



Islamic gatherings: experiences of discrimination and religious affirmation across established and new immigrant communities

Mieke Maliepaard, Mérove Gijsberts & Karen Phalet

To cite this article: Mieke Maliepaard, Mérove Gijsberts & Karen Phalet (2015) Islamic gatherings: experiences of discrimination and religious affirmation across established and new immigrant communities, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38:15, 2635-2651, DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2015.1077983](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1077983)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1077983>



Published online: 09 Oct 2015.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 154



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Islamic gatherings: experiences of discrimination and religious affirmation across established and new immigrant communities

Mieke Maliepaard, Mérove Gijsberts and Karen Phalet

(Received 17 January 2014; accepted 21 April 2015)

To what extent are perceptions of discrimination associated with religious affirmation among Muslim minorities in the Netherlands? Drawing on recent nationally representative surveys among self-identified Muslims from five ethnic groups in the Netherlands, we test boundary conditions of reactive religiosity. Our findings indicate that for Muslims from established immigrant groups, perceptions of discrimination are associated with more frequent religious attendance, but that this is not the case for Muslims from smaller, less established ethnic communities. Findings are interpreted using a boundary framework.

Keywords: discrimination; Muslim; identity; religious practice; boundary formation; reactive religiosity

1. Introduction

In many European societies, Muslim immigrants are facing increasingly overt and widespread hostile public attitudes, reflecting geopolitical tensions in the wake of 9/11 (Allen and Nielsen 2002). In the Netherlands, like in other Western European countries, public debates and political contention over ethno-religious diversity centre on the presence of Islam. This is apparent from a downward trend in the public acceptance of Muslim minorities (Verkuyten and Zaremba 2005), a growing support for anti-Islamic political parties, and a shift in media attention to Muslims as a threat to Dutch culture and society (Roggeband and Vliegthart 2007).

How do Muslims from different backgrounds deal with these tensions and specifically with experiences of discrimination? Islamic religious traditions remain a highly valued part of the heritage cultures and identities of Muslim minorities in Europe. New immigrants bring religious traditions from their home countries and recreate (ethno-)religious communities in receiving societies. Ethnic ties with co-religionists are an important source of social support and cultural continuity in the migration context (Bankston and Zhou 1996). In Europe in particular, ethno-religious communities may also offer a 'safe haven' from the often hostile public climate.

In the early twenty-first century, a period in which attitudes towards Muslim minorities became more negative, the Netherlands has seen an increase in communal religious practice, that is mosque attendance, among Muslim minorities (Maliepaard, Gijsberts, and Lubbers 2012). Qualitative studies also point in the direction of religious affirmation in response to the increasingly hostile inter-group climate in the

Netherlands (de Koning 2008; OSF 2014). However, a direct link between minority religious practice and experiences of discrimination has never been established. Nor do we know if religious affirmation is restricted to established ethno-religious communities, or if it is also happening in more recent, smaller, or less cohesive ethnic groups. In this study, we investigate how minority experiences of discrimination relate to religious practice, in different ethnic community contexts. To this end, we draw on two recent large-scale surveys with representative samples of established (Turkish and Moroccan) and new (Afghan, Iraqi and Somali) Muslim immigrant populations in the Netherlands, who together represent the vast majority of Muslims in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands 2004). The ethnic groups are selected on the basis of self-reported religious group membership, so that only groups in which the majority of the population is Muslim are included in the studies. We use the unique comparative scope of the data, and multiple measures of religious identification and practice, to investigate the role of ethnic community contexts and the strength of religious identification in connecting discrimination to mosque attendance.

Our focus is on (self-reported) attendance as a communal religious practice, which is embedded in ethno-religious communities and most directly shaped by social forces in minority groups and in the majority society. To theorize social forces from within and outside the community, we take an integrative explanatory approach of religion from group boundary dynamics. Starting from Barth's ethnic boundaries, Wimmer (2008) defines boundaries as enacted in daily interactions and practices, anchored in institutional structures, and entailing a certain degree of 'groupness'. In European societies, religion – much like race in the USA – is a bright boundary marker that sets Muslim minorities apart from the mainstream (Alba 2005). For our purposes, we see religious practice among Muslim minorities as resulting from interlocking boundary-making mechanisms as boundaries are simultaneously externally imposed through social exclusion or subordination in inter-group relations, and also internally enforced within minority communities through social control and identity strategies. Using boundary dynamics as a heuristic framework, the current research has a threefold aim: (1) to relate religious practice to perceived discrimination in inter-group relations with the majority group, and to establish the role of (2) different community contexts and (3) different levels of religious identification among Muslim minorities.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1. *Perceived discrimination and religious practice*

From the perspective of boundary-making, the religion of Dutch Muslims serves as a bright boundary marker that sets them apart from the mainstream, and which overlaps with ethnicity to create mutually reinforcing group boundaries (Phalet et al. 2013). Muslims in the Netherlands (as in most of Western Europe) by and large come from immigrant backgrounds, and are visible minorities in terms of race/ethnicity. Negative stereotypes of Muslims are widespread, with a majority of the native population believing that the Western way of life and Islam cannot go together (Gijsberts and Lubbers 2009). Muslim groups are also systematically discriminated against in the labour market (Blommaert, Coenders, and van Tubergen 2014). While immigrant minorities

mainly attribute discrimination of their group to ethnicity, between 15% and 30% of the participants in our research attributed discrimination they experienced personally to religion (Maliepaard and Gijsberts 2012, 153).

At the societal level, group boundaries are anchored in the power hierarchies and institutional structures that define inter-group relations. Thus, ethnic exclusionism in the majority society produces rigid ethnic boundaries (Wimmer 2008). There is ample evidence relating ethnic boundaries to ethnic discrimination and disadvantage. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) have coined the term ‘reactive ethnicity’ for the affirmation of ethnic identities among the second generation of disadvantaged immigrant groups in the USA. In these groups, ethnicity is affirmed in opposition to persistent social disadvantage and unfair treatment in mainstream society. As ethnic minorities rally around their ethnicity in response to ethnic exclusion, enhanced ethnic identification and collective solidarity make ethnic group boundaries highly salient in daily interactions and activities (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Attachment to the ethnic group or identity in this situation is not merely ‘maintained’, it is strategically mobilized in inter-group relations with the majority society in order to protect minority group interests or values that are denied or rejected by the powerful majority. Whereas ethnic affirmation of a distinct culture and identity refers to the internal enforcement of inter-group boundaries, the majority can also externally impose ethnic boundaries by failing to include minorities as fellow citizens. Reactive ethnicity thus entails self-reinforcing cycles of boundary-making in strained inter-group relations with the majority society (Alba 2005). While reactive ethnicity may restrict inter-group contact and mobility, it also has clear benefits in the presence of pervasive discrimination and disadvantage (Esser 2004). When acceptance by the majority is not forthcoming, the ethnic community provides not only a sense of belonging, but also an effective source of social support and in-group solidarity (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). In order to assert ethnic belonging and ensure ethnic support, one has to signal one’s group membership to other group members. Ethnic affirmation has this signalling function – for instance, the usage of the ethnic language in co-ethnic interactions communicates ethnic membership (Rumbaut 2002).

European scholars have recently extended the notion of reactive ethnicity to religion, when public hostility against Islam as a minority religion accentuates religious boundaries, leading to a reaffirmation of religious identities (Fleischmann, Phalet, and Klein 2011; for a review, see Voas and Fleischmann 2012). Religious affirmation, like ethnic affirmation, provides similar benefits of social belonging and in-group support for minorities facing disadvantage. Religious boundaries may become salient – most often in addition to ethnic boundaries in the European migration context – when Muslims experience discrimination or bias. Muslim minorities may turn to religion in search of a secure and strong group with ‘clear boundaries, internal homogeneity, social interaction, and common fate’ (Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007, 1449). Religious communities exemplify strong social groups: religious membership defines relatively clearly who is a member and who is not; there are shared conventions and rules, a common fate, and the potential for social interactions with like-minded people, for instance through attendance of religious services.

Our research focus here is on explaining mosque attendance as a communal religious practice. By visiting a mosque, Muslims signal their religious membership and adherence to shared religious norms and values, and they develop social ties with fellow Muslims. As a source of belonging and support, communal religious practice was shown to provide the most tangible social and material benefits to immigrant minorities of all faiths (Warner 2007). Reasoning from boundary dynamics in Dutch–Muslim inter-group relations, therefore, we expect that perceived discrimination will be related to higher levels of religious practice (H1a). We look beyond discrimination on purely religious grounds. Given the salience of religious boundaries in today’s Dutch society, we argue that religious affirmation may be a viable response also to social exclusion more generally.

2.2. Ethno-religious community building

In response to often hostile inter-group relations, minorities also internally define group boundaries through social closure around group norms and values (Wimmer 2008). Along those lines, affirmation of religion is most likely in internally cohesive and externally bounded community contexts, in which ethno-religious organizations and networks are well established and strongly connected (Güngör, Fleischmann, and Phalet 2011). In research on reactive ethnicity in the USA, it is to a large extent the support and solidarity in a minority group that shares similar customs and values that makes ethnic affirmation an attractive strategy (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Related arguments from segmented assimilation theory indicate that embeddedness in ethnic communities can protect disadvantaged immigrant minorities and that religion often plays a crucial role in ethnic community building (Bankston and Zhou 1995). As Warner (2007) convincingly argues in the American context, religious associations are among the most accessible organizations to immigrants; they are usually made up of co-ethnics; and they provide ‘ethnic’ social capital. Although the success of ethno-religious organizations in facilitating the *structural* integration of ethnic minorities in European societies has been questioned (Connor and Koenig 2013), being embedded in a cohesive ethno-religious community may provide disadvantaged minorities with the social support they are lacking in the wider society. Thus, Klandermans, Van Stekelenburg, and Van der Toorn (2008) foreground the key role of social embeddedness – in addition to individual-level identification – in predicting the mobilization of Turkish Dutch and Moroccan Dutch citizens.

Not all ethnic groups are equally established, however. Large group differences in the average duration of stay in the country, relative group size and degrees of residential segregation make for diverging pathways of community building. This raises the empirical question of whether less established ethnic communities can provide effective support against the exclusion of Muslims from the majority society. There is some suggestive evidence that more established minority groups are more likely to engage in reactive ethnicity: the most poignant example being Mexican Americans with their long and consistent flow of immigration, extensive group size and persistent disadvantage (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). In established minority groups, the ethnic community can buffer public hostility and provide real protection from discrimination. In less established groups, ethnic affirmation is probably less viable. When minority

groups lack effective ethnic organizations and dense ethnic networks, ethnic resources may fall short of offering real protection in the face of discrimination.

Turning to the Netherlands, we see large differences between Muslim groups from different ethnic origins in terms of length of stay, group size, residential segregation and religious organization. Originating in divergent migration histories, these differences between ethno-religious communities reflect the degree to which they are established in Dutch society. We distinguish earlier, larger and more established immigrant groups, which have developed firmly rooted, internally cohesive and externally bounded ethno-religious communities, from more recent, smaller and less established groups, which have developed far fewer ethno-religious resources, ties and organizations.

In the Netherlands, migration from Muslim majority countries from the 1960s onward consisted mainly of Turkish and Moroccan ‘guest workers’, followed by continuing waves of immigrants who came through family reunification and family formation. Turkish and Moroccan immigrants and their offspring make up an estimated 69% of the total Dutch Muslim population (Van Herten 2009), and about half of the group is currently made up of the second generation. With their relatively long migration history and large group size, the Turkish and Moroccan Dutch are settled communities with a strong religious infrastructure exemplified by a large number of mosques and religious organizations. This infrastructure completely developed along ethnic lines (Sunier and Landman 2014).

The other 30% of Muslims in the Netherlands is made up of a wide range of significantly smaller ethnic communities, most notably from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Sizeable groups of Afghan and Iraqi refugees arrived in the Netherlands in the early 1990s, and migration continued up until the late 1990s, after which a new migration law was introduced that almost fully stopped migration from these countries until the late 2000s. Somali refugees came to the Netherlands in two waves – a first wave in the early 1990s and a second wave after 2005. Refugees fled for various reasons, including war and political reasons (Dourleijn 2011). These three ethnic groups are each about one-tenth the size of the Turkish and Moroccan Dutch (ranging between 20,000 and 50,000 individuals per group), and their migration history is significantly shorter (migrants from these three countries have been in the Netherlands for ten years on average). The adult population by and large is made up of first-generation immigrants (Dourleijn 2011). For many of these immigrants, getting approval to stay in the Netherlands permanently took a long time. This, in combination with the limited group size and being spread out over the country as a result of Dutch policy towards refugees, resulted in low levels of ethnic organization formation. As refugees, they are also institutionally disconnected from their countries of origin, whereas Turkish and Moroccan Dutch maintain strong ties to their home countries, both individually and institutionally. Although religious self-identification is strong among these ethnic groups, the ethno-religious community formation is in a much earlier stage of development (Van Doorn 2011).

Embeddedness in ethno-religious communities provides a secure base for Dutch Muslims to fall back on when confronted with negative experiences of discrimination. Since religious community building in new immigrant groups is less advanced, these groups are smaller in size and they are also less residentially

segregated, we expect that new immigrants will be less likely to gather around their faith in response to discrimination. Given the overlap between group size, residential segregation and degree of religious organizations in the different community contexts, we cannot disentangle their distinct contributions to the community-building process. However, the unique comparative scope of our data allows us to compare across established and new Muslim communities. We expect that the relation between perceived discrimination and religious practice will be stronger in more established groups (H1b).

2.3. The role of religious identification

From a minority perspective, attending a mosque is a collective performance of religious identity (Maliepaard and Phalet 2012). Within the same community context, individual Muslims differ in the importance that they attach to religion as a social identity (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010). Individual-level identity strategies interact with community forces to make religious boundaries salient in people's daily activities and interactions (Wimmer 2008). According to the rejection-identification hypothesis, the experience of discrimination will reinforce reactive identification with the minority group, which serves to buffer identity threat (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey 1999). Most research on minority identity strategies had focused on ethnicity. Much like ethnicity, religion offers a positive identity that is anchored in a shared world view. Moreover, religious identities have a unique claim on epistemological certainty, ontological truth and moral virtue, which makes them particularly attractive as a source of collective self-worth in the face of identity threat (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010). Accordingly, Ghaffari and Ciftci (2010) report a positive relation between perceived ethnic discrimination and religious identification among a convenience sample of Muslims in the USA. Also in the European migration context, preliminary evidence relates negative inter-group experiences to higher levels of religious identification among Muslims of Turkish origin across the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden (Fleischmann, Phalet, and Klein 2011; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007). On a cautionary note, individuals may also disengage from a stigmatized identity in order to protect a positive self-view in the face of discrimination. This is less likely, however, to the extent that group boundaries are impermeable (Ellemers, Van Knippenberg, and Wilke 1990). Group boundaries between Muslim minorities and (non-Muslim) majorities in Western Europe are typically salient or 'bright' (Alba 2005). In view of the importance of religion in Muslim communities and in their inter-group relations with the majority, we expect that distancing oneself from their stigmatized religious identity will not be an option for most Muslims. More likely, experiencing discriminatory treatment will be related to stronger religious identification, which may form a buffer against negative inter-group experiences or outcomes. While personal experiences of discrimination most strongly predict increased identification, both individual- and group-level perceptions of discrimination have been related to identification (Bourguignon et al. 2006). Extending the rejection-identification model to the religious domain, we hypothesize that perceiving discrimination should be related to stronger religious identification among Dutch Muslims across the different community contexts (H2).

Finally, we conceive of religious identification as an individual-level predictor of religious boundary-making. To the extent that social identities require some degree of social validation in order to be psychologically viable, more strongly identified group members are more motivated to express their identity in relevant practices (Klein, Spears, and Reicher 2007). Due to its prescriptive nature, religious identity has behavioural consequences so that more strongly identified Muslims should also practise more (Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman 2010). In addition, we expect that more pervasive discrimination will also directly predict increased practice, as attendance signals social belonging to the in-group (Maliapaard and Phaet 2012). Independently of one's individual level of identification, we argue that acceptance as 'one of us' in the eyes of the ethno-religious community increases in importance for Muslims who feel excluded by the majority society. Accordingly, we predict that the relation between discrimination and religion will be partly mediated through religious identification (H3).

The notions of reactive ethnicity and rejection-identification theorize a well-established causal sequence from the experience of discrimination to ethnicity in longitudinal and experimental studies. As cross-sectional data do not allow us to disentangle cause and effect, however, we acknowledge that reverse causation may also play a role so that more religious Muslims may in turn experience more discrimination. As one way to challenge possible reverse causation from religion to (religious) discrimination, Study 2 differentiates further between discrimination on religious, ethnic, or other grounds.

3. Study 1

3.1. Data

In the first study, we use the 2006 Survey Integration Minorities, which was gathered among four major immigrant minority groups in the Netherlands (Dagevos et al. 2007). Minority samples were drawn at random in order to be optimally representative for the different minority populations nationwide. Face-to-face interviews covered detailed questions on socio-economic attainment, social integration and religion. We use the Turkish and Moroccan Dutch samples ($N=2,163$), which consist of participants (aged fifteen and over) born in Turkey or Morocco as well as participants who were born in the Netherlands and whose parents were born in Turkey or Morocco (the second generation). The overall response rate was 55%. Missing values on the independent variables (all < 5%) are imputed by means of multiple imputation in Stata.

3.2. Measures

Mosque attendance is measured using a single question ('How often do you attend a religious ceremony?') with answer categories (1) '(almost) never', (2) 'multiple times a year' and (3) 'at least weekly'. About two-thirds attend the mosque at least once a year, and more than one-third attend weekly or daily ($M=2.05$, $SD=0.80$).

Religious identification is measured with three items, referring to the importance of the religious identity ('My religion is an important part of myself', 'If someone says something negative about my religion, I feel personally hurt', 'No one should question

my religion'). Answer categories range from (1) 'totally disagree' to (5) 'totally agree'. The items form a relatively reliable scale ($\alpha = .70$). Religious identification is strong ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.80$).

Perceived discrimination is measured using a composite of two items: personal discrimination ('Have you been discriminated by Dutch people? How often has this happened?') and group-level discrimination ('Some people say that minorities are discriminated against by Dutch people. How often does this happen?'). Both items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) 'never' to (5) 'very often'. The items are correlated at 0.51.¹

We also take into account labour market participation (being employed more than 12 hours a week) and education (on a scale from 1 'no education' to 7 'university'). Respondents who were still in school were given the level of education they are currently enrolled in. In addition, we control for ethnicity, gender, age (ranging from fifteen to eighty-one), family status, immigrant generation, and living in one of the four largest Dutch cities (G4).

3.3. Results

Among Muslims with a Turkish or Moroccan background, a large majority (76%) perceives discrimination against minorities, and significant numbers (40%) also report personal discrimination. Ethnic differences between Turkish and Moroccan Dutch groups in perceived discrimination are small.

In our first analyses we investigate the relation between perceived discrimination and attendance. In Model 1 (Table 1), perceived discrimination is shown to be positively related to mosque attendance. Muslims who perceive more discrimination more frequently attend the mosque, in line with H1a.² Consistent with earlier research, stronger identifiers attend the mosque more frequently. In a second step, we look at the

Table 1. Religious attendance and identification among Turkish and Moroccan Dutch.

Dependent variable	Model 1 Attendance	Model 2 Identification	Model 3 Attendance
Constant	1.933 (0.099)***	3.955 (0.108)***	1.093 (0.125)***
Turkish	0.080 (0.033)*	0.004 (0.036)	0.079 (0.032)*
Female	-0.684 (0.035)***	0.107 (0.038)**	-0.707 (0.034)***
Second generation	0.219 (0.054)***	-0.001 (0.059)	0.219 (0.053)***
Age	0.008 (0.002)***	0.002 (0.002)	0.008 (0.002)***
Has children	0.028 (0.060)	-0.017 (0.068)	0.032 (0.059)
Has a partner	-0.057 (0.070)	0.031 (0.077)	-0.063 (0.069)
Lives in G4	0.024 (0.033)	-0.004 (0.036)	0.025 (0.032)
Education	-0.035 (0.010)**	-0.060 (0.011)***	-0.022 (0.010)*
Employed	-0.100 (0.036)**	-0.117 (0.040)**	-0.075 (0.035)*
Perceived discrimination	0.076 (0.018)***	0.086 (0.020)***	0.058 (0.018)**
Religious identification			0.212 (0.020)***
R^2	0.213	0.049	0.255

Note: Attendance is measured on a 1–3 scale, identification on a 1–5 scale. Higher scores indicate stronger religiosity.

$N = 1,980$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

relation between perceived discrimination and religious identification. Model 2 shows that perceived discrimination is related to higher levels of religious identification (see Table 1), in line with H2.

Model 3 indicates that the initially positive relation between perceived discrimination and attendance diminishes by about 25% when religious identification is taken into account. Bootstrapped Sobel-Goodman mediation tests indicate that the mediation by religious identification is highly significant ($Z=6.34$, $p<.001$). However, the direct effect remains significant, indicating that the relation between perceived discrimination and attendance is not fully mediated by religious identification. These results support H3.

In order to test the robustness of our results on attendance across ethnic groups, we added interaction terms to the models (available upon request). The non-significant interaction term between ethnicity and discrimination on attendance indicates that the relation between discrimination and mosque attendance holds for both the Turkish and Moroccan groups. However, we do find a significant interaction of ethnicity and discrimination on religious identification. Substantively, the effect reveals that the positive relation between discrimination and religious identification is driven by the Turkish Dutch group. For the Moroccan Dutch, this relation does not reach significance. Evidence for H2 is thus found only among the Turkish Dutch.

3.4. Conclusions

Mosque attendance turns out to be associated with perceptions of discrimination for both these established groups. The more discrimination they perceive, the more frequently they attend the mosque. Results also indicate that in line with our hypothesis, those Muslims who perceive more discrimination hold stronger religious identification – everything else being equal. Levels of religious identification are already very high among both the Turkish and Moroccan Dutch, but they are even higher among those who perceive more discrimination. This general finding should be qualified, however, in light of the lack of support for rejection-identification in the Moroccan Dutch group. We will come back to this in the Discussion.

In line with our mediation hypothesis, the association between perceived discrimination and religious practice is partly mediated by religious identification. However, there is still a sizeable direct effect of discrimination on attendance that does not run through identification. We interpret this to mean that over and above identification, attendance provides additional support in the face of discrimination for these large and well-established ethno-religious groups.

4. Study 2

4.1. Data

The second study focuses on Afghan, Somali and Iraqi groups in the Netherlands, as less established ethno-religious communities. Our analysis draws on the Survey Integration New Groups data gathered in 2009 among a large number of ethnic groups (Hilhorst 2010). All respondents were interviewed using computer-assisted

personal interviewing. Respondents who had been (registered) in the Netherlands for less than five years were interviewed in their mother tongue by interviewers from their own country of origin. Other respondents were interviewed in Dutch by Dutch interviewers. The response rate was 38% among Somalis, 48% among Iraqis and 49% among the Afghan group, and is relatively low compared to studies among established groups. When presenting descriptive results, the data are weighted in terms of age, sex, generation, marital status and municipality in order to be optimally representative of the groups. Missing values on the independent variables (< 5%) are imputed by means of multiple imputation in Stata.

All of the participants are first-generation immigrants, aged fifteen and over. For the purpose of this study, only Muslim respondents were selected. Among the Somali and Afghan respondents, the vast majority is Muslim (94% and 86%, respectively). In the Iraqi group, this percentage is lower (63%), and this group is therefore somewhat smaller in the analyses. Importantly, these percentages are not representative of the sending countries, where the percentage of Muslims in all three is estimated to be at least 98% of the total population (Pew Research Center 2011).

4.2. Measures

In order to test our hypotheses stipulated above, the models from Study 1 are replicated among the three new immigrant groups, using different data but highly comparable measures. The religion and discrimination measures are exactly the same. A majority of all participants reports some attendance and a minority attends regularly: over one in two participants visit the mosque at least once a year, whereas one in five does so weekly or more ($M=1.74$, $SD=0.78$). The three religious identification items form an acceptable scale ($\alpha=.70$). Religious identification is relatively strong ($M=3.79$, $SD=0.85$). The two perceived discrimination measures correlate at 0.51.³ Since these immigrant groups migrated more recently and no second generation is included in the data, a measure for length of stay in four categories is included in the analyses instead of migration generation.

4.3. Results

Also among Muslims from new immigrant groups, a majority (60%) perceives discrimination against minorities in general; and a sizeable portion (28%) also feels personally discriminated. Differences between the three groups in levels of perceived discrimination are relatively small.

In our first analyses we investigate the relation between perceived discrimination and attendance. In Model 1 (Table 2), the relation between perceived discrimination and mosque attendance is not different from zero.⁴ This indicates that less established groups differ from the more established groups in Study 1, which, although we cannot test it directly, provides support for H1b that the relation between discrimination and attendance would be stronger among more established groups.

In a second step, we look at the relation between perceived discrimination and religious identification. In line with H2 and findings from Study 1, perceived discrimination is related to higher levels of religious identification (see Model 2 in Table 2).

Table 2. Religious attendance and identification among new immigrant groups.

Dependent variable	Model 1 Attendance	Model 2 Identification	Model 3 Attendance
Constant	2.441 (0.074)***	3.759 (0.087)***	1.642 (0.098)***
Afghan	-0.507 (0.039)***	-0.156 (0.047)**	-0.474 (0.039)***
Iraqi	-0.640 (0.041)***	-0.148 (0.049)**	-0.608 (0.040)***
Female	-0.473 (0.033)***	0.152 (0.038)***	-0.505 (0.032)***
Length of stay (< 5 = ref.)			
5–10 yrs	0.026 (0.067)	-0.025 (0.079)	0.032 (0.066)
10–15 yrs	-0.074 (0.062)	-0.124 (0.072)	-0.047 (0.060)*
> 15 yrs	-0.021 (0.065)	-0.099 (0.077)	0.001 (0.063)*
Age (15–24 = ref.)			
25–44	-0.138 (0.046)**	-0.015 (0.055)**	-0.106 (0.046)*
45+	-0.074 (0.060)	-0.136 (0.070)	-0.045 (0.058)
Has children	0.011 (0.042)	0.036 (0.050)	0.004 (0.041)
Has a partner	0.081 (0.038)*	0.093 (0.045)*	0.061 (0.037)
Education (elementary = ref)			
lower secondary	-0.062 (0.049)	-0.006 (0.058)	-0.060 (0.047)
higher secondary	-0.043 (0.042)	-0.067 (0.050)	-0.029 (0.040)
tertiary	-0.051 (0.047)	-0.181 (0.055)	-0.013 (0.046)
Employed	-0.111 (0.035)**	-0.080 (0.041)	-0.094 (0.034)**
Perceived discrimination	-0.004 (0.018)	0.114 (0.021)***	-0.021 (0.017)
Religious identification			0.212 (0.018)***
R ²	0.195	0.049	0.245

Note: Attendance is measured on a 1–3 scale, identification on a 1–5 scale. Higher scores indicate stronger religiosity.

$N=2,232$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In a third model we tested our mediation hypothesis (H3). In this model, the effect of perceived discrimination remains non-significant. Despite the non-significant effect before and after mediation, a bootstrapped Sobel-Goodman test indicates that mediation by religious identification is significant ($Z=9.01$, $p < .001$).

In order to test the robustness of the effects, we conducted interactions in order to see whether the relations between discrimination and religious identification and practice are comparable across ethnic groups (available upon request). We first looked at the relation between discrimination and attendance. Results indicate that while the coefficient of discrimination is slightly larger for Iraqis than for Somalis, the relation between discrimination and attendance remains insignificant for all three groups. The relation between religious identification and discrimination does not differ across groups. Overall, small yet robust increases in religious identification support the generalization of H2 to new Muslim immigrants.

Finally, we ran additional analyses to strengthen our causal argument. All respondents who report personal instances of discrimination were asked on what grounds they think they are discriminated against. Fifty-nine per cent of the respondents attribute discrimination to ethnicity, 17% to religion, and 24% to causes like gender or age. If causality were reversed, and more religious people experience more discrimination (e.g. because of wearing a headscarf), one would assume that they would report discrimination on religious grounds. The relation between discrimination and

religious identification should thus primarily exist in the ‘religious discrimination’ group. We repeated only the models predicting religious identification (as there is no effect on attendance for any of the ethnic groups in this study) including an interaction of perceived discrimination with grounds for discrimination. We differentiate the effect of discrimination for people who report (a) religious discrimination, (b) ethnic discrimination and (c) other reasons for discrimination. Results indicate that the effect of discrimination on religious identification does not differ for those perceiving discrimination on ethnic or ‘other’ grounds and those perceiving discrimination on religious grounds ($B_{\text{ethnic}}: -0.127, p = .301$; $B_{\text{other}}: -0.249, p = .133$).

4.4. Conclusions

The second study qualifies part of the findings of Study 1. As expected from a boundary-making account of religious community building, among the less established groups, discrimination is not associated with more frequent mosque attendance. At the same time, the theoretical association between perceived discrimination and religious identification is replicated. In line with the rejection-identification hypothesis, religion provides a positive social identity also for Muslims in less established community contexts. Yet, these community contexts seem less effective in mobilizing social support – which can be gained through mosque attendance – in response to discrimination. Finally, our additional analyses to explore causality issues indicate higher levels of religious identification for people who perceive discrimination on ethnic, religious and other grounds. This pattern of findings would be unlikely if the causal relation were fully reversed: that would mean that being more religious leads to perceptions of discrimination on all kinds of grounds. Although we cannot rule out a bidirectional influence, this strengthens the causal path specified by theories explicated above significantly.

5. Discussion

Dutch Muslims have become the prototypical ‘Other’ in the eyes of the Dutch majority, as evident from widespread public hostility against the presence of Muslims in Dutch society. There is some preliminary evidence of increased religious practice among Muslim populations in the Netherlands, which has tentatively been interpreted as a response to the increasingly negative inter-group climate (Maliepaard, Gijsberts, and Lubbers 2012). The current paper supports this interpretation, particularly among large established Muslim groups.

Our main research question was whether and how perceived discrimination relates to religious practice in the Netherlands, and how this differs across groups that vary in terms of ethno-religious community formation.

Taking a conceptual approach from religious boundary-making as interlocking processes of external exclusion and internal enforcement, our main argument was that the community context should make a difference in the way that minorities respond to discrimination in unequal inter-group relations with the majority society. Studying diverse Muslim populations has important descriptive value as it challenges the amalgamation of Islamic faith traditions with socially disadvantaged ‘guest worker’ groups at the

bottom of the 'ethnic hierarchy' (Hagendoorn 1995). At a more theoretical level, including less established communities of newly migrated Muslim groups in our research allowed us to explore the boundary conditions of reactive religiosity in the face of discrimination.

The findings indicate that among more established ethnic communities, discrimination is associated with higher levels of mosque attendance – extending a notion of reactive religiosity to the communal practice of Muslim minorities in European societies as an instance of highly visible and contested collective religious behaviour. The fact that the relation between discrimination and religious practice in established Muslim groups is not fully explained by increases in religious identification at the individual level indicates that mosque attendance does not merely follow from identification. We take this to mean that mosque attendance provides benefits above and beyond 'mere' identification. Through attendance, social support can be found, while simultaneously signalling one's group membership to other in-group members. Ethnographic studies have shown that developing a Muslim identity in the broadest sense cannot be done independently of the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the West (de Koning 2008; Peek 2005). These findings support the notion that religious attendance by Muslims in a migration context may be seen as reproducing or accentuating boundaries between groups, by establishing firm membership in the ethno-religious in-group when one's identity is threatened (Wimmer 2008). Since the expression of Islamic practices is highly contested in Dutch society, the relation between perceived discrimination and increased attendance is important to explain vicious circles of mutual hostility in tense inter-group relations between (established) Muslim minorities and the Dutch majority. Crucially, we do not find more frequent attendance in relation to experiences of discrimination in less established, smaller ethnic groups. Using a conceptual approach from boundary-making processes, we have argued that Muslims who are more firmly embedded in established ethno-religious communities are more likely to gather around their religion in search of in-group support in a hostile societal climate.

At the individual level of boundary-making, we also studied the role of religious identification. As expected from rejection-identification research, we find that Muslims who perceive more discrimination report stronger religious identification. These findings are replicated in four out of five ethnic groups, extending the rejection-identification hypothesis to the religious domain. As noted by Voas and Fleischmann (2012), previous studies of reactive identification were frequently based on convenience samples and resulted in some mixed findings. Our studies provide evidence that indeed, among representative samples of Muslims from a wide range of ethnic groups with varying reasons for migration, group size and degree of organization, discrimination is related to higher levels of religious identification.

The only group in which the relation between discrimination and religious identification did not reach significance is the Moroccan Dutch group. As the Moroccan Dutch group is the prototypical Muslim group in the Netherlands, as well as the most stigmatized, Phalet, Baysu, and Verkuyten (2010) have argued that their religious identity is most chronically salient, and as such is less strongly mediated by individual differences in degrees of identification. Importantly, discrimination did predict Moroccan practice and across comparison groups, discrimination was never associated with lower religious identification.

Our studies indicate that discrimination of religious minorities in a context of already bright group boundaries will reinforce these group boundaries, as minorities respond by strengthening their attachment to the stigmatized group. Given the overlapping ethnic, religious and socio-economic boundaries that separate these minorities from the majority, experiences of discrimination can theoretically be ascribed to either race, or ethnicity, or religion, but in practice the distinction is far less clear-cut, as most instances of exclusion are likely based on an amalgamation of these factors. The fact that discrimination is related to higher levels of religious identification, and in the more established groups to more frequent attendance, points to the salience of the religious identity, but also to its benefits as a buffer against negative experiences in encounters with the majority.

In light of theoretical expectations, we modelled the effects of discrimination on attendance and identification, but as stated before, we cannot disentangle causal effects on the basis of cross-sectional data. Our additional test in Study 2 points to the fact that results are not limited to religious discrimination per se, but extend to discrimination on other grounds. This points to the salience of religion for Muslims in the Netherlands, and to the overlapping boundaries that Muslims are facing. Although this does not conclusively exclude the opposite causal pathway (from religious identification to perceived discrimination), it does support our argument. In order to truly establish causality, one would need to model these issues experimentally. However, this would come at a cost of not being able to study different real-life groups who face real-life exclusion. A preferable future option would be to study these processes longitudinally.

Keeping in mind the data limitations, we conclude that in a nation where Islam is a salient and contested issue, higher levels of perceived discrimination increase the 'brightness' of the already existing boundary between majority and minority groups. However, this is most strongly the case for groups that have a strong community to fall back on. For groups lacking a religious infrastructure and social support network, this strategy seems less viable.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes

1. In Studies 1 and 2, when the analyses are performed with either perceived personal or group discrimination (instead of a composite measure), results are highly comparable in terms of the direction of effects and effect sizes.
2. Despite the partly gendered nature of mosque attendance, additional analyses indicate that this relation was the same for men and women in both Studies.
3. See note 1.
4. See note 2.

References

- Alba, Richard. 2005. "Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second-generation Assimilation and Exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1): 20–49.

- Allen, Ch, and J. Nielsen. 2002. *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001*. Vienna: European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).
- Bankston, Carl L., and Min Zhou. 1995. "Religious Participation, Ethnic Identification, and Adaptation of Vietnamese Adolescents in an Immigrant Community." *The Sociological Quarterly* 36 (3): 523–534.
- Bankston, Carl L., and Min Zhou. 1996. "The Ethnic Church, Ethnic Identification, and the Social Adjustment of Vietnamese Adolescents." *Review of Religious Research* 38 (1): 18–37.
- Blommaert, Lieselotte, Marcel Coenders, and Frank van Tubergen. 2014. "Discrimination of Arabic-Named Applicants in the Netherlands: An Internet-Based Field Experiment Examining Different Phases in Online Recruitment Procedures." *Social Forces* 92 (3): 957–982.
- Bourguignon, D., E. Seron, V. Yzerbyt, and G. Herman. 2006. "Perceived Group and Personal Discrimination: Differential Effects on Personal Self-esteem." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 36 (5): 773–789.
- Branscombe, Nyla R., Michael T. Schmitt, and Richard D. Harvey. 1999. "Perceiving Pervasive Discrimination among African-Americans: Implications for Group Identification and Well-being." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77: 135–149.
- Connor, Phillip, and Matthias Koenig. 2013. "Bridges and Barriers: Religion and Immigrant Occupational Attainment across Integration Contexts." *International Migration Review* 47 (1): 3–38.
- Dagevos, Jaco, Mérove Gijsberts, Joost Kappelhof, and Miranda Vervoort. 2007. *Survey Integratie Minderheden 2006* [Integration Survey 2006]. The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Social Research.
- Dourleijn, Edith. 2011. "Migratie en demografisch profiel [Migration and Demographic Profile]." In *Vluchtelingengroepen in Nederland* [Refugees in the Netherlands], edited by Edith Dourleijn, Jaco Dagevos, 35–57. The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Social Research.
- Ellemers, Naomi, Ad Van Knippenberg, and Henk Wilke. 1990. "The Influence of Permeability of Group Boundaries and Stability of Group Status on Strategies of Individual Mobility and Social Change." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 29 (3): 233–246.
- Esser, Hartmut. 2004. "Does the 'New' Immigration Require a 'New' Theory of Intergenerational Integration?" *International Migration Review* 38 (3): 1126–1159.
- Fleischmann, Fenella, Karen Phalet, and Olivier Klein. 2011. "Religious Identification and Politicization in the Face of Discrimination: Support for Political Islam and Political Action among the Turkish and Moroccan Second Generation in Europe." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 50 (4): 628–648.
- Ghaffari, Azadeh, and Ayşe Çiftçi. 2010. "Religiosity and Self-esteem of Muslim Immigrants to the United States: The Moderating Role of Perceived Discrimination." *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 20 (1): 14–25.
- Gijsberts, Mérove, and Marcel Lubbers. 2009. "Wederzijdse beeldvorming [Mutual Image Creation]." In *Jaarrapport integratie 2009* [Integration Report 2009], 254–290. The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Social Research.
- Güngör, Derya, Fenella Fleischmann, and Karen Phalet. 2011. "Religious Identification, Beliefs, and Practices among Turkish Belgian and Moroccan Belgian Muslims: Intergenerational Continuity and Acculturative Change." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 42 (8): 1356–1374.
- Hagendoorn, Louk. 1995. "Intergroup Biases in Multiple Group Systems: The Perception of Ethnic Hierarchies." *European Review of Social Psychology* 6: 199–228.
- Hilhorst, Marsha. 2010. *Survey integratie nieuwe groepen SING2009 veldwerkverslag* [Survey on the Integration of New Groups SING 2009 Fieldworkreport]. Amsterdam: Veldkamp.

- Klandermans, Bert, Jacqueline Van Stekelenburg, and Jojanneke Van der Toorn. 2008. "Embeddedness and Identity: How Immigrants Turn Grievances into Action." *American Sociological Review* 73 (6): 992–1012.
- Klein, Olivier, Russell Spears, and Stephen Reicher. 2007. "Social Identity Performance: Extending the Strategic Side of SIDE." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 11: 28–45.
- de Koning, Martijn. 2008. *Zoeken naar een 'Zuivere' islam. Religieuze beleving en identiteitsvorming van Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims* [Looking for a 'Pure' Islam. Religious Beliefs and Identity Formation among Moroccan-Dutch Muslims]. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Maliepaard, Mieke, and Mérove Gijsberts. 2012. *Moslim in Nederland 2012* [Being Muslim in the Netherlands]. The Hague: Netherlands Institute for Social Research.
- Maliepaard, Mieke, Mérove Gijsberts, and Marcel Lubbers. 2012. "Reaching the Limits of Secularization? Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch Muslims in the Netherlands 1998–2006." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51 (2): 359–367.
- Maliepaard, Mieke, and Karen Phalet. 2012. "Social Integration and Religious Identity Expression among Dutch Muslims: The Role of Minority and Majority Group Contact." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 75 (2): 131–148.
- Open Societies Foundation (OSF). 2014. *Somalis in Amsterdam*. OSF: New York.
- Peek, Lori. 2005. "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity." *Sociology of Religion* 66: 215–42.
- Pew Research Center. 2011. *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*. Washington: Pew.
- Phalet, Karen, Gulseli Baysu, and Maykel Verkuyten. 2010. "Political Mobilization of Dutch Muslims: Religious Identity Salience, Goal Framing and Normative Constraints." *Journal of Social Issues* 66 (4): 759–779.
- Phalet, Karen, Mieke Maliepaard, Fenella Fleischmann, and Derya Güngör. 2013. "The Making and Unmaking of Religious Boundaries - Comparing Turkish and Moroccan Muslim minorities in European Cities." *Comparative Migration Studies* 1 (1): 123–145.
- Portes, Alejandro, and R. G. Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Roggeband, Conny, and Rens Vliegenthart. 2007. "Divergent Framing: The Public Debate on Migration in the Dutch Parliament and Media, 1995–2004." *West European Politics* 30 (3): 524–548.
- Rumbaut, Rubén G. 2002. "Severed or Sustained Attachments? Language, Identity, and Imagined Communities in the Post-Immigrant Generation." In *Language, Identity, and Imagined Communities in the Post-Immigrant Generation*, edited by Peggy Levitt and Mary Waters, 43–95. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.
- Statistics Netherlands. 2004. "Muslims and Hindus in the Netherlands." Accessed September 29, 2014. <http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=70086NED&D1=0,7-15&D2=1&HDR=G1&STB=T&VW=T>.
- Sunier, Thijl, and Nico Landman. 2014. *Turkse islam. Actualisatie van kennis over Turkse religieuze stromingen en organisaties in Nederland* [Turkish Islam: Update of Existing Knowledge on Turkish Religious Movements and Organizations in the Netherlands]. Den Haag: Rijksoverheid.
- Van Doorn, Majka. 2011. "Sociaal-culturele positie en religie [Socio-cultural Position and Religion]." In *Vluchtelingengroepen in Nederland* [Refugees in the Netherlands], edited by Edith Dourleijn and Jaco Dagevos, 165–189. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Van Herten, Marieke. 2009. "Het aantal islamieten in Nederland [The Number of Muslims in the Netherlands]." In *Religie aan het begin van de 21ste eeuw* [Religion at the Start of the 21st Century], 35–40. Heerlen/The Hague: Statistics Netherlands.

- Verkuyten, Maykel, and Ali A. Yildiz. 2007. "National (dis)Identification and Ethnic and Religious Identity: A Study among Turkish-Dutch Muslims." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 33 (10): 1448–1462.
- Verkuyten, Maykel, and Katarzyna Zaremba. 2005. "Interethnic Relations in a Changing Political Context." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 68: 375–386.
- Voas, David, and Fenella Fleischmann. 2012. "Islam Moves West: Religious Change in the First and Second Generations." *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 525–545.
- Warner, R. Stephen. 2007. "The Role of Religion in the Process of Segmented Assimilation." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612 (1): 100–115.
- Wimmer, Andreas. 2008. "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 113 (4): 970–1022.
- Ysseldyk, Renate, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anisman. 2010. "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion from a Social Identity Perspective." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (1): 60–71.

MIEKE MALIEPAARD is Assistant Professor in the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations at Utrecht University, Netherlands.

ADDRESS: European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Utrecht University, PO Box 80.140, 3508 TC Utrecht, Netherlands. Email: m.i.maliepaard@uu.nl

MEROVE GIJSBERTS is Senior Researcher in the Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP.

ADDRESS: Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP, PO Box 16164, 2500 BD The Hague, Netherlands. Email: m.gijsberts@scp.nl

KAREN PHALET is Professor of Social Psychology in the Center for Social and Cultural Psychology at Leuven University.

ADDRESS: Center for Social and Cultural Psychology, Faculty of Psychology & Educational Sciences, KU Leuven, Tiensestraat 102, B - 3000 Leuven, Belgium. Email: karen.phalet@ppw.kuleuven.be