“Comment à ce propos ne pas évoquer tous les musulmans morts pour notre pays pendant la première et seconde guerre mondiale, comment oublier ceux qui ont opté pour notre nationalité en des temps difficiles mais en conservant leur religion.”] Speech of Vigouroux in the municipal council of Marseilles on November 27 1989.
The mosque could not be built in the most urbanised centre of the city, but it should also not be established in the periphery in order to avoid “any danger of marginalisation”. The director should have French nationality and the mosque should not come under the control of any foreign government and for this reason it was indispensable that external financial funds should come from different sources.

These ideas and preconditions were in part responses to the debate in the local media. The idea that the new mosque would exclusively function as a house of worship was a hardly concealed critique of Slimani’s plans for a multipurpose Study Centre on Islamic Civilisations. However, most of the other conditions were informed by the wider governing strategy aimed at integration and creating an “Islam of France”. The role of the municipality was now narrowed down to helping the Muslims to come up with a project that would carry the support of the community. In so doing the mayor had firmly focussed the building of a central mosque toward the larger issue of the organisation of Islam in France and in Marseilles.

Organising Islam and representing the Muslim community

The idea of the mayor helping to create a consensus among the different representatives of the Muslims in Marseilles, came at a time when several initiatives were ongoing to create Muslim institutions and interlocutors at the national level. Since 1982 the Algerian government and the Paris Mosque had become increasingly involved in the organisation of Islam in France, by setting up federations in different parts of France and staffing mosques with imams that were remunerated by the Algerian state. One of the federations created under the auspices of the Mosque of Paris was the Fédération des Musulmans du Sud de la France (FRMSF) founded in Marseilles in 1988. This federation was put under the presidency of Bachir Dahmani, an Algerian immigrant worker who had been one of the “working class imams” (imams ouvriers) in Marseilles in the 1960s and who was now the rector of the En Nasr mosque at La Capellette. The other organisational centre of Islam in Marseilles was the mosque in Rue Bon Pasteur in the centre of the city near the Porte d’Aix where Hadj Alili was the rector. The Algerian-born Alili claimed to represent a mosque association that was truly local and that was struggling to maintain its autonomy vis-à-vis the Algerian government and consulate, and the Paris Mosque. Alili’s prestige as a “Muslim spokesman” in Marseilles had grown considerably because he had been invited in March 1989 by the Minister of the Interior, Pierre Joxe, as one of the six Muslim personalities in France that were preparing the formation of the Conseil de Réflexion sur l’islam en France (CORIF). That council was to convene for the first time in March 1990.

In early January the mayor spoke with ten Muslim representatives. It became clear that it was unlikely that a consensual project for a central mosque would emerge soon. Hence the Mayor announced that he could not go any further with the project until the Muslims had come to an agreement.\footnote{313} Mustapha Slimani decided to withdraw his project now that he was confronted with increasing protests and critiques from within the Muslim community.\footnote{314} The FRMSF, affiliated with the Mosque of Paris, was preparing a project of its own. In January it

\footnote{313}{See interview in \textit{Le Méridional} January 11 1990.}
\footnote{314}{“La mosquée divise les musulmans” in \textit{Le Provençal} January 29 1990.}
effectively came up with a proposal that had been developed with the help of the local section of the Algerian *Amicales* and the cultural and educative centre of the Algerian consulate (Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 245). However, apparently the political momentum for the construction of the Cathedral Mosque in Marseilles had already passed. The municipality seemed unwilling to make a clear choice for the faction supported by the Algerian consulate and the Paris Mosque. The idea had initially been to build a mosque for all Muslims in Marseilles. Two months later Alili declared in an interview that there was no urgent need for a mosque in Marseilles. It was far more urgent to create a Muslim cemetery.

In the course of 1990 and 1991 dramatic events at the national and international level would contribute greatly to a reorientation of governing strategies towards Islam in France and also in Marseilles. These events included notably the electoral breakthrough of the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS)) in Algeria. When the military regime decided to annul the elections and repress the FIS, a period of civil war began in Algeria. In addition there were the preparations for the First Gulf War in 1990. The fact that the French government decided to become militarily involved fuelled ethnic tensions in French society. Finally, there was the racist profanation of the Jewish cemetery in Carpentras, not far from Marseilles, in June 1990. This event sent a shockwave through French society, it led to proposals to outlaw the Front National and contributed to the fear that France might be on the brink of a period of inter-ethnic and racist violence.

In response to these various dramatic events and developments the municipality of Marseilles developed a strategy that was aimed at de-escalation. Instead of making recognition of the Muslim community a major issue, municipal policy now focussed on mutual respect and tranquillity between the different communities. The municipality also decided to cooperate primarily with the local Muslim associations that were affiliated with the Paris Mosque. In August 1990 the president of the mosque in Rue Bon Pasteur, Hadj Alili, had made public statements declaring that France had nothing to do in the conflict in the Middle East and that the Americans had dirtied the consecrated places in Saudi Arabia by bringing “alcohol and AIDS” with them (cited in Cesari 1994: 102). As a consequence, the municipality would soon seek to marginalize Alili and the mosque in rue Bon Pasteur. The mosque at La Capelette, affiliated with the Mosque of Paris, was selected as the main institutional partner for the municipality in community affairs.

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315. The plans to build a mosque in Lyons, which had been defended by the Mayor of Lyons, Michel Noir, also in the Fall of 1989 were successful. However, these plans originated in the early 1980s and were carried by an association called the *Association Culturelle Lyonnaise Islamo-française* (ACLIF) dominated by *harkis*. The president of the ACLIF, Rabah Kheliff said during the inauguration of the mosque in 1994 that it would become “a permanent proof that Islam can be practiced in the strict observance of the laws of the French Republic”. Typically in the eyes of French authorities the mosque did very well perform its role as a Grand Mosque, precisely because it was controlled by a rector who was both a *harki* and closely befriended with the representatives of the Paris Mosque. The downside of this municipal strategy of selective cooperation was that the new building that could cater for 1500 worshippers was relatively little frequented by the great majority of Muslims in Lyons. Relations between the mosque of Lyons and the Paris Mosque became less friendly in the late 1990s. See Kepel 1991 and 1994; Battegay 1995 and 1993; and Granet 1993.


317. In 1990 an inter-religious platform called *Marseille Espérance* was constituted that was to exemplify antiracism, tolerance and mutual respect among the different religious communities.
7.3. Algeria, the Paris Mosque and l’islam des jeunes

The French government had decided to support the Algerian military regime in its war against the FIS; it thus had chosen sides in a conflict that became increasingly violent between 1991 and 1994. Militants and sympathisers of the FIS and the Armed Islamic Group (Groupe Islamique Armée) (GIA) sought refuge in France and tried to find support for their cause (Kepel 1994: 318ff.). The civil war in Algeria also reached France in the form of terrorist attacks. The hijacking of a plane ended on the airport of Marseilles in December 1994 and a wave of bombings on subway stations in Paris – the bloodiest one being at the Saint Michel station causing 5 deaths in July 1995 – led to concern. These events stimulated further collaboration between French and Algerian intelligence services. They would indirectly also create new opportunities for the Paris Mosque to impose itself as the essential actor in the organisation of Islam in France.

The government of the Right that had succeeded to power in 1993 developed a tougher stance on issues of immigration and immigrant integration. The personification of this new approach was Charles Pasqua (Rassemblement pour la République, RPR), who was responsible for a new nationality code and new legislation that would allow for more immigration control (Favell 1998: 156ff.). Pasqua had already been Minister of the Interior in the mid-1980s and at the time he had spoken out in favour of an approach to Islam in France in which French authorities would closely collaborate with the authorities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Now back in power he decided to try and see to the development of a “French Islam” under the leadership of the Paris Mosque. Since 1992 the institute was presided over by Dalil Boubakeur, the son of Si Hamza Boubakeur who had been the rector between 1957 and 1982. The new rector was an Algerian civil servant who positioned himself as the unavoidable partner for French authorities if they wanted to create a moderate and liberal “Islam of France”. With support of the Algerian government the Paris Mosque had, not unsuccessfully, tried to find political supporters, notably in the circles of the RPR.

In order to further develop the forming of Islamic representative bodies a text for a Charter of the Muslim Religion (Charte du Culte Musulmane) was written up which was co-signed by Charles Pasqua in December 1994. The charter would serve to create a new Representative Council of the Muslims of France (Conseil Représentatif des Musulmans de France) that would function under the aegis of the Paris Mosque. The ways the French government, and in particular Charles Pasqua, sought to impose an organisational model upon Islam in France in the mid 1990s echoed specific historical traditions. It continued the Gallican and Concorditarian traditions, because of the ways the French state was involved in the constitution of an “Islam of France”. It sought to bind Muslims to the Republic via a Charter signed by the rector of the Paris Mosque. This form of cooptation aimed at creating Islamic institutions that collaborated with French authorities to enhance the formation of a “liberal” Islam was almost an exact copy

318. Geisser and Zemouri argue that the text of this Charter was written by the French political scientist Franck Frégosi. Amongst other things it contained an eulogy on the role of “Muslims” in the French army in the First and Second World Wars and praised the way Muslims in present day France “by their work, their intelligence and their creativity” contributed to the “defence and glory of the Nation and to its prosperity and radiation in the world” (cited in Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 53-54, my translation, M.M.).
of colonial government of Islam.\footnote{See Ternisien 2004; and Geisser and Zemouri 2007.} The Paris Mosque also became the only institution officially qualified to monitor the production of ritually sacrificed meat and to levy a tax on it. The institute would hold this monopoly until 1995.\footnote{The two major other Muslim federations, the FNMF and the UOIF, that until then each supervised an instance of supervision on the production of halal products, contested this unique privilege given to the Paris Mosque. In 1995 the monopoly of the Paris Mosque was ended (Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 53-54).} In other policy domains, however, the government sought to strengthen what it defined as the Republican and secularist integration model. In September 1994, for example, Minister of Education Bayrou had issued a directive requiring school principals to ban all “ostentatious” signs, especially headscarves, from schools (Bowen 2006: 89). The actual effects of these strategies would be limited, however, because a new government acceded to power in 1995. The new Minister of the Interior, Jean-Louis Debré, did not pursue the same strategy of privileging the Paris Mosque (cf. Geisser and Zemouri 2007).

Between 1995 and 1997, and later when a new Socialist government acceded to power, there were no coordinated efforts to regulate issues such as the training of clergy and chaplains, and the marketing of religious products. The Paris Mosque continued to function as the privileged interlocutor and host for French authorities. A constant theme in the self-positioning of the leaders of the Mosque of Paris was that they were able to obstruct the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in France and that they could best represent and develop the “liberal” Islam of France. In order to develop their influence the leaders of the Paris Mosque planned to install a number of regional “muftis” or Islamic legal experts in France who would oversee the activities of the local Muslim associations. Yet, it was clear that the role of other Islamic associations and federations, such as the \textit{Union des organisations islamiques de France} (UOIF) and the \textit{Fédération nationale des musulmans de France} (FNMF), as representatives of Muslims in France could not be denied. One reason for their growing visibility in the institutional landscape was that these Muslim organisations counted many younger Muslims among their constituency.

Early studies on Islam had largely focused on processes of institutionalisation and the history of Islam in France.\footnote{Kepel had celebrated the French Republican model of integration in a comparative study on Islam in France, the United States and Britain and he continuously warned against the risk of younger generations of Muslims embracing radicalism, especially because of the influence of organisations such as the Tabligh, the \textit{Union des Jeunes Musulmans} (UJM) and the UOIF, the latter being, so he argued, “close to the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood” (Kepel 1994: 293ff.).} A new generation of researchers had come up however, who specialised in the study of the so-called “Islam of the young” (\textit{l’islam des jeunes}). They often criticized the alarmist tone in public debate on Islam and articulated a far more optimistic story. According to many scholars for second and third generation Muslims, mostly children of North African immigrants, the attachment to Islam did not primarily mean that they had deeply felt religious beliefs or strictly observed religious practices. Oftentimes speaking of oneself as “Muslim” served as a marker of cultural and ethnic identity.\footnote{See for example Cesari 1994; Babès 1997; Khosrokhavar 1998; and Lamchichi 1999.} The image of the younger generations of Muslims becoming more flexible, liberal and individualised could be represented as a confirmation of the success of the French model of \textit{intégration} and its institutions such as the secular public schools.\footnote{See Wieviorka (ed.) 1996; and Gaspard and Khosrokhavar 1995.}
In the meantime in Marseilles a new political wind was blowing. In 1995 Jean Claude Gaudin (Démocratie Liberale, DL) had replaced Vigouroux as Mayor of the city. Gaudin, a former collaborator of Gaston Defferre, was a devout Catholic known for his conservative ideas on issues related to immigration and Islam. The new municipal government was determined to raise the reputation of Marseilles to the level of a middle-class city and a centre of culture and learning. Speaking of the many ethnic businesses in the city the new Mayor argued that the city centre was now “too coloured” (trop colorée) (Péraldi and Samson 2005: 29ff.). Urban re-development programs resulted in the creation of new apartments, facilities and infrastructure to attract more well off, preferably native French, residents to live in Marseilles.

When it came to the further development of Islamic institutions, Marseilles was confronted with a rather curious development. In the framework of the new Charter of the Muslim Religion, the Paris Mosque had in 1995 nominated Soheib Bencheikh as the “mufti of Marseilles”. Bencheikh was the son of the rector of the Mosque of Paris between 1982 and 1989, Sheikh Abbas. Bencheikh presented himself as a “theologian” who had been sent to educate the Muslim population in Southern France and to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. The media spoke of a young, talented intellectual who had studied in Cairo and Paris. This (self-)presentation did not make Bencheikh particularly popular among Muslim representatives in Marseilles. The new mufti was supposed to work from the mosque at La Capelette. However, almost immediately the relations between Bencheikh and the rector of that mosque, Bachir Dahmani, deteriorated. Bencheikh who lived most of the time in Paris had become a “mufti of Marseilles” without a mosque to preach in and without Muslims to educate. He created a new association, which was called the Comité des Affaires Islamiques (CORAI) which brought together a number of local politicians, lawyers and businessmen with a “Muslim background”. Soon it became clear that Bencheikh had managed to mobilize an audience among the “secular” ethnic elites, but most of all in the national and international media. For the media the new “mufti of Marseilles” was a major “reformer of Islam” in France.

In 1996 Bencheikh presented a plan for a “Grand Mosque” and a “Muslim Institute”. The new centre would bring Islamic practice out “in bright daylight”, it would become “the display window and the opening of the Mosque towards the exterior” (la vitrine et l’ouverture de la Mosquée vers l’exterieur), and a place for encounters and exchanges with non-Muslims. The design and architecture of the new building were represented as “resolutely modern” (ré-solument moderne). The building with a small futuristic minaret could provide for about 2000 Muslim worshippers.

The ultramodern mosque project of Bencheikh supposedly served to contribute to the development of an “Islam of France”. The “mufti” spoke of this Islam in opposition to the kind of Islamic fundamentalism that was being preached and practiced in basements. The Islam that

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324. Between 1986 and 1988 Gaudin had presided a coalition government in the Regional Assembly of the PACA region with the support of the Front National.

325. Bencheikh had studied at the Islamic Institute in Algiers, and at the university of al-Ashar in Cairo and written a thesis at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. His thesis was published as Marianne et le Prophète in 1998.

326. See also chapter 3.

he advocated was modern, respectful of secularism, visible and transparent, educated and open towards French society. These characteristics were in the mosque plan of Bencheikh almost literally transposed upon the building and its architecture. However, there was nothing local about this plan for a Grand Mosque in Marseilles, not in terms of its architecture, which was futuristic and not Provençal, nor in terms of the people who supposedly were going to carry out the project. The most notable example of the latter was the “mufti” himself who was seen as a Parisien not as a Marseillais.

![Picture 7.3 Project Mosque](image_url)

The project could not count on the support of local Muslim representatives. A handful of articles appeared in the local press that mentioned the new plans for a mosque. However, the local media who were well informed had concluded that the new mosque plans were primarily an event that was staged by the isolated “mufti of Marseilles”. It was as if in Marseilles once in a while some individual would come forward and present a project for a large Islamic centre to be built in the city without having a clue about the Muslim association that was to carry out the project. In that sense Bencheikh was a successor of the businessman Slimani.

At the municipality the new plans for a Grand Mosque met with scepticism if not hostility. For the new municipal government the further accommodation of Islam in the city was certainly not a priority, to say the least. The story goes that when Gaudin was confronted with the mufti’s plans for a mosque, he exclaimed: “If you want to build a mosque go and build it in Marrakech”. To the press the new mayor was equally outspoken: “As long as I will be in command, there will be no mosque in Marseilles”.

The new municipality did continue to play the politics of symbolic recognition and presented the inter-religious platform Marseilles Espérance, founded in 1990, as a major illustration of the well-wishing attitude of the municipality towards the different “communities”. At the occasion of Muslim religious celebrations, such as the Sacrifice Feast or the Ramadan, the mayor would visit the mosque at la Capelette, affiliated with the Paris Mosque thus underscoring that this mosque was de facto seen as the major institution of local Islam.

328. Cited in *Le Figaro*, October 18 2001. The statement had been made in 1996. This was confirmed to me in interviews with Mohammed Laqhila and Soheib Bencheikh held in 2001 and 2002.
7.4. Islam of France and the Islamic Religious and Cultural Centre of Marseilles

In November 1999 the Minister of the Interior in the government of Lionel Jospin, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, initiated a Consultation in view of developing representative bodies and institutions that would allow Islam to “join the other religions at the table of the Republic”. The Consultation would last from 1999 until the Spring of 2003 when Regional Muslim Councils were elected and the French Council of the Muslim Religion (CFCM) was created. The Consultation made the need for adequate mosques in France an issue on the national policy agenda. The Consultation’s working group on Islamic houses of worship that worked closely together with officials of the Office of Organised Religions, a part of the Ministry of the Interior, issued an intermediate report in June 2000. The same year the High Council on Integration (HCI) also published a report entitled Islam in the Republic that discussed the situation of mosques at length. Both reports helped to characterize the situation of mosques in France as a problématique that called for a coordinated response by the national government, not only to improve the conditions for Muslim religious practice but also to avoid a further divergence of policy and legal practices across France.

The working group on Islamic houses of worship observed that the vast majority of mosques in France were still prayer halls in “discarded factories, garages, premises, and sometimes even simple basements”. Despite the fact that there were now about five million Muslims in France “only eight mosques with a perceptible minaret” existed in the whole country. Many Muslims were said to believe that municipal authorities systematically obstructed their legitimate demands to create more adequate houses of worship. The advisory council argued that the absence of noticeable and decent houses of worship created “a feeling of injustice, which turns itself against public authorities”.


330. By consequence the Consultation also involved successive French governments and Ministers of the Interior, the latter also being responsible for the Central Office of Organised Religions (Bureau Central des Cultes). These Ministers were Jean-Pierre Chevènement (1997 to 2000) and Daniel Vaillant (2000 to 2002) under the Socialist government, and Nicolas Sarkozy (2002 to 2004) and Dominique de Villepin (2004-2005) under the government of the Right. Despite the changes in political leadership the continuity of the Consultation was maintained because a group of councillors worked on the dossier (see Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 69ff.). The second elections for the Muslim Councils were held in 2005 and the third are to take place in 2008. On the Consultation see notably Laurence (ed.) (2005); Laurence and Vaisse (2006); Bowen 2006; Jansen 2006; and Geisser and Zemouri (2007).

331. The 1995 report of the HCI had also suggested that building “decent mosques” might help to combat radicalism (Peter 2008).

332. These were amongst others the mosques in Paris, Mantes-la-Jolie, Évry, Roubaix, and Lyons. The HCI report also mentioned that most prayer spaces were located in already existing premises that had been converted for the new function (HCI 2000: 36).

333. [“un sentiment d’injustice qui se retourne contre les pouvoirs public”] (HCI 2000: 37).
Allowing for the building of Great Mosques thereby seemed to be a way of responding to these demands for recognition. A similar point was made in an editorial of *Le Monde* published in March 2001 and entitled “constructing mosques”:

the incorporation of a “Cathedral-Mosque” in the urban landscape stimulates the integration of Muslims, many of whom have French nationality. Because, beyond the needs of the worshippers, the establishment of a Grand Mosque is first and foremost a symbol: it represents the integration and the recognition of Islam.\(^{334}\)

The policy reports showed that different municipalities had chosen different strategies. In Rennes, Nantes and Montpellier the municipal authorities had directly or indirectly financed some of the building costs of mosques. In order to bypass legal obstacles, they had officially spoken of the creation of Islamic “cultural centres” or municipal “multipurpose spaces” (*salles polyvalentes*) that were being rented out to “civil associations”. In larger cities such as Strasbourg and Toulouse there were ongoing negotiations regarding the building of a Grand City Mosque. Whereas several municipalities had thus become more supportive of the creation of “real mosques” (*vraies mosquées*),\(^{335}\) other municipal governments refused any kind of accommodation and even had recourse to semi- or illegal strategies such as systematically using the municipality’s “right to dispensation” (*droit de préemption*) to claim building sites in order to prevent the building of new mosques. These policy reports confirmed that Muslims in France were in fact confronted with practices of unequal treatment in their demands to create prayer houses.

In 2000 a directive (*circulaire*) was drawn up by the French government, reminding local authorities of the most important prevailing legal obligations and of the possibilities to facilitate the creation of houses of worship. These included notably the possibility of letting out real estate spaces in long term leases for a symbolic amount (*bail emphytéotique*) to Muslim associations as well as possibilities of financing cultural activities.\(^{336}\) It was relatively new for the national government to so explicitly address municipal governments with the request to help improve the situation of Islamic houses of worship.

Another development was the introduction of overview studies on the total number of mosques and their housing situation. That policy practice would turn out to be crucial for the subsequent development of policy frameworks and approaches.\(^{337}\) Different institutions and organisations were in need of a more accurate overview of mosques in France. For example, the creation of the electoral lists for the elections of the Muslim Councils required insight in

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\(^{336}\) “Des élus de mauvaise foi” in *L’Express* June 15 2000.

\(^{337}\) In earlier times only rough estimates had been made of the total number of mosques and mosque associations in France. This kind of overview had been made by bodies such as the CIEMM, the BOLIM, the ADRI, and the Domestic Intelligence Service.
the surface of houses of worship. The Consultation’s working group needed a description of the housing situation of mosques in order to begin with the development of plans for improvement. Individual Muslims experienced the need for more information on the location of mosques in France, for example in order to know where to worship while sojourning in another city. The association La Boussole made a directory (annuaire) of mosques in the Paris region in 2000 followed by a very complete and detailed directory of mosques in the whole of France in 2003 (Ternisien 2004: 66).

7.4.1. Mosque building on the political agenda in Marseilles: “Everybody agrees that there should be a mosque in Marseilles”

Against the wider background of the public discussions about Islam, the building of a mosque reappeared on the municipal agenda in Marseilles. In November 1999 a number of municipal council members and city district politicians who presented themselves as “of the Muslim faith” (de confession musulmane), came up with a petition demanding the creation of a mosque and an institute of Islamic culture in the city. The demand that a mosque be built was inscribed into the political program of the coalition of the Left parties (La gauche plurielle) for the municipal elections of March 2001.

Even though the issue of building a mosque thus became a part of the political debate around the municipal elections it did not provoke a great polemic. In fact, an observer of public discussions in Marseilles in 2000 and 2001 would probably be struck by the level of agreement on the need to build a mosque in the city. In the interviews conducted at the time with political leaders, chairmen of Muslim organisations, chairmen of residents association and individual citizens there appeared to be a wide consensus on the matter. The president of the mosque in La Capelette, Dahmani, said: “The Muslims are numerous. A symbol should be given to them”. The director of the Mayor’s Cabinet, Claude Bertrand, confirmed: “Marseilles needs a Grand Mosque”. The president of one of the residents associations in the Northern districts of Marseilles argued that he and his constituency thought that the mosque should not be built in “their” district, but nevertheless stressed that they agreed “there should be a mosque

338. Prayer spaces were assigned one grand elector per hundred square meters. Great Mosques and prayer spaces larger than 800 square meters receive fifteen grand electors and the Paris Mosque eighteen (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 300).

339. The Regional Muslim Councils that began to function in 2003 oftentimes also counted among their priorities to make an overview study on the total number of prayer spaces in the region and to make an inventory of the adequacy of mosques in view of the needs of the Muslim population.


342. Interview with Claude Bertrand April 17 2002.
in Marseilles”. Also the president of the platform of all residents’ associations in the city underlined that a mosque was necessary because it was not “satisfactory that mosques be located in garages”. Somehow stating that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” had become something banal and self-evident. Given the long and contentious history of the idea of building a mosque in the city it seems rather puzzling that such a wide agreement should now emerge.

To understand how this came about it is necessary to initially look at two different, yet related, aspects: first, the ways the need for a mosque was represented via specific images, a vocabulary and comparisons with the housing situation of other religious communities in Marseilles; second, the way the phrase “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” functioned as the cement in a discourse coalition of local actors who had quite different and even diverging understandings of the issue. One of the images that most strongly evoked the need for “a mosque” was the photograph of Muslims praying out in the open in front of the mosque in Rue Bon Pasteur on Friday afternoon. Pictures of this scene had appeared regularly in local newspapers, weeklies and broadcasts in Marseilles. The petition in favour of a mosque spoke of Muslims forced to pray in “unworthy and degrading ‘religious shelters’” and of Muslims “practicing Islam in a state of disgrace!”. It had stipulated that the absence of a Grand Mosque was an “injustice” that was illustrative of the marginalisation of Islam in Marseilles. The need for a Grand Mosque was also systematically linked to the housing situation of the other religious communities in Marseilles, especially those of immigrant origin, such as the Jewish and the Armenian-Christian communities. A short broadcast on the mosque project on local television showed images of churches juxtaposed with the image of Muslim men worshipping in Rue Bon Pasteur while the voice-over stated:

In Marseilles, the main religious communities have decent places of worship in the city, with the exception of the Muslims, who nonetheless represent 200,000 people. Here, the synagogue, there, the Armenian church, but no Grand Mosque.

Another omnipresent image was evoked via the phrase “the Islam of the basements” (l’islam des caves). It helped to construct an image of Muslim religious practice in concealed and sombre spaces. A Grand Mosque would make Islamic practice “more transparent” and a local journalist suggested that the establishment of a house of worship that was “worthy of the name” would

343. Interview with Marius Rodriguez and René Colo January 22 2002. The observation that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” was followed by the remark “… but not in a neighbourhood like ours” [“mais pas dans un quartier comme le nôtre”].

344. [“ce n’est pas satisfaisant … des mosquées qui se retrouvent dans des garages.”] Interview with Mrs Cordier March 29 2002.

345. See for instance the picture in the weekly Ventilo October 18-24 2001.

346. [“abris de culte indignes et dégradants”] and [“vivre l’islam dans la honte!”] For complete reference see footnote above.


348. [“À Marseille, les principales communautés religieuses disposent en ville de lieux de culte décents, à l’exception des musulmans, qui représentent pourtant 200,000 personnes. Ici, la synagogue, là l’église arménienne, mais pas de grande mosquée.”] Item “Projet de grande mosquée à Marseille” Woche May 5 2000.
be “a way of fighting against the different forms of extremism”.349 Others argued that a large mosque would enable Muslims to invite non-Muslims to attend cultural activities and celebrations at the occasion of the Sacrifice Feast and the Ramadan.350

In this context it was reasonable to declare that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” (il faut une mosquée à Marseille). In this way a discourse coalition was being formed around the idea that a mosque should be built in Marseilles. A discourse coalition has been defined as a group of actors sharing a social construct. In contrast to a coalition based on shared interests, a discourse coalition can also exist when the actors seemingly agree on an issue by uttering the same (or similar) catch phrases or slogans, albeit sometimes for different reasons and with different understandings of the exact meaning of the statement or slogan.

For political decision makers in Marseilles it was important that there now seemed to exist such a wide consensus. The re-elected Mayor, Jean-Claude Gaudin, announced during the opening speech of his new six year mandate in June 2001 that he would start a process that should lead to the creation of an “Islamic cultural centre” that would include the “Grand Mosque, but also a library and a school, rooms for receptions and meetings”.351 The municipality would start with a series of hearings to find “representative interlocutors of the Muslim community”. Once those interlocutors would have been identified they would, in collaboration with the municipality, decide on a location for the new complex. The Mayor also announced that the municipality was willing to make public subventions available for the activities that would be organised in the cultural centre.

7.4.2. Everybody agrees… on what?

Now that the new municipal government had given its support, the coming of a Grand Mosque seemed finally within reach. However, at a closer look underneath the general support for “a mosque” there existed diverging ideas. When reading through the various statements and arguments in favour of the new mosque made in the period between 1999 and the summer of 2001 one finds they could be linked to radically different views on the integration of the Muslim community in Marseilles. Analytically the following three views could be reconstructed, even though, at least in 2001, neither the actors themselves nor the media represented the ongoing debates in terms of these different views:

In a pluralist view emphasis was put on the Great Mosque’s dual symbolic and community function for the Muslim community. A “real” mosque would cater to the needs of Muslims

349. [“un lieu de culte digne de ce nom (…) un moyen de lutter contre les intégrismes”] in “Le ministre de la Ville et la communauté musulmane” in *La Marseillaise* January 11 2000. The idea was also mentioned in the interview with the presidents of the residents associations in Marseilles: [“Et le fait d’avoir ces mosquées cachées permet surtout le développement des theses des ultras, donc, tout le monde pense que ça sera une bonne chose qu’il y aurait des mosquées.”] Interview with Mrs. Cordier March 29 2002.


351. [“un centre culturel musulman, la notion de centre culturel englobant bien sûr la grande mosquée, mais aussi une bibliothèque et une école, des lieux d’accueil et de réunion.”] Speech of Gaudin, municipal council Marseilles, June 25 2001.
on Fridays and during religious celebrations, but it would also fill the Muslim community with pride and should serve as symbol of the recognition of Islam.\textsuperscript{352} A second view, a Republican-assimilationist view, suggested that the building of a mosque was first and foremost a step in the development of an “Islam of France”. In this perspective the new mosque would be an illustration of the willingness of Muslims in Marseilles to choose for France and to become “French Muslims”. In a third view, a Mediterranean view, the future Grand Mosque was primarily represented as a cultural centre that would enable both the Muslim and the non-Muslim inhabitants of Marseilles to rediscover Islamic culture. In this view the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris was a major point of reference.

These different views could be distinguished analytically, but they were not crucial to the way the actors perceived the debate. What was at the forefront of the interpretations of the debate was that there was a wide agreement on the need for “a mosque”. Until now I have argued that this should be explained by two factors: the specific images and vocabulary in which the need for a mosque was represented and the formation of a wide discourse coalition around the phrase “there should be a mosque in Marseilles”. However, there were two additional factors.

For a long time it had seemed that building a mosque in Marseilles was primarily a response to the needs and interests of Muslims in the city. However, when reading through the newspapers and interviews in the early years of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century it appeared as if there were also clear benefits for the city as a whole. Some people argued, for example, that the ongoing efforts to create Islamic institutions created an urgent need to have a Grand Mosque in Marseilles in order that the city function as one of the key institutional centres of the newly emerging “Islam of France.” Marseilles should not be marginalized in the field of Muslim institutions in France at it should not lose out to cities such as Paris, Lyons and Strasbourg. Another argument suggested that the building of a Grand Mosque would further add to the view of Marseilles as one of the few larger cities in France that had been able to successfully deal with immigrant integration issues. Social researchers and journalists had repeatedly argued that “\textit{une exception marseillaise}” existed and that this might explain why Marseilles was one of the few larger cities that had somehow managed to avoid outbursts of rioting and violence in the \textit{banlieus}.\textsuperscript{353} Some academics even spoke of Marseilles as “a model, a laboratory, and a paradigmatic example of peaceful cohabitation” (Étienne 2001: 168-170). The director of the City Mayor’s Cabinet, Claude Bertrand, thought that building a mosque fitted well in a local strategy of mixing and integrating different communities:

\begin{quote}
Marseilles is without doubt, I would say, the European city which most successfully conveys this function of a melting pot (...) that manages to integrate quite well all the communities,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{352} Bachir Dahmani observed: “A Christian child can speak about the temple or the church where he worships, a Jewish child about his synagogue, but a little Muslim will not speech about his basement or his garage, because he is ashamed. We want clean, dignified and visible houses of worship for the Musulms ... We want a real mosque.” [“Un enfant chrétien peut parler du temple ou de l’église où il va prier, un enfant juif de sa synagogue, mais un petit musulman ne parlera pas de sa cave ou de son garage, parce qu’il l’a honte. Nous voulons des lieux de culte propres, dignes et visibles pour les musulmans… Nous voulons une vraie mosquée.”] cited in \textit{Le Pavé} January 19 2000.

\textsuperscript{353} During the period of riots in French suburbs in the autumn of 2005 Marseilles was again spoken of as one of the few cities in France where inter-ethnic tensions played a minor role. The idea of Marseilles as an exception in France was also mentioned in the Dutch press. See for instance “Uitzicht op zee” in \textit{de Volkskrant} November 21 2005.
and one of the stakes of the construction of a Grand Mosque is to go further in that role of integration and melting pot.\footnote{354}{“Marseille est sans doute, je dirai la cité européenne qui réussit le mieux cette fonction de melting pot (…) qui intègre assez bien toutes les communautés et que l’un des enjeux de la construction d’une grande mosquée c’est d’aller plus loin dans ce rôle d’intégration et de melting pot”] Interview with Claude Bertrand April 17 2002. During the consultations Bertrand also invoked this image, arguing: “We know that it is about time that Marseilles, this most successful laboratory in the domain of integration in France, displays the Muslim presence. It is about time, and the Mayor is convinced of this, that Marseilles says to the Muslim community that it is an integral part of this city”. [“Nous savons qu’il est temps que Marseille, laboratoire le plus réussi de France dans le domaine de l’intégration, affiche la présence Musulmane. Il est temps, et le Maire en est persuadé, que Marseille dise à la Communauté Musulmane qu’elle fait partie intégrante de cette ville.”] Official Hearings of the Municipality of Marseilles on the Project for an Islamic Centre (HMMIC) [Comptes-Rendus de la Réunion sur le Centre Culturel et Cultuel Musulman] (2001-2002), September 20 2001 p.9. In the annex is a list of the people who were heard during each hearing from which fragments are cited. If relevant the name and function of the speaker is mentioned also.}

Also the creation of an Islamic “cultural centre” could be seen as a gain for the city as a whole, especially because there were ongoing attempts to use the “Mediterranean identity” of Marseilles to advertise the city’s rich history and cultural life. Major projects had been developed in the 1990s in the domains of culture, education and tourism.\footnote{355}{These included for example the further development of the renovated 17th century hospital La Vieille Charité that now catered to museums, cultural activities, art exhibitions and various prestigious research institutes. There was also the creation of the Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l’Homme located close to Marseilles in Aix-en-Provence in 1997 and the building of a spectacular new public library in the city centre that opened in 2003. In addition there were plans to host the new national museum on the history of immigration in Marseilles. In the end the museum was created in Paris however.}

The establishment of a large “centre of Islamic culture and learning” seemed to go well with that.

An additional reason why supporting the building of a mosque seemed inevitable was related to the way extreme right parties had succeeded in almost monopolising the opposition to the mosque. In declaring their agreement with the idea that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” speakers were also positioning themselves in opposition those who were “against the mosque”. In Marseilles the Mouvment National Républicain (MNR) – a split off from the Front National created in 1999 – had protested against the new plans for a Grand Mosque as a prominent theme in their political campaign for the 2001 municipal elections. Building a Grand Mosque was said to be illustrative of the cultural “colonisation” and the “islamisation” of the city and a petition in protest of the mosque was headed: “No minarets in Marseilles”.\footnote{356}{“Marseille, ville Musulmane? Bruno Mégret dit non !” Allez Marseille No 7 June 2000.}

In June 2001 the leader of the MNR, Bruno Mégret, protested in the municipal council against the construction of a “monumental mosque”. He warned that building a Grand Mosque would result in a clash of civilisations because there were no examples of a “peaceful and harmonious co-existence of monumental mosques and cathedrals”.\footnote{357}{[“une grande ville du sud de l’Europe qui doit s’affirmer entre Barcelone et Gênes. Et non pas un port du nord de la Méditerranée ouvert à tous les vents de l’immigration.”] Allez Marseille No 7, June 2000. These ideas are an important part of the political rhetoric of the extreme right in Marseilles, but they can also be heard in more mainstream branches of local political debate and public opinion. According to the local journalist José d’Arrigo, for instance, the Algerian migrants “fill the prisons” [“peuplent la prison”] and were to blame for the more general degradation and downfall of the city. What used to be a prestigious boulevard –le Canebière- had become “l’avenue Chich-Kebab” where only “oriental sandwiches” were sold, and Marseilles seems to have become no...}
French and anti-Republican”. In that particular discursive and political context, answering in the negative to the question “are you in favour of the building of a mosque in Marseilles” simply was not a very attractive thing to do for native, non-Muslim French politicians or citizens.

An important effect of this structuring of the debate was that the residents associations in the North of Marseilles, traditionally one of the crucial organisational actors mobilizing against the building of a mosque, now declared that they also thought “there should be a mosque in Marseilles”. However, as they hastened to add: “but not in a neighbourhood such as ours”. This can, rightly, be understood as an illustration of the discursive strategy known as Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) in which one argues that one is not opposed as such to the construction of a facility but simply objects to the location that has been selected. Something else was going on as well, however. In fact, representatives of residents’ associations seemed to agree with the idea that only the extreme right was diametrically opposed to the idea of building a mosque in Marseilles. Hence, declaring in a general way that one agreed that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” was also a way of avoiding a positioning as supporter of the extreme right. The following fragment is taken from an interview with two representatives of two different residents associations in the Northern districts of Marseilles:

R: everybody agrees with the establishment of a mosque. A Grand Mosque, a cultural and religious centre” (...) [have you had the occasion to speak about this with the residents’ association, with the residents? (M.M.)] Of course, of course everyone agrees that the Muslims will have a place of worship and places of worship, not a single one [but is there no one who says…, M.M]. “Of course, there are those who say, … no there aren’t any who say, ... yes, there are extremists, namely the Front National. C: but even in our residents association there are people who do not accept that France is multi-religious... For the interviewees the most important discursive technique to enable them to be taken seriously in the debate – and to avoid being immediately put aside as extremists – was to also declare that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles”.

For the interviewees the most important discursive technique to enable them to be taken seriously in the debate – and to avoid being immediately put aside as extremists – was to also declare that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles”.

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359. Representatives of residents associations in Marseilles said, for example, that it was far better to establish the mosque, not in the suburbs where they lived, but in the centre of the city so that it could really be a “symbol of recognition” for the Muslim community. This is also what representatives of the residents association had suggested to members of the CIME who visited them in the Spring of 2001. Interview with Marius Rodriguez and René Colo January 22 2002.

360. “[Alors, tout le monde est d’accord pour la création d’une mosquée. Une grande mosquée, un centre culturel et cultuel (...) [Vous avez eu l’occasion d’en parler avec les CIQ, avec les résidents?, M.M.] Bien sur, évidemment tout le monde est d’accord pour que les musulmans aient un lieu de culte et des lieux de cultes, pas un seul [Il n’y a pas de gens qui disent…, M.M.] Bien sur si il y en a qui disent, non il n’y en a pas qui disent, oui, il y a les extrémistes, à savoir le Front National. R: mais même dans notre CIQ il y a des gens qui n’admettent pas que la France est multiculturelle…]” Interview with Marius Rodriguez and René Colo January 22 2002.

361. The interview fragment is also interesting because of the way the representatives of the residents’ association tried simultaneously to reproduce the trope that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” and to suggest a possible alternative approach to tackle the lack of adequate space for Islamic worship. Instead of thinking about
7.4.3. Development of the project and leadership over the Muslim community

The hearing committee created by the Mayor in June 2001 met with about eighty different people until January 2002: namely, leaders of different political parties, representatives of mosque committees, imams and Muslim associations, representatives of migrants and of residents associations, ethnic businessmen; priests and academic experts. Usually the meetings lasted about 30 minutes in which the members of the hearing committee explained the municipality’s ideas and objectives for the Islamic centre, and then invited the visiting guests to elaborate their ideas and opinions. The transcripts of these hearings provide an extremely valuable resource to understand ideas about the mosque and about Islam in Marseilles.

Interestingly the idea that the Grand Mosque should solve the lack of adequate prayer spaces seemed to have been abandoned along the way. At stake was a Grand Mosque that would function as a symbol of recognition and that would be coupled to an Islamic cultural centre. In an interview I conducted with Mohamed Laqhila, a representative of the Green Party of Moroccan origin, I enquired whether the problems with the housing of Islamic worship could not better be solved by building a number of mosques in different parts of the city. This, so he argued, was to misunderstand the symbolic meaning of the new mosque and to explain he made a comparison with the Hassan II mosque in Casablanca:

Hassan II wanted to have a symbolical mosque… in Morocco there are mosques in every street, just like there are churches by the way, but he wanted something really symbolic… Marseilles… in fact… we have always fought, I would say for a century, to have such a symbolical mosque… like the other large cities, and also like there are symbolical cathedrals and there are symbolical synagogues.

The Islamic cultural centre would also perform very different functions and cater to very different activities than Islamic associations spread out in the city. The new cultural centre would also serve to train imams and to accommodate symposiums, lectures and all kinds of activities that could also be attended by non-Muslims. This narrowing down of the mosque problematic also had consequences for the ways the municipal government and officials envisioned their tasks. The municipality would help the Muslim community to carry out the project that would require administrative, organizational and legal skills. It would also try to offer financial support, for example by giving a plot of land in a long term lease and by subsidising the cultural centre. Most

the building of a single Grand Mosque the interviewee suggests that Muslims in Marseilles should have “places of worship, not a single one”. As I will argue the idea of creating a number of more adequate mosques became important in the discussions in Marseilles later on.

362. It became a practice to begin each meeting with three questions: 1) do you agree on the idea of establishing a religious and cultural centre 2) do you think that the suggested location, Saint-Louis, is appropriate and 3) do you agree with the formation of an association that will represent the entire Muslim community and all its components, to carry out this program?

363. [“Hassan II a voulu avoir une mosquée symbolique… au Maroc il y a des mosquées dans toutes les rues, comme il y a des églises d’ailleurs, mais il a voulu quelque chose de vraiment symbolique… Marseille… en fait… on s’est toujours battu depuis je dirai depuis un siècle hein, pour avoir une mosquée symbole… comme les autres grandes villes, et comme d’ailleurs il y a des cathédrales symboliques et comme il y a aussi des synagogues symboliques…”] Interview with Mohammed Laqhila November 21 2001.
of all, at least in this phase, the municipal officials saw it as their task to see to it that a consensual project would be developed that would bring the Muslim community together around “the mosque of Marseilles”. Moreover, the Southern French city didn’t want to repeat the mistakes of Paris and Lyons, where the so-called Central Mosques were little frequented by “ordinary Muslims” because they were seen as symbols of a co-opted Muslim elite. In Marseilles, by contrast, the idea was that the future Grand Mosque would really be experienced by the local Muslim community as their major house of worship. In other words this project could show how in 2001 a municipality could really contribute to the development of an “Islam of France”.

After a few hearings at the City Hall of Marseilles the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York took place on September 11. Initially Muslim leaders and French politicians alike hurried to declare that Islamic practice in France had nothing to do with Islamic radicalism and international terrorism. But the events did function as catalysts for debates and did inform policy responses, though not in a univocal manner. One of the earliest interpretations was that the attacks had strengthened the case for government support for a peaceful and integrated “Republican Islam”. In this sense, public authorities were called upon to speed up their efforts to accommodate Muslim organisations in France.

On September 20 the local newspaper La Provence announced: “The Grand Mosque withstands the attacks … The anti-American attacks have not slowed down the project, quite the contrary!” The article quoted Salah Bariki, a member of the hearing committee, saying: “the attacks are one thing, something dramatic, Islam in Marseilles is another thing, that has nothing to do with it”. In November 2001 the hearing committee announced that the contours of a broad consensus on major issues could be drawn. There was wide support for the idea itself to build a Grand Mosque and to combine it with a cultural centre, but also for the most probable location, namely a building site in St. Louis located in the Northern part of the city. That location was a large terrain where the major slaughterhouses of Marseilles had been located in the past and that had been used during the past 10 years to cater to the ritual slaughtering of lambs during the yearly Sacrifice Feast. The municipality had announced that it wanted to give the land out in a long-term lease for a symbolical amount. The optimism that was voiced in the local media

364. The municipal officials in Marseilles compared their endeavours with those of other bigger cities such as Lyons and Paris. Only Marseilles was trying to do better in trying to create a Grand Mosque that could carry away the support of the entire Muslim community in the city. This idea became clear when a delegation of municipal officials from Strasbourg visited Marseilles to learn from the experiences in Southern France in 2002. In Strasbourg the project for a central mosque had resulted in increasing disagreements both between the municipal authorities and Muslim representatives and between different groups within the Muslim community itself. A possibility that was being considered was to allow two large mosques to be built. During their visit to Southern France the delegation members could hear that such a development was unthinkable in Marseilles. The municipal officials explained they had chosen to initiate a consultation process that would enable a consensual project for a single Central Mosque to emerge. Interview with Salah Bariki March 21 2002.

365. For a discussion of the impact of 9/11 on Muslims in Western Europe and in France in particular, see Vaisse and Laurence 2006.

366. The journal La Provence is a result of a merger of the former newspapers Le Méridional and Le Provençal.

367. [“Les attentats c’est une chose, dramatique, l’Islam à Marseille c’en est une autre qui n’a rien à voir.”] Salah Bariki in La Provence September 20 2001. When the president of the En Nasr Mosque Committee, Bachir Dahmani, was heard on September 19 he stated that he “clearly and totally condemned extremism”. Claude Bertrand replied that there should not be any connection between the events in the United States and the creation of the Islamic centre in Marseilles.
turned out to have been premature. Already in the Fall of 2001 major cracks in the seemingly widely shared consensus had begun to appear. Two years later it seemed that the whole project had come to a standstill. What had happened?

**Actors and coalitions and Islam in Marseilles**

Part of the explanation of what happened between 2001 and 2003 – an explanation that has been well developed in the French media and in several articles – points to the struggles over interests and power between two factions of Muslim organisations in Marseilles seeking to gain control over the Regional Muslim Council and the mosque project. The faction that would succeed in controlling the two new Islamic institutions would *ipse factum* become the most important interlocutor for Muslim affairs in Marseilles. It would also enable this group to build a beautiful mosque and possibly to set up an imam training program, not to mention the many financial gains as a result of levying taxes on certified halal products and receiving municipal subsidies for cultural activities. Because the stakes were so high, the governments of North African countries became increasingly involved, notably seeking to influence the outcomes of the elections for the new regional and national Councils for the Muslim Religion. The Moroccan and Algerian consulates in Marseilles intervened directly and tried to support their respective allies in France.

There were also ethnic, generational and denominational differences that divided the Muslim population and Muslim organisations. Younger generations of Muslim, often better educated and fluent in French, were challenging the predominant position in matters of community affairs of first generation members of mosque organisations and so-called “working class imams” such as Dahmani. Islamic associations representing Muslims of Comorian, West African and Moroccan origin challenged the dominance of the Algerian organisations and representatives. There was the ongoing struggles between those mosque organisations that were affiliated with the Paris Mosque (and thereby with the Algerian government) and other mosque organisations that either positioned themselves as “independent” or that were affiliated with other Islamic federations such as the FNMF, supported by the Moroccan state, or the UOIF. Finally, there was a group of self-styled “secular Muslims”, mostly Franco-Maghrebis who had been active in the secular immigrant organisations and in local civic society and politics, who argued that the organisation of Islam in France should not merely be the affair of “religious officials” (*les religieux*). These “secular Muslims” presented themselves more and more as viable

368. See for example Cesari 2005b; Geisser 2001; and Geisser and Zemouri 2007.

369. This self-positioning plays on the meanings the word “lay” and “secular” that can both be translated as “laïc” in French. It can be used to speak of someone who is “a lay person” (*un laïc*) and therefore does not have a religious function, for instance because he is not a priest or a Rabbi. In addition, the expression can be used to refer to someone who does not practice his or her religion actively, for example in speaking of oneself as “I am laïc, I do not practice” (“je suis laïc, je ne pratique pas”). In the context of discussions on Islam in France, however, the term is also used to speak of people who are said to have a “Muslim cultural background” (*de culture musulmane*). In the context of discussions on the building of a mosque in Marseilles, people self-styled themselves as “secular Muslims” to demand a say in the project as members of “the Muslim community”. The role of the “secular Muslims” in the municipal hearing committee – Myriam Salah-Eddine, Tahar Rahmani and Salah Bariki – was fiercely criticised by others who demanded a say in the dossier. Bariki and Rahmani were ironically portrayed as people who “had never seen a mosque from the inside”, but now occupied a key position in the debate as self-styled “secular Muslims”. Interview Mohamed Laqhila November 21 2001. See also Mas 2006.
partners for municipal authorities, because they were more “liberal” and also more experienced in setting up activities and managing associations than the religious officials.

In the summer of 2001 these underlying divergences and struggles had resulted in emergence of two factions of Muslim associations. There were those who organised around the mosque at La Capelette and the other mosques that were affiliated to the FRMSF that was presided over by Bachir Dahmani and supported by the Paris Mosque. These institutions claimed to represent a silent majority of mostly middle-aged and older Muslims in Marseilles who wanted to practice their religion in a calm and respectful way. This group had reconciled itself with the “mufti” who was said to be a talented “intellectual” and a “courageous theologian” working on the “reform of Islam” and who could help to encourage young generations of Muslims in Marseilles to choose a more “liberal” interpretation of Islam. This faction had created a new platform in June 2001 called the Collective of Muslim Associations of Marseilles (Collectif des Associations Musulmanes de Marseille, CAMM) (Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 246).

The other faction consisted of Muslim associations and individuals who had joined forces around a so-called Council of Imams of Greater Marseilles (Conseil des Imams de Marseille et des Environs, CIME) that had been founded in 1999. The CIME presented itself as a gathering of younger imams of different ethnic origins (Algerian, Moroccan, Comoro) who wanted to exchange their religious knowledge and cooperate among themselves. The platform was to help “to allow the Muslims of greater Marseilles to have the premises, the structures and the equipments necessary for the practice of Islam, in the best conditions”. The CIME presented itself as an independent and local organisation of educated second generation Muslims, born and raised in Marseilles. Others, however, questioned the independence of the CIME and said the platform was being supported by the Moroccan consulate.

By November 2001 the rivalry between the two factions had become well known in the local media. The competition between the two factions had not only become more public, it had also become more vicious. The group around the CAMM tried to present itself as defenders of a liberal “Islam of France”. Soheib Bencheikh spoke of the CIME as a group of “students who have started to preach because of a lack of imams” and he warned of the dangers of radicalism. Imams who were not qualified and educated tried to “compensate their lack of knowledge with a certain rigorist interpretation of Islam”.

The members of the CIME, from their side, insisted on the need for Islam in Marseilles to develop independently from the Paris Mosque. They argued that the time had come for the municipality to recognise the newly emerging grass roots organisations that reflected the actual ethnic and denominational diversity of Islam in Marseilles.

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370. The “mufti” was represented in these terms in an issue of the French weekly Marianne of January 7 2001.
371. [“Oeuvrer pour permettre aux musulmans de Marseille et ses environs d’avoir les édifices, les structures et les installations nécessaires à l’exercice, dans les meilleurs conditions, du culte musulman”] Brochure CIME, January 2001. The CIME claimed to represent the vast majority of the imams working in the different mosques in Marseilles and surrounding cities, such as Aix-en-Provence. However, most of the active members were affiliated with the Mosque near the Flea market and with the Al Qods mosque in the city centre. In 2000, one year after its founding, all the imams who were affiliated with the Paris Mosque had left the council.
372. HMMIC July 12 2001 p.10 and interview with Soheib Bencheikh March 16 2002. In view of possibilities to develop the mosque project both factions set up new organisational structures in 2002. These new platform organisations served to demonstrate that they were able to bring together a large number of local Muslim associations and qualified individuals. The leaders of the CIME created the Coordination des Musulmans de Marseille (COMUM). The FRMSF created the earlier mentioned Collectif des Associations Musulmanes de Marseille (CAMM).
Municipal officials wanted to avoid choosing between the two factions. The rivalry between the CIME and the CAMM was all the more regrettable because the hearings had revealed that a wide consensus existed both on the idea of creating a mosque and on the kind of centre that should be built. At least that was the way members of the hearing committee represented their conclusions to the media. This way of representing the problems was certainly not incorrect, but it had as a correlate the suggestion that there was in the end only a struggle of influence and interests between two factions. However, the competition between the two factions was linked to diverging understandings of the mosque as a symbol and on the functioning of the Islamic centre. These divergences became all the more important as they were linked to differing ideas about the incorporation of Islam in Marseilles and in France, an issue that became even more important in 2002 and 2003.

7.4.4. Disagreements about the character of the Islamic Cultural and Religious Centre of Marseilles: symbolical role and the functions of the cultural centre

Even though earlier on I had distinguished between three different views on the future mosque of Marseilles, to wit pluralist, Republican-assimilationist and Mediterranean views, the “Mediterranean view” with its emphasis on Arab-Islamic culture was not very prominent during the hearings and often came to be subsumed under the Republican-assimilationist view. I will therefore focus on the pluralist and Republican-assimilationist views. I will focus on two key issues: the first being the precise ways the Grand Mosque would function as a symbol in the city, the other being the ideas about the purposes of the future Islamic cultural centre.

When the hearing committee started its activities there seemed to be an agreement that the future Grand Mosque was to be understood as the fulfilment of what Bruno Étienne had called “a symbolical obligation”. Only a beautiful and architecturally prestigious purpose-built mosque could accomplish this symbolical function. The Grand Mosque should become a symbol of the city of Marseilles and a “Mosquée marseillaise”. However, underneath this agreement that the mosque would and should function as a symbol, there were very different ideas about what exactly it would symbolize.

Pluralism and recognition: a symbol for the Muslims of Marseilles

In interviews, representatives of the CIME explained that they had decided to become involved in the mosque dossier primarily to avoid a repetition of the events in 1989 and 1996. In the past, individuals such as Mustapha Slimani and Soheib Bencheikh had more or less hijacked the discussions in Marseilles, by presenting and publicly advertising projects of their own, which

374. [“Il faut que le projet architectural ne soit pas mediocre”] HMMIC June 26 2001 p.4. The aim was to create a “symbolical and representative place” and to make the “corresponding architectural gesture” [“lieu symbolique representative et le geste architectural adapté”] and to make the building into “a place that can be seen”. HMMIC, July 5 2001 p.7; HMMIC July 12 2001 p.8.
375. [“il est temps que la Ville de Marseille ait une mosquée”] HMMIC September 19 2001 p.14.
had been developed without much consultation with the Muslims in Marseilles. The secretary of the CIME stated in 2001:

First, a citywide study should be made on the real needs, and on the place where Muslims are concentrated. The council of imams is not in favour of a “symbolical mosque” in Marseilles, which would require a large budget and which would lead to financial waste. We are in favour of a Grand Mosque.376

Members of the CIME criticized the Mosque of Paris and of Lyons which were examples of “symbolical mosques” that were well seen by French authorities and media but little frequented by ordinary Muslim worshippers.377 The Grand Mosque of Marseilles, by contrast, should become an “expression of faith and spiritual enrichment for all”.378 For the local Muslim community it would function as the “mosque of reference” (la mosquée référence), where the end of the Ramadan would be celebrated or where the most important prayer for the Sacrifice Feast would take place. It might even become “a place of pilgrimage for the residents of the Côte d’Azur”.379 The president of the Comorian associations, Mr. Mahamoud, spoke of “the fact of having a symbolical place, which is what we are all expecting, will help us to unite”.380 Another prominent member of the CIME said:

the concern of the council of imams is to underline that this is a very symbolical place… in which all the Muslims, whatever their nationality, their religious philosophy, their preference, will come together, will identify with...381

The CIME portrayed the history of Islam in Marseilles as a long sequence of attempts to manipulate and control the Muslim population. This time the building of a Grand Mosque would be in the hands of the Muslims of Marseilles themselves. According to the CIME it was crucial that the project be “fundamentally Marseillais and those who carry it out must necessarily be Marseillais”.382 This emphasis stressed the need for local Muslims to be in control of the project as a way of saying that control of the Paris Mosque and of the Algerian government was not

376. [“Il faut d’abord faire une étude sur les besoins réels au niveau de la ville, sur les lieux de concentration des musulmans. Le Conseil des imams n’est pas favorable à une ‘mosquée-symbole’ à Marseille, qui exigerais un gros budget et qui entraînais des gâchis financiers. Nous sommes favorable à une Grande Mosquée”] (Mohammed Yassine cited in Geisser 2001).
377 Interview with Azzedine Aïnouche, March 4 2002.
378. [“expression d’une foi et d’enrichissement spirituel pour tous”] Lettre du CIME February 2002.
380. [“Le fait d’avoir un lieu symbolique, ce que nous attendons tous, va nous aider à nous unir”] HMMIC July 26 2001 p.5.
381. [“Par l’édification de ce projet c’est notre Communauté qui pourra se reconnaître et se faire reconnaître (…) une symbole d’intégration de notre religion, que c’est une religion qui est accepté (…) la préoccupation du conseil des imams c’est de dire c’est un lieu très symbolique.. dans lequel tous les musulmans quelque soit leur nationalité, leur philosophie religieuse, leur sensibilité, se retrouvent, s’identifient…”]. Interview with Azzedine Aïnouche, March 4 2002.
382. [“Le projet est fondamentalement Marseillais et les porteurs doivent être nécessairement Marseillais”] HMMIC July 12 2001 p.5.
acceptable. It was also a critique directed at the “secular Muslims” who wanted to become involved because of political, commercial and other interests without being much concerned about Muslim religious affairs. Finally, the members of the CIME were also distancing themselves from the concept of a “French Islam” if that came down to a direct involvement of the French state in the administration of Islamic institutions in France. To the hearing committee members of the CIME said they also were in favour of “an Islam that was fully compatible with French law”. The municipal hearing committee inquired whether they favoured the creation of a French Islam, which would resemble “French Judaism” or “French Catholicism”. Confronted with these questions, the president of the CIME, Mourad Zerfaoui, questioned the concept “French Islam” and instead suggested that the approach of the local imams in the CIME was done as part of a “global approach” and an “Islam of citizens”.

Republican-assimilation and modernity: a symbol of an “Islam of France”

For many people, the Grand Mosque in Marseilles should become a symbol of the willingness of Muslims to choose for an “Islam of France”. The president of the federation of residents associations in Marseilles argued:

To obtain money from abroad is not a problem, if there will be a problem that will be because of an ideological orientation of the mosque in a direction that will not be respectful of French laws (…) Islam should invent for itself a way of being Muslim in France, like the Catholic Church has done in Korea, in Tanzania or elsewhere.

The director of the Mayor’s Cabinet responded in the following way to this idea:

…we simply think that there should be a French Islam. We try to give Islam what the believers have asked for, for so long. For me, the problem is whether the Muslims of Marseilles are sufficiently mature to know what they want.

The Muslims of Marseilles were thus invited to show their “maturity” and the ability to know “what they wanted”, but on the other hand it was already clear that the only viable option was for them to choose for the creation of “a French Islam”. Once the Muslims had made this choice the city of Marseilles would, so to speak, “reward” their efforts and grant them the possibility of building a Grand Mosque. According to the “mufti” Bencheikh the Grand Mosque would be:

383. [“une démarche globale, c’est plutôt un Islam Citoyen”] HMMIC July 12 2001 p.6.


385 [“Nous pensons tout simplement qu’il faut un islam Français. Nous essayons de lui donner ce que ses fidèles réclament depuis si longtemps. Pour moi le problème est-ce que les Musulmans de Marseille sont suffisamment adultes pour savoir ce qu’ils veulent”] HMMIC September 20 2001 p.8.
…the open door to the entire modernity, it is Islam that is taking root here, it is Islam in a French way. This is the idea that we are currently developing … we ask for the Republic’s recognition. A recognition of the Muslims whose French-ness is still fragile. Hence the importance of this project, to consolidate their French-ness. We want to bring Islam out into open daylight with this mosque, out of the obscurity and away from the forces of darkness, and go towards the light to organise our religion.386

The “mufti” also underlined that it was necessary to build a mosque that was “futurist and modern”.387 Much like the project of 1996 the kind of mosque architecture the “mufti” had in mind served to illustrate that Muslims in Marseilles were willing and able to take their distance from cultural and ethnic traditions”.388 The “mufti” explained that building a new mosque would help in the struggle against “the forces of darkness” (l’obscurantisme):

We want to preach our religion in transparency. We don’t want to teach Muslims in secret, we also want to do it, like in Paris, in the presence of non Muslims who will, by the way, have chairs to sit on inside the mosque so as to listen to the sermon.389

The idea of making Islam more “transparent” and observable was also linked to possibilities of civil society and municipal authorities to oversee what was going on in the Grand Mosque. Because public authorities would become implicated in the development and financing of the centre they were also thus entitled to a “droit de regard” on the management of the future centre. This was a good development in the eyes of the “secular Muslims”, because as one of the members of the CORAI observed: “one knows the perverse and dangerous effects when Islam

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386 [“La Grande Mosquée de Marseille c’est la porte ouverte à toute la modernité, c’est l’Islam qui s’ancre ici, c’est l’Islam à la Française, c’est ce que nous développons comme idée à l’heure actuelle (…) nous demandons une reconnaissance par la République. Une reconnaissance des musulmans dont la francité est fragile d’où l’intérêt avec ce projet de consolider leur francité. Nous voulons à travers cette mosquée sortir l’Islam au grand jour, sortir de l’obscurantisme et aller dans la lumière pour organiser notre culte”] HMMC July 12 2001 p.2.

387 Cited in “Grande Mosquée: tout n’est pas fait” in La Marseillaise September 7 2001.

388 Similar ideas about what would be an appropriate mosque architecture in France were articulated by Minister Chevènement during the Consultation on Islam in France. The architecture of mosque buildings functioned as a kind of test case of the willingness and ability of Muslims in France to leave some of their cultural roots behind and to show respect for prevailing values and aesthetic norms in French society. According to the Minister of the Interior, Muslims in France should make an effort “not only to respect our laws, but also to integrate the construction of their mosques in the landscape of our cities” [“non seulement de respecter nos lois, mais aussi d’intégrer la construction de leurs mosquées au paysage de nos villes”] Chevènement cited in Le Monde February 19 2000. A report on Islamic houses of worship mentioned that if Muslims reached a certain level of integration, they would be able to “imagine their religious spaces without any cultural reference that is imported, notably from the Maghreb” [“imaginer leurs espaces cultuels indépendamment de toute référence culturelle importée notamment du Maghreb”] in Rapport d’étape groupe de travail No 1. For complete reference see above. See also “L’image des mosquée de France. L’enjeu architectural et urbain des lieux de culte musulmans est fondamental” in Libération December 22 2004.

389 [“Nous voulons prêcher notre religion dans la transparence. Nous ne voulons pas enseigner aux musulmans en cachette, nous souhaitons le faire également, comme à Paris, en présence des non musulmans qui d’ailleurs bénéficient de chaises pour s’asseoir à l’intérieur de la Mosquée afin d’écouter le prêche”] HMMC July 12 2001 p.3.
Constructing Mosques

A Communist representative of the municipal council insisted that: “there should be guarantees for the future, so that it will not one day become a place where women are excluded. We should avoid fundamentalism”.

The Islamic Cultural Centre

When it came to the ideas about the Islamic cultural centre, similar divergence between a pluralist view and a Republican and assimilationist view existed. All stakeholders were aware that by creating a cultural centre there would be more possibilities for public authorities – the municipality, but also the regional government and the state – to financially contribute to the costs of accommodation and activities. The mosque building and the association that would administer it would fall under the 1905 law and therefore they could benefit from financial compensations such as an exemption from real estate taxes and compensation for maintenance costs.

The pluralist view: an Islamic cultural centre for Muslims

Some Muslim religious leaders were sceptical about the appropriateness of speaking of an “Islamic religious and cultural centre” (un centre cultuel et culturel musulman) and saw it as a way to hide to the outside world that a real mosque was going to be built. According to a representative of the African community, Moussa Koite Fili, there was no reason for such a strategy of camouflage, because the mosque was “an honour for Marseilles”. The rector of the mosque in Rue Bon Pasteur, Hadj Alili, downright rejected the idea of creating a “cultural centre”. According to him, the underlying strategy of the municipal government was to engage non-Muslims and “secular Muslims” in the project and to use them as auxiliaries in its efforts to control Islam in Marseilles. One of the West African imams made a similar point during the hearings and insisted that the project should primarily be about the establishment of a religious place in Marseilles: “We want to emphasise the spiritual value of this mosque … these

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390 [“on connaît l’effet pervers et dangereux quand l’Islam n’est pas maîtrisé”] Benhagoug, HMMC July 12 2001 p.11.


392 [“Il faut appeler un chat un chat, un Centre Cultuel et Culturel est-ce que ce n’est pas une façon de cacher l’arbre par la forêt. L’utilité de la Mosquée c’est un honneur pour Marseille”] HMMC September 20 2001 p.2. The members of the hearing committee repeatedly argued there was a strategic reason to avoid speaking only of a mosque: “Why do we call this project the Cultural and Religious Centre and not the Grand Mosque (…). If this project would be called “Grand Mosque” the City could not be able to give a centime (…) It has to be possible to find the necessary funds. And if the public institutions cannot give you anything because it is exclusively about creating a Grand Mosque and not about a cultural place, then you will not be able to finance this project.” [“Pourquoi nous appelons ce projet Centre Culturel et Cultuel et pas Grande Mosquée? (…) Si ce projet s’appelle Grande Mosquée la Ville ne pourra pas donner un centime (…) Il faudra bien arriver à trouver les fonds et si les institutions ne peuvent rien vous donner car il s’agit uniquement d’une Grande Mosquée et pas d’un lieu culturel vous n’arriverez pas à financer ce projet.”] HMMC September 20 2001 p.5.

393 Mohand Alili, HMMC July 12 2001 p.7. The father of Mohand Alili, Hadj Alili, had raised similar objections to the mosque project developed by Mustafa Slimani in 1989. At the time the rector of the mosque at Rue Bon Pasteur had insisted that a mosque was not “a museum” and that a religious place should be kept at a distance from all kinds of political struggles.
political considerations about having a say in society … that is not the role of religion, nor of the mosque”.

According to the CIME, the cultural centre should cater to activities with a religious connotation, such as religious instructions, expositions and Arab language classes. The Islamic centre should become a key element in the community infrastructure of Muslims in Marseilles. The council of imams objected to the idea that the Islamic cultural centre would become a place where all kinds of “cultural events” would take place, which would only remotely be related to the “Muslim or Arab world”. As Azzedine Aïnouche said:

This should be about religion… if cultural centre will start signifying that it is something with “music, … rap… Arab things”, no!, then we withdraw, we will then no longer want any part … this is supposed to be a religious place.

The Republican-assimilationist view: a cultural centre to educate French Muslims

Other speakers had very different ideas about the new Islamic cultural centre. The director of the Mayor’s Cabinet, Claude Bertrand, said: “The mosque that we are speaking of is also a cultural place, which for me, isn’t limited to the Koran; the Arab Andalusia culture should also be included”. Others argued that what was needed was “a Muslim Library, and a Koranic school so that Muslims are well trained”. A member of the municipal council thought that the cultural centre should also contribute to critical reflection, intellectual exchange and scholarship among Muslims in Marseilles. It should be about: “…cultural exchange, creating links with the main library, with the Pôle d’Aix (i.e. the university, M.M.). A place of worship for the Muslims and an information centre for everyone, corresponding to the spirit of our city”. Tahar Rahmani, one of the “secular Muslims” who was a member of the hearing committee, summarised what kind of cultural centre should be created: “everybody would like to have a small Institut du Monde Arabe like in Paris. A cultural Arab-Muslim centre with a social and cultural utility”.

The image of the cultural centre was also informed by the will to avoid “fundamentalists” deciding on what forms of cultural expression were acceptably “Islamic”. Orthodox Muslims were to be prevented from banning what they presumably considered inadmissible, such as art, open discussion, the participation of women and music. Some people suggested using the cultural centre as a way to support the development of a liberal Islam in Marseilles. Since

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394 [“On met en avant la valeur spirituelle de cette Mosquée … ces considérations politiciennes pour revendiquer des places au niveau de la société, ce n’est pas le rôle de la religion ni de la Mosquée en particulier”] HMMIC September 20 2001 p.3.
395 Interview with Azzedine Aïnouche, March 4 2002.
396 [“la Mosquée dont on parle c’est aussi un lieu culturel qui pour moi ne se limite pas au Coran, il y faut également la culture arabo andalouse…”] HMMIC November 21 2001 p.3.
397 [“une Bibliothèque Musulmane et une École Coranique pour que les Musulmans soient bien formés”] HMMIC July 20 2001 p.2.HMM
398 [“l’échange culturel, nouer des passerelles avec la grand bibliothèque, avec le Pôle d’Aix, un lieu de prière pour les musulmans et un Centre de ressources pour tout le monde ce qui correspondra à l’esprit de notre Cité…”] Annick Boët, Parti Communiste, HMMIC July 5 2001 p.5.
399 HMMIC November 21 2001 p.12.
the municipality would subsidize at least part of the cultural activities it would also be entitled to oversee and inspect them. This could also perhaps apply to religious instruction where, as Bertrand argued, “excesses” (dérives) should also be avoided. Thus “the Koran school should preferably be provided for by the cultural institute and not by the religious one”. Another member of the hearing committee, Salah Bariki, said that the publicly financed Islamic cultural centre could help to take the wind out of the sails of private initiatives for Koran schools and multipurpose Islamic centres. He mentioned the example of the training centre for imams that had been created by the UOIF in Nièvre:

At the Koran training institute in Nièvre 3% of the books are written in French and everything has been paid for from abroad. If tomorrow we are confronted with a private centre, where non-Muslims are not welcome to come to the cultural centre, nobody would be able to intervene anymore.

Creating a large Islamic cultural institute sponsored with public funds would encourage Muslims to make use of French learning materials or to develop these, and it thereby also would function as an obstacle to the strategies of foreign organisations to indoctrinate Muslims in France. Finally, it was important that “religious officials” (des religieux) would not dominate the administration of the cultural centre. It would be better if “secular Muslims” and “actors of civil society” would play a leading role.

7.4.5. The future of Islam in France and re-framing divergences between Muslim factions in Marseilles

Between November 2001 and April 2002 the negotiations around the future mosque were coming to a standstill. However, the difficulties that had arisen were not primarily interpreted as related to the differences between competing views on the future project or as a result of competing views on the development of Islam in France, i.e. along lines similar to my distinction between “pluralist views” and “Republican-assimilationist views”. The members of the hearing committee, the local media and academics tended to argue that the deadlock was a result of the rivalry between the two factions, each seeking to protect their interests and prestige, and with the consulates of Algeria and Morocco and the Paris Mosque seeking to use their influence behind the scenes.

However, it became clear that the hearing committee distinguished between actors who were in favour of developing a more liberal “French Islam” and actors who wanted to sustain the relatively isolated position of Muslims in Marseilles. In an interview in April 2002 the director of the Mayor’s Cabinet, Claude Bertrand, looking back on the hearings and the meetings with Muslim representatives, tried to explain who the advocates and opponents of the mosque were:
...the more a Muslim was integrated in the city, the more he wanted this sort of testimony, that he participated well in the life of the city. The less he was integrated, the less he wanted the mosque, because he wanted to stay in his own small group. One can see it very clearly, it is obvious... the one who speaks in Arabic is usually against the mosque and the one who speaks in French is in favour of the mosque. 402

It was quite clear that the hearing committee had developed a fondness for the Muslim faction that articulated – what I have called – a Republican-assimilationist view on the future centre. Especially the “mufti” Bencheikh had made a good impression:

...in the whole group of personalities whom we have interviewed, there is one Muslim that has clearly distinguished himself, that is Soheib Bencheikh. He has distinguished himself very clearly, he has a modern vision, he expresses himself perfectly, he has a structured vision of Islam, and he is without doubt the interlocutor who is easiest to distinguish from the others, but his problem is that he is not accepted by the other Muslims... 403

The fact that Bencheikh was so obviously “not accepted by the other Muslims” made it hardly imaginable for the municipality to simply impose the unpopular “mufti” as their privileged partner to create the Grand Mosque. This became abundantly clear when members of the hearing committee made a slip of the tongue and suggested in the local media that it was likely that the CAMM would be invited to develop the project. This led to an immediate reaction of members of the CIME. They wrote an open letter to the Mayor in February 2002 in which they accused members of the hearing committee – in particular the “secular Muslims” Bariki and Rahmani – of manipulation and partiality. 404 Municipal officials hurried to declared that the CIME continued to be seen as a potential partner as well and that it would be best if all groups would work together. Not much later the municipal government decided to postpone further decisions until after the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in the Spring.

Endgame?

The Spring of 2002 was a period of great political agitation in France. This was largely due to the unexpected defeat of the socialist candidate Lionel Jospin by the extreme right leader

402 "au plus le musulman était intégré à la ville de Marseille au plus il souhaitait ce témoignage en quelque sorte, qu’il participait à la vie de la cite et au moins il était intégré au moins il souhaitait la mosquée parce qu’il voulait rester dans son petit groupe... [et comment dans ces discussions vous avez eu, comment pour vous même vous avez faite cette distinction entre ceux qui étaient mieux intégré à Marseille et ceux qui venaient... M.M.] On le voit très bien... c’est très clair à voir... celui qui parle en arabe est contre généralement la mosquée celui qui parle en français et pour la mosquée”] Interview with Claude Bertrand April 17 2002.

403 [“dans toute la groupe des personnalités que nous avons consulté il y a un musulman qui s’est dégagé clairement, c’est Soheib Bencheikh, il se dégage du haut, il a une vision moderne, il s’exprime parfaitement, il a une vision structuré de l’Islam, et c’est sans doute l’interlocuteur qui se dégage le plus facilement, son problème c’est qu’il n’est pas accepté par les autres musulmans”] Interview with Claude Bertrand April 17 2002.

404 See “Lettre ouverte au senateur maire de Marseille Jean Claude Gaudin” CIME February 2002.
Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of the presidential elections on April 21st. In October 2002, the Mayor of Marseilles invited different “members of the Muslim community” to the City Hall in an attempt to create a consensus and to set up an association in view of building the new mosque. That meeting did not produce the hoped for results. It appeared as if an historic opportunity to build a Grand Mosque risked being thwarted because of ongoing factionalism within “the Muslim community”. That was all the more deplorable because an opinion-poll issued by the municipality and published in November showed that 57% of the population of Marseilles was now in favour of the building of a Grand Mosque. In December the Mayor decided to take affairs in his own hands and appointed Salah Bariki, a well known “secular Muslim” and member of the hearing committee, as the municipal executive in charge of the mosque project. A month later, in January 2003, 33 people were invited to the City Hall in order to constitute a new association that would further develop the project. Soheib Bencheikh was to become the leading figure in this association, but the board would also include Bachir Dahmani, nine female members, a sociologist and several “representatives of civil society”. The Mayor had also invited three members of the CIME to participate, but these did not include any representative of the mosque at the Flee Market nor its president Zerfaoui. The CIME declined the invitation, arguing that the new association had not been created in a transparent and democratic way. Moreover, according to the CIME, it would be far easier to establish an executive committee on the basis of the outcomes of the elections for a regional Muslim council of the Bouches-du-Rhône, which were to take place in April 2003.

Organising Islam in France: the creation of the CFCM

As discussed earlier, the Consultation on Islam in France resulted in taking very concrete steps to develop representative bodies. Most important in this regard was the creation of a Regional Muslim Council of the Provence-Alpes-Côtes-d’Azur (PACA) region. This meant that the attempts at institutionalising Islam in Marseilles were no longer a local issue, but were entangled with governing strategies and policies at the national level. These entered a decisive phase when Nicolas Sarkozy became Minister of the Interior in May 2002.

Sarkozy’s approach to the creation of the French Council of the Muslim Religion was a combination of Gallican and Concorditarian strategies, and it earned him the name of the Napoleon of Islam in France (Bowen 2006: 100). The approach towards the creation of Islam institutions was pluralist in the sense that it aimed at overcoming the older strategy of almost exclusive cooperation with the Paris Mosque. French authorities were now inclined to recognise the plurality of organisations that represented Muslims. On the other hand, and this was the Gallican and Concorditarian element, if the state would become more directly involved in the creation of Muslim institutions this created opportunities for French authorities to insist that Muslim leaders declare their support for key constitutional principles such as secularism, equal treatment and religious freedom. Muslim organisations that wanted to participate in the consultation on Islam in France were asked to sign a declaration concerning the “rights and duties of

405 Opinion poll by SOFRES held between 15-18 November 2002 entitled “Marseilles: attentes et satisfaction à l’égard de l’action municipale”. 39% of the people who were interviewed said they were against the building of a mosque.

406 “La mairie de Marseille reprend en main le projet de mosquée” in Le Monde November 30 2002.
Muslims in France” (Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 81ff.). In so doing Muslim representative who decided to play by the rules of the game would affirm that in France religion should be subordinated to the State and its legal order (Bowen 2007: 1008).

Sarkozy insisted that a broad range of Muslim denominations and “schools of thought” would participate, but he tried to organise the formation of the future Muslim Council in such a way that “moderate” voices would be represented. A key challenge thereby was to see to it that the largest federations, the FNMF and the UOIF, would participate in the council without dominating it. The formation of the first French Council of the Muslim Religion in early May 2003 showed that, for the time being, the mixing of Gallican and Concorditarian governing strategies in the intentional creation of an “Islam of France” seemed to be paying off. The new CFCM bureau included representatives of the major Muslim organisations as well as of the five major mosques and Soheib Bencheikh and Dounia Bouzar as “qualified personalities” (Bowen 2006: 58). A Muslim body had been created that could be said to mirror the diversity of Islam in France and that was created in a “democratic” way. On the other hand, French officials had been closely involved and had orchestrated the process in such a way that the outcomes of the Consultation would be acceptable, especially for the Paris Mosque and for French authorities. Dalil Boubakeur became the president the Council while Bechari (FNMF) and Alaoui (UOIF) were appointed as vice-presidents.

...and in Marseilles

The creation of a national Islamic representative body created pressures on other institutional levels. In the PACA region, for example, the Regional Council for the Muslim Religion (CRCM) would supposedly become the interlocutor for regional and municipal authorities. During the elections for the Regional Muslim Council an independent list headed by Mourad Zerfaoui, imam of the Al-Islah Mosque Committee and president of the CIME, collected the majority of the votes. This was at the cost of a defeat of the Paris Mosque’s list, on which Bachir Dahmani and Soheib Bencheikh had presented themselves. Mourad Zerfaoui was elected as the president of the Bureau of the new regional Muslim council.

However, in the course of 2003, municipal officials had more and more outspokenly sought to disqualify the representatives of the Al-Islah mosque as “fundamentalists”. Whereas in 2001 the CIME was still looked at as a council that simply represented local imams, it was now being associated with Islamic radicalism. That image could very easily been reproduced in the media, especially by national and international media who were less informed about the ongoing power struggles in Marseilles. Thus in April 2003 an American journalist of the New York Times wrote:

407 The main federations, including the Paris Mosque, the UOIF and the FNMF had signed an agreement in July 2001 in view of the creation of the Muslim Council (Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 65).
408 See Bowen 2006: 55ff.
409 The independent list obtained 41,72% of the votes, followed by the list of the Federation of the Paris Mosque that collected 29,85% and the list “Entente des Musulmans de la region PACA” with 28,42%. See “L’Islam marseillais en pleine mutation” in La Provence June 18 2003.
One of the city’s main advocates for the grand mosque is Soheib Bencheikh, an Algerian cleric who is clean-shaven and wears a suit and tie. He wants a big, beautiful mosque that will teach what he calls “true Islam”, not distorted “radicalism”. Alongside will be a cultural center (sic) that he says will show “the beautiful face of Islam” with poetry readings, concerts and dance performances. In recent years, however, Marseille has witnessed a surge in fundamentalist clerics who preach a strict interpretation of the Koran that opposes activities like music and dancing. One increasingly popular movement is led by Mourad Zerfaoui, a bearded Algerian biologist who wears clerical garb when he preaches and lay clothes when he teaches (…) Zerfaoui’s followers try to lure teenage boys toward the cause of conservative Islam.411

Municipal officials would now begin to use and nourish this representation of the CIME as a collection of fundamentalist, if not radical, young Muslims. Shortly after the formation of the bureau of the Regional Muslim Council the director of the Mayor’s cabinet, Claude Bertrand, even compared the leading figures in the CIME and representatives of the Al-Islah mosque to the members of Al Qaeda cells in Europe who were discrete and well behaving students.412 The municipal government was unwilling to further develop the mosque project with the newly formed Regional Muslim Council. Instead other possible ways of thinking about improving the housing situation of Islamic practice in Marseilles were being explored. Perhaps there was no need for a Grand Mosque after all…

7.5. Islam de proximité

The Consultation, the formation of the CFCM and the events of 9/11 were not the only factors resulting in an almost continuous public discussion on Islam in France in the early years of the 21st century. The widely mediatised hearings and deliberations in 2003 of the Commission of Reflection on the Application of the Principle of Laïcité in the Republic, also known as the Stasi-commission, and the controversies on the headscarf also contributed its fair share. The parliamentary vote in February 2004 in favour of a law banning all conspicuous signs of religious affiliation from public schools seemingly meant further legal and political legitimacy for Republicanism and laïcité. Still, in my view the interpretation of the significance of the 2004 law as simply another illustration of the will of the French to consistently pursue Republicanism and strict secularism (laïcité de combat) when dealing with Islam is flawed for two reasons. First, important differences existed between the way this legal instrument was being represented in public and political discussions, and the internal regulations some schools made to make the


412. Literally Bertrand said to a journalist: “They are very well educated, very refined. It is the profile of the people of Al-Qaeda. But I am not saying that that is what they are” (…) “We don’t need the Renseignements Généraux to know that the people of Al-Islah (i.e. the mosque at the Flee Market, M.M.) are more fundamentalist than Dahmani. [“Ils sont très instruits, très cultivés. C’est le profil des gens d’Al-Qaeda. Mais je ne dis pas qu’ils en sont”] in “Marseilles rejette son Islam officiel” in Libération July 1 2003.
law more specific. In actual practice many schools sought to find some sort of middle way, for example by allowing girls to wear a bandana or by insisting that girls remove their headscarf only when inside the classroom. Second, and more important, the 2004 law did indeed give a boost to Republican values, but it did so in a specific institutional and policy domain – the public schools – and with respect to a specific aspect of the presence of Islam, namely the display of religious identity by wearing the headscarf. This should not be equated with French public policy responses to Islam tout court.

The further development of necessary measures depended on the successful running of the CFCM, in place since 2003. The CFCM was an unstable institution, characterised by internal strife and disagreements and subject to constant attempts at interference by the French state and the governments of Algeria and Morocco. French government officials furthermore accentuated time and again that even though different tendencies and Muslim federations were included in the council, the most “liberal” federation – the Institute of the Paris Mosque – was to be in charge. The 2004 law constituted a new challenge for the Muslim body. It was clear that the government expected the members of the CFCM to display their support and respect for the new law and, by implication, to affirm the priority of the state over religion. For some members of the Council – notably for the representatives of the UOIF – making public statements about the new law meant to face the double challenge of avoiding discrediting themselves as interlocutors for French public authorities and of convincing their constituencies that cooperation with the French government did not mean that they were compromising their ideas, religious values and demands.

Between 2004 and 2007 actual progress was being made in addressing practical concerns and providing for religious needs. Special national penitentiary chaplains were installed both for the military and for the penal system, who were to coordinate the activities of the official Muslim chaplains that were remunerated by the French state. There were new policy proposals to create training facilities for clergy, notably imams and chaplains, and the government intended to complement the religious curriculum of the training program with state-sponsored secular teaching. The construction of Muslim cemeteries was also an issue under consideration. These policy responses were informed by concerns about equity, effective religious freedom and cooperation, and not so much by the principles of non-recognition and separation that are usually associated

413. For a discussion of the work of the Stasi commission and the discussions on the headscarf see Jansen 2006 and Bowen 2006.

414. In an interview held in December 2004 the Minister of the Interior, Dominique de Villepin, said that shortly before the beginning of the school year he had gathered together the representatives of the Muslim federations to tell them clearly that he would not tolerate any reservations when it came to the application of the new law. As the Minister put it: “In my function as Minister of Religions I will accompany the organisation of Islam in France. In return, I will refuse all ambiguities: The Republic, all of the Republic. The law, all of the law” in “Je veux des imams français parlant français” in Le Parisien December 7 2004.

415. In May 2004 the CFCM issued a statement saying that “the law cannot be interpreted as a general and absolute prohibition of all head coverings” (cited in Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 170). The vagueness and shallowness of these and other public statements of the Council were also illustrative of the many disagreements between its members. On July 5 the CFCM issued another statement and promised that it would play a role in the dialogue phase that would follow upon a disagreement between a school and a student on the headscarf issue. See Bowen 2006: 145.

with the “French model”. The actual variety of government responses provides further illustration of the fact that different sets of governing strategies and different argumentative repertoires are a part of the French history of church-state relations, and that various ways of regulating the presence of Islam can appear as plausible and legitimate (cf. Bowen 2007: 1005). That conclusion can also be drawn when notice is taken of the continuation of the political and legal debate on the significance of laïcité. The Council of State and the National Advisory Commission on Human Rights both issued reports on laïcité in 2004. In addition a number of books and essays on laïcité were published in 2004 and 2005, also because of the upcoming celebration of the centennial of the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State.

Against this wider ongoing debate on laïcité and in light of explorations of possibilities to make legal modifications to facilitate and financially support newly established religious minorities, the debate on mosque building continued. In fact between 2004 and 2007 quite a far reaching reframing of the issue occurred, both at the national and at the municipal level.

7.5.1. Reframing mosques

Between the mid 1980s and the late 1990s ample use had been made of a dichotomous opposition between two images of mosques. There were the “disgraceful” (indignes) and problematic mosques in “basements”, “garages” and “hangars”. There were also the “real” and “Cathedral” mosques, such as the ones in Paris and Lyons. The “mosques in basements” stood for a series of problems, such as social marginalisation of Muslim populations and discrimination. Since 9/11 the idea that sometimes Islamic fundamentalist deliberately sought to sustain the “mosques in basements” had gained in popularity. Some French Mayors justified their support for the building of more respectable houses of worship as a way of doing away with the more obscure prayer spaces and thus combat Islamic extremism.

In the early years of the 21st century, however, a different perception of the smaller makeshift mosques had come to prevail. Many mosque organisations and mosque users had enlarged, improved and renovated their prayer spaces in the foyers, HLM buildings and neighbourhoods. Often they had put a nicer new carpet in, painted and decorated the interior and made the

417. Prominent members of the Stasi commission, such as the political scientist and scholar of French religious history, René Rémond, argued that the commission had never suggested to restrict the promotion of respect for laïcité to the school system. Neither had it recommended that government action should first and foremost aim at banning expressions of religious affiliation. Moreover, the government seemed to have decided to ignore other, more pluralist, ideas and recommendations included in the report. These included measures to combat discrimination, to develop schooling programs teaching respect for diversity and to make important Islamic and Jewish feast days into official public holidays. See interviews with Rémond in L’Humanité February 11 2004 and La Croix March 4 2004.


419. See for example Baubérot 2004; Pena-Ruiz 2005; and Roy 2006.

420. In October 2004 Nicolas Sarkozy stated that the French should not fear minarets but “garages and basements” (cited in Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 84). In July 2006 the Mayor of Istres argued that the creation of respectable and official prayer spaces was a way of creating obstacles to “the dubious places in which there is a risk that radical discourses can develop”. See “Islam dans le paysage provençal” in La Croix July 17 2006.
place for the ritual ablution prettier, for example by paving it with North African tiles. The worshippers now experienced their prayer house as quite adequate, especially for their daily needs for prayer and conviviality.\textsuperscript{421} Seen from the outside these places perhaps did not resemble “real mosques”, but they could also not be written off as “garages” or “hangars”. What was more, these “discrete” spaces provided for the needs of a large group of mosque attendees in France, being older and middle aged men belonging to the first generation of immigrants, who often took some pride in the ways they themselves managed to see to the upkeep of their mosque.\textsuperscript{422} A vocabulary gained in prominence to speak of these places in existing premises without discarding them as inadequate. They were called “neighbourhood mosques”, “pavilion-like mosques” (mosquées pavillionnaires) and “discrete prayer houses” (salles de prière discrètes).\textsuperscript{423} Importantly this vocabulary not only referred to the building state of houses of worship, it was also linked to the perception of possible patterns of organisation. As a correlate of the more positive reputation of the “neighbourhood mosques” there was also a vocabulary to speak of the organisation of Islam at the city district and neighbourhood level: the so-called “vicinity Islam” (islam de proximité) or “neighbourhood Islam” (islam de quartier). Prominent scholars of Islam in France spoke of a “normalised Islam” that was “tailor made” (sur mesure). They also portrayed this development as a process of emancipation of Islam at the city and neighbourhood level, for example by framing the development as about the “progressive autonomisation of places of worship”, and speaking of the emergence of “autonomous houses of worship” and of “Muslim parishes” (des paroisses musulmans).\textsuperscript{424} Mosques being “of the neighbourhood” (du quartier) also suggested a more positive understanding of them as partaking in the social fabric of local French society.\textsuperscript{425}

The growing positive view of the neighbourhood mosque came at the expense of the idea that it was necessary to build Cathedral Mosques. Islam scholars and Muslim religious leaders had for more than a decade been criticising the concept “Cathedral Mosque”. Speaking of a Cathedral evoked the suggestion of organising the internal structure of religion in a unitary and hierarchical way, something that might be suitable for Catholicism but was seen as foreign to the Islamic tradition. There was also a more political critique of the concept that took notice of the ways French authorities had – in different historical periods – repeatedly sought to co-opt Muslim leaders by building new and beautiful mosques. Finally, there were also questions about whether building a beautiful and prestigious mosque with a minaret was the appropriate way to enforce recognition of the presence of Islam in France. Perhaps, on the contrary, by building a beautiful and typical mosque that was interesting to visit, Muslims were letting themselves be

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\textsuperscript{421} See for example Abdoun et al. 2004; Frégosi et al. 2006.

\textsuperscript{422} For a discussion of the development of religious observance among Muslims in France see Laurence and Vaisse 2006 (in particular chapter 3) and Godard and Taussig 2007.

\textsuperscript{423} See for example the typologies in Frégosi et al. 2006: 39ff. and in Godard and Taussig 2007 : 102ff. See also “Les mosquées investissent les pavillons” in Libération November 12 2004.

\textsuperscript{424} These terms are taken from Frégosi et al. 2006: 45ff. and Frégosi 2006. See also Bouzar 2004; and Ternisien 2004.

\textsuperscript{425} This view was confirmed in the report of the Machelon commission that concluded from its hearings with several mayors that the creation of houses of worship – Islamic or other – often helped to “strengthen the social ties in the neighbourhoods. This is all the more the case when their opening is done in the framework of a project that has been accompanied by public authorities and that has resulted in the construction of a real (véritable) religious building” (Machelon 2006: 19, my translation, M. M.).
manipulated into accepting a particular conception of the form and function of the mosque. A representative of a local Muslim association in the Lyons region observed:

The sociologists who want to build beautiful and visible mosques do not interest us. We know what they want: beautiful monuments which remind them of foreign countries, which remind them of their holidays in Morocco… This gives them the impression that they have accepted us. But we, we want something which is functional; adequate in terms of hygiene, safety, and that there is enough space to receive women, that is all. Why should there be a minaret when there is no call to prayer?

According to the critics, the true recognition of Islam in France required that Muslims be allowed to decide themselves on what kind of mosque buildings they deemed adequate and appropriate.

7.5.2. Building mosques and municipal policy practices

The new ways of framing mosque establishment developed in close relation to ongoing policy practices at the national, regional and municipal level. Several municipal governments had commissioned studies on the need for prayer space and on the available offer of houses of worship. In October 2006 the director of the Central Bureau of Religious Affairs, Didier Leschi, declared in an interview with the newspaper *La Croix* that “the Islam of the basements” no longer existed. He confirmed the estimates made by the journalists of the total number of Islamic prayer houses in France going up from 1555 in 2001 to more than 2000 in 2006 and explained that at present France was in a phase of “accelerated catching up” (*rattrapage intensif*). Many of the prayer spaces in the basements of HLM-complexes were in the process of being relocated as part of urban restructuring projects. Leschi observed that ten years ago the idea of building noticeable Cathedral Mosques had prevailed, but that nowadays there was a general orientation among policy makers to facilitate the creation of “pavilion-like mosques” (*mosquées pavillonnaires*).

426. On the website *Maison de l’Islam* an article called “Constructing beautiful mosques: okay but…” could be found in 2005. It summarized the appropriate religious motives when building a mosque. The beauty of a mosque should never become a reason for vanity and mosques should not serve to display exaggerated luxury, because it was more important to make “one’s heart beautiful” than to decorate mosque buildings. See “Construire de belles mosquées: d’accord mais…” available on [http://www.maison-islam.com/article.php?sid=61](http://www.maison-islam.com/article.php?sid=61) extracted December 9 2005.


428. These kind of overview studies had, for example, been made in Strasbourg, Mulhouse and Metz, see Frégosi 2006. There were also regional studies, for example made by the Regional Muslim Councils that since 2003 kept detailed records of the situation of mosques and of ongoing plans and constructions of mosques. See for example Conseil Régional du Culte Musulman d’Alsace (2004) *La Construction des lieux de culte musulman*.

Cities in various parts of France had opted for a more pragmatic and supportive policy approach. In practice this mostly came down to making inventories of the needs and situation of houses of worship and of being of help in the relocation and renovation of neighbourhood mosques. An important policy goal became to see to it that the “neighbourhood mosque” was well incorporated and accepted as a part of the neighbourhood and that, by consequence, “vicinity Islam” functioned as an integrated part of the daily life in the neighbourhoods (Frégosi et al. 2006: 54). The more pragmatic approach could also enlarge the possibilities for municipal authorities to make some financial support available. These subsidies could be justified by reference to ongoing urban restructuring projects or as contributions to the socio-cultural activities and accommodation costs of neighbourhood associations.

7.5.3. Financing mosque building

Throughout the 1990s several municipal governments had decided to directly finance the building or renovation of mosques. A well known case was the one in Montpellier where in 1995 a large warehouse had been renovated by the municipality in order to function as a mosque that could serve 2000 worshippers. Officially the mosque was called a “multipurpose community centre” (une salle polyvalente) that was being rented out to a Muslim association. However, it was a public secret that this centre was a mosque and the Mayor of Montpellier, Georges Frêche, declared loud and clear that he had built a mosque in the city.430 A constant theme in discussion on the financing of mosques was the fear that foreign donors might increasingly seek to step in to help finance mosques, also hoping to create networks of influence in France. Policy practices in several cities in the early 21st century suggested that local governments were increasingly willing to stretch the law to its limits in order to be able to help finance mosques. Again the case of Montpellier was most forthright. The municipality in this city again financed and built a mosque in 2003, once more calling it a multipurpose community centre. This time the “community centre” was in fact equipped with a small minaret.431

These kinds of local policy responses necessitated some kind of elucidation by the national government. In February 2005 the Ministry of the Interior issued a directive addressed to the prefects, calling upon them to remind municipal authorities to see to the respect of legal regulations and not to obstruct the building of places of worship for inappropriate reasons or on illegal grounds.432 In addition there were two initiatives taken to further regulate the financing of mosques in France; by the creation of a Foundation that could collect funds to be used to finance the costs of building mosques, and by considering the possibilities of revising the 1905 law.

A first idea was to create a Foundation that could help finance Islam in France. In December 2004 the Minister of the Interior, Dominique de Villepin, suggested that setting up a

private Foundation would allow for the necessary “channelling” of financial flows from private gifts, inheritances and foreign funds. Not only was the plan obviously “in the interest of all”, it was also said to be suitable given the French legal framework. All Muslim associations should support it, at least those associations that were in favour of a “responsible and transparent” way of organising Islam in France.\textsuperscript{433} With this statement the Minister was reacting to objections that had been raised by leaders of the UOIF. The secretary-general of the UOIF and vice-president of the CFCM, Fouad Alaoui, had said that setting up this kind of Foundation came down to an attempt to “nationalise the financing of Islam in France”.\textsuperscript{434}

Alaoui argued that only Cathedral Mosques had been so expensive that foreign funds had to be used and that municipal financial support often was also necessary. Thus he cleverly underlined that often times French municipal governments, and not Muslim associations, had come up with the idea to build a Cathedral Mosque. It was now also the French government that suggested scrutinizing the financing of mosques. According to the vice-president of the UOIF, then, it would be a better strategy for Muslims in France to primarily seek to create privately owned smaller and middle-sized Islamic centres. He also argued that it was more appropriate for the French state to treat the financing of mosques as a private matter, given the principles of separation of church and state and that of equal treatment. Ironically, the secretary-general of the UOIF was now invoking \emph{laïcité} to object to French authorities meddling directly in the building of mosques.

In the end, however, the leaders of the UOIF decided to back down. On March 21 2005 representatives of the UOIF and other major Muslim federations signed the statutes allowing for the creation of the Foundation to Finance Islam in France (\emph{Fondation pour les œuvres de l’islam de France}). The foundation, created under private law, was categorized as accomplishing a public interest (\emph{d’utilité public}) meaning among other things that the French state could directly interfere with its administration (Maurer 2006: 46-47). The administrative council of the foundation was to include committees consisting of members of the different Muslim Federations and of the CFCM, qualified persons and a representative of the state appointed by the Minister of the Interior. In the Fall of 2007 the foundation had become a reality. Again the creation of the foundation can best be understood as emanating form the Gallican tradition and element in French church-state history. This became abundantly clear when the closest Muslim ally of the French government, the rector of the Paris Mosque, Dalil Boubakeur, was now also appointed as the president of the Foundation to Finance Islam in France. It remains to be seen how effective the new foundation will be.

A second idea under discussion was the possibility of revising the legal framework and modernizing the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State. In October 2004, Nicolas Sarkozy had suggested that it should be possible to consider to “further develop” (\emph{faire évoluer}) the 1905 law in order to allow for a direct financing of mosque building. That time this suggestion had led to some polemic debate and it had quickly been discarded by president

\textsuperscript{433} See “Je veux des imams français parlant français” in \textit{Le Parisien} December 7 2004. See also Maurer 2006: 46.

\textsuperscript{434} In an interview in \textit{Le Monde} Fouad Alaoui explained: “I fear that tomorrow the local authorities will exclusively give credits to associations which are patronized by this foundation (…) The tradition in Islam is that the places of worship are financed by the believers through donations and collections. And the state is a facilitator, it is neither the owner nor the financer of the construction of mosques.” Interview in \textit{Le Monde} December 1 2004, my translation, M.M.
Chirac and Prime Minister Raffarin. Back in office as Minister of the Interior since May 2005, Sarkozy decided to create a Commission de réflexion juridique sur les relations des cultes avec les pouvoirs publics. That commission, presided over by the legal scholar Jean-Pierre Machelon, would advice on the need for and the possibilities of amendments to the 1905 law.

The Machelon Commission published its report in September 2006. Members of the commission argued that the 1905 law had in recent times been too often talked about in light of its second article, which stipulates that the state “does not recognize nor pay the salaries of any religion”. They underlined that a primary goal of the law was to protect religious freedom and equal treatment (Machelon 2006: 12ff.). In view of the present situation, notably of Islam and of other religious newcomers, a series of possible measures were discussed. One of these measures was to allow for direct subsidies for the building of houses of worship. Such a measure would be inscribed in the legal practice and tradition of the 20th century, in which the French state had always, in specific circumstances, been involved in stimulating the building, repairs and upkeep of religious buildings. Moreover, it would be a manifestation of the willingness of the Republic to show its concern for those social groups that were facing disadvantages, and would create more transparency in the financing of houses of worship (Machelon 2006: 26ff.).

This attempt of some influential legal scholars to give a new turn to the ongoing discussion on the meaning of church-state arrangements in France led to a storm of protest. Advocates of strict or militant secularism (laïcité de combat) stood up in public, political and academic debate to protest against what they saw as an attack on laïcité. Following the critical reception of the report, French politicians, including the presidential candidates Nicolas Sarkozy and Ségolène Royal, already announced that they did not intend to follow up on the recommendations and modify the text of the 1905 law. In October 2007, however, a new working group of legal advisers was installed to study the recommendations of the commission and come up with a proposal to the government.

7.5.4. Islam de proximité in Marseilles

The ongoing policy discussions on mosque creation in France would have an effect on discussions in Marseilles. In June 2004 the mayor declared that the municipality would seek to ac-

435. There was some political support for the idea, for example from the MP and Mayor of Créteil, Laurent Cathala (Socialist). See “Le maire PS veut assouplir la loi de 1905” in Libération December 8 2004. The suggestion to create a Foundation to Finance Islam in France was also said to be a strategic move of De Villepin, who was in competition with Sarkozy in view of the candidature for the Right for the upcoming presidential elections. In reaction to Sarkozy’s idea, De Villepin stated in an interview held in October that the “fundamental principle” of secularism should not be compromised. See “Villepin s’oppose à Sarkozy sur la loi de 1905” in Le Figaro November 1 2004.

436. See for example “Seize députés critiques le rapport Machelon” in Le Figaro October 27 2006.


438. See speech by Prime Minister François Fillon at the Paris Mosque on September 18 2007. For a complete reference see above.
commodate the numerous demands to improve the housing conditions of “vicinity Islam”. As an important additional justification of the new municipal approach, reference was made to a study on the “religious panorama” (panorama cultuel) that had shown that the lack of adequate Islamic space for worship had already by and large ceased to exist in Marseilles.

The study that the municipal government invoked to support its new policy was a part of a larger research project on the conditions for Islamic worship in four regions in France. In their case study on Marseilles the researchers had counted and described in total 47 prayer halls and they had reported numerous ongoing efforts to renovate neighbourhood mosques. There were plans for an enlargement of the mosque at La Capelette. The Comorian community was said to plan to build a Grand Comorian Mosque (Frégosi et al. 2006: 59). An association affiliated with the missionary movement Tabligh had created a mosque with a small minaret by a thorough renovation of an existing building, thereby taking a dodge with the building permit. The researchers concluded that with 47 spaces, mostly located in the quartiers populairs, the offer of prayer houses in Marseilles was “satisfactory” (2006: 68).

With the overview study in hand, the municipal government presented its new approach as a temporary additional effort to improve and regularise the housing situation of Islamic prayer spaces. A further study was to be made. From now on, when a mosque association would seek to create or renovate a prayer house, municipal officials would try and be of help to find an adequate location or a suitable building. When a mosque could effectively be relocated or created anew the municipality would seek to simultaneously close down some of the smaller and often illegal and unsafe prayer spaces in the immediate environment. The process of gradual improvement and regularisation was to be carried out in close cooperation with the city district authorities and with the Regional Muslim Council.

In November 2005 the mayor performed the official opening of the earlier mentioned small purpose-built mosque, located not far from the centre of the city. It was ironical that in the preceding decades municipal authorities had always sought to minimize the public attention for the creation of the mosques in the neighbourhood, fearing that media attention would fuel public protests of neighbouring residents and extreme right parties. Now mosque openings and building permits were deliberately publicized and virtually represented as policy outcomes. However, the mayor also hurried to mention that the new policy approach focussed on “neighbourhood Islam” need not mean that a Grand Mosque could not be built. If Muslims developed a viable project they would still find a listening ear at the City Hall. It seemed unlikely that such

440. This was the earlier mentioned study issued by the FASILD that had been completed and published in May 2004. It was published in the form of a book only in 2006. In 2004 there were still in total 28 foyers for workers that were administrated by the SONACOTRA in Marseilles (Frégosi et al. 2006: 62).
441. The building permit had in fact initially been cancelled after protest by representatives of the Front National (Frégosi et al. 2006: 53). A political pamphlet of the Front National issued in 2001 showed a photograph of the ongoing building activities of this mosque. The picture was accompanied by statements such as “The Grand Mosque of Marseilles: it is already being built” and “The minaret that obstructs the sky of the Good Mother” (“Le minaret qui bouche le ciel de la bonne mère”). Personal archive of the author.
442. See reply of the mayor to questions raised by council member Tahar Rahmani in the municipal council of Marseilles March 21 2005. In May 2005 a terrain of 19,000 square meters in the 11th arrondissement was given in long term lease to a Muslim association to build a mosque. See “Marseille fournit un terrain pour une mosquée” in Le Figaro May 10 2005.
a thing would happen. A journalist of *Le Monde* wrote that events in the Southern French city showed that the “days of ‘Cathedral Mosques’” were over.⁴⁴³

Still, it remained to be seen what would happen with the other objectives articulated around the hearings on the Grand Mosque in 2001 and 2002, such as the creation of a symbol of the presence of Islam and the setting up of a larger Islamic Cultural Centre. The creation of a number of smaller purpose built mosques could be seen as a way of recognising the presence of Islam. The adding of a minaret and a dome to mosques in existing premises, as had happened with the mosque at La Capelette, also made Islam more noticeable in the urban landscape. The creation of a cultural centre could also be seen as a matter best left to private initiatives taken by Muslims. In October 2003, for example, the UOIF had presented plans to develop a large Islamic centre in the Northern part of Marseilles. This centre was to be created in premises the Muslim association already owned and it would include a private Muslim school, a mosque and spaces for socio-cultural activities.⁴⁴⁴

However, this type of private Islamic centre did not really correspond to the image municipal officials, the “mufti” and “secular Muslims” had been developing a few years earlier. In May 2005 one of the them, municipal council member Tahar Rahmani, suggested that the municipality should indeed create an Arab-Muslim cultural institute to function as a counterweight to the kind of “communal associations” that, so he argued, several of the neighbourhood mosques actually were. The conservative religious message that were preached in the smaller houses of worship had great attraction power on the youth and it stimulated a process of “ethnic closing in” (*communautarisme*). To oppose this trend the Mayor should anew set up a committee – this time solely consisting of secular people – to develop plans for a cultural centre.⁴⁴⁵ In reply the Mayor promised to issue a new study on the possibilities of creating a *Institut culturel arabo-musulman*.⁴⁴⁶ However, before this idea could be further developed events would take a surprising new turn.

### 7.5.5. A Grand Mosque and a cultural centre after all

In June 2005, for the second time, elections were held for the National and Regional Muslim Councils. In the PACA region these elections would result in important changes in the power balance between different groups of Muslims. In 2003 the Regional Muslim Council had been dominated by an independent list presided over by the Al-Islah mosque and the list presented by the UOIF. By their collaboration these two groups had managed to put the members elected on the list of the Paris Mosque in a subdominant position.

In the two years the Regional Council had been in place it had been characterised by ongoing internal strife and conflicts. Gradually local representatives of the UOIF had come

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⁴⁴⁶. One idea was to combine this centre with the new *Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée* to be established in Marseilles. See for a presentation of this project: [http://www.musee-europemediterranee.org/projet.html](http://www.musee-europemediterranee.org/projet.html), accessed on December 9 2005.
to the conclusion that, in view of possible cooperation with the municipality, it was wise to take more distance from the council members who were elected on the independent list and from some prominent members affiliated with the Al-Islah mosque. In the 2005 elections the independent list once more collected most of the votes. This time, however, the UOIF council members and those elected on the list of the Paris Mosque decided to support together the candidacy of Abderrahmane Ghoul, affiliated with the Paris Mosque, to become president of the Regional Council.\textsuperscript{447} The new alliances and the fact that the president was now affiliated with the Paris Mosque, created new opportunities for cooperation with the municipal government of Marseilles. Another important obstacle was also lifted when Soheib Bencheikh, stepped down from his position as “mufti”.

In this new situation the project for a Grand Mosque quickly reappeared on the agenda. The president of the Regional Muslim Council, Abderrahmane Ghoul, and the regional representative of the UOIF, Mohcen N’Gazou, agreed on the formation of a new association called “The Mosque of Marseilles”. Nordine Cheikh, a local businessman of Algerian origin, was elected as the president of this association in early 2006. Cheikh was an active member of the Muslim community in Marseilles, but otherwise he was relatively unknown. Strategically what mattered was that Cheikh was not a confrontational figure and that he was also seen as a protégé of the Paris Mosque. The municipality welcomed the new association. In July 2006 the municipality signed a long-term lease of 99 years with the new association, giving them the use of a plot of land of more than 8,000 square meters located in the neighbourhood Saint Louis, the property that had already been selected during the hearings in 2001. The agreement would allow the association to lease the terrain for the symbolical amount of 300 euros per year.

In April 2007 political representatives of the extreme right parties MNR, Front National and the Mouvement pour la France (MPF) protested to the administrative tribunal and argued that a long-term lease for the sum of € 300 per annum was “unusually low” and therefore an “illegal” form of subsidy of religion.\textsuperscript{448} Their protest was successful and the tribunal ruled that indeed this should be seen as an indirect form of public subsidy for the mosque, and therefore as a violation of the 1905 Law.\textsuperscript{449} In order to avoid further delays the municipal government of Marseilles

\textsuperscript{447}. In these elections the independent list collected 175 votes, the list of the Mosque of Paris 124, the FNMF 101 and the UOIF 59. See also “A Marseille le conseil régional de culte musulman doit élire à nouveau un président” in \textit{Le Monde} May 28 2006.

\textsuperscript{448}. See “Des mosquées menacées au nom de la loi de 1905” in \textit{Libération} May 5 2007.

\textsuperscript{449}. It was remarkable that an administrative tribunal declared a long term lease for a symbolic amount illegal. Only two years earlier the French government had issued a directive calling upon the prefect and municipal
decided to make a new contract, stipulating that the terrain would be leased for 24,000 euros a year for a period of 50 years. This new contract was signed at the end of July 2007.450

On November 22 the Mayor of Marseilles symbolically handed over the keys of the future mosque to the Nordine Cheikh. Significantly the most noticeable Muslim representatives during the ceremony were the president of the Paris Mosque and of the CFCM, Dalil Boubakeur, and the president of the Regional Muslim Council and the new protégé of the Paris Mosque in Marseilles, Abderrahmane Ghoul. It appeared that the demand articulated by Abdelkader Ben Ghabrit in 1937 and that was repeated by French Secret Services in 1951, namely that a mosque in Marseilles could only be built if it was put under the control of the Paris Mosque, was fulfilled in the end, with a delay of seventy years.451

7.6. Conclusion

In the literature it has been stipulated that France has been reluctant to respond positively to Muslim demands to create prayer houses in a manner they deemed appropriate (Koenig 2003: 183ff.; Fetzer and Soper 2005: 87ff.). In addition, it is commonly argued that in France public authorities have consistently refused to make any financial contribution to the creation of prayer spaces. This chapter has shown that this view is at best a simplified representation. It also cannot explain why and how public authorities have become increasingly involved in the improvement of houses of worship since the late 1990s.

From the second half of the 1980s onwards French governing strategies towards Islam developed around the idea that it was necessary to stimulate the emergence of an “Islam of France”. In bigger cities with larger Muslim populations, such as Lyons, Marseilles and Strasbourg, the idea resulted in the plan to create a purpose-built Cathedral Mosque that could function as a symbol of recognition and as an institutional support for a “French Islam”. The Paris Mosque exemplified what a Cathedral Mosque should be like: it should be a prestigious and noticeable building, an organisational and institutional centre of a “liberal” branch of Islam, and open and accessible to the wider public. From the mid 1980s onwards it also went without saying that it was a problem that Muslims in France had to worship “on the street” and in “basements” and “garages”. In the course of the 1990s municipal policy approaches increasingly began to diverge: some local governments were uncooperative, others decided to help Muslims

authorities to apply the law and make use of the provision of this kind of long term lease (*bail emphytéotique*) to allow for the building of mosques. Also in term of jurisprudence and legal practice since the 1940s this ruling was surprising and it seemed to be based on a contestable interpretation of the 1905 law. This was also argued by Jean Baubérot in an article published in *Le Monde*. See “La République ne subventionne pas les cultes, mais elle garantit leur libre exercice. Les juges ne devraient pas l’oublier” in *Le Monde* July 18 2007. In the 1940s the practice of long term leases for a symbolic amount had been introduced in view of allowing for the building of churches in France (see chapter 2).

450. The MNR has decided to also file a legal protest against this new contract. See “Marseille, prodigue sans exclusif” in *L’expansion* December 1 2007.

451. The architectural plans for the Grand Mosque were presented in July 2008. See “Mosquée de Marseille: le projet se précise, pas son financement” in *Rue89* July 4 2008.
to improve the housing situation of their prayer houses, and some municipal governments contributed financially to mosque building, by legal but also by semi-legal ways.

The Consultation on Islam that began in 1999 led the French government to become more actively involved in finding solutions for the practical concerns that mattered to Muslims. A more pragmatic approach that focussed on improving the adequacy and sufficiency of prayer space was made possible because the mosque problem was now predominantly framed as about improving the housing conditions of “vicinity Islam”. This framing steered the issue of mosque establishment away from contentious discussion on the organisation of Islam and from discussions on whether and how the presence of Islam should be visibly expressed in the public sphere. It was also new that the national government now began to play a more prominent role in policy responses to mosque creation: First, it explicitly and repeatedly called upon prefects and municipal governments to be supportive of mosque creation. Second, new possibilities were investigated for a more direct influence on the financing of mosques, in cooperation with the national and regional Muslim councils.

The reconstruction of public discussions and policy responses to mosque creation in France has brought to light important shifts and variation across time, and between national and local institutional levels. Still, it is also clear that there are also particular types and patterns of policy responses that are consistent over longer periods of time and that reflect argumentations, institutional repertoires and motivations that are recognisably “French”.

Successive French governments re-invented and promoted laïcité as the guiding institutional principle to regulate the presence of Islam, but simultaneously came up with the idea of creating an “Islam of France”, which re-mobilised the Gallican tradition of state dominance over religion. Moreover, the related idea of creating Grand Mosques to serve as symbols and institutional carriers of “French Islam” evoked the colonial traditions in which prestigious mosques had sometimes served as a “reward” for those Muslim factions willing to cooperate with the French. In Marseilles, in addition, the building of a Cathedral Mosque was framed in terms of local policies of intercommunity relations that in many respects echoed the Concordat model in which public authorities would recognise the established religious communities. The use of institutional repertoires related to contrasting lines of reasoning within the French church-state traditions resulted in public policy responses that were in tension with each other. For example, the principle of secularism was taken to imply that French authorities could no longer finance the Grand Mosque themselves, as they had done in colonial times, but the Gallican tradition implied that French authorities could not afford to lose control over religion by allowing Muslims to create large, private Islamic centres with the help of foreign donors. When the idea of improving the housing of “vicinity Islam” arose, it seemed easier to situate policy responses more firmly within the framework of the 1905 law. However, as the contentious discussions around the report of the Machelon commission have shown, in a situation in which minority religions obviously lacked sufficient and adequate facilities for religious practice it was a subject for debate whether policy responses should be informed by the idea that the state guarantees free exercise of religion (article 1 of the 1905 law) or by the idea that the state does not finance religion (article 2). This illustrates that even when there is agreement on which (aspect of) institutional repertoires should prevail, there is still room for interpretation – and thereby for disagreements – on what institutional arrangements imply for concrete policy responses.

Policy responses to mosque establishment are also shaped by specific understandings, representations and framings of the issues they intend to address and solve. It matters greatly whether in responding to mosque creation municipal authorities think they are creating a symbol
of recognition, stimulating immigrant integration, combating social exclusion, fighting the growing influences of radical Islam, guaranteeing effective religious freedom or taking away feelings of resentment among young Muslims. Most probably they will argue that they are achieving multiple objectives at the same time. I have in particular focussed on the various meanings that were being ascribed to “mosques” in policy discourses and the different understandings that were being invoked in figures of speech such as the “basements of Islam”, “Cathedral Mosques”, “mosquées-hangars” or “vicinity mosques”.

At this point it is useful to distinguish two critical junctures in the discussions in Marseilles. The first juncture occurred in the late 1980s when the idea of building a Cathedral Mosque linked the creation of an “Islam in France” to the incorporation of the Muslim community into the local model of pluralism. As a result of this framing the issue was allocated to the policy field of community relations and was understood as being about recognition and the organisation of Islam. This made it an extremely complex policy issue, also because it brought into play a variety of local, national and transnational stakeholders, each seeking to defend their interests and positions of influence. A second critical juncture occurred when the municipality took up the frame suggesting that there should be room for “vicinity Islam” and that a primary objective should be to improve the “neighbourhood mosques”. Given the fact that the inadequate housing situation of the small prayer spaces had been on the public agenda since the early 1980s it was striking that it took almost 25 years for a municipal approach to develop that could effectively address this issue. The more pragmatic approach associated the “regularisation” of the housing of Islamic worship with the policy field of urban planning. Events in 2005 and 2006 showed that these two framings of the creation of mosques were not mutually exclusive, and that efforts to improve the situation of the neighbourhood mosques could exist alongside the creation of, what Geisser and Zemouri (2007: 246) have ironically called, “a Grand Paris Mosque in Marseilles” to function as a symbol of “Islam of France”.

What actual policy responses were developed and implemented also depended on a range of situational factors. An important factor in France, and especially in Marseilles, have been electoral politics. Immigrant integration and the presence of Islam are sensitive issues in most European countries, but especially in France national governing strategies towards Islam are very much informed by electoral strategies and political goals, including those related to foreign relations with North African governments. In addition, the contentious nature of discussions in Marseilles should be understood in light of the institutional framework of French local politics, in which the district system and the possibilities for politicians to have different mandates, create strong linkages between national and local political agendas. Nearly every two years there were elections and political campaigns in which integration issues would invariably be discussed and in which extreme right parties had a prominent voice, and these would come together on the local discussion on mosque of Marseilles. In addition, there were important events at national and international levels that shaped policy discussions. Finally, there were numerous idiosyncrasies that have left their mark on the course of events, among them the fact that the businessman Mustafa Slimani presented a megalomaniac project for a multipurpose Islamic centre in the Fall of 1989, thus blocking the road for other more sensible mosque projects, or the way Soheib Bencheikh succeeded for a decade in positioning himself as the “mufti of Marseilles” and to strategically make use of the media attention he received to discredit quite a few local grassroots Muslim associations as representatives of “forces of darkness”.
8.1. Introduction

Over the past years the image of the Netherlands abroad has changed from that of a guiding nation in the domain of immigrant integration policies to that of a country facing a deep crisis due to the failure of its multicultural policies. Social scientists argue that the Netherlands was a prime example of a country implementing multiculturalism, and that it now provides a first-class illustration of the disastrous effects of “granting group rights” to immigrants and allowing Muslims to set up “an Islamic pillar”. Others have argued that these critics misrepresent the actual progress of integration and that they far too easily suggest that continued problems with immigrant integration are the direct outcome of erroneous policy choices. In addition, so they argue, it is very doubtful whether in reality the Dutch ever implemented multicultural policies.

This chapter makes a contribution to this debate by analysing policies of accommodation of Islam in the Netherlands since the early 1980s. It explores the ways Dutch integration policies and institutionalised church-state relations have structured public policies. The chapter in particular focuses on municipal public policy discussions around mosque creation in Rotterdam. This city has been at the forefront of discussions on immigrant integration and Islam in the Netherlands. Of special relevance is to see whether, and if so how and why, policy responses to mosque creation changed over time. In addition, the various institutional arrangements that were drawn upon in the local context are discussed. Finally, the chapter aims to generate possible explanations for the radical shifts in Dutch policy discussions over the past 8 years that have puzzled many outside observers.

8.2. Ethnic Minorities Policy and mosque creation in Rotterdam

In the 1980s Dutch immigrant integration policies started off on the premise that the Netherlands were now “de facto a country of immigration”. Ethnic Minorities Policies were based on dis-
tinctions between cultural minority groups, which would make it possible to attune policies to the specific circumstances of each group. This approach was driven by the twin ideals of equal opportunities and respect for cultural differences. A flourishing multicultural society could develop if immigrants would be enabled to participate fully and equally in society and if discriminatory talk and behaviour were not permitted. National and local advisory councils were set up that would allow a new generation of ethnic elites to replace the self-appointed Dutch fiduciaries who had represented migrants in the 1960s and 1970s. The slogan “integration with retention of cultural identity” became the motto of Minorities Policy. Emerging ethnic elites rapidly picked up this slogan to argue that successful integration did not require cultural assimilation and to justify their attempts to create community based institutions.

Ethnic Minority Policy had a structural similarity to the foundational ideas of pillarisation. The legacy of the pillar-system, as a way of handling diversity, seemed of particular relevance for the religious dimension of integration. In 1982 this idea was developed by Klop, a member of the scientific bureau of the Christian Democrat Party (CDA), in an article entitled *Islam in the Netherlands: Fear of a new pillar?* According to him, Dutch history had shown that a certain level of isolation could be beneficial in the early stages of collective emancipation. At first, members of minority groups would be preoccupied with their own community, but later they would participate more in the central spheres of society (Klop 1982: 528). Another a central Minorities Policy Directorate was created within the Ministry of Home Affairs. See Entzinger 1984 and Penninx 1988 for early studies on the development of policy responses with regard to immigration in the Netherlands. For a recent discussion see the report by the Commission Blok 2004 and Scholten 2008.

455. Minorities Policy distinguished between ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccans, Yugoslavs, South-Europeans, Surinamese and Moluccans) and native underprivileged groups (caravan dwellers). Dutch policies were seen as paradigmatic for a pluralist approach to immigrant integration. Several policy measures were illustrative of a pluralist approach to immigrant integration. Dutch legislation was scrutinised as early as 1983 to see whether it contained elements of discrimination on the basis of nationality, race and religion (Beune and Hessels 1983). Existing programs for education in migrants’ native languages and culture were continued and new intercultural education programs were set up. The revision of the nationality law in 1986 made it easier for immigrants to become Dutch citizens. A National Advisory and Consultation Body (Landelijk Overleg en Inspraak Orgaan) for minority organizations was set up in 1985 and in 1985 active and passive voting rights for alien residents in local elections were introduced (See Penninx 2005).

456. This view of the integration process was strongly indebted to the theories and categories developed in pioneering Dutch academic studies. See Penninx 1988; Penninx and Vermeulen (eds) 2000. See Scholten 2008: 97ff. on the relationships between policy development and social scientific research and on the role of the Advisory Committee on Minorities Research (ACOM) and the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) thereby. Minorities Policies also developed in tandem with a commitment to combat discrimination. Several policy measures were illustrative of a pluralist approach to immigrant integration. Dutch legislation was scrutinised as early as 1983 to see whether it contained elements of discrimination on the basis of nationality, race and religion (Beune and Hessels 1983). Existing programs for education in migrants’ native languages and culture were continued and new intercultural education programs were set up. The revision of the nationality law in 1986 made it easier for immigrants to become Dutch citizens. A National Advisory and Consultation Body (Landelijk Overleg en Inspraak Orgaan) for minority organizations was set up in 1985 and in 1985 active and passive voting rights for alien residents in local elections were introduced (See Penninx 2005).

457. Already in the late 1970s policy advisors had questioned the idea that immigrants could, in actual fact, preserve and hold on to their cultural identity. The Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) had argued in 1979 that the slogan diverted attention away from the need for integration and adaptation. The council had argued that permanent immigrants could only successfully participate in Dutch society if there was a mutual adaptation of majorities and minorities, if immigrants respected the law and if the achievements of Dutch culture were protected (Scholten 2008: 104ff.; Minorities Bill 1983: 38-42). In 1985 a municipal memorandum in Rotterdam was even more outspoken and insisted that migrants should learn the Dutch language, show a willingness to adapt to the host society and should not “hold on too much to their own ‘identity’” (GR 1985: 14-16).
important lesson to be taken from the Dutch experience of pillarisation, was to see religion as “a force affecting all aspects of societal life”. Klop also thought that religion would remain important for immigrants and their offspring, whereas national and ethnic differences would slowly fade out. Therefore there were reasons to expect the forming of a kind of Dutch Islam that would eventually bring together various national groups of Muslims.\footnote{458} However plausible it may have seemed to Klop and others to think about the creation of Islamic institutions in light of the Dutch history of pillarisation, in actual fact policy responses to the presence of Islam in the 1980s were barely shaped by this idea.\footnote{459} There was never much enthusiasm to see an Islamic pillar emerge.\footnote{460} The collapse of the pillarised society was interpreted as a result of processes of individual emancipation, democratisation and growing social mobility.\footnote{461} The overall emphasis in policy was on participation and integration. As important, there was also no enthusiasm on the part of emerging Muslim leaders in the Netherlands to create a Dutch Islamic pillar. The new ethnic and religious elites, and especially the Turks, set out to create ethnically-based religious organisations and religious institutions. The most important context for discussions about appropriate forms of Muslim organisation-building was the level of municipal politics.

8.2.1. Integration policies and Islam in Rotterdam in the 1980s

Policy makers in Rotterdam believed that by forming ethnic organisations immigrant communities would demonstrate that they were able “to accept their own responsibility”. In 1981 a special municipal bureau had been created to deal with ethnic groups, called the Migrants Office.\footnote{462}

\footnote{458. Klop (1982: 533) believed that religious diversity would prove to be lasting, whereas in a few generations ethnic and national differences would become nothing more than a “flourishing folklore”. For a discussion also Fermin 1997: 121ff. and Klop 1999. In 1983 Jan Slomp, who worked as an Islam expert for the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and who participated in the Waardenburg Working Party (see below) wrote a critique of these ideas of Klop. He argued that the parallels that were drawn between the situation of Muslims and Roman Catholics and Orthodox Protestants were mistaken for three reasons: Muslims were immigrants who had a completely different mindset than Christian groups in the 19th century, there was no intention from the side of Muslims to create an Islamic pillar and Muslims were ethnically and denominationally a very heterogeneous group (cf. Hampsinck 1992: 3).

459. The suggestion that Dutch accommodation policies with regard to Islam in the 1980s and early 1990s were primarily shaped by “pillarisation” still figures prominently in political and academic debates. See for example Statham et al. 2005. For a critical discussion see Sunier 2000; Vink 2007; and Maussen 2009.

460. The idea that Muslims in the Netherlands should organise themselves around their religion, as opposed to them organising on the basis of ethnicity, continued to play a role within the Christian Democrat Party (CDA). The ideas of Klop (see above) were, for example, further developed by the sociologist Anton Zijderveld who was a prominent member of the Scientific Bureau of the CDA. For a discussion Maussen 2006: 61ff. On ideas about integration and religion within the CDA see also Fermin 1997.

461. See Kennedy 1995.

462. The Migrants Office had been created in 1981 to replace the municipal Bureau for Special Groups (Sunier 1996: 244). In 1980 the municipality had stimulated and subsidised the founding of a co-ordinating body for ethnic organisations: the Platform Foreigners Greater Rotterdam (Platform Buitenlanders Rijnmond). The platform should function as an alternative to the Foundation for Foreign Workers in Greater Rotterdam (Stichting Buitenlandse Werknemers Rotterdam Rijnmond) that was the typical form of welfare organisations set up during the guest workers regime and that was mainly administrated by Dutch fiduciaries. The Platform Foreigners...
In a short text submitted to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and entitled “Mosque groups as
self-help organisations”, the Migrants Office sought to develop a more open approach to mosque
associations (GR 1983). Municipal policies on employment, housing, family reunification and
discrimination could be discussed with representatives of mosque associations. Hans Simons
(Social Democrat Party, PvdA), the alderman who was responsible for Ethnic Minorities Policy,
was open to the idea of mosque associations becoming “social partners in immigrant policy.”

To investigate the matter further, officials of the Migrants Office and alderman Simons met on
three occasions with Turkish imams. These meetings were deemed a critical dialogue to under-
line that differences of opinion would be expressed, not concealed. During the third meeting, in
February 1984, one of the municipal officials asked:

whether in the future there might be a looser relationship with the home country- for there
are still intensive contacts with the embassy- and there might develop a kind of “Dutch
Islam”, in which Moroccan, Pakistani and Dutch Muslims can also participate.

When municipal officials talked about the development of “a Dutch Islam” they also thought
about integration and adaptation to Dutch culture. What role did the mosque play when it came to
retention of religious and Turkish identity, and in view of the integration of Turkish men, women
and youth in the Dutch society? And what did the imams think about Turkish parents who
kept girls of school age at home during school time? Would imams be willing to try to motivate
Turkish migrants to vote in the upcoming city district elections? The question about the practice of
Turkish parents to give their children in marriage to partners in the country of origin was pushed
forward to a later occasion. These questions were illustrative of the fear that conservative values
and strong ties with Turkish society and government would hinder the integration process.

The Turkish imams presented their activities as an illustration of the ways in which Turks
were able to take care of their community affairs. In their work, so the imams explained with the
help of an interpreter, they put the emphasis on Turkish culture and combined spiritual counsel-
ling and religious instructions with teachings about Turkish culture and language lessons. They

Greater Rotterdam refused membership to Muslim organisations because these were said to be not sufficiently
“democratic” (Rath et al. 2001: 114). Initially, this was not a big deal as the municipality was only involved
with secular ethnic organisations anyhow, and in the 1970s these had also been the most socially active forms of

463. Simons was the alderman of Social Affairs between 1983 and 1989. He had the portfolio of Special Groups and
since 1985 that of Cultural Minorities (Sunier 1996: 143). He wanted to see whether some of the costs for non-
religious activities and accommodation of Mosque Committees could be subsidized. Perhaps a special training
could be developed for imams allowing them to “contribute to the emancipation and participation of Turkish
migrants in Dutch society” (Rath et al. 2001: 115).

464. [“of in de toekomst wellicht sprake kan zijn van een lossere band met het thuisland –er zijn nu immers
nog intensieve contacten met de ambassade – en er een soort “Nederlandse Islam” ontstaat, waarin ook de
Marokkaanse, Pakistaanse en Nederlandse Islamieten kunnen participeren”]. Minutes of meeting with Turkish
imams, February 14 1984, p.3. All policy notes, letters, minutes and transcripts that are not reproduced in an
official publication by the municipality are to be found in the personal archive on Rotterdam of Frank Buijs, Jan
Rath and myself.

465. [“de rol van de moskeeën bij het instandhouden van de religie en Turkse identiteit en de integratie van Turkse
mannen, vrouwen en jongeren in de Nederlandse samenleving”]. Minutes of meeting with Turkish imams,
February 14 1984, p.3.
were now giving priority to the development of a network of Turkish Muslim organisations and made clear that they were less enthusiastic about the development of inter-ethnic Muslim platforms in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{466} Also, the contacts with the municipality should not serve to “enforce Dutch policy upon the Turks” but should be about “the rights Turks have”.\textsuperscript{467} The co-
ordinator of the Turkish imams emphasized that Islam was “a universal religion” and rejected the term Dutch Islam.\textsuperscript{468}

These reactions were illustrative of prevailing ideas and strategies within Turkish Muslim organisations. In 1979 the Turkish government stimulated the forming of the Turkish Islamic Cultural Federation (TICF) in the Netherlands, a platform of Muslim associations affiliated to the Directorate of Religious Affairs founded in 1924 by Atatürk and located in Ankara (the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı). The idea was to foster strong ties between Turkish immigrants and their home country, to facilitate the forming of a Turkish Islam in Europe and to guarantee that the government had a direct influence on Turkish mosque associations abroad. With the creation of the Islamic Foundation in the Netherlands (ISN) in 1982, the properties of mosques affiliated with the Diyanet in the Netherlands were centralised, which meant that additional funds and mortgages for the creation of mosques became available (Landman 1992: 101ff.).\textsuperscript{469} In Rotterdam, of the thirteen Turkish Muslim organisations that existed in 1985, six were affiliated with the TICF. These organisations had succeeded in achieving good relations with Dutch officials and all the imams who had been invited to the critical dialogues were working for the Diyanet (Sunier 1996: 86).

\textsuperscript{466} The imams referred to the Foundation Muslim Organisations in the Netherlands (Stichting Federatie Moslim Organisaties in Nederland (FOMON)) that was one of the first inter-ethnic Muslim council set up in the Netherlands. However, the council was already moribund at the time (Landman 1992: 243-249). Actually, Turkish Diyanet associations remained sceptical (if not hostile) to attempts to develop Dutch Muslim institutions, such as a multi-ethnic platform of Islamic organisations and Dutch training programs for imams. They also left the multi-ethnic platform of Moroccan organisations in Rotterdam (SPIOR) in the mid 1990s.

\textsuperscript{467} [“als het niet gaat om het opdringen van Nederlands beleid aan de Turken, maar om het duidelijk maken van rechten die de Turken hebben”]. Minutes of meeting with Turkish imams, January 31 1984. Alderman Simons had suggested that the critical dialogues should also help to “get the municipal policy accepted, as far as possible, by those who are primarily concerned” [“Doelstelling is ook het gemeentelijk beleid voor zover mogelijk aanvaard te krijgen door de eerst betrokkenen”]. See policy note “Policy for mosques” [Beleid t.a.v. Moskeeën], April 1984.

\textsuperscript{468} Minutes meeting with Turkish imams January 23 1984. During the final meeting the imams asked for more understanding from the side of Dutch society for Islamic and Turkish religious and cultural practices. Turkish girls often were insulted because of their clothes and headscarves and school boards insisted on mixed sports lessons and obligatory naked showering which were not allowed for Muslims. Minutes meeting with Turkish imams, February 14 1984.

\textsuperscript{469} The Turkish government had become increasingly concerned about the growing influence of religious and political movements that were being suppressed in Turkey and that had succeeded in setting up networks in Western Europe. In response the government developed a threefold strategy: firstly, it supported the creation of national umbrella organisations of mosque associations in various Western European countries that were affiliated to the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs. These mosque associations could receive financial support and were staffed with Turkish imams. Secondly, these associations were encouraged to begin a public relations campaign in which they warned public authorities in Western Europe about the dangers of Islamic fundamentalist movements. Simultaneously they argued that Muslim associations that were affiliated to the Diyanet were liberal and respectful of secularism. Thirdly, it sought to encourage the maintenance of cultural and religious bonds between Turks living in Western Europe and those living in Turkey (Landman 1992; Sunier 1996).
The critical dialogues had brought to light quite profound differences of opinion. Instead of spelling these out, the Rotterdam officials tried to avoid jeopardizing the recently established contacts. Ethnic Minorities Policy discourses provided a whole set of rather vague concepts to maintain this kind of suggestion of mutual understanding. All parties agreed “discrimination” and “assimilation” should be prevented and that the goal was “integration with retention of cultural identity”. To show that the imams were also in favour of “participation” they promised to encourage Turks to vote in the upcoming municipal elections.\textsuperscript{470}

New attempts to develop relations with mosque associations

The dialogues with Turkish imams were only one among several attempts to see what kind of relationships could be established between the municipality and Muslim associations. Mosque associations in Rotterdam were struggling to survive and were hoping to receive some kind of financial support for their activities and accommodation costs. In 1984 a municipal Working Party on Self-help Organisations (\textit{Werkgroep Zelforganisaties}) published an advisory report on municipal subsidies for ethnic organisations.\textsuperscript{471} It suggested making public subsidies available for activities in the areas of emancipation, education, integration, participation and identity formation, but only to the extent that these activities served to promote “the integration process of foreigners in all sections of Dutch society” (cited in Rath et al. 2001: 137). Public money would not be simply given to ethnic organisations without scrutinizing exactly its intended use. This approach created possibilities for Muslim associations to receive subsidies for some of their non-religious activities. The working party remained divided, however, on the question of whether mosque associations could actually become eligible for municipal subventions.

Parallel to the activities of the municipal Working Party on Self-help Organisations, a study on Turkish ethnic organizations was conducted between 1983 and 1985.\textsuperscript{472} The researcher, Hein de Graaf, distinguished between different functions of ethnic organisations. These could provide a “safe haven” (\textit{toevlucht}) and “assistance” and they could contribute to “transformations in the own group” and “transformations in Dutch society”. Drawing on this typology De Graaf concluded that most Turkish organisations had set up activities aiming to preserve Turkish culture. Ethnic organisations, and the mosque associations above all, functioned as “safe havens” and as a kind of “cultural home”.\textsuperscript{473} He argued that mosque leaders were hardly able to act as brokers for ethnic groups because they barely spoke Dutch and were primarily defending the interests of their own faction (Buijs 1998: 44).

The classification developed by De Graaf was immediately absorbed in policy discourse. Mosques functioned as “cultural homes” and as “safe havens” and this was important, especially

\begin{enumerate}
\item The municipal elections in March 1986 were the first in which non-nationals would have the right to vote. This right was given to non-nationals who had lived in the Netherlands for a minimum continuous period of 5 years.
\item The Working Party on Self-help Organisations had been created in the autumn of 1983 in view of the proposed decentralization of welfare work for ethnic minorities (Rath et al. 2001: 136).
\item A summary of the report of 1983 had been sent to the members of the Rotterdam municipal council. Representatives of the TICF also mentioned the report in an address in which they asked for Muslim organisations to be treated on par with secular migrant organisations. In 1985 a more elaborate report on Turkish organisations in Rotterdam was published. See De Graaf 1983 and 1985 and for a discussion Buijs 1998: 43-44.
\item “Vooronderzoek eigen organisaties Etnische Culturele Minderheden” (De Graaf 1983).
\end{enumerate}
for migrants from rural areas who had difficulties in adapting to urban life; for them “the mosque [was] the only constant point in face of a risk of disorientation” (GR 1983: 4). These attempts to specify the exact functions of mosques had still not resulted in a framework that was clear and acceptable to all parties. At closer look distinct discourse coalitions had been formed of actors that supported different images of mosques. One coalition consisted of the officials of the Migrants Office, alderman Simons and the leaders of the Turkish mosques. They sponsored a frame in which the mosque was seen as a “cultural home” and the mosque association as an important form of “ethnic self-help organisation”. In addition, they believed that the government should be willing to financially support these kinds of institutions and activities. In an address to the municipal council in 1985, alderman Simons emphatically argued: “Their own community is the basis for the maintenance of the spiritual identity, a first condition for the kind of well being that Dutch society grants everyone”. If the council would now reject the requests to give at least some subsidies this would also “signify a setback in the chosen policy of trying to break through the isolation of the Moroccan and Turkish ethnic organisations”. This framing of mosque associations was also forcefully supported by the Turkish Muslim leaders who felt that at present Islamic organisations were being discriminated against (Buijs 1998: 43).

Another coalition was being formed that framed the creation of large, multipurpose mosques as a worrisome trend. Representatives of secular ethnic organisations had looked with dismay at the ways municipal officials and politicians had approached Muslim associations. In 1985 the Platform Foreigners Greater Rotterdam, that was not open to Muslim organisations, spoke out against any kind of municipal subventions for mosque associations. They questioned the idea that mosques had an important meeting place function. For one, there were hardly any spaces available for women and the youth. The municipality, it said, should stimulate the participation of migrants in public welfare facilities and subsidise only the activities organised by

474. In the meanwhile Turkish Muslim organisations sought to influence municipal decision-making and handed over a letter to the alderman that was signed by 2,443 mosque visitors. They demanded that mosque associations and other immigrants organisations would be treated equally. In April 1984 municipal officials came up with a new policy note called “Policy towards mosques” that acknowledged that often times ethnic organisations provided “a social, cultural and national home” to immigrants. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen was now inclined to give some subsidies to mosque associations. However, taking notice of the advice of the Working Party on Self Organisations, subsidies would only be available “on a very limited scale, exclusively for activities in the socio-cultural sphere directed at integration, and which were in no way at variance with municipal policy” (cited in Rath et al. 2001: 137). Alderman Simons, however, was willing to go a step further and also subsidize, on an incidental basis, some of the accommodation costs of the non-religious activities. In what ways accommodation costs for religious and non-religious activities were to be distinguished remained unclear. See letter by alderman Simons sent to various mosque associations and addressed to “the Muslim citizens of Rotterdam”, June 25 1984 and “Policy on mosques” (Beleid t.a.v. Moskeeën), April 1984.

475. [“De eigen gemeenschap is de basis voor het behoud van de geestelijke identiteit, een eerste voorwaarde voor het welzijn dat de Nederlandse samenleving iedereen gunt” (...) “een terugslag betekent voor het ingezette beleid van doorbreken van het isolement van de Marokkaanse en Turkse eigen organisaties”] in “Subsidising Turkish and Moroccan mosques” [Subsidiëring Turkse en Marokkaanse moskeeën], Meeting Municipal Council Commission, April 2 1985.

476. As an intermediate solution some minor subsidies for the accommodation costs of language classes in mosques were made available in 1985. However, the financial benefits were so meagre that they could not take away the feeling that mosque associations were being disadvantaged. Turkish Muslim leaders thought that this stingy municipal attitude towards their associations stood in glaring contrast to the generous subsidies that were being given to secular ethnic organisations (Buijs 1998).
secular ethnic organisations. In addition, the creation of mosques by Turkish associations affiliated to the Milli Görüş and the Nürçu movements had led to anxiety among Dutch residents in some neighbourhoods. In the media these movements were portrayed as Islamic fundamentalist groups with “outspoken, right-wing political goals”.

These concerns were more elaborately explained in a letter addressed to the municipality in August 1987 and in an article in the periodical Traverse written by two migrant community workers. Migrant community workers were social workers who had been employed by the municipality to encourage the participation of immigrants in Urban Renewal Project Groups. The migrant community workers argued that mosque associations propagated conservative ideas about “education, gender relations, the authority of the father over the children, and matters of honour”. The Friday sermons, that were spoken of as a “form of propaganda”, were said to concentrate on themes such as feelings of honour and the obligation of women to wear the headscarf. Imams promoted “hatred of Jews and Christians”. Mosque associations also showed no interest in “the problems in the neighbourhood” and in actual fact they aimed to create a greater distance between the Turkish and Dutch populations and to obstruct the “integration of Turks in Dutch society” (Aksu and Dogan 1987: 9).

The municipality had actually been fuelling this process of isolation and segregation by encouraging mosque associations to also develop socio-cultural activities. Thereby the efforts of the migrant community workers to establish contacts between migrant communities and the Dutch residents and their attempts to stimulate the further emancipation of migrants were being nullified.

Migrant community, often of immigrant origin themselves, argued that originally small scale houses of worship had been created in Rotterdam that provided prayer space and meeting places for Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. However, in the 1980s the “fundamentalist” mosque associations had begun to create “large mosques” that catered to all kinds of activities. These mosque associations seemed to become like “a state in the state”. To visually emphasise these worrisome developments the earlier mentioned article in Traverse had been accompanied by a drawing representing a typical Rotterdam neighbourhood overshadowed by a huge replica of a Turkish mosque. This trend should be stemmed: mosques should return to their “original function”, serving as “rooms for prayer and nothing more” just as they did in Muslim countries. Welfare institutions should also become more open to Turkish men and organise activities for the young.

Initially, the alarming tone of the article was met with scepticism by municipal officials. However, it was also becoming clear that worries about the influence of the conservative mosques were resonating with the concerns of Dutch residents associations. The disagreements on the actual role that mosques played in the integration process made it increasingly unlikely that a generous and determined policy of subsidising mosque associations would see the light any time soon. In a policy note issued in December 1987, the municipality said it wanted to make Muslim organisations aware of the necessity to be active in domains such as “education, complementary schooling, work etc.”. This reserved attitude was also a reaction to the ongoing discussion in Rotterdam neighbourhoods.

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482. Officials of the Migrants Office thought the ways the migrant community workers had voiced their concerns was inappropriate. In a policy note an official argued that speaking of Muslim “fundamentalist movements” in Rotterdam that supposedly were under the influence of Saudi Arabia and Iran was highly exaggerated. The article expressed outright hostility towards all mosque associations and as such it could better be understood as resulting from the outspoken left wing political ideas of the authors (Buijs 1998: 57).

8.2.2. Mosque creation and Urban Renewal Policies in Rotterdam

Throughout the 1980s the number of Islamic houses of worship increased steadily in Rotterdam, from 8 in 1980 to about 28 in 1987. Most prayer spaces were created in abandoned commercial premises and dwellings that were readily available in the older, more run-down neighbourhoods. Many of these neighbourhoods were selected for urban renewal. The newly created houses of worship often caused environmental problems: many buildings did not comply with fire and safety regulations, there was insufficient parking space available or the use of residential property had been changed without permission (Rath et al. 2001: 139). The municipality had tolerated illegal and semi-legal forms of mosque housing and did not enforce strict compliance with safety regulations. However, environmental problems were repeatedly signalled in the Urban Renewal Project Groups, where municipal officials worked closely with residents organisations to discuss urban and social renewal projects.

Mosques were also becoming symbols of the (perceived) over-concentration of immigrant populations in relatively poor neighbourhoods. Islam was now becoming a more central issue in protests against the presence of immigrant communities. In 1985, the residents organisation in the Feijenoord district protested against the “uncontrolled creation of new houses of worship in the city district” and especially against the creation of mosques that were affiliated with “conservative Muslim movements”. They called upon the municipality to specify the total number of mosques needed and to specify how these would be spread over the city districts. The residents questioned the role of the Migrants Office that, so they argued, unconditionally supported all initiatives to create a mosque.

In June 1985 the municipal council and the alderman discussed the letter of protest and decided to organise a meeting between the Urban Renewal Project Group and some officials of the Migrants Office. That meeting would serve to discuss short term solutions for some of the existing problems, whereas subsequently the Migrants Office would develop ideas for a more structural solution for the location of mosques in urban renewal districts.


485. Of the 8 houses of worship in the Southern part of Rotterdam 6 were established in premises that were on the list to be demolished or renovated because of Urban Renewal projects. The direct reason for the protest of the residents was the fact that a group of Moroccan Muslims was looking for a new location in Feijenoord and that a group of Turkish Muslims affiliated to the Milli Görüş movement had transformed a rented dwelling into a house of worship.

486. In 1982 an interdepartmental working party on mosque establishment had been formed, but it ceased its activities almost immediately because there was no money available to improve the housing situation. The Migrants Office made an overview of minority houses of worship in the city in 1982 and had suggested to establish a municipal housing policy and to include houses of prayer in municipal zoning plans (GR 1982 and 1983).

487. A special official worked at the Migrants Office since 1984, who was a Muslim himself, and who tried to help different groups in finding suitable accommodations. This new “Muslim employee”, Ibrahim Spalburg, had played a pioneering role in the development of Islam in Rotterdam. He had, for example, been involved in the project to create a central mosque in 1979 (see chapter 6) and later became the president of the platform of Muslim organisations set up in 1988.

488. The Migrants Office could make use of an overview of houses of worship that had been made in 1982. In the period July-October 1985 a new working group on mosque establishment was created that formulated proposals for the spreading of mosques over the city and made an overview of the accommodation problems.
the placing of mosques in the city districts it was clear that quite different understandings of the significance of mosque creation existed. In addition, the two main groups of actors that were opposing one another in these discussions about the placing of mosques overlapped with the groups that had been opposed in discussions about subsidies for mosque associations.

There were the officials of the Migrants Office and the leaders of some of the more active, mostly Turkish, mosque associations. They framed mosque creation as about providing for the elementary needs of a new group in society. As one official put it, if there was a private initiative of Muslims who had collected money for a house of worship than a “mosque [had] the right to exist” and by consequence “a space [had] to be found”. The alderman for Social Affairs, Simons, agreed with this view. The Migrants Office was simply a “service bureau”. According to the alderman, the fact that the Migrants Office put so much emphasis on the interests of mosque associations was also a result of “certain resistances” against mosques among the Dutch populations in the neighbourhoods. Leaders of a Turkish mosque association in Feijenoord spoke of discrimination against the Muslim population and said “they would defend with all the legal means at their disposition their rights to have a mosque in their neighbourhood”.

Alternately, the residents associations suggested thinking of mosque establishment in Rotterdam in very different terms. The following fragment illustrates some of their arguments:

Also in the district Feijenoord/Northern Island we are convinced of the necessity of a Turkish and a Moroccan mosque. Because our district has almost 30% Muslims. But what we fear is that the uncontrolled growth in facilities, like it is becoming now, is socially a bad thing. Not only do we expect opposition from the Dutch population, there is also something brewing within the Turkish community. As residents’ associations, project bureau, but especially you as municipality, we are co-responsible that Feijenoord remains a liveable district. Riots, like they occurred in former days in the Afrikaanderwijk should be prevented at all times…

The Feijenoord city district was thus represented as in need of careful management, both socially and physically. The immigrants living in a particular district were entitled to have adequate housing and facilities in the neighbourhood, but they should also make an effort to take some interest in the “problems of the neighbourhood”.

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489. Minutes meeting of the Migrants Office and the Project Group, June 14 1985.
492. [“Ook in de wijk Feijenoord/Noordereiland is men overtuigd van de noodzaak van een Turkse en een Marokkaanse moskee. Onze wijk bevat immers bijna 30% moslims. Waar we bang voor zijn is dat de wil-groei in voorzieningen, zoals die nu aan het ontstaan is, sociaal gezien een slechte zaak is. Niet alleen verwachten wij verzet van de Nederlandse bevolking, zeker binnen de Turkse gemeenschap broeit ook iets. Als Bewonersorganisatie, projectburo, maar zeker u als gemeente, zijn we er medeverantwoordelijk voor dat Feijenoord een leefbare wijk blijft. Rellen zoals die vroeger in de Afrikaanderwijk hebben plaatsgevonden moeten te allen tijde voorkomen worden”]. Letter of the residents association Feijenoord/Noordereiland, 1985, no further date.
493. In 1985 a special program had been set up called “Migrants, Urban Renewal and Community Work” [Projekt Migranten, Stadsvernieuwing en Opbouwwerk]. For this project the Rotterdam Institute for Community Work
each district should provide for “its own” Muslim residents and therefore there should be “district-oriented mosques” (*wijkgerichte moskeeën*). There was no room in Feijenoord for “urban mosques” (*bovenwijkse moskeeën*). 494

Between 1985 and 1987 the relations between the residents organisations and the mosque associations in Rotterdam gravely deteriorated. The residents accused the officials of the Migrants Office of constantly siding with the mosque associations. The municipality could not afford a conflict ridden relationship with the residents associations, because it needed their support for major urban renewal projects. One possible way of getting out of this conflict was to find a way of thinking about mosque creation that would function as a bridge between the two parties involved. A crucial categorisation in this respect would prove to be the distinction between neighbourhood mosques and urban mosques. 495

In 1985 one of the officials of the Migrants Office had already suggested organising a municipal conference to discuss “mosque integration at the neighbourhood level” and to approach the location of mosques in a similar way as the planning of welfare facilities in the neighbourhoods. 496 It would require more involvement of the central city government and the removal of the Migrants Office from the dossier to allow this new municipal position on mosque creation to crystallize between 1987 and 1991.

**8.2.3. Towards a municipal policy on the housing of mosques**

In September 1987 the director of the Municipal Secretariat of Social Affairs, Health and Cultural Minorities suggested subjecting mosque establishment to a “central municipal co-ordination”. Such a strategy had also been used to locate caravan dwellers and it might be an effective way to overcome protests and to rise above the “non-objective resistances in the neighbourhoods”. 497 In the meanwhile an overview study was made jointly by officials of the Migrants Office and officials of the Urban Renewal Projects Coordinators Collective (PCC). 498

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495. This distinction between urban and neighbourhood mosques had already been used in an overview of houses of worship in Rotterdam made by the Migrants Office in 1982. In that text it was suggested that the smaller Muslim groups could suffice with a single “urban mosque” that would provide for the needs of all their members. However, the more numerous groups, such as the Turks and Moroccans could create a number of houses of worship catering for Muslim populations in specific districts. A policy objective for the accommodation of the needs of the Turkish community could be that in due time the “average Turkish mosques [can] … perhaps be seen as a normal neighbourhood facility …” (“de modale Turkse moskeeën [kunnen] in de toekomst wellicht als een normale wijkvoorziening (...) worden beschouwd”) (GR 1982: 10).

496. Minutes meeting July 8 1985. For a brief period a Working Party on Mosque Creation was created that sought to investigate housing problems and develop a “pragmatic approach to the problem”. See minutes meeting Project bureaus Feijenoord and Hillesluis and the working party on mosque locations, October 17 1985.


498. This report had been made at the request of the Board of Mayor and Alderman between January and September 1987.
The study provided insight into the situation of houses of worship in the urban renewal districts and suggested some short term solutions (GR 1987a). The second part of the report was issued in October and discussed the structural solutions for the longer term. This second report had been made exclusively by officials of the PCC who had refused to further collaborate with the officials of the Migrants Office. The latter were said to be too unconditional in their support for new houses of worship and they were refusing to think about the societal consequences of the growing influence of conservative mosque associations and of the further concentration of immigrant populations in certain city districts (GR 1987b).

These detailed overview studies would form the basis for a new policy approach. One of the propositions was to concentrate on the issue of accommodation and to disentangle this aspect from the wider discussions about the societal role of mosque associations. The mosque issue was “complex” and “sensitive”. The municipality should refrain from taking sides in these discussions. In order to avoid “drowning in the unlimited”, municipal authorities should focus on urban renewal, unwanted situations and new creations. It was to be expected, however, that solving the housing problems and preventing environmental nuisance could help to solve social problems and improve the relations between migrants and Dutch residents. Every neighbourhood with a sufficiently high percentage of foreigners should be willing to provide for “at least two mosques”. A new project bureau was created that consisted of officials of the Urban Development Department and the Cultural Minorities Department.

The municipality was now ready to move forward. In the meanwhile, a new platform had been created by local Muslim associations in June 1988, called the Platform Islamic Organisations in Greater Rotterdam (Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rotterdam Rijnmond) (SPIOR)).

A draft policy text was issued in early 1991, entitled “Faith in the Future. Mosques in Rotterdam” and announcing a “more stimulating and regulating approach” (GR 1992: 75). There would be an overall “catching up operation” to improve the housing situation of mosques and four larger mosques would be built at “strategic locations”. These mosques would be located on major thoroughfares, catering to Muslims living in different neighbourhoods and providing primarily for the needs of the more numerous Turkish and Moroccan populations. The large mosques could also become “more recognisable” (herkenbare) and “well constructed” (bouwkundig goed). To ensure that these large mosques would be open to different Muslim communities they should be more “neutral”, meaning that they should not be dominated by any specific denominational group. Muslim associations that were likeminded and belonged to the same national group would be encouraged to “unite their forces” so as to create a larger mosque

501. This meant that the Migrants Office was removed from the dossier. Only a few years later the office disappeared altogether because of a reorganisation.
502. In October 1988 the municipal council decided to provide a substantial municipal subsidy to allow the platform to be developed and to promote the interests of Muslim associations in Rotterdam (Rath et al. 2001: 119ff.).
503. Several structural problems were identified, including the chronic lack of space, the stagnation of urban renewal projects, the illegal use of dwellings and commercial premises, illegal commercial activities in mosques, unsafe spaces and non-compliance with fire-regulations, nuisance for the surroundings, and mosques being targets of hatred of foreigners. References are to the final memorandum published in 1992.
constructing mosques (gr 1992: 36-37). there would be no direct subsidies for the creation of new houses of worship “because of the separation of church and state”. mosque associations could benefit from urban renewal funds, however, if they would have to be relocated because of urban renewal projects. somewhat inconsistently, the municipality promised it would do its best to convince the national government to issue a temporary subsidy regulation to help improve the housing situation of prayer spaces of ethnic minorities. apparently, the principle of separation of church and state was not seen as an obstacle for direct financial support by the national government.

the mosque policy, which was to be implemented by the town planning and housing department, was based on three interrelated frames. mosques in rotterdam were primarily depicted as “neighbourhood facilities” (wijkvoorzieningen). this view helped to approach the mosque problematic within a framework of urban development and renewal policies. a central idea in urban renewal policy discourses was that social cohesion and the harmonious living together of different groups of residents would benefit from the availability of adequate facilities for each group. by speaking of “mosque integration at the city district level” the policy created a common perspective shared by the native dutch and immigrant residents. all “residents of the neighbourhood” – muslims and non-muslims alike – had to reconcile their various interests and concerns. in this way the demand of mosque associations that immigrants be fully recognised as residents was reconciled with the demand of dutch residents associations that immigrants should show more interest in “the problems of the neighbourhood”. finally, mosque creation would from then on be discussed in the vocabularies typical of urban development. the “pragmatic approach” was supported by a vocabulary and a set of practices that transformed the issue of mosque creation into a matter of technical know-how, good urban planning and pragmatic balancing of ideas and interests. urban planners would take the lead in the entire “planning process”. they made inventories of the existing accommodation problems. when there were plans for a new house of worship they would conduct a “location study” and determine the “supply area”, being the area of the city where the members of a specific mosque congregation lived. municipal services would also monitor adherence to existing rules and regulations more strictly. houses of worship would be subject to the same procedures and treatment as other premises. the relatively technical urban planning vocabulary and the embedding of mosque creation in urban planning regulatory practices helped to normalise what usually was seen as a sensitive and socially explosive issue.

this particular interpretation of the municipality’s role helped to finally move things forward. the municipal council, the city districts and the platform of residents associations reacted positively to the new policy proposal. the spior also welcomed the municipality’s willingness

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504. The municipality would also try to stimulate the use of abandoned church buildings to cater for mosques.
505. See more elaborately maussen 2004.
506. Officials of the city district charlois welcomed the mosque policy because, so they argued, it meant that muslim residents would in the future: “benefit from facilities of full value, that can function in reasonable harmony with the living- and other functions in the districts (...) The possession of such full value facilities can contribute to a more equal position in society” [“zijn zij gebaat bij volwaardige voorzieningen, die in redelijke harmonie met de woon- en andere functies in de wijk kunnen functioneren (...) Het bezit van dergelijke volwaardige voorzieningen kan een bijdrage leveren tot een gelijkwaardige positie in de samenleving”]. reaction of the city district charlois to the draft memorandum, 1991 (no further date).
to tackle the issue, but was critical of some aspects of the new policy. The urban planning lens downplayed the efforts Muslim newcomers had made to create houses of worship and how immigrants had experienced the obstacles and the opposition they had encountered. SPIOR (1991: 7) spoke of the “sacrifices of the Muslim community” and of “discrimination of Muslims in Dutch society”.

The municipality had also put the discussion on the role of mosques for integration on hold. However, a particular normative view on the socio-cultural functioning of mosques in Rotterdam was being articulated, even though this was presented primarily as a result of urban planning considerations. The municipality hoped to see mosques in Rotterdam function primarily as places of worship and not as full-blown community centres organising all kinds of activities and risking obstructing integration. SPIOR argued that it was not up to the municipality to impose a view on the functioning of mosques because this went against the principle of separation of church and state. It was also inappropriate that the residents associations had been given a prominent role in these matters. Finally, there was also a striking silence in the policy memorandum concerning the way the creation of larger mosques entailed some kind of symbolic recognition of the presence of Islam. Policy makers emphasised that all places that “on a regular basis catered to collective worship” were considered as mosques, irrespective

508. SPIOR argued that mosque creation was also about the emancipation of immigrant groups and about recognition and not only, as the municipality now suggested, a matter of good urban planning and of incorporating a relatively new facility in the urban tissue. Municipal officials had acknowledged that often times mosques were targets of hatred of foreigners, but they had refrained from framing protest against mosques as being primarily inspired by hostility and prejudice. Residents associations had explicitly and repeatedly pointed out that protesting residents should not be disqualified as “racists”. SPIOR also objected to the way the residents associations were being involved and argued that it seemed as if residents associations would “determine how large a mosque should be and which activities are allowed to take place in it” (SPIOR 1991: 3).

509. Ironically, the mosque policy text was written by an official, Mustafa Aksu, who had previously worked as a migrant community worker and who was one of the authors of the earlier mentioned alarming article in Traverse that spoke about the growing influence of “fundamentalist” mosque associations and about mosques combining all kinds of activities and functioning like “a state in the state”. However, the need to separate different types of activities was now primarily defended from the perspective of town planning. The idea of the larger mosques functioning as “neutral prayer halls” was defended because “seen from a planning perspective” these kinds of mosques would be “the solution for many problems” (GR 1992: 36). Whatever mosque associations might claim, according to policy makers the majority of Turkish and Moroccan mosque-goers experienced prayer services as a “neutral event” and attended several different mosques without caring too much about the religious or political views of the boards of the respective mosque associations (GR 1992: 36). Muslim residents would be more inclined to go to the larger mosques that were located closest to their residency if these mosques were not affiliated to any specific “religious group”. It would also be better if religious education and Koran lessons could be accommodated in regular school buildings that were far more suited for that purpose. In “the Moroccan community education [had] already been separated from the mosque” (GR 1992: 39, my emphasis, M.M.). It would be even better if public welfare facilities were more accessible for Muslims, so that they no longer felt the need to set up their own welfare and leisure activities. The policy text also stipulated that in the future organisations that wanted to “express an ideology” should be located “clearly next to the mosque” (GR 1992: 39).

510. The Municipal Council Commission for Urban Development and Housing underlined that “socio-cultural activities and the accommodation of the meeting place function would better take place in public facilities from the viewpoint of integration”. Agenda Municipal Council Commission on Town Development, August 9 1991. The platform of migrant community workers had welcomed the fact that in the future functions would be separated. See “Reaction of the project migrant community work to the draft memorandum Faith in the Future” [Reaktie van het project migrantenopbouwwerk op de konseptnota Geloven in de toekomst], 1991 (no further date).
of whether they were small or large and whether they looked like mosques or not. There was only the rather vague suggestion that newly built mosques on strategic locations would be “well constructed” and “more recognisable”, immediately followed by the observation that this would help to “put a brake on initiatives to create new mosques”. Despite these criticisms and silences all stakeholders, including SPIOR, realised that their support for this policy approach would mean that finally real progress could be made. In 1991 the municipal council voted in favour of the new mosque policy. Throughout the 1990s the policy discourse developed around this municipal approach would structure public discussions on mosque creation in Rotterdam.

8.3. National discussions on subsidy schemes for mosques

In the 1980s many mosques in the Netherlands still struggled with a chronic lack of space. On national policy agendas an important issue in this period was whether the national government had a responsibility in this matter and whether or not existing subsidy regulations should be continued. In August 1982 the Minister of Culture, Recreation and Social Work, De Boer (Christian Democrat Party, CDA) set up a working party that was presided over by one of the leading Dutch scholars on Islam at the time, Jacques Waardenburg. This working party would “advise on the need for premises in which members of cultural minorities can carry out their religious practices, the desirability of government support for this, and the conditions under which this support might be granted” (cited in Rath et al. 2001: 48). The working party published its final report in January 1983 entitled “Religious Facilities for Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands” (Religieuze voorzieningen voor etnische minderheden in Nederland). It advocated a “fair and positive public policy for religious facilities for ethnic minorities”. Subsidy schemes for houses of worship should be prolonged and extended to all ethnic minorities. There should be no maximum budget and extra financial support should be provided for socio-cultural activities of minority religious organisations.

This plea was remarkable in light of ongoing amendments in church-state legislation. Since 1977 there had been negotiations between the churches and the government on ending...

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511. The idea that newly built mosques and minarets could function as symbols of the presence of Islam in the city had been brought up occasionally. It had been voiced, for example, around the plans for a central Rotterdam Mosque in 1979 and also around building plans for a purpose-built Turkish mosque in 1987. See Buijs 1998: 51ff.

512. See chapter 4 and 6 for a discussion of previous subsidy schemes. The General Regulation concerning Subsidies for Places of Worship (1976-1981) had resulted in subsidies for 31 mosques for a total amount of 1,657,650 guilders (Hampsink 1992: 17). The Temporary Regulation concerning Subsidies for Places of Worship for Muslims (1981-1983) had resulted in subsidies for 69 prayer houses for amounts varying between 2,760 and 30,000 (the maximum) guilders (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 80). These amounts stood in contrast to other subsidy schemes for the same purposes. The Regulation concerning financing of Church building in the IJsselmeerpolders had amounted to 27 million guilders of subsidies. The special regulations for Moluccans had resulted in subsidies of respectively 1,800,000 guilders and 300,000 guilders for maintenance costs for the mosque in Ridderkerk and a substantial amount had been given for the mosque in Waalwijk (Hampsink 1992: 19). Subsidies because of the Church Building Subsidy Act (1962-1975) alone amounted to a total of nearly 112 million guilders (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 33).
the financial obligations for salaries and pensions of religious personnel. Also with regard to
the financing of houses of worship the trend was towards non-financing. These ongoing legal
alterations were not seen as of much relevance for the Waardenburg Working Party. In line
with its official governmental instructions, the working party did not approach the issue of fi-
nancial support for minority religions in light of church-state legislation, but in light of Ethnic
Minorities Policy.

The working party argued that integration with retention of cultural identity meant that
immigrants were not obliged to “throw off their own identity once they decide to stay here”.
The creation of mosques should be understood as a part of the creation of a normal basic struc-
ture, which was a natural aspect of the formation of ethnic groups and settlement processes.
Immigrants should be able to benefit fully from the freedom of religion that existed in the
Netherlands (Werkgroep Waardenburg: 10-12). Cultural minorities were depicted as “victims of
the economic crisis” facing difficulties and “immense problems”, and willing to make “sacri-
fices” to create some basic facilities to provide for their cultural and religious needs.513 The Dutch
should be more critical about the way they approached immigrants and should become more
aware of what members of minority groups could experience as “discriminatory behaviour”:514

The responsibility of the government applies to all residents, but especially to immigrants
from the former colonies and to those who came to the Netherlands as employees because
of the government’s interference, and who have settled here as aliens to provide for the
labour demand.515

There were also more strategic reasons for a relatively generous subsidy regulation. It would
allow the government to create some goodwill among immigrant communities and halt the

513. Werkgroep Waardenburg 1983: 30, 32 and 78
514. One can also read in the report that the Dutch should understand that it “often makes the Muslims desperate that
their religion is not taken seriously. Yes, it makes them sad that only sporadically their own houses of worship
have been made available in the Netherlands”.[“dat het islamieten vaak radeloos maakt dat hun geloof niet serieus
wordt genomen. Ja, het stemde hen verdrietig dat er voor hen in Nederland nog maar sporadisch eigen gebeds-
ruimten ter beschikking zijn gekomen.”] (Werkgroep Waardenburg 1983: 40). This moralising tone and way of
thinking about government responsibility resembled the discourses of solidarity groups for foreign workers in the
1970s. This was no coincidence. In the late 1970s and early 1980s there existed dense networks between these
kind of support and solidarity groups, social scientists who were interested in immigration issues, and policy
makers. Researchers often displayed a strong sense of concern about the social position and difficulties of
minorities and argued that understanding the situation of immigrants required good knowledge of their cultural
and religious background and a sufficient level of engaging in alien cultures (Scholten 2008: 112ff.). This was
also the case of the Waardenburg Working Party. The president of the working party was Jacques Waardenburg,
a professor of Islam and phenomenology, and another member, Mr. Slomp, was also an Islam scholar. In terms
of research methods the working party had argued (1983: 5-6) that there needed to be “intensive conversations
with people from the respective groups” in order to understand the ways those involved themselves interpreted
their “life situation” and to understand what kind of needs existed with respect to religious facilities. Some of
the passages in the report cited above were illustrative of an approach in which engagement with the perspective of
immigrants was being combined with a critique of the lack of knowledge and sensitivity in Dutch society.

515. [“De verantwoordelijkheid van de overheid geldt voor alle ingezetenen, maar met name voor immigranten uit
vroegere koloniën en voor diegenen die als werknemers door overheidsbemoeienis naar Nederland gekomen
zijn en zich hier als vreemdeling gevestigd hebben om de gevraagde arbeidsfunctie te vervullen”] (Werkgroep
growing “bitterness” (ressentiment) among the Muslim population (idem: 37 and 41). Public subsidies could also help to speed up the process of integration. The fact that immigrants were still struggling to create basic facilities was hampering the much needed process of reflecting on the “development of religion in a new and alien environment” (idem: 20). In addition, financial support and government involvement would help to prevent unwanted developments of Islam in the Netherlands. At this point the working party picked up on themes that already figured on policy agendas across Europe, such as the influence of Saudi Arabia and the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism. Public subsidies would prevent Arab countries stepping in to use their vast financial resources to create “uncontrollable influence” over Muslims in the Netherlands (idem: 17). The government should also stimulate the teaching of Muslim religious instructions in regular primary schools. In this way it would prevent Muslims from holding on to the “traditional models” of education that prevailed in Morocco, Turkey and Surinam, and that usually came down to “learning the Koran by heart” (idem: 33ff. and 51ff.).

The government should also offer the teaching of Muslim religious instructions in regular primary schools. In this way it would prevent Muslims from holding on to the “traditional models” of education that prevailed in Morocco, Turkey and Surinam, and that usually came down to “learning the Koran by heart” (idem: 33ff. and 51ff.).

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The issue of financing houses of worship for immigrants was now being more and more linked to political discussions about the appropriate relations between state and religion. In these discussions there was a growing opposition between the Christian Democrat Party (CDA) and secular parties such as the Social Democrat Party (PvdA) and the Liberal Party (VVD). This became clear when during the parliamentary discussions on the Minorities Policy Memorandum in 1984 a member of the Christian Democrat Party (CDA), Krajenbrink, tabled a motion for the government to take over the recommendations of the Waardenburg Working Party. This motion was rejected by a majority of the Social Democrats and Liberals (Rath et al. 2001: 49). In 1984 two MPs, Wiebinga (Liberal Party, VVD) and Dales (Social Democrat Party, PvdA) tabled a parliamentary motion arguing that a selective policy to support specific religious groups was unacceptable because of the principle of equal treatment and that of separation of church and state. Therefore subsidies for the building of houses of worship for ethnic minorities should be

516. Looking back on these discussions in 2003, the coordinator of Dutch Ethnic Minorities Policy in the late 1970s and 1980s – Henk Molleman- argued: “I have always regretted that the government did not financially contribute to mosques (…) because we did not financially contribute, we did not manage to get any influence. At the openings of mosques I heard imams mention big foreign subsidisers. Especially Saudi Arabia has a large influence on the mosques. If we had contributed financially, that foreign influence would not have been so big”. (“Een punt waar ik altijd moeite mee had was dat de overheid niet meebetaalde aan moskeeën. En omdat we niet meebetaalden aan moskeeën, kregen we geen daar geen poot aan de grond. Bij moskee-openingen hoorde ik imams grote buitenlandse gevers noemen. Vooral Saudi-Arabië heeft grote invloed op de moskeeën. Als we hadden meebetaald, was die buitenlandse invloed niet zo groot geweest.”[interview in NRC-Handelsblad 20-21 September 2003]).

517. In 1983 there were talks between the Prime Minister, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Welfare, Health and Culture and representatives of church bodies, the Humanist Union and Hindu and Muslim groups. These talks served to “exchange ideas” about the implications of the new constitutional framework for the principles of equal treatment of religious and denominational groups and about the relations between church and state.
rejected (cf. Rath et al. 2001: 50). This motion was accepted by Parliament in October 1984. Another attempt to create a regulation to grant “investment subsidies” allowing minority groups to build houses of worship, was also obstructed by a parliamentary motion by the same MP’s in 1986.\footnote{In March 1986 the Ministers of Internal Affairs and of Welfare, Health and Culture wrote a letter to Parliament stating that the government would indeed refrain from a general subsidy regulation. Instead, possibilities would be created to provide “investment subsidies for social-cultural spaces that can also serve as prayer spaces” (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 82). Until 1989 400,000 guilders would be set aside on the budget for welfare of minority groups that could be used to co-finance the costs of investment to create these kind of premises. However, a new motion tabled by the same MP’s, Wiebinga and Dales, also obstructed this plan, which, as they had argued, was merely a subsidy scheme in a concealed form.} In reaction the government set up the State Committee concerning Subsidies to Churches and other Religious Societies (Commissie van advies inzake de criteria voor steunverlening aan kerkgenootschappen en andere genootschappen op geestelijke grondslag). This committee was presided by a legal scholar and prominent member of the Christian Democrat Party (CDA), Mr. Ernst Hirsch-Ballin.

The Hirsch-Ballin State Committee would advise the government on criteria for the state providing financial support and material facilities to church bodies and other spiritual associations, in particular for spiritual care, chaplaincies and houses of worship. The committee investigated these issues in light of constitutional and legal principles that were discussed in a historical and comparative perspective.\footnote{In March 1986 the Ministers of Internal Affairs and of Welfare, Health and Culture wrote a letter to Parliament stating that the government would indeed refrain from a general subsidy regulation. Instead, possibilities would be created to provide “investment subsidies for social-cultural spaces that can also serve as prayer spaces” (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 82). Until 1989 400,000 guilders would be set aside on the budget for welfare of minority groups that could be used to co-finance the costs of investment to create these kind of premises. However, a new motion tabled by the same MP’s, Wiebinga and Dales, also obstructed this plan, which, as they had argued, was merely a subsidy scheme in a concealed form.} The constitutional right to religious freedom was understood as meaning that citizens and groups should have the effective possibilities to exercise their legal rights. The principle of equal treatment was taken to imply that religious and secular worldviews were to be treated equally and that religious organisations should not be disadvantaged when it came to possibilities to receive state support for societal activities.

Starting off from this pluralist interpretation of the Dutch constitutional regime the committee argued that there were good grounds to reject structural subsidies to religious bodies (Hirsch Ballin 1988: 57).\footnote{In this sense the report of the Hirsch-Ballin State Committee resembled the report by the Machelon commission in France (see chapter 7).} However, the committee also argued there were no constitutional reasons per se against financial or other forms of support for the exercise of religion. Sometimes “special circumstances” and a sense of even-handedness could justify state support.

At this point the committee criticised the ways in which politicians had framed the constitutional significance of the principles of separation of church and state and of equal treatment in discussions around the recommendations of the Waardenburg Working Party. The Hirsch-Ballin State Committee observed that more established religious communities, and most of all the Christian Churches, had benefited from state support in the past.\footnote{The combination of state support and infringement in the internal organisation of religions had been a part of the Dutch approach until the mid 19th century. Only with the 1848 constitution and the 1853 law on church bodies the principle of non-infringement had been laid down (Hirsch-Ballin 1988: 22ff. and 57). See chapter 2.} Furthermore, a special fund had been created to provide for the costs of maintenance of Moluccan churches and mosques and the state had contributed 12.6 million guilders to this fund (idem 1988: 81). Turkish and
Moroccan Muslim communities had also been able to benefit from, far less generous, subsidy schemes. However, other groups, such as the Surinamese Muslims and Hindus and the Buddhist refugees from South East Asia, had not been able to benefit from any support. According to the committee this was unfair:

The committee cannot but observe … that Dutch society has gradually evolved towards the present situation that is ruled by the principle of separation and by articles 1 and 6 of the constitution. Where in the past there has been room for direct support for buildings catering for church bodies – and for which the reasons justifying that support at the time can be established – the associations of minorities have practically not been having any part in this.522

To compensate these groups the committee advocated a one-time and temporary subsidy scheme. This could, for example, result in a regulation for a period of three years, covering 30% of the costs of the creation or renovation of houses of worship and with a maximum amount of 750,000 guilders. The committee also advised that a criterion for subsidy would be that the “group to which the association belongs” had not been able to benefit from one of the earlier subsidy schemes (idem: 84ff.).

In national government circles there was support for these recommendations (Rath et al. 2001: 51). Municipal governments also believed that a national subsidy scheme was a good idea. In Rotterdam the municipality had expressed the hope that the proposals of the Hirsch-Ballin State Committee would be implemented so that additional financial means would become available for the municipal mosque policy (GR 1992: 44). Also the Minister of Internal Affairs, Van Dijk (Christian Democratic Party, CDA) and Christian Democrat MP’s spoke out in favour of a temporary subsidy scheme. However, MP’s of the Social Democrat Party announced that they were not in favour of the state subsidising church building of minorities (Rath et al. 2001: 51). It was up to the new government that would accede to power in 1989 to decide on what to do with the recommendations.

Political support for the kind of pluralist interpretation of church-state legislation that was developed by the Hirsch-Ballin State Committee, however, was waning as secular parties became more outspokenly opposed to any kind of financial support for financing of houses of worship. The principled debates on subsidy schemes for immigrant minority religions foreshadowed political debates in the 1990s when secular parties sought to do away with some of the institutional and legal remnants of pillarisation that, so they argued, had become obsolete in a society that was increasingly secularised.523 However, the coalition government that was formed

522. [“Voor deze groepen geldt dat zij door hun recente komst naar Nederland niet in de gelegenheid zijn geweest de historische ontwikkeling mee te maken die heeft geleid tot het huidige voorzieningenniveau van de kerkgenootschappen, noch hebben kunnen gebruik maken van regelingen betreffende subsidiëring van gebedsruiumten. De commissie kan niet anders constateren … dan dat de Nederlandse samenleving met een zekere geleidelijkheid is toegegroeid naar de huidige situatie welke beheerst wordt door het scheidingsbeginsel en de artikelen 1 en 6 van de Grondwet. Waar in het verleden ruimte was voor directe steunverlening ten behoeve van gebouwen die de kerkgenootschappen ten dienste staan – en waarvoor in die tijd ook redenen kunnen worden aangegeven – hebben genootschappen van minderhedenkrijng daaraan praktisch geen deel gehad”] (Hirsch-Ballin 1988: 84).

523. The Purple Coalition Government (1994-2002), the first government since the Second World War that did not include the Christian Democrats, would legislate on a series of issues that until then had met with opposition of Christian parties, such as euthanasia and same-sex marriages.
in 1989 included both Social Democrats (PvdA) and the Christian Democrats (CDA). Ironically also, one of the MPs tabling the motions against a subsidy scheme for minority religions in the mid 1980s, Ien Dales (Social Democrat Party, PvdA), had now become the new Minister of Internal Affairs and the president of the State Committee, Ernst Hirsch-Ballin (Christian Democratic Party, CDA), had become Minister of Justice.

The Minister of Internal Affairs seemed little inclined to speed up the process, which was not surprising given her earlier position on the matter. In March 1991 the minister declared that discussions with representatives of religious minority organisations had shown that actually there was no longer a shortage of houses of worship (Rath et al. 2001: 52). In this way she effectively dismissed the whole idea of a subsidy scheme without engaging in a renewed principled discussion about constitutional principles and the goals of Ethnic Minorities Policy.

8.4. Integration policy, multicultural architecture and executing the mosque policy in Rotterdam 1992-2002

In the early 1990s Dutch integration policies began to move away from the pluralist orientation of Ethnic Minorities Policy. The immigrant population had been growing rapidly and continued to grow because of family reunification, marriage immigration and, especially since the mid 1990s, because of a growing influx of asylum seekers. Key elements of the multicultural approach were being gradually abolished, such as government sponsored native language classes, migrant advisory councils, and the generous and constant subsidies for ethnic organisations. A new vocabulary sought to sustain a frame-shift towards an individual-oriented approach: Ethnic Minorities Policy became “integration policy”, members of ethnic groups became the allochtonous (allochtonen) and great emphasis was put on “civic integration” (inburgering) a concept that was introduced in the mid 1990s. The Purple Coalition Government that ruled the country between 1994 and 2002 based its immigration policies on the idea that successful integration would result from empowerment of individual migrants and creating equal opportunities for participation in the economy and in Dutch society at large.

Islam figured occasionally on the public agenda in the 1990s. In 1991 Frits Bolkestein, the leader of the Liberal Party (VVD), caused some turmoil by arguing in an address to the Liberal International Conference that Islam and Western values were irreconcilable. He believed that immigrants should adapt to the dominant cultural patterns of Dutch society. In 1997 Pim Fortuyn, at the time a well known columnist of the weekly Elsevier, published a book on “The Islamisation of Dutch society” in which he argued that liberal values concerning homosexuality and women’s emancipation should be defended against the conservative influence of

524. Representatives of one of the larger Muslim Federations maintained that they had not been consulted and that there was still an urgent need for adequate prayer spaces.

525. Already in 1989 the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) had advised the government to try and restrict further immigration, to put more emphasis on employment policies and to further develop Dutch language education and other forms of training for immigrants.

526. The idea was developed in the 1994 Contours Memorandum Integration Policy (see Scholten 2008: 164ff.).
Islam. On the whole, however, these kind of alarming outcries were the exception rather than the rule in discussions about integration and Islam in the 1990s (cf. Prins 2004).

More became known about Islam in the Netherlands because of a series of academic studies. These essentially argued that the process of institutionalisation was steadily moving forward and that Muslims and Dutch society were getting more accustomed to one another. The consensus among academics was that in an international comparative perspective, the conditions for Muslims in the Netherlands were very favourable (Rath et al. 2001: 286). As in France, there was also a growing interest in the development of religion and the formation of organisations among younger Muslims. Dutch researchers in the mid 1990s also observed a gap between the individualised Islam of “the young” who had made a “cognitive shift” (Sunier 1996) and the traditionalist Islam of “the fathers” who remained strongly oriented towards the countries of origin (Phalet et al. 2000). In public debate and policy the findings and reasoning in these academic studies translated into optimism: Islam was finding its place.

The national government was now only marginally involved in the development of policy responses. Many legal aspects of the incorporation of Islamic practices and institutions had already been regulated in the 1980s. The government remained implicated in successive attempts to create some form of national Muslim council and a training program for imams and in the late 1990s the Inspectorate for Education became increasingly involved in investigating the functioning of the growing number of Muslim primary schools (Maussen 2006: 43ff.). Mostly, however, the further accommodation of Muslim needs and demands for recognition had become a matter for municipal governments to solve.

In Rotterdam, integration policies had traditionally focussed on the need for immigrants to participate and integrate. By the 1990s the remnants of the older style multiculturalism and the understanding for immigrants “retaining their cultural identity” had been even further marginalized in local policy discourse. However, in the mid 1990s there gradually developed a new kind of multicultural policy discourse at the municipal level. Ethnic Minorities Policy and its “group-approach” was criticised in retrospect as too paternalistic. Culture and identity should be seen as fluid and policy makers should understand the ways individuals were able to find their way between various allegiances and identities. Municipal governments that were dissatisfied with traditional Ethnic Minorities Policies turned to “diversity policies” as a new approach. Strongly inspired by fashionable diversity management philosophies in the private sector, diversity policies suggested focussing on the ways all individuals were “different” and how this could be a source of enrichment for society as a whole. The receiving society should be sufficiently open-minded, willing to endorse difference and to combat discrimination. In Rotterdam this kind of “diversity talk” became increasingly important for local policy discourse when a new municipal government succeeded to power in 1998.


528. The phase in which diversity policies became increasingly popular in the domain of integration issues is usually overlooked in studies that focus exclusively on the national level (Penninx 2005; and Scholten 2008). By contrast, studies on local integration policies have pointed to the importance of these policy frames. See Alexander (2006) and Uitermark and Van Steenbergen (2006) who speak of post-multicultural policies. See also Maussen 2006.

8.4.1. Negotiating the location and functioning of larger mosques: discussions on the Kocatepe Mosque

In 1993 a special bureau had been created at the Town Planning and Housing Department to implement the mosque policy. The municipality had posited that mosque associations should preferably separate their religious from educational, social and cultural activities. Larger mosques would also be created outside the neighbourhoods, which was sensible from the perspective of urban planning, as it would be far easier to find building sites outside the neighbourhoods. Policy makers had also argued that the location of a large mosque in the middle of a neighbourhood led to the unwanted “stigmatisation” of these neighbourhoods as Turkish or Moroccan and that large mosques could easily become seen as symbols of ethnic segregation (GR 1992: 35-37). Larger mosques should concentrate on their “prayer function”\textsuperscript{530} It remained to be seen what kind of policy instruments the municipality had to impose these ideas.

One of the first test-cases presented itself with the relocation of the Turkish Kocatepe mosque, one of the oldest mosques in Rotterdam. The mosque association had been looking for a new accommodation since the mid 1980s.\textsuperscript{531} In 1991 the Town Planning Department pointed to the Kocatepe mosque association as the “main candidate” to build a new Turkish mosque. Urban planners hope that a new “grandiose” mosque might also be attractive to the Turkish Muslims who until then visited the nearby Fatih Mosque. Municipal and city district officials and the residents associations spoke out in favour of a location somewhat on the outskirts of Hillesluis, an adjacent neighbourhood of the Afrikaanderwijk. Municipal officials put some pressure on the Kocatepe association to accept this location by threatening to open negotiations with “other candidates”. This had been seen as one of the instruments to execute the mosque policy: mosque associations that would not collaborate would be warned that they might “miss the boat” (GR 1992: 37).

The Kocatepe mosque association was not enthusiastic about the suggested location. Members of the mosque congregation feared vandalism because of the neighbouring Feijenoord soccer stadium and they believed that the location was too far removed from where most of the worshippers lived. During a meeting with the alderman of Urban Renewal and Housing, Hans Vermeulen (Social Democrat Party, PvdA) in February 1993, Turkish speakers underlined that the mosque should be located in the centre of the district so as to “remain a meeting place for the Turkish Islamic community”. A protest banner copied the municipal policy vocabulary: “we want to stay in the supply area”.\textsuperscript{532} A location on the outskirts of the neighbourhood, which had been presented as a pragmatic solution to avoid environmental nuisance and traffic jams, was now being represented as an attempt to take the mosque out of the neighbourhood and even as a way of putting Muslims away on an “outside area”.\textsuperscript{533} The mosque associations also underlined that they did not intend to build a “neutral” prayer hall but a multipurpose Turkish Islamic community centre.

\textsuperscript{530} SPIOR (1991: 5) had argued that public authorities could not impose their ideas on the functioning of Muslim associations or on the character of mosque buildings. The platform also underlined that historically mosques had always been “centres of education”.

\textsuperscript{531} Plans to realize a newly built mosque in 1987 had failed for various reasons. See Buijs 1998: 53ff.

\textsuperscript{532} In Rotterdams Dagblad February 18 1993.

\textsuperscript{533} One Turkish speaker said to a journalist: “for the Dutch one also does not build a church in an outside area (buitengebied)”. Cited in Rotterdams Dagblad February 18 1993.
These protests created a serious problem for the municipality. If it chose to persist it seemed unavoidable that a conflict would result with one of the most influential Turkish Muslim associations. Officials still believed though that it was necessary to “separate functions” in order to build what were now labelled “large, recognisable, future oriented mosques-to-be-proud-of”. In 1995 a new opportunity presented itself. A large school building of some 6500 square meters, located on a square in the centre of the Afrikaanderwijk became available. The Kocatepe Mosque Committee immediately expressed its intention to purchase the building.

The municipality now decided in favour of this solution. If the Kocatepe mosque association could create a mosque in the former school building this would solve its accommodation problems in a relatively short amount of time. The fact that mosques continued to cater to educational and cultural activities was by now also accepted as an inevitable reality. However, by allowing for the creation of a large multipurpose mosque within a neighbourhood the municipality was compromising the deal that had been made with the residents associations in the late 1980s. The idea had been that mosques located in the neighbourhoods would function as normal “neighbourhood facilities”. Once it became known that the Kocatepe association wanted to purchase the school building the residents associations in the Afrikaanderwijk protested.

The Dutch residents argued that the Turkish community deserved a beautiful mosque and that Muslims “should not worship on the street”. However, a part of the school building should remain available for other purposes, such as a neighbourhood education centre on biology and for the lessons of a primary school in the district. A mosque that would occupy the entire school building was far beyond the “normal size”. Other residents – including “some of the Turkish residents” – were afraid of the “creation of a huge religious fortress (bolwerk)” that would “dominate their life in the neighbourhood”. Residents spoke of “stories going around” about the creation of a “mammoth mosque” with an Islamic school and shops.

The discussions stimulated others to articulate views on the ways mosques could function. A city district council member, Van Grunsven (City Party, Stadspartij) argued that she was a “principled advocate” of “multicultural community centres” (multiculturele buurthuizen). The school building should be converted into “a multifunctional centre, for the whole neighbourhood” and within that centre a mosque could be created. In this view the overall emphasis was on facilitating integration and the underlying idea was to avoid Islamic practice

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534. Minutes Meeting Department of Town Planning on the executing of the mosque policy, March 12 1993. In an attempt to find a solution the municipality suggested another location in 1994. This location was more centrally located in the Afrikaanderwijk, but it would take no less than 7 years before building activities could begin.

535. Mosque associations preferred to organise activities in their own buildings rather than making use of public facilities and also argued they had the liberty to make use of their own spaces as they deemed appropriate (GR 1994: 8). The general liberalisation of the Shops Acts also meant that it became far less problematic for mosques to cater for small scale commercial activities such as selling groceries and religious and ethnic products.

536. Note distributed during a public hearing on November 14 1995.

537. (“Zo gaan nu verhalen over de vestiging van een mammoet-moskee met een islamitische school, winkels en verhuur van zalen voor partijen”). Letter of the platform of associations in the Afrikaanderwijk to the Daily Board of the City District Feijenoord, April 19 1995.


539. (“Het moet een multifunctioneel centrum zijn, voor de gehele buurt. En daarin kan ook best een moskee zijn gevestigd”) in “Weer verzet tegen verkoop van Oldenbarneveldschool” in Rotterdams Dagblad February 7 1996.
becoming isolated from the neighbourhood society. Interestingly, in the early 1990s the board of the Kocatepe Mosque Committee had also developed ideas about ways to avoid the mosque being experienced as an inaccessible and inwardly turned institution within the district. The younger Muslims who had dominated the board at the time had wanted to develop contacts with organisations and residents in the neighbourhood and they believed that “the mosque de facto [had] a place in the neighbourhood society” (cited in Sunier 1996: 119, my translation, M.M.). However, now a new wind was blowing. The new board members, mostly of an older generation than their predecessors, were primarily interested in further developing a Turkish religious infrastructure. In fact, within Turkish Muslim associations the ideas developed by the young board in the early 1990s were the exception rather than the rule. A study on Turkish Muslim organisations in Rotterdam conducted in the mid 1990s concluded that the leaders without exception gave priority to maintaining and strengthening Turkish identity (Canatan 2001: 185; Sunier 1996: 135). A compromise was reached in the end and the building was sold to the Mosque Committee under the condition that it would allow the primary school to temporarily use some of the class rooms. Still, this compromise could not prevent that the relationship between the Turkish mosque association and the residents associations had considerably worsened (Buijs 1998: 75ff.).

By the mid 1990s the municipality had become convinced that it had few instruments to impose its ideas. The Turkish mosque associations further pursued their strategy to develop a strong Turkish Islamic infrastructure, while seeking to remain on good terms with the Dutch authorities and the neighbouring residents. Effectively, the larger Turkish mosques developed into independent and full-fledged ethno-religious community centres. The municipality, on the other hand, emphasised time and again that its priority lay with improving the housing conditions, not with developing or imposing a view on the functioning of mosques. (GR 1995: 10).

8.4.2. Normalising and exceptionalising mosque creation: Urban planning, multicultural architecture and discussions on the Essalam mosque

When politicians and municipal officials looked back on ten years of municipal mosque policy in 2002, they congratulated themselves on having successfully guided the process of mosque location. The total number of houses of worship had decreased to 36 and the remaining mosque associations were better housed. There seemed to have developed a gradual process of mutual accommodation between neighbouring residents and mosque associations. Occasionally delegations from other Dutch cities visited Rotterdam to learn from their approach. The municipal government had decided to adopt “a pragmatic approach within a town planning perspec-

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540. Buijs and Schuster (2001: 91) came to the same conclusion in a study on the relocation of a Moroccan mosque in the mid 1990s.

541. Also at the national level Turkish Muslim organisations successfully obstructed attempts to set up a Dutch imam training that would function as an alternative to religious education in Turkey. They also remained extremely reserved when it came to participation in multi-ethnic Muslim platforms, both nationally and locally (Landman 1992; Maussen 2006).

The municipal approach functioned as a two-edged sword: it allowed municipal officials to be strict when dealing with the boards of mosque associations. Mosque associations should learn to accept how town planning in the Netherlands included many rules and regulations and gave ample opportunities to residents to object and protest against building plans. Muslim representatives should not all too rapidly accuse other stakeholders of hostility and discrimination. Conversely, municipal officials could rely on a relatively technical approach when dealing with the emotions on the side of the Dutch residents for whom mosque creation often functioned as a “crystallisation point of the fear for an increase of the number of allochtonen” and worries about changes in the “social structure” of the neighbourhoods (GR 2002: 34). A lot of effort had been put in creating “more knowledge and understanding for this new facility” (GR 2002: 21). One of the occasions to put this approach to work was around the building of a new Moroccan mosque.

Defending and opposing mosque creation: symbol of cultural diversity or regular neighbourhood facility?

The Moroccan Essalam mosque association had actively begun looking for a new accommodation in 1994. When it turned out that another Moroccan mosque association located in the same district, the El Mohcinine association, was also looking for a new place the idea arose to aim for the building of a larger mosque to cater to the two congregations. In 1995 a location was found on the edge of the neighbourhood where a mosque could be built on a green belt that was squeezed in between an apartment complex, a school building and a fly-over. The location close to the borders of the rivers Maas, was quite remarkable, and because of urban development programs the new mosque would in a few years time be bordering on the prestigious newly built urban area called the “Head of South” (Kop van Zuid). The Essalam mosque association, the municipality and the city district were all enthusiastic. Protests between 1995 and 2001 would mainly be voiced by a group of residents living in the neighbouring apartment complex.

By 1995 the plans for a new mosque building that had until then been developed by the mosque associations and the municipal officials had become sufficiently concrete to be discussed with the other immediate stakeholders. In an interview with a local newspaper the

543. Interview with Maaike Groen, Project-leader mosque policy, Rotterdam, July 23 2001. Policy texts and statements on Islamic houses of worship in Rotterdam were built up around the image of mosques becoming more adequate and more safe. A typical illustration thereof was an interview with the municipal policy coordinator in 1995. The journal article was subtitled “a search for place for good facilities”, new mosques were replacements of “mosques that had outgrown their coat” and the header of the article cited the coordinator: “It is mainly about good mosques”. See “Plannen voor vijf grotere moskeeën. Speurtocht naar goede voorzieningen” in Rotterdams Dagblad July 20 1995.

544. [“In deze deelgemeente (IJsselmonde, M.M.) werkt de potentiële vestiging van een moskee als kristallisatiepunt voor de angst voor toename van het aantal allochtonen, de angst voor een verandering in de sociale structuur die hoe dan ook al aan de gang is”] (GR 2002: 34).

545. This also meant that discussions would become more public. The SPIOR had come to play an important role in helping representatives of mosque associations find their way through complex urban planning procedures and write letters and declarations to publicly explain their plans and demands. Municipal officials of the Town Planning and Housing Department and the some of the leading figures of SPIOR were on good terms and this facilitated the role of go-between of the Muslim platform.
vice-president of the Essalam mosque association, Abdelrazak Boutaher underscored that a new house of worship was urgently needed. In addition, the new building could serve for religious instructions, language lessons and for new activities for women and the youth. A relatively new idea was that a new and beautiful mosque would also be of value for the neighbourhood as a whole:

For Dutch society a newly built mosque means an enrichment to the urban landscape. It expresses the multicultural society in Feijenoord and shows that people with different cultural backgrounds can live together in harmony. For the Dutch with a migrant background it represents recognition, positive reception and above all, acceptance of their cultural and religious background.

This idea of a new mosque being an “enrichment to the urban landscape” had gained some plausibility in the Netherlands in the mid 1990s. In 1995 23 newly built mosques existed that had visible and typical architectural characteristics and 19 of these had both a dome and one or more minarets (Dijker 1995: 43). The architecture of these mosques showed clear references to the countries of origin: Moroccan mosques usually had a square minaret and were made of brick and Turkish mosques had slim minarets and a dome, usually with white outside walls and with parts of the building (such as the roof or dome) made of bright coloured materials (usually in red or green).

If one reads through the various background articles on mosque building published in newspapers, they typically told a story of a local mosque association that after years of struggle had been able to collect the resources to build a proper mosque. Some basic information on Islam and the various functions and architectural requirements of the mosque were discussed and the architecture was then depicted as “oriental”, “fairy-tale like” or “typical”. The mosques were “prestigious projects”, built in an “oriental style” and showed that Muslim communities refused

546. The Essalam Mosque association usually was represented by Mr. Boutaher and Mr. Ajid and received support from Mr. El Kourchi of SPIOR. Since 2001 the Dutch architects also voiced the ideas and wishes of the mosque associations in meetings with residents and municipal officials. The residents of “De Laantjes” who protested had set up a “Committee to maintain the green belt” and received some support of a community worker who worked for the residents association in the district.

547. [“Voor de Nederlandse samenleving betekent een nieuwbouw moskee een verrijking van het stadsbeeld. Het geeft uiting aan de multiculturele samenleving in Feyenoord en toont aan dat mensen met verschillende culturele achtergronden in harmonie met elkaar kunnen leven. Voor de allochtone Nederlanders betekent het erkenning, waardering en vooral acceptatie van hun culturele en religieuze achtergrond”]. Speech held by Mr. Boutaher during the City District Council Meeting, January 18 1995.

548. The creation of the ISN (Diyanet) resulted in more opportunities for local Turkish Muslim associations to build new mosques. In 1990 about 96 local mosque associations were affiliated the ISN that was the owner of 62 mosque buildings. The platform organisation had real estate capital of 30 million guilders in 1990, which it used to give cash advances to local mosque associations (Landman 1992: 109).

to remain “invisible”. This interpretation of mosque building was congruent with the more general image of successful integration and institutionalisation of Muslim communities and with the idea that expressions of ethnic identity should be endorsed in a multicultural society.

By the mid 1990s “diversity policy” or “post-multicultural policies” had become more prominent at the municipal level. Diversity policies decoupled the more problematic, “harder” aspects of immigrant integration processes, including socio-economic disadvantages, exclusion, persisting arrears and cultural rights, from the “softer” aspects, including the expression of differences in various life-styles and the ways societies had been enriched because of the presence of people with a non-European cultural background. Especially the more folkloric aspects of cultural diversity as a result of immigration were being represented as an enrichment to Dutch society, such as food, dress, habits, looks, language and slang. Diversity policy discourses also helped to link ideas about imaginative architecture to the possibility of endorsing and enjoying ethnic differences. In its political program called “Multi-colourful City” (Veelkleurige Stad) (1998) the new Centre-Left municipal government had articulated that it aimed “to stimulate architectural cultural expression and works of arts in the cityscape that refer to the diversity of cultures in the city”.

It seemed plausible to start thinking about mosque building and mosque architecture in the perspective of what was now called “multicultural architecture”. However, it was less evident how the idea that a new mosque would function as an “enrichment to the urban landscape” related to existing municipal policy discourses on that issue. Policy makers had time and again emphasised that it primarily mattered that prayer houses were adequate and safe, not that they were visible and recognisable. Aware of the possible tensions between this endorsement of architectural diversity and the goals of the municipal mosque policy, alderman Meijer carefully tried to explain the differences between the two perspectives during a discussion evening on mosque architecture organised by the Rotterdam Art Foundation in 1998.


551. A municipal policy paper of 1991 had already argued that members of cultural minority groups were in need of specific facilities such an “oriental bathhouse”, an “oriental market or Kasbah”, prayer houses and places for migrant families to “meet in the open air” (GR 1991: 11).


553. The organisers of the discussion evenings on multicultural architecture were convinced it was good to approve of recognisable mosque architecture. In the announcement of the program they also suggested why some people were opposed to typical mosque architecture: protest was to be understood as a sign of hostility against the “manifestation of cultural differences” (een manifestatie van culturele verschillen). See Brochure “Naar een multicultureel stadsbeeld”, Rotterdamse Kunststichting, February 1998.
By building large mosques on remarkable locations in the city, one can give the Muslims the impression that it is also their city. One could say: we want that to be manifested, but in fact this is two steps ahead of what we want at this moment. The current mosque memorandum of the Rotterdam municipality has been elaborated because of the awareness of a problem: too many small houses of worship in factories and garages. But now that I am thinking about it, I personally think that it would be a good road to embark on…

One of the reasons for the alderman to be careful not to present the mosque policy as essentially about promoting the possibilities of Muslim immigrant communities to be more visible was because of the ways the municipality was presenting and discussing mosque creation with the Dutch residents.

Discussing mosque creation with the residents

Through the coordination of citizens participation evenings and information dissemination, the municipality had built up a great deal of expertise in interacting with protesting residents. Yet, there had been occasions in which tensions on mosque creation had escalated. The turmoil around the relocation of the Kocatepe mosque was such an illustration. However, the events around the creation of a Moroccan mosque in Crooswijk, in the North-Western part of the city, had been even more distressful. Here plans to build a new mosque combined with apartments and sports facilities on a square in the middle of a neighbourhood had met with fierce opposition from the city district and the Dutch residents. One night in 1996 anonymous vandals had nailed pig slaughtering remains on the walls of the youth centre located on the site destined for the new mosque. This had caused fear and anguish in the Moroccan community (Buijs and Schuster 2001: 86ff.).

In all, the chances that the selected location for the new Essalam mosque would lead to equally intense conflicts seemed rather small. The new mosque was located on the edge of the neighbourhood and would only face an apartment complex for the elderly called De Laantjes. This complex had been built in the late 1980s and predominantly catered to people who had lived in the surrounding neighbourhoods for most of their lives. Some of the residents objected to the selected spot and in 1995 created a committee to “maintain the green belt” on which the mosque was to arise. The residents of De Laantjes argued they accepted that migrants had the “right to practice their religion” but they objected to the location that had been chosen. They had chosen to live in an apartment complex established “next to a park”, surrounded by a “beautiful green belt” that was “like a forest” to them. But now a “strange building” and “huge tumour” would be

554. “[Door op markante punten in de stad grote moskeeën te realiseren, geef je moslims de indruk: het is ook onze stad. Je kunt zeggen: wij willen dat gemanifesteerd zien, maar eigenlijk is het twee stappen verder dan wat wij op dit moment willen. De huidige moskeeënnota van de gemeente Rotterdam is opgesteld vanuit een probleembesef: te veel kleine gebedsruimten in fabrieken en garages. Maar als ik er zo over nadenk, vind ik het persoonlijk wel een goede lijn om in te zetten.”] cited in “Men ziet een minaret en koepel als uiting van: dit is een moskee” in Rotterdams Dagblad February 12 1998.


556. During one of the information evenings one of the residents wrote in capital letters on a piece of paper: “MOSQUE OKAY, BUT NOT HERE” (MOSKEE OKE, MAAR HIER NEE). Minutes of Stichting “De Laantjes”, January 19 1995.
built “on their doorsteps” instead. Another set of arguments focussed on the various forms of environmental bother that would be produced by the mosque: “Where will remain the calmness for which we moved to this flat, if on a daily basis some hundreds of mosque visitors walk and drive up and down?”. Residents expressed their worries about the sound of the call to prayer and about the fact that alongside a planned facility for the homeless in the district there would now also be “an increase of the number of Muslims, which will bring bother with it”.

The arguments mentioned above concentrated on the competing interests of various groups of residents and the possible environmental nuisance caused by the new mosque. However, other arguments concentrated primarily on the fact that this was a building for immigrants. These arguments were illustrative of the specific kind of emotions evoked by mosque creation. The residents of De Laantjes presented themselves as “the native people” (het eigen volk) and as the “older residents of the neighbourhood”, in opposition to the mosque visitors who were the “foreigners”, the “allochtonen” or “those people”. As one residents wrote frankly in a letter to the alderman: “The main problem is, however, that there live far too many allochtonen in the city district. Those fellow country men (medelanders) are not tolerant toward each other and towards the Dutch”. There was a story going around that someone had seen an old van that was “stuffed with slaughtered sheep”, the result of “an Islamic slaughtering”.

These kind of statements expressed the kind of worries that the creation of a mosque aroused among some of the Dutch residents. Of particular relevance was the idea that ever since the coming of immigrants the entire neighbourhood had been steadily going downhill. The importance of that image was confirmed in a study on representations of community life and social cohesion in Hillesluis, conducted in the mid 1990s. The researcher observed how native Dutch residents would often evoke a “collective nostalgic picture of how beautiful the life in the neighbourhood used to be” (Blokland-Potters 1998: 302). Another idea was that the native population of Rotterdam was being pushed out of the neighbourhoods. In Rotterdam particularly, a new generation of people from a strongly disadvantaged background, mostly of immigrant origin, began to move into the older neighbourhoods in the 1990s. Another aspect of this image of the “native population on the run” was the idea that the older residents were now on the defensive. The remaining Dutch residents were living in a flat for the elderly, some were even “confined to

557. [“Bij een eventueel besluit van de Deelgemeente, zou dit stukje groen worden opgeofferd aan een Marokkaanse moskee”], Letter of Stichting “De Laantjes” to City District Feijenoord, March 16 1995.
558. The residents linked the building of the mosque to the nuisance that would result from a planned centre for homeless people. Address to the City District Council, September 28 1995.
559. See the documentary “Higher than the Kuip” (Hoger dan de kuip) by Ingeborg Jansen, Holland Doc January 17 2008, for an impression of the feelings of different groups of residents about the building of the Essalam mosque.
561. [“Het alles overheersende probleem is echter, dat in de deelgemeente veel te veel allochtonen wonen. Deze medelanders zijn niet tolerant ten opzichte van elkaar en t.o.v. de Nederlanders”]. Letter of the association of proprietors and residents of Hillevliet and surroundings addressed to alderman Meijer, March 1 1995.
562. Address to the City District Council, September 28 1995.
563. Interview with Maaike Groen, Project-leader mosque policy, Rotterdam, July 23 2001. Interview with Anton Bruchez (resident of De Laantjes), Rotterdam, 22 March 2003. See also documentary “Higher than the Kuip” (see above).
their beds” (bedlegerig) and they would easily be accused of discriminatory talk if they dared to protest. The “Muslims”, on the other hand, were being supported by the municipality and “those Mohammedans” were are able to show up massively at the information evenings to defend their interests. 564 Out of this mixture of arguments and emotions the protesting residents deduced that it would be better if the municipality would look for another location “where many Muslims live”. 565 In summary: “a mosque does not belong on this spot”. 566

Municipal officials were aware that mosque creation could arouse these kind of emotions. Based on their experiences and confident about the strength of the pragmatic approach, officials would rely on two discursive strategies. On the one hand, they did their utmost to inform residents well, explain all the different steps in the planning process, including the possibilities to voice protests and raise objections. They promised that worries about bother and legitimate concerns would be taken seriously. 567 On the other hand, it was made very clear that the municipality would not tolerate discrimination aimed at the immigrants. The chairman of the city district stressed that the existing situation was unacceptable because sometimes the mosque-goers “were obliged to sit outside on a rug to worship”. 568

Political debate on making an exception to municipal land policy

Negotiating the building plans with neighbouring residents was not the only concern for the Moroccan mosque association. They also needed to find the necessary funds to build a new mosque. Once the Essalam Mosque association knew there were opportunities to realise a new mosque building, they had begun to send out letters to a great number of potential foreign sponsors. With the letter sent to the Al Maktoum Foundation in Dubai they got the first prize. After a visit of the chairman of the mosque association – during which he had spoken about “tulips and Muslims in the Netherlands” – the foundation agreed to sponsor all the costs of the project, estimated at the time at about 3 million guilders. 569 However, in 1998 it became clear that the foundation coupled together the gift for the building costs to the possibility to purchase the land on

564. [“Wij waren met z’n vieren... Zaten we daar tussen tachtig van die mohammedanen.”] in “Altijd bonje, niemand wil een moskee naast de deur” in Trouw March 11 1995.

565. See Blokland-Potters (1998 : 277-282) for an analysis of a similar kind of conflict about the use of a square in Hillesluis.


567. One of the community workers in Hillesluis made a detailed communication plan in 1997 arguing that: “At the moment the communication does not go well the effect is that the involvement of residents or neighbouring residents and the support for such a facility as a mosque decreases. The aim is to enlarge the support for the mosque in the neighbourhood” [“Op moment dat de communicatie niet goed verloopt is het effect dat de betrokkenheid van bewoners c.q. omwonenden en het draagvlak voor een dergelijke voorziening als een moskee afneemt. Doel is het draagvlak voor de moskee in de wijk te vergroten.”] Ton Koppens, Communication plan mosque Coloseumweg, February 7 1997.

568. Minutes of the City District Council meeting, February 1998, Also “Moskee puit uit, toch geen schot in nieuwbouw” in Rotterdams Dagblad November 30 1999. In an earlier letter addressed to the foundation De Laantjes alderman Meijer also emphasised that all citizens, including the Muslims, were entitled to the facilities they needed. Herman Meijer letter to Foundation “De Laantjes, January 19 1996.

which the mosque was to be erected. They argued this was necessary because of the Islamic tradition, in which mosques could only be built on land that was owned eternally and not on land that was given in lease, but also because the foundation wanted to have guarantees that the mosque would actually be built and that the donation would not be used for other purposes. This demand meant a setback because the Rotterdam land policy only allowed land that became available to be given out in long term lease for a period of maximum 99 years. The municipality turned down the initial request of the mosque association to make an exception to the municipal land policy.

In January 1999 the Essalam mosque association renewed its request with the help of SPIOR. In a letter they explained that the sponsor threatened to withdraw his “generous offer” which would mean that “a unique occasion” might be missed to create “a remarkable building” on a “magnificent location”:

By building this mosque several goals are accomplished simultaneously: the city obtains an architectural landmark (in English in the text, M.M.) that will contribute to the image of multicultural Rotterdam. Besides, the mosque will function as the centre for the Moroccan community that has been looking for an adequate mosque location for many years now.

The municipality was now divided on whether some kind of exception should be made. Officials from the municipal land-office (grondbedrijf) and the alderman for Town Planning and Land Policy (Grondzaken), Kombrink (Social Democrat Party, PvdA) were opposed to the idea. They were afraid that a precedent was being created and that the image of the municipality giving in to the demands of an “Arab Sheikh” would cause bad publicity, which ultimately would negatively affect the Muslim population. Alderman Meijer (Green Party, GroenLinks) for Urban Renewal and Housing, however, believed that it should be possible to find a “creative solution” so that the mosque could be built. This solution consisted of a deal in which the municipality would argue it intended to purchase the privately owned land on which the present Essalam mosque was located for purposes of urban renewal projects. This plot of land would then be swapped for the one on which the new mosque was to arise. Because the new plot was far larger the mosque association would still have to pay for the remaining parts and guarantee that the land would be sold back to the municipality if the association would at some future date decide to leave the location. Meijer also argued that the municipality should not suggest that the fact that an “Arab Sheikh” was now involved in financing a mosque project was of any consequence. Suggestions that there might be reasons to be suspicious of these kind of foreign donations met with a principled reaction of the alderman: “if the Vatican pays we also don’t ask any questions”.

This creative solution required generating political support for a legally somewhat doubtful way of bypassing the land policy. In political discussions that followed the building of the new mosque was being justified both in view of the municipal mosque policy and in view of

570. [“Met de bouw van deze moskee worden meerdere doelen tegelijk verwezenlijkt: de stad wordt een architectonische landmark rijker die bijdraagt aan het image van multicultureel Rotterdam en tevens fungeert de moskee als middelpunt voor de Marokkaanse gemeenschap, die al jarenlang op zoek is naar een passende moskeelocatie.”] Letter of SPIOR, January 20 1999.

571. This statement of the alderman was confirmed in an interview with Yassin Hartogh former director of SPIOR, Rotterdam, June 22 2001.

the new goal of favouring multicultural mosque architecture. The aldermen wrote a proposal for what was euphemistically labelled a “land-swap” (grondruil) and would discuss this in the municipal council in April 1999. During the deliberations in the municipal council, alderman Meijer spoke of the new mosque as “aesthetically valuable” and as “a visible sign of the presence of a large Muslim population in our city”. By now the alderman indeed argued that mosque building should be understood in light of the “multi-ethnic and international composition of the city’s population” and that the existing “diversity in cultures” should be “allowed to be visible in the cityscape” and could be “looked at with joy”.573

In the end the municipal council would, with a majority vote, approve of the proposal for a land swap. Members of the local City Party (Stadspartij) and the Socialist Party (SP) voted against, primarily because of their principled views on the rectitude of the municipal land policy and out of fear that a precedent was being created. However, there were differences between the parties that voted in favour of the land swap. The representative of the Liberal Party (VVD), Mr. Janssens, for example, primarily justified his support in view of the existing municipal mosque policy. He spoke of the value of tolerance and of religious freedom and said the new mosque stood for the basic idea that “people with a particular religion should be given the opportunity to practice that religion in a respectable accommodation”.574 Mrs Hellwig-Kuipers of the Christian Democrat Party (CDA) did agree that the new mosque was a “gaining for the urban landscape of our city”. However, she was also warned the municipal government to make sure the mosque would become embedded in the “frames of reference (belevingsfeer) of its surroundings”. A timely and well-though-out communication plan should be developed together with the city district officials in order to create societal support for the “incorporation of a mosque in an Arab style in the district”.575 Thus while they supported the municipal government in its decision to make the building of the new mosque possible, these representatives of parties of the Right were more reserved when it came to supporting the alderman’s enthusiasm about multicultural architecture.

By contrast, representatives of the parties of the Left were more outspoken. Municipal council member Mr. Çelik (Social Democrat Party, PvdA) argued that the mosque policy explicitly foresaw the building of four “real mosques” and said that now there was an opportunity to build such a “real, beautiful mosque, with a dome and minarets”. A representative of the Green Party (GroenLinks), Mr. Daal, spoke of the way the urban landscape of Rotterdam was illustrative of a “global city” (wereldstad). At this time these divergences in political discussions about the value of grandiose mosque buildings were still of minor relevance. It would require the societal and political changes that occurred in the early 21st century for divergences to become more articulate.

575. [“Wij realiseren ons dat een zorgvuldige en vroegtijdige wijze van communiceren over de inpassing van een moskee in een Arabische bouwstijl in de wijk in overleg en samenspraak met het bestuur van de Stichting Moskee Essalam, de deelgemeente en omwonenden noodzakelijk is”.] Minutes Municipal Council Deliberation April 15 1999.
Mosque design and protests

In the second half of the 1990s there had been some hesitant attempts to link the praise for multicultural architecture more directly to the execution of the Rotterdam mosque policy. The building of the new Mevlana mosque between 1999 and 2001 would give additional plausibility to that idea. The Turkish mosque with its two slim minarets and green dome was clearly visible from trains reaching Rotterdam from the Amsterdam and The Hague. To the mosque association it was self-evident that building this type of mosques was a way of developing Turkish Islam in a Western European context “with retention of cultural identity”.

The Dutch architect, Bert Toorman, said the mosque was “an autonomous building with its own appearance and identity”. He suggested the building of this mosque was a result of the municipal policy: “The Rotterdam municipality has laid down in the past that the Muslim community is a full-fledged and important part of the town community”. At the ceremonial placing of the first stone in 1999 the chairman of the city district council had stated: “If I will return from my holidays, and drive back home from Schiphol, the first thing I will see in Rotterdam are the minarets of the Mevlana mosque. And then I will know that I am home”. In the local and national press the plans and architecture of the mosque were spoken of enthusiastically as a “classical mosque” that was “one of the largest in Europe” with a “record dome”, minarets that were the “highest in Europe” and a building that “gave Muslims an appearance”.

577. [“Als ik straks terugkomi van vakantie, en vanuit Schiphol naar huis rij, dan zie ik bij Rotterdam als eerste de minaretten van de Mevlana moskée. En dan weet ik dat ik thuis ben”] in de Volkskrant November 10 1999.
seen as illustrative of the process of emancipation of Turks and a journalist spoke of the “spatial integration of Muslims”. “Monumental mosques” were becoming characteristic markers in the Dutch landscape. While there was a lot of praise for the architecture of the newly built mosques it was far less clear what exactly were the architectural merits of the buildings. The new mosques were principally said to be “beautiful” and “typical”. It seemed as if mosque buildings were so exotic and different that they evaded the categorisations of Dutch architectural discourse.

When the design for the new Essalam Mosque became known it also showed a fairly traditionally styled mosque that to amateur observers mainly seemed to imitate mosques in the Middle East.

The design was presented during a meeting with municipal officials at the city district office in September 2001. When asked her opinion of the model the City District Mayor exclaimed “I think it is a baby”. The municipal Commission for Aesthetic Appearance (Welstandscommissie) did not present a much more enlightening commentary on the mosque design either. Usually the commission discussed proposals for new buildings at length and gave explicit judgements on the ways new buildings fitted in with their surroundings and gave a substantial aesthetic judgement on the architectural quality of a new project. According to the director of the commission this had not been possible in the case of the design for the Essalam mosque. In retrospect he concluded in 2003 that the commission lacked guidelines to evaluate mosque architecture because
there existed no local culture policy that laid down the role of Islamic houses of worship. In 2001 the commission had formulated parameters (stedebouwkundige randvoorwaarden) for the design, but these merely stipulated that the building should have a “representative expression” that should match the high quality of the area “Head of South” (Kop van Zuid kwaliteit). In their official comments on the design the commission had focussed on aspects such as the alignment of the building to the street, the neighbouring buildings and the green belt.

The ways the urban planning discourses and the pragmatic take on the issue of mosque creation were shaping discussions on appearance and aesthetics was also becoming clear during the meeting at the city district office when the design was being presented. One of the Moroccan commissioners, Ahmed Ajdid, suggested that the sponsor would also be willing to pay for a fountain, which would make the forecourt of the mosque more beautiful and that could be enjoyed by all the residents, migrants as well as native Dutch.

Mr. Adjid: the forecourt, the sheikh also wants to do something about that. Perhaps a fountain…
Mrs. Steenbergen (City District Mayor): It almost looks like the Tash Mahal! What about parking? The parking garage has only been a suggestion (…) 
Mrs. Groen (Coordinator mosque policy): ...What I can worry about are those fountains. Who is going to do the maintenance, the city district? 
Mrs. Steenbergen (City District Mayor): we don’t want any fountains because it is a burden on the budget.

This type of interactions served to mutually explore and adjust interests and ideas about the further embedding of the mosque in the city district. The City District Mayor in the same sentence moved from the idea that a building resembling “the Tash Mahal” was going to be erected, to the idea that what was primarily at stake was avoiding parking problems. Municipal officials, not incorrectly, often were under the impression that the representatives of the mosque association constantly came up with additional suggestions and that they did not show enough concern about practical issues such as available parking space and maintenance. From their side the

581. According to the architect, the commission had been in favour of a building with “the genuine radiation of a mosque, meaning a strong identity that is, so to say, somewhat traditional [“een echte uitstraling van een moskee, dus echt een sterke identiteit die-zeg maar enigszins traditioneel is”]. Interview with architect Wilfred van Winden, Rotterdam, 23 March 2003. Later, however, members of the aesthetic appearance commission would argue that at the time they did not have the criteria to discuss and evaluate mosque designs.
582. Statement by Mr. Adjid during a meeting with city district administrators on the design of the mosque on September 2 2001. A Moroccan fountain had been built in the North of Rotterdam in 1999.
583. [“Ajid: voorterrein, daar wil de sjeik ook iets aan doen. Misschien een fontein. Steenbergen: Het lijkt de Tash Mahal wel! Hoe zit het met het parkeren? De parkeergarage is niet meer dan een suggestie geweest? (…) M.Groen:… Waar ik me nou druk over kan maken zijn die fonteinen. Wie gaat dat beheer doen, de deelgemeente?” Steenbergen: we willen geen fonteinen want dat is een belasting voor het budget.”] Personal observations during meeting September 2 2001.
584. Interview with Maaike Groen, Project-leader mosque policy, Rotterdam, July 23 2001. Interview with Paul van
representatives of the mosque did their best to suggest how the mosque would function as an asset for the neighbourhood as a whole. The new mosque was there “for everyone” and it would function as a meeting place for “Muslim and non-Muslims”. There would be “multifunctional spaces” that would be available for lectures, calligraphy exhibitions and expositions on the Arab world. The neighbouring residents would be “invited for dinner” during the month of Ramadan and they could visit “symposiums” and visit the “library that would be open to everyone”.

This rather curious mixture of vague promises and celebrations of diversity combined with very down to earth concerns about practical issues was also visible in other discussion settings. In October 2001 there was an information evening for residents. The Dutch architect Van Winden presented the design and spoke of the mosque as “a centre of social functioning” that could be seen as a “cultural and religious centre”. The municipal coordinator of the mosque policy had stated that the aim was to build a mosque that was “beautiful” and that “everyone could be proud of”. However, she then immediately proceeded by stating:

Large mosque also means large prayer room. In the totality of the planning around mosques this is an important issue. What is often related to it, is the parking facility. For the neighbouring residents the parking facility is an important aspect.

An opening statement such as this privileges a specific set of arguments by promising that legitimate objections –such as those concerning parking facilities- will be taken seriously. At the information evening municipal officials explained at length how “parking tables” (parkeertallen) and the “parking balance” (parkeer-balans) had been used to minimize the risk of nuisance. If residents were bothered about noise, they also were reassured by officials who explained that there were “plenty of regulations and little rules” that applied when a mosque association tried to obtain “a permit for an amplified call to prayer”. The setting for discussions on mosques thus created, was further supported by a political culture that strongly disapproved of overt racist or xenophobic statements when opposing a prospective planning decision. Dutch residents were well aware that they would be accused of racism if they did not carefully phrase their objections against mosque building.

Following the information evening there was the legal opportunity provided by the procedure that allowed residents to formally protest against the change of the zoning plan and the building plans. A number of residents, for the most part living in De Laantjes, did write such a formal letter of protest, mostly by signing a standard letter written by one of the residents. These protests restated the arguments about possible nuisance, the need to maintain the green belt and the wider concerns about the neighbourhood. Somewhat far-fetched were the ideas that people

Schaijk, official working at the city district Feijenoord, August 30 2001.

585. [“GGD, gezondheid, politiek, voorlichting, lezingen, expositie van kaligrafie, informatie over de Arabische wereld, bijvoorbeeld over Marokko. Om te eten, de buurt uitnodigen”]. Personal observation of a statement by Mr. Adjid during a meeting with city district administrators on the design of the mosque on September 2 2001.


587. [“Grote moskee betekent ook grote gebedsruimte. In de totaellite van de planvorming rondom moskeet is dit een belangrijk onderwerp. Wat vaak eraan gekoppeld wordt, is de parkeergelegenheid. Voor de omwonenden is de parkeergelegenheid een belangrijk onderdeel”]. Information evening on the Essalam Mosque, October 16 2001.

588. See also Buijs and Schuster 2001: 121.
might “climb the minaret” to stare at the women who “like to sun bathe on the inner part of the complex” and that residents would no longer be allowed to take their dog for a walk because that was “unclean in regard to the mosque”.  

Technical frames were used to counter these protests by pointing to parking regulations and “assigned dog-walking spaces”. These hardly allowed participants to address broader discussions over the social implications and symbolical dimensions of mosques in the Netherlands. Feelings of discomfort could only enter discussions via the filters that had been introduced in these settings. The careful attention to practical issues in the present was combined with rather vague expectations for the future. When it came to the looks of the new Essalam Mosque it was merely stipulated that this was a “beautiful building”, “something to be proud of” and something that people would in the end get used to. When it came to the functioning of the new mosque there was the idea that a flourishing cultural centre was being built that would contribute to integration.

In 2001, municipal officials concluded that the main accommodation issues had essentially been resolved. The special mosque policy was ended and a final report drawn up. The town planners concluded that now “the baton of the builders could be passed on to the more content focussed policy makers in the city” (GR 2002: 11). It remained to be seen whether new opportunities would present themselves for the Dutch residents to express their anxieties.

8.5. The “multicultural tragedy”: populism, assimilation and new polemics on mosque architecture in Rotterdam

In 2000 an essay entitled the “Multicultural Tragedy”, written by an intellectual affiliated with the Social Democrat Party (PvdA), Paul Scheffer, was the starting point for a national debate on the failures of consecutive policy approaches to immigrant integration. Discussions were continued throughout the “long year 2002” when Pim Fortuyn and the party he had founded (the List Pim Fortuyn, LPF) dominated the campaign for the parliamentary elections. Fortuyn introduced issues and positions in the integration debate that had until then been marginalized, arguing for example that Islam was a backward culture and a threat to liberal values such as equal rights for women and gays. After Fortuyn was assassinated in May 2002, the LPF made a spectacular electoral breakthrough and entered a (short-lived) Centre-Right coalition government with the Christian Democrat Party (CDA) and the Liberal Party (VVD).

Dramatic events also sparked off continuous polemics and debates on various aspects of Islam. At the international level these included 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ongoing conflict in the Middle-East and terrorist attacks by networks of radical Muslims in Europe and the rest of the world. In the Spring of 2001 a national debate had followed a televised interview with a Moroccan imam, Mr. El Moumni, who worked in Rotterdam and had stated that “Europeans were lower than pigs” and that “homosexuality was a contagious decease”. It was also the period of the rapid and spectacular rise to fame of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who not only forcefully pointed towards the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism but also questioned the naivety of

589. See Reservations with regard to permission to build a mosque on the Laantjesweg (“Bedenking verzoek om vrijstelling voor het oprichten van een moskee aan de Laantjesweg”), March 2002. Personal archive of the author.
the multicultural policy model and the Dutch tradition of toleration and the tendency to look the other way. A new generation of writers, intellectuals and opinion leaders entered centre stage in public debates saying they intended to “break taboos”, discuss the downsides of immigration and display rather than conceal the tensions between a progressive and permissive Dutch society and the deeply conservative and sexist culture of Islam (cf. Prins 2004). The death threats directed at Hirsi Ali and the brutal assassination of Theo van Gogh in November 2004 by a radicalised Moroccan-Dutch Muslim sent yet another shockwave through Dutch society. A brief period of unrest and anti-Muslim violence followed the horrific attack. Policy makers and politicians were increasingly concerned about the ways significant parts of young Muslims in the Netherlands were tempted by Islamic radicalism. They sought to develop responses to address both societal polarisation and radicalisation. Up to the present day populist politicians continue to mobilise public opinion and the feelings of discontent with existing political parties, and speak out in favour of a tougher approach to the integration of Muslims.590

The turbulence in political and public debate also had its effect on immigrant integration policy discourses. New approaches were proposed that would help prevent unwanted forms of immigration, defend key liberal and Dutch values and enforce adaptation by immigrants. Under the leadership of Minister Verdonk (Liberal Party, VVD) “Integration Policy New Style” was introduced that, as its name suggested, was to signify a major rupture with past approaches.591 Between 2002 and 2005 the gulf widened between the kind of ideas and policy measures that appeared on the public and political agenda and policy measures that were effectively being developed and that could be implemented given existing legal and constitutional constraints. The dust has not settled yet and it will take some time to determine in what ways Dutch policies with regard to Islam have actually been altered and to what consequences. In this final section I explore the ways in which these broader political changes shaped discussions on mosques in Rotterdam and resulted in (plans for) new public policy responses.

In March 2002 the newly created local party Liveable Rotterdam (Leefbaar Rotterdam) won 16 out of 45 seats in the municipal council in Rotterdam, which was in significant part a result of the charismatic leadership of Pim Fortuyn who was the head of the list. Liveable Rotterdam formed a Centre-Right coalition government with the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the Liberal Party (VVD). The new coalition government ended decades of Social Democrat dominance in the city and made Rotterdam into the key experimental ground for the new assimilationist approach to integration.592 New political winds would soon start blowing over mosque building projects.

In 2002 the beginning of the construction works for the new Essalam mosque still required the approval of the change of the zoning plan by the municipal council. At this stage this

590. New political leaders such as Geert Wilders and (later on) Rita Verdonk split off from the Liberal Party (VVD) and founded their own populist movements of the Right. See Prins 2004; Buruma 2006; Buijs et al. 2006; Maussen 2006; and Vink 2007.

591. In 2002 the Dutch Parliament took the initiative for the creation of an investigative committee to review 30 years of integration policy. This investigative committee, known as the Commission Blok, concluded in its report published in 2004 that on the whole integration process had been “relatively successful” (Scholten 2008: 212ff.).

592. The coalition program was entitled “The new élan for Rotterdam…and this is how we are going to do it” (GR 2002). See Maussen 2006; and Tops 2007.
was merely an administrative decision that was scheduled on the municipal council agenda for November. When this date approached spokesmen of Liveable Rotterdam began raising new objections. Alderman Pastors said in an interview that he was opposed to the building of large mosques in a “deviating style” on prominent locations. Municipal council member Sørensen said he was also concerned about the possible influence of the foreign sponsor on the mosque association. Liveable Rotterdam politicians announced that they intended to halt the procedures until a new design was made that would be of smaller size and “less dominant”. Administratively, however, it was inconceivable to contemplate obstructing the building of the mosque after all the procedures had already been completed. As alderman for Physical Infrastructure Pastors even had the political responsibility of defending the new zoning plan in the municipal council, which was then sanctioned by the council by majority vote.

However, half a year later Pastors reopened the discussion when he announced that he had held a meeting in August with the authorized solicitor of the Al Maktoum Foundation, Mr. Al-Sayegh. Pastors claimed that he had succeeded in convincing the foreign sponsor that a new design should be made that would be more “modern and contemporary”. However, a new design meant that all procedures had to be redone. The mosque association denied there existed any agreement on the need for a new design and threatened to go to court if the alderman would refuse to sign another contract needed to begin building. The city district council also objected to the way the alderman tried to reopen the discussions and insisted that all procedures had already been concluded. Once again the alderman was forced to back down.

When finally, in October 2003, the day of the ceremonial laying of the first stone had come, it celebrated, in the words of a representative of the Al Maktoum Foundation, “a dream come true”. However, to the painful surprise of most of the people who attended the festivities, the Mayor of Rotterdam, Ivo Opstelten (Liberal Party, VVD), chose the occasion to express his dissatisfaction with the design of the new mosque. A “less prominent building”, so he argued, would have been “more suited given the limited role of religion in Dutch society” and it would have been a “recognition of our culture”. The mosque might now become an “exotic attraction” for non-Muslims. As the Mayor put it: “we are enriched with a curiosity, which is nice for the people of Rotterdam to see or to show to others. We don’t have to go each time to a museum or to the Euromast”. During the ceremony alderman Pastors ostensibly held his arms crossed so as to express his dissatisfaction.

The lack of courtesy of the Mayor and the alderman at this special occasion for the Moroccan community caused a small scandal, and especially for the Mayor to be so outspokenly critical was unusual. It was all the more striking because Opstelten had warmly welcomed the Turkish Mevlana Mosque in October 2001, a building that was also fairly traditional, equally large and (at least in the eyes of alderman Pastors) equally “weird”. During the opening ceremony of the Mevlana Mosque, only a few weeks after 9/11, the Mayor had underlined that Islam in the Netherlands should not be associated with the violence of extremists abroad and that this beautiful new building gave the mosque “the status it deserved in the city” and created new

593. See “Moskee in Rotterdam eigentijdser” in de Volkskrant August 16 2003.
opportunities for further integration of Muslims.\textsuperscript{596} It seemed that ideas about the significance of traditionally styled mosque buildings had changed quite a bit since that time.

\subsection*{8.5.1. Public and political views of mosque architecture}

The design for the new Essalam mosque had been made by Dutch architects who, according to their own words, had been inspired by a number of postal cards of “mosques across the world” provided by the chairman of the mosque association. To an amateur’s eye, however, the mosque with its dome of about 25 meters height and two minarets of 49 meters, seemed to be strongly inspired by mosque architecture in the Middle East. The mosque was said to copy a mosque in Dubai, which happened to be the home country of the sponsor of the project, the Al Maktoum Foundation.\textsuperscript{597} When the project was presented in 2001 the architects had self-confidently presented the design as illustrative of high-standing and innovative Dutch mosque architecture. A year later, however, the Essalam Mosque was portrayed in the media as a “contested mosque” and the self-evident praise for this type of design seemed to have completely vanished.

\textbf{Opposition against Islamic presence and visibility}

An interview with alderman Pastors in \textit{Rotterdams Dagblad} in November 2002 had stimulated the beginning of a wider discussion on mosque building and architecture. He argued he would not have allowed the building of the Mevlana Mosque because the building “contrasts sharply with the rest of the environment”. A new debate on mosque architecture was developing in which specific figures of speech were used to depict newly built mosques. In Rotterdam the main targets of these discourses were the Mevlana Mosque and the Essalam Mosque. The Essalam Mosque was a “megalomaniac sugar cake”, a “mega-mosque” and a “Castle of Ali Baba”. It was a “colossal house of worship”, of “enormous proportions” that made it the “largest of Europe”.\textsuperscript{598} The 49 meters high minarets were depicted as “enormous”, “dominant” and especially the fact that they were to be “higher than the light posts of the neighbouring Feijenoord soccer stadium” showed the lack of reticence of Muslims.\textsuperscript{599} The idea that the looks and size of the new mosques made them weird and incongruent was also being linked to wider concerns about Islam, integration, the secular character of Dutch society and extremism. There was the idea that the failure to develop a different kind of mosque architecture was a symbol of the failed integration of Muslims and also of their unwillingness to assimilate and adapt to the Dutch context. According to alderman Pastors “An all too showy

\textsuperscript{596} See “Vierduizend Turken trots op hun Mevlana-moskee” in \textit{Rotterdams Dagblad} October 8 2001.

\textsuperscript{597} According to the architects the board of the Essalam Mosque Committee had rejected a first sketch because they thought it looked like “a swimming pool and a garage”. The design that was ultimately chosen had taken its inspiration from a number of pictures of mosques “from all over world”. Interview with architect Wilfred van Winden, Rotterdam, 23 March 2003. See the forthcoming PhD of Eric Roose for a detailed reconstruction of the designing process of this mosque.


classical mosque is, so I think, a signal in the wrong direction with respect to integration”. Then there was the idea that behind this type of mosque architecture there stood a wider strategy of Islam to impose itself on the West. A journalist from the conservative weekly HP/De Tijd spoke of the way “Muslim architecture marched on” and explained the significance of these mosques:

The new mosques in the Netherlands are closed bastions with minarets that tower high above the houses and thereby seem to declare a message of religious imperialism. (...) Because they do not seem to share in the rest of the district and their architecture contrasts sharply with our urban landscape, their presence only makes the gulf between Muslims and non-Muslims more sharply perceptible.

By now the critique of mosque architecture also targeted other Islamic designs. When the rather futuristic design for a 44 meters high minaret of the Kocatepe mosque was presented, a local journalist wrote that it looked “like a missile fresh from the factory”. Sørensen was more outspoken as to the significance of this new construction: “The minaret on the Afrikaanderplein has a symbolic function for many Rotterdammers. To them it signifies: Watch out we are coming and in the meanwhile you know what that means, because we will not step aside a single meter”. There was the idea that the building of the large new mosques should be seen in light of international Islamic radicalism. There were now doubts about the Essalam mosque association. Sørensen spoke of the Essalam Mosque association as “a very conservative Moroccan group” and qualified mosque visitors as “fanatic Muslims”.


601. [“De nieuwe moskeeën in Nederland zijn gesloten bastions met minaretten die hoog boven de huizen uittorenen en daarmee een boodschap van religieus imperialisme lijken te verkondigen. Hun architectuur harmonieert niet met de overige bebouwing en roept een onwerkelijk gevoel op (...) Het effect van deze gebouwen is er een van vervreemding. Omdat ze geen deel lijken uit te maken van de rest van de wijk en hun architectuur scherp contrasteert met ons stedelijke landschap, maakt hun aanwezigheid de kloof tussen moslims en niet moslims alleen maar scherper voelbaar.”] in Renate van der Zee “KathedraLEN voor Allah” in HP/De Tijd November 28 2003. The front page title of this issue of the weekly read “Mega mosque. Muslim architecture marches on” [“Mega moskee. De moslim architectuur rukt op”].


603. [“De minaret op het Afrikaanderplein heeft voor veel Rotterdammers een symbolische functie. Hij betekent voor hen: Pas op we komen eraan en je weet ondertussen wat dat betekent want we zullen geen meter wijken...”]. Ronald Sørensen on the website of Leefbaar Rotterdam, accessed December 19 2003.). A French-Dutch columnist of Trouw, Sylvain Ephimenco, spoke of a strategy of “visual conquest”. He questioned the naivety of Dutch public authorities who still refused to acknowledge “the totalising presence of a conservative religion that damages the modern and neutral identity of Rotterdam via huge architectural settlements of an old fashioned design” [“de alomtegenwoordigheid van een conservatief geloof dat via gigantisch architectonische nederzettingen van ouderwetse snit, de moderne en neutrale identiteit van Rotterdam aantast”] in “Oorlog met Irak om meer dan olie” Trouw December 5 2002.

604. “Gesteggel om een Rotterdamse moskee” in Trouw November 28 2003; Ronald Sørensen in Twee Vandaag November 30 2002; and Ronald Sørensen “Leefbaar Rotterdam vraagt moskee om ‘enige ingetogenheid’” in Rotterdams Dagblad August 28 2003. The earlier mentioned documentary, that was broadcasted in 2002, on sermons of conservative imams preaching intolerance, had also been filmed in the Essalam mosque.
Islam and a “despot” who applied the Sharia in his own country. On the internet some people even suggested that the Rotterdam mosque was financed with “terrorist money”. Three members of parliament in 2003, asked the government to investigate the matter. Whatever was true of these allegations, not much as it turned out, it did lead to a more general concern about possible financial linkages between conservative and radical international Islamic movements and mosque associations in the Netherlands. An editorial comment NRC-Handelsblad defended the right of Muslims to build mosques but presented the Essalam mosque as “a foreign mosque”. The editorial then went on to raise questions about the activities of foundations and billionaires from the Middle East funding mosques in Western Europe, thus trying to spread their “orthodox, anti-western ideas”.

In previous periods the symbolical dimensions of mosque buildings in Rotterdam had been consistently dampened. It had been suggested that mosques could be seen as normal neighbourhood facilities and only hesitantly, since the mid 1990s, the idea that mosques were also to be seen as welcome symbols of cultural diversity had come up. This approach was now being turned on its head. The Essalam Mosque had come to stand for a variety of urgent social issues and concerns. As Ronald Sørensen argued in the municipal council: “it is about a symbol: a building can be a symbol”. According to Sørensen, politicians who took the anxieties of Dutch residents seriously would only allow Islamic houses of worship that were “very discrete and reticent” and “completely absorbed in the built environment”. By now, it appeared that if governments showed their determination to act upon this concrete issue of the building of too large and too visible mosques they would be able to address other urgent social problems, including failed integration and mounting Islamic radicalism. Because newly built mosques had become a symbol of a number of social evils, acting upon the symbol seemed an effective way of addressing societal challenges.

Defending multicultural architecture and visibility

The fact that the choice of fairly traditional designs was now under heavy fire led advocates of this type of architecture to express their ideas more clearly. One discursive strategy was to point

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605. In 1999 the sponsor had been depicted as someone who was “incredibly wealthy”, a “generous spender” (gulle gever) who was financing mosques all over the world out of “charitable considerations”. See “Gulle gift van sjeik uit Emiraten” and “B en W Rotterdam buigen voor rijke sjeik” in Rotterdams Dagblad March 18 and March 23 1999.

606. In October 2003 three members of Parliament (Mr. Wilders (VVD), Mr. Eurlings (CDA) and Mr. Eerdmans (CDA)) asked the government whether it was correct that the sponsor of the mosque was a major sponsor of international terrorism (“Opnieuw commotie rond Essalam moskee” in Trouw October 29 2003).


609. Sørensen in Twee Vandaag November 30 2002 and “Sørensen bindt strijd aan met moskee” in Rotterdams Dagblad November 26 2002. More radical solutions were also being voiced. On the discussion forum on the website of Liveable Rotterdam some individuals suggested to throw “fire bombs at the mosque” and “to erase all those buildings”. See discussion forum Website Liveable Rotterdam, accessed November 27 2002.

610. In this way discussions on mosque architecture in Rotterdam functioned in a similar way as discussions on headscarves in France (see Bowen 2006; also Gusfield 1981).
to the fact that this public outcry about mosque design should be understood as illustrative of the more general hostility of Liveable Rotterdam towards Muslims and Islam. During the period Liveable Rotterdam was in office some of its prominent spokesmen were linking Islam to all kinds of evils, from petty crime to gang rapes, from honour killings to female circumcision, and from language deficiency among immigrants to domestic violence. Seen in this light, the critique of mosque design could be depicted as merely one among several ways of expressing hostility. Another argument was that, in the end, criteria of beauty were subjective and relative. As a municipal council member of the Green Party argued: “we hope that many people can enjoy this building and that others will in the end get used to it”. Others argued that issues of taste could not be solved in a political debate. These kind of arguments sought to demonstrate the reasons a wide discussion about mosque architecture was beside the point and why public authorities should be more reticent in imposing their views on the looks and functioning of religious buildings. However, there were also ways of more positively defending the creation of recognisable mosques built in this kind of exotic style.

One could argue that architecturally the new mosques were an aesthetic gain for the cityscape, rather than spoiling it. The “oriental mosques” were actually “enchantingly beautiful” (sprookjesachtig mooi) and should be welcomed in a city like Rotterdam that had a tradition in building “exotic houses of worship”. This praise for imaginative architecture was usually linked to all kinds of virtues, such as open-mindedness, imaginativeness and tolerance. There was also the more principled justification of Muslim minorities building the kind of mosques they deemed appropriate and of minority groups controlling their identity. Municipal council member Mr. Çelik (Social Democrat Party, PvdA) argued: “A great number of identities live in Rotterdam, and the mosque is an expression of one of those identities”. Those who protested against this kind of buildings were suggesting that Muslims should worship in the Islamic version of “hidden churches”. The chairman of SPIOR also defended the Mevlana mosque and argued that it played a positive role for integration: “It is a symbol of the diversity of the city. For the integration of Muslims it is important, because they will feel more at home and start thinking: Rotterdam also belongs to us”. One could also argue that religious minorities had the

611. For a discussion on these discussions and the role of Liveable Rotterdam therein see Maussen 2006: 116ff.
612. To some the suggestion that politicians of Liveable Rotterdam genuinely wanted to discuss the architectural style of religious buildings was even laughable, because they sharply criticised the traditional looks of mosques but had never complained about the building of a traditionally styled Russian Orthodox Church (completed in 2003) or about the wooden Norwegian Church, an exact copy of a traditional Norwegian village church that had been built in 1914. On the website Maroc.nl, a popular discussion forum for young Muslims, the discussion on mosque architecture were represented as yet another illustration of anti-Muslim prejudice. Accessed November 27 2002.
613. [“Wij hopen dat veel mensen van het gebouw kunnen genieten en dat anderen er uiteindelijk aan zullen wennen”] Mrs Kruse (Green Party, GroenLinks), Deliberations Municipal Council, November 29 2002.
614. Jantine Kriens (Social Democrat Party, PvdA) “Is Pastors er echt op uit kwaliteit van samenleven in Rotterdam te verbeteren?” in Rotterdams Dagblad December 5 2003.
617. [“D’r leven heel veel identiteiten in Rotterdam, en een moskee is een uiting van één van die identiteiten”] Mr. Çelik in Twee Vandaag November 30 2002.
618. [“Het is een symbool van de diversiteit van de stad. Voor de integratie van moslims is het juist belangrijk, omdat die zich hier meer thuis voelen en gaan denken: Rotterdam is ook van ons.”] Ibrahim Spalburg, Director
right to create the kind of building they preferred and that neutrality demanded the government to be reserved in these matters. It was not up to the majority to decide whether or not Muslim minorities were entitled to build specific types of mosques.

A third way? Modern mosques and “poldermosques”

Advocates and opponents of multicultural mosque architecture were not only disagreeing profoundly on how to evaluate the new buildings, they also accused one another of avoiding a discussion on the real issues. According to Liveable Rotterdam and the other critics, the real issues were radical Islam and failed integration of Muslims, whereas according to their opponents the real issue was intolerance of difference and prejudices against Islam. However, a new position in the debate became available when the idea of modernising mosque architecture arose.619

In 2003 four architecture students of the Hogeschool Rotterdam working under the name MEMAR presented an alternative design for the Essalam Mosque that they had made as a graduation assignment. It showed a fairly futuristic building, largely made of glass and lacking typical elements such as a dome and minarets and with a grass incline serving as a roof. The Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch students, not only graduated with honours, they also won various architecture contests and for the moment became highly visible in the media and were invited to participate in several discussion evenings to present their design for a “modern” and “multicultural mosque”.620

The students primarily depicted their own mosque design by placing it in opposition to the design of the Essalam Mosque that was actually being built. The Essalam Mosque was “massive and closed”, it displayed a total lack of interest in the immediate surroundings and merely imitated a “traditional mosque”. The students suspected the Dutch architects had simply given in to the demands of the donors and of the board of the Essalam Mosque association that was, so they thought, dominated by “older Moroccan men”. The students had been confronted of SPIOR cited in “Sørensen bindt strijd aan met moskee” in Rotterdams Dagblad November 26 2002. A similar idea had motivated the city district Delfshaven to put a picture of the Mevlana Mosque on the cover of the district’s information guide (wijkgids), claiming it represented a “part of the identity of the district”. Representatives of Liveable Rotterdam also protested against this cover.

619. A discourse on mosque architecture in the Netherlands had existed in a relatively small circle of experts since several decades. Relatively new was the idea that modernising mosque architecture required abandoning several of the more “traditional” features such as the dome and the minaret. However, these ideas had not been very influential in public discussions about mosque architecture. For example, in 2000, that is long before any kind of designing process had begun, an Iranian-Dutch student of interior design, Mahasti Tafahomi, had made a sketch for the future Essalam mosque. In a short newspaper article her design was depicted as a “high-tech mosque” that expressed the “progressiveness of Islam”. Pyramids of glass functioned as “lighting shafts” and replaced the “traditional minarets”, and new technologies such as “solar panels” were used for the construction. Tafahomi argued that the mosque association had been enthusiastic about her plans and that it would be regrettable if only “traditional mosques with minarets were being built” in the Netherlands. The municipality did not show much interest for these plans Municipal officials believed that this kind of large project should not be developed on the basis of a sketch of an architecture student but required the hiring of a more established bureau of architects. Besides the article in Rotterdams Dagblad, Tafahomi’s ideas also fell on deaf ears in the media. See “High-tech moskee benadrukt vooruitstrevendheid van islam” in Rotterdams Dagblad December 19 2000 and letter of Tafahomi in NRC-Handelsblad of May 8 2004.

620. A presentation of the design was available on the website www.mucumo.nl, accessed May 8 2003.
with a similar reaction from their parents when they had shown them their own, more modern, design: “Our parents immediately asked why the minaret was missing in our design. Older Muslims especially need tradition and familiar forms.”621 This anecdote was important because it strengthened the idea that the students were speaking with insider knowledge who had discussed mosque architecture with their (older) Muslim parents. This image was further enhanced when the students picked up on the figure of speech “nostalgia mosque” (heimweemoskee) to qualify the traditionally styled mosques in the Netherlands.622 To contrast their own design with the prevailing style in Dutch mosque architecture, the students spoke of their mosque as not only a modern mosque but also as a more truly Dutch “polder-mosque”623.

The MEMAR design for a polder mosque could be used to articulate a sharp critique of existing forms of “nostalgia mosques”, without reproducing the more unfriendly messages


622. To my knowledge, the figure of speech “nostalgia mosque” first appeared in the title of an article in Vrij Nederland. See “De heimweemoskee” in Vrij Nederland, January 12 2002.

about Islamic presence. What was problematic, was the way an older generation of immigrants were unable or unwilling, both intellectually and emotionally, to leave behind the images and cultural orientations of their home country. Their “nostalgia architecture” had its way because of the naivety and lack of interest of Dutch architects who avoided a confrontation and did not uphold Dutch architectural and aesthetics norms and standards. In addition, the conservative branches in Islam with their basis in foreign countries now saw an opportunity to impose their standards and create an Islam that was “massive and closed”. This story was a version of Scheffer’s “multicultural tragedy” applied to mosque building: under the eyes of the Dutch, society and the urban landscape were being deeply transformed without them even seeking to challenge the demands and ideas of conservative and nostalgic Muslims. As a result the country ended up with unimaginative, cheap and ugly imitation mosques that were also inappropriately large.

This new perspective opened up a space for Dutch intellectuals and architects who thought of themselves as open-minded, to also enter the fray. They criticised Disney architecture and the ways the “mosque was becoming a caricature of itself”. Now speaking of the new mosques as “Disney mosques” meant not so much to question exotic or traditional architecture as such, but to question the building of clichés and cheap copies of traditional buildings. The Mevlana Mosque was depicted as a building that “had nothing to do with the Netherlands” and that was the result of “an architect who after looking at post-cards from Istanbul has designed a mosque in one day”.

In diametrical opposition to this highly problematic form of mosque architecture, the “modern” and “polder mosque” design was portrayed as a symbol of change and hope. Younger generations were better educated and willing to reconsider their culture and identity in the new context of the Netherlands. A journalist of NRC-Handelsblad wrote enthusiastically: “Young Muslims in the Netherlands are fed up with the minaret”. The younger generations were in favour of a more “Dutch mosque”. There was also the idea that the functioning of the more modern mosque would be illustrative of an openness towards the Dutch context. Even politicians of Liveable Rotterdam now concluded that they in fact also were in favour of “more modern” mosque architecture. Alderman Pastors explained that the Essalam Mosque was “a reference to the past”. New mosques in Toronto and Rio de Janeiro showed other possibilities, because these modern buildings were “open and progressive”: “That is the kind of thing we

625. “Heimweemoskee of poldermoskee” in NRC-Handelsblad May 1 2004. According to a high-ranking municipal official in Rotterdam there were good grounds to reconsider the enthusiasm for the design of the Essalam as it had prevailed in the late 1990s: “I do think that this should be the last mosque that looks like that... a process of emancipation and real integration also entails that one is aware of the context in which one finds oneself. I miss that awareness in this case”. [“Ik denk wel dat dit de laatste moskee moet zijn die er zo uitziet. Bij een emancipatieproces hoort ook dat je je bewust bent van de context waarin je je bevindt. Ik mis dat bewustzijn in dit geval”.] Jean Piret cited in “Dit moet de laatste traditionele moskee zijn” in de Volkskrant January 16 2004.
626. The discussions on mosque architecture could be associated to all kinds of initiatives and debates for a different, more “Dutch”, type of Islamic organisations and mosques in the Netherlands. There had been demands of younger Muslims that sermons be held in Dutch and a few years later, in 2008, a new project for a mosque for younger Muslim began in Amsterdam that was – not coincidently- also labelled a “polder mosque”. See “Jongeren krijgen Poldermoskee” in de Volkskrant April 14 2008.
need— a signal that we want to go forward and that we work on integration”. It remained to be seen if these ideas would translate into concrete policy responses.

8.5.2. Proposals for a new mosque policy in Rotterdam

The polemics about mosque architecture had many different effects. They figured within the context of a series of spirited discussions about Islam in Rotterdam between 2002 and 2006. Whether or not these debates contributed to a deepening of distrust of Muslims and a growing dislike of the new mosques in the city remains difficult to establish. After the assassination of Van Gogh in November 2004 there were several minor attacks against mosques in Rotterdam and a small fire was created on the doorsteps of the Mevlana mosque. These events caused serious distress and anxiety among Muslim communities in Rotterdam, but in other Dutch cities similar and more dramatic incidents took place, such as the burning down of an Islamic school in Uden and a mosque in Helden. There were also renewed protests against the building of the new Essalam mosque: someone threw a paint-bomb at the announcements plate on the building site, the extreme right group New National Party (NNP) organised a protest in March 2003, and the extreme right politician Michiel Smit (a former municipal council member of Liveable Rotterdam) produced a special brochure and a website under the confrontational title “no mosque” (Mosknee).

The period 2002-2006 was also a period of radical reorientation of public policies with regard to Islam in Rotterdam. In 2003 a large project was developed that was called “Islam in discussion” and that included series of lectures and discussions that were held at the municipal and city district level. In addition, in the wake of the murder of Van Gogh the municipality also developed policies to combat radicalisation among younger Muslims in Rotterdam (Maussen 2006: 116-124). Here I focus on the new policies with regard to the creation of mosques.

Alderman Pastors had failed to enforce his ideas about the outer limits of appropriate mosque architecture upon the new Essalam Mosque building. He continued to think, however, that Islam should be less visibly present in the urban landscape and presented a draft memorandum entitled Spatial Mosque Policy in 2004. The memorandum began by arguing that the ability “to take in” (incasseringsvermogen) by the citizens of Rotterdam had been pushed to the limit. A new policy would take as a starting point that the constitution stipulated that there was freedom of religion but that sometimes “societal reality” diverged from “legal reality”. In this case the societal reality was the building of mosques that by their architecture in an unwanted way visualised and accentuated the differences between cultures. It also mattered that for new faith communities “the freedom of religion should not only be a pleasant surprise that allowed them

627. [“Zoiets moeten we hebben—een signaal dat we vooruit willen en dat we bezig zijn met integreren”] in “Moskee in Rotterdam moet eigentijdser” in de Volkskrant August 16 2003. The Toronto Mosque is a large building in a modern style.

628. In 2001 a study had begun on the societal role of mosques in Rotterdam. The making of this report was strongly embedded in the kind of approach that had dominated in the 1990s. The idea was that now that the housing issues had been dealt with the builders would pass on the baton to policy makers who would think about the further social integration of Islam and possibilities to develop the role of mosques. However, when this report was published in 2003 the political context had changed significantly. Municipal official interpreted the report as a confirmation that many of the mosques did not contribute enough to the integration process. See Canatan et al.2003.
to claim rights” (GR 2004). They should understand that freedom of religion also implied respect for others, an open attitude towards Dutch society and “respect for the modern architecture and town planning of our city”. The new mosque policy was to be a part of the wider integration policy. Seen in this light “the creation of large, prestigious projects for mosque building” was no longer in line with the new policy approach that favoured integration (idem: 4). Since a mosque did not fulfil a broad societal function it was not sensible to give the buildings a remarkable position in the city. In fact, in light of the municipal integration policy, mosques should preferably also provide for functions that targeted other residents of the neighbourhoods, such as child daycare centres. If mosque building could also be used by non-Muslims this would help to lessen “the feeling of separation”.

The alderman seemed willing to restrict religious freedom and the separation of church and state in order to enforce the integration of Muslims. It also seemed discriminatory if only Islamic houses of worship would be subject to a special policy with regard to their design, size and location. The policy memorandum immediately sparked intense political opposition. Muslim organisations protested at the Rotterdam City Hall. The united Rotterdam city districts wrote a letter saying that it was inappropriate that “a presumption of resistance” against mosques was now being used to justify this kind of policy. All parties in the municipal council, with the exception of Liveable Rotterdam, rejected the proposed policy. The alderman thereupon withdrew the proposal.

This was not the end of the matter, however, because in 2005 alderman Pastors again presented a plan for a new Spatial policy for houses of worship. This time the alderman had been careful to present the policy as addressing all prayer houses and the policy guidelines were also much vaguer. The goal was now to ensure that regarding new plans for religious buildings a “careful process” would be developed that would allow all stakeholders to “take their responsibility” in view of integration. The municipality wanted to stimulate “congruent architecture” and wanted to alter the regulations concerning the maximum height of “towers next to houses of worship” (GR 2005). The use of general categories such as houses of worship and towers could not really disguise that the aim was to prevent the building of large mosques and minarets that exceeded a certain maximum height.

Despite its more general and vague phrasing, the adoption of the new policy memorandum would again create tensions with existing constitutional and legal regulations, among them the freedom of religion and the separation of church and state. However, because of political developments such a principled discussion of the policy memorandum never occurred. In 2005 a new controversy began when alderman Pastors said in an interview that “Muslims often used their religion to justify their crimes”. These comments led to a motion in the municipal council forcing the alderman to step down. The issue was removed from the agenda and the new Centre-Left municipal government that acceded to power in 2006 seemed little inclined to pick it up again.

The heavily mediatised public discussions on mosque architecture seemed in the end not to have resulted in a clear and comprehensive policy. The ways politicians of Liveable Rotterdam had translated their ideas into policy measures had met with strong political opposition and they also existed in tension with basic elements of Dutch constitutional and legal regulations. However, there did seem to be consequences for policy practice in more indirect

ways. As I mentioned, the president of the Aesthetics Commission had asked in 2003 for clearer
guidelines as to the kind of criteria that should be used to evaluate mosque buildings. Perhaps
coincidentally, the commission in August 2003 rejected the initial building plans for a new
Surinamese mosque in the city-district of IJsselmonde in Rotterdam, arguing that the suggested
building looked too much like a “collage of a mixture of styles” and seemed “an incompre-
hensible construction” in its direct environment that demanded “some kind of peacefulness”.
In November 2006 the plans for a new Moroccan mosque in Delfhaven were presented that,
according to the architect, was “a liberal building” that took notice of its immediate surround-
ings. The sharp lining and the use of glass made the building “transparent”. The board of the
mosque explained that for them transparency was important. The new mosque building was
contrasted to the neighbouring Mevlana Mosque that was now depicted as that “oriental looking
mosque”. Mosque architecture thus continued to be discussed in close relation to the process
of immigrant integration.

In the meanwhile the completion of the building of the Essalam mosque was repeatedly
delayed between 2005 and 2008. At first there were problems with the German subcontractor
and with the payments of the Al Maktoum Foundation for what by now had become a project of
6 million euros. In December 2006 a conflict developed within the Essalam mosque community
when a group of members protested against the presence of representatives of the Al Maktoum
Foundation on the board. They accused the existing chairman of corruption and feared that the
influence of the Al Maktoum Foundation constituted a risk for the autonomy of the Muslim as-
sociations and might result in a more conservative religious profile of the mosque. The conflict
escalated when there were brawls between different mosque-goers in front of the mosque.
These concerns were picked up in the media and also resulted in two members of parliament,
Van der Toog (Christian Democrats, CDA) and Dijsselbloem (Social Democrat Party, PvdA),
requesting the Minister of the Interior to order the General Information and Security Services
(AIVD) to conduct an investigation of the influence of foreign sponsors on mosque associations.
The building remained to be completed in August 2008. Because of continuing problems with
the financing there was even the possibility that the building permit for the mosque would be
withdrawn because of the association failing to stand by the agreements.

8.6. Conclusion

It has become a commonplace to suggest that the Dutch sought to accommodate Islamic institu-
tions by mixing “pillarisation” with multiculturalism. This chapter has shown that this image
is a distortion of actual governing approaches in the past 30 years. Institutional relations be-
tween state and religion cannot be equated with “pillarisation” and the growing emphasis on the

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630. See “Annasrmoskee na 30 jaar nieuw gebouw” in Rotterdams Dagblad November 18 2006.
631. In the Fall of 2007 the board of the mosque association sought to obtain a court order to refuse entrance to the
mosque of their critics. See “Conflict over macht in Essalam escaleert” in Rotterdams Dagblad October 9 2007.
“Gelovigen Essalam blij met aangekondigde rechtszaak” in Rotterdams Dagblad October 23 2007 and “Moskee
wil af van kritische bezoekers” in Algemeen Dagblad June 9 2008.
principle of separation of church and state since the 1980s had considerable impact upon public policy responses. Sometimes short-lived policy approaches, such as the now notorious idea of supporting the efforts of immigrant communities to “retain their cultural identity”, fuelled a dynamic in institutionalisation processes that then largely followed its own trajectory. However, crucial factors shaping integration process proved relatively immune to changing policy measures, notably the continued arrival of new immigrants lacking essential cultural and educational skills to successfully participate in Dutch society.

In the 1980s Dutch church-state traditions and Ethnic Minorities Policies converged around the idea that minorities ought to have equal rights. This resulted in a series of measures assuring Muslim participation in domains such as public broadcasting, education, spiritual care and burial arrangements. To compensate for structural disadvantages it seemed fair to give extra financial support for religious facilities. In 1983 the Waardenburg Working Party proposed a comprehensive program of support. It argued that the host society had a responsibility to assure immigrants’ basic religious rights and insisted that ethnic institutions had an important cushioning function for immigrants communities facing difficult circumstances. Substantial subsidies would create more equal opportunities for Islam and allow for the gradual evolving of guest workers policies towards a condition in which Muslims would be able to loosen the cultural, institutional, ideological and financial ties with their home countries.

However, the proposals of the Waardenburg Working Party were drawn into ongoing discussions on church-state relations. Therein, secular parties, such as the Social Democrat Party (PvdA), the Liberal Party (VVD) and the Liberal Democrat Party (D66), had taken a more principled stance on the issue of separation of church and state. They saw the revised constitution of 1983 as a welcome move away from the church-state traditions belonging to the age of pillarisation. In Parliament representatives of these parties took a firm stance: the state should not financially support religion and it should refuse to make an exception to subsidise religious facilities of immigrants. In 1988 the Hirsch-Ballin State Committee again came to the conclusion that it was fair to set up a subsidy scheme to support the creation of houses of worship for immigrant communities. This time the arguments turned primarily around the obligation of the state to guarantee effective religious freedom and compensate groups that were confronted with “special circumstances”. Yet, the secular parties remained opposed to direct financing. In the early 1990s, they effectively removed further discussions on subsidy schemes for mosques from the political agenda.

The national government reasoned that municipalities were better able to regulate the creation of mosques. In Rotterdam mosques entered the municipal policy agenda in the early 1980s and from then on moved with the tides of discussions on immigrant integration. Two major themes figured on the municipal agendas: the societal functioning of mosque associations and the incorporation of mosques into the urban tissue. Initially, it had seemed plausible to focus on the societal role of Muslim associations. However, early attempts in this direction

632. The infamous slogan “integration with retention of cultural identity” did inspire policy measures and attitudes, such as generous support for ethnic organisations, the creation of native language and culture classes, reluctance to enforce further adaptation of immigrants and a public debate that was suffocated by the severe norms of anti-racism. But processes of ethnic-organisation building and integration also took their own course and national and municipal governments found they had little opportunities and instruments to effectively change those developments.
rapidly brought to light the many underlying tensions in Ethnic Minorities Policy that were so ingeniously evaded when speaking of “integration with retention of cultural identity”. In different arena’s political discussions on mosques touched upon concerns about the growing number of immigrants in certain neighbourhoods, anxieties about the perceived rise of Islamic fundamentalism, and struggles about the goals of integration policy and the distribution of municipal subsidies for immigrant self-help organisations. These increasingly complex and contentious discussions ended in a dead-lock. Despite this setback, Muslim organisations were increasingly able to create the kind of Islamic institutions they deemed appropriate. Turkish Muslims especially, used the opportunities provided by the Dutch institutional environment to set up what was basically a trans-nationally organised Turkish Islam. They skilfully employed the slogan “integration with retention of identity” and the principle of separation of church and state to protect their associational autonomy. The municipality was obliged to acknowledge it lacked effective instruments to intervene in the development of Muslim organisations. Alternatively, municipal policy makers came to think that it would be possible to move progressively from better spatial to further social integration of mosques.

Policy makers announced in 2001 that the moment had arrived for “the builders to pass on the baton” and they initiated a study on the “societal role of mosques”. However, a year later the populist party Liveable Rotterdam dominated the political agenda on these issues. Instead of incrementally and carefully working on the further societal integration of mosques, municipal policy discussions “went wild”. Confrontational discussions and an endless flow of new proposals became the trademark of policy making around Islam in Rotterdam. When the Coalition government of the Right was replaced in 2006 many of these plans ended in an indeterminate state.

The second major theme on municipal policy agenda was the location and housing of mosques. In the late 1980s increasingly incongruent depictions of mosques were articulated by various stakeholders: Dutch residents related mosque creation to the unwanted concentration of immigrants in the neighbourhoods, Muslim representatives and municipal officials believed mosque functioned as a “cultural home”, and secular ethnic organisations perceived them as obstacles to integration. Between 1987 and 1991 a critical juncture occurred, when the image of mosques as regular “neighbourhood facilities” developed and the idea of aiming for “the integration of mosques at the neighbourhood level” began to structure problem-definitions. Building on a discourse coalition between residents associations, mosque committees and municipal officials around this policy frame, a cohering policy approach was implemented by the Town Planning and Housing Department. Urban renewal and town planning policy practices provided many tools to navigate through the discussions that tended to become emotional and controversial. For a period of more than 10 years the vocabulary and frames of the municipal mosque policy shaped perceptions and helped to convert the process of the incorporation of mosques into an matter of sufficient parking space, preventing environmental nuisance and building up understanding among the Dutch residents for this “relatively new facility in the neighbourhood”. The mosque policy intended to progressively normalise the issue of mosque creation and it sidelined more symbolical aspects.

A second juncture occurred in the debate when issues of cultural diversity and immigrant integration re-appeared in mosque discussions in the second half of the 1990s. The idea that newly built mosques functioned as symbols of recognition and expressions of ethnic diversity was picked up in new discourses on the need for “multicultural architecture”, associated with the “diversity policy” approach developed in the political program of the coalition government of the Centre-Left that acceded to power in 1998. Within the more formal settings, discussions
still very much focused on practical issues and concerns. In addition, Dutch political culture in
the 1990s strongly disapproved of overt racist or xenophobic statements and thereby smothered
possible criticisms of the dominant ways of praising ethnic mosque architecture. In January
2002 the alderman for Urban Renewal and Housing, Herman Meijer (Green Party, GroenLinks),
enthusiastically announced that the special mosque policy had been concluded and he claimed
that in Rotterdam the social conflicts about “visibility, dignity and presence” of immigrant com-

Ironically, at this time a third juncture occurred in municipal policy discussions on
mosques. By 2002 the underpinning of politically correct speech had been weakened and alter-
native views on the symbolical meanings of newly built mosques entered the fray. Under the
stimulation of representatives of Liveable Rotterdam the symbolical dimensions of mosque
building were now put at the centre of public discussions. Architecture was associated with
immigrant integration and the (perceived) growing prominence of Islam in the Netherlands.
Discussions on the appearance of mosques now touched upon all kinds of societal issues.
Advocates of multicultural architecture positioned themselves as open-minded and tolerant, and
they were opposed by supporters of more modest and “adapted” mosque architecture. Others
suggested there was a need to overcome “nostalgia architecture” and for Muslim institutions in
the Netherlands to become more modern. They argued that there should be more room for “the
young” and more imaginative “poldermosques” and buildings that were socially and physically
oriented towards their Dutch surroundings.

This third juncture in public policy discussions has not (yet) been converted into insti-
tutionalised public policy responses. On two occasions, in 2004 and 2005, alderman Pastors of
Liveable Rotterdam did try to create a policy that would result in banning the building of mosques
in an all too showy and incongruent ethnic architecture. He defended his proposals in light of
prevailing assimilationist interpretations of integration policies, but they met with intense politi-
cal opposition and bumped into the boundaries of the institutional church-state regime. The legal
order constituted an important obstacle to the implementation of policy plans that came down
to institutionalising unequal treatment of Islam. Still, more indirectly, public policy discussions
on mosque architecture have been giving increasing plausibility to the linking of mosque archi-
tecture to processes of immigrant integration and to the attitudes and ideas within the Muslim
communities. Over the past years, these ideas have been picked up by various institutional ac-
tors, among them municipal aesthetics commissions and representatives of mosque associations.

633 See recently the presentation of a new “polder mosque” in Doetinchem in “Zonder heimwee” in NRC-
Handelsblad August 2 2008. The article was written by the same journalist, Bernard Hulsman, who had sharply
criticised “Disney” mosque architecture in 2003, see above.

9.1. Introduction

There is a continuing debate in the literature on the governance of Muslim presence in Western Europe. An important issue in this debate is whether the overall trend is toward convergence of public policies, or whether country-specific regimes continue to generate divergent paths of integration and accommodation. Because of their citizenship regimes, West European societies are under institutional and normative pressure to respect religious diversity and grant equal rights to Muslim communities, also with regard to the creation of the houses of worship they deem appropriate. However, this general kind of convergence does not signify that French and Dutch governments are adopting similar policy responses. Policies of accommodation continue to be stamped by country-specific regimes of governance and increasingly the relevant question has become, not so much whether governments accommodate Muslim demands for recognition, but which demands are accommodated, in what ways and for what reasons.

Answering these questions requires a type of analysis that focuses upon the substance and underlying motivations of policies, and that is sensitive to changes over time. The taken-for-granted images of French and Dutch public policies with regard to Islam are too much based on extrapolations from events and policy approaches that in actual fact were typical for particular periods. For example, the hostile approach of French governments to the building of mosques in the 1980s and early 1990s does not illustrate that because of the principle of laïcité “France” is unwilling to accommodate Muslim religious practices. Over the past decade French governments have been more forthcoming in making a place for neighbourhood Islam. In order to more accurately analyse what governments actually do this study has mapped out in a historical perspective a wide range of different ways of thinking about, representing, designing, building and accommodating mosques. The empirical trends and patterns of French and Dutch public policies of accommodation of mosques in the 20th and 21st century will be discussed in a comparative perspective in this concluding chapter.

Institutionalised regimes of governance and the dynamics of public policy processes can explain the emergence of distinctive government responses. Institutionalised regimes are internally plural and subject to important transformations over time. The French regime comprises Gallican and Concordatarian traditions and contrasting interpretations of laïcité. Dutch church-state relations have been stamped by the experience of pillarisation but they should not be equated with this particular social configuration that once characterised the way Dutch society was coping with denominational diversity. Dutch church-state traditions are also marked by an ongoing debate between advocates of secular-liberal and pluralist interpretations of religious freedom and separation of church and state.

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Most of the literature on Islam in Europe has almost exclusively sought to explain policy responses in light of institutional repertoires of citizenship and nationhood. However, for most of the 20th century policies of accommodation of Muslim immigrant populations were being shaped by colonial and guest workers regimes. The differences between these regimes of incorporation of immigrant minorities can explain the emergence of very dissimilar approaches and responses to Muslim presence in France and the Netherlands in different periods. Moreover, the historical development of the accommodation of Muslim populations created possibilities for patterns of governance that had emerged to then continue shaping public policies in subsequent periods. However, it has also become clear that French colonial history has mattered far more for post-war policies in France, than Dutch colonial history has done for policy responses in the Netherlands. French colonial policies were extremely well institutionalised, the principle of secularism was consistently sidelined in the governance of Islam and, for historical reasons, there existed powerful mechanism of diffusion that allowed the colonial legacy to continue shaping French public policies in the post-war period.

The crucial connecting point between institutionalised regimes of governance and policy responses are public policy discussions. Institutional repertoires structure policy discourses, but simultaneously institutional arrangements are made to be relevant within these public policy discussions. When building mosques in France was represented as about creating a “French Islam” the principle of laïcité was taken to imply a strict policy of non-financing. When, however, the issue was framed as about creating more equal conditions for “vicinity of Islam” municipal governments became far more forthcoming and other elements of French church-state traditions were pushed to the fore. Other institutional arrangements can also exercise a great influence on the formation of public policy approaches. The ways urban renewal policy discourses began structuring the issue-field of mosque creation in Rotterdam in the late 1980s was exemplary. Policy approaches and their respective images and vocabularies also create their own path dependencies. If a particular framing of mosque creation gains in plausibility and legitimacy it can structure the representations and thus propel policy responses down a particular path.

Institutional theories and discourse-oriented perspectives on the policy process can explain why particular configurations of public policy responses emerged in different periods and in different countries and cities. In this study a heuristic model has been used that distinguished between different levels of structuration of public policies. A first level comprises country-specific regimes of government. A second level was that of governing strategies and policy discourses. At this level particular features of wider institutional arrangements come to be of direct relevance for emerging policy proposals and strategies of accommodation of Islam and mosques. The third level is that of interactions and public policy discussions. Following these levels of structuration I elaborate on the main comparative observations and theoretical conclusions in the remainder of this chapter.
9.2. A comparative perspective on colonial and guest workers regimes in France and the Netherlands: the governance Islam and the accommodation of mosques

9.2.1. Colonialism

It remains risky to in any meaningful way summarize French and Dutch colonial strategies of governance of Islam, given that both countries “ruled millions of people through hundreds of policies in dozens of regions over centuries of history” (Bleich 2005: 173). Broader underlying strategies nevertheless can be identified. The governance of Islam in the French African colonies was organised around normatively meaningful distinctions between different forms of Islam. The French positively evaluated an Islam that was only a religious belief and Muslims that took over Western life styles. By contrast, “bad Islam” was associated with Arab fanaticism and with anti-colonial resistance and was seen as fundamentally in tension with European modernity. One governing strategy consisted of sponsorship of “good Islam”, by co-opting Muslim leaders who were willing to support French rule, sporadically financing some religious institutions (especially in Algeria) and showing respect for ordinary Muslim worship. A second strategy was the shielding of those forms of Islam that were seen as more syncretic and liberal, such as l’islam noir, and favouring those ethnic groups that were seen as only superficially religious, such as the Kabyle. Finally, the French developed comprehensive strategies to survey and control religious orders that might constitute a risk to the colonial status quo. Another crucial characteristic of French colonialism was the formation of elaborate institutional arrangements to accommodate workers and soldiers from the colonies in France. These arrangements for colonial immigrants were erected parallel to the arrangements to accommodate European immigrant workers. However, they functioned in very different ways. North Africans especially were segregated from the French population and from European immigrant communities, they were subject to constant surveillance and taken care of by institutions that were specialised in “native management” (encadrement).

The Dutch often claimed that their colonial governance of a society that was ethnically and religiously as complex as the East Indies was successful because it was based on profound knowledge and discretion. The advisory role of Snouck Hurgronje served to illustrate that public policies with regard to the Muslim population were also grounded in scholarship. Indeed, Snouck Hurgronje’s ideas about the need to be vigilant with regard to “Islam as politics” and simultaneously to respect regular Islamic practice, such as worship, the pilgrimage and Islamic law, became progressively more important for Dutch policies in the wake of the Aceh War and in the early 20th century. The Dutch sought to abstain from becoming involved in the direct regulation of “Islam as worship”. Another governing strategy, that existed in tension with this principle of neutrality, was to favour the hybridised cultural communities and to shield local forms of Islam, for example on Java, from purification under the influence of reformist movements. Interestingly this strategy of shielding a syncretic form of Islam resembled French colonial policy in West Africa.

French institutional church-state relations shaped colonial strategies of government of Islam in Algeria and West Africa, but it was not the tradition of strict secularism that was of crucial importance. Instead, the Gallican and Concordatian traditions of state control over organised
religions (le culte) and support for officially recognised religious institutions were leading. In Algeria an official Islam was created with institutions and religious personnel that were remunerated by that state. Not only were Algerians Muslims excluded from equal citizenship, the principle of laïcité that was constantly celebrated as among the defining characteristics of French modernity, was consistently side-lined when it came to the governance of Islam. Importantly, through the creation of the Paris Mosque in 1926 and the co-optation of Abékader Ben Ghabrit, an important institutional linkage was created between the government of Islam in Algeria and policies of accommodation in France. The significance thereof became clear, for example, when the rector of the Paris Mosque and the French government joined hands and succeeded in frustrating the construction of an “independent mosque” in Marseille in 1937 and 1951.

Because the administration of Islam in the Dutch East Indies was far less institutionalised and developed there were also less attempts to systematically draw upon Dutch church-state traditions for the governance of Islam. The principle of neutrality was laid down in the instructions to the governor general of 1803, but the fact that colonial rulers abstained from all too directly mingling in religious affairs and tried to restrain overzealous missionaries, was not so much grounded in Dutch church-state traditions, but rather a result of strategic considerations and the fear that economic interests might be jeopardized. The principle of government neutrality was also cancelled out by attempts to obstruct the engagement of Islam in the political realm. Foundational ideas of “pillarisation” played only a minor role and superficial resemblances of the “group approach” in Dutch governance of pluralism should not be taken to imply substantial similarities. First of all, there was no genuine form of equal treatment because the entire colonial system was based upon strategies of exploitation and the idea of European cultural superiority. The idea that the populations of the East Indies were in need of Dutch “trusteeship” prevented the model of “association” from converting into a system of government based on more equal respect of indigenous religions and culture. In addition, whereas political representation of the different religious denominations was central to the pillarised model in the Netherlands, it was seen as deeply troublesome in the case of Islam.

9.2.2. Guest workers

There are important structural similarities between French and Dutch arrangements to accommodate guest workers. These institutional arrangements were organised around the impermanent presence of single male men who’s main goal was to collect revenues to bring home. Institutions were developed to “reproduce the immigrant labour force”, by regulating immigration and rotation of foreign workers, and making available food, a bed, medical care and some distraction. However, when attention is paid to the ways arrangements for Muslim guest workers – North and West Africans in France, and Turks and North Africans in the Netherlands – functioned, important differences become visible. In France guest workers from the former African colonies, were handled in a very different way compared to their European counterparts. Institutions such as the newly set up immigration services and the SONACOTRA hostels continued to function in the same way as they had in the colonial regime. The kind of expertise that was vital to “native management” (encadrement) continued to be seen as relevant in dealing with the Muslim guest workers. The people who had this expertise – such as the veterans and administrators who had returned from Algeria – were readily re-employed in institutions set up to accommodate these immigrants. In the Netherlands, by contrast, the creation of institutional arrangements for guest
workers did not draw upon a colonial legacy but was inspired upon the arrangements that were developed in the sector of social work and notably in the governance of “maladjusted families”. These institutional arrangements could become likened by assuming that single male foreign workers risked the same kind of “disorientation” as the clients of social workers. Only “careful guidance” could help prevent the spread of alcoholism, laziness and misbehaviour among immigrants forced to live temporarily in an “unfamiliar environment”. In the Netherlands there was no institutional differentiation between the accommodation of Southern European, and North-African and Turkish guest workers.

Despite these differences French and Dutch policies converged around the idea that it was wise to offer labour immigrants a “cultural environment”. This would smoothen the hardships of the temporary stay in a foreign country and guarantee that immigrant workers would not forget that they were only abroad for the short term. When religious needs and demands appeared these were addressed in a similar improvised manner. At first Catholic masses were organised for Italian and Spanish workers, and later some premises were made available for Muslim prayer. Interestingly, in both countries more elaborate plans were developed to provide for the cultural and religious needs of Muslims when the guest workers regime was on its last legs, namely in the second half of the 1970s. It was at that point that in the Netherlands a national subsidy scheme for the refurbishment of houses of worship for “Mediterranean Muslims” was set up in 1976, and continued until 1983. In France an elaborate policy plan was presented that would provide support for the religious and cultural needs of foreign workers. A few years later all hostels for foreign workers were equipped with a prayer facility.

Particular historical circumstances need to be taken into account to understand why this happened so late. Throughout the 1970s foreign workers had become better organised and were better able to make themselves heard, and among their demands was to have their religious needs provided for. Governments also assumed that by supporting the possibilities of guest workers to retain their cultural and religious practices they could sustain the belief in return. Finally, the closing years of guest workers policies also witnessed the emergence of solidarity movements questioning the exploitation of the “migrating labourers”. In discussions on the creation of cultural and religious institutions in the late 1970s there existed a mixture of ideas about improving the living conditions of temporary guest workers and about setting up permanent institutions to accommodate the new forms of religious and ethnic diversity. Discussions around early mosque building projects in Almelo (1975), Rotterdam (1979), Mantes-la-Jolie (1979) and Marseilles (1982) were illustrative of this mixing of policy frames.

In France and the Netherlands the presence of guest workers and their needs were not primarily framed as related to religion. This approach was also plausible because many single male workers had (initially) put their religion “on hold” during their stay abroad. Religious practices were commonly subsumed under the heading of all kinds of “cultural needs”, which sidelined the idea that church-state relations were crucial for governing practices. More generally, both immigrant workers and the host society perceived cultural needs as secondary to other issues, such as employment, wages, medical care and lodging. Policy responses remained fragmentary. In the Netherlands the Foundations for Foreign Workers were officially not supposed to provide for religious needs, but they often did so nonetheless, usually in an improvised way. The moment (municipal) governments became convinced that labour immigrants were settling permanently, however, they took a more principled stance. Thus the Rotterdam municipality laid down in policy in 1978 that Muslims should understand that in the Netherlands the state carried no responsibility for the financing of religion. In France there were also few incentives to specifically
draw upon colonial religious policies of governance of Islam. Responses were developed on an ad hoc basis. There was also little opportunity for institutional diffusion because the status of the crucial institution bridging the colonial and guest workers regimes in the domain of religion and Islam – the Paris Mosque – was unclear. It was undecided whether its ownership belonged to the Algerian or French government, it catered primarily to harkis living in the Paris region, and in the early 1970s newly emerging organisations of Algerian Muslims openly criticised the rector and even called the institute in Paris “the last bastion of l’Algérie française”.

9.3. Citizenship, public policies and the construction of mosques in France and the Netherlands: patterns and explanations

Since the 1980s strategies of governance of Islam, immigrant integration policies and policy responses to mosque creation in France and the Netherlands were formed dialectically between national and local levels of administration. In France the crucial guiding idea shaping policies of accommodation was the need for an “Islam of France”. In the late 1980s the idea arose that in each major French city a central Grand Mosque could be built. Throughout the 1990s, successive French governments tried, but ultimately failed, to impose the Mosque of Paris as the principal institute for “Islam of France”. Adequate opportunities for Islamic worship continued to be lacking and the development of Islam at a grassroots level was largely disconnected from public policy agendas. The process of Consultation on Islam of France would, however, open a new phase in French accommodation policies. The issue of mosque creation re-appeared prominently on national and municipal policy agendas. The municipality of Marseilles began a series of hearings focussed on creating a central mosque that would be administrated by a council of local Muslim representatives. However, these plans seemed to end in a deadlock in 2004 and the municipality then connected on to an idea that had come up elsewhere, namely to focus upon improving the housing conditions of “vicinity Islam”. In 2006 events took yet another turn when the municipal government opted for a dual strategy of facilitating the building of a large Islamic cultural and religious centre to represent “Islam of France” and simultaneously to create opportunities for the erection and renovation of a number of more adequate “neighbourhood mosques” catering to the needs of Muslims living in the different districts of the city.

In the Netherlands an important issue on the national policy agenda in the 1980s was whether a special regulation would be made to finance the improvement of immigrants’ houses of worship. Intense discussions finally resulted in the political decision to abstain from such a subsidy scheme. The national government since the early 1990s took a “hands-off” approach to the issue, leaving the accommodation of mosques to municipal governments. In Rotterdam early attempts to support and subsidise mosque associations as important immigrant self-help organisations were met with increasing opposition in the second half of the 1980s. Confronted with growing tensions between Dutch residents associations and mosque associations, and with disagreements within the municipal bureaucracy, a window of opportunity presented itself when the idea came up to think about “mosque integration at the neighbourhood level”. A special policy for the housing of mosques was developed between 1988 and 1991 that embedded the issue of mosque creation within urban renewal policies and town planning practices. During the implementation of this policy in the 1990s it sometimes seemed as if the accommodation of Islamic
worship in Rotterdam mainly required coordinated attempts to provide sufficient parking spaces and create understanding for this “relatively new facility”. Another idea, that emerged in the mid 1990s, was to accommodate plans for a number of perceptible mosques as signifiers of the ethnic make-up of the city’s population. In 2002 policy makers celebrated what they believed to be the conclusion of a successful municipal policy of making a place for Islam in Rotterdam. However, political and public debate on immigrant integration and Islam in the Netherlands would quite unexpectedly take a sharp turn. One key focal point for the expression of discomfort about the development of Islam in the Netherlands were the so-called “nostalgia mosques” that were said to be too prominent and illustrative of the failure of immigrant integration.

9.3.1 Comparative observations

Both in France and the Netherlands the housing conditions of the small makeshift mosques came to be defined as “a problem” in the early and mid 1980s. However, public policy responses in Rotterdam and Marseilles rapidly began to diverge. In Rotterdam the municipality accepted the responsibility to help Muslims improve the situation of their houses of worship. In Marseilles, by contrast, the municipality focussed almost exclusively on the possible creation of a Grand Mosque. Only in the second half of the 1990s did some French cities begin to take a similar “pragmatic” approach, seeking to help improve the neighbourhood mosques. Still, this new approach was only adopted by the municipality of Marseilles in 2004.

Another issue on the agenda was whether or not the government should finance the building or refurbishment of mosques. In the Netherlands the national government took a principled decision in the early 1990s that there would be no direct financing of immigrants’ houses of worship. Municipal governments softened this principled stance, which prevented direct financial support for mosques, by being forthcoming in helping mosque associations in finding more adequate locations and premises. In France, the idea of the state directly financing the creation of mosques seemed unimaginable in the 1980s and early 1990s. In addition, many local governments, including the one in Marseilles, took a hostile approach and actively obstructed efforts of Muslims to create more adequate mosques. However, in the second half of the 1990s several cities began developing rather creative interpretations of the law and sometimes ended up financing the building of mosques. The national governments issued special directives in 2000 and 2005 spelling out the actual opportunities for direct and indirect financial support for the building of mosques. In 2006 the Machelon Commission even advocated a revision of the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State to allow for direct subsidies for houses of worship of immigrant minorities. These trends appear counterintuitive, especially in view of the image of the French secular model as preventing the state from financing religion.

If attention is focussed upon the policies of accommodation of the larger mosques there are again remarkable divergences. In France the overall image is now to think that in the future there will be a number of smaller and middle-sized “neighbourhood mosques”. However, the idea is also that there will be some Central Mosques and larger Islamic centres in the major cities that will function as institutional supports and symbols of “Islam of France”. In the Netherlands the predominant idea throughout the 1990s was that a natural process of emancipation would unfold, in which sufficiently numerous Muslim communities would seek to substitute their makeshift accommodation by larger and more perceptible mosques. However, the public perception of these larger mosques has changed quite dramatically. They are now often represented
as institutions that turn their back upon Dutch society. The future image of the incorporation of larger and new mosques in the Netherlands has become destabilised in the last 5 years or so, which has also created new opportunities for other images to emerge. There are now politicians and opinion makers who suggest that the “nostalgia mosques” should make way for mosques that are more “modern” and that look like and function as “polder-mosques”.

Another overall pattern in policies of accommodation of mosques relates to the ways municipal governments regulate the societal functions of mosques and Muslim associations. Again the stereotypical idea that French authorities would take a “hands-off” approach, whereas the Dutch would delegate state prerogatives to religious communities is belied by the actual policy responses (cf. Statham et al. 2005). The municipality of Marseilles has been eager to see an Islamic Cultural Centre emerge and it is willing to make substantial subsidies available for the building and the activities. In Rotterdam the enthusiasm for making mosque associations into players in the field of immigrant integration faded away in the late 1980s. Municipal authorities still tend to take an open stance when it comes to collaboration on a project basis with Muslim associations. However, it has become very clear that there are few opportunities for Dutch authorities to steer the development of Islam, and the Turkish Muslim organisations especially have successfully protected their associational autonomy vis-à-vis Dutch governments.

9.3.2. Level of structuration (1): internally plural, institutional regimes of government and the formation of public policies of accommodation of Islam

Church and state

French and Dutch church-state regimes are historical products, comprising different traditions and various principles that work together to create a distinctive national approach, but that also exist in tension with each other. The French regime combines state regulation of organised religion (le culte), reluctance to recognize communal group-representation in the political realm, with the idea that only a state that is itself strictly non-religious can treat individual citizens equally. Dutch institutional church-state relations are centred around the idea that religious and non-religious “philosophies of life” (levensovertuigingen) should be treated in an even-handed manner, that religious and denominational organisations are constitutive of an autonomous civil society, and that religious freedom means effective opportunity to practice and protection of religious associations from state intervention.

A second dimension of the internal plurality of regimes of government of religion is that they vary between institutional spheres and policy fields. Contrary to the stereotypical image, in France there are actually quite substantial opportunities for financial support for the costs of building and maintenance of houses of worship. In the Netherlands, by contrast, after some legal and political debate, the 1983 constitutional revision has come to be understood as meaning that the separation of church and state implies that there is no room for direct financing of houses of worship. In France ideologically loaded interpretations of laïcité are crucial in shaping policies in institutional domains that are closely associated with the identity of the state, such as public education and the judiciary. In the domain of institutional relations with organised religions, the Gallican tradition of state control over religion is strongly alive. With regard to more practical issues, however, it turns out that French authorities can be quite forthcoming in recognising religiously
motivated demands. This is one aspect of the dialectical relationship between institutions and discourses. Depending on the ways an issue is framed – for example the building of mosques or the practice of wearing a headscarf – different elements of church-state regimes come to the fore. In the Netherlands the principle of proportional representation in the public realm, a legacy of the period of pillarisation, is crucial for public policy in the sphere of education. However, with regard to issues such as Muslim spiritual care and the wearing of headscarves the guiding principle is even-handedness. In the particular case of the financing of houses of worship, the Dutch regimes primarily is assumed to mean “separation of church and state” and “no-financing of religion”.

A third dimension of the internal plurality of regimes of government of religion is related to the particular situation of Islam as compared to that of other religions. This dimension is especially associated with the history of colonialism. The French case is quite exceptional because of the ways distinctive intersections developed between colonial governance of Islam and church-state traditions. The Gallican and Concordatarian traditions remained crucial for the governance of Islam in Algeria and West Africa, while the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and the State was consistently sidelined. Since the colonial period, French Islam policy, especially in those domains where the symbolical, political or financial stakes are high, are made in networks linking the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Office, the National Security Services and governments in befriended Muslim countries. A crucial historical and institutional linkage in this network is the Paris Mosque. The continued “status aparte” attributed to Islam in French religious government is also the result of cultural mechanisms of diffusion. Ideas about the risk of Muslims uniting in opposition to French rule, the view of Islam as a “belligerent religion” and of secularism being a concept alien to Islam are a constant in colonial as well as in post-colonial times. These ideas are in themselves not that different from the guiding notions that informed Dutch colonial government of Islam. However, colonial legacies did not diffuse into the church-state traditions. The Dutch did not draw upon their colonial policies for the governance of Islam in Europe, neither in the colonial nor in the post-colonial period. In recent years, and especially since 9/11, there are indeed political voices in the Netherlands suggesting a distinctive status to Islam, setting it apart from other religions, but these are not a direct legacy of Dutch colonialism but have developed in relation to ongoing debates in Europe and the rest of the world.

This more complex and layered conceptualisation of church-state regimes allows for an explanation of some of the distinctive patterns of strategies of government of Islam and policy responses to mosque creation in France and the Netherlands. The idea of creating an “Islam of France” crucially informed French public policies of accommodation since the late 1980s. It coupled the re-invented Republican tradition together with laïcité. Islam was to be “domesticated” (Bowen 2004a) and to organise in a way that was post-ethnic, liberal and modelled by French traditions of administration of “le culte”. Distinct traditions shaped responses in different domains: in education upholding secularism became the key objective, but in organising the forming of Islamic representative bodies Gallican and colonial strategies were continued throughout the 1990s. The Paris Mosque was the only viable partner for “Islam of France”.

The effects of these strategies were different, but equally discouraging. In the domain of education, for example, a series of confrontations about the headscarf continued throughout the 1990s until the 2004 law, and arguably beyond. The idea of building “Cathedral Mosques” reproduced the Gallican tradition of organising religion in a top-down manner, but it also reproduced the colonial tradition of co-opting the “good Muslims” and using a beautiful mosque building as a “reward”. By linking the building of mosques to these issues of organising Islam of France it became not only a highly complex and sensitive policy issue, but the focus was also
steered away from the more practical concerns about the lack of adequate prayer space. In addition, and this was crucial, the more the issue became of symbolical importance the more the principle of laïcité and the fact that in France “the state does not finance religion” came to be of importance. Whereas in the colonial context, financial support had been the correlate of state influence and co-optation, the emphasis that was now put on laïcité prevented direct financing. This was an important factor that prevented this approach from producing much results.

The Consultation on Islam in France (1999-2003) quite fundamentally changed the overall strategies of governance of Islam. A number of practical concerns that mattered to Muslims were now being addressed. It was crucial that the experiences of French cities that had been able to help improve the housing conditions of “neighbourhood mosques” came to be picked up on the national policy agenda. Advocates of moderate secularism (laïcité modéré) emphasised that French authorities could be more forthcoming in helping Muslims provide for their needs, and they could underline that article 1 of the 1905 law stipulates that the French state “guarantees freedom of religion”.

Dutch church-state traditions have been transforming more fundamentally over the past decades, which is also demonstrated by the revision of the constitution in 1983. In some domains principles of proportionality and even-handedness continue to inform policy responses with regard to Islamic presence. This was the case with regard to equal rights for Islam in spheres such as education, spiritual care and religious practices such as ritual slaughtering. The relatively rapid regulation of these issues in the 1980s has probably earned the Dutch the reputation for being forthcoming in the accommodation of Muslim demands for recognition. However, there was never any strategy of stimulating the forming of an Islamic pillar. With regard to the creation of houses of worship the regime-shift marked by the constitutional revision of 1983 had profound consequences. In the 1980s there were good grounds to argue that in light of Dutch church-state traditions immigrant minorities needed to be compensated for “historical inequalities” and that a subsidy scheme was fair. The fact that this did not happen was not a direct result of the text of the new constitution. As the Hirsch-Ballin State Committee argued, there was no principled constitutional obstacle preventing subsidies allowing immigrant minorities to catch up. However, a more sharp polarisation between Christian-Democrats and liberal-secular political parties resulted in a more principled political stance of the latter that suggested that equal treatment and the separation of church and state meant that there could be “no financing of religion”. When it came to the building of mosques the Dutch church-state regime was focused in the early 1990s around the principle of “separation” and “no-financing”. However, the fact that national and municipal governments constantly recited this principle did not mean they would therefore take a strictly “hands-off” or even a hostile approach to the issue of mosque creation. Quite the contrary. Municipalities, including but not only, Rotterdam, actually were encouraged to develop other approaches to address the unacceptable situation of housing of Islamic worship.

The lack of direct financial support was thus softened, if not compensated, by more forthcoming municipal approach and by using indirect ways of financial support, notably via urban renewal funds and subsidies for socio-cultural activities.

**Citizenship regimes and integration policies**

Citizenship regimes are organised around democratic principles such as equality and freedom, which means that the forms of exclusion and hierarchy that characterised the incorporation of Muslim population in colonial and guest workers regimes could not be continued. Since the
early 1980s, French and Dutch strategies of accommodation policies, at least to some extent, were guided by democratic principles. I focus on the ways national and local integration policies have shaped strategies of governance of Islam and of the incorporation of mosques.

In the mid 1980s an extremely powerful discourse about the French model of intégration was re-invented. It was organised around the notion of Republican citizenship, discursively opposed to “Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism” and represented as a direct continuation of the political model invented with the French Revolution. The discursive strength of this framing remains remarkable. It has guided not only the policy process but the entire understanding of immigrant integration issues in French public debate. The only way for “ethnic elites” – the term in itself obviously exists in tension with this discourse – to speak with influence in France is by phrasing their demands in the terms of Republican discourse. It has informed strategies to make Islamic institutions and Muslim religious beliefs more “French”. This refers not only to the earlier-discussed modelling of Islam by French church-state traditions, but also to the need for Islam to be shaped by French language, French architecture and “French values” such as “un esprit critique”, scholarship, modernity and gender equality. It this sense the colonial idea of creating an “Islam fabriqué par nous” is not that far away.

The re-invention of the Republican tradition in the late 1980s also directed attention away from other aspects of French history. It happened to be, however, that these other aspects – such as colonialism and racism – had been crucial in shaping the actual social situation of the Muslim population that was living in France. Their social exclusion and continued discrimination obviously existed in tension with the political ideals underlying the discourses of intégration. In addition, the relatively abstract discourses on integration gave little guidance to actors trying to address societal problems on the ground. The intense struggles that opposed the extreme right Front National and the anti-racist movements since the late 1980s contributed their share in letting “la lutte des symboles” take priority over practical approaches of addressing social problems related to immigration. Partly as a result, the actual process of formation of Islamic institutions and the emancipation of immigrant newcomers developed relatively autonomously from (national) policy practice.

The particular history and context of Marseilles has also left a strong imprint on understandings and policy responses to the incorporation of Islam in the city. The so-called “Marseilles model” served as a reference point with regard to a local tradition of religious pluralism and to the idea that traditionally immigrant communities had been able to integrate into local society on the basis of their religious institutions. On the other hand, there was also the image of the Mediterranean city, characterised by a hybrid culture, a tradition of local autonomy and an atmosphere of open-mindedness and typical Mediterranean disorderliness. Bringing in the Mediterranean identity when discussing the incorporation of Islam served at various moments to bridge the colonial past and the immigration present. Marseilles could be situated in a transnational and regional perspective that linked it to North Africa and in that perspective Islam was no longer a “foreign threat”. This image of Marseilles has grown in prominence since the second half of the 1990s. It was linked to the idea of Marseilles being a positive exception in France, better able to integrate immigrants and thereby avoiding the violent clashes that were witnessed in other French cities. However, also with regard to these local narratives it should be kept in mind that they tend to hide as much as they supposedly reveal about the history of the city. When the Muslim community was called upon to “invent itself” in the late 1980s and when the Director of the Mayor’s Cabinet in 2002 raised the question whether the “Muslims were sufficiently mature to know what they wanted”, the actual history of exclusion of the North
African immigrants was obscured. Indeed the patterns of integration of the Muslim population diverted in significant ways from those of other immigrant communities, but far from being a result of the inability of Muslims to constitute themselves as “a community” this was due to a long history of “native management” and enforced segregation that had been crucial for French governance in colonial and guest workers regimes.

Whereas French immigrant integration discourse is characterised by a rhetorical consist-

ency, the Dutch integration debate has been marked by a number of crucial shifts and changes of policy paradigms. Three major phases in integration discourse and the development of policy paradigms can be distinguished that each structured particular policies of accommodation of Islam. A policy paradigm centred around Ethnic Minorities Policies was set up in the early 1980s. Even though it was primarily guided by the idea of combating disadvantages and preventing the formation of socially-excluded minority groups, it also comprised a kind of multiculturalism. The idea was that immigrant communities should have equal rights and opportunities in the spheres of religion and culture, and that ethnic self-help organisations could fulfil both a cushioning and an emancipating function in the integration process. The way this view was summarised as about “integration with retention of identity” would have profound effects. This slogan had previously figured within the guest workers regime, and it had guided policy efforts to accommodate (impermanent) Moluccan immigrants by guaranteeing community cohesion. It was now being diffused into immigrant integration policy discourses. Importantly, emerging ethnic elites, and most of all the Turkish Muslims, wholeheartedly embrace the idea of integrating while retaining their ethnic and religious identity. They would use it as a major device to justify the strategy of ethnic community building they pursued throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

There was a discursive affinity between the legal and cultural legacies of pillarisation and Ethnic Minorities Policy. They converged around the idea that sometimes a phase of in-group bonding and collective emancipation preceded individuals integrating into the wider institutions of society. There was never any kind of policy to stimulate the development of an “Islamic pillar”. Nevertheless, the combination of, on the one hand, support and subsidies for ethnic self-help organisations, the critique of the concept of assimilation and the constant underlining of the right to “retention of identity”, and, on the other hand, attempts to grant Muslims equal rights and incorporate Islam into Dutch church-state traditions, ended up facilitating if not stimulating a process of ethnic institutionalisation of Islam. This process has in retrospect been criticised as allowing for the formation of Islamic institutions that are insufficiently adapted to the Dutch context and that too much turned inwards. Policy makers in Rotterdam had already lost their enthusiasm about integration with retention of identity in the late 1980s, but their feeble efforts to oblige Muslim associations to organise their educational and social activities in municipal community centres because this was better for “integration”, failed repeatedly. It showed that the combination of discursive and institutional opportunities had set off a process of emancipation of Islam that now followed largely its own trajectory. Instead of seeing here a deliberate policy strategy of group-based integration, it is better to understand the outcomes as a result of agency of ethnic elites, unintended consequences and a lack of political will and institutional means in the 1980s and 1990s to effectively steer the process in another direction.

A second phase in Dutch strategies of governance of immigrant integration developed in the 1990s. At the national level the overall emphasis was on further combating socio-cultural and economic disadvantages, focusing on individual emancipation and enforcing “civic integration” (inburgering). Studies that focus on these trends in national integration policy discourses have overlooked another shift in integration policies in the 1990s, which was the turn
towards “diversity policies”. In domains of culture and identity this policy paradigm focused on the more folkloric aspects of ethnicity and represented cultural diversity as a matter of different life-styles. These ideas were rather vague and elitist, but they translated into a strong moral call upon Dutch residents not to be racist and “embrace differences”. It did not directly shape many policies of accommodation of Islam, but it helped sustain the optimism about the integration of second generation immigrants in the Netherlands. Researchers and policy makers in the mid 1990s constantly celebrated the “Islam of the young” and they converged in believing that the strategies of self-segregation that were pursued by first generation ethnic elites (“the fathers”) were already being undermined from within because of the influence of younger generations within Muslim organisations. On the other hand, the emphasis that successful integration required open-mindedness of the Dutch smothered the expression of many forms of discomfort and anxiety in the centres the policy process. This would pave the way for the drastic turn in immigrant integration discussions in the early 21st century.

A third phase in the articulation of ideas about national identity and immigrant integration was set off by an essay that helped to give a name to all kinds of worries and discomforts. Scheffer’s article on the “multicultural tragedy” was followed by years of public and political debate on the failure of Dutch approaches to immigrant integration. The new turn in discussions put Islam and the problematic integration of Muslims at the heart of policy discussions. Because Rotterdam became the home-base of the Fortuyn revolt and because the populist party Liveable Rotterdam participated in a coalition government between 2002 and 2006, the new belief in assimilationist had important repercussion municipal policy discourses with regard to Islam and the building of mosques. However, the actual impact of these shifts in discourse upon concrete policy measures that were being executed remains difficult to establish. The plans to halt the building of new mosques in a “deviating style”, for example, were never executed.

9.3.3. Level of structuration (2): strategies of governance and policy frames

A second level of structuration of public policy responses is that of strategies of governance and policy discourses. Configurations of strategies of accommodation of mosques can help to distinguish between periods. In Marseilles four main strategies of governance of Islam and mosque creation can be distinguished. In the late 1980s the wider idea of creating an “Islam of France” was linked to the idea of incorporating the Muslim community into the local tradition of religious and community based pluralism. The building of a central, Cathedral mosque was seen as a way of addressing the problematic housing situation of Islam, but also as a way of constituting a genuine Muslim community with appropriate institutions. The particular understanding of mosque creation emphasised institutional and symbolic issues more than practical ones, and importantly it resulted in the mobilisation of institutional repertoires indebted to, on the one hand, the colonial and Gallican traditions of governance of Islam and, on the other, the strict interpretations of Republicanism and laïcité. A second strategy of governance was introduced by the conservative municipal government led by Jean-Claude Gaudin that came to power in 1995. It combined a superficial recognition of privileged Muslim interlocutors with an attitude of outspoken hostility to further recognition of Muslim demands and opposition to the building of symbols of Islamic presence. This was basically a strategy of marginalizing of the Muslim population, set in the context of other attempts to transform Marseilles into a middle-class city and being tough on the immigrant population. In the early 21st century, a new reorientation
of strategies occurred in the context of growing political power of immigrant elites and the Consultation of Islam of France. Renewed attempts to actually create an “Islam of France” were now linked to the idea of distinctively local traditions of managing cultural diversity. A new perspective was created around the building of a large Islamic centre that would be sponsored in part by the municipality and that would stand as a symbol of recognition. Underneath the surface, however, ongoing differences about the development of this Islam of France continued. The introduction of the new strategy of governance in other French cities to improve the housing conditions of “neighbourhood mosques” and its corresponding framing of the need to accommodate a regular and serene form of “vicinity Islam” came as a *deus ex machina*. It opened up possibilities for a more pragmatic take on the matter and justified a more forthcoming approach of the municipal authorities. Even though it seemed that the focus on “neighbourhood Islam” would come at the costs of the more ambitious plans for a central institute of “French Islam”, in the end a window of opportunity presented itself after the elections of the Regional Muslim Council when the power balance in this council shifted towards the more “liberal” factions associated with the Paris Mosque. The governance of Islam and mosques in Marseilles then seemed to enter into a period of problem closure with simultaneous attempts to improve the conditions for the various ethnic and denominational Muslim communities in the city district and ambitious plans for a major Islamic centre to stand for “Islam of France”.

In Rotterdam, initially municipal officials set out to accommodate Muslim associations and mosques within the field of Ethnic Minorities Policies. Discussions on the role that mosque associations fulfilled brought to light political tensions and normative disagreements that were concealed by everyone reciting that there was a need for “integration with retention of identity”. However, parallel to this approach another policy framing was being developed that avoided church-state traditions and immigrant integration policies, and instead approached the issue of mosque creation as about urban and social renewal and town planning. An underlying promise was that better spatial accommodation would smoothen the process of further integration of immigrant communities in the neighbourhood. A coherent and comprehensive strategy of governance was developed and implemented that concentrated on the incorporation of mosques as regular “neighbourhood facilities”. This approach sidelined many of the more contentious issues and seemingly allowed for a progressive normalisation of discussions and approaches. It was institutionalised and implemented throughout the 1990s. In the mid 1990s, almost without being noticed, another strategy was being introduced in view of the legitimising the building of larger purpose-built mosques. This strategy mobilised the fashionable “diversity talk” and suggested understanding mosque building as about embracing diversity. In 2002 policy makers announced they had succeeded in bringing the regulation of mosques to an end. Ironically a new and extremely contentious discussion would almost immediately start, in which immigrant integration was again the major motive to think critically about the building of mosques in the city. However, subsequent attempts by Liveable Rotterdam to translate a political strategy that was aimed at restricting the prominence of Islam in Rotterdam into policy met with political protest. A policy that singled out Muslims and restricted the opportunities for the building of mosques also existed in tension with the Dutch legal framework. This showed that overzealous populist politicians who had argued that “legal reality” was less important than “social reality” had failed to capture the significance of the institutional constraints within which they had to operate.
9.3.4. Level of structuration (3): interactions and public policy discussions

Public policy responses to mosque creation are shaped by institutionalised regimes and strategies of governance, but structuration does not mean that institutional arrangements “determine” outcomes. The policy process is also directed by the dynamics of political contestation and by more idiosyncratic and circumstantial factors. Some factors or “events” are truly circumstantial, meaning that it is easily imaginable that policy outcomes would have been different if they had not “occurred”. Often times, however, what appear to be circumstantial factors are actually only of consequence because of various forms of human action. Crucial events only become “crucial” by being represented and framed as crucial, and consequently they can become experienced as such. The headscarf affair of 1989 had considerable impact on public policy discourses on Islam in France, but this was not because two girls decided one day to show up at school wearing a headscarf, but precisely because it became an “affair” seen as emblematic of the confrontation between “Islam” and “French values”. Similarly, it would be hard to overestimate the effects of 9/11 for discussions on Islam in Europe. Politicians at first desperately tried to argue that the terrorist attacks in the United States were “completely unrelated” to the development of Islam in France and the Netherlands, but they obviously failed. In the Netherlands the broader trend of public opinion becoming more and more dissatisfied with integration policies, could be associated with wider developments of Islam in Europe and beyond. The brutal assassination of Theo van Gogh and the death threats against Ayaan Hirsi Ali were dramatic events in themselves, but the great impact they had on Dutch discussion on Islam was also due to the fact that they could be linked easily to ongoing debates about failed integration, political naivety, Islamic radicalism and international terrorism.

A second factor that can explain why institutional frameworks do not in a clean or straightforward way determine policy outcomes is related to the importance of practices of interpretation, representation and argumentation at various stages of the policy process. This study has shown how far institutions and legal and constitutional frameworks can bend under the weight of interpretation. The diverging paths that interpretations and discussions take can sometimes explain the simultaneous formation of different outcomes within a similar institutional setting, leading to different accommodation policies in different municipalities for example. Sometimes these struggles about meaning concern crucial aspects of institutional frameworks and are played out on the centre stages of political debate. The storm of protest following the presentation of the Machelon report in 2006 was an illustration thereof. Ongoing deliberations on the significance of principles that are seen as foundational, such as the separation of church and state, the principle of equal treatment and religious freedom, have over the past years gained in importance in public policy discussions on the accommodation of Islam. This study may help in shedding some light on the ways these discussions unfold and to what consequences, and contribute to the capability of policy makers to reflect upon the cultural and institutional frameworks in which their actions are embedded and help them proceed in making balanced and contextual judgements (cf. Maussen 2006: 3ff.).

A third aspect of the ways interactions and discussions shape policy outcomes is the formation of discourse coalitions. These coalitions around metaphoric understandings sometimes enabled actors to pursue common courses of actions and to agree on problem definitions, even if they continued to have diverging normative orientations, conflicting interests and incongruent empirical understandings. Discourse coalitions at times introduced novel understandings and stimulated the forming of unexpected alliances in situations that were characterised by misunderstanding or
antagonism. Whether or not this kinds of coalitions in discourse helped solving public problems and gave a positive turn to the policy process depended on various factors. For example, Dutch policy makers and emerging ethnic elites formed a discourse coalition in the late 1980s by constantly stating that it was important that there would be “integration with retention of identity”. However, this appearance of agreement prevented many underlying divergences between normative models of immigrant integration to be more openly discussed. Similarly, the ways a broad coalition of meaning emerged around the idea that “there should be a mosque in Marseilles” helped re-introducing the issue of recognition of Islam onto the municipal agenda in the early 21st century, but translating this general ambition into a concrete policy response proved to be rather difficult. The suggestion of agreement obscured rather than solved underlying disagreements about the organisation and development of Islam in France. At other times, by contrast, the forming of discourse coalitions has been a crucial moment in the formation of public policy responses. This was the case notably when municipal officials, Dutch residents associations and representatives of mosque associations in Rotterdam developed a common perspective and could agree that what mattered was the creation of adequate “facilities” providing for the needs of the immigrant population in the city districts. They could share the hope that the spatial integration of mosques could pave the way for the more general integration of the Muslim population in the city. A similar understanding developed in France in the second half of the 1990s. Quite suddenly the idea of creating a place for “Islam de proximité” seemed a way of addressing a wide variety of different concerns felt by politicians, representatives of Muslim associations and non-Muslim French residents. The erection of houses of worship that were “tailor made” (sur mesure), the idea of mosque associations functioning as autonomous “parishes” and acting as ordinary “neighbourhood associations” now carried the promise with it that in the foreseeable future there would be a progressive normalisation of inter-community relations.

A final dynamic at the level of interactions and policy discussions is related to the ways policy approaches tend to generate path-dependencies. Policy frames that have great discursive strength are able to steer the attention of policy makers and the wider public. Sometimes stakeholders see a problem in a way that seems unintelligible to outside observers. For a long time it was very plausible for local actors in Marseilles to argue that a “Cathedral Mosque” should be built because it was unacceptable that “Muslims had to worship on the street”, even though it would only take a few seconds to understand that such a central new building would not solve the problem of a lack of space. When policy frames can hook into the vocabulary and practices of established institutions they gain in plausibility and obtain a taken-for-granted status. This was extremely well illustrated by the ways urban planning discourses produced their own set of meanings in Rotterdam. Municipal officials in Rotterdam had no problem talking at length about “parking tables”, “assigned dog-walking spots” and the “maintenance of fountains in the city district” while simultaneously underscoring that they were in the process of accompanying the building of something that looked like “the Tash Mahal”. Sometimes the discussion settings themselves structured what were experienced as meaningful ways of talking about mosque creations. The town planning practices in Rotterdam focussed debates onto down to earth issues and practical concerns. The discursive format of the municipal hearings held in Marseilles stimulated more abstract reflections on the future of Islam and the nature of French secularism. Interestingly, despite these differences both settings allowed those who were participating in these discussions to draw upon discursive and institutional repertoires enabling them to articulate their views on the kind of public policy responses they deemed appropriate. This study has focussed on the ways institutional environments entail opportunities and constraints to make mosque building
meaningful. They are important moments in which French and Dutch societies seek to represent and accommodate the presence of Islam while drawing on routines and institutionally grounded repertoires. The analysis of the ways these repertoires are simultaneously being destabilised, re-invented, changed and reproduced gives insight in the ways these European societies are being changed in the process of accommodation of Muslim populations and Islam.

9.4. Suggestions for further research

Studies on the accommodation of Islam in Europe need to move from the more general overviews of national approaches to more empirically grounded case studies that focus on the governance of aspects of Muslim presence and religious practices and needs. Institutional repertoires of governance of religion vary across institutional spheres. Therefore, case-studies are needed to explore in what ways country-specific institutional regimes shape strategies of accommodation in domains such as education, health-care and prisons. Comparative case-studies, such as this study on mosque creation or the study by Beckford et al. (2005) on Muslim spiritual care in prisons, can contribute to the further refining of our understanding of the ways institutional arrangements shape strategies of accommodation of religious minorities.

A second line of enquiry could be to further develop the perspective of governance to analyse the ways opportunities and constraints for religion are being developed. This study has corroborated the claim that governments do not only regulate (immigrant) religions via their religious and immigrant integration policies, but that opportunities and constraints are also shaped by rules and regulations emanating from domains as different as food safety, town planning or educational standards (cf. Bader 2003). Another reason to further develop the governance perspective is because it allows for a linkage between the literature on Islam in Western Europe and studies on forms of regulation and authority in environments that are politically, socially and culturally transnational. Citizens and non-nationals in Western European societies live in increasingly transnational religious and ethnic contexts, which in various ways presents a challenge for governments that attempt to regulate social processes and sustain cohesive and democratic societies. The fact that municipal governments in France and the Netherlands have converged around policy approaches that seek to accommodate “neighbourhood mosques” and “vicinity Islam” can be seen as a pragmatic way of handling the need for adequate prayer facilities. But it is also an attempt to invent ways to re-embed immigrant communities that live part of their religious life in a transnational context into the local sphere of reference and into the social life of the neighbourhood.

A third line of inquiry would simultaneously draw on historical analysis and the study of actual public policy practices to study institutionalised regimes of government. National models are “historical products” and their history cannot be accurately described by exclusively looking at formal and legal regulations. In addition, national models are also “models for”, to use John Bowen’s phrase, which are used by actors in various settings, for specific purposes and with particular consequences (cf. Bowen 2007). A focus on the practices of application in which institutional arrangements are made relevant by various actors is thereby a way of resisting the temptation to reify country-specific regimes into stereotypical models that hinder empirical observation and obstruct policy learning across national boundaries.


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<th>Publisher/Year</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACLIF</td>
<td>Association Culturelle Lyonnaise Islamo Française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADRI</td>
<td>Agence pour le Développement des Relations Interculturelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOF</td>
<td>Afrique Occidentale Française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Anti-Revolutionaire Partij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAE</td>
<td>Amicale des Algériens en Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTAM</td>
<td>Association pour l’Accueil et la Formation des Travailleurs Migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOLIM</td>
<td>Bureau de la Ligue Islamique Mondiale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORIF</td>
<td>Conseil de Réflexion sur l’Islam en France</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIQ</td>
<td>Comité d’intérêt de quartier</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIM</td>
<td>Conseil des Imams de Marseille et des Environs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAI</td>
<td>Comité des Affaires Islamique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMUM</td>
<td>Coordination du Musulmans de Marseille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMM</td>
<td>Collectif des Associations Musulmans de Marseille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFCM</td>
<td>Conseil Français du Culte Musulman</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRCM</td>
<td>Conseil Régional Culte Musulman</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIAM</td>
<td>Commission Interministérielle des Affaires Musulmans</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAZ</td>
<td>Commissariaat van Ambonezenzorg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Christen Democratisch Appèl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEMM</td>
<td>Centre d’Information et d’Études sur les Migrations Méditerranéennes</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Sociaal Werk</td>
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<tr>
<td>CGT</td>
<td>Confédération Générale de Travail</td>
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<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Démocratie Libérale</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENA</td>
<td>Étoile Nord Africaine</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELCO</td>
<td>Enseignement de Langues et Cultures d’Origine</td>
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<tr>
<td>FNMF</td>
<td>Fédération des Musulmans de France</td>
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<td>FRMSF</td>
<td>Fédération des Musulmans du Sud de la France</td>
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<td>FIS</td>
<td>Front Islamique de Salut</td>
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<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de Libération Nationale</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAS</td>
<td>Fonds d’Action Sociale pour les travailleurs migrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIA</td>
<td>Groupe Islamique Armée</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Gemeente Rotterdam</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPV</td>
<td>Gereformeerde Politiek Verbond</td>
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<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>Partij van de Arbeid</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>Haute Conseil à l’Intégration</td>
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<td>HLM</td>
<td>Habitation à Loyer Modéré</td>
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<td>HMMIC</td>
<td>Official Hearings of the Municipality of Marseille on the Project for an Islamic Centre</td>
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<td>KNIL</td>
<td>Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger</td>
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<td>KITLV</td>
<td>Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNR</td>
<td>Mouvement National Républicain</td>
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<td>MPF</td>
<td>Mouvement pour la France</td>
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ORIV Observatoire Régional de l’Intégration et de la Ville
ONI Office National d’Immigration
PACA Région Provence-Alpes-Côtes-d’Azur
PCF Parti Communiste Français
RPR Rassemblement Pour la République
RG Renseignement Généraux
RMS Republik Maluku Selatan
SCICM Centre d’Etudes sur les Civilisations Islamique à Marseille
SOTC Service de l’Organisation des Travailleurs Coloniaux
SAINA Service de Surveillance, Protection et Assistance des Indigènes Nord-africains
SPIOR Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond
SONACOTRA(L) Société Nationale de Construction de logements pour les travailleurs (Algériens)
UOIF Union des Organisations Islamiques en France
UJM Union des Jeunes Musulmans
UDF Union pour la Démocratie Française
UMP Union pour un Mouvement Populaire
VOC Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie
VVD Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
WVC Ministerie van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur
## Overview of interviews

### Interviews held in Marseilles

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<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Function/Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interviewer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Ainouche</td>
<td>Membre du CIME</td>
<td>04-03-2002</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Alili</td>
<td>Président de l’Association Er Rhamaniya, Mosquée Rue Bon Pasteur</td>
<td>22-03-2002</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bencheikh</td>
<td>«Mufti » de Marseille</td>
<td>16-03-2002</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bertrand</td>
<td>Directeur du cabinet du Maire Marseille</td>
<td>17-04-2002</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Cordier</td>
<td>Présidente des CIQ du 13ème arrondissement et membre de la confédération des CIQ de Marseille</td>
<td>29-03-2002</td>
<td>Johanna Lees, Elsa Zotian</td>
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<td>Mr. Dahmani</td>
<td>Président de l’association de La Caplette, membre de Marseille Espérance et président de la Fédération des Musulmans du Sud de la France</td>
<td>19-03-2002</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<td>Mr. Gorce</td>
<td>Président de la fédération des CIQ du 13ième arrondissement</td>
<td>28-02-2002</td>
<td>Johanna Lees, Elsa Zotian and Marcel Maussen</td>
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<td>Mr. Laqhila</td>
<td>Représentant des Verts et porte parole du CORAI</td>
<td>21-11-2001</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Rodriguez et Mr. Colo</td>
<td>Présidents de la Fédération des CIQ du 15ème et du CIQ Boulevard ODDO.</td>
<td>22-01-2002</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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### Interviews held in Rotterdam

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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bruchez</td>
<td>Resident of De Laantjes</td>
<td>22-03-2003</td>
<td>Herman van de Kaa and Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Boutaher</td>
<td>Chairman Essalam Mosque</td>
<td>24-07-2001</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<td>Ms. Groen</td>
<td>Project leader mosque policy</td>
<td>23-07-2001</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Hartogh</td>
<td>Former director of SPIOR</td>
<td>22-06-2001</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Van Schaijk</td>
<td>Official working at the district office Feijenoord</td>
<td>20-08-2001</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Spalburg</td>
<td>Director of SPIOR</td>
<td>21-07-2001</td>
<td>Marcel Maussen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Van Winden</td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>22-03-2003</td>
<td>Herman van de Kaa</td>
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Overview of Official Hearings of the Municipality of Marseilles on the Project for an Islamic Centre (HMMIC) [Comptes-Rendus de la Réunion sur le Centre Culturel et Cultuel Musulman] that have been cited in this study:

**July 5 2001**
Audition de madame Annick Boët du Groupe Communiste du Conseil Municipal de la Ville de Marseille
Audition de monsieur Patrick Mennucci Président du Groupe Socialiste du Conseil Municipal de la Ville de Marseille

**July 12 2001**
Audition de la Fédération des Musulmans du Sud Est
Audition du Conseil des Imams de Marseille et ses Environs (CIME)
Audition du Comité Régional des Affaires Islamique (CORAI)

**July 26 2001**
Audition du docteur Adamo Doumbia, Association des Familles Africaines
Audition de monsieur Alili, Association Er Rhamania, Mosquée Camille Pelletan
Audition de Monsieur Mahamoud, Fédération des Association Comoriennes
Audition de monsieur l’imam Doudi
Audition de Messieurs les aumôniers de la Timone

September 19 2001
Audition de la Fédération de Musulmans du sud est
Audition de l’Association Averroès
Audition des Chefs d’Entreprises
Audition de Monsieur Bouod, Chef d’Entreprise
Audition de Messieurs Fahli et Azzoug, Chef d’Entreprise

September 20 2001
Audition de la Communauté Africaine
Audition des sociologues spécialisé de l’Islam du CNRS

**October 25 2001**
Audition de la Confédération Générale des Comités d’Intérêt de Quartier (Confédération CIQ)
**November 21 2001**

Audition Monsieur Nordine Atia, Président de la FACEM, monsieur Touffi Zerbick, FACEM, monsieur Aïssa Aggoun, MCRS, madame Zoubida Meguenni Tani, FACEM, madame Evelyne Fontaine, AJEU/FACEM, monsieur Malek Ben Lhassania, Association ARENA

Audition de monsieur Ahmed, Président de Radio Gazelle, madame Malika Yebdri, avocat

Audition de Monsieur Madani, Président de Radio Soleil

**December 13 2001**

Audition de Confédération des Comités d’Intérêt de Quartier

Audition de Jean Dufour, Député des Bouches-du-Rhône, Conseiller Municipal de Marseille, Conseiller Communautaire
This thesis is about the governance of Islam and Muslim immigrant minorities in France and the Netherlands. Its focus is on public policy making processes with regard to the creation of mosques, with particular emphasis on developments in Marseilles and Rotterdam.

Most existing studies have analysed the forming of Islamic institutions in Western Europe as an aspect of a wider process of the formation of ethnic institutions since the early 1980s. This study, by contrast, looks at the ways French and Dutch societies and governments were involved in the governance of Islam since the mid 19th century until the early years of the 21st century. The study explores in what ways ideas and representations of mosques are dialectically related to distinctive governing strategies. Ideas and images inform public policies, but they also emanate from already existing policy paradigms and institutional repertoires. Of particular relevance are church-state regimes and different regimes of incorporation of ethnic immigrant minorities. I distinguish between three regimes of incorporation: a colonial regime, a guest workers regime and a citizenship regime. Public policy making with regard to mosque creation is thereby understood as a complex social and political process that unfolds over time, and in which institutional repertoires and policy discourses get produced, reproduced and contested.

In chapter 2, I introduce French and Dutch national regimes for the governance of religion. These regimes are an institutional legacy that has grown out of a history of relations between church and state. I more elaborately discuss the institutional framework for the financing of houses of worship.

In chapter 3 and 4, I discuss strategies of governance of Islam in the context of French and Dutch colonial rule. I specifically focus upon public policies with regard to the construction, maintenance and functioning of mosques in the colonies and Europe. At the colonial exhibitions in Europe, the French erected traditionally styled imitation mosques to demonstrate how the French respected Islamic culture in their overseas colonies. At the same time, Muslim workers and soldiers were performing their prayers in make-shift accommodations in cities such as Paris and Marseilles. The creation of a prestigious Muslim institute and a traditionally styled mosque in the centre of Paris in the 1920s served to show that France was a Great Muslim Power and that it honoured its Muslim soldiers who had died during the First World War. In Marseilles there were also plans to create a central mosque, in the interwar period and shortly after World War Two.

The Dutch sought to abstain from becoming involved directly in the regulation of “Islam as worship” in the East Indies. There was also a strategy of shielding and protecting indigenous cultures and adat communities from outside influences and reformist movements in Islam. The need to accommodate Muslim populations and Islamic practice did not present itself in the Netherlands in the colonial era. The fact that, paradoxically, the Dutch state became involved in the creation of mosques for post-colonial Muslim immigrants from the Moluccas was in large part due to the particular history of this group.

Chapter 5 and 6 deal with the accommodation of Muslim religious needs in the context of guest workers policies. In France, North and West African immigrant workers experienced their treatment as a continuation of a defunct colonial status. Compared to their European counterparts, Muslim guest workers were in a more disadvantaged position to perform their religious rituals and cultural practices. Prayer rooms in the foyers, in barracks camps and factories were
often experienced as safe havens in an otherwise inhospitable social and physical environment. I explain for what reasons policy efforts to improve the conditions for Islamic worship were developed in France in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In the Netherlands institutional arrangements for guest workers were developed in close relation with social work. There was hardly any diffusion of colonial repertoires into guest workers policies, in contrast to what happened in France. The religious needs of Muslim guest workers became an issue on the national policy agenda in the mid 1970s when the government decided in favour of a subsidy scheme for prayer houses. I discuss the shifts in perceptions of Islamic presence that occurred in Dutch cities in the closing years of guest workers policy.

In chapter 7 and 8 I more elaborately reconstruct state accommodation in the citizenship regime. A guiding idea for the French approach was the hope that an “Islam of France” could develop. Municipal governments believed that “Cathedral Mosques” could serve as symbols and institutional carriers of this type of Islam. In Marseilles, the building of a central mosque also seemed plausible in light of local traditions of inter-community relations. I analyze the impact of the Consultation on Islam in France and reconstruct in detail the discussions on the building of a grand Islamic Religious and Cultural Centre in Marseilles. A critical juncture occurred when the municipality of Marseilles took up a policy frame that had developed in other French cities, namely to focus on improving the housing conditions of “vicinity Islam”.

In Rotterdam mosque creation entered the municipal policy agenda in the early 1980s and from then on moved with the tides of discussions on immigrant integration. Municipal policy makers eventually came to think that it would be possible to move progressively from better spatial accommodation of mosques to further social integration of Muslims. A special municipal policy on the housing of mosques helped to convert the process of the incorporation of mosques into an matter of sufficient parking space, preventing environmental nuisance and creating more understanding among the Dutch residents. In the second half of the 1990s the idea came up that newly built mosques could function as symbols of recognition and that this form of “multicultural architecture” should be endorsed. However, in the context of rising concerns about the “multicultural tragedy” alternative views on the symbolical meanings of newly built mosques entered the fray. Representatives of Liveable Rotterdam associated mosque architecture with the stagnation of integration of Muslims and the (perceived) growing prominence of Islam in the Netherlands. Eventually, however, proposals to forbid the building of large mosques in an “out of the ordinary style” were not converted into effective policy measures.

In the concluding chapter I compare the prevailing strategies of governance across time and also between the two countries. I argue that many taken-for-granted images of French and Dutch policies with regard to Islam are too much based on extrapolations from events and approaches that in actual fact were typical for particular periods. French and Dutch church-state regimes have shaped public policies of accommodation of Islam, but there is great diversity between the regimes of incorporation of ethnic immigrant minorities in that respect. In the colonial period the French drew upon Concordatian and Gallican traditions to organise state control over Islam, and the ways these governing strategies were institutionalised created an important legacy for the governance of Islam in later periods. In comparison with France, Dutch colonial Islam policies were very little institutionalised. In addition, there were hardly any possibilities for colonial policies to diffuse into post-colonial policies of accommodation of Islam. Important shifts in public policies in both countries and cities illustrate in what ways institutional and legal frameworks can bend under the weight of diverging policy frames.
Dit proefschrift gaat over de regulering van de Islam en moslimminderheden in Frankrijk en Nederland. De nadruk ligt daarbij op beleidsprocessen rond de vestiging van moskeeën, in het bijzonder in Marseille en in Rotterdam.

Bestaande studies hebben veelal de institutionalisering van de Islam bestudeerd als een onderdeel van de vorming van etnische organisaties sinds de jaren tachtig. Deze studie, daarentegen, bekijkt op welke manieren Franse en Nederlandse samenlevingen en overheden betrokken waren bij de institutionele inbedding van de Islam sinds het midden van de 19de eeuw tot en met de eerste jaren van de 21ste eeuw. De studie onderzoekt op welke manier de beeldvorming over moskeeën samenhangt met bepaalde strategieën van regulering. Ideeën en beelden geven richting aan beleid, maar tegelijkertijd komen zij ook voort vanuit heersende beleidsparadigma’s en bestaande institutionele repertoires. Van bijzonder belang daarbij zijn stelsels van verhoudingen van kerk en staat en verschillende regimes van incorporatie van etnische migrantengemeenschappen. Ik onderscheid drie regimes van incorporatie: een koloniaal regime, een gastarbeiders regime en een burgerschapsregime. Het proces van beleidsvorming rond moskeeën zie ik daarbij als een complex sociaal en politiek proces dat zich door de tijd ontwikkelt, en waarin institutionele repertoires en beleidsvertogen ontwikkeld worden, maar ook betwist.

In hoofdstuk 2, introduceer ik Franse en Nederlandse stelsels van verhoudingen van kerk en staat. Deze stelsels zijn een institutionele nalatenschap die is ontstaan vanuit de geschiedenis van interacties tussen religieuze instituties en de staat. Ik ga uitvoeriger in op de bestaande institutionele kaders voor de financiering van gebedshuizen.

In hoofdstuk 3 en 4, bespreek ik de regulering van de Islam in de context van het Franse en Nederlandse koloniale bestuur. Ik kijk daarbij in het bijzonder naar beleid rondom de bouw, het onderhoud en het functioneren van moskeeën in de koloniën en in Europa. Op de koloniale tentoonstellingen in Europa bouwden de Fransen imitaties van traditionele moskeeën om te laten zien hoe respectvol Frankrijk omging met de Islam in de overzeese gebieden. De bouw van een prestigeus islamitisch instituut en een traditionele moskee in het centrum van Parijs in de jaren twintig had als doel het beeld van Frankrijk als een Islamitische grootmacht te bevestigen. Tegelijkertijd diende de moskee als een monument voor de moslimsoldaten die waren gesneuveld tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog. In Marseille waren er in het Interbellum en kort na de Tweede Wereldoorlog ook plannen om een centrale moskee te bouwen.

In Nederlands Indië probeerden de Nederlandse machthebbers te voorkomen dat zij direct betrokken zouden worden bij de regulering van de islamitische geloofsbeleving. Tegelijkertijd had de noodzaak om ruimte te bieden aan de islamitische geloofsbeleving in Nederland deel van de koloniale periode. Het feit dat, paradoxaal genoeg, de Nederlandse staat betrokken raakte bij de bouw van moskeeën voor postkoloniale Molukse immigranten was grotendeels een gevolg van de bijzondere geschiedenis van deze groep.

In hoofdstuk 5 en 6 bespreek ik de manier waarop in beide landen werd omgegaan met de religieuze behoeften van moslim gastarbeiders. In Frankrijk, beschouwden Noord en West Afrikaanse arbeidsmigranten de wijze waarop zij werden behandeld als een voortzetting van hun voormalige status van koloniaal onderdaan. In vergelijking met de Europese gastarbeiders...
bevonden moslims zich in een achterstandspositie bij de uitoefening van hun religieuze rituelen en culturele gebruiken. Gebiedsruimten in de pensions, barakkenkampen en fabrieken fungeerden als veilige havens in een omgeving die sociaal en fysiek weinig gastvrij was. Ik laat zien om welke reden de Franse overheid besloot om in de late jaren zeventig en vroege jaren tachtig maatregelen te nemen om islamitische gebiedsruimten en andere religieuze voorzieningen te verbeteren.

In Nederland werden de instituties om gastarbeiders op te vangen ontwikkeld in een nauwe relatie met het maatschappelijk werk. Er was nauwelijks sprake van voortzetting van koloniale institutionele repertoires, zoals dat in Frankrijk wel gebeurde. De religieuze behoeften van moslims werden een onderwerp op de nationale beleidsagenda in het midden van de jaren zeventig toen de regering besloot om islamitische gebedsruimten en andere religieuze voorzieningen te verbeteren.

In hoofdstuk 7 en 8 wordt uitgebreid ingegaan op het beleid dat in beide landen werd gevoerd in het kader van een burgerschapsregime. Een leidende gedachte in de Franse benadering was de hoop dat zich een Franse islam zou ontwikkelen. “Kathedraal moskeeën” zouden als symbool en tegelijkertijd als institutionele basis voor deze vorm van islam kunnen fungeren. In Marseille werd de bouw van een centrale moskee ook gekoppeld aan de lokale traditie van relaties tussen de verschillende religieuze gemeenschappen. Ik bespreek de betekenis van de Consultatie over de islam in Frankrijk en ga in detail na hoe de discussies verliepen over de eventuele bouw van een grootschalig islamitisch religieus en cultureel centrum in Marseille. Een cruciaal moment in de vorming van het beleid vond plaats toen de gemeente aansloot bij een beleidsframe dat in andere steden was opgekomen. Dit betekende ondermeer dat de nadruk kwam te liggen op het verbeteren van de huisvesting van de “buurtmoskeeën”.

In Rotterdam werd de vestiging van moskeeën in de vroege jaren tachtig een thema op de gemeentelijke beleidsagenda. Sindsdien was de huisvestings situatie van moskeeën een belangrijk onderwerp in de discussies over de integratie van migranten. Gemeentelijke beleidsmakers raakten er gaandeweg van overtuigd dat een goede ruimtelijke integratie van moskeeën de opmaat kon vormen voor een verdere sociale integratie van moslims. Een speciaal gemeentelijk beleid voor de huisvesting van moskeen droeg ertoe bij dat het proces van vestiging van moskeeën voornamelijk een zaak werden van het creëren van voldoende parkeergelegenheid, het voorkomen van overlast en het ontwikkelen van meer begrip onder de Nederlandse bewoners. In de tweede helft van de jaren negentig ontstond ook het idee dat nieuwbouwmoskeeën fungeerden als symbolen van erkenning en dat deze vorm van “multiculturele architectuur” moest worden aangemoedigd vanwege het vigerende “diversiteitsbeleid”. Nadat een brede maatschappelijke discussie over het “multiculturele drama” was losgebarsten traden ook heel andere visies op de symbolische betekenis van moskeeën op de voorgrond. Vertegenwoordigers van Leefbaar Rotterdam brachten moskeearchitectuur in verband met de stagnerende integratie van moslims en met de (ogenschijnlijke) alsmaar toenemende aanwezigheid van de islam in Nederland. Voorstellen om de bouw van grote moskeeën in een afwijkende bouwstijl in Rotterdam te verbieden werden echter niet omgezet in concrete beleidsmaatregelen.

In het afsluitende hoofdstuk vergelijk ik de gevonden strategieën van regulering in verschillende perioden en tussen de twee landen. Ik betoog dat veel ogenschijnlijk vanzelfsprekende beelden over Frans en Nederlands beleid met betrekking tot de islam gebaseerd zijn op extrapolaties van gebeurtenissen en benaderingen die in feite typerend waren voor bepaalde perioden. Franse en Nederlandse stelsels van de verhoudingen van kerk en staat hebben mede
de vorm bepaald van het beleid, maar tegelijkertijd bestaan er in dit opzicht grote verschillen tussen de verschillende opeenvolgende regimes van incorporatie. In de koloniale periode maakten de Fransen volop gebruik van de Gallicaanse en Concorditaire tradities om het toezicht van de staat over de islamitische instituties vorm te geven. De manier waarop deze strategieën van toezicht werden geïnstitutionaliseerd, vormde een belangrijke erfenis voor het beleid aangaande de islam in Frankrijk in latere perioden. In vergelijking met het Franse beleid was het Nederlandse koloniale islambeleid veel minder vergaand geïnstitutionaliseerd en van continuïteit tussen koloniaal en postkoloniaal beleid aangaande de islam is nauwelijks sprake geweest. De belangrijke verschuivingen in het beleid in beide landen en steden laten ook zien dat de betekenis van institutionele en wettelijke kaders in sterke mate afhangt van heersende interpretaties en beleidsframes.
The integration of Muslim immigrants is frequently seen as a direct consequence of a country’s political tradition. These traditions themselves are often portrayed in clichéd terms. The patterns of incorporation that emerge following the entry of newcomers depend, on closer inspection, on the interplay among a complex set of factors that varies across time periods. This comparative study of policies adopted by the state to accommodate the religious practices of Muslims traces developments in France and the Netherlands in a historical perspective, beginning with the period of French and Dutch colonial rule and ending with the most recent bouts of controversy. The analysis examines discussions about mosque building in Marseilles and Rotterdam, tracing how Islam was represented in colonial exhibitions and in debates at the millennium over what constitutes “appropriate” mosque architecture. The author concludes that colonial governing approaches have shaped post-war policies of accommodation of Islam to a far stronger degree in France than in the Netherlands.