

# Religion, migration and conflict

edited by

Carl Sterkens and Paul Vermeer

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## Chapter 7

# **Beyond conflict: Understanding the Deprivatisation of Religion from the Social Capital of Religious Migrants' Organisations**

*Jorge E. Castillo Guerra*

### **Introduction**

Theories regarding the return of religion to the public sphere seem to emerge from studies related to national or international conflicts, polarised political and religious positions and fundamentalist ideologies, which all tend to create rifts in the so called multicultural societies. These theories arose as an alternate position to the secularisation thesis that predicted that the modernisation of society made marginalisation of religion inevitable and even foresaw its disappearance. However, the widespread interest in the renewed manifestation of religion in the public domain seems to come mainly from the perspective of conflict. In the case of the religions of migrants, selective conclusions and generalisations are formulated from this perspective, even when it is clear that not all members of every religion are implicated in the so called 'clash of civilisations'.

In the middle of the past decade an alternative analytical perspective arose for the study of the religions of migrants, which goes further than the perspective of conflict. Without any intention of relativising this last perspective or the events that make it relevant, the alternative perspective points to a broad understanding of the emergence of religions in the public arena. What is the meaning of this alternative analytical perspective for understanding the so called re-emergence of religion, termed as 'de-privatisation of religion' by Casanova?

It is necessary to indicate some studies offering empirical material which have received too little attention until now, due to prevailing studies of religion from a conflict perspective. I will draw on these studies to analyse participation of migrants in the public sphere in the Netherlands through their contribution to social capital. What I wish to do here is to advance a better understanding of public participation of religions through a broadening of current approaches from a conflict perspective, especially Casanova's de-privatisation thesis. I will therefore introduce Casanova's thesis on de-privatisation of

religion and central concepts and methods that have been applied to study social capital building by migrants' religious organisations. Consequently, I will introduce a short overview of the secularisation process and the repositioning of religion in the public sphere from the context of the Netherlands. This last will focus on the social return on investment and contributions to social cohesion by migrants' religions. After dealing with both ways of social capital building, I will underline the meaning of an alternative perspective, not limited to conflicts, for the study of the return of religions to the public sphere.

### **1. The thesis of de-privatisation of religion**

In the last decades of the past century, new theoretical perspectives came about that aimed to explore the participation of religions within society. José Casanova in particular maintains that the function of religion surpasses the limits designed by thinkers from the theory of secularisation proposed as 'privatisation' by sociology. Privatisation means the process of differentiation between secular and religious institutions and the limitation of the role of religion to the individual and private sphere. However, Casanova states that religion never totally disappeared from the public domain and is even gaining public influence once again. Religion becomes de-privatised because it exceeds the limits of the individual realm (micro level) and the religious community (meso level) and influences various spheres in the public environment. Religions turn outwards (extroversion) and leave behind their marginal positions (Casanova 1994: 3). This is Casanova's observation based on the boom of public manifestations of religious movements and the participation of religion in political issues.

Casanova focuses on events in the 1970's such as the Islamic revolution in Iran, Liberation Theology in Latin America and the re-emergence of protestant fundamentalism. These events confirm for Casanova the increasing relevance of religion for the public sphere: "By de-privatisation I mean the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatised role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularity had reserved for them." (Casanova 1994:5).

For Casanova, de-privatisation of religion does not mean the failure or eradication of the theory of secularisation, it speaks more of a challenge to re-approach it. Therefore, studies on the de-privatisation of religion lean towards a critical reflection regarding the relationship between religion and modernity. A relationship that is analysed from three distinct areas, which are necessary to separate out. The term "secularisation" is an umbrella term used for multiple meanings pertaining to the religious domain, the state and sciences.

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Let us briefly examine these distinctions in order to understand the scope of 'de-privatisation' according to the first chapter of *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Casanova 1994).

Casanova posits that the theory of secularisation comprises three theses to explain different processes. The first and main one refers to the differentiation of the religion from the secular spheres: the state, the economy and science. This differentiation, therefore, constitutes a process by which a new structuring of the secular must happen in such a way that it is considered as an autonomous space with regard to the religious. In the second thesis, the author distinguishes, within the range of secularisation, a decline in the religious beliefs and practices with regard to modernisation processes. Moreover, in his third thesis, he makes a distinction, still within secularisation, regarding the process of privatisation of religion. This last consideration encompasses a normative aspect of secularisation as it proposes the privatisation of religion as a necessary condition for the advent of a liberal democracy.

The three theses embraced by Casanova's distinctions (differentiation, declining and privatisation of religion) have been generally applied by scholars to explain the marginalisation of the church as related to the state, the withdrawal from public spaces and an isolation within a private domain. Casanova in turn states, first, that the presence of religion in the public sphere shows that the three processes are not necessarily applicable for all societies, particularly those outside Western Europe. And second, that the new presence of religion in the public sphere does not constitute, in itself, a threat to other spheres. The presence of new religious movements in the public arena shows that we are witnessing another process, the de-privatisation of religion, because of the extroversion of the religious towards the public, as well as the necessary bond created in the political realm enjoined with public participation (Casanova 1994: 65-66).

Casanova's studies have started a debate regarding the exactness and depth of his statements on the topic of de-privatisation and on the manner in which there is a reappearance of religion within the public domain (Riesebrodt 2010). In this sense, Achterberg et al. (2009) approached the thesis of de-privatisation of religion in an empirical research in 18 Western countries and concluded that declining religion seems to lead to more interest by believers bringing their religion into the public sphere. Kippenberg, Lehman & Nagel (2013, 139) distinguish "variations of religious de-privatisation" and propose to develop a perspective in religious studies to reflect on this. Following that, the de-privatisation of religion is related to a transformation of the modern nation states through globalisation (trans-nationalism, migration and market economy). Nation states lost their monopoly to regulate public goods and services and religious communities take advantage of this vacuum to manifest their

public responsibility. Kippenberg et al. (2013, 138) listed four dimensions of the reappearance of religions as public actors: legal, welfare, (political) legitimacy and the state monopoly force. According to them, the novelty of the de-privatisation of religion does not consist of a detection of the presence of religions in the public sphere, since these have been operating there through education, health or mass media, among others. Much more than that, this novelty lies in the roles assumed by religions in the framework of a transformed nation state.

*Religions of migrants and de-privatisation of religion in Europe*

In the first decade of this century, Casanova introduced modifications to his theory of de-privatisation in which he answers his critics and acknowledges the impact of immigration in the mapping of religions in host countries (2006; 2008). Reflecting on the de-privatisation of religion in the European context, he maintains that immigration entails religious plurality and that the religions of migrants are necessary to comprehend the re-emergence of religion in those countries. In his words: “there is very little evidence of any kind of religious revival among the European population, if one excludes the significant influx of new immigrant religions” (Casanova 2008: 101). He also dedicated more effort to explain his distinctions regarding secularisation and de-privatisation (Casanova 2006; 2008). For the author, migrant’s religions are an opportune reference to validate his three theses on the necessary distinction in the theory of secularisation. For this purpose, his analytical perspective leans towards the problems linked to religions of migrants in host societies. From this, he argues that the religious participation of migrants in the public sphere makes the ‘drastic’ understanding of secularisation uncomfortable, as well as the ‘secular’ self-understanding regarding the progressive impairment of religion as something inherent to the modernisation process (Casanova 2007: 60). In Casanova’s view, in Europe the privatisation of religion has been accepted as an irreversible fact, nevertheless this situation changed after the Twin Tower attacks, the start of the anti-terrorist wars and the various debates regarding immigration or the presumable Christian identity of Europe - as an argument against the entrance of Turkey into the European Union.

In a recent study Hjelm corroborates the thesis of de-privatisation according to the way religion has been perceived in public discourse and which he summarises as “either problematic or useful” (2014: 205). Additionally, Kippenberg et al. (2013) and Kippenberg (2013) note an increased participation of religion in terms of welfare among others. However, according to them this issue passes unnoticed by public opinion, as “In the post-9/11 world, the most significant reason for religion’s return to the public imagination has been the fact that it has been associated with political violence” (Hjelm 2014, 204).

This last can play a decisive role in a theory formation which also tends to characterise the process of de-privatisation of religion emphasising political, cultural or social conflicts. One can see this within the scope of Casanova on the religions of migrants in Europe. The challenge grows for a better understanding of the de-privatisation of religion through migration beyond the scope of conflict, to find a balance between a “problematic” and a “useful” approach. Nevertheless, the question is: which “useful” methodology and criteria are needed to study the religions of migrants?

Dutch research on the social activities of members of religious organisations and their effects on the public sphere have been viewed from the perspective of social cohesion. Social cohesion is a polyvalent term and it has been applied in a positive perspective to explore the effort of citizens to increase social relations. Social cohesion is related to behaviour and perception of the social engagement of people through association (Schnabel 2000, 22). Following Berger-Schmitt (2002, 404), the main effects of social cohesion are both reducing inequalities in society and acquisition of social capital as it strengthens social relations. In this sense, social cohesion is interpreted as an element of association or bonding that determines the quality of society by way of social participation and the level of equilibrium between the various groups that make up that society. However, different authors warn about the negative effects of social cohesion, when this does not go beyond the limits of the own group and when this leads to the marginalisation of others or to self-exclusion (Schnabel, Bijl & De Hart 2008, 15).

A model to distinguish internal and external levels of social cohesion has been developed by Putnam on the basis of Bourdieu’s theory on social capital. Accordingly, social capital indicates the way in which members of a group cooperate to achieve social goals through working collectively. Social capital is based on the values of trust, understood as mutual recognition, and reciprocity, understood as mutual reward. Both trust and reciprocity are regulated by control mechanisms or conventions of the associations. Search for mutual benefit has two scopes according to the model of Putnam (2001): the first is “bonding capital”, which can be understood as cohesion inside a voluntary association. The second is “bridging capital”, which takes place when new relationships with other associations are established through common goals or interests. “Bridging” means an exchange of capital among different groups that can facilitate access to new services, different kind of support and social networks. Bonding capital is the condition for bridging capital, since recognition of persons and values that encourage interaction with other groups are generated there.

Finally, research on the contributions of the religions of migrants in the Netherlands has taken advantage of the possibilities offered by the research

method known as Social Return on Investment (SROI). This method was introduced by the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (San Francisco) to investigate the economic value generated by the social investment of non-profit organisations that aim to contribute to the “public good” (Nicholls et al. 2009; Arvidson et al. 2010). A disadvantage of the SROI method is that monetisation can play a dominant role and relegate other relevant outcomes to the background, such as the number of hours that volunteers invest in social work of this quality (Arvidson et al. 2010).

Particularly with regard to religious organisations, in 2004 the Oikos Foundation (Utrecht) applied the SROI method to research the social function of churches from their contributions to civil society (Van der Sar 2004). Applying the methodology of the SROI, researchers related the activities of the churches with the time expended in them. Then, the cost per hour is calculated, according to the type of activity and the way that these activities take over the social work of the government agencies, such as counselling and courses for young people experiencing problems at school, helping the homeless and so forth. The cost per hour is calculated from the basic salary of social workers and, finally, this calculation shows the sum of money that indicates the social investment of a particular church.

## 2. Withdrawal of religion from the public sphere

In this section, I offer an introduction to the Dutch context, where I will discuss the process of secularisation following the distinctions of Casanova (differentiation, declining and privatisation of religion).

From the nineteenth century on, ideas stemming from French secularism had bearing on the proposal that social work carried out by the Dutch Churches, known as *armenzorg* (assistance to the poor), should be taken on by the state. The parish councils were opposed for two reasons: first, because their influence on the poor co-parishioners would diminish and second, because the state could only carry out this work through tax increases. The parish councils were successful in their opposition and were able to maintain the *armenzorg* as their responsibility, as written into the law on poverty, the *Armenwet*, of 1912. However, the social attention offered by the state organisations continued to increase and this jump-started the process of differentiation of *armenzorg* carried out by churches (Nordergraaf 2011). After World War II, the decrease of social work offered by churches began to accelerate due to two reasons; the increase in prosperity and the law on general assistance *Algemene Bijstand*, of 1965. This law professionalised and at the same time bureaucratised social assistance, which was initially carried out by volunteers who operated from an organisation motivated by faith. Each Christian church offered assistance to

people of their own denomination, following the *modus operandi* of a model known as *verzuiling* (pillarisation). This model began to collapse in the 1960's, when the aid offered by the church surpassed denominational boundaries. Soon churches began to focus their assistance on people not attended to by the regular state assistance programmes. The 1960's also saw other developments in the religious and socio-cultural impact on the decline and privatisation of religion and these have been given various terms. The first of these terms is *ontkerkelijkking*, (un-churching or religious disaffiliation), a term used to identify the decline of church affiliation, from 67% to 39% of the population (Bernts, Dekker & De Hart 2007). The second term is de-confessionalism, which can be understood as the decrease of parishioners in Christian political parties. A third development is termed as individualisation, which is understood as the increase in the independent capability of individuals who feel free from social or family or institutional pressures, including the church, in the choices they make, (Schnabel 2004). The deinstitutionalisation of society is a fourth development, which has bearing on the relativisation of institutionalised structures. A final development that I wish to point out is termed de-traditionalising (Heelas, Lash & Morris 1995), which is a process of letting go of traditional guidelines and the construction of new flexible, post traditional guidelines that ensue a search for individualisation and greater personal responsibility (Beck 1992).

The last three decades of the last century witnessed a differentiation of the religious from the State, a significant decline in the participation in churches and the presence of religion in the public domain (privatisation). This direction is expected to continue. People tend to accommodate religion according to their personal needs and these are converted into a do-it-yourself product. The individual satisfies his or her own religious needs from one or more religious guidelines and decides the level of bonding with institutionalised religion. This is what Grace Davie has been speaking of since the 1990's, for which she uses the term "believing without belonging" (2006).

The developments I have reviewed herein have provoked the fall of the traditional frameworks for interpretation (Felling, Peters, & Scheepers 2000). Less people feel attracted to institutionalised churches. There is stagnation in the number of parishioners or members, a significant absence of young people and a decrease in the social effect of churches in society. Expressions such as ecclesial avoidance, ecclesial abandonment or church exodus are being used to describe the disappearance of the churches foreseen by a secularisation thesis.

### **3. Repositioning of religion in the public sphere**

At the beginning of this century, a series of events within and outside the Netherlands obliged the theorists of religion to reflect and review the disappearance

of religion from the public domain, as it could not continue to be said that the churches occupied an isolated position in society. Let us briefly examine these events, known as the breakdown of the welfare state, followed by the coming of religious justified terrorism and multicultural tensions.

*a) The emergence of the welfare state*

During the last decade of the past century, the public management of welfare was restructured to introduce the market economy. The government cut social assistance and required a greater personal responsibility in terms of health, education and social security. Precisely in this frame the Administration Council of the Diocese of Rotterdam, referring to the law that has to do with general assistance or aid, *Algemene Bijstand*, of 1965, stated the following: "It gave the impression that the church would not have to be occupied with any substantial issue regarding social needs" (Diocesaan Bestuurcollege 2000: 11). On the contrary, it is the government who should be in charge of calling attention to the work that the churches carry out in the public arena. Consequently, government agencies have a vested interest in knowing more about the social work that this diocese organised through seven topics: social assistance, solidarity, pastoral care, spiritual guidance and three types of cooperation; ecumenical, inter-religious and social work with other institutions. This will allow the work, known as deaconry, to return slowly to the notice of political authorities and institutions for social assistance. This ecclesial document illustrates a progressive proliferation of religious organisations in the public field that was appropriated by the state (Van Leeuwen 1999).

*b) Religiously justified terrorism*

The attacks on 11 September 2001 in New York and the Washington metropolitan area signalled the transfer of the Middle East conflicts to the territories of the developed countries. The religious justification for these attacks changed the perception of religion in such a way that events related to the international stage are combined with internal policies, in the same way it happened during the Iranian revolution and the social tensions related to Salman Rushdie in the 1970's and the 1980's. Later, we witnessed the Madrid attack (2004), the London attack (2005), and - different in scale - in the Netherlands the murder of Theo Van Gogh (2004) and the emergence of the nationalist populism of Geert Wilders.

*c) Multicultural tensions*

It is the perception related to the migrant population as well as policies regarding migration that will change radically, either because of nationalist populism or because of national security policies.

The public role of religion claimed by Islamic fundamentalism is considered in order to use religion as an element to clarify the cultural, social and political problems and in particular the policies for integration. Growing populism takes advantage of this climate to load all the problems related to migration and multicultural societies on Islam. This results in identification of Muslims and non-western migrants as fundamentalists, labelling them as dangerous for society. This labelling legitimises the growth of antagonism with the out-group (Juergensmeyer 2003; Stem 2003).

Let us observe that with respect to the repositioning of religion in the public sphere, religion is perceived as 'de-privatised' in order to become a clarification factor for national and international conflicts. From this understanding of religion, the Dutch government needs to pay more attention to the conflicts linked to religion, such as those seen as caused by religious radicals and Islamic fundamentalists. However, when the government wants to develop legislation or policies for prevention of conflicts, radicalisation or even of problems related to socio-cultural integration, one discovers that it does not possess the necessary knowledge to analyse these problems, nor to determine the goals for these policies. There was no information or structured contact with religious organisations. When trying to fill this void at national and local levels, the government decided to subsidise research and promote the organisation of leaders representing the various religions of migrants.

*At national level:*

- Compilation of knowledge: information on the composition of religious organisations (Phalet & Ter Wal 2004).
- Promote the foundation of organisations of leaders of religious organisations and establish relationships with them: National Hindu Council, founded in 2001; The Contact Body for Muslims and Government (2004), Contact Group Islam founded in 2005, and the organisation of protestant churches Together Church in the Netherlands founded in the 1990's.
- Subsidies for the formation of Muslim Imams at the Free University of Amsterdam (2006). The organisation of an expert meeting and a conference on Religion and Public Domain, by the Association of Netherlands Local Councils in 2008 and 2009.

- The publications from the Institute for Multicultural Affairs, Forum, and the creation of the Specialised Centre for Religion and Society in 2008 and the *Tijdschrift voor Religie, Recht en Beleid* (The Journal for Religion, Law and Public Policy) founded in 2010.
- The formulation of various legal bases to regulate religious leaders (Imams, priests, preachers and so forth).

*At local level:*

- Investigations of religious radicals in different cities (Slootman & Tillie 2006; Buijs, Demant & Harchaoui 2007).
- Exploratory studies on the contributions of religious organisations for building society or grants for social and cultural projects for religious organisations within the new Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning (Social Support Act) of 2006.
- The promotion of positive values of the social function of religion in public policies through the Association of Netherlands Local Councils.

Developments at national level illustrate how the government, with the help of religious leaders and organisations, is gradually beginning to sit up and take notice of religion and its approach to the problems arising in the public arena. Phalet & Ter Wal (2004) carried out an investigation assigned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Integration, to explore the diversity of Muslims and their relationship to fundamentalism. At the same time, they analysed the image of Islam in the media. Slootman & Tillie's (2006) investigation was assigned by Amsterdam City Council and focused on the backdrop of religious radicalisation and Muslim policies, with the goal of formulating a prevention policy. The main contribution is that it offers broader knowledge on the religious experience of Muslims. Slootman & Tillie also offer criteria to mitigate the negative perception of conservative Muslims when it states that an orthodox position cannot be understood simply as a radicalisation and much less as a path towards radicalisation. Lastly, both authors underline the importance of cooperation by the government with mosques, in order to increase the capacity for prevention of radicalisation (Slootman & Tillie 2004: 6). Concerning Hindus and Christian migrants, the government works towards reforming integration policies according to the insufficiencies evidenced by the Parliamentary Commission included in the minority policy (Blok 2004).

From this overview I conclude therefore that the government finances scientific research to generate knowledge regarding religious groups, to analyse social conflicts and find solutions through new integration or prevention policies regarding radicalism. The government seeks contacts with religious organisations to find allies in avoiding social conflicts and maintain security

within the country. In this government interest, the conflict perspective dominates the understanding of the participation of religion in the public domain. The advantage of this perspective lies in the fact that it maintains a critical view in observing and analysing negative aspects of the de-privatisation of religion. This conflict perspective however does not lead to consider the broad and "useful" spectrum of the participation of Islam and Christianity through migrant groups in the public sphere. New critical research that goes beyond the current conflict perspective would allow a new theoretical framework, enabling a better understanding of re-emergence of religion on the public sphere. In other words, what is needed is an approach able to generate new knowledge regarding social capital of religious organisations, churches, migrants' parishes and mosques. Consequently, this knowledge could broaden Casanova's thesis to study de-privatisation of religion in a constructive manner.

The reports and documents regarding public policy and the new types of cooperation support a new awareness regarding the role of religions in the public sphere. If up to now religion had been relegated to a simple factor from which to face tensions or situations of conflict or violence in multicultural societies, we will see next that it will slowly begin to be valued as an instrument for social cohesion.

#### **4. The social return on investment of the religions of migrants**

The Netherlands boasts a long tradition of immigration closely linked to its colonial and industrial history. In the 1950's the migratory flow increases, mostly coming from Southern European countries and non-western countries. Various migratory waves coincide with the decolonisation of the territories in Asia and America and their increasing peoples search for work.

Immigrants from Turkey, Morocco and to a lesser degree from East Indian Netherlands (today Indonesia), Surinam, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa, have placed Islam as the second religion of the Netherlands. Close to one million followers, they constitute 6% of the population and it is estimated that there are 450 mosques and 500 organisations linked to these, such as social clubs, organisations for women, older persons or students (Canatan, Popovic & Edinga 2005: 5). During the past century, various European wars have had an influence on the immigration of Christians from Southern Europe and other latitudes, a flow which increased during the 1960's (Castillo Guerra, Wijzen & Stergerda 2006). This group totals 1.3 million persons and constitutes 8% of the population (Stoffels 2008). Of this group, half a million come from the so called Global South. Christian migrants have introduced new Christian denominations, diversifying both Catholicism and Dutch Protestantism (Bernts, Dekker & De Hart 2007; Castillo Guerra & Steggerda 2008). Both Muslim and

Christian groups have introduced a new perception of religion in differentiated spheres, relating faith with culture, ethnicity, identity construction and a transnational orientation.

In the section dedicated to the repositioning of religion in the public sphere, I pointed out that at the beginning of the 21st century, the Diocese of Rotterdam drew attention to the slowly growing social work offered by churches, which is related to the deconstruction of the welfare state. The Rotterdam City Council wanted to know more about the implication of this development on public policy and decided to prepare a study on the contributions of the religious organisations to society.

However, the Christian organisations, mainly the Protestants, interpret this initiative in view of the separation of church and state. Consequently they decided not to participate in this investigation, because they feared that the City Council would interfere with their churches' internal affairs, whereas by contrast the councils of the mosques embraced the invitation.

The results of the investigation were published as *The Social Role of the Rotterdam Mosques* (Canatan, Oudijk & Ljamai 2003); they show that 30 mosques have some 1000 active volunteers, which averages 35 volunteers per mosque, participating in social and leadership activities. Most of the mosques are made up of first and second generation immigrants from Turkey and Morocco, followed by Somalia, Indonesia, Bosnia, Pakistan and Suriname. This report interprets the social dimension of mosques through the lens of social engagement and shows that in a growing manner they are taking on more social functions in various sectors, such as attention for elderly, education of children and cooperation with social initiatives instigated by local government. The mosques offer individual counselling, organise visits to members who are ill, run sports activities, cultural excursions and celebration of national holidays. Some governmental institutions also offer in the mosques courses in health, healthy eating and labour related counselling. In a special way, these mosques dedicate a great deal of attention to working with young people as a preventive measure against criminality, as well as offering help with school work and courses in Dutch. After the events of September 11, Rotterdam's mosques, also participated in interreligious dialogue groups. Lastly, the investigation also shows that the councils of the mosques are willing to cooperate with the local government's social work department, insofar as this is formally recognised.

The perspective of religious motivated social engagement introduced by this report was continued by research subsidised by the Department of Health, Welfare and Sports involving 120 mosques throughout the country. The findings revealed that there are 16,000 volunteers among the 400 mosques in the Netherlands (Canatan, Popovic & Edinga 2005: 81). In this second re-

port it is noted that there was a change in the function of the mosques. Volunteerism is gaining strength in such a way that the religious function is combined with a growing social function (Canatan, Popovic & Edinga 2005: 5).

Both reports by Canatan, Oudijk & Ljamai (2003) and Canatan, Popovic & Edinga (2005) have played a pioneering role, as it gleans data regarding the contributions of Muslim organisations to society. In spite of their value, both reports were not sufficient to alter the entrenched perception of religion, which reduces the religion of migrants to little more than a factor of conflict. Crucial support for a new perspective on the study of the religion of migrants came from a paper by the mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, during the conference "Religion, a source of social cohesion?" at the University of Leiden on December 10, 2003. In this paper, Cohen invites the audience to appreciate the relevance of religion, particularly in the way that it guides its members towards the search for a just society.

A valuable contribution for this approach came from the research on the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of migrant's religions. Indeed, in 2006 Van der Sar and Visser applied the SROI method to 23 migrant protestant and catholic churches in The Hague. The first step was to make an inventory of the activities and the hours worked and from this they noted that these churches invest 293.000 hours in various activities, including 112.000 which substitute for the government's social work. A second step concludes that once these numbers are extrapolated to the estimated total of migrant churches in The Hague, 110, they save the government at least 17.5 million.

The report by Van der Sar & Visser (2006) offers new knowledge on the variety of social activities coming from the churches of migrants. These activities include relationship counselling, visits to detained persons, neighbourhood festivities, collection and distribution of clothing, food kitchens for homeless, counselling for young people and couples, workshops for social integration and participation in the labour market. These churches offer excellent contributions to society in spite of the problems they face, such as the lack of adequate accommodation. Their services are directed to their own groups and to other people outside their religious communities with similar problems, in particular refugees and those who, because of their irregular status, cannot access state aid. Finally, the report makes recommendations to the churches of migrants to coordinate their social work with other churches working with migrants and to establish greater contacts with local authorities.

## **5. Contributions to social cohesion**

During the first half of the past decade, the notion of secularisation as a differentiation from the state and the decline of religion, as Casanova distinguishes,

prevented a constructive approach to religion in government institutions. As an illustration of this, the Second Debate on Integration, organised by the Association of Netherlands Local Councils in 2006, excluded all types of collaboration with religious organisations, because they argued that the duration of these organisations was short-lived. In fact, in that year, parliament approved the *Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning* (the Social Support Act, known as WMO from its Dutch title). This law obliged the local councils to support the social welfare work offered by the volunteer organisations and to boost cooperation with professional workers. This law established new loci of attention among which are social cohesion, work with young people, support to the homeless or women and work with drug addicts. In a joint publication by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and the Association of Netherlands Local Councils, the following is recommended: "The political prioritisation of the objectives requires a clear image and vision of the social topics of the local council. A social analysis of the demographic changes, development, problems of young people and the participation of vulnerable groups could provide a working starting point. Nevertheless, it is not only a social analysis that is necessary. The experiences and the various viewpoints of the organisations of clients, churches and volunteers, are also a source of social knowledge" (Rijnkels & Vos 2006: 8).

The mandatory character of the WMO highlights the social work carried out by the religious organisations. However, it also stresses their experiences and their points of view as sources of knowledge necessary for the implementation of the WMO.

On the other hand, the WMO stimulates a discussion within the churches regarding their participation in the social policy of the local councils. Usually the churches take on the contents of the WMO as a challenge to make their activities known to other groups beyond their own organisation and to establish contacts with government organisations (Dautsenberg & van Westerslaak 2007).

As I referenced earlier, the government institutions did not have access to data regarding the religious organisations in the Netherlands. This lack has led to a new set of investigations and reports regarding the contributions to social cohesion, in particular from the religions of migrants. Therefore, the religions of migrants will no longer be studied exclusively as generators of conflict, but also as generators of social cohesion.

From this background, representatives from the Catholic, Protestant and Migrant churches of Rotterdam suggested to the City Council they prepare a report on the contributions of the local churches to the social cohesion of the city. In the Rotterdam City Council this idea was already being considered, agreeing to a suggestion made by the Commission for the Multicultural City

Council. This Commission invites local councils to design public policy to allow for humanist and religious groups as elements that create unity and to call them forward to facilitate the effort of social cohesion that is being carried out in a multiform city (Stedelijke Adviescommissie Multiculturele Stad 2005: 10).

The report was prepared by the Nijmegen Institute of Mission Studies and the Centre for Investigations Kaski, published under the name *Tel Je Zegeningen* (Count your Blessings) (Castillo Guerra, Glashouwer, & Kregting 2008). This report offers, for the first time, a comparative study of the social cohesion and social return on investment of the autochthones and churches of migrants in the Netherlands and Europe.

Considering the ideas of Schnabel (2000) and Berger-Schmitt (2002), mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, this report explains social cohesion as an element of association or bonding that determines the quality of society by way of social participation and the level of equilibrium between the various groups that make up that society. The contributions by churches to social cohesion were investigated in 92 churches, using a quick scanner. To allow some comparability they applied SROI criteria following the model of capitalisation of church activities of Van der Sar and Visser (2006). The investigation using the SROI method was carried out in 32 churches. The data compiled showed that in Rotterdam, with approximately 600,000 inhabitants, there are approximately 250 to 300 churches and of those between 110 and 140 are churches of migrants. These churches have 200,000 members, of which 50,000 attend liturgical celebrations regularly. From this last group, some 60% are autochthones, 6% are migrants from western countries and 34% from non-western countries. The volunteers of these churches add up to 25,000 (one for each 10 members and one each for 2 regular attendees), of these 8,000 are migrants. The churches themselves are centres for social cohesion, 9% of the members of the migrant churches are autochthonous and 18% of the members of the autochthonous churches are migrants. The autochthones form 16% of the members of the councils of the churches of migrants and migrants form 11% of the members of the councils of autochthonous churches. The report evidences that the greater part of the churches (between 61 and 72 of those interviewed) use intercultural communication. In fact, the churches of migrants pay more attention and interest to intercultural interchanges inside and outside their groups than the local churches. The multiple origins of the members of the churches of migrants, which could add up to more than 20 nationalities within an ecclesial community, could explain that difference between the migrant and local churches. Data collected from 32 churches, applying the SROI method, was extrapolated to 272 churches, which results in numbers between 110 a 133 million Euros per year. This translates to an average social investment per

church of 442,000 Euros. The *Tel Je Zegeningen* report introduces a perspective of comparison in the investigation regarding the social cohesion and SROI of the churches of migrants. The limits of investigations that offered isolated information regarding the churches of migrants are overcome in this way. Or, in other words, the limits that made it impossible to analyse the churches of migrants when comparing contributions to social cohesion and SROI were overcome. The conclusions garnered from the report reveal that the churches of migrants offer an open field for leadership formation and the activation of volunteers and that their work has a strong social relevance, in particular as they promote social cohesion between the various groups, both of immigrants and autochthones. Lastly, the Rotterdam City Council used information provided by this report to implement the WMO, to establish new areas for cooperation with churches of migrants and to promote the interreligious interchange in the city.

As a conclusion to this review, I would like to highlight that the SROI method was used to investigate the contributions made by the mosques in the Netherlands (Van der Sar, Lombo-Visser & Boender 2008). In fact, in the *Moskeeën gewaardeerd* (valuation of mosques) report there is information collected from 16 mosques extrapolated to the estimated 475 existing mosques in the country. According to this, social investment is calculated to be 150 million; a value that indicates the great effort expended by mosques in order to offer different types of social assistance.

## **6. Building of social capital through social return on investment and social cohesion**

The reports that I have highlighted above offer detailed information on the wide range of aid that mosques or churches provide. I list for example social assistance to the poor, family conflict mediation, social assistance (for the homeless, refugees, drug addicts and women facing domestic violence), visits (homes, prisons, hospitals and reception centres for refugees), support for young people, preventive health and drug prevention programmes, job search workshops, empowerment, assistance for sex workers, reading or recreation centres and lessons in Dutch. Voluntary organisations of mosques or churches also cooperate with other organisations such as food banks, local government organisations and NGOs. They also deal with projects ranging from social aid, cultural programmes or information regarding participation in election processes.

Applying Putnam's distinction on bonding capital and bridging capital, one can conclude that migrants intervene in the public sphere mostly when problems appear related to their own community. In addition, through activities

regarding SROI in their religious organisations, migrants promote social cohesion among various ethnic and religious groups.

However, this analysis of the formation of social capital may give rise to misunderstandings when bonding capital is limited to an in-group activity and when the scope is reduced to that what Wimmer and Glick Schiller termed as “methodological nationalism” (2003). First, as bonding capital takes place within a diverse group which set out different types of interethnic or intercultural bonds, as shown by the percentage of autochthones who are member or are involved as volunteers in the migrant churches. Many religious groups also congregate migrants of different cultures, ethnic groups and countries of origin. This is the case in communities organised by language, which can bring together members from all continents - in the case of Anglophones - or more than 20 nationalities - in the case of Spanish speakers. Second, since Putnam’s model, no attention has been paid to the symmetry of possession of social capital that is acquired through an autochthonous family or social setting into which a person is born. In the case of migrants, bonding capital is used as a conduit to achieve bridging capital by those who lack social capital by the fact of coming from another country. Within their communities, many migrants learn the necessary skills for bridging capital. Third, as several processes of transnational adaptation take place within religious communities, such as the participation of women on the board of the mosques and the possible impact of this female leadership upon the societies of origin of migrants. Lastly, because within their religious organisations, migrants find a motivation to act in the public arena through networking. Activities which may be characterised as bonding capital could encourage ethical and religious values for their members, such as solidarity. These could also be extended to other people (Kippenberg 2013: 148-160). Following De Hart and Dekker (2006: 116), churches - and I also add mosques - in many cases act as “schools for social abilities” and encourage pro-social values that motivate their members to participate both as volunteers and in civic actions inside and beyond their own organisations.

Finally, to avoid misunderstandings it is necessary to emphasise that Putnam warns against a one-sided interpretation of his model since he explains: “bonding and bridging are not ‘either-or’ categories into which social networks can be neatly divided, but ‘more or less’ dimensions along which we can compare different forms of social capital” (2001: 23).

### **Conclusion: Studying de-privatisation of religion from social capital building of religious organisations of migrants**

Recently De Hart published a report in which he synthesises various investigations that collated data concerning the religions of migrants in the Netherlands.

From the sociological point of view, he indicates a lack of attention from his colleagues on this topic. In spite of the fact that the government has shown interest in obtaining information and knowledge on the religions of migrants and despite the fact that these religions challenge many prognoses brought about by the theory of secularisation, this field of study is carried out by only a handful of investigators and subsequently there is still a lot to investigate. With regard to the churches of migrants, De Hart states: "The world of Christian migrants constitutes, up to the moment, a void in the investigations within the field of sociology of religion. To date there is not much knowledge regarding origins, ideas, practices and social functioning, at least not with reliable quantitative data. In fact, the number of Christian immigrants in our country is not clear (...). There are some studies, (at a limited level and locally) which suggest that the churches of immigrants play an important role in many ways, in the integration of the recent arrivals in Dutch society" (De Hart 2014: 115).

In addition, regarding investigation into religious organisations of Muslims, De Hart affirms: "Although there is a lack of data of a wide-ranging period of time, we can scarcely speak of secularisation among Dutch Muslims at a scale similar to that observed in the whole population; identification with faith continues to have great bearing among them" (2004:116).

Research concerning the religions of migrants has not been developed on a large scale. However, current information is valuable for knowledge about religion in the Netherlands. This is the case with the information gathered on the social capital formation by religious organisations of migrants, which offers new possibilities for theory building to approach religion. Investigations held in mosques and churches of migrants highlighted in this article contribute data to test the plausibility of Casanova's theory, according to which the three processes of secularisation, i.e. differentiation, declination and privatisation, are not necessarily so for all societies. According to this, religions of migrants help us to understand why the theory of secularisation is not able to explain religion in multicultural and multi-religious societies.

Approaching the distinctions of varieties of de-privatisation of religion highlighted by Kippenberg et al. (2013) I want to distinguish a welfare dimension, as one form of reappearance of religion at a meso level. This kind of de-privatisation is related to developments of economic policies that transfer the state's responsibilities for welfare to the sphere of civic associations and religious organisations. This explains in part a growing valuing by the state of the social cohesion of the religious organisations over the last 10 years. If we consider that the renewed interest in religions of migrants by government has been linked to conflict prevention, such as terrorism, religious radicalism and multicultural tensions, this approach has given way to a new perception, starting

from the renewed value ascribed to the contributions that these religions offer society.

Moreover, I want to introduce two other dimensions of de-privatisation. There is a transnational dimension. I agree with Fox & Sandier (2004) in stating that modernisation and the process of globalisation leads to a necessary re-orientation; a search that also includes groups and persons that make up the migratory contexts. In their religions, migrants find the resources to achieve this re-orientation in a transnational way. They do this in their own language, guarding their culture and relations with their countries and communities of origin. At the same time, through practices directed towards bridging capital, religious organisations link migrants to other social and ethnic groups and engage in public activities in various spheres.

In addition, there is also a public policy dimension. According to the WMO and to recent changes in welfare policies, churches and mosques are valued as sources of information for the design and implementation of public policies (Davelaar & Van den Toom 2010).

These three forms of reappearance of religion offer criteria for a new theoretical framework to broaden the thesis of de-privatisation posed by Casanova, who still places emphasis on the conflict perspective in his approach to the religions of migrants. The consideration of “useful” perspectives of social capital of the religious organisations of migrants does not imply an abandonment of the perspective of conflict, but it has real importance in understanding the interaction between international policies, religious communities - specially Muslims - and other groups within a country, as we witness in our times. However, it implies that further research on religion deserves expansion; a broadening of perspectives, in order to better understand the wide spectrum of participation and public visibility of religions of migrants in the public sphere.

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