The Biggest Mosque in Europe!

A Symmetrical Anthropology of Islamic Architecture in Rotterdam

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The new Essalam Mosque of Rotterdam, often said to be "the biggest mosque of Europe", opened in December 2010 after more than a decade of conflict and controversy. The building was realised thanks to the financial backing of the Al Maktoum Foundation based in the United Arab Emirates. Together with the mayor, the sponsor representatives and local media, former "guest workers" – now Dutch citizens – marched from the original mosque to the new building in the same neighbourhood. The difference was striking: the former structure was small, poorly lit, with a very limited space for ablution and prayer, and only a small sign made it recognisable, whereas the new building was a purpose-built mosque, had two minarets and a dome, several floors, and windows on all sides so that the new carpets were bathed in light.

The Essalam Mosque's community consists mainly of Dutch-Moroccan elderly men, their sons and grandsons. The mosque is used to a lesser extent by women but also for example by local Somalian Muslims and international visitors from countries such as Egypt and Malaysia. Islam in the Netherlands has grown primarily as a result of migrations after the Second World War. The guest workers who first settled in cities such as Rotterdam "became" Muslims – that is to say, their Muslim identities were brought to the fore with greater emphasis when it dawned on them and their Dutch hosts that they and their children would stay. In the past decades, the desire for cultural and religious recognition has become more important and remains pertinent today. "*Wij blijven hier*" ("We are staying here") is the title of a popular blog of young Dutch Muslims, created half a century after the first guest workers arrived. The blog's statement of purpose shows that decades of debates on recognition have not resolved the issue: "We [Dutch Muslims] are staying here! Because we are born here or raised here. Because this is our country and we enjoy living here and would like to keep it that way."[1]

In contemporary Rotterdam, Islam impacts citizens' feelings about their "right to the city" (Harvey 2008) and their right to change them-

selves by changing the city landscape and constructing houses of worship. Especially since the 1990s, Western Muslims have moved interior Islamic aesthetics to the exterior. As Joycelyne Cesari has concluded for European cities in general, Islam has gone from "being invisible" to "being unwanted" (Cesari 2005: 1018). The experience of not being wanted in its turn reinvigorates Muslim demands for cultural and religious recognition. In the Dutch context, the competing demands for recognition and integration have not and cannot be easily transcended because they are based on the everyday feelings of being wanted or not wanted. Mosque architecture, a spatial and material medium par excellence, plays an important role in these dialectics. In other words, the Dutch "politics of home" (Duyvendak 2011) are very much a matter of "aesthetic formations" (Meyer 2009). The where, what and who of home-making are not answered merely by speaking words but by tactile, aural and – in the case of architecture – visual speech.

In this chapter, I discuss the genre of the so-called "megamosque" in Europe. The script follows recurring themes in Western European countries. I first focus on the hype around the size of Rotterdam's Essalam Mosque. I have been following the construction of the Essalam Mosque passively for years and actively since it opened during my fieldwork in Dutch mosques from 2010 to 2012. Particularly helpful for discussing the ways in which the size of the mosque is interpreted by various groups was a documentary that I used as ethnographic data about the construction of the mosque. *Hoger dan de Kuip* (Higher than the Kuip) was screened several times on national television. The title captures the complaint of residents and at least one politician who said that the minarets are too provocative because they are higher than the nearby football stadium of Feyenoord Football Club nicknamed the Kuip.

After describing the megamosque genre, I link my observations theoretically to Bruno Latour's analysis of fetishised objects (Latour 2010). Latour blurs the boundaries between the socially constructed fetish and mind-independent, often physical, facts. I suggest that the megamosque genre should be understood as a play between "factishes", a mixture of fetishes and facts. The idea of the "factish" arises from Latour's method of a "symmetrical anthropology", which collapses the distinction between the realms of the social and the physical.

The megamosque genre

Plans to build a central mosque for Rotterdam were already made in the 1980s. On a 1987 drawing that announced "a mosque in the neighbourhood" (*een moskee in de wijk*), a huge Ottoman mosque in the style of Sinan's Selimiye Mosque is depicted as dominating the Dutch streets (Maussen 2009: 198). Twenty-five years later, the image of an alien "megamosque" that will dominate and take over a cityscape continues to haunt the European imagination. A conversation of two Dutch-Antillean residents in Rotterdam-South gives an impression of how the megamosque genre has – thanks to years of "megamosqueing" – played out in Rotterdam:

> *I love this neighbourhood. Really! Now it's just dead, dead, dead. It looks like you step into another culture. I step out my door, I'm in another country.*
> What do you mean? Aren't their two churches close to that square as well? What's the difference?
> *That mosque is big, very big. Do you get what I mean? The biggest in Europe!*
> But what's so threatening then?
> *It's the vision that I see. It's not a threat. I step outside my door, I step into another world ... that mosque there, bling bling. (*From *Hoger dan de Kuip)*

These imaginations exist in countries such as the UK, Germany, Italy, France and most notoriously Switzerland, where minaret construction has been banned as of 2009. Dutch anxiety about the "biggest mosque in Europe" in one's own local environment should be understood in the broader Western European context of mosque construction such as the new Cologne Central Mosque and the Marseille Grand Mosque. In all of these cases, size has been emphasised as a major obstacle and a provocation, and the buildings are often described as the "largest" of Europe, of the country or simply as "bigger than x". The genre of the megamosque is a transnational one. If one googles "biggest mosque Europe", one finds several results from different countries.

For instance, the Abbey Mills Islamic Centre in London was never built and was only a conceptual proposition but attracted strong responses especially after 7/7, the 2005 terrorist attacks in London. Even before the bombings, however, the Prime Minister's Office received an e-petition,

its largest ever, with over 280,000 signatures against the idea of a mosque "bigger than St. Paul's" (Jaeckle & Türetken 2011). In Venice and surrounding areas, especially Mestre, the number of Muslims has increased since the 1990s. In a city where almost every building is a monument, this has brought forth the very sensitive question of whether it would be possible to have a mosque in Venice. Wael Farhat, a local Muslim architect, told me that "Venice must have a mosque, because the Muslims are here as well". For now, he has only pleaded for a symbolic floating mosque, an art project that he likes to call the "Jesus Mosque" because "it, too, walks on water".[2] A poster advertising an event organised by architects to debate mosque architecture in Venice resulted in a furious reaction: "No, no, no, no, again, no!" was marked on the image, on which an enormous mosque overshadows the Doge palace. Just like the case of the Abbey Mills Islamic Centre, no actual plans or funds for a constructed mosque in Venice exist, but the image or very idea is experienced as jarring.

The Mosque of Rome often features in debates on European mosques because of its modern design by star architect Portoghesi. On a visit, the local Muslim janitor told me, without my asking, that it was the "biggest mosque in Europe". The mosque's Wikipedia page claims that over 12,000 people can be accommodated for prayer. According to the janitor, however, no more than 2,000 people visit the mosque on the busiest days, and the prayer space, though impressive, cannot contain many more people than that. The gated mosque is located far outside the city in a quiet green environment that can only be accessed by subway or car. Expecting the "biggest mosque of Europe", visitors often encounter only a handful of people. Only on Fridays do believers show up in some numbers. Because the mosque is far from the city, buses are used on Fridays to transport the believers. However, the Muslim community that resides and prays in the city has its own mosques which were not constructed as such and, although invisible from the exterior, are more lively inside. In fact, the Mosque of Rome did not develop in a grassroots way at all but is known instead as an "embassy Islam" (Laurence 2012), barely frequented by local Muslims. When pressed, the janitor, who had first talked about the "biggest mosque of Europe", said that, in practice, it was too far from the city to be really used as such. He also did not know in which sense the mosque was actually the biggest, either in terms of minaret height, dome size or height, or prayer space surface.

Branding a mosque as a megamosque is not something that is done exclusively by its opponents but also by Muslims and others who are impressed by the vocabulary of size. The language that was used by a young

Muslim tourist who visited the mosque and made a video is also striking for its insistence on the mosque's size:

> Right now I'm actually at *the* largest mosque in Europe! This one actually beats the one in Madrid, which is number two and this is number one. I'll just try to capture it all in the video but it's just really really big ... You can't even see the other end from here. It looks like it's infinite. It's just really really big. I think the designer designed to represent the infinite nature of Allah [referring to the geometric patterns and the columns] ... It's really big, amazing, mashallah.[3]

The short video ends with the statement that, actually, the main prayer space is only opened on Fridays (presumably because of a lack of visitors), and that those who come here to pray ordinarily use "a basement". The basement is moreover often empty, and the space for ritual ablution, the *wudhu*, is also very quiet and not at all designed for handling thousands of people.

The megamosque genre is about both size and location, as in the Mosque of Rome or the Mosque of Venice, creating images of mosques that are right at the centre of these places of Christian-European heritage, even though in fact the Mosque of Rome is outside the city and the Muslim population that works in Venice and surrounding areas lives in Mestre, a nearby town not visited by tourists. Similarly, the so-called "Ground Zero Mosque" in Lower Manhattan, often described as a "megamosque" as well, is a name that emphasises location rather than size. Although the nickname was invented by its opponents, it is now frequently used by Muslims and other sympathisers in its defense, and also because they are often unfamiliar with the more neutral name Park51 Mosque. At a meeting about the image and future of Park51 in New York, one of the speakers warned board members of the Islamic center that "if you don't define your brand, someone else will".[4] We may add that the megamosque "brand" can be appropriated and interpreted in more than one way.

Megamosqueing, or making a mosque an object of both anxiety and pride, is exemplified by the way in which the city of Rotterdam has dealt with the Essalam Mosque. In this case, buildings much higher than the mosque have altered the landscape only a few blocks away without much ado. When the Russian Orthodox Church of the Holy Alexander Nevsky was built close to Rotterdam's Erasmus Bridge, in a neo-style that could be perceived as similar to that of the neo-traditionalist Essalam Mosque, there were no protests. Meanwhile, opponents of the Essalam

Mosque called it a "megamosque" but also "a huge religious fortress". Geert Wilders, leader of the anti-Islam Freedom Party (PVV, *Partij Voor de Vrijheid*), frequently referred to it in the media as a "a palace of hatred" (*haatpaleis*). In the Freedom Party's 2010 election campaign video, Wilders is standing before the mosque as he warns of subsequent waves of Muslim foreigners threatening the Netherlands by increasing crime and welfare dependency. The PVV has also stated that one of its political goals is to ban mosques from being constructed within the ring of Dutch cities, even though mosque construction is currently legally guaranteed by the freedom of religion (*godsdienstvrijheid*) and acknowledged by almost all political parties.

Wilders chose the Essalam Mosque as a symbol of what his party is against because of its megamosque image that makes it out to be the largest in the Netherlands or even Western Europe. Even usually well-informed newspapers uncritically adopt this trope. Leading Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, for instance, began a 2010 article by emphasising the size of the mosque: "With a dome of 25 meters and 50 meter high minarets the Essalam Mosque was opened in Rotterdam-South. It is immediately the biggest Islamic house of worship in Western Europe. The towers reach higher than the lights of the nearby located football stadium, the Kuip of Feyenoord." For non-Muslims living in Rotterdam, the idea of a mosque close to the football stadium and with minarets that reached higher than the football stadium lights was often disturbing. The documentary made about the people in the neighbourhood of the mosque, *Hoger dan de Kuip* (i.e. higher than the Kuip football stadium) includes interviews with Dutch seniors living next to the mosque. Some of them did not mind the mosque; others were unhappy with the building but could reconcile themselves to its presence by employing humor. But there were also those who could not help feeling alienated from their neighbourhood. A senior lady remarked: "If I had known [that the mosque would be built], I would have never decided to live here." Her neighbour added: "The problem here is that there already so many foreign shops and people, and if that mosque is added, then our neighbourhood just isn't the neighborhood anymore." The residents felt that the minarets of the mosque should not be higher than the "native" lights of the football stadium.

On a map of Rotterdam-South published in a local newspaper in 2011, the mosque is called "the biggest in Europe".[5] The map was designed for addressing the problem areas in Rotterdam-South and placed the supposedly largest mosque in Europe in a central location surrounded by urban

issues such as high rates of crime. In many debates about the mosque, the issue of size is often equated with the social issues of inner-city areas. In such imaginings, the mosque symbolises socio-economic marginality rather than emancipation through public expression. For instance, an article in a major national newspaper about crime among young Dutch-Moroccans was accompanied by a picture of the Essalam Mosque's visitors and the word "scum" (*tuig*) in the title.[6] The picture showed mosque visitors putting on or taking off shoes before or after performing a prayer, including a young child in the middle and one of the mosque's board members. The building and its everyday life thus become visually associated with crime and marginality.

The Dutch history of intolerance towards Catholics suggests that it would be an oversimplification to portray the conflict over mosques as one between a "white" Dutch population against a "black" – in this case Moroccan – population. Only from the nineteenth century onwards were Catholics allowed to build churches, and the law that banned Catholic processions was not reformed until the 1980s. That said, megamosque conflicts, as well as interreligious conflicts with Islam in the Netherlands, are powerfully tied to the racial tensions that exist among and within all groups in the highly multicultural district of Rotterdam-South. In *Hoger dan de Kuip*, three young unveiled Turkish girls ask a Surinamese Rotterdammer, a huge football fan and someone who was raised in the neighbourhood, what he thinks about the mosque:

> *"It doesn't belong here. Rotterdam is the harbor, cranes, the Euromast tower."*
> "But why not? There has to be a mosque, right?"
> *"Everybody has a right to his own house of worship, but it didn't have to be this big."*
> "But it isn't that big!"

Later in the documentary, the man sits in a Dutch brown café, a place where local Dutch Muslims usually don't go. "For me, there is only one temple in this neighbourhood and that is the Kuip. That's enough." He was worried that the non-Muslim inhabitants would leave the neighbourhood because of the mosque. At first, he boldly states that he would stay no matter what but then says that should he have a family in the future, it would probably be better to leave.

Muslim sympathisers frequently do not mind the Rotterdam mosque being branded as the largest mosque of Europe. Some Rotterdam-based

Muslims question the status of the Essalam Mosque as the biggest in Europe, but nevertheless the mediatised vision of the Essalam Mosque as a "huge" building has survived to this day. Before the opening of the mosque, the Muslim community would regularly pray outside in the open because their smaller, almost invisible, mosque was packed. "When the big mosque is finished, we will not have to pray outside anymore. It will be the biggest mosque of Europe!", said one of the children as he and his family joined the others for prayer in the chilly weather.

Symmetrical anthropology

It should not surprise the reader by now that the Essalam Mosque is de facto neither the biggest in Europe nor even in the Netherlands. When I first visited the mosque myself, I remember being surprised by its relatively small size (plates 3 & 4). It was much smaller than I had imagined, far smaller than most churches. I was quite puzzled. The terrain around the building did not look very attractive to me at the time – still under construction and surrounded by mud and dirt, the building was located alongside an uninspiring road towards the highway (plate 5).

The maximum capacity of the new building of around 1,000 individuals is dwarfed by the East London Mosque or the Mosque of Rome. When finished, the Marseille Grand Mosque claims to be able to support over 7,000 people. Though in terms of surface and capacity, the Essalam Mosque is nowhere near being the biggest, the 50-metre-high minarets are among the tallest in Europe. For example, the Cologne Central Mosque has only slightly higher minarets, and those of the St. Petersburg Mosque, which opened in 1913, are also around 50 metres high. Nevertheless, even a year after the opening of the Essalam Mosque, it has repeatedly been referred to as the "biggest in Europe". To my surprise, this occurred again on television in 2012 in one of the episodes of Mijn Moskee is Top ("My mosque is great"), a Dutch television show about local mosques. The presenter, a veiled Dutch-Moroccan woman, welcomed her viewers in the Essalam Mosque, smiling and gesturing with her hands: "Welcome to the biggest mosque of the Netherlands and of Europe!"

The obsession with mosque size in the language of both Muslims and mosque critics indicates that the mediation and perception of size lives a life of its own. Because the language about megamosques is clearly unrelated to actual reality, a strict constructivist would be tempted to call the

trope of the megamosque a fetish. The fetish is an idol that we have created ourselves, feared by some and revered by others. Motivated by a political goal – for example the advancement of religious freedom – the strict constructivist aims to smash the discourse that he believes is responsible for the fetish, which is deemed in conflict with this right. However, as Bruno Latour has argued, the use of the term fetish exaggerates the power of social construction. In our case, the strict constructivist fails to explain the effects that the mosque produces by being perceived by different parties such as mosque sceptics and local Muslims. The constructionist language does not allow the object, the mosque, to *be* threatening or to *make* someone happy. The use of the word fetish is in a way pejorative because social constructionism is, as Bruno Latour has argued, the parlance of the anti-fetishist, someone who is in the business of breaking idols such as the megamosque. The anti-fetishist holds that it is not allowed to understand a human fabrication as an autonomous entity. An ethical desire may guide the anti-fetishist to defend a minority's rights to their own space by stepping outside the illusory construction and convincing the impartial reader that the mosque is, in fact, not necessarily threatening in itself but hyped as such. An odd consequence of this approach is that the mosque can also not be accounted for the happiness it generates among its users *as* a big mosque.

A fetish is ordinarily interpreted as wholly mind-dependent, the product of the "inside" of our minds. When describing the megamosque genre, words such as "imagination" can mislead us into downplaying the role of physical things in the process of mediation and ultimately into an exaggeratedly anthropocentric epistemology, which sharply separates the "inside" world of the mind with the "out there" world of physical facts. Radical epistemological anthropocentrism fails in critical thought because it promotes forgetfulness of "what Michel Foucault called the 'awesome materiality' of our human-technical worlds" (Read 2012). Constructivism is valuable when it explores the conditions for the possibility of human knowledge, by setting limits and explaining how knowledge is constructed. The introduction of such a Kantian theory of knowledge, deepened by Foucault's genealogical approach, means that social constructions are never up for grabs but made possible by the material limits of our worlds. What Latour calls a "symmetrical anthropology" (2010: 29) also limits a radical constructivism in which anything could be potentially constructed by reminding us not only of "constructed" fetishes but also "factual" realities. But where social practices are concerned, these can never be accessed as wholly distinct from each other.

Rather than studying either side, Latour thinks we should see them as "factishes", an entanglement of what is constructed and what is objective. Rather than seeing the task of the anthropologist as freeing himself from the alienation of a constructed and thus illusory reality, he thinks that we should study how the partial and impartial, the fetish and the fact, exist only "from entanglement to even greater entanglement" (ibid: 61). In short, Latour subverts the very idea that anthropologists must "choose between constructivism and realism" (ibid: 16). Not only are facts constructed and value-laden but what is constructed is real and fact-laden. A building, therefore, is not a neutral object waiting to be imbued with meaning by people but it facilitates values, for or against it, disclosed in and through an organically intertwined "world" (Heidegger 1927; Arendt 1958), existing as a spiraling of the subjective-objective poles, which Latour has also called a "circulating reference" (Latour 1999: 24-79). Mosque construction has been one of the most influential ways for the spatial establishment of such a "world" of Dutch Islam. However, a mosque "in itself" cannot determine the quality and future of spatial establishments but relies on how the building is used and perceived – that is, on social practices.

If not merely a fetish but a factish, how then does the megamosque that we have constructed ourselves, physically as well as in collective imaginations, speak? Latour's notion of a "symmetrical anthropology" collapses the dichotomy between interiority and exteriority, between mind-dependent constructions and a mind-independent reality, and thus also between a speaking subject and a spoken-about object. A Muslim does not only pray in a mosque, he is not only a subject or a mosque user, he is also called to prayer by the mosque and in that sense the object of a mosque's attention. The claim that buildings speak can be exaggerated when the "spirit" of a time and place is ascribed to a building in an overly deterministic and homogenising manner. Nevertheless, buildings can be said to have "psychologies" that affect the humans who use them. In a meditation on the language of architecture, Alain de Botton suggests three possible ways in which buildings speak (2007: 77-100).

First, buildings speak about who we are, they are *anthropomorphic*. The mosque is personified, an actor in the megamosque allegory. We have seen that it has ignited feelings of competition. Other physical objects such as a crane in the harbour or a light in a stadium become personified as well. It is easy and instinctive for neighbourhood residents to identify with these objects and to give them their own identities. Competitive personification means that, for example, size can become a mat-

ter of a Muslim's defense of what he considers his right to the city, despite any pious or sober claims that one can pray anywhere and that the whole earth is a mosque. The story of relationality, by definition, is not something that happens merely in private but rather in shared spaces in the city.

Second, buildings speak about who we wish to be, they are *metaphoric*. The mosque speaks by expressing visions of polity, of a city and a nation, of who we want to be together. Physical mediation is essential for such grand mosque speech acts. We can see the mosque clearly when approaching it from the river and on the side of the train tracks. Its white marble glitters in the sun and because the area has not yet been fully developed, the mosque can look impressive in size in comparison with the flat space that surrounds it. Thanks to the car roads connecting the mosque to the highway, the number of people who actually see it run in the thousands. Because the mosque is located next to a railway track connecting Rotterdam to the south of the Netherlands and Belgium, it is known far beyond Rotterdam-South. At night, the mosque is lit up and clearly visible. This visibility sparked criticism because the mosque speaks about a city that people may not want to belong to, and about citizens who may not want to respond to the mosque's demand for acknowledgment. The responses to the mosque shape citizens' identities.

Third, the Essalam Mosque speaks in a highly connotative manner, it is *evocative*. It addresses the city or the nation by being dressed up in a certain garment, quoting from the innumerable images that shape our conscious and unconscious thoughts. Especially this aspect of the mosque's speaking was experienced as troubling for critics of the mosque, which reminded them too much of a conservative, old-fashioned Islam. For Christian Welzbacher, for instance, the Essalam Mosque is in Europe but not European (2008). The mosque upholds the binary of Islam and the West rather than progressively dissolving it. On the Internet and in newspapers, it was described as a mosque from Disneyland, a kitschy collage. From the right of Muslims to put their mark on the city, such lines of arguing quickly lead into debates about style. These style issues are closely connected to the evocative quality of the mosque and lead to questions as to what it is exactly that different groups of people want the mosque to evoke.[7] From a debate about citizens' right to the city or the right of mosques to speak at all, we can move towards what they should tell us. Whereas some local Muslims may want to religiously distinguish themselves from other groups of Muslims, others may be more concerned with their relation to a national identity.

It is not without reason that architects believe that their work can influence our behaviour, feelings and thoughts. Not only style but also spatial composition, for example, has an impact on how mosques speak. At night, when standing in front of the mosque, the lights of the football stadium make it look as if mosque and stadium are close to each other. When standing in between them during the day, however, the distance is perceived to be much greater. It takes about ten minutes by foot to approach the football stadium, whereas at night it looks as if the stadium is right behind the mosque.

The aesthetic transformation of the environment speaks to the residents of the neighbourhood and in time subtly changes who they are, who they want to be and how they associate imagery in the process. Since the Essalam Mosque has been in use, further alterations to the mosque continue to transform the neighbourhood. Although the inside of the Essalam Mosque has still not been finished due to financial stagnation, a square has been realised in front of the mosque, which makes the building look more monumental. In spring, the tulips in front of the mosque have improved the appearance of the environment. The square has been named "Vredesplein" or "Peace Square" after the mosque's Arabic name, and it has its own street sign. Beneath the Peace Square and in front of the Essalam Mosque, a large parking space has been created. On one occasion, after observing and participating in the Friday prayers, I left the building with a friend and took the stairs to the parking lot to get to his car. The signs in the parking facility had been adjusted to accomodate the mosque: on one of the walls, the word "Mosque" with an arrow had been painted in big block letters. Such subtle material changes enable the Muslim community to materially spatialise in a "concrete lived environment" (Meyer 2009: 5).

Conclusion

In the last two decades, the Dutch city of Rotterdam has become one of the main urban centres in the Netherlands for debates on the social significance and aesthetics of mosques. Religious architecture engenders explicit discourses of identity, a literally material way to demand recognition for the right to the city. In this paper, I showed that the mega-mosque genre ordinarily conveys information about the depicters and users of the image, whether for or against the building, and barely about what it is supposed to depict, namely the mosque as it is used in everyday

practices. It would therefore be wrong to say that the megamosque genre is not a social construction, coloured mainly by anxieties and fears, but also by pride and the wish to belong. However, I have argued that that does not mean that the importance of physical alterations to Rotterdam's cityscape should be underscored or seen as inconsequential. Following Latour, I have suggested that we adjust our conception of social construction by making it less anthropocentric. The constructed megamosque genre is inextricably bound to the very real Essalam Mosque, a building that has the power to impact people's feelings about their city. We have seen that conflicting emotions such as anxiety and pride can manifest themselves through and thanks to the mosque. Not only demands for integration and recognition but also the practice of religious toleration, something in between anxiety and full acceptance, must then have aesthetic dimensions. How can a building evoke feelings of toleration and sentiments of sociability? Such questions need to be informed by stylistic criticism, which in turn needs anthropological accounts of how people use and view such buildings, but also of how in their everyday lives they can call them forth.

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Notes

1 www.wijblijvenhier.nl
2 Pooyan Tamimi Arab. "De drijvende moskee van Venetië", December 9, 2011. www.nieuwemoskee.nl
3 "Largest Mosque in Rome (Italy)", Accessed Oct. 3, 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjaAae4t4Ec
4 Pooyan Tamimi Arab. "De toekomst van islamitische kunst en architectuur in New York", March 16, 2012. www.nieuwemoskee.nl
5 "Rotterdam-Zuid het afvoerputje van ons land", AD Nieuws, Feb 17, 2011.
6 "Het tuig gaat met de ramadan aan de haal", www.volkskrant.nl, July 21, 2012.
7 For the sake of brevity, I have not discussed the specifics of the stylistic debate. For the vision of the Essalam Mosque's Dutch architect, Wilfred van

Winden, see his essay in Erkoçu and Bugdaci (2009). Christian Welzbacher has criticised the mosque design (2008). Marcel Maussen has discussed the mosque's construction process and the stylistic debate from the perspective of Dutch governance of Islam (2009). Eric Roose has written an essay about the designing process in which he discusses the role of the patron (2012).

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