Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

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10. The civilizing of Islam. Civil differentialism in Amsterdam after 9/11 and the assassination of Theo van Gogh

As the integration debate heated up, political and policy attention focused on migrants and Muslims who were actually or potentially criminal, radical, insulated or apathetic. All of these behaviors and attitudes were framed as expressions of a lack of civil integration. Culturalists and pragmatists agreed on this point but disagreed on how to solve the problem. Culturalists developed a discourse demarcating the civil community along the lines of ethnic culture and emphasized the need for strict enforcement. Pragmatists took a different approach and emphasized the transcending of divisions. They, too, felt that Muslims needed to integrate but considered this a collective challenge, not an exclusive obligation for Muslims. Amsterdam was the most important discursive milieu for the development of Pragmatism. In the 2002 elections Labor was pushed out of office at the national level and in Rotterdam but remained in power in Amsterdam, which thus functioned as a showcase for Pragmatism.

The first section of this chapter examines how the Amsterdam government developed its discourse and how it forged its strategy for civil repair in the wake of 9/11 and the assassination of Theo van Gogh. The second section shows that the government divided the population into groups according to their putative civil virtue. The result was the emergence of civil differentialism: a governance figuration that transcended many of the contradictions of ethnic corporatism and civil liberalism but that also – as we shall see in the third section – had contradictions of its own.

The formation of civil differentialism

Part II of this thesis showed that integration politics proliferated after 2000 and exploded after the assassination of Pim Fortuyn. Actors that challenged the pragmatist approach towards integration were stronger than ever before. They claimed that a series of incidents – with the assassination of Van Gogh as apotheosis – demonstrated that the Netherlands had been too soft on migrants and that a more demanding and repressive approach was needed. The heating up of integration politics and the growing power of Culturalism forced the Amsterdam government to abandon its optimistic diversity discourse. After the turn of the century, the government, and especially the mayor, Job Cohen, developed a discourse that revolved around the idea that all groups within society had an obligation to defend civil unity.

According to this discourse, civil unity is under severe threat. It is the task of administrators to stand above and connect the different groups – an approach that developed under the slogan "keeping things together" (*de boel bij elkaar houden*).

Job Cohen declared directly upon his installment as mayor in January 2001 that he wanted to "keep things together" in Amsterdam.[101] He argued that we were witnessing four processes – globalization, individualization, privatization, democratization – that together can lead to civil alienation. If nothing keeps citizens together, society could disintegrate. The very first thing that the government should do to manage such disintegrating processes is to strictly enforce the law: the erosion of traditional mechanisms of social control and the resulting lack of normative orientation should be countered through interventions that make clear, in words and practice, what is and is not allowed (Cohen, 2002). However, this argument was hardly distinctive and no one took issue with it. What defined Cohen's position – and what made the apparently mundane ambition to "keep things together" into a highly controversial slogan – was his idea that Muslims are an integral part of the civil community. On several high-profile occasions, he argued for mutual understanding and expressed his concern over the backlash against Muslims after 9/11. Whereas culturalists often portray Muslims or radical Muslims as intruders or violators, Cohen argued that Islam and its institutions can in fact help to integrate newcomers. Religious institutions are of special interest to Cohen since he views them as cement that can keep together a society threatened by disintegration:

> We now deal with an inflow of people for whom religion often is the most important guide in their lives. That raises the question of acceptance by the secularized society that surrounds them and their integration in this society. As far as this last issue is concerned: religion is for them an easy and obvious entry when they try to connect to the Netherlands. Where would they find that connection if not initially with their compatriots? This is why the integration of these migrants in Dutch society may best be achieved via their religion. That is almost the only anchor they have when they enter the Dutch society of the 21st century (Cohen, 2002, p. 14).

Cohen thus argued that religion is not antithetical to integration. To the contrary, religion is a vehicle for integration, as are religious institutions like mosques.

One important implication of Cohen's position is that he values associations and identities that were almost completely ignored under ethnic corporatism and civil liberalism. Mosques and Islamic associations played a role in neighborhood networks but were virtually

invisible for the city's administration.[102] The politicization of Cohen's discourse created a sense among administrators and civil servants that minority associations, and especially Islamic associations, should be incorporated into governance networks. Pragmatists in general, and Cohen in particular, regarded Islamic associations and Muslims as agents of civil repair. If there is a growing schism between Muslims and non-Muslims – as pragmatists believe – then these two groups need to be brought together. Such rituals of civil repair entailed a reconfiguration of governance relations: they represent a move away from individualized understandings of diversity and towards a more group-oriented approach where actors willing to act as Muslims come to play a vital role (even though others have cast them in that role). How were these notions and ideas inscribed into policies and state institutions?

Institutionalizing civil differentiation

After the attacks of 9/11 and especially the assassination of Theo van Gogh, the diversity discourse was abandoned in favor of a discourse based on the idea that the commitment of moderate Muslims is necessary to curb the threat posed by extremism. This was the analysis that would inform subsequent institutional reforms and projects carried out under the banner of *Wij Amsterdammers* (Us Amsterdammers, WA) – a policy program created by top level civil servants under the direct supervision of the aldermen and the mayor. WA marked a definite break in that it did not postulate that "diversity is positive." It was instead based on the premise that diversity can lead to explosive conflicts that need to be suppressed before they materialize. Whereas before – under the minorities policy – ethnic groups were the policy objects, now the population was divided into different groups according to their putative civil virtue. While the precise articulation of this principle of differentiation varied between individual administrators and policy documents, the continuum usually runs from those who passionately defend liberal democracy to those who passionately attack it. For example, the analysis of conflict potential made immediately after the assassination of Van Gogh distinguished between five groups of Muslims and five groups of non-Muslims. Muslims were distinguished as follows:

1. Muslims who are completely integrated and experience no tension whatsoever between Islam and modernism. They actively resist radical Islam;
2. Muslims who accept the rules of the game of liberal democracy but who feel some tension between Islam and modernism. They resist radical Islam;
3. Muslims who experience strong tension between Islam and modernism but who accept

the Dutch constitutional order. They are willing to provide information on Islamic extremism;

4. Muslims for whom political Islam provides a sense of identity and meaning. They approve the assassination, passively reject the Dutch constitutional order and passively support jihadis;

5. The jihadis who recruit and train, maintain breeding places, spread hatred of the West and want to commit extremist acts. This group consists of 150 people [an estimate by the Dutch intelligence agency, JU] and strong networks around them.

The non-Muslim population, according to WA, consists of:

1. Those who accept Islam within the context of the Dutch liberal state and actively strive for the recognition of Islam within the Netherlands;

2. Those who accept Islam within the context of the Dutch liberal state;

3. Those who have difficulty with Islam and exclude and stigmatize Muslims;

4. Those who want Islam to disappear from the Netherlands and who exclude and stigmatize Muslims;

5. Those who (want to) undertake violent action against Muslims

(Gemeente Amsterdam, 2004, pp. 4-5).

These categorizations give an impression of the ways in which administrators perceived the population of Amsterdam: there is a rough division between Muslims and non-Muslims and both groups are internally differentiated according to their putative civil virtue. These categorizations also suggest a line of action: the municipality and its administrators should form coalitions with those who embrace liberal democracy, wish to reduce polarization and fight against extremism, and should isolate and prosecute those who seek to undermine liberal democracy. This approach, if successful, would encourage people – so the government's analysis assumed – to climb up the civil hierarchy.[103] Here I truncate the five groups into three different groups of Muslims (liberal elites, critical counter publics and defiant outsiders) and examine their positions and power relations within the emergent governance figuration.

Power relations under civil differentialism

Embracing the liberal elite

The growing importance of representations of Islam within integration politics triggered the emergence and consolidation of a small group of Muslim leaders who were able to position themselves as a major force for civil repair. As we saw in Part II, Ahmed Aboutaleb emerged as a central figure in the national debate after 9/11 and enjoyed much more support than other participants in the debate. Haci Karacaer, director of the (Northern branch of) the Turkish Milli Gorus mosque federation, also became a central figure in the debate after 9/11 and he, too, enjoyed comparatively high levels of support (see Chapter 6). Two other central figures were Ahmed Marcouch and Ahmed Larouz. Marcouch had become a spokesperson for the Moroccan mosque federation UMMAO[104] in 2004. Ahmed Larouz and his colleagues at Mex-It also increasingly shifted their attention from diversity management to projects for civil repair. Some of the founders of Mex-It had been born and raised in Amsterdam West and through their projects for the municipality (including the planning of an Islamic graveyard) had established contacts with a number of Moroccan mosques.

These four figures were among the most visible representatives of the Muslim community after the assassination of Theo van Gogh. Larouz, Marcouch and Karacaer staged a press conference in De Balie, one of Amsterdam's most prestigious cultural centers. Larouz read a statement on behalf of the government-funded association "Islam and Citizenship," asking people to stay calm after this "attack on our society." Karacaer was "visibly shocked" by the event according to a newspaper report and uttered "I wish I could undo all this." Ahmed Marcouch declared on behalf of UMMAO that "this was not a religious act, even if the assassin committed it in the name of Allah" (cited in *NRC Handelsblad*, 2004). All three men engaged in symbolic crisis management after the assassination. They set up campaigns and organized events in order to express that the fight against extremism was not a fight against Muslims but a fight by Muslims and non-Muslims against those who disturbed civil peace.

A day after the assassination, Aboutaleb reprimanded the visitors of the Al Kabir Mosque, where he expressed anger that people close to the assassin had not intervened. He called upon the Moroccan and Muslim community to produce "counter poison" and not allow extremists to "hijack their religion" (see Chapter 6). The Amsterdam government supported the civilizing mission of these Muslim leaders in various ways. Some of the attempts to support liberal Islam were hardly controversial while other attempts aroused strong

opposition. Let me mention three large projects – one that materialized and two that did not.

An example of a project that did not arouse much controversy was the Ramadan festival. Mex-It conceived the festival after the assassination of Theo van Gogh. According to the project description, it aims to correct "misunderstandings of Islam among non-Muslims as well as Muslims" (project description, n.d.) and to open up this Islamic holiday for the whole of Amsterdam. The municipality contributed from several funds (including MGI) but the firm was also very effective – much more effective than any migrant or Islamic association with an organized constituency – in attracting funds from commercial sources, including banks, consultancy agencies and privatized welfare agencies eager to improve their positions in a market where more and more customers had Islamic backgrounds. The first edition of the Ramadan festival in 2005 had a budget of around 300,000 euros, which grew to half a million in 2006. In 2007, the festival was expanded to 40 cities in the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom. Its 2007 edition in Amsterdam had dozens of sponsors and partners; well over fifty associations and organizations participated in one way or another. Newspapers and television stations constantly covered the activities. Although controversial issues were debated, the focus was on mundane topics such as food, fashion and business.

An example of a project that aroused much more controversy was the plan to establish a debating center for Islamic culture, Marhaba. The project was first conceived in an expert meeting organized by Job Cohen. The model for Marhaba was the Parisian *L'Institut du Monde Arabe*. City administrators (including Cohen and Aboutaleb) lobbied for subsidies from the central government, believing that such a prestigious center could take the debate on Islam to a higher level. Initially the national government was not forthcoming. In anticipation of a turn of the tide (a change in the government's attitude or a change of government), the municipality decided to give a "start subsidy" of 26,000 euros for the center in January 2006. Haci Karacaer was hired to initiate the project. A press release announced the project as a "non-religious center for Islamic art and culture" with which the government "gives a powerful message to all Amsterdammers that 120,000 Amsterdam Muslims belong and should participate" (Gemeente Amsterdam, press release, 26 January 2006).

The goal of the start subsidy was to draw up plans in anticipation of further financing from the national government. The working group consisted mostly of individuals strongly in favor of encouraging Muslims to become more self-critical and included Ahmed Marcouch, Haci Karacaer and Mohammed Baba of Mex-It.[105] Referring to Tariq Ramadan, the group argued that it is both a necessity and a moral duty for "European Muslims ... to break out of the isolation that is imposed upon them, to make connections with the 'Western cultural

universe' and to confront this with their own principles" (Marhaba, 2006, p. 7). To achieve this, the center sought to attract diverse audiences, especially higher-educated youth with an interest in religious issues and current affairs. On the basis of the working plan, Marhaba received an additional 468,000 euros of subsidy in 2006. According to the plans in 2006, Marhaba was to receive a structural subsidy of 2 million euros and an incidental subsidy of several millions for accommodation.[106] But while Marhaba was in the process of development, criticism intensified. National as well as local politicians argued that Marhaba breached the separation between church and state. Local civil society associations pointed out that the generous subsidy to Marhaba represented an arbitrary divergence from the municipality's policy of not funding organizations, let alone organizations that specifically focus on one religion (see Chapter 9). In the end, the opposition was so strong that the municipality abandoned the project.

A third and possibly the most controversial example was the Wester Mosque in the Amsterdam neighborhood of De Baarsjes. The media drama began in the early 1990s when the Turkish mosque federation Milli Gorus and the neighborhood council of De Baarsjes entered into conflict over the construction of the mosque. The neighborhood council and a group of local residents protested against its size and the height of the minaret but Milli Gorus insisted it had the right to build anyway. After some years of stalemate, Milli Gorus pushed forward a leadership that promised the mosque would become a vehicle for emancipation rather than a cultural bastion. The new leadership – with Haci Karacaer as charismatic figurehead – manifested itself everywhere and spoke out against conservative and fundamentalist tendencies. The mosque association participated in the commemorations of the Second World War and unequivocally denounced the attacks of 9/11. The apotheosis was perhaps Karacaer's performance at the gay monument where he declared to struggle for the rights of other minorities even if that would bring him into conflict with his own community. Milli Gorus had transformed – in media representations – from a hyper-conservative association into a liberal vanguard of Dutch Muslimhood. A housing corporation now agreed to a joint-venture to construct homes on a plot adjacent to the mosque; the neighborhood council agreed to fully support the project. But all this changed in 2007. According to media sources, "conservative hard-liners" sponsored by the German headquarters of Milli Gorus had engineered a "coup" against the "liberals" sponsored by the Amsterdam municipality (e.g. Beusekamp, 2006). The downfall of the liberal leaders robbed pragmatists of what had been their most epic civil story. Cohen's government suffered a direct blow when it crystallized that it had covertly given an indirect subsidy of 2 million euros for the construction of the mosque

complex. While the liberal leadership had told the government that such a subsidy was necessary to prevent a conservative take-over, in yet another media revelation it became apparent that one of the leaders had agreed to hand over ownership of the mosque to the federation's headquarters as soon as the construction was completed. The government and the housing corporation withdrew their support. The plot where the Wester Mosque was to be erected was still vacant in 2009.

These examples show that the government intervened directly in civil society to strengthen the power of liberal Islam. The idea of a level playing field in which associations have to compete for resources (central to civil liberalism) was completely abandoned. The amounts involved were enormous compared to the sums allocated through competitive bidding. The government sought to strengthen the position of Muslims who were critical of their own (ethnic and religious) communities and who expressed support for the Dutch civil community. So strong was this desire that the government attempted to rewrite the rules of the game by giving itself the discretion to subsidize religious discourse.[107]

Accommodating critical Muslims

A large segment of the Muslim population shows strong civil engagement but is much more critical of Dutch society than the liberal Muslim elite. For the sake of convenience, I refer to this segment as "critical Muslims" though it should be clear that this category lumps together actors as diverse as illiterate first generation mosque representatives who vaguely sense that politicians are against Islam and second generation intellectuals who eloquently counter Islamophobia in newspapers and on television. Under civil differentialism, these critical Muslims did not receive nearly as much recognition and resources as the liberal Muslim elite. Nevertheless, there were attempts to incorporate them into governance networks. Through the support of projects enticing Muslims to enter into debate, governments hoped to reduce the power of radical discourses.

What kinds of projects received support? One example is Muslim Youth Amsterdam (*Moslimjongeren Amsterdam*, MJA), which brought together youths from different ethnic backgrounds and mosques. While the city government had previously shown scant interest in mosques (see previous chapters), this changed after 9/11 and the assassination of Theo van Gogh. The alderman for diversity, Ahmed Aboutaleb, decided that an association was needed after research found that mosques, and especially Moroccan mosques, developed few civil initiatives. Aboutaleb granted the consultancy firms that had carried out the research the assignment to form the association. Its mission was to improve Islam's image and to educate

the next generation of mosque administrators. The group included such diverse people as television presenter and Mex-It freelancer Jihad Alariachi and a young volunteer from the orthodox El Tawheed Mosque. MJA was just one of several associations of young Muslims incorporated into governance networks. Another example was JUMMAO, a group originally brought together by Ahmed Marcouch to participate in a (government-funded) weekend of training by an institute for applied research at the Free University. Islam Aangenaam (Pleasant Islam) was another association of this kind. There was also the National Muslim Youth Organization (*Landelijke Moslimjongerenorganisaties*, LMJO), a national collective of youth associations established by people who had left the group that would eventually become JUMMAO. These were just several of the associations that actually materialized which I encountered in my research. The number of initiatives was probably much higher and the number of ideas for associations and projects countless.

Cultural centers like Mozaïek and Argan functioned as the discursive milieu in which these initiatives emerged. Unlike the prestigious cultural centers in the canal district (such as De Balie, Rode Hoed and Felix Meritis), Mozaïek and Argan attracted large numbers of people from groups that are notoriously difficult for the media and administrators to reach, such as orthodox Muslims and eloquent Moroccan youths. In the debates on integration issues that I attended, roughly half of the audience normally consisted of migrants, mostly second generation Moroccans.[108] The natives at these meetings were by and large on the left and generally opposed Culturalism. Politicians like Geert Wilders, Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Rita Verdonk could count on no support whatsoever: they were only mentioned negatively and served as the foil against which discourse is articulated. In effect, these discursive milieus functioned as counter publics (Fraser, 1991) where alternative integration discourses were generated and where civil talents were cultivated (Box 10.1).

These associations, venues and events offered excellent entry points for journalists in search of "Muslim youth," political parties in search of new talent and companies looking for new hires. The most engaged Muslim and Moroccan youths and organic intellectuals ended up in television shows or news reports as "Moroccan youth" or "Muslim." The fact that these settings were constantly in the spotlight affected how they functioned. In one sense, the media coverage was a crucial part of the attraction. Some people were "discovered" there. One volunteer told me in an informal conversation:

> Abdel is now something like a media star. He is just sixteen years old and the perfect Moroccan. Gentle and engaged. He has a group around him who often come to these

debates. They are part of the next generation. They all look up to Mohamed and Jamal and see how far you can get (approximation; talk not recorded).

The presence of important politicians and television cameras certainly adds to the prominence of a debate. The preference for high-profile debates, however, also limited their role as milieus for civil inculcation. Although volunteers and professionals often intended to engage in long-term efforts to build institutional networks, such ambitions were easily forgotten when the next spectacular event took place. Associations in this volatile environment functioned less as civil incubators than as portals for civil talent. Some of the younger Moroccan and Muslim talents I spoke to self-consciously cultivated their skills and networks to be involved in party politics, to represent one or the other association or to work in the integration field. They also experienced major frustrations as they discovered that rejection of their own communities was a prerequisite for success outside of this particular discursive milieu. Especially Marcouch's transformation (from a representative of a Moroccan mosque federation to a critic of his own community, see below) irritated many of his former followers.

Box 10.1 A debate on Islam and the Media in the Argan youth center (2 December 2005)

The chair for tonight was Martijn de Greve, a professional television host and conference chair. The panelists:

1. Mohamed Jabri, a columnist for the internet website El-Qalem. The website had the slogan "to strive with the pen" and gave space to polemical Muslim commentators (like Jabri) and orthodox Muslims who discussed religious affairs;
2. Frank Williams, director of the Dutch Muslim broadcasting station (NMO);
3. Farhad Golyardi, editor of the monthly *Eutopia* that gives a stage to progressive intellectuals to comment on multicultural society and international relations;
4. Fouad Laroui, professor of literature at the Free University, a Muslim and a critic of fundamentalist Islam;
5. Justus Uitermark, PhD student at the ASSR, who had just been in the news with a joint research project that, according to journalists, showed that the media had written with "nuance" and did not "instigate" after the assassination of Theo van Gogh.

Although I had discussed integration issues in public debates, expert meetings and seminars, this was the very first time I had to speak in front of a room that had a large share of vocal minority youths. Throughout the debate, this created a sort of pressure that I had never felt before. Certain mistakes that would be overlooked or ignored by other audiences now drew immediate attention. For instance, when I made a remark about an "imam," I was corrected by Jabri to the amusement of many in the audience; I should have talked about an Islamic scholar.

One example to illustrate the dynamics of power in this particular setting: at one point, a participant in the audience laughed at the idea that Osama bin Laden was behind the attacks of 9/11 – "the Jews" did that. In a righteous fury he added that the Quran dictated that no harm shall be done to those who are peaceful to Islam but that violence was a natural response to the atrocities committed against Muslims. A loud applause followed. One native Dutch woman said she had become afraid of such rhetoric and openly asked if she, as a lesbian, had anything to fear. An older Muslim woman then reprimanded her for doubting the good intentions of the man who had accused the Jews and then raised her hands to the sky and called out "Allah Akhbar" a few times. After these outbursts a young man called upon "his brother" to be calm and explained in the most dignified manner what he considered proper Islamic conduct.

When I was asked in a later part of the debate to comment on the coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict, I remarked that I had no expertise on that topic but that I was shocked by the accusations against Jews and especially by the applause. Jabri accused me of avoiding the topic. Again: applause. Then Frank Williams put an arm around me and said that my feelings should be respected. At the end of the debate, the lesbian went over to the Jew-accuser and, after a short exchange of words, they hugged each other. Once more: applause.

After the debate, several people came to me to explain that the Jew-accuser had been too bold but that there really was evidence suggesting that the official reading of 9/11 was wrong. Other people told me that they appreciated my contribution but that I should not "get so emotional." We see here a complete inversion of the assumptions and sensitivities inherent in mainstream discourse production. Normally Muslims "get emotional" and cannot take it when their root assumptions are questioned. Now I experienced these expressions of frustration bred by discursive subordination.

The organizers who had invited me to the debate often featured on television as "youth workers" or as "Moroccan youth." the local channel AT5 invited the Jew-accuser to speak on Islam in a discussion program. I also learned that the Labor Party had scouted two of the female organizers as potential politicians. These are just a few illustrations of Argan's brokerage role; it had transformed from a center for marginalized youths into a vibrant discursive milieu embedded in governance and media networks. This is partly due to funding from the government. Argan's community work is structurally funded and for this particular debate the center received a project subsidy from MGI (see Chapter 9).

Disciplining defiant Muslims

Precisely because participation in government-supported associations and debates requires a measure of civil engagement, these events did not attract the problem groups that fill the media and policy documents: isolated women, drop-outs, delinquent youths and (potential) extremists. To get a grip on these groups, the Amsterdam government, as other governments, intensified its investments in repressive and disciplinary institutions: more discretion and personnel for the police, more CCTVs, more state funds and discretion for security personnel, stricter enforcement of the legal requirement to attend school, and so on. But there was also a civil dimension to this offensive. Social isolation, poor school performance, criminality, etc. were redefined under civil differentialism as resulting from the lack of civil engagement. The solution was therefore to stimulate "participation."[109] To civilize the most defiant groups, the government increasingly called upon Islam, Islamic authorities and Islamic associations. This development, which took place throughout Amsterdam, reached its zenith in the neighborhood of Slotervaart, a post-war neighborhood on the outskirts of Amsterdam which became a laboratory for new governance institutions.

After it became clear that Van Gogh's assassin lived in Slotervaart, journalists, academics, policy-makers and politicians flooded the neighborhood. Media scrutiny and political interest further intensified when Ahmed Marcouch ran for and became chair of the neighborhood council in 2006 – the first Moroccan to achieve this position in the Netherlands. With Marcouch as charismatic "neighborhood mayor" and the Labor party in charge of national integration policies, all conditions were met to focus attention on, and to invest resources into, Slotervaart. It was the first neighborhood Labor minister Ella Vogelaar visited to learn about radicalization and the fight against it.

Marcouch passionately promoted a discourse of civil differentiation tough on those who commit incivilities and rewarding for those who exhibit civil qualities. Referring to Marcouch's background as a police officer, the German weekly *Der Spiegel* called him "the sheriff of Slotervaart" (cited in Jongejan, 2007). Indeed, Marcouch had no sympathy whatsoever for youths hanging on the streets after midnight or parents forsaking their responsibilities. But his policies were disciplinary rather than simply repressive: the goal was to weave a network of surveillance and control around the life world of perpetrators and potential perpetrators. The neighborhood government of Slotervaart set up a rapid response unit of "street coaches" (usually martial arts practitioners) to surveil the neighborhood and intervene whenever youths were loitering, skipping school or causing a nuisance. The council also financed curricula for parents on the intricacies of the school system and to stimulate

them to show an interest in the educational performance of their children. Such disciplinary interventions have surged everywhere in the Netherlands (Van den Berg, 2007) and elsewhere (Crawford, 1997, 2006) in recent years. In Slotervaart, religion is used to convince target groups that they need to cooperate. The policy document where the council lays out its strategy against radicalization states that:

> the emphasis will be on the opportunities offered by religion and culture in upbringing, strengthening one's own identity and developing a positive self-image. Next to that, there will be a search for points of contact (*aanknopingspunten*) in religion and culture for creating a bridge to Dutch society. Dichotomous world views will be countered with religious prescriptions. This offers the opportunity to convince parents that their wish to give their children an Islamic identity does not entail a clash with Dutch norms and values (Stadsdeel Slotervaart, 2007, pp. 8-9).

In the understanding of Slotervaart, delinquents and radicals should be confronted by authorities who demonstrate to these putative Muslims that their behavior is not in accordance with proper Islamic conduct. These policies reconfigured the relationship of the government to both parents and civil society associations.

One of the goals of the programs for parents was to bring their religious conceptions in sync with what educational and other social environments require. In her evaluation of a course for Moroccan parents offered as part of the anti-radicalization policy, Amy-Jane Gielen shows that parents and especially mothers were not primarily interested in religion or culture but in their children's success in school and on the labor market; most of all, they did not want their children to drop out of school or to fall into the hands of local criminals (Gielen, 2008). But where religion and culture played a role, religious precepts were used to delegitimize cultural beliefs or practices that inhibit success in Dutch society. In the course, for instance, a group of (less-educated) mothers discussed whether it is permissible to hit a child. Some complained that child protection laws are too strict and that Dutch society does not allow them to discipline their children. Others suggested that Islam requires parents to adopt a gentle approach and expressly forbids hitting children. They felt that their ethnic culture holds women back and that greater knowledge of Islam would lead to a revaluation of the mother's role. As one of them put it: "I do not find traditions and being Moroccan very important because I think we mostly have bad traditions. The fact is that a girl is kept down while a boy is allowed to do anything he likes. Islam is against this" (cited in Gielen, 2008, p. 15). This

quote is no exception. The discourse that I refer to as Civil Islam is not only popular among civil elites but can also count on strong support from lower-class Muslim women, even if they have hardly any contact with native Dutch (Van Tilborgh, 2006).[110]

The growing importance and frequency of state interventions into households was to some extent an alternative to support for civil society associations, which lost their status as intermediaries between the state and residents. Especially secular neighborhood associations lost their subsidies and accommodations (see Box 7.1). But associations that catered to groups close to potential radicals or delinquents retained or consolidated their roles as intermediaries. For instance, participants in courses for child-rearing were now recruited through Islamic associations. The government organized debates within mosques and provided guidance to mosques wishing to present themselves in the media. The government also supported mosques to organize dialogues among their constituents and with other religions in an effort to open up to the younger generation and Dutch society.

Contradictions of civil differentialism

Compared to civil liberalism, civil differentialism has two major strengths. First, by promising to discipline and punish those groups that threaten or dishonor the civil community, it offered an answer to the anxieties expressed most vocally (but not exclusively) by culturalists. Second, civil differentialism incorporated – through discourses of Civil Islam and disciplinary interventions – groups that had been ignored under civil liberalism. But civil differentialism also had its contradictions.

First, the relationship between the Labor Party and Muslims is under the constant scrutiny of other political parties, the media and even the party's own supporters. Any sign that it will use its power in government to support Islam can be seized upon, creating a constant threat of scandals. The subsidies for Marhaba and the indirect subsidy to the Wester Mosque are good examples of attempts to support liberal Islam that generated overwhelming opposition. Many Muslims, too, distrust the government when it comes to religion. Even some of my respondents involved in state-sponsored initiatives having to do with Islam deeply resented the attempts to reform religion. More orthodox Muslims actively searched for interpretations of Islam that did not have the stamp of state approval as they deeply mistrusted the proverbial "subsidy Muslims" ("with or without a beard," as one of my orthodox respondents said). The subsidizing of liberal Islam – even the impression that the government wants Muslims to believe in liberal Islam – can have results opposite from what the

government intended.

Second, the government was so heavily involved in shaping civil society that it annihilated its autonomy. On the one hand, some civil initiatives or associations were funded and accommodated to the extent that they were transformed into state subsidiaries. On the other hand, groups and people regarded as possible threats were subjected to intense disciplinary interventions. Either way, the government tried to reward civil discourses and to inculcate civil dispositions through direct intervention. Civil society associations following their own agendas were marginalized within governance figurations. This was especially detrimental to groups that neither qualified as super-citizens nor as potential threats to civil order. Neighborhood associations and associations pursuing specific interests did not benefit from the surge of support for civil initiatives at all.

Third, the differential incorporation of different types of actors bred resentment among subordinated actors, thereby undermining the capacity of associations to cooperate. Those who managed to live up to the expectations of core groups sooner or later hurt the sensitivities of co-ethnics or fellow believers. This was not due to any tactical incompetence on their part, but to another imperative of the civil sphere: in order to find acceptance among core groups, civil actors with minority backgrounds have to transform their stigma into marks of distinction, and can only do so by dissociating themselves from stigmatized groups. Aboutaleb's speech in the Al-Kabir Mosque (see Chapter 6) is one example of a performance that simultaneously boosted his status among media audiences and degraded his direct audience. He spoke to the Moroccan community as if he was not part of it and as if they (as volunteers and visitors of a mosque with no connection to the assassin whatsoever) were somehow more to blame than he was (as alderman of diversity).

Conclusion

The intense and often negative focus on Islam may further marginalize Muslims and lead to social disintegration. This, at least, is what many people fear. But this fear triggered counter-forces: this chapter showed that as integration politics heated up, more time, energy and resources were devoted to the discursive and institutional incorporation of Turkish and Moroccan migrants, who were increasingly redefined as Muslims. The controversies over Islam were thus divisive in some ways but crucial for bringing together actors that were previously apart. The commitment to Civil Islam bound together a coalition stretching from progressive politicians like Cohen to orthodox Muslims opposing terrorism. Islam thus fused

into governance and was mobilized to extend the influence of the government.

The government liaised at various levels with civil society, even creating new civil society associations: it invested heavily in actors promoting liberal Islam, sponsored actors providing critical or orthodox alternatives to radical Islam, and created disciplinary institutions to civilize groups that supposedly lacked civil engagement. In short, we can observe the emergence of a governance figuration – civil differentialism – in which discourses of Civil Islam fused into, and legitimized, institutions that differentiate between groups according to their civil virtue. Resources and recognition were distributed along these same lines: liberal Muslims close to the Labor party leadership received a great deal of support, critical Muslims further removed from the core could count on attention and limited resources, defiant or marginalized Muslims were the targets rather than the subjects of policies. Although the emerging governance figuration was much better designed to deal with incivilities than civil liberalism, it also suffered from internal contradictions. At the heart of these contradictions was the annihilation of civil society's autonomy. The government intervened directly into power relations in civil society and subjugated civil initiatives to its own policy program, incorporating minority associations in a relation of subordination. The case of Rotterdam provides an interesting counter-example.