

SITUATION OF ISLAMIC
COMMUNITIES IN FIVE
EUROPEAN CITIES

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL INITIATIVES

EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE
ON RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA



Situation of Islamic Communities in five European Cities

Examples of Local Initiatives

on behalf of the

**European Monitoring Centre
on Racism and Xenophobia**

by

ECWS

**European Centre for Work and Society
Maastricht, The Netherlands**

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Preface

Europe is home to many different religious and ethnic communities, including millions of Muslims who contribute to shaping the numerous cultures that form European society.

The many Islamic communities of Europe are themselves made up of diverse groups whose needs vary according to their background, locality and historical roots. However, they all share a common challenge: the struggle for equal treatment as Europeans.

Prejudice and hostility against Islamic communities are prevalent in all European Member States, and have often led to discrimination against Muslims and their exclusion from mainstream socio-economic activities. Such 'Islamophobia' has grown over the last decade, fuelled by international events, such as the Gulf War and the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001. Increasingly, public and media discourse evoke the dangers of 'Islamic Fundamentalism', thereby stigmatising a whole section of Europe's multi-faith society without paying attention to the very ordinary lives of European Muslims in our midst.

Underlying such hostilities is a more general fear of difference, which can manifest itself in racist, xenophobic and intolerant attitudes and practices against a wide range of minority communities. The EUMC's role is to monitor these attitudes and practices, so that European institutions and Member States can challenge them effectively. However, just as important as charting the negative impact of racism and Islamophobia is the identification of the many positive actions taken by governments, faith leaders, non-governmental organisations and social partners.

The report "Situation of Islamic communities in five European Cities" adopts such a practical and positive approach. Its authors analyse and compare practical examples of promoting inclusion and equal treatment of Muslims in five local communities across Europe. They demonstrate that comprehensive action against the many inequalities that afflict our societies is often most effectively taken at local level. This is where solutions are developed in partnership, where practical actions are implemented by those who are directly affected, and where diversity is lived on a daily basis.

This report acknowledges that each local community sets its own priorities and adopts approaches sensitive to its specific situation. Differences between and among local communities remain visible; there is no panacea for Islamophobia. Nevertheless, there are valuable lessons to be learned from the experiences these communities share with the reader. Such lessons are not restricted to particular localities but can be applied in all European Member States. The report concludes by recommending specific actions which aim at building bridges and uniting people. It becomes clear that people of all faiths (and none) have a role to play in enhancing the mutual understanding between communities of different religions and beliefs, cultures and traditions.

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This transnational report is based on local reports submitted by Aarhus (DK), Bradford (UK), Mannheim (D), Rotterdam (NL) and Turin (I). The ECWS has made the comparative analysis at transnational level.

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1. Introduction

SHURA (Islamic term for consultation) is an ECWS (European Centre for Work and society) transnational, analytical study on the situation of Islamic communities in Aarhus (DK), Bradford (UK), Mannheim (D), Rotterdam (NL) and Turin (I). The study was carried out for and supported by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism & Xenophobia (EUMC) from December 2000 to June 2001.

The aim of this study is to learn about the extent to which the identification, collection and comparison of good practice on the various approaches being used to meet the needs of the Islamic communities can contribute to the promotion of tolerance and equal treatment on religious grounds in key areas of public life such as employment, public services and education.

The ECWS has a long history of working with local authorities from all over Europe and has worked with the participating SHURA partners in previous programmes such as LIA¹ and networks such as ELAINE². The local authorities of the cities involved have a significant interest in Islamic communities, with which joint action is undertaken and/or consultation exists. The different levels of experience, contexts, traditions and geographic make-up of the partners are a reliable starting point for reviewing the situation in EU cities and for providing valid suggestions leading to better practice. Partnership is thus the cornerstone of the data collection process.

The partners have drawn up local reports on the basis of the reporting guidelines provided by ECWS. These guidelines ensure a basic format allowing for comparability between the local reports. This is crucial as the local context in terms of socio-economic situation, legal framework and the political climate may differ significantly. This is not only the case for the partner cities in this study, but also for the potential users of the learning captured in this report, i.e. other cities throughout the EU. The guidelines also clarified that there are considerable differences between the participating cities with respect to the information, documentation and good practice examples available concerning the promotion of religious tolerance. Although the similar queries were made in each city, the results differ both in length and in topics. At the same time however, it is important to recognise the diversity of the local settings as an asset. It is this diversity that constitutes a significant pool of learning. In this report, the diversity shines through in the key items describing the local situation and the length and depth of the coverage of each city per key area.

The report consists of three chapters. The opening chapter highlights practical approaches to promoting religious equality and tolerance at local level. Starting from a common framework of analysis, the local contexts and approaches are described. Particular emphasis is placed on the involvement of Islamic Communities in the process of policy development and implementation.

The second part describes the real impact of local approaches in three key policy areas: employment, public services and education. These practical experiences clearly demonstrate the intricacies of the issues of religious equality, integration and discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and culture.

The closing chapter highlights some of the learning that takes place at local level. It provides suggestions for practical implementation to those actively working towards the promotion of religious equality and tolerance.

¹ Local Integration Action funded by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs (1996/7/9).

² European Local Authorities (Interactive) Network on Ethnic Minority Policies funded by the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs (1993/4/5/6/7)

2. A practical approach to promoting religious equality and tolerance at local level.

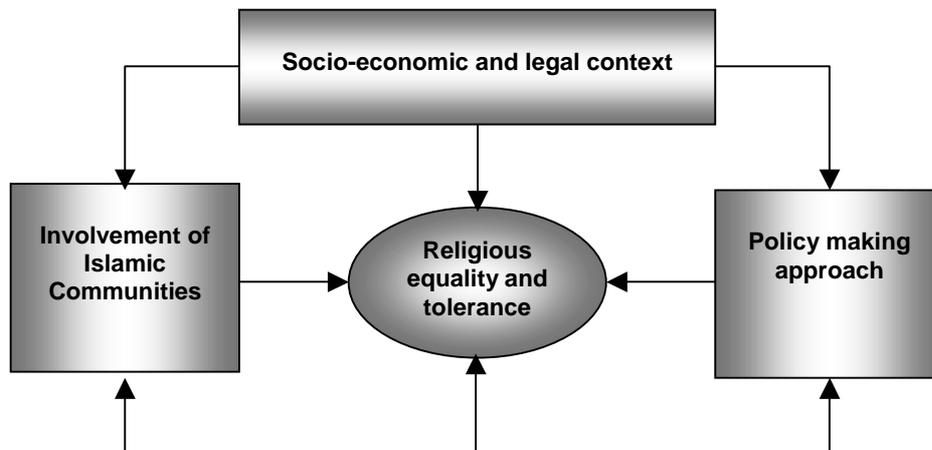
2.1. The framework of analysis

The SHURA study is based on five local case studies in the cities of Aarhus, Bradford, Mannheim, Rotterdam and Turin. To fully understand these local realities and identify similarities and differences it is important to start from a common framework of analysis. This analytical framework is the basis for our perceptions and understanding.

The reality at local level is mainly shaped by three inter-linking key factors. Each of these factors can be broken down into a number of dimensions:

- the socio-economic and legal context
 - the European level
 - the national level
 - the local level
- the local approach to policy making
 - the degree of formality and explicitness
 - the degree to which it is pro-active and/or reactive
 - the directness or indirectness of the strategy
- the involvement of the Islamic Community
 - institutionalised or non-institutionalised involvement
 - the nature of involvement (decision-making, advisory, sub-contracting, etc.)
 - perceptions
 - organisational strengths

The following figure illustrates the relationship between the different factors.



2.2. Context

For decades, the configuration of Europe in terms of ethnicity and religion has been shifting. The search for “guest workers” to sustain the economic boom of the 50s and 60s and the devastating results of (civil) war throughout the world have had a significant impact on the demographic make-up of Europe. The European Union is per definition a union of different cultures and ethnicities and as such has created several long-standing European and international instruments to uphold personal (religious) freedoms, to combat racism, discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia. These supranational investments are being furthered, as it becomes increasingly possible to recommend, but also to legislate in order to influence policies and practices (dealing with promoting religious tolerance and combating discrimination) in the different European states.

Two examples of good practice are the Council of Europe’s adoption of the ECRI general policy recommendation (-No. 5) to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, and the European Union’s recent insertion of a non-discrimination provision in the EC treaty (Article 13). The latter provision is supplemented by two Council Directives (one that combats racial discrimination in different fields and the another combating discrimination in employment – including discrimination on the grounds of religion). As a result of this European anti-discrimination package, national anti-discrimination legislation will develop. By July 19th 2003 each EU Member State must have transposed these directives into national legislation. Moreover, the corresponding Community Action Programme creates an important structural foundation upon which European actors can carry out relevant (transnational) actions.

There are also several examples of good practice at the national level concerning legislation to combat discrimination and to promote tolerance and equality. National legislation to protect basic liberties (i.e., freedom of speech, religion, race, sexual preference, association, etc.) which is often supported by anti-discrimination legislation in key issues such as employment. In addition to national legislation, there are specialised national bodies that aim to apply and monitor the legislation in practice, i.e.: the Board for Ethnic Equality in Denmark, the Equal Treatment Commission in the Netherlands, the Commission for Racial Equality in the UK.

Overall, it is fair to say at supra and national level, legislation and instruments exist to promote equality and combat discrimination, even in terms of religious beliefs and customs. It remains, however, a very sensitive issue to address (directly). This is particularly apparent in local policy-making and implementation approaches. Local authorities are responsible for a range of issues and therefore have a multi-faceted role. They are employer, service deliverer, local stakeholder, initiator of local policies and actions, law enforcer, contractor, planner, etc. This multi-faceted role carries with it the pressure to fulfil each task efficiently and effectively, based on principles of equality. It is about striking a balance between respecting beliefs and customs coming from different cultures (living in diversity) and respecting existing legislation.

It is quite difficult, however, to address the issue of religion face on. Particularly concerning Islam. Although Islam is a common religion in Europe today, it is not automatically welcomed in societies that have traditionally based their beliefs on the more established European religions such as Catholicism or Protestantism. It is also difficult to understand the relationship between the socio-cultural needs of Muslims and their religious needs, or to distinguish between the two.

Sensitivities concerning these issues are also connected to the heterogeneity of the communities themselves. There are great differences between Islamic communities from Turkey and Morocco, and those

from Somalia, Iraq or Bosnia; just as there are great differences as to how the different Islamic communities see themselves.

The following table provides some basic figures identifying the features in the populations of SHURA partner cities:

Table: Population features in SHURA cities

City	Population	% of ethnic minorities in total population	% of Muslims in total population	Origin of largest Islamic groups ³
Aarhus (DK)	284,668	10.7%	not available	Lebanon, Turkey, Somalia
Bradford (UK)	486,000	20%	16%	Pakistan, India, Bangladesh
Mannheim (D)	320,000	21.3%	8.5% ⁴	Turkey, Bosnia, Iraq,
Rotterdam (NL)	600,000	42%	15% ⁵	Morocco, Turkey, Surinam, Pakistan
Turin (I)	904,171	3.31% ⁶	1.38% ⁷	Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Senegal, Somalia, Iran

2.2.1. Aarhus ⁸

Legislation

- National level

Danish national legislation includes basic democratic liberties, such as the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of gathering etc.

The 'Law against verbal discrimination' and the 'Law against unequal treatment'⁹ are general laws prohibiting any discriminatory behaviour by individuals and institutions. Infringements are sanctioned with fines or imprisonment. A newer and more specific law, is the 'Law against unequal treatment in employment', preventing employers from using information about applicants' ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, national, or regional background when hiring new staff.

³ In descending order

⁴ Estimate based on dominant religion in country of origin

⁵ Unofficial figure

⁶ There is a concentration of ethnic minorities in the district of Porta Palazzo, where the percentage rises to 17.55%. Approx. 38% of which is of Moroccan origin.

⁷ Estimate calculated by ECWS using population data of 1999 and based on dominant religion in country of origin.

⁸ This section is taken from the Aarhus local report drafted in the framework of SHURA.

⁹ "Unequal treatment" is understood to be every direct or indirect unequal treatment on the basis of race, colour of skin, religion, political sympathies, sexual orientation, or national, social, or ethnic origin.

The 1999 'Law of integration' specifically regulates activities offered to newly arrived migrants in the first three years after they gain permission to stay, and it aims at employment and education.

- Local level

Aarhus has its own Policy on refugees and migrants. This policy deals with integration and promoting equal opportunities in the work of all local authority departments.

Country of origin

The Muslim population in Aarhus consists of a range of different nationalities, of migrants and refugees, and of both first and second generation of new citizens. The first group of Muslim arrivals in Aarhus dates back to the nineteen-seventies, when Danish companies introduced foreign workers to Denmark, particularly from Turkey, due to a lack of Danish workers. This group of people has been in Denmark for almost thirty years and is often seen as the most integrated group.

In the early 1980s, refugees from the Iran-Iraq war came to Denmark. In the mid-eighties Palestinian refugees fled from Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel and came to Denmark as a result of the Palestinian uprising between 1987 and 1993.¹⁰

The latest group to arrive from Islamic countries are Somalis fleeing the civil wars in the mid- and late nineties.

These are not homogeneous groups. The time of arrival and the background and the circumstances concerning individuals' arrival in Denmark is judged to be significant to the level of integration obtained – those who arrived most recently are typically the least integrated in Danish society.

However, as Danish national legislation allows family members to be reunited with family in Denmark, all groups of nationalities grow continuously. So even the more established groups have members who have arrived in Denmark recently.

Geographic distribution in Aarhus

As is often the case in larger cities, the various ethnic groups tend to concentrate their presence in certain geographic areas. This is also the case in Aarhus, where the majority of refugees and migrants (and therefore Muslims), live in suburban neighbourhoods in the western part of the city. This means that local policies and organisations concerning refugees and migrants are concentrated in this area.

Organisation of Islamic communities

The organisation of Islamic communities in Aarhus consists of several private associations, the majority of which is non-religious (social and leisure clubs, sport clubs, women's organisations, etc.). Some organisations offer guidance to parents on children or on Danish society, others teach children the religion and history of the country of origin. The exact number of Muslim clubs and associations is not known, but the level of organisation is estimated to be high.

So far there are no mosques in Denmark. Therefore worship and prayer take place in private locations, and local organisations organise religious events, particularly Friday prayer.

¹⁰ It is important to notice that Palestinians include both Muslims and Christians.

Most of the Islamic clubs in Aarhus are members of a national Islamic umbrella organisation, organising religious events and celebrations and providing the clubs with religious guidance.

Representation

The Integration Council consisting of the ethnic non-Danish citizens in Aarhus, permanently has 8 members (of a total of 13 members) from traditionally Islamic countries. Seats in the democratically elected council are distributed in accordance with the national composition of the ethnic non-Danish citizens in Aarhus.

The role of the Imam

In Aarhus, each national group has its own Imam. These local Imams and all Islamic communities in Denmark are united by central or common Imams, based in Copenhagen. These central Imams often act as spokesmen on Islamic community issues, as was the case in February 2001, when one of the Imams commented in national newspapers on social disturbances involving young Muslim men in Odense, Denmark's fourth largest city.

The local Imams function as counsellors for both Muslim individuals and their community, both in matters directly related to religion and in private and social matters. Imams also work with mainstream public services to supplement advice from teachers, social institutions and social workers. However, the combined use of public and religious institutions is not yet institutionalised.

The Image of Islam and Muslim communities in the media

A 1997 report by The Council for Ethnic Equality in Denmark analysed the representation of ethnic minorities in the Danish media.¹¹ The report clearly states that there is a clear tendency to divide the Danish population into 'us' (Danes) and 'them' (migrants and ethnic minorities). The media describes the migrants and ethnic minorities with limited and stereotypical selection of topics and themes, which increases the social distance between minority and majority. A review of news coverage in the autumn of 1996, showed that 70 percent of the broadcast and written news contained negative news items on ethnic minorities. The report states that this tendency creates an image of negative consensus towards the ethnic minorities.

The same tendency was pointed out by two Muslim representatives from the Ethnic Council in Aarhus, interviewed in the framework of SHURA. The negative representation of Muslims in the media influences the general population's attitude towards Muslims and Islam. Recent negative stories in Aarhus on young Muslim men involved in gang rape, created fear and suspicions towards Islam.

However, in spite of these negative reports, the media seems to be gaining awareness of the role and responsibility they have in the representation of refugees and migrants (including Muslims). One of the two national broadcasting companies, TV2, recently received a symbolic 'baton' from the Danish Board of Ethnic Equality, thereby committing itself to promote ethnic equality and to combat direct and indirect discrimination. TV2 has made a list of concrete approaches it wishes to implement and the company will have to publicly review its efforts by end of the year. Last year, the other national broadcaster, Danish Radio (DR) was 'baton holder'.

¹¹ Hassain, Mustafa; *Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten*. Naevnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997.

The concept of committing companies and organisations for combating discrimination by making them 'baton holders' for one year, was developed in 1997 by the Board for Ethnic Equality. The idea was inspired by the 1997 European Year against Racism¹². Every year, a conference is held to present the work of 'baton holders' and to further develop debates on ethnic equality

2.2.2. Bradford ¹³

Legislation

The Race Relations Act 2000 (which amends the Race Relation Act of 1976) that came into force in April 2001, makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origin. Nevertheless, except for Northern Ireland, there is no UK legislation that specifically outlaws religious discrimination. The Article 13 Directive will change this with regard to employment. However:

- The courts have said that Sikhs and Jews are distinct ethnic groups under race legislation, which to some extent protects their religious views (e.g. Sikhs don't have to wear crash helmets if they are wearing a turban).
- Since religion is often associated with racial groups then indirect discrimination can be an issue. This aspect should not be underestimated.
- Specific exemptions have been made with respect to shop opening times (for the Jewish communities) and the slaughter of animals (for both Jews and Muslims)

Secular vs. non-secular groups

In Bradford 'secular' really means not directly attached to any particular mosque. Religion is at the heart of Bradford's Muslim communities and there is no evidence of the existence of any Asian community group, which challenges the authority of Islam. Any conflict between groups often includes a theological justification of their stances.

Religion and culture are not so much overlapping as a tangled interface. The issue being that culture can be challenged but religious belief cannot.

Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous Groups

The Muslim communities of Bradford appear to be a very homogeneous group and the city sometimes gives the impression of being bi-cultural rather than multi-cultural. However, based on anecdotal evidence and a recent interview with the Vice President of the Council of Mosques the following points can be made:

- There are 38 member mosques, 34 Sunni and 4 Shia.
- The membership of individual mosques is usually based on the locality where people come from. Not just language or state, but also town or village.
- While religious practices (as opposed to observance) do not appear to vary, it is sometimes said that some beliefs vary. For example, Islam has no priests, i.e. intermediary between God and man, but some

¹² An action from the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs.

¹³ This section is taken from the Bradford local report drafted in the framework of SHURA,

allege that people from more rural areas do rely on intermediaries. Perhaps this can be viewed as being like the way Protestants view the Catholic regard of saints and relics.

- Religious interpretation is often intertwined with culture. For example, Pathan women are completely covered while the rest wear salwar and kameez. There seems to be a lot of personal choice for non-Pathan women about covering their hair.
- Homogeneity is encouraged by the practice of arranged marriages, usually between cousins, where one of the partners comes from the mother country.
- The biggest threat to homogeneity may be the alienation of many young people (but by no means all) from the older generation. This does not mean a rejection of Muslim values. There are concerns that younger people cannot recite the five daily prayers in classical Arabic, they don't count in any other language.

Muslim Women Facing Multiple Discrimination

This is perhaps the most sensitive issue in Bradford. Based on anecdotal evidence and an interview with the Vice President of the Council of Mosques the following points can be made:

Sharia law makes specific mention of women and how they should dress and behave and there is a wide variety of theological interpretations. In Bradford the key issues relate to:

- Arranged marriages: Although boys are also affected, there are questions about whether 'arranged' means 'forced'. If a girl refuses an arranged marriage, coercion may stop short of actual violence, but there is always the fear of ostracism.
- Hard to reach: Some Muslim women are much harder to reach, particularly Pathan and Bangladeshi women. This is a problem in terms of health promotion and health services as well as child health and education.
- Access to culture and recreation: Muslim women rarely participate in sport because of the dress codes. Special provision has to be made for swimming pools to be accessible. Even in women only sessions they still enter the water fully dressed.
- Access to employment: In Bradford, certain jobs (such as nursing) are forbidden to Muslim women, yet it is thought that the theological arguments can be overcome as there are women nurses in Kashmir.
- Most employers do have flexible enough dress codes to allow most Muslim women to work. However, in practice there are still problems to overcome.

Links between religious discrimination and social exclusion

It is extremely difficult to prove a causal connection and there is scant evidence for it. While there are disproportionate levels of poverty in the Muslim communities compared to non-Muslim, this can rather be attributed to poverty issues since most Muslims in Bradford come from very poor backgrounds.

The role of the Imam

An issue for Bradford is that most (perhaps all) the local Imams were born and trained in the mother country. This means that they are often not well educated outside Sharia law and can have little understanding of what it means to grow up in Bradford. There are 'seminaries' locally, but more work needs to be done in this area.

Awareness raising to avoid social and cultural unrest

More work needs to be done in researching this issue, but any work here tends to be at the margins as the Muslim population is very segregated from the white population in terms of housing and schools.

The image of Islam and Muslim communities in the media

More work needs to be done on researching this issue, but the images are usually negative.

Discrimination within the communities themselves

Some local research work has found evidence of this, but more research work needs to be done.

2.2.3. Mannheim ¹⁴

Legislation

- Most of the Muslims living in Germany are residents without German citizenship and are therefore defined as *foreign residents*. Discrimination (e.g. a restricted access to the labour market) is primarily due to this legal status of Muslims rather than their religious beliefs.
- German canon law governs the modes of ecclesiastical influence on national responsibilities (e.g. examination powers for graduates in theology or drawing up the curriculum for religious education in schools). The law also governs the Church's privileges as a result of its status as a corporation. To Islamic organisations this sort of structural organisation is contradictory to their religious identity. The Muslims are heterogeneously organised, which makes it difficult for the national administration to find a communicator representing the Islamic church as a whole.
- There is a basic division between the Nation-State and the Church in Germany. Also the German constitution guarantees freedom of worship for everybody. Against this background it becomes clear that there are no special (financial) support programs for *any* religious group.
- Germany still lacks an anti-discrimination law. Both the Greens and the Social Democrat Parties submitted bills in 1998. The realisation of such an anti-discrimination-law is part of the coalition agreement of the current session, but because of its great complexity and the guidelines of the constitutional law that have to be followed, the national government has not yet worked out an amendment.

Organisation of Islamic communities

The majority of Muslims in Mannheim are Turkish. The situation of the Turks reflects the situation of the Muslims, however it is not possible to draw links between their socio-economic situation and/or social or political participation level on the one hand, and their religion on the other hand. Formal connections can only be made between social and economic participation and their status as *foreign residents* (see above).

On the interpersonal level, relating to the social encounters in everyday life, statements about acceptance and tolerance between Muslims and non-Muslims remain vague. To a great extent, existing prejudices and reservations against Islam are based on a historical hostility and ignorance of Islam. Fundamentalists, which

¹⁴ This section is taken from the Mannheim local report drafted in the framework of SHURA.

are a clear minority of the Muslims living in Germany, contribute their share to this more or less negative image of Islam, supported by a highly effective sensational journalism.

For example, when in 1998 a member of the ultra-nationalistic 'Grey Wolves', was elected as chairman of the board of the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosq association, the national weekly magazine 'Der Spiegel' insinuated in an article that the Mayor of Mannheim and the Municipality would co-operate with the Turkish ultra-nationalists. In fact, the City of Mannheim did not accept the 'Grey Wolf', but respected the democratic vote of the board, making plainly clear what they expected from the new chairman: a loyal continuation of the successful integration work between the Muslims and the Non-Muslims. Instead of stressing the administration's control potential, 'Der Spiegel' guessed on the basis of a partial informer and as a result undermined the longstanding process of step-by-step reconciliation between the Muslims and the Non-Muslims.

A small percentage of the Muslims living in Germany are organised. The Islamic (umbrella) organisations are difficult to assess because of their political convictions (comp. studies from *Feindt-Riggers/Steinbach* 1997 and *Lemmen* 2000).

There are 3 main Islamic umbrella organisations in Germany:

- Diyanet Isleri Türk Islam Birliği
- Islam Kültü Merkezli Birliği
- Avrupa Milli Görüs Teskilatları

They are all represented in Mannheim:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque | 2000 visitors on Fridays |
| • Centre for Islamic Culture Mannheim | 750 visitors on Fridays |
| • Fatih Mosque | 1000 visitors on Fridays |

There are also a few other Islamic organisations in Mannheim:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Centre for Alevits' Culture (Turks) | 550 members |
| • Ahmadiyya Community (Pakistani) | 300 members |
| • Bosnian Herzegovinian Centre for Islamic Culture | 100 members |
| • Al Faruq Omar Center (Arabians) | 50 members |

Plus several so called 'backyard Koran schools and mosques'

Islamic Week

In 1996 some Islamic groups (from the region of Mannheim, but not directly from Mannheim) initiated the "Islamic Week". It takes place in the very centre of Mannheim. Different Islamic groups participate together with the "Mannheimer Abendakademie" (institutionalised adult education program) under the patronage of the mayor of Mannheim. No public funds are given to the event.

The "Islamic week" has one main objective: to inform about the Islam and foster its understanding and acceptance in the non-Islamic population

A manifold program takes place at the evenings: informative discussions about the Islam from historical, theological and political perspectives; discussions about current interest themes concerning the Islam and its acceptance in Germany; inter-religious dialogue; Islamic service; Sufi concerts etc.

Through the years the number of critics increased – especially from the Islamic community. The main reproach was the one-sided presentation of the Islam. It was criticised that the program tended towards more or less dogmatic religious direction, ignoring the lay movements in the Islam.

From the very beginning the municipal administration demanded the participation of all (legal) Islamic groups in the "Islamic Week" as condition for taking on the patronage of the event. Through the years the Islamic groups could not find a common base yet, so that in 2001 the municipality called its patronage into question, thus casting a shadow over the future of the "Islamic week".

Summing up the problem lies in the internal disagreements between the different Islamic groups. In the first instance it is not a conflict between the Islamic and the non-Islamic side. The municipal administration just wants a good balance of the different Islamic orientations.

As the Commissioner for Foreigners' Affairs formulated: "Such events are always a tightrope walk." The integration of Islamic culture still is very difficult, at least because there is not "one Islam", but a religion with a wide range of very different adjustments.

International Film festival Mannheim-Heidelberg

The International Film festival started in 1987. Within its scope there was a series of "New Turkish films" right from the first year on. The series was unexpectedly successful. Following a sharp increase in the number of visitors, in 1990 many German cities established a similar offer with Turkish films. A special crowd-puller are the visits of famous Turkish actors or directors during the festival (e.g. there was a traffic chaos in the centre of Mannheim in 1994, when Tarik Altan ("Yol") visited the German-Turkish Centre for culture to join his film presentation).

In 1998 sixteen different Turkish films were shown during the festival – a new record.

The festival can be seen as a special offer to the Turkish residents and their wish to stay in touch with their culture of origin. But it also has a bridge-building function by showing the pluralism of the Turkish society, having similarities as well as differences with the German society. Doubtless it offers a better understanding for the so-called "fremdartig" (foreign) and it is a great vehicle for tolerance and intercultural understanding.

Political participation

Political participation is channelled through the newly convened Migrants Advisory Board (Migrationsbeirat) and Integration Committee (Integrationsausschuss).

The Migrants Advisory Board is made up of thirty representatives elected directly by the foreign residents of the city. Although none of the participating 10 political alliances can be described as religiously oriented, at least 50% of the members are professed Muslims. (The only alliance, which was not voted into the board, was the Ahmadiyya Muslims from Pakistan. Probably because of their small number.)

The Migrants Advisory Board represents the migrants in Mannheim and looks after their interests towards the local council and the Municipality. In addition to this advisory capacity in all fields relevant to the migrants, the Board serves as a platform for the migrants and for the shaping of their opinion.

Eleven members of the Migrants Advisory Board and twelve members of the local council constitute the Integration Committee, which deals with all the migrant's related issues and the improvement of their integration. The Integration Committee is to foster the integration process of migrant residents by recommendations, comments and suggestions. One member of Integration Committee has access to all the relevant decision-making and advisory committees – but without having a vote.

The installation of these two fora can be seen as the local response to the federal law, which still refuses citizens without German citizenship the right to vote on all levels (except the voting right for EU-citizens at local elections). While the possibility for non-German residents to vote a migrants advisory board is no adequate substitute for the missing universal suffrage, it is at least one chance for political participation and representation.

The Integration Committee guarantees a regular co-operation between representatives of the migrant and the representatives of the local council. That ensures the possibility for the non-German residents to present their interests, demands and specific needs to the elected decision-makers of the Mannheim community. The Migrants Advisory Board is very important because it is the organ for the foreign residents to bring in their specific perspective into the communal decision-making and planning processes.

Open Mosque

The Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque and the 'Institute for German-Turkish integration studies and inter-religious dialogue' were founded in parallel. They were the result of the unanimous vote of the local council for the construction of the Mosque despite the scepticism of the non-Muslim residents of the district. The residents' change in attitude from rejection to acceptance of the Mosque has also resulted in a nation-wide positive feedback for the concept of the 'Open Mosque' (see also 2.3.2.).

Anti-discrimination climate in Mannheim

Citizens of Mannheim – non-Muslims and Muslims – stopped the Neonazi march 1st May 2001 before they could enter the city centre. Alevits (a religious minority) made a very important contribution to the peaceful course of the anti-Nazi sit-down demonstration by de-escalating the atmosphere by playing music.

2.2.4. Rotterdam ¹⁵

Legislation

The constitution lays down in its first article the general principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination: "All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, political belief, race or sexual preference or any other ground whatsoever is not allowed".

The definition of discrimination according to the Penal Code reads as follows:

- 'Discrimination is to be defined as any form of distinction, any exclusion, restriction or preference, the purpose or effect of which is to nullify or infringe upon the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, or cultural fields or any other field of social life.'

Policies

Migrants/ Ethnic minorities/ migration policies consist of three strands:

- policies for newcomers (*"inburgering"*);
- policies for people who have settled in the Netherlands/ Rotterdam;
- policies for people going back to their country of origin – currently being developed.

This contribution focuses on the people settled in Rotterdam, the "foreign" urban residents¹⁶. Therefore a special program, labelled "Multi-coloured City", that since 1998 has been one of the councils' priorities, will be described in more detail.

Diversity, "Diversity" or Multi-coloured City is the norm and forms a basic point of departure for all the municipality's areas of policy. The fact that more than 40% of the population of Rotterdam is of foreign origin ("allochthonous") is recognised as a fact and is seen to offer opportunities that should be utilised. In its implementation program four priorities have been formulated.

- Participation in general, subsidised organisations.
General organisations are organisations with no excluding criteria: everybody can participate, if he or she wants to do so, irrespective of ethnic background. Participation by migrants/ethnic minorities and young people in the general, subsidised organisations should be increased.
Organisations should report on the number of migrants and ethnic minorities in the executive committee/ management board of the organisation, on the number of migrant and ethnic minority employees and on products/sales. The report should also comprise terms of reference and concrete measures concerning the methods of how to realise intercultural participation. In addition, migrants and ethnic minorities are challenged to contribute to Rotterdam society in the form of initiatives of their own.

¹⁵ This section is taken from the Rotterdam local report drafted in the framework of SHURA.

¹⁶ This contribution has a companion essay, describing the situation for "newcomers"

- **Rotterdam DiverCity**

The urban society of Rotterdam has changed and continues changing rapidly. This requires new ways of thinking and acting on behalf of the public institutions and the general population. Diversity is to become the basic principle of policy. In order to achieve the “change in approach”, the Multi-coloured City programme formulated the Rotterdam Divercity Scheme, a plan of action for the introduction of diversity policies within the local authority and other institutions. Special efforts are to be made in experimenting with diversity in the fields of communication, personnel policy and service provision. The personnel policy of the local authority is to lead to a true reflection of the composition of the urban population. The Divercity organisation should offer the opportunity for utilisation of a wide diversity of existing talents. The services provided will be geared to the needs of Rotterdam’s multi-coloured and diverse society.

- **Cultural policy**

Rotterdam’s cultural policy will be based on a broad cultural concept that does full justice to the different cultural traditions in Rotterdam. The strategic point of departure is that cultural diversity should be “touchable”, visible and accessible. Within this context, culture is seen from a number of different angles, including as “a bearer of standards and values”, as a tourist attraction, and as a cultural heritage of history and architecture. In 2001 Rotterdam is the Cultural Capital of Europe. One of the themes is the Multicultural City, one of the city’s interpretations of the slogan “Rotterdam is many cities”.

- **Entrepreneurship and employment**

An important objective is to strengthen the entrepreneurship of migrants. In order to achieve this, co-operation is being sought with migrant entrepreneurs.

- **Other areas**

In terms of key measures, percentages still have to be defined for the following targets:

 - Percentage of migrants and young people participating in clubs.
 - The percentage of growth in homeownership by migrants.
 - Number of women and migrants as independent entrepreneurs in the regular commercial market and degree of growth and marks for success.

Policies combating discrimination.

Rotterdam supports and subsidises organisations, which monitor and combat racism, xenophobia and discrimination. A well-known organisation is RADAR (Rotterdam Anti- Discrimination Action Council). RADAR reports to the local authority about institutional forms of discrimination and also reacts to forms of “daily racism and discrimination”¹⁷.

¹⁷ The term racism or race on its own or in word combinations is not often used in the Netherlands. Most of the time people refer to “discrimination” without spelling out the basis for discrimination. In common parlance “discrimination” or anti-discrimination” is used to refer to discrimination on the basis of race, colour and culture. Depending on the context gender is another field to which the term may be applied. It comes close to the semantics of the English “equalities”.

Organisation of Islamic communities

The number of Muslims can only be determined indirectly, because religion is no longer included in population statistics. However, it is possible to make a well-founded estimate based on demographic data and knowledge about the backgrounds of the main Muslim communities in Rotterdam. Virtually all Moroccans and the greater part of the Turks are Muslim. In addition, there is a considerable group of Surinamese Muslims. As a result of the war in former Yugoslavia there is a considerable number of Bosnian Muslims in Rotterdam. In addition, there are between one and two thousand Pakistanis and approximately the same number of Somalis, both groups with an Islamic background.

The Muslim communities in Rotterdam have formed many Islamic organisations. The largest Islamic organisation with which Rotterdam council co-operates is SPIOR¹⁸. SPIOR has 27 member organisations representing 8 nationalities: Turkish (13), Somali (9), Surinamese (4), Pakistani (3), Indonesian (3), Bosnian (1) and Palestinian (1). Five other organisations have expressed their wish to join SPIOR and there are still other organisations that are not a member of SPIOR.

The organisations include 19 mosques and prayer rooms, 10 socio-cultural organisations and 6 youth organisations. Moreover, there are now 5 women's organisations, which were founded legally with the support of SPIOR.

The mosques and prayer rooms affiliated to SPIOR have an important religious function, but they also traditionally fulfil a social function. Mosque-goers come to the mosque to maintain essential social contacts. They find the opportunity to meet and exchange information. Furthermore, the mosque not only provides religious education. Alongside lessons in Arabic and the Koran, both girls and boys have the opportunity to follow a variety of courses, varying from Dutch language to creative skills, computer training and homework assistance.

The role of the Imam in this context is very diverse, depending on the different ethnic and cultural influences from the original home countries. Within the Somali community, for example, the role of the Imam is much more important than within the Moroccan community. The actual role of the spiritual leader may also vary between mosques. Unlike the earlier days, when Imams were often appointed from the countries of origin, the present Imams have been educated in the Netherlands and are much more capable of answering everyday questions relevant to life in Rotterdam. Obviously there are also noticeable differences between the different communities. Just as is in other denominations, there are orthodox and more liberal views. In the spectrum of religious beliefs, all variations are conceivable. In this context it is also important in what way the religious communities maintain connections with countries of origin (for example, the influence of the Turkish government). An important phenomenon for the situation in the Netherlands/Rotterdam is the typically Dutch way of socially structuring organisations and institutions. The Netherlands was to a certain extent, and still is, a "society of denominations". The socialist¹⁹, catholic, protestant and Jewish communities had and to some extent still have their characteristic structure that not only determined the religious life but also the social life. For example, associations, schools, sport clubs were originally organised according to religious denomination. This history means that it is also logical that Muslim schools and associations could be developed.

¹⁸ SPIOR = (Foundation Platform Islamic Organisations in Rotterdam/Rijnmond

¹⁹ The term 'socialist' refers to the pillar in sociological terms and not to a political party.

2.2.5. Turin²⁰

In Turin, the highest concentration of mosques, or more correctly, prayer halls²¹ are located in the districts of San Salvario and Porta Palazzo. They are usually rooms rented by the community and paid for by the congregation. The prayer hall at Porta Palazzo is easily identifiable, because the space around the buildings is a meeting place for many Arabs who gather outside during the day. Approximately one thousand people attend these prayer halls regularly. During the two major Islamic festivals (Aid Al Fitr and Aid El Kebir²²) a much larger number of Muslims of all confessions gather together.

From the information gathered during the interviews²³ there are eight prayer halls in Turin:

- Two prayer halls at Porta Palazzo:
 - The prayer hall *Dar al Koran* is in contact with the Islamic Centre in Imperia, the Islamic Centre in Rome and the Muslim World League. The head of the prayer hall is a well-known personality in the city. He is often interviewed and invited to public meetings as the Imam²⁴ of Turin; frequently he declares himself to be spokesman of the Turin Muslims, when in fact the majority of the Muslims migrants do not recognise him as such. He also heads two prayer halls in San Salvario, where after-school activities are organised for children on Saturday afternoon and, in the month of June, every day except Friday and Sunday. Eighty children attend the Koran school on Sunday morning. About forty people attend the prayer hall every day, a number that increases considerably on Fridays.
 - The Islamic Institute Peace Mosque²⁵ founded in 1995 has a room reserved for women. It is the only prayer hall in Turin which women are a part of the board of administration (one is responsible for teaching, the other for "women's affairs", which means all the activities of the women connected to the prayer hall). The hall is linked to the UCOII (Union of the Islamic Communities and Organisation in Italy). Its head is a moderate. For years now a school has been open on Sunday mornings for the teaching of Arabic language and culture and the Koran.

²⁰ This section is taken from the Turin local report drafted in the framework of SHURA.

²¹ A mosque is a building with a particular architectural style. In Italy there are three: In Rome (1995), in Milan (1988) and in Catania (1980). Turin in fact does not have a mosque in this sense. *Jami'a* (small prayer halls) have less than 40 places and are used exclusively for prayer. *Masjid* are halls with more than 40 places for prayer, in which the Friday prayer meeting is held with a sermon. These halls are also used for other activities such as teaching Arabic language and culture (Koran schools). Turin has *masjid* halls.

²² The feast that marks the end of Ramadan and the sacrifice of the lamb.

²³ Useful information came from a report still being prepared *La presenza islamica a Torino e in Piemonte*, prepared by the Department of Social Sciences at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Turin and the Caritas Migranti, financed by the Region of Piemonte.

²⁴ In fact none of the heads of the prayer hall are true *Imam*:

"The *Imam* of the Turin mosques belong to the category of self-proclaimed *Imam*, which means that they were not sent by their own governments nor by traditional religious and official institutions (Islamic schools and universities). They do not have specific training in the science of Islam. They are leaders chosen by a group of migrants who strongly feel the need, in the face of the cultural situation, to safeguard their traditions. These leaders are above all guarantors of the traditional ideas concerning women, the family, education, the society and the State. They do not have any qualifications to teach Islamic science, and are often in difficulty when reinterpreting the rules in the context of the modern world. Their role must not over-estimated. Many Muslims in Turin do not appreciate their considerable status and do not agree with the role assumed by political and cultural leaders of a conservative and radical nature".

from the web site of the Centro Interculturale of the Comune di Torino.

This opinion was confirmed by interviews.

²⁵ Actually a prayer hall.

150 children attend: Moroccans, Egyptians, Africans, children of mixed marriages, and ranging in age from 6 to 11 years, divided into five classes. Recently permission has been given to transfer this activity to a school. There are approximately 200 spaces available and attendance levels by both Muslim men and women are high.

- Five prayer halls at San Salvario:
 - One of the prayer halls is the only property owned by an association of Muslims. It can hold up to 200 people and comprises a basement, hall, a room for women, a room for ablutions, and a small library. Full time staff lead the daily prayers and the hall is open all day. Muslims of all nationalities attend, mostly from the Maghreb and Somalia. Attendance is highest on Fridays and at the weekend, and particularly during the month of Ramadan. Assistance for visiting the sick and for refugees is also organised. Courses for children in Arabic and on Islam-Arabic culture are held, as are courses on Islam for Italians (or others) that want to learn about Islam.
 - A second prayer hall is closely linked to the above mentioned one and is headed by a Somali leader. It was the first Turin-based centre in close contact with the Islamic community in Milan. Since 1997 it has been reserved for Muslim women, including converts.
 - A third prayer hall is mostly attended by Somalis and some Moroccans.
 - A fourth prayer hall serves a mixed congregation of Somalis, Algerians, Moroccans. It is the headquarters of the *Associanze Culture Islamic* in Piemonte.
 - A fifth prayer hall is located in the area around the Porta Susa railway station: The *Centro Islamico di Torino* (via San Martino). It has been open as a prayer hall since 1987; courses of Arabic-Islamic culture and rites of passage are also held here. Its leader, a 'historical' figure from the initial wave of immigration, has always managed it. He currently also acts as an element of mediation and equilibrium between the heads of the other two Turin prayer halls (in Porta Palazzo).

- In the northern area of the city a prayer hall has recently opened.

In recent years a number of *halal* butcher's shops have opened in the Porta Palazzo quarter. Restaurants offering Moroccan and Arab cuisine have also become common and there are kebab shops in the Porta Palazzo and San Salvario areas; two associations, *Alma terra* and *Dar Al Hikma*²⁶ have opened or are about to open Turkish baths.

Courses of Arabic for Italians, and the opportunities for encouraging religious dialogue between representatives of various religious confessions are also increasing (courses, conferences, and films).

The Muslims of Turin are heterogenic. There are activists that act through the mosques. There are individuals and families who consider their religious beliefs a private matter and who do not attend the mosques. There are people from Muslim countries who declare themselves to be non-believers: they are individuals or associations who often collaborate with the public sector through co-operatives for cultural mediation or similar organisations. The Senegalese are a separate group because they are organised in confraternities.

Some of the people interviewed emphasised that Turin has a large number of Muslims from rural areas (in particular, many Moroccans come from the area around the city of Kourigba), and are mostly illiterate. Their

²⁶ The association has set up in the same building a Centro Culturale Arabo (...).

attitudes²⁷, which are often believed to be dictated by rigid religious observance, are derived from cultural and traditional models practised in the area they lived in. The relationship between the various communities is not always harmonious. One of the strongest conflicts existing in Porta Palazzo is the one between the heads of the two prayer halls. The situation is fairly stagnant, relations between the communities seem to be based more on separation than on collaboration, and this fragmentation certainly generates weakness when making claims or negotiating.

2.3. Different strategies, different approaches

2.3.1. Three dimensions

At local level different strategies and different approaches can be seen. Before going into the local practices in the five SHURA cities it is useful to briefly describe the three dimensions identified and provide a picture of the overall findings.

- The degree of formality and explicitness
The degree of formality has to do with the extent to which measures promoting religious tolerance and equality follow officially established procedures, policies, laws or whether they are unofficial, addressing ad hoc issues of every day circumstances. Often there is a direct link between the degree of formality and the explicitness of the approach. The explicit aspects of an approach have to do with the extent to which local authorities can clearly, precisely and directly identify their approach towards religious tolerance and equality or do so in an indirect form via the implementation of other approaches.

The relevance of the distinction is that the objectives and targets are clearly outlined, serving as a frame of reference for the expectations of all parties concerned. It is easier to monitor whether actions are taken and what their impact is. Individuals and organisations can identify more readily whether there would be an official basis for a complaint. Improved monitoring and follow-up could contribute greatly to a better understanding of Islam, the mechanisms required for improving policy-making in this regard.

The issues of religion are not commonly addressed in a directly formal or explicit manner. This does not mean, however, that it is not addressed. The level of specificity of a topic like religion is such that it is not likely to stand on its own, but is more likely to be part of a greater whole. The existence of formal strategies for integration, for social inclusion, and legislation combating discrimination also imply the support for basic principles of equality and, in this case, the freedom to practice one's religion equally. Thus, it may be said that formal policies exist and the issue of religion is an embedded element addressed as part of the greater whole. The Islamic community is perceived as groups of people with different ethnic backgrounds bound together through the social-cultural identity of Islam.

- A pro-active or reactive approach
The pro-active and reactive aspects have to do with the extent to which local authorities act in a forward-looking manner or act in response to stimuli around them. In fact, the reactive approach is quite common given that support is easier to achieve when an approach or policy addresses shared, visible

²⁷ Two of the interviews stated that it is of fundamental importance to make contact with these people and educate them in "true" Islam; the attitudes referred to above all concern the relationship between men and women and the education of children. One interviewee mentioned that some women working as 'home-helps' refused to serve ham or wine at the table.

concerns. Pro-active approaches are less common even though they are widely advocated. The reason why they are less frequently applied in practice is that it is quite difficult. Not only is support less easily mustered, but it also requires a fairly clear and explicit future-oriented strategy, serving as a guiding principle for action. Particularly in sensitive areas, where a consensus is not easily achieved, this level of explicitness and commitment to long-term objectives is not commonplace. The long-term objectives remain implicit. Putting them in the spotlight is considered as counter-productive as they may disturb a delicate process of dialogue and creating a wider acceptance in society for views and ideals that some perceive as threatening.

Policies concerning ethnic minorities in general and Islamic communities in particular are dealing with a very sensitive area. There are many conflicting ambitions, views, needs and expectations among the various parties concerned. It is an issue heavily coloured by emotive arguments and incidents that attract (adverse) publicity. Pressured by the threat of undesirable shifts towards the extreme-right in the political landscape, those responsible for policy-making tread carefully.

- The directness or in-directness of the strategy
The direct and indirect aspects have to do with the extent to which the local authority involves intermediary persons or organisations in its approach towards Islamic communities. A direct approach entails a hands-on involvement of the local authority whereas the indirect approach is characterised by delegation and sub-contracting. Strategies in fact always combine both aspects. This dimension should be seen more as a continuum than a strict distinction. Nevertheless, it is important to reflect on this dimension as it helps to understand the mechanisms behind the policy implementation process and the involvement of a wider group of stakeholders (i.e. the Islamic community) therein.

2.3.2. Experience at local level

Aarhus

A general policy was needed in order to meet the increasing number of foreign citizens in Aarhus. Especially the development in the city schools with the rising number of bilingual pupils was a point of concern for the local authority. A steering committee, made up of heads of departments from the city administration, formulated the proposal for a general policy in 1995. After hearings and revisions, the policy was approved by the city council on May 8th 1996. The steering committee continues to revue and guide the General policy on refugees and migrants in Aarhus. The General policy on refugees and migrants wishes to combat the obstacles towards integration and aims to provide equal opportunities, demands and duties to refugees and migrants. The policy focuses on five main areas: housing, language, employment, leisure and culture and attitudes.

The local policy targets refugees and migrants in Aarhus, and the term "refugees and migrants" covers the citizens of foreign origin, i.e. from the so-called third countries (all except the Nordic countries, EU, and North America). "Refugees and migrants" are citizens who are born in third countries or whose parents are born in third countries. Refugees and migrants are registered according to their country of origin. This means that on the policy level, no approaches are directed particularly towards integrating Muslims. However, a large part of the refugees and migrants in Aarhus are Muslim, and since approaches are made to best suit its users, some particularly support Muslim citizens.

The Law of integration of January 1st 1999 made the establishment of local integration councils possible. In March 1999 the establishment of the integration council was initiated. A process that was completed with the first elections held in April 2000. The Integration Council has 19 members, whereof 4 are appointed representatives from the national Employers Union, the Workers Union, the Union of School Boards and the union of parents to children in day care institutions. The remaining 15 members are elected among refugees and migrants by a direct, secret vote. The 15 seats are distributed among the countries and regions with the biggest representation population wise.

The following principles determine the work of the Integration Council:

- By request or by own initiative the Integration Council may give guiding comments and statements on the local integration efforts. The Integration Council must be heard in all political matters concerning integration to be decided on by the city council.
- The Integration Council meet 10 times a year and when needed.
- The Integration Council may invite to its meetings representatives from other parties involved in integration

The objective of the Integration Council is to assist the city council in making consistent and efficient efforts in promoting integration and equal treatment of all citizens. The Integration Council is co-ordinated by a secretary appointed by the local authority. The departments in charge of the relevant policy domains follow up the recommendations of the Integration Council. An ongoing dialogue has been established between the Integration Council and departments within the local authority.

The Aarhus approach can be characterised as *formal* and *explicit* in the sense that there is a clear legal and organisational basis for the process of policy development. The objectives are also clearly outlined. These objectives are focused on different areas of integration. The promotion of religious equality and tolerance are not explicitly targeted. The policy targets the migrant and ethnic minority population as an overall group. Deliberately, no differentiation is made between the different ethnic groups. Nevertheless, recognising the heterogeneity of the migrant and ethnic minority population in terms of their social and cultural background is the basis for putting the policy into practice. In that sense, the Islamic community is not targeted as a specific group, neither on the grounds of their social-cultural identity nor on the grounds of their religion. Possible specific needs on a religious basis are addressed *implicitly* as an embedded part of the overall objectives of an integration policy.

The implementation process starts from a bi-annual policy plan. In that sense there is clear move towards a *pro-active stance* in policy making. However, practice in fact shows tendencies towards a *reactive approach*. Shaped by pragmatism, the local authority officers involved from the various departments work with a case-by-case approach. Nevertheless, the role of the Integration Council is designed in such a way that a more pro-active development of policies in the field of integration can be expected. They have the right to be heard on all political matters concerning integration. As the Integration Council has only been working since spring 2000, it is not yet possible to assess its impact on the policy making process.

The approach is a very *direct* one. There is direct dialogue between the Integration Council and the various departments involved. The case-by-case working method also points towards a very direct approach. While recognising the need of the migrant / ethnic minority to be actively involved in the process, the local authority keeps a direct responsibility for policy development and implementation.

Bradford

Bradford has well developed equality policies. Religion is dealt with generically. It is not a statutory issue, but is such an important part of Bradford (ethnic minority) life that it cannot be ignored. The religious aspects of anti-discrimination policies are developed in consultation with faith groups such as the Council of Mosques. The religious observances of the 6 main religions of Bradford are treated with equal respect.

In practice the local authority's approach is pragmatic and relies heavily on the views of the 'elders'. While efforts are made to engage with young people, the Council of Mosques is extremely influential. It is directed towards interventions and actions. Incidents of discrimination are picked up and practical solutions or mediation is sought. In July 2001, serious riots took place in Bradford. At local level these riots are strongly believed to be the result of a provocative demonstration by a white fascist group confronted with criminal elements of "Asia young men". There might have been a deliberate tactic by drug dealers to 'persuade' the police that any arrest of an "Asia young man" could result in a riot.

The Bradford local authorities feel that the factual segregation of the different ethnic communities actual prevents inter-community racial tensions. However, there is evidence of fear and mistrust within all ethnic groups living in Bradford.

For Bradford the riots are seen as the result of tensions brought about by poverty, social exclusion and crime. The riots have fuelled Islamophobia and a negative perception of Bradford and its Muslim Community. Similar types of unrest which have occurred in white areas received much less publicity because these areas are geographically isolated and the unrest took place on a much smaller scale.

The approach is *formal* and *explicit*. It is embedded in the British tradition of race relations policies. The involvement of the local authority in shaping and implementing local policies is very *direct* and backed up by grievance and disciplinary procedures

Mannheim

The Commissioner for Foreigners' Affairs plays a central role in the approach to policy-making and implementation concerning migrants, including the Islamic community. Although the issue of the Islamic religion is not a specific focus in the activities of the Commissioner, in practice it has become an important theme. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the largest ethnic minority group is Turkish, which is predominantly Muslim. Secondly, the Islamic community was perceived as being the most different from the traditional German mainstream culture.

The activities of the Commissioner concerning the Islamic community is mainly targeted at stimulating a greater acceptance of the Islamic community in the wider urban society of Mannheim. To achieve this, support is given to the Institute for German-Turkish Integration Studies and Inter-culturalism. One of the most crucial activities in this respect has been the development of the so-called 'Open Mosque'.

In 1994 the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque was built, the biggest Mosque in Germany. The idea of the 'Open Mosque' is that it can serve as a positive model to create a better understanding of the Islam in the non-Islamic population. While the Mosque was under development the Christian-Islamic Society was founded to launch an inter-religious dialogue between the different confessions. As a result of the 'Open Mosque' model networks have been established between the Mosque and Institute for German-Turkish Integration Studies

and Inter-culturalism and the municipality, local public institutions, the churches, political parties and the Turkish consulate. These networks largely contribute to the public acceptance of Islam and strengthen the feeling of recognition among the Islamic community.

In the context of the 'Open Mosque' different events are organised, such as:

- supra-regional meetings (like 'Muslim women in Germany – looking for independent ways into the modern age' in 1997)
- symposia (e.g. 'Is the Islam compatible with western democracy?' in 2000)
- at the 'Mitfeierzentrale' (Celebrate together) the different religious groups (Muslims, Jews, Christians) join each other for their religious holidays
- regularly, Christian-Muslim services take place, alternately in Christian churches and the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque
- Especially the tradition of inter-religious services for school-classes is to mention: About five Muslim-Christian services take place every year – alternately in the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque and in different churches in Mannheim. In preparation for these inter-religious services the participating school classes learned songs from both religions (in German and Turkish) in order to sing them together. As the organizers from the "Institute for German-Turkish integration studies and inter-religious work" and the municipal education authority said: "These morning services contribute to a better understanding and mutual tolerance between Muslims and Christians."
- Sufi concerts

There is also an educational offer (i.e. German language training for adults and young persons) and advisory services concerning education.

Apart from networking and dialogue in relation to the Open Mosque model, Mannheim also has an institutionalised dialogue with the ethnic minority communities. The Migrants Advisory Board provides the ethnic minority communities with a channel to voice their concerns and needs. It can advise the municipality on a wide range of policies in relation to the specific needs or concerns of the ethnic minority community. Recently, has also been set up an Integration Council. Its membership is composed of representatives from the Migrants Advisory Board as well as from the local authority. The Integration Council has decision-making power concerning integration issues.

In line with the German tradition, the different organisations for social welfare (Wohlfahrtsverbände) play a key role in the service delivery concerning social welfare needs. Traditionally, these welfare organisations are based on denomination. Since there was no welfare organisation linked to the Muslim religion, the social needs of the Islamic (Turkish) community were catered for by the non-denominational 'Arbeiterwohlfahrt' (Workers Welfare). Obviously, the needs directly related to the Muslim religion are not met adequately in this manner. Consequently, Islamic organisations relying heavily on the support from the country of origin have filled in this gap. The influence of the country of origin has thus also remained significant, potentially slowing down the process of integration.

The Mannheim approach is organised in a rather *formal* manner, placing the Commissioner for Foreigners' Affairs in a central position. The mission of this Commissioner concerns all integration issues and issues related to the Muslim religion are embedded into the overall policies. In that sense the key objectives of policy making concerning religious equality and the promotion of tolerance remain *implicit*. The strong focus that is attached to the development of the 'Open Mosque' model, however, has heightened the visibility of

the Islamic community and policies related to that considerably. Therefore, the practice of policy making in this respect is very much an *explicit* one, even though the aspects of religion, culture and ethnicity remain intertwined.

The central objective of the policies concerning the Islamic community is safeguarding equal rights and access to services as well as integration into the mainstream society. This rather wide perspective means that it is not clear to what extent the process of policy making is proactive or reactive.

It seems that the Migrants' Advisory Board has both a *proactive* and a *reactive* role to play. The intention is that the Migrants' Advisory Board can already involve itself in the planning process leading up to decision making concerning policies that may affect ethnic minorities, including the Islamic community. Following the outcome of policies, they bring possible problems and concerns to the table (reactive).

The Integration Council appears to be designed on a more *reactive* basis. Its main task is to reflect upon the outcomes of policies and debating potential needs for adjustments.

The implementation of policies in the sense of service delivery or project work is mainly shaped through the work done by independent organisations such as the Institute for German-Turkish Integration Studies and Interculturalism with respect to the issues of religion (*indirect*). This is in line with the German tradition of policy implementation as is also demonstrated by the role of the so-called Welfare Organisations (Wohlfahrtsverbände). Nevertheless, the city of Mannheim also develops and implements a number of projects *directly*. These projects are mainly focussing on areas where other organisations are less active.

Rotterdam

The promotion of tolerance and equal treatment of Islamic communities in Rotterdam is embedded in a general approach. The cornerstone of this approach is that policies and services should be equally accessible to all residents (although additional efforts are made to encourage the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in, for example, employment). The multicultural nature of the city is promoted via a specific programme called "Multicoloured City" (1998) which is a starting point for policy implementation in the different departments of the local authority. The four priorities are participation of ethnic minorities in organisations, a Diversity Scheme for the municipal services, a broad cultural policy and, entrepreneurship and employment. The city has a specific policy for the reception of newcomers, another for settled migrants and ethnic minorities and another for "minority residents" returning to the country of origin (being developed).

The need to enter into formal discussions with local mosque organisations regarding the relocation of mosques throughout Rotterdam during the urban renewal process (1980s) motivated the establishment of a more structured organisational relationship with religious communities. By 1989 there was a municipal officer responsible for mosque policies and shortly after, a publication on the issue was tabled and decided upon by the council. All this led the local authority to subsidise an umbrella organisation called SPIOR (Foundation Platform Islamic Organisations in Rotterdam/Rijnmond) to act as a liaison between the Islamic communities and the local authority. Today, SPIOR develops and carries out specific services for the local authority and participates in political committees and consultation groups. The organisation is responsible for developing and co-ordinating activities that advise the local authority on issues of ethnic minorities. Its overall objective is to influence policies through its developed network and activities in favour of Islamic interests.

An important element of the approach is the consultative platform²⁸ of migrants and ethnic minorities (including religious minorities) used by the local authority to screen, discuss and exchange views on (potential) strategic policies. In some cases, proposals for policy action must get the approval of the platform before becoming an official policy. The importance of this platform system is that an involvement of migrants and ethnic minorities, including Islamic communities in the process of policy development is more likely to result in policies and services that better guarantee equality in the services provided and a certain sensitivity to the issues in question.

The Rotterdam approach is a *formal* one in the sense that it is clearly outlined how the process of policy-making is organised. Its objectives focus on general integration and social inclusion issues and are in that sense *explicit*. The underlying objectives concerning the promotion of religious equality and tolerance however, remain *implicit*. The various actors involved in the process can introduce elements and issues concerning religious equality and tolerance but the issue is not in the forefront of the policy making debate.

The implementation of policies is practised via consultative groups and sub-contracting to SPIOR. The consultation groups (advisory groups) exemplify the *pro-active* stance in the policy-making approach. Early on in the process, an explicit screening is carried out to assess whether policies entail implicit and unintended discriminatory mechanisms. Again issues of religion can be addressed, but are not necessarily the primary focus.

The role of SPIOR can be seen as an example of delegation via subcontracting of policy implementation responsibilities (*indirect approach*). Originally set up as a response to emerging needs of the Islamic community concerning the establishment of Mosques, it was *reactive* in nature. Gradually SPIOR has also become a key partner in the process of policy development concerning the Islamic community. However, this role is not formalised or made explicit. The longstanding nature of the co-operation has allowed SPIOR to develop, extending its activities beyond the border of Rotterdam. The focus of SPIOR is still the needs of the Islamic community, but religious issues as such are explicitly in the forefront of their work.

Turin

The city of Turin does not promote specific policies or actions for combating discrimination based on religion. There is however, an intrinsic network of immigration services and offices; the main offices of which are the Nomads and Foreigners Office, the Nomads and Foreigners World Office, the Non-EC Minors Office, and the Intercultural Centre. Their actions are directed at intercultural education, protection of illegal minors, professional training, employment, health, reception of newcomers and intercultural (social) activities. The network tries to co-ordinate its work and to create formal understandings and co-operations. Policies concerning the Muslim migrants and ethnic minorities in Turin are first and foremost conceived as policies directed at non-EU citizens. Matters related to their religion are only considered after the more pressing issues are dealt with.

In recent years the city of Turin has, in conjunction with other local authorities, tried to develop a more coherent range of services and activities targeted at the needs of the migrants and ethnic minority population. This approach has stumbled on considerable difficulties in the management and delivery systems of the municipality. Certain organisational rigidities not only posed problems in case of emergencies, but made it also quite difficult to have an adequate response to needs put forward by the

²⁸ Foreigners have full passive and active voting rights at municipal level in the Netherlands.

migrant and ethnic minority community. To overcome these organisational problems, the City of Turin decided to subcontract a wide range of services and activities to different associations and social co-operatives.

Turin embeds its approach to promote tolerance and equal treatment of Islamic communities in general policies to meet the needs of the overall migrant and ethnic minority population, which are aimed at encouraging a multicultural society. The process of policy making is *formalised*, taking the legislation relevant to the position of non-EU citizens as its basis. The focal points of the activities with respect to the integration of individuals into Italian society (housing, health, reception of newcomers, education, employment, etc.) are set out *explicitly*. Issues that are more specific to the Islamic community vis-à-vis their religion, remain *implicit*. This can partly be explained by the fact that these needs are considered as more urgent. Another factor is that the distinction between Islam as a religion and Islam as social-cultural identity cannot be made very easily, particularly in a society where one religion, i.e. Roman Catholicism, has been so dominant in its development.

The overall approach seems to be strongly geared to solving the problems encountered by non-EU citizens. In that sense the approach appears to be more *reactive* than pro-active. Nevertheless, recent efforts to set up a more coherent process of service delivery taking on board the needs voiced by the ethnic minority community does point to more pro-active impulses in the process of policy making.

The delivery of policies is partly carried out *directly* by the local authorities and partly *indirectly* through a network of associations and social co-operatives. The direct approach is mainly applied for issues directly governed by legislation, whereas the indirect approach is used for the delivery of a wide range of integration services.

2.4. The involvement of Islamic communities

2.4.1. Types of involvement

The involvement of Islamic communities is a critical element for determining the extent to which measures adequately deal with religious tolerance and equality. Particularly, since policies and activities geared to the promotion of religious tolerance are at best embedded into an overall policy concerning migrants and ethnic minorities. The issue of discrimination on religious grounds is mostly seen as secondary to the more imminent needs of integration. It is dealt with if and when problems arise. The key issue is thus to ensure that the antenna of the policy-making process is sufficiently accurate in picking up any signal pointing to the need for a more targeted approach concerning the issue of religious tolerance. The active and direct involvement of the Islamic community in the process of policy making can be one strategy to ensure this.

The organisation of the involvement can take on different forms depending on the context and approach in question. A distinction can be made between institutionalised and non-institutionalised involvement:

- Institutionalised involvement implies a structural, longer-term co-operation between the local government and Islamic communities/ethnic minorities and, comparatively direct access to the decision-making process.

- Non-institutionalised involvement generally has less weight in the decision-making process. It often implies limited, if not short-term, commitment and occurs sporadically (one-off events) rather than structurally (regularly scheduled).

The *institutionalised* forms of involving Islamic communities can appear in *an advisory capacity* and in a *decision-making capacity*.

- The Ethnic Minority Advisory Councils, Integration Committees or Integration Councils often act as important platforms (especially as most participating migrants and ethnic minorities are non-EU citizens without voting rights) for voicing concerns, discussing issues of mutual interest and for direct access to the political decision-making system. Even with only advisory capacities, these structures have the potential to develop real debates and assessments of local authority approaches. It is however, important to note that in some cases Integration Councils may have decision-making power. Much depends on the local setting.
- Another institutionalised form of involving Islamic communities that allows their active participation in decision-making are the so-called consultative councils. Local authority officers and ethnic minorities and/or community representatives may sit together on such expert panels. The consultative council is called together by the local authority to scrutinise policy plans before they reach the public to ensure that the key elements are in line with a multicultural society.

The involvement of Islamic communities in shaping local authority policies can also be *non-institutionalised* by *ad hoc* and *contractual* means.

- Ad hoc involvement relates to single, non-binding efforts by the local authority to address small or individual concerns of Muslims and where a case-by-case approach is applied. This often happens when specific problems related to specific religious aspects such as, cemetery rites (including a rapid burial processes), dietary needs, prayer rooms, religious teaching in schools, etc. The importance of ad hoc involvement is not to be denied since loudly voiced concerns by Islamic communities appear to be a very effective basis for encouraging local authority action. Moreover, it is often the most pragmatic solution to resolve difficulties that are less easily dealt with through more lengthy and administrative procedures sometimes linked to institutionalised forms of involvement.
- The involvement of Islamic communities by contract is a further means for participation. The idea of contractual work is linked to the element of time – limited time only, but the intensity of the aim of the contract is usually quite specific thus aiming towards specific concerns of Islamic communities. This is the case for cultural mediators and consultants that often provide the local authority with a more culturally aware vision of Islamic communities as well as a more objective perspective on what may appear as a conflictive situation.

The different types of involvement can exist in parallel and in practice often do. Institutionalised forms of involvement are more developed in case of more formal and explicit approaches. The non-institutionalised types dominate in case of informal, implicit approaches. The contractual relationships are the trademark of indirect policy implementation by local authorities.

2.4.2. Key factors influencing the involvement in practice

Structures channelling the involvement of ethnic minorities including Islamic communities, though crucial, are only one dimension of the role migrants and ethnic minorities play or can play in the process of policy development at local level. Another dimension is the quality of that involvement. Quality in this case refers to the openness of the dialogue, the attitudes of both parties involved (local authorities and migrants/ethnic minorities), the degree to which their expectations are being met, etc. In that sense, quality is very much a subjective concept. For this reason it is important to further identify and understand some of the factors that influence the involvement Islamic communities in practice.

Based on the practical experience two key factors can be identified:

- different perceptions concerning the involvement
- the organisational strengths of the ethnic communities and their organisations.

First of all, *perception* has to do with how the different stakeholders (including the Muslims themselves) see, understand or believe the involvement of Islamic communities to be in the process of policy advice and decision-making. The Islamic communities need to know that their efforts are taken seriously and they are appreciated as equal partners in the process. There is a need for reassurance that the efforts are not futile.

Some Islamic groups are able and ready to involve themselves in the shaping of policies. They may already be organised into self-organisations and may have some experience with authorities. Islamic communities that are composed of legal residents (thus with a stable livelihood) have more of a vested interest in local issues and are more likely to want to make qualitative contributions to the local environment. Having said that, it is also important to acknowledge and respect those communities that choose to remain uninvolved in local politics. Those groups that are made up of recent arrivals, that are uncertain of their stay or that have had bad experiences with authorities in the past, are less likely inclined to become involved. In spite of all efforts made they may still feel that active involvement on their part will not only make them more visible but also more vulnerable. There are some local experiences that seem to indicate that a seriously troubled or even traumatic relationship with the authorities in the country of origin is a major contributing factor.

The extent to which Islamic communities become involved is also linked to the perceptions of others regarding the potential contribution of their involvement. This is exemplified by how seriously and respectfully dialogue occurs with mainstream decision-making. The institutionalised committees and consultative councils that presently exist are only as good as they are perceived to be. Advice, recommendations or decisions are only useful if there is the confidence that these will somehow be taken forward into the decision-making process.

Needless to say, the media plays a very significant role in influencing perceptions altogether. To date, the power of the press has proved to be both a friend and foe in the fight against discrimination. The media's portrayal of the ethnic and religious minorities influences the potential and seriousness of the co-operation between these communities and their respective local authorities.

'*Organisational strength*' is also a crucial factor in the involvement of the Islamic community. The extent to which organisations of the migrant and ethnic minority communities, including the Islamic community, have facilities from which to operate, funding for which to organise activities, and training for improving their

resources, will largely determine the potential of their involvement in local policy development and implementation.

As Islamic organisations become more professional and confident with their work, they also become more effective and efficient partners for local authorities. This makes them better able to provide good, sound advice and may subsequently lead to a more direct involvement in decision-making fora. The more representation there is of Islamic communities in relevant policy areas, the better informed the local authority will be to make sure it has the right mechanisms in place to ensure that the approach considers and addresses the needs of all communities in society. It also provides the local authority with a more secure basis on which to pursue more proactive measures and explicit strategies promoting religious tolerance and equality.

The local experience shows that the organisational strength of Islamic organisations with respect to their involvement in the process of policy development is a complex issue.

A first aspect is *funding*. Obviously, access to funding is a prerequisite for organisations to exist and develop. In this context however, it appears that also the source of the funding is of importance. In Mannheim for instance the Islamic organisations are completely dependent on funding from the country of origin. This is felt to be one of the main reasons why these organisations are less focused on the German society and are thus less able or willing to contribute to the process of integration.

Another aspect is the degree in which Islamic organisations and their representatives have *insight into the functioning of the local process of policy making*. Given the fact that these processes are generally already considered to be complex by those who have been trained within that context, it is fair to say that this complexity is multiplied for migrants and ethnic minorities educated in quite different local authority systems and policy-making approaches. The effectiveness of their involvement in the policy-making process through Integration Councils, Ethnic Minority Boards, etc. will depend largely on their ability to assess the scope for influence and change as well as estimate the realistic timeframe in which changes can be expected to be implemented. In Mannheim a training and information session has been organised to help prepare the members of the newly established Integration Council and Ethnic Minority Board for their role. The experience has been a positive one but it also showed that perhaps a more extensive training period would be useful. Therefore the initiative is being continued. Aarhus is currently preparing plans with the intention of organising this kind of training for their Integration Council in the near future.

A third aspect concerns the *facilities and support* made available to migrant and ethnic minority organisations in relation to their active involvement. This has to do with timely access to information and documentation, but also with practical support given by local authority officers. The latter can concern general (secretarial) support to the Integration Council, Ethnic Minority Board, etc. but also more specific support with respect to issues dealt with in the Council. Again practical experience demonstrates the relevance of this kind of support. In practice it is directly connected to the previous aspect in the sense that a deeper understanding of the process helps ethnic minorities to more effectively make use of the facilities available.

2.5. Monitoring effectiveness: practical challenges

Strengthening the approach depends on how appropriately the approach can be assessed. It helps if local authorities establish monitoring and follow-up measures as well as the means to collect and distribute (research) material about the approaches and services of the local authority and community needs. These are important aspects for being able to assess the development of approaches, the identification of user needs and optimise the quality of service provision. Furthermore, (internal) structures such as an office or officer responsible for issues of discrimination, or an ombudsman, are important for (self-)monitoring since they can provide a view on whether (internal) approaches promoting religious tolerance are followed.

In practice, establishing a monitoring system at local level is confronted by a number of practical challenges. The fact that the approach towards Islamic communities with regard to the issue of religious equality and tolerance is often embedded in a more general integration policy is one of the major challenges. The implicitness of the objectives makes monitoring rather difficult.

Another challenge is the definition of the term 'effective'. Given the implicitness of the objectives and the sensitivity of the issue, assessing the effectiveness requires taking on board a number of subjective perceptions. The active involvement of Islamic communities in the process therefore becomes relevant. Overall, there is limited evidence that suggests the involvement of Islamic communities in assessing the effectiveness of local authority approaches. The formal and informal advice provided by organisations such as SPIOR (Rotterdam) and other Islamic representatives in, i.e., local councils, committees or panels can contribute to the assessment. These institutionalised mechanisms appear to present a real opportunity for the local authority to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of its achievements, while at the same time increasing the involvement of Islamic communities in the shaping of policy relevant to them.

In spite of these difficulties, local authorities do try to establish some kind of monitoring. The nature and depth of these approaches differs considerably.

Aarhus

In Aarhus the approach to assessing the effectiveness of policies has recently been established. Therefore, to date no practical experience with the system is available nor are there any assessment results yet.

The approach is directly linked to the setting of goals at the level of specific policy areas. The responsible departments formulate quantitative and qualitative goals for their work for the year ahead. At the same time the methodology for capturing the necessary data and measuring the effects is outlined. These methods vary from statistical data, targeted reports and questionnaires. In conjunction with the outlined methodology in some instances explicit indicators are set as well.

The first results from this new approach to monitoring are expected early 2003.

Bradford

There is no continuous formal assessment procedure concerning the overall policies and their effectiveness. The monitoring is mainly based on the formal grievance and disciplinary procedures. Bradford local authority does however, monitor within their own organisation race and gender at all levels of staff.

On a regular basis reports are made on the current situation in policing, employment, housing and social care. Each report contains a number of recommendations concerning improvements.

Recently, Bradford Vision²⁹ commissioned the "Bradford Race Review" which had to address the following main question: "Why is community fragmentation along social, cultural, ethnic and religious lines occurring in the Bradford District?" The Review Team, led by Sir Herman Ouseley former chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, focused on the drift toward self-segregation, the necessity of arresting and reversing this process and the role of education. To better understand the ongoing process and underlying mechanisms the Review Team held large assembly meetings, spoke to individuals as well as organisations and invited written comments and reports, including the active usage of its web site. Particular emphasis was placed on the active involvement of young people. In fact three of the twelve members of the Review Team were pupils of a Bradford School. The results were published in July in the report 'Community pride not prejudice - making diversity work in Bradford'³⁰.

Mannheim

In Mannheim the assessment of policies concerning ethnic minorities and Islamic communities takes place via project evaluations and targeted thematic studies. There is also an informal monitoring process of the progress made in the field of integration. This monitoring is based on tracking the number of visitors to the 'Open Mosque' as an indicator for the exposure to a positive example of Islam in Mannheim; tracking the number of public incidents in which the Islamic community is in some way implicated; tracking the media coverage; etc.

Rotterdam

In Rotterdam monitoring and assessment is partly linked to the subcontracting of activities to SPIOR. Every year at the end of the contractual period the performance and results are assessed.

The so-called Minorities Monitor (*Minderheden Monitor*) is a survey held every year (since 1997) by the Institute for Sociological and Economical Research (ISEO) and the Centre for Research and Statistics (COS) on behalf of the Department of Social Affairs and Employment of the City of Rotterdam. The outcomes of this annual survey are the main input into the evaluation the effectiveness of policies. The Minorities Monitor covers issues such as housing, employment, education, health care, etc. Based on specific policy priorities every year the survey selects a specific focal point on which more in-depth analysis is carried out.

²⁹ Bradford Vision is a partnership including Bradford Council, West Yorkshire Police, Bradford University, Bradford, Keighley and Shipley colleges, Bradford Chamber of Commerce, Bradford Health Authority, Bradford Breakthrough, Yorkshire Forward and representatives from the voluntary sector and the faith communities.

³⁰ The report can be downloaded from www.bradford2020.com

3. Local experience in three key policy areas

The lack of formal, explicit approaches that directly promote tolerance and equal treatment on the grounds of religion is reflected in the delivery mechanisms of the local authority. In the three key policy areas of employment, public services and education, it becomes clear that the shaping of the larger, strategic frameworks involving different statutory authorities is generally out of reach to the general public, including Islamic communities (e.g. employment policies). As one goes into policy areas that are closer to people; that is to say, that have a more immediate effect on the every day, practical livelihood of people, the extent of the involvement of people (namely, Islamic communities) increases. This may be because there is a heightened awareness of the need to include communities in policy development that directly affect them, as well as, the awareness and willingness of the communities themselves to become involved. This is the case in some of the public services provided by the local authority and also in education, especially primary education. This is less so in the employment policy area.

3.1. Employment

Sometimes local authorities are policy-makers in the field of employment, but they are, at the same time, employers themselves.

As *policy-maker* the local authority aims to integrate people in the labour market who may happen to be of the Islamic faith. Religious tolerance and equal treatment does not come into play when developing employment policies. It might, however, if Islamic communities were institutionally involved in the shaping of employment policies. At present, Islamic communities largely act as ad hoc information gatherers, disseminators and sometimes carry out employment/integration-related contracts.

As *employers*, some local authorities have special actions encouraging the employment by migrants and ethnic minorities in the local authority in order to reflect the society being served. With these special actions, they are directly faced with issues that emerge from employees practising a specific religion such as Islam (e.g. prayer times and rooms, religious celebration and customs, holidays, diet, etc.). Some employment policies in local authorities already include provisions respecting religious customs while others lack the provisions, but accommodate them as long as it creates little inconvenience to others. The difficulty with the latter is that there is no way to know whether people are being kept from practising their religion due to the worry of inconveniencing others. It implies a lack of mechanisms to detect the needs of employees regarding religious customs and practices.

Aarhus

In its role as policy maker the local authority launched a new initiative in November 2000 to assist the employment of refugees and migrants. The main goal is to increase the employment ratio of refugees and migrants with 3 percent per annum for the next 10 years. At that point in time the employment ratio should be equal to the whole population of Aarhus. In 1999 the gap was still 34.2%.

The new policy initiative has 4 key areas of action:

- start up a dialogue campaign targeted at employers and employees;

- increase efforts for the integration into private companies;
- increase efforts in career guidance for young refugees and migrants;
- increase the number of refugees and migrants trained and employed by the local authority.

For the implementation of this policy initiative a wide range of employment and training projects have been set up.

In its role as employer the local authority explicitly states the right to equal opportunities. Specific efforts in this area are grouped under the title 'Room for differences' (Plads til forskellighed). In the process of recruiting new employees special attention is paid to attracting applications from ethnic minorities for all positions. Recruitment of ethnic minorities has so far been specifically successful in the area of public bus transportation (Aarhus Sporveje).

Bradford

Bradford has no specific activities for policy making in the field of employment at local level.

As an employer Bradford has codes of conduct which can be enforced by grievance/disciplinary procedures. There is a prayer room for all faiths whenever space allows for this provision. Awareness courses are also available for staff.

Sensitivity to the various aspects of other religions is the cornerstone of the approach in practice. During Ramadan, Islamic staff members go without food all day and colleagues should be aware of this and be sensitive to it. Similarly, working time should be arranged to suit religious obligations. Respect for religious diversity can also be expressed in more informal ways, i.e. organising an informal meal including a presentation by pilgrims returning from Hajj.

Mannheim

There are no employment *policies* targeted at migrants and ethnic minorities, including the Islamic community, in Mannheim. The lack of scientific and representative data about ethnic, and particularly religious, discrimination in the employment field has been criticised by the Federal Commissioner for Foreigners' Affairs for years (*Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen*, 2000, p. 144). In his publication about "Discrimination on the job" (1998) the President of the German Trade Union summarised that there are still reservations in the personnel departments about the employment of Muslims in the services sector. However, as religion is legally declared to be a private matter, public services and private companies have no responsibility to promote equal treatment with respect to religion. There are no quota comparable to gender mainstreaming and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Even if "undisturbed religious exercise is ensured", as laid down in paragraph four of the *Grundgesetz* (German constitution), this right is restricted through legitimate regulations in the employment field. The employer should protect religious convictions and their practice, but is not obliged to offer the opportunity for it, e.g. by providing a prayer room. Religious practice is allowed as long as the regular working process is not impeded (e.g. praying has to be done during the working breaks; wearing a headscarf is accepted as long as industrial safety is guaranteed).

A serious problem in the workplace is a lack of acceptance and tolerance for different religious cultures and practices. This is linked to various forms of discrimination such as jokes about Muslim praying, clothing and fasting practice, and the justification for neither drinking alcohol nor eating pork.

The three biggest enterprises in Mannheim (Mercedes Benz, 10,000 employees, 10% Non-Germans; John Deere 2,500 employees, 20% Non-Germans (6.4% Turks); Siemens, 2,000 employees, small number of Non-German employees) were asked in how far religious (Islamic) practice is an issue to the company's internal policy. Each of the three personnel managers declared that there has not been any call for action concerning the issue of Muslim practice on the job yet. They all denied any problems in this field. John Deere's personnel manager said: "We do have Muslim colleagues who withdraw to be undisturbed while praying. There has been no racist or religious discrimination so far. A business with employees from twenty different nations has to have intercultural tolerance to function."

Applications for time off on religious holidays are approved without problems in all of the three enterprises.

Two *projects* in the field of employment in Mannheim deserve special mentioning.

- The project '*Deutsch-Türkischen Wirtschafts- und Bildungszentrums*' (German-Turkish Economic and Training Centre) focuses on the Turkish community and tries to support interested Turkish entrepreneurs in setting up their own business and mediate contact to the chamber of commerce. Local experience demonstrates general difficulties and deficits for non-German entrepreneurs. One reason is the reluctance to make use of the different offers of consultation and information provided by the appropriate institutions. There are also more specific problems for the Turkish entrepreneurs (e.g. no property in Turkey is accepted as security by German banks when asking for a loan).

The objectives of the Centre are:

- promoting Turkish business creations
- providing advice and support to existing Turkish business (particularly in crisis)
- break down of barriers hindering the labour market integration of specific Turkish target groups
- the increase of training facilities in Turkish businesses
- the integration of Turkish businesses and companies into the associations at the level of the regional economy.

Concerning religious issues, the centre will remain neutral. But even though the output of the centre cannot be closely related to the religious task of the Islam, in its consequences there will be a correlation: social-cultural (and therefore religious) integration through economic integration! Economic success as well as a high educational level signalise integration and adaptation into the mainstream society. Successful entrepreneurs with (Turkish) migration background change the cliché of the 'low-class foreigner from rural Anatolia'. At the same time it is also expected that the image of Islam will become more diverse. Currently, too many people still believe Islam to be negative towards progress, old fashioned and incompatible with the modern day market economy. This image may be changed partially or even completely through economically successful members of the Turkish-Islamic community, fully participating in the economic associations and bodies at local or regional level.

- The other project is Quist – qualification in the city district. It reaches out to young migrants living in the inner city and tries to encourage them to finish their secondary school education and to go on to

complete vocational training. Establishing interpersonal relations between social workers and their young clients based on mutual confidence is a generally accepted prerequisite for any kind of intervention. One possible way to gain this confidence can be working together in small groups with a regular schedule and a common interest. This way of working offers the possibility to work on changes of attitudes and behaviour within a defined and stable group and, through this, to aim at the improvement and stabilising of personality. A wide range of activities is offered, including theatre and music workshops, construction, painting, woodwork, etc. There are also special provisions for girls. One day a week the activities are open to only girls, allowing also the girls from traditional Turkish families to participate.

Rotterdam

In its capacity as *policy maker* Rotterdam focuses on all groups with weak labour market positions. Migrants and ethnic minorities are one of the target groups. In co-operation with SPIOR the local policy in this respect is shaped. SPIOR is for instance the president of the municipal taskforce on employment policies directed at migrants and ethnic minorities. At the same time SPIOR also participates in the legal control group following up the implementation of the national law SAMEN (Together). This legislation requires businesses and public authorities to keep an official register on the number of staff it employs with an ethnic minority background.

There are also a number of specific projects. All these project involve SPIOR as well as other ethnic minority organisations:

- a help-desk to counsel job seekers;
- special training courses to train highly educated ethnic minorities to become teachers in primary education;
- training project to prepare migrant/ethnic minority women for jobs in home care (Thuiszorg in kleur – "Home care in colour")

As an *employer* Rotterdam has a diversity policy targeted at the recruitment of migrant and ethnic minority staff. This policy has already proven to be successful at the lower and middle level. Religion is not a specific issue in this domain. Nevertheless, the recruitment of ethnic minorities leads de facto to an increase of the number of staff with an Islamic background. In practice this is reflected in the sense that days off are possible with respect to Islamic religious feasts. Account is also taken of Ramadan and special dietary requirements are catered for in the canteens.

Turin

There is no well-defined employment policy targeted at ethnic minorities. However, the Turin local authority funds projects targeted at the vocational guidance and training of foreigners. The local authorities (Turin city council, Province, Region) have promoted, for the three year period 1997 – 1999, through community financing as part of the INTEGRA Employment Program, the creation of projects that seek to provide foreign citizens with a vocational qualification. These projects include:

- Creation of employment start-up, training and orientation services centre through the training of operators and the creation of a network of permanent offices;

- Contacts with Piedmont companies present in those non-EC markets from which the immigrants arrive, to encourage the introduction of small and medium sized businesses with the collaboration of companies which can promote development in the countries of origin;
- Creation of a network of services that support the training and start-up of work, with the additional support of a grant and at the same time assistance in looking for accommodation.

Of fundamental importance is the fact that one of the key players at local level in the setting up of employment projects is the Catholic Church, for instance *Carita Migranti*. Activities specifically linked to the employment issues of the Islamic community are not conducted.

3.2. Public Services

The local authority plays an extensive role as a public service provider to the local society. The spectrum can go from public safety to environment, to libraries, to health care, housing, etc. Its approaches to prevent and combat religious discrimination in its own service delivery varies between cities and is linked to how far departments or institutions are allowed to manage their own individual policies and practices.

It appears that departments of the local authority have the space to develop an own targeted approach when it is deemed necessary. The question remains – when is it deemed necessary? It appears to be deemed necessary when there are complaints or requests by service users (for example parents) rather than through the local authority's own initiative to find that out. The departments that are more likely to accommodate their service provision are those addressing key issues and practices of the Islamic faith such as (quick) access to burial grounds, the establishment of mosques, days off for religious celebration, prayer rooms, diet requirements in public institutions such as hospitals, exclusive spaces for female students in schools, etc. Unfortunately, specific complaints or requests from Muslims in obvious key areas are not a guarantee that only *these issues* in *these departments* impede equality in service provision for Islamic communities.

There is a greater role to be played by the local authority to ensure that service provision is based on equal treatment on religious grounds; just as there is a greater role to be played by the institutionalised involvement of Islamic communities in this respect.

The utility of bilingual staff, cultural mediators, consultants and organisations as SPIOR (Rotterdam) to carry out formal service provision by the local authority to better ensure the take-up of public services by all potential users, cannot be undervalued. However, there is limited evidence of involving Islamic communities in development and planning stages of service delivery.

One of the more apparent issues causing national debate is the ageing population of the migrants and ethnic minorities with different religious practices than that of the autochthone population. From the basis of equality, it means that homes for the elderly will serve all these individuals equally according to their religious customs. How quickly will authorities be to prepare for this future? The collection and distribution of information (including research studies by self-organisations) on this issue is a beginning, but it is only one step in the complex process. Key to ensuring good service provision in (future) homes for the elderly is the involvement of Islamic and other communities in the approach, today.

Aarhus

The local authority offers a wide range of services. The practical experience can be illustrated through the work done with respect to childcare and care for the elderly.

In area of childcare Aarhus employs a consultant to guide and qualify the staff in the institutions with respect to working with bilingual children. The topics are selected to meet the needs of the staff in their daily work. The issue of Islam is not targeted separately, but as a part of more general awareness of diversity. The problems that most frequently occur in practice are related to issues like food, personal hygiene, male staff changing nappies of Muslim girls, etc. The baseline approach is to follow the general guidelines of the institution and to negotiate with individual parents. There is no specific role for Islamic organisations as issues are resolved in a case-by-case approach.

With respect to the care for the elderly, a special knowledge centre concerning the needs of elderly refugees and migrants has been set up in 1999. Currently the number of elderly refugees and migrants is still rather limited and even fewer make use of the facilities offered. In light of demographic developments this is expected to change in the coming years. The knowledge centre has therefore three main tasks:

- gathering knowledge
- communicating knowledge
- developing new approaches relating to the needs of the target group

Bradford

The issue of religious equality in the area of public services is dealt with as an integral part of the overall service delivery approach. This approach covers social services, housing, education, recreation, culture, environment and cemeteries. To respect Islamic funeral rites, a part of the cemetery is set aside for Muslims, which is accessible at all times to facilitate burial within 24 hours of death. At the same time special arrangements are also made with the Coroner's office to release bodies out of office hours.

To accommodate the needs of Islamic women to engage in sporting activities, special women only periods are scheduled in the sporting and swimming facilities.

In consultation with the Committee of Council of Mosques general requirements of Koran are applied to specific circumstances.

Mannheim

- Health services

Interviews with the three largest hospitals in Mannheim (Klinikum Mannheim, Zentralinstitut für seelische Gesundheit und Theresienkrankenhaus) demonstrated that today the offer of Muslim food is standard. Islamic prayer rituals are not seen as problematic – although none of the three hospitals offers a separate praying room. According to the representative of the Klinikum Mannheim 'there is no big demand for a praying room neither from the employee's side nor from the patient's side'. All hospitals offer the possibility for pastoral care by giving access for the Islamic clergymen (Hodcas) to the hospital.

(Except the ‚Zentralinstitut für seelische Gesundheit‘ which only allows their Muslim patients external Hodca-visiting – as well as visiting the mosque).

Language problems are also not acknowledged. All hospitals mentioned the multicultural composition of their staff, which makes it possible to find an interpreter when needed. E.g. the Theresienkrankenhaus is keeping a list with the staff names and their language abilities in order to offer prompt translating services when needed. Only the “Zentralinstitut für seelische Gesundheit” mentioned language problems, which is not surprising given the scale of verbal therapy taking place (e.g. psychotherapy). The Zentralinstitut works very closely with psychologists and physicians in the greater Mannheim region that speak Turkish. The representative of the “Städtischen Kliniken” reported about a decline in language problems in the Turkish group. On the whole, public health services make great efforts in providing multilingual services (e.g. a pharmacy in the centre of Mannheim which serves their customers in twelve different languages).

Concerning activities in health education the public health centre made several events in the last years:

- event for Turkish youngsters about AIDS prevention in 1993
- a workshop „AIDS-prevention with migrants“ in 1995
- another event for Turkish women about sexuality and AIDS in 1998
- the first German-Turkish health-day (nearly all presentations were given in Turkish language by Turkish scientists and physicians) in 1998

In principle, all the projects and campaigns initiated by the public health centre include the Muslims as a target group, but are not specially focused on them. At present there are two regional working groups. One is dealing with the issue 'Migrant patients', the other works on 'Migration and health in the Rhein-Neckar region'.

- Funeral rites and cemetery

There is a Muslim section at the municipal cemetery. The graves all head to Mecca. There is also the opportunity for the ritual washing in the autopsy-room. But the Muslims do not have their own place for their burial-rituals like the Christians and Jews which both have their own chapel. Therefore, the Migrants Advisory Board (Migrationsbeirat) filed a petition at the Integration Council for the permission to build their own ritual washing-room.

Concerning the Islamic rule for an unlimited death rest, there is the possibility to lease a so-called 'Wahlgrab' which allows a prolonged use of the burial place. The burial of the deceased solely in a linen sheet is not allowed in Mannheim yet (because of pollution danger of the groundwater). However, the Academy for Islamic rights in Mecca declared that there is no problem on the basis of Islamic law to be buried in a coffin (*Rohe* 2001, p. 181).

Another problem, mentioned by the local cemetery administration, is the differing views on the up-keep of burial places. The administration criticises a lacking care of Islamic graves as 80-90% of these graves are overgrown. On the other hand, the Islamic tradition has no provisions in this respect.

- Housing

There are no specific housing programs for foreign residents in general nor for the Islamic groups, in particular. In 1997 a report has been published under the title 'Housing to foster the integration of foreign residents' by the municipal working group "Housing in the City of Mannheim". The paper presents statistics and contemporary data. Recommendations are made concerning the promotion of integration and identification especially of Turkish migrants within their districts. But there has not been a conversion into concrete housing practice yet.

- Prison

Research by the German Federal authorities showed that in February 2000 there was a total number of 1925 Muslim prisoners (646 prisoners on remand and 1279 prisoners serving a sentence) in the Land Baden-Württemberg. This is approximately 22% of all inmates.

In eleven out of 20 prisons, religious guidance is offered to Muslim prisoners. Religious gatherings take place on a monthly basis. With respect to special Islamic celebrations additional religious gatherings with Muslim counsellors take place. Generally, this is organised in conjunction with the Turkish Consulate General. In four prisons a more intensive spiritual counselling is offered, sometimes even on a weekly basis. According to the prison authorities there are no specific problems in this domain. Some prison institutions plan to start up spiritual guidance programmes for the Muslim prisoners or to intensify existing programmes (*Deutscher Bundestag*, Drucksache Nr. 14/4530, S. 48, Berlin 2000).

- Ageing

In previous decades the majority of migrants – especially the migrants from the former recruitment-countries – used to return to their home countries after their retirement. Since the middle 90ties another tendency can be observed. More and more migrants are staying in Germany after their retirement.

The demographic prognosis indicates a growing number of elderly migrants (especially from Turkey) with need for medical care and welfare. In several facilities of the 'Städtische Altenpflegeheime' (*Municipal Geriatric Care and Old People's Home*) the theme 'Muslim elderly' is not yet addressed. Their strategy is reactive: Adaptations will be made if and when they are required.

The 'Seniorenbüros' (*Municipal Office for the Elderly*) offer leisure amenities to the elderly. Offers to older migrants – especially Muslims – have not yet been made in the 17 public meeting places. Again the lack of explicit demand and the fact that to date no older migrants make use of these facilities, is the main reason for the lack of specific offer. Nevertheless, there is an openness and willingness to create such an offer in the future.

Like the 'Städtische Altenpflegeheime', the 'Seniorenbüros' also follow a more reactive concept. However it is rather doubtful that the older migrants and especially the older Muslims will be able to take the first step and formulate an explicit demand for services. Not only because of lacking information but also because there is no appropriate (cultural) access to these services and their offer.

Rotterdam

The municipality provides a wide range of services, ranging from education and benefits to public safety and environmental protection. Every service provider and department has its own practice with respect to the ethnic minority communities. Again SPIOR is the central player with respect to the Islamic community.

Generally the issue of religion is not in the forefront of the debate. Interesting are, the efforts of the Housing Department concerning the search for adequate locations for mosques. In dialogue with the Islamic community a limited number but socially well-suited locations have been selected. Planning and construction have begun and the first large mosque (Mevlana Mosque) will be completed in the summer of 2001, replacing a number of smaller and problematically located ones.

Currently, the social functions of mosques are under debate. Some feel that mosques have a role to play, whereas others make a clear distinction in this respect. As also the issue of public support (funding) is related to this debate a research project will be initiated to study the social functions of the mosques.

Turin

One of the areas of public service where the most explicit attention is paid to the issue of religious equality and tolerance is the health service. The issue of religion comes into play concerning the food provided in hospitals and the possibility for Muslim women to be treated by a female doctor. Generally, both aspects are well taken care of. Two specific initiatives have been taken to facilitate further the quality of health care for migrants and ethnic minorities:

- The cultural mediation service has been active since 1995. It also provides support in local social services.
- The Migrant Health Information Centres have been set up in 1999 to provide homogeneous services and guarantee an adequate information flow (costs, epidemiological and preventative medicine and measure anagraphic and statistical data for patients and treatments administered).

Another important area is that of policing. The relationship between the police services and the migrant / ethnic minority community is often strained, as their contacts are often limited to residency permits and related issues. In recent years the situation has improved, according to the interviews held in the framework of SHURA. A specific initiative taken in this domain is the courses in the Arabic language (standard and dialect) for the Municipal Police Officers.

3.3. Education

The local authority is involved in the implementation of (national) education policies. While national legislation lays the foundation for the implementation of local policies and actions, the local authority has great potential as a promoter of religious tolerance and equality in the city's education system. Its main areas of work lie in the basic educational structures (primary and secondary schools) and tackling school segregation, religious instruction, teacher training, 'own language' education, combating discrimination, etc. The importance of intercultural education is apparent in all cities and this should form a link with the promotion of tolerance and equal treatment on religious grounds. Religious tolerance has a relatively higher priority in education than in other policy areas. This is probably due to the fact that religion is a much more

obvious feature in a child's character and early development. In schools, the key issues linked to religion become apparent very quickly in relation to diet, nudity, and public spaces for boys and girls, religious celebrations and holidays, etc. Furthermore, Islam is still viewed to contain an important pedagogical role in the education and guidance of young people so, it will continue to be taught, in schools, in mosques, in private homes, etc.

The involvement of Islamic communities in education spans from doing the actual teaching in Mosques and schools to participating in committees, ethnic councils and parent-teacher organisations that advise or make decisions on issues of (local) education in a multicultural society. These working groups contain parents and community representatives in addition to the public entities represented. The ideas and recommendations made have direct influence on the work of the schools and the teaching approach.

The training of teachers in issues of integration, hiring of cultural mediators and bilingual staff and the occasional participation of parents in schools are the type of supportive measures taken to strengthen the quality of the educational offer towards ethnic minority groups, including the Islamic communities.

A very specific issue is that of the Islamic school. In Germany and Italy it is not possible to establish a school on the basis of a religion. In Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK it is possible to establish Islamic schools. At present, there are three private Islamic schools in Aarhus. In Rotterdam there are several primary schools based on Islamic principles, one Islamic school for secondary education and, interestingly enough, even a Turkish boarding school.

In the debate surrounding the Islamic school questions are raised concerning its quality and the degree of social isolation of its pupils. The experience in for instance Rotterdam has shown that the educational performance of the pupils attending the Islamic schools is equal if not better than the performance of children attending the other schools. Concerning the degree of isolation, it is important to point out that in many schools in the inner city the pupils are predominantly from ethnic minority backgrounds. In other words even though the school is officially not Islamic, in terms of the risk of isolation the situation is similar.

Aarhus

The schools in Aarhus are managed within a decentralised system. The schools decide on their own policies concerning the issue of integration, but respect the goals of integration policy. However, the local authority encourages schools to address integration as a process in which all parties concerned need to be involved.

Schools can also establish a so-called ethnic council. So far, three ethnic councils exist. The role of the ethnic council is to provide advice to the schools on ethnic issues. At the same time they can serve as communication and mediation channel between schools, teachers and parents.

Schools with more than 10% bilingual pupils are part of network through which specialised training is provided over a two-year period. Again Islam is not a key issue, but forms an integral part of the training.

Within schools, tolerance is promoted through organising theme weeks focussing on a specific culture. The main difficulty is to go beyond the exoticism and take on board the differences in every day life.

Bradford

Since 1985, the Interfaith Education Centre, (which is part of Bradford Council's Education Department) including representatives of the four major faiths of the city, Christianity, Islam, Hindu Dharma and Sikh Dharma, have worked in local schools with teachers and pupils helping implement the local Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. It also supports schools in providing weekly assemblies for pupils meeting in separate faith groups as part of their school's Collective Worship arrangements.

The *Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education*³¹ is divided into primary and secondary education. The overall target is that pupils should learn *about* and *from* religion(s). Four key stages are distinguished and for each key stage specific study units are set. The statement of aims for religious education contains the following:

- "A central purpose of education is the development of wisdom and since religions and philosophies possess some of the most profound wisdom in their teachings and their scriptures, religious education has a significant contribution to make to this. Knowledge and understanding are important but they are not educational ends in themselves."

Religious Education should enable pupils to:

- Develop conceptual understanding of religion, religious beliefs and practices.
- Develop an informed appreciation of religions.
- Value religious and cultural diversity.
- Create meaning from their knowledge and understanding of religion and religions.
- Develop an awareness of the richness of religions and their contributions to society and culture.
- Recognise difference and commonality, within and between religions.
- Develop a sensitive understanding of the significance of religious commitment and practice in the lives of individuals.

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires a broad and balanced curriculum and this has to be evident in each curriculum area as well as the curriculum as a whole. The study of religion involves a wide range of disciplines. In order for their pupils to understand religions it is necessary for teachers to ensure that they use a variety of approaches and cover a range of disciplines in their teaching.

This means that:

- Pupils in schools should have the opportunity to discover religious communities for themselves and to develop an empathetic understanding of them (social anthropology/ethnography).
- Pupils should be able to explore sacred and other texts in an informed manner in order to interpret their meaning, understand their significance and to appreciate their commonalities and differences (textual study).
- Pupils should develop an understanding of the key beliefs and teachings about God that underpin much religious practice and commitment so that they can engage in informed debate and rigorous study (theology).
- Pupils should be able to work competently with concepts and arguments and to analyse ideas so that they can think clearly and carefully about their own and others' beliefs and lifestyles (philosophy).

³¹ The complete 2001 Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education can be downloaded from www.ngfl.ac.uk/re/syll/

- Pupils should develop an understanding of the ways in which religions are structured and their influence on societies and culture (sociology).
- Pupils should understand the varieties of religious experience so that they are able to recognise the deep commitment that underpins people's involvement in religion (psychology).
- Pupils should explore a range of moral principles, questions and arguments in the light of religious teachings in order to develop their own considered responses to such questions (ethics).
- Pupils should develop knowledge and understanding of the origin and spread of religions so that they are better able to understand their current situation (history).
- Pupils should develop the ability to interpret and to create meaning (hermeneutics).
- Pupils should understand and appreciate the variety of art forms within religions, the religious beliefs which underpin them and how they convey meaning to and nurture commitment within the adherents of that religion (art and aesthetics).

To facilitate the observance of religious obligations in all schools, Halal food is made available for school dinners. The school uniforms respect the dress code of Islamic girls and women and separate prayer facilities are made available too.

One of the major problems faced in education is that the catchment area of most Bradford schools leads to overwhelmingly white or Asian schools, as most pupils go to local schools close to where they live. But the Rhodesway School in the Allerton district of west Bradford draws its 1,900 pupils almost equally from the white and Asian communities, with some Africa Caribbean pupils too. In its curriculum much attention is paid to different cultures and religions. This is partly achieved through different faith assemblies every week and partly by including specific subjects like Urdu and Asian dance classes in the school timetable.

Mannheim

Schools are the responsibility of the state, which is bound to religious neutrality. The German law does not even recognise Islam as a Church (whereas it does recognise Catholicism and Protestantism). For this reason the Islam communities have no basis to give lessons in Islamic education in public schools.

There are serious difficulties in setting up religious education for Muslim children in schools, as there is no teacher training in this subject and there is no consensus about the subject matters to be taught.

Rotterdam

In line with the Dutch tradition of an educational landscape based on the different denominations, the Islamic communities are setting up their own schools. The framework curricula are prescribed at national level, but at the level of the individual school, additional elements can be added. Language teaching and religious lessons are most often added on. The municipality contributes towards the cost of the religious lessons.

It is important to note that Islamic schools often do not have enough well-qualified teachers of Islamic origin. Consequently, not all teachers in Islamic schools are Muslims themselves. The non-Muslim teachers, however, have to respect the Islamic character of the school and are sensitive to the Islamic background of the children.

Turin

Interventions in the educational sector are intercultural training and the teaching of the Italian language. The underlying aim is to promote the integration of foreign pupils. The interventions are not targeted at Islamic pupils in particular, but in practice the Moroccan pupils have the greatest learning difficulties. Consequently, the various supportive interventions are often directed towards them.

The Intercultural Centre is one of the main organisations involved in the delivery of intercultural activities for schools. Their main focus is to develop the skills and competence of teachers working with ethnic minority children. Specifically with respect to religion they have two types of activities on offer:

- *An open door on the Mahgreb, culture, religion, society* intends to present the countries of the Mahgreb as regards their geo-political, cultural, religious and anthropological aspects, useful in understanding immigrated Muslim communities.
- *Discovering religions* with the aim of demonstrating that religions are a key to understanding the culture of people.

4. Lessons to be learned

In this chapter some general conclusions will be drawn concerning the practice at local level with respect to policy development and implementation on the issue of combating discrimination on grounds of religion and promoting religious equality and tolerance. In the second paragraph some recommendations and practical suggestions will be presented on how to proceed in this domain given the experience at local level. These recommendations are illustrated by some examples of good practice.

4.1. General conclusions

Religion is not a central issue in policy-making

While local authorities demonstrate the use of a significant number of policies and practices with regard to integration, social inclusion and combating discrimination, it is difficult to identify any formal approaches that directly promote tolerance and equal treatment on the grounds of religion. Even in the case of Rotterdam, a city with a formal policy designating a local umbrella (self-)organisation to carry out activities for Islamic communities (SPIOR), its mission is mostly directed at issues of local integration and, not combating discrimination on religious grounds. The approaches identified by cities target newcomers and/or migrants and ethnic minorities who may happen to be of the Islamic faith. Any engagement in key areas such as employment, education and public services is principally targeted at ethnic groups – which, in part, may be of the Islamic faith.

Religion cannot easily be separated from culture and ethnicity

The intricate links between elements like ethnicity, religion, policies for integration, combating discrimination and social exclusion create a situation where the promotion of tolerance and equal treatment on the grounds of religion is not treated specifically, but plays an implicit part of a larger strategic framework. However, this implicit approach does mean that it is more difficult to identify the critical factors for improving practices leading to tolerance and equal treatment on the grounds of religion. It creates limitations on the ability to assess the effectiveness of approaches to combat discrimination based on specific grounds separate from the larger, more general policy approaches for. i.e., integration.

Approaches are mainly implicit and responsive

The approaches identified in the five cities are mainly responsive in nature and linked to meeting immediate concerns or addressing current affairs. They are mostly directed at intervening at strategic moments, i.e., enforcing a new national Law of Integration (Aarhus), carrying out urban renewal initiatives (Rotterdam) rather than encouraging forward-looking, longer-term actions or legislation. This situation can be best explained in light of the previous two general conclusions.

4.2. Recommendations: Practical suggestions for moving forward

4.2.1. Involving Islamic communities

It is recommended to encourage and promote the active involvement of Islamic communities in institutionalised procedures of policy making and to also include them in more informal channels of dialogue.

Active involvement of the Islamic communities has been identified as one of the critical factors in ensuring an appropriate take up of religious concerns in the process of policy making.

Good practices encouraging active involvement

Depending on the city's approach one or all of the following mechanisms are applied to encourage the active involvement of Islamic communities:

- Institutionalised councils and/or committees (that include migrant and ethnic minority groups and local authority officials) to reflect upon practices affecting the integration of ethnic communities.
- Expert panels and/or consultative councils (that include specific ethnic minority experts) for screening local authority policy plans.
- Regular dialogue with organisations representing the Islamic community (i.e. Council of Mosques)
- Subcontracting of activities and/or services to self-organisations of ethnic minorities including the Islamic community.

It is highly recommended to harness the active involvement of Islamic communities, by supporting their self-organisations in a process of capacity building.

The practical experience at local level with either of these mechanisms point to the issue of 'organisational strength', as one of the key aspects in ensuring a qualitative involvement. Organisational strength is related to the degree in which the organisations representing the Islamic community can effectively work within the boundaries of the local systems of policy development. Insight into the mechanisms and procedures of policy making are vital in this respect.

Good practices for capacity building

Local experience shows several practical approaches for the strengthening of the impact of the involvement of Islamic communities:

- Organising special introductory courses to provide the representatives on Councils and Committees with the necessary information on the process of policy development up to the final decision. In that way they have a better insight into:
- the crucial moments for influencing the decision;
- the rules governing the process of influencing the decision (i.e. presentation of written material, timing and prior notification, degree of formality, etc.);
- the limitations of the influence given to the Council or Committee;
- the way the dialogue and interaction with the City Council is organised;

- how to co-operate with the departments of the local authority and its officers.

Providing support through local authority officers. This support can take on different forms, for instance:

- secretarial support for organising the meetings of the Council or Committee and taking the minutes of the meetings;
- ensuring that the members of the Council, Committee or expert panel have adequate access to the information available within the local authority on the subject matter at hand.

Supporting the development of abilities via long-standing (subcontracting) relationships. The organisations involved can develop hands-on experience, identify their own strengths and weaknesses, in the near certainty that they will not be judged on one single activity.

The long-term character of this approach can also help to build a wider basis within the Islamic community for a co-operation between the local authorities and the Islamic community. It takes the dialogue beyond the treatment of incidents and creates the opportunity for several individuals from the Islamic community to become involved.

4.2.2. Monitoring effectiveness

It is recommended to install monitoring procedures, not only to assess the effectiveness of policies but also to send an unequivocal signal to the different local communities that the efforts combating discrimination are to be taken serious.

Monitoring the effectiveness is crucial in several ways. Not only is it essential for an optimal policy-making process, but it is also important for the positive and constructive relationship with the ethnic community (including the Islamic community). It helps all parties involved to discuss on the basis of facts rather than on perceptions only, even though the latter are a significant aspect of the reality of discrimination. This is particularly the case as the sensitivity of the issues may lead to an emotive colouring of the dialogue.

Good practices concerning monitoring

Measuring effectiveness is hindered in practice by the fact that the issue of discrimination on religious grounds is treated as an integral part of a wider integration policy. Consequently, the objectives are not specified. Nevertheless, there is some limited experience concerning this issue which can be divided into four types of monitoring, which can be combined:

- Screening an 'anti-discriminatory climate' on the basis of representation in the media, incidents at local level, exposure to the Islamic religion (i.e. visitors to mosque), etc. This type of monitoring is informal and based on "soft" indicators. It can however, help to capture the 'mood', which is relevant concerning highly sensitive and emotive issues.
- Monitoring on the basis of the formal grievances and complaints procedures within the local authority. This type of monitoring is formal, but also limited as not every issue of discrimination can lead to a formal complaint. Moreover, issues are most likely dealt with on an individual case-by-case approach,

which not necessarily leads to (re-) assessment of the overall policy. A strong aspect of this approach is the directness of the result: the complaint is justified or not and if so, action is taken.

- Monitoring via an annual general survey held by an independent research institute (i.e. university, specialised body). This approach provides a wider perspective on the progress made in the field of integration policies concerning the different ethnic minority groups in the different policy areas. It can give a quantitative as well as a qualitative view on policy development and implementation.
- Monitoring on the basis of explicit targets and goals set at the level of the specific departments involved. In relation to the period of time deemed necessary to achieve a certain change, targets are set and the monitoring period identified. Depending on the nature of the policy area and the changes pursued, the method of data collection and assessment is worked out. Consequently, the monitoring of the effectiveness of policies is more flexible. It also provides opportunities to have a direct involvement of the Islamic communities in the process of assessment.

4.2.3. Three key areas

Employment

It is recommended to create an open and constructive climate within organisations, ensuring that the individuals concerned feel 'secure' in addressing sensitive issues of discrimination and lack of tolerance.

Good practices in the field of employment

The role of the local authority as a policy maker in the field of employment is relatively limited. Policies are mainly shaped through the employment programmes developed at national level. In as far as local authorities are active as policy makers in this respect, the focus is on integration rather than on discrimination on grounds of religion.

In its capacity as employer, one of the focal points is also to increase the recruitment of members of migrant and ethnic minority communities. However, this does also bring the issue of religion into the debate. The issue of discrimination on grounds of religion is addressed in the sense that:

- there are possibilities for having special days of leave with respect to Islamic feasts;
- the cafeteria or canteen caters for the dietary requirements of Muslims;
- the special circumstances of the Ramadan are taken into account, although this appears to belong more to the leeway of individual heads of department;
- rooms for prayer are made available.

The degree to which individuals actually feel free to make use of these options depends on the openness of the climate in this respect. There are two main strategies to address this. These strategies can also be combined:

- to install of a formal complaints procedure, such as an ombudsman within the department;
- to launch an awareness-raising campaign. This campaign can involve special courses, initiate debate, provide information, organise conferences, etc.

Public services

It is recommended to continuously work on raising the awareness that sensitivity to the issues of discrimination and lack of tolerance is an essential part of the quality of service to the members of the local community.

Good practices in the field of public services

In the area of public service delivery more direct links with combating discrimination on grounds of religion can be found. Most common are, for obvious reasons, aspects related to the establishment of mosques or prayer halls and to funeral rites.

As a result of the separation between State and Church, the establishment of mosques or prayer halls is mainly considered to be an issue of the Islamic community itself. The community needs to find the necessary resources. As a result the situation differs at the local level.

- For instance in Aarhus (as in the rest of Denmark) there are no mosques. Prayer takes place in private locations. In Turin, a number of prayer halls have been established over the years. In Rotterdam several mosques are currently being built, whereas in Bradford and Mannheim mosques are already in existence.
- The Mosque in Mannheim is of particular importance as it is the largest in Germany and was deliberately constructed in the centre of Mannheim. In that sense it has become a 'showcase' of the Mannheim policy towards the Islamic community.

Concerning funeral rites the focus is mainly on the availability of Islamic cemeteries and ensuring that the procedures can meet the specific needs of Muslims. Another related aspect is the mourning ritual. Particularly, for Muslims in nursing homes, hospitals and care institutions there is a need for spiritual guidance and support according to their own religion.

- For this purpose in Rotterdam the project Mourning Rituals has been set up in which the Islamic organisation SPIOR participates. This project has organised a working conference to develop a service file for all parties involved to ensure that people can have the rituals of their religion are observed in their last hours and for the bereaved during the mourning period.

Other interesting examples in the care sector are:

- The availability of meals compatible with the dietary requirements of Islam is one of the key issues. The awareness in this respect is very important given the fact that pork or pork-derived products are used as an additive in so many food products. Information and open communication can assist in dealing with the arising issues.
- For example, in a particular childcare institute, parents were contacted about the fact that additives derived from pork are used in ice cream. Strictly, this could mean that Muslim children should not be given ice cream. In practice it turned out that the majority of the parents allowed their children to have ice cream.
- The possibility to choose between a male or female doctor and nurse is another important aspect. This is not only relevant in hospitals but in all care institutions including childcare (i.e. changing diapers by a male staff member).

- For example the practice in Turin is that in hospitals at any given time both male and female staff are on duty. The approach followed in the childcare centres in Aarhus is again to discuss with parents how strict the rules need to be applied. In that way mutual understanding is fostered and the practical issue resolved.
- In the childcare facility The Sparrow in Aarhus, introductory meetings are held with the parents of every new child. An exchange between parents and staff takes place about the child and its background, about the parents and their wishes and also about the institution. Fundamental issues as eating rules, the question of nudity and communal baths and gender issues are discussed. These first meetings are followed up by home visits. These visits are a good opportunity to establish a balanced relationship between parents and staff, letting the parents be hosts instead of guests. A particular added value is that the staff can better understand the child when it talks about home.

Education

It is recommended that the issue of religious tolerance be addressed within the context of the existing educational tradition, treating Islam similarly to other denominations.

Good practices in the field of education

With respect to education the focus at local level is mainly in primary education and partly on secondary level. This is related to the way education is organised in most countries. Education is an area where the issue of religion is more or less dealt with explicitly. This can be explained by the fact that religious education comes into play as well as religious feasts and the observance of religious rules.

Different approaches are being followed in this respect at local level. Much is dependent on the national legislation concerning the link between education and religion. One approach is the establishment of Islamic schools.

- For instance in Germany it is not possible to establish an Islamic school. In Rotterdam however, the establishment of Islamic schools is completely in line with the national tradition of establishing schools on religious principles (traditionally schools based on Roman Catholic or Protestant principles). Islamic schools have also been established in Aarhus.

Another practical approach is to organise religious education in schools. Again this is not always possible for legal reasons. The lack of appropriately educated teachers is another problem in this respect.

- In Rotterdam the issue is dealt with via the Platform for Religious Socio-cultural Education. In this platform, organisations with a Christian background, a humanist background and an Islamic background (SPIOR) co-operate to provide religious education in primary schools. The main problem is that the subsidies available are not sufficient to meet the needs in terms of teaching hours, teaching material and an appropriate teaching position for the teachers involved.

The involvement of parents is also an important issue in education. Again it needs to be stressed that the practices in this respect are largely dependent on the tradition in a country concerning parent involvement. For instance in Turin the schools do not actively involve the parents of Islamic children, nor do they involve

the Italian parents. In Denmark, the involvement of parents in schools is much more part of the normal practice.

- This has been the basis for an interesting new initiative: the Ethnic Council. Introduced at the Tilst School but since transported to other schools in Aarhus and Denmark.
The role of Tilst School goes beyond the teaching of skills. The school has become actively involved in the wider area of social work, closely co-operating with the local authority's social department. This led to a situation in which Tilst School became an actor in the life of the pupils outside the school. A more direct dialogue with the parents became a necessity. For this purpose the Ethnic Council was introduced. In this Council the parents, teachers, school board and management co-operate. In that way the process of change can be effectively organised. The Ethnic Council meets 4 or 5 times a year and discusses a wide range of topics, among which issues of religion.

5. Good Practices and Recommendations

5.1. Five examples of good practice

I. Capacity building for active involvement of Islamic communities

In Mannheim (Germany) training and information sessions are made available to the members of the Integration Council and Ethnic Minority Board to help prepare them for their role.

II. Monitoring the effectiveness of policies

The city of Rotterdam (NL) annually commissions a survey of their policies, the so-called Minorities Monitor, covering a wide range of issues. Every year a specific policy priority undergoes in-depth analysis.

III. Public Services

The 'Open Mosque' model in Mannheim (Germany) demonstrates how a symbol for the Islamic religion can play a significant part in opening up channels of communication and understanding between Islamic communities and 'mainstream' society.

IV. Education

In the Tilst School (Aarhus - Denmark) an Ethnic Council has been set up. Through this Ethnic Council, a dynamic process of dialogue and co-operation has commenced between parents and teaching staff.

V. Religion

In Bradford (UK) religious education is based on the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The overall target is that pupils should learn *about* and *from* different religions.

5.2. Five key recommendations

- I. Encourage and promote the active involvement of Islamic communities in institutionalised procedures of policy making and also include them in more informal channels of dialogue.
- II. Harness their active involvement by supporting their self-organisations in a process of capacity building.
- III. Install monitoring procedures, not only to assess the effectiveness of policies but also to send an unequivocal signal to the different local communities that the efforts combating discrimination are to be taken serious.
- IV. Create an open and constructive climate within organisations, ensuring that the individuals concerned feel 'secure' in addressing sensitive issues of discrimination and lack of tolerance.
- V. Work continuously on raising the awareness that sensitivity to the issues of discrimination and lack of tolerance is an essential part of the quality of service delivery to the members of the local community.

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