

Nongovernmental Organizations and Muslim Queer Communities in the Netherlands

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The Netherlands offers a particularly interesting case study of what it means to incorporate a changing sense of values toward sexual freedom while maintaining a strong sense of national culture and context. During the height of the Dutch system known as “Pillarization,” daily life was defined by religion. Every town and village not only consisted of Protestant and Catholic churches, but also separate schools, butchers, grocers, doctors, and shops, in a sort of “separate but equal” society that did not require much interaction between people perceived as different.

The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s had a significant effect on Dutch society, resulting in a retreat from the domination of religion and a rethinking of various societal norms. Gay and lesbian Dutch in particular benefited as Dutch society became more accepting of different expressions of sexuality, and in 2001, the Netherlands became the first country to allow same-gender marriage.

The introduction of a significant Muslim community to the Netherlands has once again challenged the status quo and caused many Dutch to rethink their commitment to the concept of multiculturalism. Muslim immigrant communities have grown significantly in size. More than one million of the twelve million Dutch identify as Muslim, but have remained largely isolated from their white Dutch neighbors. Instead of becoming increasingly influenced by the Dutch way of life, most Muslim communities have become more conservative with each succeeding generation. The political and cultural reactions that have followed question the often-touted notion of Dutch tolerance for difference. As gay and lesbian communities emerge within the transplanted Muslim communities, it remains to be seen if existing organizational structures will be adequate to support their growth and development. Finally, in a world where we all just want to get along, it begs the question of what makes us the same and different. Is a shared sexual orientation enough to forge bonds of community?

Non-Governmental Organizations, or NGOs, have played an important role in establishing a sense of place for the gay and lesbian community. The Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum (Center for Culture and Leisure), or COC, was founded in 1946 and is the oldest Dutch NGO focusing on lesbian and gay issues. In fact, it claims to be the oldest organization of its type in the world. The rather unique name was created to deflect the casual observer from the true purpose of the organization.¹ The roots of the queer organization go deeper, and it is likely that the COC had its foundation in the Dutch chapter of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (SHC). The SHC was founded in 1911 in protest to the passage of a series of laws, “Article 248bis,” designed to repress homosexuality. The SHC functioned until World War II and the Nazi occupation, and then rebounded quickly and was re-formed as the COC after the war.²

It wasn't until 1964 that the name was altered to Nederlandse Vereniging voor Homofielen COC (Dutch Association for Homophiles COC), providing more transparency to the role of the organization.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the COC played a significant role in fostering greater acceptance of gay and lesbian events and activities by the general population. By the 1970s, most large cities hosted gay and lesbian bars and visibly open social activities. Formal recognition by the government did not happen until 1974, when the name changed formally to Nederlandse Vereniging voor Integratie van Homoseksualiteit COC (Dutch Association for Integration of Homosexuality COC). With government recognition came funding for projects and access to government agencies. The government began to rely on COC for the collection of data and advice about providing services to gay and lesbian citizens.³

The COC website notes four “spear heads” of COC work: young people and education, care for elders, the multicultural society, and international solidarity.⁴ Given these priorities, and the strong current of discussion about Muslim immigration and the treatment of homosexuals by Muslims, one might assume the COC to be very active in these endeavors. Despite eleven emails over six months, no individual at the COC ever responded to my questions about COC policies or activities designed to facilitate the integration of Dutch Muslim queers, or to address the issue of tensions surrounding immigrant populations. During an impromptu visit to the COC federal offices in Amsterdam, the staff was not able to provide information on—or even seem to have knowledge of—work being done by the COC to address questions and issues exacerbated by the immigration debate. All questions were directed to a single individual, who did not respond to requests for information.⁵

In interviews with members of other LGBT activists, criticism of COC was apparent. The organization is respected for its past, but seems to be “written off” as a group that has real influence over contemporary Dutch queer society. COC is credited, for example, with organizing a major seminar challenging governmental perspectives on marriage in 1990, and it remained involved in the debate until the passage of laws guaranteeing equal marriage rights.⁶ A dispute over management in 2004, however, led to significant resignations of senior leadership and the establishment of a rival organization, Homo Lesbische Federatie Nederland. To be fair, staff at COC seems actively engaged in a variety of issues, but focuses primarily on coordination of activities, government relations, and maintaining a network of smaller, but more active, regional offices.

There is no shortage of LGBT NGOs in the Netherlands, at least eighty of which are active in some significant way. These tend to be smaller, more focused organizations, which garner most of the public, or at least activist, attention. Many have a relatively short life cycle, in part because of their high degree of specialization or their focus on smaller, more targeted issues.⁷

Immigration, particularly by Muslims, is changing the face of modern-day Europe. Many European countries are experiencing waves of populist xenophobia and new political parties with anti-immigration platforms are being created. While this is not surprising in many parts of the continent, one might not expect that such a party would garner 20

percent of the vote in the tolerant Holland of the current day. While most of the negative political discussion focuses on Muslims in general, concern is largely directed at the two largest groups: Moroccans and Turks. Immigrants, who came in a first wave to fill unwanted jobs were later allowed to bring family members to join them. As subsequent generations have been born in the Netherlands, most Muslims remain concentrated in the larger cities, with little interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch or even within various immigrant communities. Dutch frustration with Muslim immigrants is significant, and seems primarily motivated by fear of crime. Muslim failure to adopt Dutch attitudes about the treatment of women and acceptance of homosexuals exacerbates the situation. It highlights a growing, yet often unspoken, fear that Muslim society might be incompatible with the Dutch way of life.⁸ Dutch scholar Laurens Buijss notes:

[T]he cultural divide between Dutch versus Moroccan and Turkish people around issues related to homosexuality has been exacerbated in recent years by a political climate in the Netherlands in which Dutch natives have attempted to bring about the 'sexularization' of Muslim immigrants. 'Sexularization' describes the manner in which some members of mainstream Dutch society have tried to force immigrants to assimilate to Dutch secular attitudes that are permissive of homosexuality.⁹

The distinction in attitudes about and definitions of homosexuality is extensive. The typical white Dutch person would likely identify homosexuality as an inherent trait someone is born with, while the typical Muslim immigrant would identify it as choice made by the individual. Even among immigrant men who engage in same-sex sexual relations there is a resistance to accepting the label of gay or homosexual.¹⁰

Perhaps it should be no surprise, given the progressive stance most Dutch take on homosexuality, that this has become one of the most visible sources of concern with the Muslim community. Right-wing politicians like Geert Wilders have highlighted Muslim violence toward gays (both verbal and physical) as evidence that Muslim society is incompatible with Dutch values. This adoption of a pro-Gay Rights stance as a political wedge issue seems to be a uniquely Dutch phenomenon.

As troubling as the relationship between Muslims and homosexuals is in the Netherlands, on a larger European level, it takes a back seat to issues faced in other countries. At the Brussels office of the International Gay and Lesbian Association-Europe (ILGA-Europe) attention is primarily focused on fighting the type of homophobia that would be more recognizable in the United States. In reaction to the increased tolerance toward sexual minorities, conservative Christian religious groups have become more professionalized and powerful, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. In that context, tensions between Islam and homosexuality do not present as great a concern to others as they do in the Netherlands.¹¹ The struggle to find space for peaceful coexistence between Muslims and homosexuals may be primarily a Dutch issue, but the lessons learned will undoubtedly influence the rest of the Western world.

There are several NGOs organized either for or by gay and lesbian Muslims operating in the Netherlands. The pioneering gay Muslim organization in the Netherlands was the Yoesuf Foundation, founded in 1992 by Syrian immigrant Omar Nahas. Mr. Nahas is described as a strong intellectual with an intelligent knack for nudging and pushing the dominant Muslim community in its thinking about homosexuality.¹² At its height, Yoesuf had a staff of three and a volunteer board of fourteen. The group's focus was geared more toward the collection and dissemination of information than providing a social outlet.¹³ The impact of Yoesuf was considerable, in particular because of its influence on the Dutch government. The name *Yoesuf* was specifically chosen because of its religious connotations. The historical Yoesuf was a man noted in the Qur'an as being extremely beautiful, but never having tested the love of a woman. As an academic, Dr. Nahas studied and published on Islam, homosexuality, and Western culture. His personal knowledge gave him the ability to formulate discussion based on scientific views and the Qur'an, quoting the teachings of Mohamed whenever possible.¹⁴

By capitalizing on connections in the white Dutch community, Yoesuf became a positive influence, providing education for social workers and members of government ministries. Within the Muslim community, Yoesuf posed the question of whether or not it was possible to combine a Muslim and a queer outlook. Homosexuality is a taboo subject in Muslim society. Not merely rejected, it is typically not even discussed. Yoesuf and many successive organizations have striven to create a positive term to be used to describe homosexuality in the Muslim community, since all of the terms currently used have negative connotations. Simply by bringing the question into the public forum, Yoesuf helped advance the cause. The response in the Muslim community was not always positive, but even bringing the topic into the acceptable range allowed individuals to begin forming opinions that could be openly discussed. Perhaps advances such as this contribute to noted Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan's point that while homosexuality could be tolerated by Muslims, it would just never be accepted as legitimate.¹⁵ This language is amazingly close to the "hate the sin, love the sinner" concept promulgated by many Christian denominations.

In particular, the Yoesuf Foundation caught the attention of the Dutch Minister for Health and Education, who frequently held out the Foundation as a positive example and provided funding and government support.¹⁶ Dr. Nahas left the Netherlands to pursue a Ph.D. in Belgium in 2002, and the Yoesuf Foundation began to flounder. Because of the government investment and desire to showcase a foundation of and for Muslim queers, Yoesuf lingered until 2008, when it officially became defunct.

After placing so much attention on Yoesuf, its demise left the Dutch government in need of a strong organization dedicated to advancing a dialogue. Other existing groups, such as Secret Garden, or Stichting Nafar, were more inwardly focused and social, so the government facilitated the new organization, Malaica. Once again, the naming of the group was intentional. The new group might have liked to continue using the Yoesuf label (the old Yoesuf web address automatically redirects the user to the Malaica website), but it feared a backlash from within the Muslim community. Many Muslim leaders had long argued that the use of the name *Yoesuf* was disrespectful. With the organization no longer headed by a Muslim or a scholar, it did not seem prudent to continue its use. The new term, *Malaica*, is both an African and Arab word, meaning guardian angel. While it is not directly related to the Qur'an, it is still considered a holy

word. The organization hopes to convey a connection to religion that will speak to members of the immigrant community.

In its formation Malaica is more visibly influenced by its government origins. The organization is managed by a Board, not all of whom are Muslim or identify as LGBT. By design, Malaica is set up to be bi-cultural in orientation, and promote small group dialogue sessions that hope to continue a process of establishing common ground. The initial goals of Malaica are fairly restrained. With a grant of 4,500,000 euros for a four-year period, the organization is expected to produce eleven dialogues of twelve to eighteen participants each per year. Each dialogue has a budget of approximately 6,000 euros. Malaica works within the networks of COC and other NGOs, including organizations that are not organized specifically around homosexual activism, to find the audience for these dialogues. Conscious of its status as a newcomer, the leaders of Malaica are careful not to duplicate existing services or try to step into areas they know to be served well by existing groups. This group in particular seems to understand that the native Dutch need just as many opportunities for education and understanding as the immigrant Muslims. Each dialogue session hopes to contain participants from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations. Many native Dutch are unaware of the struggles within the Muslim immigrant communities, and feel uncertain about how best to even begin a conversation. The group's treasurer, Mattias Duyves, notes that, "for many young Muslims, homosexuality is not their first problem. The idea of virginity (or lack thereof), the acceptable roles of men and women and violence are much more prevalent and must be addressed first before their minds can even begin to comprehend what it means to be queer." What Malaica shares most with other NGOs in this category is a desire to challenge the secrecy and silence that many ethnic groups use as a weapon to prevent discussion, which perpetuates cycles of violence and misunderstanding. As Malaica continues to develop as an organization, it will likely venture into other programmatic areas, including the use of social media, the development of educational programs in schools, and providing educational exhibitions around the country. The success of Malaica is yet to be determined. Its goals are laudible, but its artificial creation and government sponsorship may prevent it from being seen as legitimate.

Habibi Anna opened in the mid-1990s as the first and still only café and bar in Amsterdam catering to Arab and Muslim gays, lesbians, and transsexuals. It has developed into a community center for gay and lesbian Muslims and Arabs and recently moved to a larger space to accommodate a growing clientele. Early in its history Habibi Anna even sponsored a float in the annual Amsterdam canal parade, featuring Muslim boys and men in the traditional veiled costumes of female dancers. Participation in Pride and the accompanying associations of being "out and proud" created conflict in the community and participation has changed in the ensuing years. The bar is well known and listed in the various publications for gay and lesbian visitors. It is located in a pleasant neighborhood within the center ring of Amsterdam, but not on a street containing many other gay- and lesbian-oriented businesses. A visit to Habibi Anna on a Friday night illustrates the distinctions in how homosexuality and same-sex relationships are lived in the Muslim community. The bar is a lively, friendly place, where everyone seems to know or at least be comfortable with each other. The visual distinction between generations, however, is immediately noticeable. Older patrons, dressed more conservatively, would hardly stand out from any other Muslim man in the city. Many of

them are married and live traditional lives as far as anyone else in the community is concerned, honoring the need for discretion in perhaps the same way that they would if they remained in Morocco or Turkey. While there is no strong concept of homosexuality in many Muslim countries, the idea of same-sex relationships is a discretely acknowledged part of the social structure.¹⁷ Younger patrons, however, were dressed much more provocatively, similar to young men in other Amsterdam gay bars. They were also more overtly sexual in their actions, holding hands and dancing. It was impossible to tell their level of openness in the world outside the bar, but the activity inside would suggest that perhaps the next generation of young Muslim queers could adopt a more Western philosophy about living their life as a gay person. There were women in the bar, but they seemed to be there to be with their male friends and not because they identified as lesbian or worked seeking sex with women.¹⁸ In general, most of the discussion on homosexuality within the Muslim community seems focused on men, perhaps mimicking the conflicts with gender roles and perceived sexism they are associated with.

In 1994, Emir Belatoui founded Secret Garden, in conjunction with the COC, as a foundation for LGBT Muslims. Belatoui had been a fashion designer in his native Algeria prior to seeking asylum in the Netherlands. Secret Garden slowly but steadily grew as a social space for gay Muslim men until a dispute in 2001 with the COC administration left Secret Garden without a home, and the organization was dormant for several years. In 2008, Secret Garden reappeared as an independent organization and has seen steady growth since then.¹⁹

The Secret Garden website outlines its goal to increase dialogue on the subject of homosexuality within immigrant communities as well as provide a safe place for LGBT Muslims to meet and increase their sense of self worth.²⁰ In many ways, Secret Garden works hard to protect the privacy of its members, and is cautious about granting requests for interviews or meetings. At the same time, they are among the most visible of the LGBT Muslim organizations. In July of 2010, the group signed a lease for office space in the notable Amsterdam landmark Montelbaanstoren, an iconic tower on a canal in the center city. The Amsterdam city council provided subsidized rent in an effort to give the organization a home in a visible center city location.²¹ The Secret Garden website features a gallery section with photographs of major events. The Secret Garden is unique in having its own separate, not to mention highly visible, location. All signs point to Secret Garden becoming a more permanent fixture of the LGBT community in Amsterdam.

Secret Garden also takes a more visible stand in the promotion of safer sex and HIV awareness. Many bars and coffee shops distribute Secret Garden pamphlets in Arabic on HIV and safer sex and condoms. The red AIDS awareness ribbon is adorned with the Arabic phrase, "If you have sex, do it safe."²² In a 2009 interview published in the Amsterdam newspaper *de Telegraaf*, Balatoui openly challenged the Muslim community to start thinking differently about gay and lesbian issues, stating, "Homosexual youth should be able to speak about their inclinations with their parents...Many religions have the tendency to ban homosexuality," he says, "but nowhere, neither in the Koran, does it say that love between people of the same sex is forbidden. That taboo is cultural, but should be changed." Balatoui contends that he does not seek confrontation with imams, for example. "We don't want to shock or provoke. In this way we won't reach our goal,

but we do enter into talks. A first step should then be that we learn to accept each other.”²³

The third predominantly LBGT Muslim NGO in Amsterdam is Stichting Nafar, founded by Chafik Gadir. Gadir was born in Morocco but later moved to the Netherlands with his family at the age of 16. He was motivated to create Stichting Nafar by the experience of losing close friends to AIDs and by inflammatory remarks by Sheikh Khalil el-Moumni, the Rotterdam imam who was taken to court in 2001 (but acquitted) for his disparaging remarks against homosexuals. The organization promotes three main goals: *hulpverlening* (relief), or providing support for members of the community; *voorlichting* (education), or raising awareness about issues related to North Africans and same-sex attraction; and *ambitie* (ambition), or moving North African youth with homosexual feelings forward as a community.²⁴

Stichting Nafar also started small and with assistance and space provided by COC. Five North African boys attended the first Nafar dance at the COC-Amsterdam bar, but two years later events would draw as many as seventy. The organization has grown to sponsoring theme parties in some of Amsterdam’s most prominent venues.²⁵ Nafar recognizes the need to provide Moroccan and other North African youths with a space where they can come to terms with their sexuality in the context of their cultural and religious upbringing. In an April 2010 interview with the Dutch magazine *Gay & Night*, Gadir stated, “In Morocco, your identity is determined by your family first, and only then by your nationality or your sexual orientation. There is no mention of possible feelings for someone of the same sex because, according to Islam, homosexuality does not exist.”²⁶

Gadir underscores the strength of family identity within the immigrant community and the challenges that come with rebelling against it in any way. Gadir is open to his family about his own sexuality, but understands their need for him to maintain a level of discretion.²⁷ Negative perceptions of Moroccan youth in the Netherlands are widespread and it is not difficult to find someone who claims first- or second-hand knowledge of violence at the hands of one of the young male members of this community. Gay men in particular are concerned about the rise in violence against them perpetrated by Moroccan immigrants. Newspapers and magazines frequently reference this concern and offer reports of attacks. Visitors to Amsterdam gay clubs are warned to stay vigilant against attacks and be cautious of being overtly sexual or affectionate with members of the same gender in public. Gadir offered his own philosophy about this violence, stating:

There is something else going on. Those guys are often consciously gay cruising areas around, looking for victims. They are jealous when two gay men openly and happily see walking around. I believe this is because they often struggle with their own homosexual feelings. But they know that they, when they talk about home, their father, brothers or friends get a spanking. This fear makes them aggressive.²⁸

Nafar, then, provides that needed opportunity for North African boys struggling with homosexual feelings to challenge cultural norms and redefine what it means to be gay, or at least to have homosexual feelings. The hope is that over time this will contribute to the development of a sense of positive self-esteem among young same-sex-attracted North

African boys. Furthermore, this may propel a positive discussion of homosexuality within Muslim families and in Muslim culture.

The official COC is indeed quite difficult to engage, but for all the disparagement by activists, it does seem stronger and more vibrant than it is given credit. Outside of Amsterdam, the local chapters are, by and large, still active and in many smaller cities the local COC chapter remains the most identifiable homosexual organization. Gay media outlets in the Netherlands frequently cite COC, especially as a source of news items from rural areas and small towns. Almost all of the Muslim-oriented LGBT NGOs in Amsterdam began with COC support, using meeting space and benefitting from COC's large network of resources and contacts. It is likely that many of the other mid- to large-size LGBT NGOs arose in similar fashion. Perhaps the strong COC history and network is the reason that so many LGBT NGOs flourish in the Netherlands. After homosexuals in the the Netherlands were granted the right to marry in 2001 and adopt children in 2004, there no longer seemed to be a great "common enemy" against which the community could unite. Many members of the LGBT community turned their attention to other issues and pursuits, relying on the COC for assistance collecting data, distributing funds, or providing meeting space. It is understandable that the COC may rely on these newer, Muslim-oriented NGOs to fulfill the needs of Muslim gays, but given the role Muslim-gay relations play in contemporary Dutch politics, it would seem wise for the COC to step up their visibility and activity around these issues.

One of several characteristics that many of the Muslim-oriented LGBT NGOs have in common is their reliance on a single charismatic leader. The idolization of charismatic Muslim gay men seems to be something of a phenomenon in the Netherlands.²⁹ A recent issue of the major Dutch publication *L'Homo* (The Gay) features Orhan Bucakli, a prominent model and socialite within the gay community. Part of the article addresses the attention Bucakli receives when in public, and how he has become somewhat of a cult figure within the gay community. Bucakli has capitalized on his notoriety to organize parties for queer Turks and Moroccans.³⁰ Each of the grassroot LGBT NGOs has an iconic founder, and the success of the organization has been dependent on the success of the leader. When the leader leaves the scene, as when Omar Nahas left for Belgium, the organization folds. Secret Garden may prove to be the exception. While still led by founder Emil Belatoui, the organization is taking steps to be more public and open, providing more opportunities for members to get involved and take on leadership roles.

A second theme is more specific and reflects the personal stories of the leaders of these organizations. Most of the gay Muslim men in the leadership roles have come to the Netherlands as asylum seekers, meaning they left their country of origin specifically to emigrate to the Netherlands.³¹ Forced to find and develop new connections upon their arrival in the Netherlands, they frequently found it easier to connect to the white Dutch queer community than to their native immigrant communities. Particularly if they left their country of origin as a result of oppression, they are justifiably hesitant to affiliate with a new community that is likely even more conservative than the one left behind. As a result, each man is less connected to, and therefore less dependent upon, the strong, isolating, family-centered nature of the immigrant communities.

If not asylum seekers, it is more likely that openly gay Muslim men have made a more formal break with their families.³² Orhan Bucakli was born in the Netherlands to Turkish parents and married at age 18 to a bride brought to the Netherlands from Turkey. He ultimately left her and his children to pursue life within the gay community in Amsterdam. An exception to this pattern might be Chafik Gadir, the director of the Nafar, who was born in Morocco but emigrated. At one point in a 2001 interview with Daniel Woznica, Gadir noted that he is “out” to his family, but they are accepting only as long as he maintains a certain level of discretion. The fact that several years earlier Gadir’s picture appeared alongside an article about Nafar in the major Dutch newspaper *Trouw* seems far from discrete, however. It might be that immigrant communities are so isolated the chance of his picture being noticed and causing concern for his parents is slim. The number of men attending NAFAR parties or patronizing Habibi Ana might mean that younger gay Muslims are better able to manage the balancing act required to be part of both the Muslim and homosexual worlds.

The conflict between “Eastern” and “Western” ways of defining what it means to be homosexual was prevalent in this process. Western European expectations of being “out and proud” were in part formulated as a result of the Sexual Revolution and accompanied a separation by mainstream society from the prior dominant Christian paradigms. The Sexual Revolution, however, missed the majority of the Muslim world. The ever-increasing number of Muslims in Western Europe is pushing Muslim cultural thinking to catch up. If Western notions are not going to be adopted, how will mainstream Muslim society in Europe discuss this formerly taboo subject? Within the limited discussion on homosexuality among Muslim scholars there is disagreement on what it means to be, or not be, homosexual and how Muslims might be inclined to define same-sex activity differently than Westerners.³³ Perhaps that explains why so many Muslim gays prefer the relative comfort of organizations like Secret Garden or Nafar.

Distinctions within Muslim communities play a role as well. The gay Muslim parties organized by Bucakli have separate rooms for Moroccans and Turks.³⁴ Organizations and activities such as these welcome Muslim men as they are. They place no expectation that the men leave their family or their religion in order to be successfully “out” or even try to determine who they are. Stifling communities and poor self-esteem keep many gay Muslim men isolated and afraid. The discovery that one is not alone can help build self-esteem, which over time creates a desire to build allies and create community.³⁵ The desire by many Dutch to have an open conversation with Muslim immigrants about sexuality and homosexuality is at present more than most immigrants are able to digest. Perhaps the efforts of Malaica to encourage dialogue around the taboo topics of violence and gender relations need to occur first to allow a path for discussions on sexuality.

It is tempting to take the rise of such divisive politicians as Geert Wilders as a sign that there is no hope for a peaceful coexistence between Muslims and homosexuals in the Netherlands. The work—and success—of many LGBT NGOs suggests otherwise. To be certain, these are small strides, but as we know, babies must crawl before they can walk. The history of homosexual rights in the West demonstrates that society must first break the taboo on discussion before meaningful dialogue and perhaps change in attitudes can occur. By being visible and creating venues for conversation (even if the conversation is critical), the discussion of homosexuality in the Muslim community is entering a different phase. Activists are finding ways to discuss sexuality that fit the norms of Muslim

communities and are compatible with references to the Qur'an. This might not be recognizable or even preferable to progressive white Dutch attitudes, but it is an advancement. Attitudes within Muslim communities about poor behavior by "Moroccan" youth might also be evolving. Parents are becoming more aware of the need to address violence by their children, which may by default lead to discussions about violence against homosexuals.³⁶

Complete integration is perhaps not always the ideal outcome. Muslim homosexuals in the Netherlands are becoming increasingly recognized as part of the Muslim community, and not just part of the "them" of white Dutch society. Smaller Muslim immigrant communities, such as the Surinamise and Somali, already seem more comfortable with their place in Dutch society and in some ways more comfortable with the position of homosexuals in the Muslim world. In a conversation with an elder member of the Somali Community Center in The Hague, I asked what would happen if one of his children came out as a gay or lesbian. The man paused and put his hand on his forehead before saying, "I would not like it, but I would still love them. What else could I do?" More attention is being directed to the fact that moderate imams reference homosexuality in terms not all that different from the Pope or other Christian religious leaders. As organizations like Secret Garden continue to grow and become more visible, perhaps their efforts will serve as an influence on the white Dutch as well, challenging perceptions and stereotypes of what it means to be Muslim and Dutch.

Notes

1. Accessed online at coc.nl/.
2. Accessed online at myweb.lsbu.ac.uk/~stafflag/dutchmove.html.
3. Hekma, interview by author.
4. Accessed online at coc.nl.
5. Site visit, 11 June 2010.
6. Merin 2002, p. 214.
7. Duyves, interview by author.
8. Buruma 2006.
9. Laurens Buijjs, in Woznicka 2010.
10. Voor 2009.
11. Moe, interview by author.
12. Accessed online at flw.ugent.be/cie/CIE2/nahascv.htm; and Duyves interview.

13. Nahas 2004.
14. Accessed online at indiawijzer.nl/religion_and_spirituality/islam/islamic_institutions/utrecht/utrecht_yousuf.htm; and Nahas 2004.
15. Accessed online at tariqramadan.com/Islam-and-Homosexuality.html. 29 May 2009.
16. Duyves interview.
17. Habib, S., "Islam and Homosexuality," Vol. II, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, Cal. (2010), p. 196.
18. Habibi Ana Café, interviews with author, 11 June 2010.
19. Accessed online at gay-news.com/article04.php?sid=2429.
20. Accessed online at stichtingsecretgarden.nl.
21. Accessed online at dutchamsterdam.nl/891-muslim-lgbt-organization-rents-historic-tower-in-amsterdam.
22. Interview with Emir Belautoui by Daniel Woznica.
23. Voor 2009.
24. Woznica 2010.
25. Klejweigt 2007.
26. Woznica 2010.
27. Ibid.
28. Klejweigt 2007.
30. *L'Homo* (May 2010).
31. Bedeem, interview by author.
32. Hekma interview and Bedeem interview.
33. Habib 2010, p. 270.
34. *L'Homo* (April 2010).

35. Guindon 2010, p. 214; and Pimental-Habib 2008, p. xiii.

36. *Trouw*, mk. 29 November 2007.

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