EURISLAM WORKPACKAGE 6

INTEGRATED REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH MUSLIM LEADERS

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INTEGRATED REPORT ON INTERVIEWS WITH MUSLIM LEADERS

1. Introduction

The EURISLAM project is made possible by the funding of the European commission and it is cooperation between researchers at six universities in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and France. In these six West European countries we study the way in which Muslims are incorporated in Western society. In earlier work packages we have looked into the political opportunity structure (work package 1), the debate on Muslims in the media (work package 2) and the way in which Muslim citizens experience their situation and native citizens look at Muslims (work package 3 and 4). The EURISLAM project focuses on the largest ethnic groups that have provided immigrants to these six countries, this means that we have focussed on Turks, Moroccans, Pakistanis and former Yugoslav Muslims.

In this work package we look at the way in which the leaders of Muslim communities operate: how do they see their role towards their own ethnic community, towards the Muslim community in general and towards the surrounding society in the country where they live. The information was collected in semi-structured interview in the language of the six countries where the research took place. In this report some first outcomes of the interviews with Muslim community leaders are reported.

We have organised the report around the following research questions:

1. How do leaders present the Identity of the organisation – is that as a Muslim organisation, as a specific Muslim grouping, as homeland or as anything else and how is the Muslim aspect of the identity of the organisation presented, and why?
2. Which religious practices do community leaders consider important for the members of the community they represent?
3. What are the difficult issues that divide the ethnic community from the majority society, particularly on gender, what issues are important according to leaders?
4. Which public debate coping strategies can we distinguish among Muslim leaders?

In this report we will present an overview of the results of the interviews in six European countries. In chapter 2 we will explain the method that was used in this work package. In chapter 3 we will give an overview of the results on the four questions for all leaders in on dataset. In chapter 4 through 6 we will go on discussing the differences between leaders of religious and non-religious organisations, the difference between countries, and the difference between ethnic groups.

2. Method

After the quantitatively oriented work packages 1-4, the intention of this work package was firstly to work qualitatively and to provide in depth information on how Muslim leaders think and operate. But after discussing this thoroughly in the research team, working completely

qualitatively was not considered desirable since it is the explicit purpose to gather comparative information from different countries. With a fully qualitative approach this would not be possible since interviewers would follow their own strategies and a completely open interview method would not get to comparability. Therefore half structured questionnaires were designed. Half structured means that the questionnaire contained both closed and open ended questions. The interviewer can choose to get deeper into some of the issues as long as he or she asks all questions. With the closed question format it is easier to draw fast comparative conclusions on the relatively large number of interviews. The open-ended questions lead the subjects and are meant to provide more in depth information. At the start of our fieldwork, the intention was to interview 18 respondents face to face per country, so in total our dataset would combine the information on 108 interviews. This is a rather large dataset for a qualitative study, and coding and structuring the data is inevitable.

2.1 Setup of fieldwork

The first step in the fieldwork was to make a list of potential organisations where we could look for an interviewee. The intention was that in countries with a relatively large community of on of the four ethnic groups 6 interviews would be arranged in that ethnic group while in countries with smaller ethnic groups, 4 interviews would be arranged. For instance, in the Netherlands Turkish and Moroccan populations are much more sizable than Pakistani and Yugoslavian populations, so for the first two groups the target was to interview six representatives and for Pakistani and Yugoslavs four. Furthermore it was the intention to find some relatively conservative, some moderate and some relatively liberal leaders in every community, to maximize the variation among the interviewees.

The next step was to reach the organizations. In six countries either the researcher or an interviewer tried to phone representatives of Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistani and ex-Yugoslavian Muslim organization. After making an appointment, the interviewer travels to a location that suits the respondents, to convey face-to-face interview of maximum 1,5 hour. The distance to travel in Germany, the UK and France were longer than in Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands and the number of hours that had to be spend on getting to respondents therefore more.

2.2 Questionnaire

Before the fieldwork started a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire is build up of five subject blocks. Firstly in block A basic information on the organisation is gathered, for instance what the main activities include, what kind of participants come to these activities, and to what larger grouping the organisation belongs, if any. The question how the leader would present the organisation to the outside world is important here.

Block B contains questions on the network and contact of the organisation, for example what is the role of the organisation in the ethnic community. Is there cooperation with other

Muslim organisations or Muslim umbrella's, and is there any cooperation in multi ethnic or multi religious councils and with local and national governments.

Block C is about religious practice. The leader was asked which religious practice he finds important for his community. We want to know whether these practices are in any way different than in the country of origin compared to Western Europe. The question whether opinions change in the West, also leads to questions about youngsters and their views and about members that are either to strictly following Muslim rules or that have become too loose.

After this issue, we get to block D about the way in which the leaders cope with the media and the on-going negative debate on Muslims in all countries of our study. The leaders are asked if the organisation had to deal with negative reactions directly, by reacting in the media, or indirectly because the members were upset about this.

In block E we asked the leaders what they think are the most difficult issues that divide their ethnic community and the majority society (if any). Since gender is an often-discussed issue that supposedly differentiates Muslims from non-Muslims some more specific questions on the treatment of boys and girls were asked in the last part of the interview. At the end of the interview the respondent is asked if he or she has something to add. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix I.

2.3 Fieldwork and response

Most of the fieldwork took place between April and September 2011, with some delayed interviews in the months after that. In the Netherlands, Germany and France the researchers were helped by two to four interviewers, while in Switzerland, the UK and Belgium one researcher performed all the interviews. In some countries it turned out difficult to convince interviewees to take part. There were a few reasons for this. Some of the potential respondents that we approached had given so many interviews that they suffered from research fatigue. In others cases the subject caused the problem: they did not like it that they were approached because of their religious group, and sometimes because of their ethnic group. A third reason was mistrust: not all potential interviewees thought that anything they say is abused in the current debate on Muslims. The researchers had to do considerable effort to convince them.

The interview itself was usually conveyed in a friendly atmosphere: the interviewers were received in a very hospitable way with drinks and cakes. Sometimes the interviewer met a single member of the organisation and sometimes there was a small group of board members present to represent the association. The interviews took place at mosques, at the buildings of federations (at or just before an activity) but also in the workplace or the homes of respondents. The travel time varied from half an hour, if the organisation was in the same town as the research team to more days. In the case of Germany the interviewer had to travel for instance from Berlin to Köln, Frankfurt and Bonn and in the case of the UK the interviewer travel from Bristol to London and Edinburgh. In the Dutch case the mean time that for an interview and travel took was five hours.

During the interview the interviewer put answers in the questionnaire and made notes. In some cases a recorder was used. After the interview was successfully finished, the interviewer or assistant transferred the results into an English questionnaire. In some cases the interview report was immediately written in English, while in other cases the report was first made up in German, Dutch or French to let the interviewee read it and agree with it, and then translated into English. In some cases the questionnaire format was not used during the interview, but the data were afterwards transferred into the questionnaire. Generally it took 1-2 days to write an interview report and translate the interviews, sometimes more. In all none English-speaking countries, translating interviews turned out much more time consuming that was calculated in advance.

On December 15 2011, the total number of typed interviews was 91. Most of the interviews are translated into English. As table 1 shows, the total number of interviews per country varies from 20 in Switzerland to 6 in France.

Table 1: Interviews available on December 15, 2011

	Turks	Moroccans	Pakistani	Ex Yugo	other	Total
Netherlands	5	5	1	2	1	14
Germany	4	3	4	2	5	18
Switzerland	5	3	3	4	5	20
Belgium	6	6	1	1	0	14
UK	1	0	3	0	15	19
France	2	*0	1	0	3	6
total	23	17	13	9	29	91

* 1 empty interview not included

Table 1 also shows that not all interviewers have interviewed six representatives of the largest communities in that country. Only in Belgium six Turks and six Moroccans were interviewed. There are substantial gaps across the other countries and communities. In the UK where the Pakistani community is the largest only two representatives of Pakistani organisations were interviewed, while 15 interviewees were not representing any of the targeted communities. In France there is an even more general lack of interview material with only six interviews completed. The consequence of this is that in the comparison between countries it will be necessary to remove France for the analysis. The consequences of the different sampling strategies will be considered at every analysis of the results separately.

The good news is however, that all columns are reasonably filled, so that it is probably possible to draw conclusions on the differences between ethnic groups. Since the total number of interviews is relatively large, it is not disastrous to miss some of the subdivisions.

A second problem, which had to be taken into account during our analyses, was the fact that some interviews did not include all block of questions (due to time constrains during the interview or respondents refusing to answer the questions).

2.4 Analysis

As mentioned earlier, 91 interviews is a rather large amount for a qualitative dataset. It is necessary to code and structure the data. Therefore we decided to use MaxQDA software for qualitative analysis, which was available at the University of Amsterdam. The interviews protocols including the questions were entered into a data file in MaxQDA.

With MaxQDA it is possible to code text fragments. On three research questions we already had codes in mind from earlier research (question 1 on identity, and question 4 on networks, and question 5 on coping with the debate on Muslims in the media). On the other research questions first an overview was made of potential categories, and then a decision was made about the most relevant categories or the continuum behind the answers. This led to the outcomes below.

3. Results: Muslims leaders in Europe in general

The results section is subdivided into four sections, relating to the research questions mentioned earlier. In 3.1 we discuss results on how Muslim leaders present the identity of the organisations. In section 3.2 we answer the question on which religious practices are considered most relevant. In section 3.3 we analyse issues that, according to the Muslim leaders, divide the Muslim community from the majority society. In section 3.4 we discuss strategies among Muslim organisations concerning the debate on Muslims.

3.1 How do leaders present the identity of the organisation?

On the question how leaders present the identity of the organisation, a categorisation was made before hand. In general we were interested to find out whether leaders present firstly a religious identity or whether they would firstly stress a country of origin identity. As table 2 shows, 75.8 % of the interviewees stresses a religious identity, among whom 70.3% the Muslim identity. A minority – 14.3 % of the leaders – mentions the country of origin and an even smaller group – 5.5% – the country where they are settled; 9.9% of the leaders mentioned an intercultural identity

Table 2: Organisations identity (multiple responses)

Main category	subcategory	%	Valid %	*N*=91
Religious identity		**75.8%**	**75.8%**	**69**
	Muslim / Islam	70.3%	70.3%	64
	Other	5.5%	5.5%	5
Non-religious identity		**8.8%**	**8.8%**	**8**
	Migrant organisation	2.2%	2.2%	2
	Political	1.1%	1.1%	1
	Other non-religious	5.5%	5.5%	5
National / cultural identity		**29.7%**	**29.7%**	**27**
	[Inter]cultural	9.9%	9.9%	9
	BE/CH/DE/FR/NL/UK	5.5%	5.5%	5
	Tur/Mor/Pak/Yug	14.3%	14.3%	13

The following citations come from different interviews and show how the different aspects of the organisational identity interact. The first one stresses the Muslim aspect, while the second one mentions that there is something specifically Turkish :

> *'[We are] a Muslim organisation for Germans [...] National Backgrounds of members hardly play a role in the interaction of members. [...] Members mostly identify as Germans and Muslims, lesser with their country of origin, because MJD presents itself clearly as a German organisation. Nevertheless members are free to also identify with their national background'* (Islamic youth organisation, Germany).

> *'It is an Islamic organisation, but representing the interests of our community comes first. We do not only portray it as Islamic but also as a Turkish Islamic organisation. It is*

therefore not specifically Islamic because we represent everyone who wants to join us and wants to be represented by us' (Turkish organisation, the Netherlands).

3.2 Which religious practices are most relevant?

An important question that relates to the core of what a Muslim organisation stands for is which religious practices the interviewees present as the most important for the followers of their organisation. We have first made an overview of all answers and then categorised them into two main sections: core religious practices and additional practices. As table 3 shows, 62.9% considers the prayer the most relevant religious practice for Muslims. The second issue that is mentioned by 32.3 % of the respondents is Ramadan and other religious festivals. Many of the organisations we have visited mentioned that they organise the prayer and festivals.

Other core religious practices mentioned were adherence to religious rules – 19.4% and religiously inspired dress, which 9.7% of the respondents mentioned. It strikes us that a much more important issue for the leaders is education, 19.4% of the respondents mention this. We have not put education under religious practice, because a clear separation between religious and secular education cannot always be made. This category therefore includes both Koran and Arabic education, but also education as taught in general schools. Many officials mentioned that it is an important issue for all Muslims to educate themselves, as stated in the Koran. Many leaders stress the importance of education to the members.

Table 3: Which religious practices are most relevant for Muslims? (Multiple responses)

Main category	sub category	%	Valid %	*N*=91
Core religious practices		**52.7%**	**77.4%**	**48**
	Faith / adherence of religious rules	13.2%	19.4%	12
	Prayer / religious practices	42.9%	62.9%	39
	Ramadan / religious festivals	22.0%	32.3%	20
	Religious dress	6.6%	9.7%	6
Additional practices		**27.5%**	**40.3%**	**25**
	Critical thinking	5.5%	8.1%	5
	Community support	5.5%	8.1%	5
	Integration	5.5%	8.1%	5
	Public debate / freedom of speech	6.6%	9.7%	6
	Education	13.2%	19.4%	12
Missing		*20.9%*		*19*
Non-religious		*11.0%*		*10*

Though we asked for religious issues relevant for Muslims, quit a lot of things were mentioned that were not directly religious, for instance the public debate/freedom of speech (9.7%) and integration (8.1%). As a Muslim organisation it seems unavoidable to talk with members about the public debate and about integration.

'We are a socio cultural organisation with religious fundaments. This is for us important. Originally the group started as a mosque organization to support the members with

their religious duties. Thus it will remain like this and we are clear about it. Besides that we are also a social organization [...] [We wish to see] to what extend can we stimulate our followers to emancipate, integrate and participate? Thus also on social terrain we are very active' (Turkish organisation, the Netherlands).

Practices that are mentioned are often things in which the organisation plays an important role. An organisation can organise the prayer, festivals, Koran lessons and homework support, but it cannot influence individual decisions on how to dress.

'First of all, it is important to be a good human being. Second, praying [is] important – believing alone is not possible. Then comes wearing [a] headscarf, [or having a] beard, but we don't force anyone to do this' (Pakistani organisation, Germany).

3.3 The issues that divide the Muslim community from the majority society

In this section we present results on what issues leaders find most important in distinguishing their community from the host society. We have first distinguished between those who though there was nothing or little that distinguishes the two (25%) and those who mentioned an issue (56 %).

Table 4: What issues distinguishes this community from the majority society? (multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	Description	%	Valid %	*N=91*
None or little			**19.8%**	**25.0%**	**18**
Structural issues			**18.7%**	**23.6%**	**17**
	Political rights / participation	Political participation / minority rights / citizenship	5.5%	6.9%	5
	Education	Attaining higher education	4.4%	5.6%	4
	Language	Language proficiency	2.2%	2.8%	2
	Unequal treatment	discrimination / lower opportunities in labour market and education	6.6%	8.3%	6
	Conflict / traumatic experience	Traumatic experiences / war / conflict	1.1%	1.4%	1
Symbolic issues			**37.4%**	**47.2%**	**34**
	Different values / norms	General difference in values / norms	6.6%	8.3%	6
	Radicalisation	Danger of radicalisation	4.4%	5.6%	4
	Family	Different family values and norms	4.4%	5.6%	4
	Religious dress	Visibility of religious dress	4.4%	5.6%	4
	Religiosity	Different religious values and norms	7.7%	9.7%	7
	Sexuality	Different sexual values and norms	5.5%	6.9%	5
	Sharia	Importance of religious law (Sharia)	1.1%	1.4%	1
	Generation gap	Different perceptions / values between 1st and 2nd generation	2.2%	2.8%	2
	Misrepresentation / Stereotypes	Negative influence of misrepresentation / stereotypes	9.9%	12.5%	9
Missing			*21.2%*		*18*

Then we looked at the total list of issues mentioned, and came to the conclusion that they could be subdivided into structural and symbolic issues. Structural issues include political rights, education, language proficiency, unequal treatment and fewer opportunities on the labour market. Symbolic issues concern different norms and values, the danger of radicalisation, family values, religious values, sexual values, the importance of religious laws, but also the negative influence of misrepresentation and stereotypes.

As table 4 shows the issue that was most mentioned as something that divides the Muslim and non-Muslim community was the negative influence of misrepresentation and stereotypes (12.5%). This was mentioned more often than different religious values and norms (9,7%), political rights and citizenship (6.9%) and unequal treatment and less opportunities in the labour market and educational system (8.3%). After the problem of stereotyping, Muslim leaders seem most worried about the structural problems of their community. Problems of political representation, problems in the educational system and on the labour market are more often mentioned than most of the symbolic issues. Without repeating all details of the table, we think it is worth mentioning that different norms on sexuality and gender relations were not mentioned very often by Muslim leaders (only 6.9%).

Gender

Since we would like to know a bit more about the gender issue, we have asked some questions about equal treatment of boys and girls and the role of women. Table 5 shows the answers that were given when the representatives were asked if they think parents should treat girls and boys in the same manner as is usual in Western countries, for instance kids study for years, live in student flats, date and marry late and have jobs. We asked the leaders if they would direct the members of their organisation to a more Islamic approach somehow and what that might be? Firstly we need to mention that for 13.6% this remains unclear. After looking at all answers we came with a subdivision into three main categories, namely one more progressive, an in between category promoting equality, and a more conservative category.

Table 5 Differences on the gender issues

Main category	Subcategory	Description	%	Valid %	*N=91*
Progressive			**17.6%**	**24.2%**	**16**
	Progressive / Emancipation	Support for more rights/involvement of women	11.0%	15.2%	10
	Education	Support for women's education	7.7%	10.6%	7
Gender Equality		Support for gender equality	**31.9%**	**43.9%**	**29**
Conservative			**11.0%**	**15.2%**	**10**
	Religious differences men / women	Religious supported gender difference	5.5%	7.6%	5
	Protective	Women should be protected	5.5%	7.6%	5
Unclear			**9.9%**	**13.6%**	**9**
Missing			*27.5%*		*25*

The answers show that the majority of the leaders promote views that are either in the middle or on the progressive side: 43.9% supports gender equality, and 24.2% supports more rights and involvement of women. There is a limited number of organisational leaders that promotes more conservative viewpoints like women should be protected (7.6,%) and the viewpoint that there are religiously supported gender differences (7.6%). These more conservative standpoints are frequently framed with a positive logic:

> *'We have to respect the woman more, to cherish the woman more who has to be preserved from negative things. So I would say that with Islam women have found a better place than before*' (Turkish organisation, Belgium).

3.4. Strategies among Muslim organisations concerning the debate on Muslims

After qualitative analysis of interview data in the Netherlands, Van Heelsum (2003) identified different strategies among Moroccan associations in their way of coping with the negative tone in the media on Muslims:

1) Organisations that do not react on the debate – it goes ahead with its own goals and tries to be as much as possible indifferent or mentions that the debate is nonsense so one should not get involved. Externally: ignore debate, internally: convince members that 'we' are doing the right thing and members should not worry about the debate.
2) Organizations that react defensive by publicly defending the Islamic faith, protest against the negative image, and trying to formulate a more positive identity both internally and externally. Protesting openly on TV, but also internally showing members the good side of Islam.
3) Organisation that work with a discussion model: searching cooperation and trying to pacify the non-Muslim public, by organising multi faith meetings, cooperation with non-Muslim but otherwise similar groupings, joining multicultural events and looking for similarities.

In the open question how people go about in the debate similar answers were found in this study. As table 7 shows, 25.6% of the organisations show low involvement in the public debate which can be paired with a mistrust of journalists and the media in general, or a focus on internal concerns only:

> *'No, fortunately we don't. We don't want to receive publicity or propagate our cause. We are solely concerned with internal matters'* (Moroccan organization, the Netherlands).

Table 7: Public debate strategies

Main category	Description	%	Valid %	*N*=91
Evasive / Passive	Low involvement in public debate and media / distrust in journalists or debate in general	24.2%	25.6%	22
Defensive	Involvement in public debate but with a defensive attitude / Muslim identity or Islam needs to be publicly defended	35.2%	37.2%	32
Discussion	Involvement in public debate with the intention to build a dialogue / non-defensive attitude	26.4%	27.9%	24
Unclear		5.5%	5.8%	5
Missing		*5.5%*		*5*

Most organisations (37.2%) show involvement with a defensive attitude, i.e. the Muslim identity or Islam needs to be publicly defended:

> *'The media in Britain generally treat Muslim very badly and unfairly, across the board. I get a lot of phone calls when something goes wrong and not when a positive story happens. The local media tend to be more sensitive and more positive as opposed to the national media. [...] More than often, the Muslim community is found reacting to stories in the press instead of being more proactive in generating its own story lines. It responds [to] what is already there in the media'* (Non-specific organisation, United Kingdom).

The remaining 27.9% of the interviewees show the discussion model and involve in the debate with a non-defensive attitude and the intention of discussion and dialogue:

> *'I think a first observation would be that it is hugely difficult to organize these debates with a minimum of serenity and away from any form of stigmatization. [It] is difficult to have only an exchange of arguments, a real debate. There is no exchange '* (Moroccan organisation, Belgium).

4. Religious and non religious organisations

Some of the organisations interviewed stressed that they do not have no religious fundament. With regard to singular or even multiple ethnic minority groups, these organisations present themselves as a [inter] cultural or political organisation. Because of their orientation to specific ethnic groups, these organisations do attract Muslims. As a result, clear distinctions between religious, cultural or political spheres become opaque:

> *'Since we are a non-religious organisation we don't have any religious norms. Staff and visitors are free to practice their religious believes e.g. by wearing headscarves, the possibility for prayers in our prayer room, to participate in Ramadan (we finish a little earlier during Ramadan) and our food is always halal. We offer interreligious and intercultural seminars to sensitize Muslims and non-Muslims for one another. We often have to defend ourselves during those seminars against a lot of prejudices. Participants are often convinced that certain prejudices are facts (e.g. Muslim women who want to dissolve their marriages will be expulsed by their families). Yet all we want is to inform and to reduce prejudices in order to integrate Muslims and Islam into society on the long run'* (Women's organisation, Germany).

Out of the 91 organisations interviewed, only 10 stressed a clear non-religious orientation. The orientation of these organisation remains rather fluid and emphasize on cultural or political (as the status of a migrant) elements can fluctuate. Of those ten, four identify as a cultural organisation, two as an intercultural dialogue institute, one as a political organisation, one as a women's organisation, one as a migrant organisation, and one as a school.

5. Differences between countries

In the following section we will briefly reintroduce the themes discussed above to see if there are any striking differences between the organisations in the different countries in our project. Because of the low number of observations per cell, we report only the actual number of observations and not the percentages.

5.1 How do leaders present the identity of the organisation?

Table 8 shows that across the countries, the religious identity as an Islamic or Muslim organisation remains the largest category. What stands out is that relatively more organisations in Germany identify themselves as a cultural/ethnic organisation. The Netherlands and Germany, furthermore, are the only two countries where organisations identified themselves as being German or Dutch: three (out of 18) in Germany and two (out of 14) in the Netherlands:

Table 8: Organisations identity (number of documents, multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	BE (14)	DE (18)	NL (14)	CH (20)	UK (18)
Religious identity						
	Muslim / Islam	12	13	9	15	14
	Other	1	1	1	1	1
Non-religious identity						
	Migrant organisation	.	1	.	.	1
	Political	.	.	.	.	1
	Secular	.	.	1	1	1
National / cultural identity						
	[Inter]cultural	1	1	2	2	1
	BE/CH/DE/FR/NL/UK	.	3	2	.	.
	Tur/Mor/Pak/Yug	1	6	3	1	.

5.2 Which religious practices are most relevant?

Table 9 shows that in all countries organisations consider the prayer and other religious practices to be most important. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom only have three cases in this category, but in both the Dutch and British interviews this question was either omitted or not answers. Making cross-national comparison for both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom appears problematic, because the missing values in these countries comprise almost half of the interviews.

Table 9: Which religious practices are most relevant for Muslims? (number of documents, multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	BE (14)	DE (18)	NL (14)	CH (20)	UK (18)
Core religious practices						
	Ramadan / religious festivals	4	9	.	6	1
	Prayer / religious practices	9	11	3	13	3
	Faith / adherence of religious rules	3	3	2	1	3
	Religious dress	1	2	1	1	1
Additional practices						
	Education	2	4	1	2	3
	Public debate / freedom of speech	1	2	.	.	3
	Integration	1	1	1	2	.
	Community support	2	.	1	1	1
	Critical thinking	1	.	2	1	1
Missing		.	.	7	.	9
Non-religious		.	3	1	3	.

** The outcomes in this section were mainly found at question 25, but often there was information around the actual question.*

In Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland we see a reasonably similar pattern. There is more mentioning of religious festivals and education in Germany and more focus on the core practice of prayer in Belgium and Switzerland.

5.3 The issues that divide the Muslim community from the majority society

In section 3.3 we categorised the issues that respondents see as most relevant in distinguyising Muslims and non-Muslims into structural and sybolic issues. In table 10, symbolic issues remain overall most important in the perceived difference between Muslim and majority populations. Some cross-national differences can be observed between the relative higher focus on structural issues in Germany and Switzerland, in comparison to the higher focus on symbolic issues in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Table 10: What issues distinguishes this community from the majority society? (number of documents, multiple responses)

			DE (18)	NL (14)	CH (20)	UK (18)
None or little		**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**1**
Structural issues		**0**	**4**	**1**	**6**	**5**
	Conflict / traumatic experience	.	.	1	.	.
	Political rights/participation	.	.	.	1	2
	Unequal treatment	.	4	.	.	2
	Language	.	.	.	1	1
	Education	.	.	.	4	.
Symbolic issues		**11**	**12**	**8**	**4**	**5**
	Different values / norms	1	3	2	.	.
	Radicalisation	1	.	.	.	3
	Family	1	3	.	.	.
	Religious dress	4	.	.	.	.
	Religiosity	1	3	1	2	.
	Sexuality	1	1	3	.	.
	Sharia	1	.	.	.	.
	Generation gap	.	.	.	1	1
	Misrepresentation / Stereotypes	1	2	2	1	2
Missing		*1*	*1*	*2*	*4*	

Issues that stand out most in this regard are unequal treatment in Germany, education in Switzerland, and religious dress in Belgium:

> *'This veil story, where [...] we forbid something, it is increasing. For me, we have to let people free, mainly pupils, to dress as they want* (Turkish organisation, Belgium).'

> *'[There is] limited participation [...] on the labour market and [limited] educational opportunities [for our] children. Where can we live if there are no equal opportunities for us in Germany? There is the question of identity between two cultures, ignorance towards Muslim religious practices, [and] discrimination of Muslim women [in] the labour market* ' (multi-ethnic organisation, Germany).

> *'The lack of education and the influence of homeland institutions keep people maintaining their prejudice and [they stay] ghettoized in their* community' (Turkish organisation, Switzerland).

Gender

We again take a more in depth look at issues of gender and how the organisations position themselves in this debate. As was the case with the observed differences in Table 10, the high number of missing values for the United Kingdom means that it hard to compare the findings in this country to others in our sample. Table 11 shows that a majority of organisations across all countries explicitly expresses their support for either gender equality or the emancipation of women.

Table 11: Differences on the gender issues (Number of documents, multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	BE (14)	DE (18)	NL (14)	CH (20)	UK (18)
Progressive		**1**	**0**	**4**	**10**	**2**
	Progressive/Emancipation	1	.	1	6	2
	Education	.	.	3	4	.
Gender Equality		**8**	**10**	**6**	**4**	**1**
Conservative		**3**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**2**
	Religious differences men / women	1	1	2	1	.
	Protective	2	.	1	.	2
Unclear		**0**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**1**
Missing		*1*	*3*	*1*	*3*	*12*

The most interesting cross-national difference is found between Switzerland and the rest and to a lesser extent, between the Netherlands and the rest. Organisations in these countries appear to express themselves more
progressively:

> *'I am the father of two daughters [...] I would never tell my daughter to stop studying and to get married or any of that nonsense. A woman has an important role in society. In Arabic: a woman is a school. You receive everything from your mother. It's better to have a modern mother in Europe because she will be knowledgeable about the world and the language. I find that important. It is the key you need to access society '* (Moroccan organisation, the Netherlands).

> *'In Turkey there is emancipation of women and we try to propose this model of emancipation also in Switzerland, to support every association that supports women rights*' (Turkish organisation, Switzerland).

5.4. Strategies among Muslim organisations concerning the debate on Muslims

Table 13 shows the public debate strategies of Muslim organisation toward the media. In Belgium and Switzerland there appears to be a distribution closest to the aggregated presentation of data in section 3.4.

Table 13: Public Debate Strategies (Number of documents)

Main category	BE (14)	DE (18)	NL (14)	CH (20)	UK (18)
Evasive / Passive	4	1	3	8	1
Defensive	5	6	2	9	10
Discussion	4	10	1	3	5
Unclear	.	1	1	.	3
Missing	.	.	5	.	.

Two countries that show a notable exception to this are the United Kingdom and Germany. Organisations in the former country seem to have a relatively more defensive attitude towards media compared to their counterparts in Germany, who express their public relations more in line with a debate or discussion model:

> *'The most important thing that could improve is the perceptions of Muslims that is fostered by the media. It is relentless; it picks odd practices here and there. When your practices are looked down, you do not feel at home. The first generation feels more at home here than the second because they feel that the society sees us as backward and terrorist. I see this with my children. It makes them defend themselves all the time "I am not barbaric, I am a human being, and I have similar aspirations as yours". This war on terror has created big fault lines. [...] The media is playing a bit role and you can speak with others, but you cannot say to the media: "let's sit down and talk", because that does not sell the papers* ' (Non-specific organisation, United Kingdom).

> *'We have to talk about Islam in this country because it is part of this country; however, it is sad that the topics are limited around marginal topics, such as the headscarf. Of course; there are topics to be discussed, such as commonalities or differences of women's position as some women right defenders discuss them, and these are [also] topics discussed in the Islamic countries. Questions such as how do we have to interpret the sharia so it fits to the life today, we have to reinterpret it. We need a Martin Luther who reinterprets it; we need the courage to do this* ' (Moroccan organisation, Germany).

6 Differences between ethnic groups

In the following section we will again reintroduce our four themes and see whether there are any striking variation between different ethnic groups. As with the disaggregation by country, we report only the actual number of observations and not the percentages. We report organisations that can be characterised as being non-specific or multi-ethnic separately.

6.1 How do leaders present the identity of the organisation?

Table 14 shows that across different ethnic groups a religious identity as an Islamic or Muslim organisation again remains by far the largest category. What stands out is Pakistani, Turkish, and ex-Yugoslavian organisations frequently identify their organisations along ethno-cultural lines, whereas Moroccan organisation in our sample appear to stay clear of such explicit classification.

Table 14: Organisations identity (number of documents, multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	None/Multi (26)	Moroccan (17)	Pakistani (13)	Turkish (23)	Yugoslavian (9)
Religious identity						
	Muslim / Islam	19	14	7	13	8
	Other	1	.	.	4	.
Non-religious identity						
	Migrant organisation	.	1	1	.	.
	Political	1	.	.	.	.
	Secular	3	1	.	1	.
National / cultural identity						
	[Inter]cultural	3	1	.	4	.
	BE/CH/DE/FR/NL/UK	2	3	.	.	.
	Tur/Mor/Pak/Yug	.	.	5	5	3

Together with non-specific and multi-ethnic identifications, Moroccan organisations where the only organizations who explicitly expressed their organisational identity to be tied to the country of residence:

> '*We are a Dutch organisation; we are not at all a Moroccan organisation. Only to make it easier for people, we [say we] are a Moroccan organisation. For me that is not correct. We are a Dutch organisation. But we represent the Dutch of Moroccan descent* '
> ("Moroccan" organisation, the Netherlands).

6.2 Which religious practices are most relevant?

Table 15 shows all that all groups most frequently mention the prayer and other religious practices as being among the most important religious practices of their organisation.

Table 15: Which religious practices are most relevant for Muslims? (Number of documents, multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	None/Multi (26)	Moroccan (17)	Pakistani (13)	Turkish (23)	Yugoslavian (9)
Core religious practices						
	Ramadan / religious festivals	2	7	1	6	3
	Prayer / religious practices	6	9	7	11	5
	Faith / adherence of religious rules	3	2	2	1	3
	Religious dress	2	1	1	1	1
Additional practices						
	Education	3	1	4	3	1
	Public debate / freedom of speech	4	1	.	.	.
	Integration	.	.	1	3	1
	Community support	1	1	2	1	.
	Critical thinking	.	1	1	2	.
Missing		9	5	1	3	.
Non-religious		5	1	1	2	1

Non-specific/multi-ethnic, Pakistani, and Turkish groups more frequently mentioned issues outside of the core Islamic practices:

> '*We took the view that the needs of the community are not restricted to religious issues, but poverty, unemployment, poor health, the quality of treatment of patients in hospitals were of equal relevance and importance for the welfare of the community*' (non-specific organisation, United Kingdom).

Moroccan and ex-Yugoslavian organisations only mentioned additional practices occasionally. These organisations appear to stay more focussed on their core role as a religious organisation:

> *'Every practice is important but there are different levels. The most important is that people can do their prayers in a worthy place so they can live their religion with serenity'* (Moroccan organisation, Belgium).

6.3 The issues that divide the Muslim community from the majority society

Table 16 shows that overall symbolic issues remain most important differences that respondents observe between the Muslim and majority population. Some interesting variation across groups can be observed between Moroccan and Turkish organisations. Half of the Turkish organisations mentioned some kind of structural issue that is perceived to separate Muslims from majority populations:

> '*Issues interesting us are: equal opportunities, citizenship, discrimination, difficulties in education, vocational training and [access to] the labour market*' (Turkish organisation, Germany).

Table 16: What issues distinguishes this community from the majority society? (number of documents, multiple responses)

Main categories	Subcategory	None/Multi (26)	Moroccan (17)	Pakistani (13)	Turkish (23)	Yugoslavian (9)
None or little		**1**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**4**
Structural issues		**7**	**0**	**3**	**6**	**1**
	Conflict / traumatic experience	.	.	.	.	1
	Political rights/participation	2	.	1	2	.
	Unequal treatment	2	.	1	3	.
	Language	1	.	1	.	.
	Education	2	.	1	1	.
Symbolic issues		**8**	**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**
	Different values / norms	1	3	.	.	1
	Radicalisation	3	.	.	1	.
	Family	.	1	2	.	1
	Religious dress	.	2	1	1	.
	Religiosity	1	1	3	1	1
	Sexuality	.	1	3	1	.
	Sharia	.	.	.	.	1
	Generation gap	1	1	.	.	.
	Misrepresentation / Stereotypes	3	1	2	3	.
Missing		*10*	*2*	*1*	*4*	*2*

None of the representatives of the Moroccan organisations on the other hand mention any structural issues; they focus solely on symbolic issues:

> *'Islam plays an important role in the lives of Muslims. You cannot say I am a Muslim and I will do everything that God has forbidden. You teach this lesson to the boys as well as the girls. Such as sex before marriage, it doesn't matter what age they are; it is simply not allowed. If you approach this issue with a Dutch mentality you will say: my daughter is 18 and I have to give her freedom. I do that too, but I keep an eye on her. Of course they are allowed to study and I hope all Muslims go to university. The question of them moving into dorms or not is very open. Sometimes it's possible and sometimes it's not. If I think my son or daughter is in an environment which will remove them from their religion, I will advise against it'* (Moroccan organisation, the Netherlands).

Representatives of wx-Yugoslavian organisations frequently mentioned that they see little or no difference. Compared to the other ethnic groups, ex-Yugoslavian Muslims identify with Europe and view themselves more as Europeans.

Gender

We again take a more in depth look at issues of gender and how the organisations position themselves in this debate. Table 17 shows that a majority of organisations across all ethnic groups explicitly expresses their support for either gender equality or the emancipation of women.

Table 17: Differences on the gender issues (number of documents, multiple responses)

Main category	Subcategory	None/Multi (26)	Moroccan (17)	Pakistani (13)	Turkish (23)	Yugoslavian (9)
Progressive		**4**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**1**
	Progressive/Emancipation	3	2	1	3	1
	Education	1	1	2	2	.
Gender Equality		**4**	**11**	**3**	**7**	**2**
Conservative		**4**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**2**
	Religious differences men / women	2	1	.	.	2
	Protective	2	.	.	2	.
Missing		12	.	4	7	2
Unclear		1	1	3	2	2

Compared with other ethnic groups conservative notions appear to be most frequently mentioned by non-specific/multi-ethnic and ex-Yugoslavian representatives:

> *'Yes, we see that among Bosnian Muslims. One need to steer children to the right behaviour, they have to learn how a Muslim behaves. Girls cannot have sex before marriage, that's absolutely forbidden in Islam'* (Bosnian organisation, the Netherlands).

6.4. Strategies among Muslim organisations concerning the debate on Muslims

Table 19 shows a quite even spread of public debate strategies across the different etnic groups.

Table 19: Public debate strategies

Main category	None/Multi (26)	Moroccan (17)	Pakistani (13)	Turkish (23)	Yugoslavian (9)
Evasive / Passive	4	4	4	5	5
Defensive	15	4	4	6	2
Discussion	6	6	3	6	2
Unclear	1	.	2	1	.
Missing	.	3	.	2	.

Ex-Yugoslavian organisations seem to be more pasive/evasive than the other groups and Moroccan organisations appear to approach the public debate more with a strategy of discussion:

> *'I take for example the issue of the veil which is debated in the Occidental societies. It is a problem for us too. We would like to deal not by confrontation but by dialogue. This is an advantage here in Belgium: most affairs are dealt by compromise. So we are against the exclusion approach and we are against the community confinement '* (Moroccan organization, Belgium).

7. Concluding remarks

In conclusion we would like to summarize the finding of the interviews for each of the four topics presented in this report, paying special attention to cross-country or cross-group variations that stand out.

- **Identity:** A religious identity as a Muslim or Islamic organisation remains the most important form of identification for the organisations and the leaders. Organisations in Germany appear to identify both more with their ethno-cultural background (e.g. Turkish, Moroccan) and with the identity of the host country. Organisations of Moroccan origin seem most reluctant to identify explicitly with their ethno-cultural background.

- **Religious practices:** Among the religious practices, core practices are mentioned as being most important most frequently. There are no noticeable cross-national differences. Between different groups, non-specific/multi-ethnic, Pakistani, and Turkish organisations more frequently mentioned issues outside of the core Islamic practices, whereas Moroccan and ex-Yugoslavian organisations only mentioned additional practices occasionally. These organisations appear to stay more focussed on their core role as a religious organisation.

- **Observed differences:** On average one fifth of the representatives does not identify any substantial barriers between the Muslim population and the majority. Those that do identify some issues, tend to focus on symbolic rather than structural issues. In Belgium this focus on symbolic issues appears greatest, whereas there was more mentioning of structural issues in Switzerland and Germany. Across ethnic groups, half of the Turkish organisations mentioned some kind of structural issue, whereas Moroccan organisations do not mention any structural issues and focus solely on symbolic issues. Ex-Yugoslavian organisations frequently mentioned that there are little or no observed differences between them and the majority population in the host society. Compared to the other ethnic groups, ex-Yugoslavian Muslims identify more with Europe and view themselves more as Europeans.

- **Public debate strategies:** On average there appeared to be an almost equal distribution of avoiding, defensive, and discussion debate strategies among organisations and their leaders. Between countries there are some differences in the way that organisations talk about and seem to approach the media. Organisations in the United Kingdom seem to have a relatively more defensive attitude towards media compared to organisations in Germany, who express their public relations more in line with a debate or discussion model. Between different groups there seems to be a quite even spread of public debate strategies. Ex-Yugoslavian organisations seem to be more evasive (passive) than the other groups and Moroccan organisations appear to approach the public debate more with a strategy of discussion.

References

Heelsum, A. van (2003) Reacties van zelforganisaties op stigmatisering, In: S. Harchaoui & C. Huinder (eds), *Stigma: Marokkaan! Over het afstoten en uitsluiten van een ingebeelde bevolkinsgroep*, Utrecht: Forum

Appendix I. Questionnaire

Country: Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, UK (encircle interviewer can fill in what he/she already knows):
Ethnic group: Turkish/ Moroccan /Yugoslavian/ Pakistani (encircle)

Name of organisation: ……
Address, town/city: ……
……

Type of building? newly designed mosque/ old refurnished building/ home/other (encircle).

Name of the interviewed representative: ……
Name of interviewer: ……

Introduction

As I already explained in our telephone conversation, we are gathering information in the EURISLAM project on how Muslims and non Muslims think about each other. We have interviewed Turks, Moroccans, Pakistani and ex-Yugoslavian Muslims and natives. Of course Muslim organisations play an important role in their communities, so we would like to get insight in the functioning of the organisations. We are interested in three things: how the organisation uses its network, how it handles the media discussion on Muslims, and how organisation influences the larger Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistani or Yugoslav community.

A. 'The organisations, basic information'

Firstly I would like to ask a few things about you.

1. What is your function in this organisation?
……

2. Are you full time working here as a volunteer or do you have a profession also outside this organisation? If so what kind?
……
……

3. May I ask, how old are you? ……

4. Where were you born (country): …… Please encircle: 1st/2nd/3rd generation.

5. And when was the organisation established? ……
……
……
……

6. How long have you been involved with this organisation? And what was your motivation?
……
……

7. Can you tell me what the main targets of the organisation are?
……
……

……..…..

8. How would you present the organisation to the outside world? Is that firstly as
 a Muslim association, or as
 a Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistani association, or
 anything else? ……
……..……

9. And what kinds of activities take place at the organisation? (make list on the left)
…… ……..……
…… ……..……
…… ……..……
…… ……..……
…… ……..……
…… ……..……
…… ……..……
…… ……..……

And who would come to that kind of activity? (from which ethnic group, religious subgroup, age group, gender, local/national? (add to list of activities on the right the kind of visitors)

10. What language is used during these activities? (in case you are at a mosque ask for language used at the Friday prayer).
……..……
……..……

11. a. Does the organisation represent a certain movement or Islamic denomination, if so which one?
 no yes: ……
b. I the organisation a member of any umbrella or federation? no yes: If so which one? ……..……
……

B. 'Networks and contacts'

We would like to know what the role is of your organisation in the Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistani community.

12. How would you characterise the organisation's role in the Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistani community? …….
……
……..……
……..……
……..……

13. Do you cooperate which other Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistani organisations?
 no yes: If so, which
ones? ……
……..……

……
……

14. Do you cooperate with other Muslim organisations?
 no yes: If so which ones? ……
……
……
……

15. Does the organisation have (transnational) cooperation in Turkey, Morocco, Yugoslavia or Pakistan?
 no yes: if so, with who, and of what kind? ……
……
……
……

We would also like to know how you use the network outside your own ethnic group, if you have one, so among autochthonous and other immigrant groups.

16. How would you describe the role of the organisation in the local community, I mean towards the people of this town/city?
……
……

17. Is the organisation part of any multi-cultural or multi-religious council?
 no yes: if yes, which ones ……
……

18. Is the organisation in contact with local or national authorities?
 no yes: if yes, are this (more answers possible)
 subsidy relations
 Advisory council
 Direct personal contact
 Other ……
……

19. What are the main financial sources that make the work you are doing possible? (more than one possible)? Is this
 membership fees and donations from members (adherents)
 subsidies from local or national government
 donations or support from outside this country
 other ……

C. Topic 'Attitudes towards religious practices'

We would like to know what kind of religious practice you judge as important, from your organisations perspective.

25. What religious practices do you see as extremely important for your community? (Iter: if necessary, give examples: joining festivals and Ramadan, coming to the prayer, showing to

the outside world that one is Muslim in wearing head scarves/beards, defending the Muslim faith in public)

……
……
……
……
……

26. (not for non-religious organisations) Does the way in which your organisation promote religious practices differ from how this was promoted in Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistan?

……
……
……
……

27. How do you see the development among the youth in the way Islam is practiced? Do you have to stimulate or stop certain tendencies?

……
……
……
……

28. Do you have members that are too westernised to your opinion? (in the sense of not observing religious rules)

 no

 yes, in what sense? And how does your organisation react? ……
……
……
……
……

29. Do you have members that are too strict in observing religious rules to your opinion?

 no

 yes, if yes, how does your organisation react? ……
……
……
……
……

D. TOPIC 'Coping with the media and the debate on Muslims'

Muslims have been a subject of heavy debates in the last ten years. We want to know how you as a representative of an organisation are coping with debate in the media on Muslims and Islam.

20. What do you think of the debate in the media in general, do you think the debate is fair?

……
……
……
……

21. To what extend do you think the views of Muslims are represented in the media?
……
……
……

22. Did the change in climate around 9/11 have any effect on your organisation?
 no yes, how did you cope with this?
……
……
……
……

23. Did your organisation ever experience any negative reactions?
 no yes, if so, how do you interpret this? And how did you cope with
it ? ……
……
……
……

24. Did your members get affected in any way?
 no yes, if so, how did you cope with
it ? ……
……
……
……

25. Is your organisation ever approached by journalists?
 no yes, on what subject? How do you react?
……
……
……

26. Does your organisation approach journalists itself?
 no yes, when did this start and about what subject?
……
……
……

27. Does your organisation try to influence politicians or parties in this city?
 no yes, how?
……
……
……

28. Does your organisation organise any activities for the members around elections?
 no yes, how?
……
……
……

29. Do you think Islam should play a role in politics?
 no yes, in what way?
……
……
……
……
……

E. TOPIC 'Observed differences, particularly gender'

In the media debate there are certain issues that are supposed to distinguish Muslims and non-Muslims. We would like to know how your organisation sees this and deals with this.

30. What do you think are the most difficult issues that divide your ethnic community and the majority society? (if there are any)
……
……
……
……
……
……

31. One of the issues that is supposed to distinguish Muslims from non Muslims is the position of girls and women. Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistani parents are sometimes not sure how to deal with their daughters in the Western context. Does your organisation ever get questions of and give advice to Tu/Mor/Yu/Pakistani parents, on coping with girls in the Western context?
 no yes, what kind of questions and in what direction do you point them? Example?
……
……
……
……

32. Would you give your members the advice to send their kids to Islamic schools if there were any? What would be the advantage/disadvantage?
……
……
……
……
……

33. Do you think parents should treat girls and boys in the same manner as is usual in Western countries? For instance they study for years, live in student flats, date and marry late, have jobs. Or are you directing them to a more Islamic approach somehow and what would that be?
……
……
……
……

34. As a last question I would like to ask, what you think is the most important issue that your organisation will be coping with in the coming years?

……..……
……..……
……..……

We are at the end of this interview. Is there anything that you find important and that you have missed in this interview or would like to comment?

……..……
……..……
……..……
……..……

We want to thank you for your cooperation. In the future we are organising a conference where we will discuss the results. Would you be interested to get an invitation? ☐ no ☐ yes