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Support for democracy and liberal sexual mores among Muslims in Western Europe

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ABSTRACT

There is an on-going debate whether a ‘clash of civilizations’ exists between Islam and the West, in particular in relation to support for democracy and endorsement of liberal sexual mores. This study aims to explain Muslim minorities’ support for democracy and their attitude towards these mores by making a comparison with majority members and by considering the level of religiosity and sense of national belonging. Using data from four European countries (Belgium, Germany, U.K., Switzerland), we found that Muslims compared to majority members were less supportive of democracy and of liberal sexual mores. Furthermore, these differences could be explained by Muslims’ higher level of religiosity and weaker national belonging (for liberal sexual mores). These findings demonstrate that the so-called ‘clash’ is more prominent in the case of liberal sexual mores than democracy and that not only religiosity but also the development of a sense of national belonging is important.

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In the aftermath of 9/11 and the terrorist attacks in various European cities, ordinary people and politicians have increasingly questioned whether Muslims support western democracy and liberal values. These attacks were often interpreted as not only attacks on democracy but also on Western liberalism (Norris and Inglehart 2004). In the media, Islam has been presented as a ‘backward’ religion that poses a threat to western liberal democracy (Statham and Tillie 2016). Some political scientists have claimed that Islam is incompatible with western democracy and that there is a ‘clash of civilizations’ (Fukuyama 2006; Huntington 1996). Public opinion increasingly seems to agree with this claim (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007; Vanparys, Jacobs, and Torrekens 2013). However, Norris and Inglehart (2004, p. 155) conclude from their worldwide research that the ‘basic cultural fault line between the West and Islam does not concern democracy – it involves issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization’ (see also Fish 2011).

Yet, there is research that suggests that, compared to majority members, Muslims in Western Europe are not only less supportive of gender equality and liberal values (Lewis and Kashyap 2013; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007) but also of democratic principles (e.g. Gundelach 2010; see also Sanders et al. 2014). However, it is unclear whether these findings are specific for particular West European countries and particular Muslim

minority groups. Furthermore, it is not clear why exactly Muslims would be less supportive of democracy and liberal values. The role of religiosity for the degree of support has been examined, but not together with a sense of national belonging and by systematically comparing majority members and Muslim minority members (Carol and Milewski 2018). Whereas Muslim minorities are often considered to be different and face exclusion because of their religion, they can be considered similar and feel included by a sense of belonging as a dimension of citizenship (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008).

In the current study, we go beyond the existing literature by examining Muslims' support of democracy and liberal sexual mores in comparison to majority members in four West European countries (Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, U.K.). In addition, we contribute to the literature by examining religiosity and national belonging as two possible explanations for a majority-Muslim minority group difference in support for democracy and liberal sexual mores. Muslim minorities can be expected to be more religious and to have a lower sense of national belonging, which could explain why they might support democracy and liberal sexual mores less than majority members.

Support for democracy and liberal sexual mores

Support for democracy is a multifaceted construct and consists of a variety of attitudes. Here we focus on the attitude towards democracy as a form of government that can maintain order (performance aspect) and that is better than other forms of government (ideal aspect; Norris and Inglehart 2004). This so-called abstract or overt support for democracy is considered a requirement for the functioning and legitimacy of democratic systems (Dalton 1999; Easton 1975). In their large-scale study, Norris and Inglehart (2004) found that Muslims in Muslim majority countries are quite supportive of various aspects of democracy (see also, Inglehart and Norris 2003; Norris and Inglehart 2011; Tessler 2002). However, Muslims living in Western liberal democracies where Islam is a minority religion might be less supportive of democracy than majority members (Cesari 2004). In liberal democracies, Muslim minorities are generally less represented in government and other political bodies. Specifically, in Western liberal democracies, Islam is not represented ideologically and Muslim minorities have criticised the secular nature of liberal democracies (Parekh 2008). The five pillars of Islam are seen as fundamental to the faith and living in accordance with Allah's will is central to Islam. For strong believers, the will of Allah and the laws of Islam (e.g. Sharia) might not always be easy to reconcile with democratic procedures and decision making (Koopmans 2015). Therefore, Muslims might feel less represented by the democratic system resulting in less support for democracy, compared to majority members. Indeed, in some European countries, Muslims have been found to be less supportive of democracy when compared to majority members (Gundelach 2010).

Norris and Inglehart (2004) (see also Esposito and Voll 1996) argue that Islam is not incompatible with democratic ideals but is rather difficult to reconcile with principles of gender equality and sexual liberalization. The divide between the West and the Islamic world would relate to these latter issues. In this study, we focus on the approval of four related dimensions of liberal sexual mores that have been examined in cross-national (Carol and Milewski 2018; Ersanilli 2012; Norris and Inglehart 2004) and national research (Lewis and Kashyap 2013). These involve the acceptance of homosexuality,

abortion, divorce, and premarital sex. Western societies experienced a 'sexual revolution' in the 1960s whereas Muslims in Muslim majority countries, as well as Muslim immigrants, tend to be more traditional in their attitudes towards these liberal sexual practices that are condemned in several passages in Islamic scriptures (Fish 2011; Norris and Inglehart 2011, 2012; Voas and Fleischmann 2012). Research in the Netherlands demonstrated that Dutch Muslims endorse liberal values much less than native Dutch (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). In addition, British Muslims have been found to have more conservative attitudes towards sexual practices than other Britons (Lewis and Kashyap 2013). In line with these findings, it is expected that Muslim minorities support liberal sexual mores less than majority members. Furthermore, this group difference in support of these mores is expected to be larger than for the support of democracy.

Religiosity and support for democracy and liberal sexual mores

Muslim minorities remain overwhelmingly religious when compared to majority members in Europe (Voas and Fleischmann 2012). This has resulted in social scientists debating whether Muslims' religiosity acts as a 'bridge' or a 'barrier' to their integration in the host societies (Foner and Alba 2008). In Europe, religion is typically seen as a barrier for integration because Europeans have become increasingly less religious (Güngör, Fleischmann, and Phalet 2011). The higher religiosity of Muslims could explain why they might be less supportive of democracy and of liberal sexual mores in particular.

Concerning democracy, Muslim minorities in Western Europe have been found to support religious rights more strongly than natives (Carol, Helbling, and Michalowski 2015; Gundelach 2010), but at the same time, they seem less supportive of democratic principles and government. Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan (2012b) found in their research in 75 nations that for Muslims stronger religious belief was associated with less support for democracy, whereas this was much less so for Catholics. Whereas involvement in religious networks (communal aspect of religion) can contribute to democratic attitudes (but not necessarily among Muslims, see Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012a), religious belief is associated with values that might contradict democratic principles, such as traditional and conservative values, conformity and opposition to change. Furthermore, religious belief has a clear ethos of what is right and wrong which is laid down in holy scriptures and this might be difficult to reconcile with democratic secular values and principles (Cesari 2004; Minkenberg 2007; Parekh 2008). Democratic government can be construed as being contradictory to divine moral directives (Juusola 2016; Parekh 2008). Therefore, the more religious individuals are the less likely they are expected to support democratic principles and government. This means that Muslim minorities are expected to be less supportive of democracy because they are more religious than native majorities.

Modernization processes have led to greater approval of sexual liberalization, including acceptance of homosexuality, abortion and premarital sex (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Religiosity has been found to be associated with negative attitudes towards these practices (Hooghe et al. 2010; Lewis and Kashyap 2013; Sahar and Karasawa 2005; Schwartz and Lindley 2005). In monotheistic scriptures, liberal sexual practices are condemned and religious belief is associated with values of tradition and conformity and conservative social attitudes (Putnam and Campbell 2010). This leads to the expectation that compared to

native majorities, Muslim minorities are less supportive of liberal sexual mores because they are more religious.

National belonging and support for democracy and liberal sexual mores

The ideals of democracy and liberal values are embedded in the culture and institutions of West European nations and considered defining aspects of the national identity (Parekh 2008; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). A sense of national belonging is a dimension of citizenship (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008) and when people have a stronger sense of belonging with their nation they tend to adopt the perceived nation's core principles and values (for a discussion see Pehrson and Green 2010; see also Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind 2000). Self-categorization theory argues that individuals perceive the world through the lens of their group belongings and the norms and values associated with their specific group memberships (Turner et al. 1987). For high national identifiers the norms and values that are considered to define the nation become self-relevant. Among Muslim minorities, it has been found that a stronger sense of national belonging is associated with stronger attachment to the host culture (Mathijssen and Saroglou 2007), stronger commitment to perceived national norms and values, and stronger political participation (see Verkuyten and Martinovic 2012). In other words, a stronger sense of national belonging tends to be related to a higher level of political and cultural integration in the host society. Therefore, stronger national belonging is expected to be associated with stronger support for democracy and liberal sexual mores.

National identities are typically defined by the history, culture and language of the majority group and this finds its expression in national institutions and cultural symbols (Vroome, Verkuyten, and Martinovic 2014). In West European countries there is a large majority population that determines what it means to be a national and that is considered to be representative of the nation. Cross-national research has found that majority members have higher national identification compared to Muslim and non-Muslim immigrants and minorities, especially in non-settler and highly developed countries (Berry et al. 2006; Staerklé et al. 2010). Therefore, we expected that Muslims compared to natives have lower support for democratic principles and liberal sexual mores because of their lower sense of national belonging.

Method

Data

The data are from the EURISLAM project that aimed 'to provide a systematic analysis of cross-national differences and similarities in countries' approaches to the cultural integration of immigrants and Muslims in particular' (Hoksbergen and Tillie 2015, p. 4). It encompasses a wide range of themes from intergroup attitudes, to norms and values in relation to gender equality and religion. Data were collected predominantly throughout 2011 until January 2012 by telephone interviews. The sample consisted of native majority members and Muslim minorities living in Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and the UK.¹ In the case of Muslim minorities, a surname based sampling method was used to identify people with an Islamic background, in particular from Morocco ($N = 850$), Turkey ($N = 1226$), Pakistan ($N = 790$), and ex-Yugoslavia ($N = 810$).

The interviews were completed predominantly in host (48.6%) and origin (21.5%) country languages. In some cases, participants switched between either host and/or origin country languages and another unspecified language (6.8%). Only 1.6% of the interviews were completed in another language that was neither the host or origin country language.² Response rates differed between countries from 38.6% to 91.9%. The highest response rate was in the UK, probably due to participants receiving a five-pound compensation for their participation. No other country offered compensation for participation. Furthermore, non-response was more common among people originating from Pakistan and Morocco (for further details about the procedure, sampling, and sample size see Hoksbergen and Tillie 2015).

Majority members with other than a Christian or an agnostic/atheist background and non-Islamic minorities³ were excluded for the current analyses ($N = 70$). Thus the final sample size was $N = 5080$ (27.6% majority members). There was an almost equal distribution of males and females for both majority members (46.4% male) and Muslims (53.8% male). The age range was from 18 to 96 but the Muslim sample was around 10 years younger than the majority one (see Table 1).

Measures

Two items assessed *support for democracy* and focused on the performance of the democratic system and democratic ideal (Norris and Inglehart 2011): ‘Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order’, and ‘Democracy may have problems, but it’s better than any other form of government’ (reverse-coded). Using four-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree), the inter-item correlation was $r = .30$ ($p < .001$). In the analyses, this measure was treated as a manifest variable.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by group.

	Scale	Muslim Mean (SD)	Majority Mean (SD)
Support for democracy	1–4	2.987 (.718)	3.309 (.603)
Liberal sexual mores	1–10	5.589 (1.134)	7.396 (1.538)
Religiosity	1–5, 0/1	3.080 (1.063)	2.187 (.832)
National belonging	1–5	3.026 (1.053)	4.132 (.494)
Age	18–96	39.249 (13.405)	48.306 (17.365)
Male	0/1	53.8%	46.4%
Education	1/3		
Low		18.7%	3.1%
Medium		43.6%	55.3%
High		25.6%	36.8%
Muslim denominations	1/4		
Sunni		71.5%	
Shiite		1.7%	
Alevi		4.7%	
Sufi		.4%	
Ahmadi		3.3%	
Generations	0/1		
1st generation		47.97%	
1.5 generation		27.8%	
2nd generation		23.2%	
Origin country	1/4		
ex-Yugoslavia		22.0%	
Turkey		33.4%	
Morocco		23.1%	
Pakistan		21.5%	

The endorsement of *liberal sexual mores* was measured in terms of the degree to which respondents find four practices acceptable; divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and sex before marriage. Each practice was rated on a 10-point scale with 1 = Never justifiable and 10 = Always justifiable ($\rho = .75^4$). Higher scores reflected stronger agreement with sexual liberalization.

Religiosity was operationalised in terms of religious group identification, engagement in religious practices, and expression of religious beliefs. There were two identification items ‘To what extent do you see yourself as a Christian/Muslim?’ and ‘To what extent are you proud of being a Christian/Muslim?’ (1 = not at all, 5 = very strongly). Two other items concerned frequency of religious prayer (1 = never, 2 = only on special occasions, 3 = once or a few times a week, 4 = once a day, 5 = several times a day) and attendance at religious services (1 = never, 2 = rarely / only on special occasions, 3 = weekly, 4 = daily). The answer categories were reverse-coded, so that higher scores reflected stronger religiosity. In addition, a set of five binary (yes, no) items of religiosity were used. These items asked whether respondents expressed their religion in specific practices, namely covering their hair, abstaining from drinking alcohol, following holy days, wearing religious symbols, and following dietary rules. All the items mentioned were used to form a latent construct of religiosity ($\rho = .72$).⁵

National belonging was treated as a latent construct and measured with two items: ‘To what extent do you see yourself as [a person of the host country?]' and ‘To what extent are you proud of being a [person of the host country]' with a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very strongly). The inter-item correlation of the two items was $r = .70$ ($p < .001$).

Control variables

We controlled for the following demographic variables: age (continuous), gender (male = 1, female = 0), and education. The operationalization of education was based on a worldwide categorisation (ISCED) of different educational levels from primary, secondary to tertiary. The category of no diploma/still in education was treated as ‘missing’, since it was not possible to deduce who were still in education and who had no diploma.⁶ Dummies were created for all levels accordingly in order to make comparisons between the three educational groups. In addition, for Muslim minorities, Islamic denomination (Sunni, Shiite, Alevite, Ahmadi, Sufi), origin country, and migrant generation were taken into account. Research suggests that some denominations (e.g. Alevi) are more liberal compared to others (e.g. Sunni; Banfi, Gianni, and Giugni 2016; Martinovic and Verkuyten 2016). Dummies were created for all Islamic denominations and origin countries. Furthermore, Muslim minorities born in the host countries are more exposed to the host culture and this could influence their support for democracy and liberal sexual mores. Generations for Muslim immigrants were coded as first generation (arrived in the host country at 18 or older), 1.5 generation (arrived in the host country at 17 or younger), and second generation (born in the host country).

Analysis

Measurement model

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed in Mplus with the estimator weighted least squares with means and variances adjusted (WLSMV) since there were

Table 2. Measurement model for the three factors for liberal sexual mores, religiosity, and national belonging (WLSMV, $N = 5080$).

	χ^2 (df)	χ^2 (df)***	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
M1: 3-factor structure: liberal sexual mores, religiosity, national belonging	1570.833 (87)		.058	.934	.920
M2: 2-factor structure: liberal sexual mores and religiosity on one factor, national belonging	2490.202 (89)	461.517 (2)***	.073	.893	.873
M3: 2-factor structure: liberal sexual mores and national belonging on one factor, religiosity	2568.661 (89)	634.825 (2)***	.074	.889	.869
M4: 1 factor structure: liberal sexual mores, religiosity, national belonging	3635.018 (90)	1129.280 (3)***	.088	.842	.815
M5: 3-factor structure: liberal sexual mores, religiosity, national belonging; nonzero residual covariance between frequency of prayer and religious service attendance	1352.135 (86)		.054	.943	.931
<i>Final model</i>					
M6: 3-factor structure: sexual mores, religiosity, national belonging, nonzero residual covariance relaxed between frequency of prayer and religious service attendance, and between the two items on religious identification	1151.421 (85)		.050	.952	.941

Note. *** $p < .001$. Chi-square tests are difference tests appropriate for WLSMV estimator.

five categorical items included in the model. In the first step, CFA was computed with all items on their originally proposed constructs, namely liberal sexual mores, religiosity, and national identification (see Table 2). The proposed 3-factor model had an acceptable model fit.⁷ Two residual covariances were freed; firstly between the two religious identification items, and between the two religious practice items. Since the two former items really tap into the identification and the frequency of religious prayer and religious service attendance address religious practices, freeing these covariances is theoretically acceptable.

To examine whether the proposed 3-factor structure presented the best fitting model, it was examined whether a 1-factor model or 2-factor model fit the data equally well. It was found that the 3-factor model had a better model fit compared to all the other theoretically sensible combinations. Therefore, the endorsement of liberal sexual mores, religiosity, and national belonging were treated as three empirical distinct and continuous latent constructs. All missing cases in exogenous variables were treated by endogenization.

It was examined whether the measures for religiosity, liberal sexual mores, and national identity were comparable between Muslims and majority members (measurement invariance; see Appendix A). In almost all religiosity measures, the items were not scalar or metric invariant across both groups. With the liberal sexual mores and national belonging latent constructs a partial scalar invariant model was found and thus these constructs can be compared between the two groups. A Multiple Indications in Multiple Causes (MIMIC) modelling approach was used to take the lack of measurement invariance for religiosity into account.

Results

Correlations

Correlations were computed separately for majority members and Muslim minorities using the manifest means (see Table 3). For both groups, stronger support for democracy was associated with stronger liberal sexual mores. National belonging was associated positively

Table 3. Correlations between the main constructs.

	1	2	3	4
1. Support for democracy	–	.147***	–.084***	.067***
2. Liberal sexual mores	.180***	–	–.647***	.298***
3. Religiosity	.050	–.444***	–	–.160***
4. National belonging	–.044	–.154***	.220***	–

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Lower diagonal: majority members; Upper diagonal: Muslim minorities

with religiosity among majority members, and negatively among Muslim minorities. Stronger religiosity was associated with less support for liberal sexual mores among both groups. For majority members, national belonging was not significantly associated with support for democracy and the endorsement of liberal sexual mores. In contrast, for Muslim minorities, national belonging was associated positively with both measures. Additionally, religiosity did not have a significant relationship with support for democracy among majority members, whereas for Muslim minorities there was a negative association.

Explaining support for democracy and liberal sexual mores

A structural mediation model was fitted with the estimator WLSMV, with a MIMIC covariate of Muslim to establish differences between Muslims and majority members. Thus, a covariate of Muslim was included in the model to predict items whenever suggested by preliminary analyses. All analyses were conducted in Mplus version 7.3. This made it possible to analyse a path model including latent constructs, along with the proposed mediation paths (Muthén and Muthén 2012). For this model, the control variables education, gender, and age were included for all paths. Lower educated individuals and females were used as the reference groups.

The model fitted the data rather poorly ($\chi^2 (157) = 1684.244$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .060, CFI = .870, TLI = .834). This was mainly due to differences in measurement between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between men and women. Examination of the modification indices indicated that freeing the effect of ‘Muslim’ and ‘gender’ on some of the religious items improved the fit significantly. Therefore, we relaxed the effect of being a Muslim on three religiosity items, along with the effect of gender on two items that asked about gendered practices.⁸ After these changes the model fit was good ($\chi^2 (152) = 1138.847$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .038, CFI = .949, TLI = .933).

This model showed, as expected, that Muslims were less supportive of democracy and of liberal sexual mores compared to majority members.⁹ Furthermore and also as expected, Muslim minorities and majority members differed more in their attitude towards liberal sexual mores than in their support for democracy (Wald $\chi^2 (1) = 116.225$, $p < .001$). Muslims had a lower sense of national belonging and were more religious compared to majority members. National belonging was associated with stronger support for democracy and liberal sexual mores. Stronger religiosity was associated with less support for democracy and liberal sexual mores (see Figure 1). Furthermore, religiosity had a negative covariance with national identity ($b = -.086$, $SE = .018$, $p < .001$), whereas support for democracy and liberal sexual mores had a positive association (see Figure 1).

A bootstrap of 1000 was applied to establish estimates of the standard errors of the indirect effects of the Muslim versus non-Muslim group difference on support for democracy and liberal sexual mores through national belonging and religiosity. Indirect effects

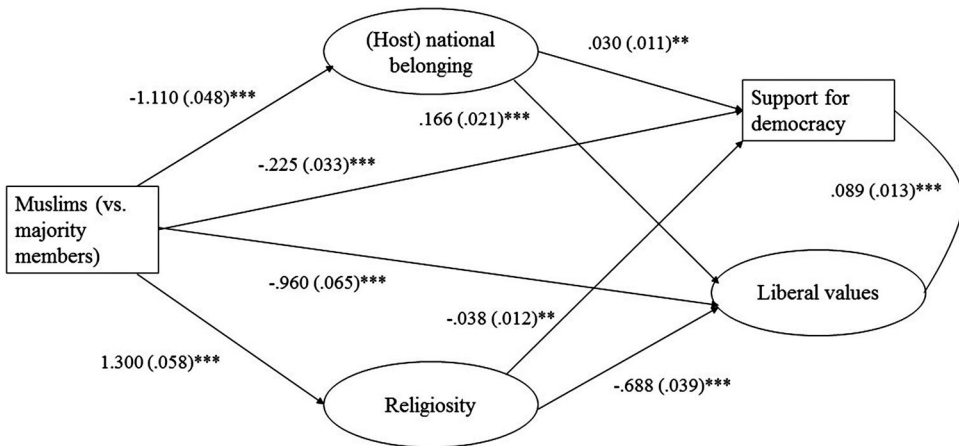


Figure 1. Mediation model for differences between Muslim and majority members in support for democracy and liberal sexual mores through national belonging and religiosity.

Note. $***p < .001$ $**p < .01$ $*p < .05$ Unstandardised coefficients with standard errors in brackets.

are considered significant when the zero does not fall in between a 95% bias confidence interval (Preacher and Hayes 2008). The group difference in support for democracy was indeed explained by religiosity but only marginal significantly by national belonging. Additionally, the difference between Muslim minorities and majority members in the attitude towards liberal sexual mores was explained by both national belonging and religiosity (see Table 4). Thus, it was confirmed that Muslim minorities, compared to majority members, were less supportive of democracy and of liberal sexual mores and this difference was explained by Muslims being more religious and having a lower sense of national belonging (but with marginal indirect effect on support for democracy).

Control variables

For the control variables, it was found that older compared to younger participants endorsed liberal sexual mores less, were more religious, and had lower national belonging. Women compared to men were more supportive of liberal sexual mores but also more religious. In turn, men had higher national belonging. Higher educated and medium educated individuals were more supportive of liberal sexual mores and had a higher sense of national belonging compared to their lower educated counterparts. Higher-educated individuals were also more supportive of democracy compared to lower educated individuals (see Table 4).

The model was also analysed without majority members in order to be able to take three Muslim-specific controls (Muslim denomination, country of origin, and immigrant generation) into account. With the inclusion of these controls, the findings did not change – Muslims' religiosity was still associated with less support for democracy ($b = -.041$, $SE = .018$, $p < .023$) and liberal sexual mores ($b = -.684$, $SE = .054$, $p < .001$), and national belonging was associated with more support of democracy ($b = .046$, $SE = .016$, $p < .003$) and liberal sexual mores ($b = .167$, $SE = .027$, $p < .001$). In terms of Muslim denomination, Alevi Muslims were less religious compared to their Sunni counterparts, whereas Ahmadi Muslims were more religious. Furthermore, Shiite and Alevi Muslims had a higher sense

Table 4. Coefficients for the majority members and Muslims' including indirect effects, control variables for both groups and Muslim-specific controls.

	Support for democracy	Liberal sexual mores	Religiosity	National belonging
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
Muslim via religiosity	-.049** (-.095, -.002)	-.895*** (-1.042, -.764)		
Muslim via national belonging.	-.033* (-.071, .001)	-.184*** (-.255, -.124)		
<i>Controls</i>				
Age	.001 (.001)+	-.007 (.001)***	.006 (.001)***	-.004 (.001)***
Male	-.004 (.021)	-.203 (.039)***	-.295 (.036)***	.090 (.034)**
Education				
Medium	.033 (.030)	.215 (.055)***	-.040 (.048)	.280 (.046)***
High	.112 (.032)**	.375 (.060)***	-.048 (.051)	.306 (.050)***
<i>Muslim specific controls</i>				
<i>Islamic denominations</i>				
Alevi	.062 (.069)	-.064 (.101)	-1.191 (.104)***	.310 (.107)**
Ahmadi	.125 (.072)+	.256 (.141)+	.744 (.128)***	.235 (.123)+
Sufi	.355 (.266)	.601 (.340)+	-.409 (.367)	.751 (.549)
Shiite	.280 (.107)**	.255 (.159)	-.104 (.155)	.353 (.172)*
<i>Generations</i>				
First generation	.031 (.043)	-.394 (.070)***	.033 (.062)	-.356 (.069)***
1.5 generation	.018 (.042)	-.168 (.069)*	-.029 (.064)	-.063 (.069)
<i>Origin country</i>				
Turkey	.135 (.051)**	.002 (.068)	.831 (.071)***	-.554 (.066)***
Morocco	.077 (.052)	.296 (.075)***	1.032 (.080)***	.201 (.068)**
Pakistan	.006 (.056)	.253 (.081)**	1.339 (.087)***	.073 (.077)

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ + $p < .10$. Indirect effects = b (lower CI, upper CI).

of national belonging in comparison to Sunnis. In addition, Shiites were more supportive of democracy compared to Sunni Muslims.

In comparison to ex-Yugoslavian Muslims, people of Turkish, Moroccan and Pakistani origin were more religious. National belonging was stronger among ex-Yugoslavian Muslims than Turkish Muslims, whereas Moroccan Muslims had stronger national belonging in comparison to ex-Yugoslavians. Turkish Muslims were also more supportive of democracy compared to ex-Yugoslavians. Finally, Muslims of Moroccan and Pakistani origin were more supportive of liberal sexual mores, in comparison to ex-Yugoslavians.

The first and 1.5 generations were less accepting of liberal sexual mores compared to the second-generation. In line with this, first-generation immigrants had a lower sense of national belonging compared to their second-generation counterparts (see Table 4).

Sensitivity analyses

Multigroup approach

In order to investigate whether there were country differences, a multi-group structural model was tested with the four countries as groups: Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and the UK. Two binary items were excluded from the latent factor of religiosity, due to issues of representativeness over the groups. Since the religiosity items had to be excluded, the model is not strictly comparable with the originally proposed model. Otherwise, all other settings were kept the same for the multi-group structural model.

The model fit was moderately acceptable compared to the originally proposed model ($\chi^2(519) = 1802.510, p < .001, RMSEA = .047, CFI = .911, TLI = .890$). The pattern of associations was very similar in the four countries, with one exception. In Switzerland

and Germany, the path of religiosity to support for democracy was not significant. Thus, overall the pattern of associations appears to be robust across the four countries (see Appendix B).

Christians and Muslims

We also examined the structural model by excluding majority group participants who self-identified as being atheist or agnostic. This model compares religious majority members (Christians) with Muslim minorities. The model fit was good ($\chi^2(152) = 1167.120$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .040, CFI = .944, TLI = .926) and a similar pattern of associations was found. Thus, the relations between the different constructs was similar when comparing Muslim minorities with only Christian majority members, with Muslims being less supportive of democracy and of liberal sexual mores in particular (Wald $\chi^2(1) = 92.888$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, Muslims had a lower sense of national belonging and stronger religiosity, and the indirect effects were the same as for the whole sample (see Appendix C).

Discussion

In most West European societies there is a polarised debate about immigration and immigrants that is centralised around Islam. Attitudes towards Muslim immigrants are more negative than towards other immigrant groups (Strabac and Listhaug 2008) and Muslim's support for democracy and liberal sexual mores is questioned by politicians and the public (Statham and Tillie 2016). In four west European countries, we examined whether Muslims do have lower support for democracy and liberal sexual mores and whether this might be due to higher religiosity and a lower sense of national belonging.

In all four countries, we found a very similar, and thus robust, pattern of associations. Compared to majority members, Muslim minorities were indeed less supportive of the democratic government and in particular of liberal sexual mores. This difference in support for democracy and liberal values is in agreement with the claim and empirical finding that the basic fault line between the world of Islam and the West is more about sexual liberalization than democracy (Fish 2011; Norris and Inglehart 2004). Furthermore, the group difference in support was found to be due to the fact that Muslims were more religious and had a less strong sense of belonging to the nation compared to majority members in general, and also to Christian majority members. This indicates that Muslim religiosity makes it more difficult to support the democratic government and to endorse liberal sexual mores (e.g. Alexander and Welzel 2011; Gundelach 2010). Similar to Muslims in other parts of the world (Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012b; Norris and Inglehart 2004), Muslim minorities in Western Europe seem to support democratic and liberal sexual mores less because these go against particular rules and regulations laid down in religious scriptures to which devote Muslims obey. Yet, research has also found that Muslim immigrants fall somewhere in-between the host and origin-country's attitudes towards democracy and liberal mores (Norris and Inglehart 2012). This means that in the Western context the (disadvantaged) minority position might make Muslims distance themselves from society and emphasize their religion more (Karlsen and Nazroo 2013; Maliepaard and Verkuyten 2018). Furthermore, the learning of more conservative and non-rational values might be important and this would mean that we can expect similar patterns of associations among devote Christians and Jews. Future research

could examine the various factors that may contribute to the Muslim minority's lower support for democracy and liberal sexual mores in particular.

The findings indicate that Muslims were also less supportive of liberal sexual mores and democracy (marginal significance) due to having a lower sense of national belonging. This supports the notion that national belonging, as a dimension of citizenship, contributes to political and social integration. Examples of the latter include studies in the Netherlands where stronger national identification was associated with more contact among Turkish, Moroccan, Antillean, and Surinamese immigrants (ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten 2013). We further found that second-generation Muslim immigrants had higher national belonging and were more supportive of liberal sexual mores, but at the same time, they were as religious as their first and 1.5 generation counterparts. An integration process is often considered successful when one is able to retain some of the aspects of the country of origin but also endorse values that are more representative of the host society (Berry 2005). Previous research has demonstrated that for second-generation immigrants it may be less problematic to have dual identities in terms of combining religious group belonging and national identification (Tsai, Ying, and Lee 2000). They may feel that Islam and liberal values are less mutually exclusive. One reason might be that young Muslims in Western Europe increasingly consider religion as something private rather than public (cf. Fleischmann and Phalet 2012; Voas and Fleischmann 2012).

Limitations

There are some limitations to our study. Firstly, the data were cross-sectional and therefore we cannot make claims about the direction of influence. It could also be that stronger endorsement of democratic government leads to a stronger sense of national belonging or lower religiosity. However, this direction of influence seems less likely and we had theoretical reasons to test the model as presented. Yet, it would be useful to examine whether religiosity and national belonging actually affect support for democracy and liberal sexual mores over time.

Secondly, Muslim minorities are a heterogeneous group. In Western Europe there are many different Islamic communities originating from different countries and regions and that have somewhat different beliefs and practices (Statham and Tillie 2016). We did find some differential associations for Islamic denomination and country of origin. For example, Shiites were more supportive of democracy in comparison to Sunni Muslims, whereas Alevis were less religious. In terms of country of origin, Moroccan Muslims were more religious but also more supportive of liberal sexual mores in comparison to ex-Yugoslavian Muslims. However, these controls did not change the associations found between religiosity, national identity and support for democracy and liberal sexual mores. Thus, although Muslim immigrants are a heterogeneous group there is a tendency among Muslims, in comparison to majority members, to be less supportive of democracy and liberal sexual mores due to stronger religiosity and a weaker sense of national belonging. Yet, these results must be interpreted with caution as they are not from a representative sample of all Muslim minorities in Western Europe.

Third, we focused on the role of religiosity and national belonging and future studies could examine other mediating mechanisms. For example and in addition to religiosity, research could examine the role of the communal aspect of religion. Being involved in

religious networks and religious institutions might have a positive influence on civic skills and thereby contribute to democratic attitudes (Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012a, 2012b), but not necessarily to the endorsement of liberal sexual mores. Furthermore, perceived social rejection and discrimination have been found to be important explanations for societal disengagement (Portes and Zhou 1993; Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007). Muslim individuals who feel rejected by society or treated as second-class citizens and who have the feeling that Muslims are not recognised or well represented in society might be less inclined to support the democratic system and the liberal sexual mores it represents (Idema, Phalet, and Budrich 2007). Alternatively, positive contacts with majority members might stimulate support for democracy and a more positive attitude toward liberal sexual mores, similar to stronger support for egalitarian gender role attitudes (Maliepaard and Alba 2016). Finally, future research should examine other aspects of democracy such as support for democratic procedures, civil rights and freedoms, and political tolerance (e.g. Sullivan and Hendriks 2009; Verkuyten and Slooter 2007).

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have tried to make a contribution to the literature and public debates by comparing Muslim minorities' support for democracy and liberal sexual mores to that of the majority population in four West European countries. Furthermore, going beyond the existing research we examined in a single model religiosity and national belonging as possible reasons for a group difference in levels of support. Across the countries, and thus independently of the specific historical and political context, Muslims were found to be more religious and to have a lower sense of national belonging and these accounted for their lower support of democratic government and of liberal sexual mores. One implication of these findings is that encouraging a sense of national belonging may facilitate Muslim's support for democracy and of liberal sexual mores in particular. This means that it is important to examine the factors that contribute to (e.g. social recognition) or hamper (e.g. perceived discrimination) the development of such a sense of belonging. Another implication is that it is necessary to think about ways in which Islamic belief and engagement in Islamic practices can be reconciled with support for democratic principles and tolerance of liberal sexual mores. Religious belief and religious behaviour in and of themselves might be responsible for the lower support of democracy and liberal sexual mores and this would call for the need to develop an 'Euro-Islam' or 'Europeanised Islam' (Tibi 2002, 2008). Additionally, it might be that the disadvantaged minority position leads to a stronger emphasis on Muslim identity and a distancing from the society which means that it is crucial to emphasize societal inclusion and equality. Further, it is possible that conservative and traditional values that religious individuals learn are responsible, and in that case, there is room for interventions that educate people about democratic principles and the importance of tolerating liberal sexual mores (Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012b).

Notes

1. A shorter version of the survey was also used in the Netherlands and France. However, since many of the questions related to the variables in this study were not included in this short version, these countries could not be included in this study.

2. The information on the language that the interview was conducted in was missing for 21.6% of the participants
3. Participants were identified as being Muslim minorities if they stated their denomination as Muslim and if they and/or their parents had an immigrant background. Furthermore, participants who had Muslim immigrant parents were also categorised as Muslim minorities. In other words, non-religious individuals were also included among the Muslim sample. Majority members were defined as native-born (with native-born parents), with a Protestant or Catholic background.
4. The following formula was used to calculate $\rho = (\text{variance of the factor} * \text{sum of the item loadings})^2 / ((\text{variance of the factor} * \text{sum of the item loadings})^2 + \text{sum of the residual variances of the items} + (2 * \text{sum of the residual covariances of the items}))$.
5. It has been proposed that religiosity can be distinguished in terms of the three dimensions of religious belief, belonging and behaviour (Kellstedt et al. 1996). We investigated whether this distinction could be made empirically with the current items and across the four countries. This turned out not to be the case, with for example problematic measurement equivalence across countries. Furthermore, there were considerable cross-loadings with means that various theoretically uninformed modifications would have to be made in order to achieve a good model fit.
6. Furthermore, this category was predominantly formed of Muslim immigrants, who stated not having a diploma from their country of origin. Further analyses demonstrated that some of them had completed schooling in the host country. Nevertheless, in order to not create false truths, these participants were treated as 'missing' only on this education variable
7. The chi-square test indicated that the model did not fit the data perfectly. However, with large sample sizes, model fits are often significant, as no model is perfect. RMSEA = acceptable fit <.08, good fit <.05, CFI >.900, TLI >.900 (Kline 2015)
8. The effect of Muslim was freed on the following items: frequency of religious service attendance, expressing religious beliefs by abstaining from drinking alcohol, and following dietary regulations. In the case of the first item, majority members demonstrated attending the church more often than Muslims. This may be surprising due to the otherwise lower religiosity of majority members. However, mosques can be less locally available to Muslims (e.g. Carol and Koopmans 2013). The other two items are (nowadays) associated more with Islam than Christianity (e.g. distinctions of "halal/haram" in terms of dietary practices, in the case of both food and alcohol, Hämeen-Anttila 2004). The items on which the effect of gender was relaxed were "showing religious beliefs by covering hair" and frequency of church attendance. Veiling is a practice more specific for women and mosques tend to be visited more by men than women.
9. As suggested by one of our reviewers, we also examined whether items tapping into other aspects of support for democracy, such as free speech, separation of church and state, and authoritarian leadership could be examined as an additional dimension. We ran an exploratory factor analysis with our original items included which resulted in a single factor, with the exception of the free speech item. However, the reliability of this four item measure was poor and importantly the pattern of findings was similar as with the two item measure that we used. We also did a factor analysis in which we forced the four democracy items on two separate factors (excluding the free speech item). This showed that one item had an unacceptable cross-loadings (>.39) and that the differences between one of the items cross-loadings was only .101. These cross-loadings mean that various theoretically uninformed modifications would have to be made in order to achieve a good model fit. Nevertheless, we re-examined our structural model with two measures of support for democracy and all the associations remained the same as in our original analysis. Thus, we can be confident of the findings presented in our model.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Measurement invariance for the main model.

Table A1: Measurement invariance for liberal sexual mores, national belonging, and religiosity.

Models	Chi2(df)**	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
M1 Configural: religiosity, liberal sexual mores and national belonging	1572.734 (171)***	.057	.900	.877
M2 Metric: religiosity, liberal sexual mores and national belonging	1706.610 (183)***	.057	.892	.876
M3 Scalar: religiosity, liberal sexual mores and national belonging	2136.185 (194)***	.063	.862	.850

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

Appendix B. Sensitivity analysis: multigroup approach.

Table B1. Coefficients for the majority members and Muslims' by country including indirect effects, and direct effects.

	Support for democracy				Liberal sexual mores				Religiosity				National identity			
	BE	CH	DE	UK	BE	CH	DE	UK	BE	CH	DE	UK	BE	CH	DE	UK
<i>Indirect effects</i>																
Muslim via	-.122*	.016	-.029	-.115**	-1.348***	-.785***	-.722***	-.373***								
religiosity	(-.268, .017)	(-.059, .086)	(-.076, .012)	(-.232, -.010)	(-1.812, -.1.032)	(-1.051, -.549)	(-.981, -.501)	(-.518, -.235)								
Muslim via	-.015	.012	-.049,	-.056	-.014	-.065*	-.121*	-.096	-.131**							
national	(-.054, .023)	.063)	(-.134, .029)	(-.119, .094)	(-.156, .003)	(-.262, -.006)	(-.285, .081)	(-.248, -.020)								
<i>Direct effects</i>																
Muslim	-.004 (.068)	-.330 (.064)***	-.110 (.054)*	-.399 (.081)***	-.858 (.145)***	-.933 (.155)***	-1.088 (.138)***	-1.497 (.101)***	1.505 (.113)***	1.027 (.104)***	.722 (.095)***	1.311 (.077)***	-.509 (.094)***	-.783 (.087)***	-1.455 (.099)***	-1.391 (.083)***
Religiosity	-.081 (.031)**	.015 (.025)	-.041 (.024)+	-.087 (.029)**	-.896 (.082)***	-.765 (.076)***	-1.001 (.078)***	-.284 (.034)***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
National	.030 (.024)	-.015 (.025)	.038 (.019)*	.010 (.027)	.128 (.048)**	.154 (.058)**	.066 (.042)	.094 (.030)**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ + $p < .10$. Indirect effects = b (lower CI, upper CI).

Table B2: Coefficients for majority members and Muslims by country, control variables for both groups and Muslim-specific controls.

	Support for democracy				Liberal sexual mores				Religiosity				National identity			
	BE	CH	DE	UK	BE	CH	DE	UK	BE	CH	DE	UK	BE	CH	DE	UK
<i>Controls</i>																
Age	.000 (.001)	.003 (.002)*	.001 (.001)	-.003 (.002)*	-.009 (.003)**	-.008 (.004)*	-.017 (.003)***	-.007 (.002)***	.000 (.002)	.009 (.003)**	-.003 (.002)	.005 (.002)+	.004 (.002)	.001 (.003)	-.013 (.003)***	-.011 (.002)***
Male	.005 (.044)	.060 (.044)	-.017 (.039)	-.067 (.039)+	-.256 (.084)**	-.204 (.097)*	-.349 (.085)***	-.059 (.042)	-.228 (.074)**	-.245 (.075)**	-.412 (.070)***	-.048 (.051)	.035 (.074)	.085 (.066)	.223 (.067)**	-.043 (.050)
Education																
Medium	-.039 (.061)	.161 (.060)**	-.014 (.058)	-.090 (.054)+	.020 (.122)	.208 (.126)+	.348 (.134)**	.072 (.062)	-.219 (.108)*	-.026 (.092)	-.292 (.098)**	.132 (.070)+	.061 (.103)	.243 (.084)**	567 (.099)***	.179 (.067)**
High	.133 (.065)*	.209 (.067)**	.137 (.063)*	-.020 (.058)	.357 (.130)**	.295 (.135)*	.546 (.143)***	.104 (.066)	-.326 (.113)**	-.037 (.102)	-.319 (.106)**	.252 (.076)**	.302 (.114)**	.327 (.094)***	.522 (.111)***	.124 (.074)+
<i>Muslim specific controls</i>																
<i>Islamic branches</i>																
Alevi	-.102 (.191)	.144 (.120)	-.014 (.121)	-.230 (.203)	-.384 (.364)	-.850 (.259)***	-.177 (.237)	-.053 (.127)	-1.230 (.264)***	-1.418 (.161)***	-1.517 (.179)***	-.098 (.185)	.132 (.266)	.129 (.149)	.488 (.203)*	.057 (.200)
Ahmadi	-.031 (.158)	-.125 (.168)	.048 (.118)	-.581 (.202)**	.342 (.299)	.708 (.370)+	.612 (.266)*	.260 (.367)	.847 (.274)**	.407 (.244)+	.814 (.201)***	-.151 (.450)	-.031 (.225)	.039 (.306)	.311 (.182)+	-.647 (.528)
<i>Generations</i>																
First generation	-.020 (.082)	.133 (.131)	-.021 (.090)	.064 (.084)	-.289 (.139)*	-.571 (.252)*	-.760 (.172)***	-.210 (.072)**	.094 (.130)	-.042 (.182)	-.004 (.129)	.241 (.095)*	-.196 (.128)	-.867 (.179)***	-.578 (.148)***	-.552 (.102)***
1.5 generation	-.136 (.083)	.122 (.123)	-.022 (.074)	.046 (.078)	.078 (.150)	-.472 (.235)*	-.553 (.148)***	-.180 (.076)*	.163 (.140)	-.235 (.168)	-.109 (.121)	.048 (.101)	.203 (.136)	-.311 (.172)+	-.302 (.126)*	-.265 (.106)*
<i>Origin country</i>																
Turkey	-.014 (.102)	.146 (.118)	.197 (.082)*	.154 (.116)	.441 (.195)*	.061 (.187)	.355 (.158)*	-.632 (.076)***	1.731 (.154)***	.171 (.144)	1.118 (.128)***	.429 (.094)***	-.737 (.125)***	-.423 (.140)**	-1.148 (.134)	-.107 (.101)
Morocco	-.114 (.092)	.253 (.123)*	.111 (.086)	.056 (.119)	.550 (.171)	.047 (.200)	.577 (.161)***	-.265 (.082)***	1.352 (.154)***	.610 (.154)***	.858 (.141)***	.828 (.101)***	-.098 (.131)	.458 (.147)**	.057 (.126)	.163 (.104)
Pakistan	-.202 (.104)+	.093 (.129)	.134 (.113)	.315 (.130)*	.212 (.171)	-.037 (.218)	.375 (.183)*	-.356 (.088)***	1.214 (.147)***	.719 (.162)***	1.163 (.165)***	1.506 (.115)***	-.014 (.147)	.377 (.163)*	-.138 (.156)	.231 (.114)*

Appendix C. Sensitivity analysis: Christians and Muslims.**Table C1:** Coefficients for Christians and Muslim immigrants including indirect effects, direct effects, control variables for both groups, and Muslim-specific controls.

	Support for democracy	Liberal sexual mores	Religiosity	National belonging
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
Muslim via religiosity	-.050** (-.096, -.005)	-.829 *** (-.979, -.700)		
Muslim via national belonging	-.035* (-.072, .006)	-.212*** (-.288, -.152)		
<i>Direct effects</i>				
Muslim	-.226 (.036)***	-.917 (.069)***	1.285 (.062)***	-1.171 (.055)***
Religiosity	-.039 (.013)**	-.645 (.040)***		
National belonging	.030 (.011)**	.181 (.022)***		
<i>Controls</i>				
Age	.001 (.001)	-.008 (.001)***	.006 (.001)***	-.005 (.001)***
Male	-.004 (.022)	-.198 (.040)***	-.284 (.037)***	.099 (.035)**
Education				
Medium	.037 (.031)	.193 (.054)***	-.036 (.048)	.272 (.047)***
High	.104 (.033)**	.331 (.059)***	-.002 (.051)	.324 (.052)***
<i>Muslim specific controls</i>				
<i>Islamic branches</i>				
Alevi	.062 (.069)	-.064 (.101)	-1.191 (.104)***	.310 (.107)**
Ahmadi	.125 (.072)+	.256 (.141)+	.744 (.128)***	.235 (.123)+
Sufi	.355 (.266)	.601 (.340)+	-.409 (.367)	.751 (.549)
Shiite	.280 (.107)**	.255 (.159)	-.104 (.155)	.353 (.172)*
<i>Generations</i>				
First generation	.031 (.043)	-.394 (.070)***	.033 (.062)	-.356 (.069)***
1.5 generation	.018 (.042)	-.168 (.068)*	.029 (.064)	-.063 (.069)
<i>Origin country</i>				
Turkey	.135 (.051)**	.002 (.068)	.831 (.071)***	-.554 (.066)***
Morocco	.077 (.052)	.296 (.075)***	1.032 (.080)***	.201 (.068)**
Pakistan	.006 (.056)	.253 (.081)**	1.339 (.087)***	.073 (.077)

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ + $p < .10$. Indirect effects = b (lower CI, upper CI).