

# **Are the Dutch tolerant?**

*Examining the difference in anti-immigrant attitudes between  
religious and non-religious Dutch*



**Universiteit Utrecht**

Bachelor thesis Sociology  
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June 2013

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## **Preface**

We would like to thank Hanneke Posthumus for her constructive feedback and help during the process of writing this bachelor thesis. Because of the instructive and inspiring meetings we could complete this bachelor thesis successfully.

## **Abstract**

This study uses the fourth wave of the European Value Study (EVS) to examine the role of religiosity and conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes. It does so by using the Social Identity Theory and the Integrated Threat Theory. The Social Identity Theory explains the way in which social identity is constructed and that religion can be a part of this social identity. The Integrated Threat Theory explains how this social identity can be threatened and how this can result in negative attitudes toward other groups. In this thesis, we aim to answer the research question: *To what extent can anti-immigrant attitudes among religious and non-religious Dutch be explained in terms of religiosity and conservatism?* The main focus will be on the role of religion and conservatism. We not only try to explain if and why religion has an influence on anti-immigrant attitudes but also try to examine the importance of how strictly someone practices their faith and differences between various religious denominations. Most important results are that there are no differences between religious and non-religious Dutch in anti-immigrant attitudes. The belief that religion offers the only truth causes more negative attitudes toward immigrants. On the other hand, a high frequency of attendance of religious services causes more positive attitudes toward immigrants. The influence of conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes provides a starting point for further research.

*Keywords:* anti-immigrant attitudes, non-religious, religiosity, conservatism

## Introduction

After the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 attention was drawn toward immigrants and attitudes towards this group became more hostile. The anti-immigrant attitudes increased and also in the Netherlands this became a common phenomenon. Events like the killing of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and the killing of Dutch movie director Theo van Gogh in 2004 have fueled the debate about immigrants in the Netherlands.

Currently, Dutch politician Geert Wilders of the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Political Party for Freedom) has a very explicit opinion about immigrants. This political party has fifteen of the 150 seats in the Dutch House of Representatives. In a press conference in February 2013 in Australia, he stated that there should be put an end to the mass immigration from Islamic nations. He wants to limit the amount of immigrants entering the Netherlands because he sees them as a threat to the Dutch nation (NRC Next 2013).

Another example of the presence of anti-immigrant attitudes in the Netherlands is the reactions to the speech of Nasrdin Dchar, a Dutch/Moroccan actor who won a price for his performance in the movie *'Rabat'*. In his speech, he chose to talk about 'religion, hope and love' - the three pillars of Christianity - and the fear of immigrants. He thinks that this fear creates a distance between the Dutch population and the immigrants. His speech was quickly distributed through social media. Some people reacted emotional because they thought of it as an example of integration. But there were also a lot of negative reactions, for example people stated that he won the price only because he is a Muslim and not for his performance (Volkskrant 2013).

Negative attitudes toward immigrants are a current problem in the Netherlands because anti-immigrant attitudes object the integration of immigrants. Immigrants and natives influence each other's opportunities on the labor market because they apply for the same jobs. In addition, immigrants get excluded from resources like jobs, housing and status because of formal governmental policy or informal public stereotypes and discrimination (Connor and Koenig 2013). We think it is important to understand the root causes of anti-immigrant attitudes because the number of migrants increases. It is also important for policy makers helping nations be more effective with promoting the integration of migrants (Rustenbach 2010). Velasco Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie and Poppe (2008) state that understanding the causes of anti-immigrant attitudes is crucial for preventing the negative consequences of intergroup conflicts and discrimination.

There are different determinants that can cause anti-immigrant attitudes. A possible cause of negative attitudes toward immigrants that has received relatively little attention is someone's religious affiliation. In previous research, religion is often used as a control variable to test the attitudes toward

immigrants and in studies on immigrant policies but not as a main focus. These studies show that religion has an effect on the attitudes and they show this for different religious denominations but whether religion plays an important role in this process is not examined. In this thesis, we will lay the main focus on religion and examine whether or not religion, different religious denominations and conservatism matter in having negative attitudes toward immigrants. According to different theories we want to explain why religion has an effect on anti-immigrant attitudes. With this research, we hope to contribute to the nationwide debate about immigrants and the growing hostility towards foreigners.

Immigrants are very common in the Netherlands. Since the 1960s this country has seen a steady flow of immigrants with a peak in 1975. In 1960, 45400 immigrants entered the Netherlands; in 1975 this number was 127300. Also, in 2010 the immigration flow is still high, 154000 immigrants migrated to the Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2013). The attitudes toward immigrants in the Netherlands differ a lot among different groups. An example comes from the Dutch journals 'Volkskrant', 'Historisch Nieuwsblad' and TV program 'Andere Tijden' who published the 'Geschiedenismonitor' (history monitor) in 2008. They showed that 57 percent of the Dutch population considers allowing of immigrants was the biggest mistake in Dutch history. The persons who are 65 years and over were the biggest group who agreed with this opinion, followed by the persons between the age of 16 and 34. When the distinction is made by education, the biggest group who is negative consists of lower educated people. 38 percent of the higher educated people agreed with this opinion. The respondents also saw the arrival of immigrants as a threat to the national identity (Kromhout and Smits 2008).

Some attempts have been made to study the importance of religion in regard to anti-immigrant attitudes. Nastuta and Tompea (2011) argue that religious feel more threatened by immigrants, but they do not give an explanation. Peter van der Veer (2006) describes in his article the cause of the rise of populism in the Netherlands and the role of religion in this process. He stated that the collapse of the pillars in the 1960s caused negative attitudes among the former religious Dutch. Dutch society became secularized and the religious values of the Dutch and the immigrants clashed. Immigrants were seen as a threat to this secularized society.

To explain the role of religiosity and conservatism the Social Identity Theory (SIT) and the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) will be used. Both theories describe the importance of religiosity in explaining negative attitudes toward other groups. The SIT explains that people aim to have a positive identity and how people derive their social identity from their membership of a social group. Belonging to a religious denomination can be seen as a social identity (Tajfel 1981). The ITT contains of different threats which can threaten this social identity, symbolic threats and negative stereotypes will be the main focus in this thesis. These factors are a threat to the religious social identity and can explain anti-

immigrant attitudes (Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman, 1999). According to these theories, we expect that religious will feel more threatened by immigrants and therefore will be more hostile toward immigrants than non-religious. In addition, we think that conservative religious are more likely to follow the norms of their religious affiliation and are more likely to feel threatened by another group than moderate religious and therefore are more negative toward immigrants (McDaniel, Nooruddin and Shortle 2011, Knoll 2009).

Prior research lacks explanations if and why conservative religious denominations are more likely to be opposed towards immigrants than moderate ones. The Integrated Threat Theory provides possible explanations for this. We will examine the importance of social identity in this process and examine whether or not conservative religious are more negative than moderate religious. We want to lay our main focus on the role of religion in the process of negative attitudes toward another group. In this thesis, a distinction will be made between religiosity (religious or non-religious) and conservatism (attendance of religious services and world view: the belief that only one religion offers the truth). We will examine to what extent the attitudes between religious and non-religious Dutch differ and if and why attitudes differ among various religious denominations. Religiosity and conservatism will be important determinants in our research. Because former scholars disregarded religion as a key factor in this process, this thesis will make a contribution to the studies regarding anti-immigrant attitudes.

With this in mind, we want to tackle the question: *'to what extent can anti-immigrant attitudes among religious and non-religious Dutch be explained in terms of religiosity and conservatism?'* To answer this main question, we will examine to what extent the attitudes toward immigrants differ between religious and non-religious Dutch and to what extent conservatism has an influence on anti-immigrant attitudes. The fourth wave (conducted in 2008) of the European Value Study will be used in this thesis.

## **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework will first start with an explanation of the Social Identity Theory. This theory explains how people derive their social identity from their membership of a social group and the value and emotional significance of this membership. We will continue with the Integrated Threat Theory which explains possible threats to this social identity. Finally, we will examine why the effects of these threats can be expected to differ for religious and non-religious, and between moderate religious and conservative religious.

### **Social Identity Theory**

In daily life, people tend to classify themselves and others into different social categories. For example, same sex, religious denomination and age are social categories (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The starting point of the Social Identity Theory is that people aim to have a positive social identity and want to belong to a group with a positive identity. Therefore the classification has two aims. First, it is a systematic way to define others. A person is ascribed different characteristics of the category to which he or she belongs to. Second, it helps a person to get a position in this social environment and the feeling of belonging to a group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Tajfel (1981, 1982) summarizes these point in an useful definition of social identity. He stated that *“social identity is that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership”* (Tajfel 1981, p. 255; Tajfel, 1982). Members of a group put themselves in the same social category. People who are similar to the group belong to the in-group; people who differ from these members are called the out-group.

Four important aspects of the social identity theory make social identity possible: social categorization, social identity, social comparison and psychological group distinctiveness. The first concept, social categorization means that people will seek similarities within a category and will emphasize differences between categories. The similarities and differences will be exaggerated to give the own category a positive label and the other category a negative one. Differences within the own category can be eliminated or diminished while the differences with the other category will be exaggerated. Social categorization ultimately can lead to dehumanization of the other group (Tajfel 1981).

The second concept is social identity; this is the part of the identity which is derived from group memberships. The extent to which people feel part of a group and the identity which is derived from this membership creates the social identity (Tajfel 1981).



The third concept, social comparison, concerns the comparison between the in-group and relevant out-groups. This defines the relative status of one's own group. People aim to have a positive social identity and derive this from the comparison between the in-group and the out-group (Tajfel 1981). The consequence of social comparison is that the emphasis will be on the dimensions that enlarge the outcomes for the self. This process is mostly selective (Stets & Burke, 2000). This concept is comparable with the first concept, social categorization. But social categorization is focused predominantly on the in-group and social comparison focuses mainly between the groups.

The last concept, psychological group distinctiveness means that people want to distinguish themselves from other groups in a positive manner. People will make this comparison in such a way that their own group will be displayed better than the other group (Tajfel 1981). In case of a negative group identity, people will leave the group or find ways to achieve a more positive distinctiveness for their group (Brown, 2000). Important to note is that people prefer a favorable evaluation instead of an accurate evaluation (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1987).

### **Integrated Threat Theory**

The former part of this thesis focused on social identity and it will now proceed with discussing when this social identity can be threatened. The Integrated Threat Theory consists of four predictors of negative attitudes: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotyping (Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman, 1999). Realistic threats are threats that are affecting the existence, political- and economic power and the physical or material well-being of the in-group or its members. Symbolic threats concern group differences in morals, values, norms, standards, beliefs and attitudes. Intergroup anxiety explains that people often feel threatened personally in intergroup interactions because they are concerned about negative outcomes for the self. Negative stereotypes provide expectations about the out-group. Negative stereotypes often lead to the avoidance of the other group and are likely to lead to prejudice (Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman, 1999). This thesis will focus on symbolic threats and negative stereotyping because of the relevance for the subject. Later on, the realistic threats will be compared with symbolic threats to test the differences in anti-immigrant attitudes. But the realistic threats will not be the main focus in this thesis. Intergroup anxiety will not be included in our thesis as well, because this threat focuses mainly on contact which will not be included in our analyses.

Like mentioned above, symbolic threats are threats to the in-group's worldview and concern group differences in morals, values, norms, standards, beliefs and attitudes. The members of the in-group are afraid their traditional values will be in danger. The prejudice of the in-group that the out-group will have different values results in negative attitudes. The more these values are blocked by the out-group, the more negative the attitudes toward this out-group will be. When specific values are

threatened, they are more likely to become salient to the in-group and cause negative attitudes toward the out-group (Stephan et al. 1999).

Curseu et al. (2007) state that social identification plays an important role in the perception of threats, concerned by the Integrated Threat Theory. People who strongly identify themselves with their in-group are more likely to feel threatened by the out-group. Contact with and knowledge about the out-group will help diminish perceived threats and prejudice. Symbolic threats, differences in values, beliefs and moral standards, can cause that the characteristics of the out-group are held responsible for the caused prejudice and discrimination where the symbolic threats lead to.

The second predictor of the Integrated Threat Theory is negative stereotypes, these are a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing and provide expectations of social interaction with the out-group. These stereotypes can explain anti-immigrant attitudes. Negative stereotypes often lead to the avoidance of the other group and are likely to lead to prejudice. Prejudice is a negative attitude toward members of a given group based exclusively on the membership of that particular group. In studies of intergroup relations, prejudice is seen as an attitude which is irrational and unjustifiable and will lead to certain type of behavior, in this case negative attitudes toward immigrants (Stephan et al. 1999 & Reynolds, Haslam and Turner 2012). In-group members are afraid that interaction with the out-group will have negative consequences. This fear of negative outcomes can lead to prejudice. Members of the in-group have unjustified expectations about the members of the out-group, for example, they think the out-group members are aggressive, dishonest or unintelligent. In-group members will have a negative expectation which will lead to a negative feeling after they had interaction with an out-group member. Negative stereotypes are linked to prejudice (Stephan, Diaz-Loving and Duran 2000).

### *Threats of immigrants*

The threats discussed in the former part are closely related to threats of immigrants. According to Pereira, Vala and Costa-Lopes (2010) symbolic threats can legitimize negative attitudes toward immigrants. Because these threats are related to the differences between groups in terms of values, morals and standards, they challenge the in-group's worldview. Symbolic threats predict prejudice. Nevertheless, this causal relation is not fully supported. The authors also state that it also could be the other way around; prejudice predicts symbolic threats. But they state that symbolic threats are a mediating factor between prejudice and anti-immigrant behavior. They found that symbolic threats have a significant effect on anti-immigrant attitudes. The greater the perception of symbolic threats, the more negative the attitudes toward immigrants will be.

Stephen, Ybarra and Bachman (1999) also aim to understand negative attitudes toward immigrants according to the Integrated Threat Theory. They state not everyone in the host country has negative feelings toward immigrants and the authors focus on these individual differences in attitudes in their study. Stephen et al. (1999) also state that negative stereotypes toward immigrants are typically negative. They show that symbolic threats and attitudes toward immigrants are highly related and show that symbolic threats are highly correlated with direct measures of racial attitudes. Symbolic threats are an important aspect in understanding the behavior of the members of the in-group (Stephen et al. 1999).

Another explanation is given by Curseu, Stoop and Schalk (2007). They state that immigrants have a strong impact on the autochthonous population, fostering discrimination and the development of prejudices. Perceived threats play a crucial role in the development of negative attitudes.

#### *Threats of immigrants to religious*

People create social identity, and religion is a source of this social identity. The worldview of religious could be threatened by immigrants because of the differences in religion or other cultural differences (McDaniel et al. 2011). In this thesis, the importance of religion in regard to anti-immigrant attitudes will be examined; belonging to a religious affiliation contains a lot of emotional significance. Ysseldijk, Matheson and Anisman (2010) define in their article religion as “*a set of diverse yet commonly held belief systems from which individuals may gain benefits*”. Strong identification with a religious group enhances the collective and personal self-esteem and creates more bonding with the other members of the group.

In addition, McDaniel et al. (2011) state that religion is an identity that is established early in life and will be reinforced during one's life. Religion shapes social and political attitudes and gives meaning to personal actions and life experiences. It provides norms of behavior, decides what is right and wrong. Religion gives people a sense of group-belonging and shapes group boundaries. “*These boundaries as well as the rules dictating behavior are noted for establishing highly religious individuals' low levels of tolerance for those outside the group.*” Those who belong to a religious denomination are more likely to be negative toward immigrants than non-believers (McDaniel et al. 2011).

McDaniel et al. (2011) state that minimal group effects and differences between groups can cause perceived threats to one's social identity. The authors state that immigrant groups will provoke threats that cause prejudice. When this national identity is infused with religion, this will cause a perception of threat. Members of a religious affiliation are more likely to accept immigrants with the same religious affiliation. But McDaniel et al. (2011) argue that even when the same religious affiliation is

shared, there will still be a negative attitude because the immigrants will be seen as an out-group while religious affiliation and national identity are intertwined.

An example of why religious are more likely to be negative toward immigrants is given by Flunger and Ziebertz (2010). They relate religion - the in- group - to Muslims in Germany – the out-group. They stated that the Islam will be used as an ethnic identity factor: it is the offspring for maintaining the immigrant identity. Therefore, this creates two categories that shape social identity: country of origin and religion. In their article, they also focus on ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism arises from in-group attitudes and if the categorisation is made on religion and ethnicity. The in- group will be considered superior, while the out-group are considered inferior (Flunger and Ziebertz, 2010). Considering both theory and findings, the first hypothesis is formulated: *I. Religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than nonbelievers.*

There can be differences in anti- immigrant attitudes between members of various religious denominations. An example is given by Daniels and von der Ruhr (2005). They show in their study that religion is an important factor in regard to trade and immigration policies. They argue that different religious denominations generate different types of social capital and therefore result in different approaches in attitudes toward others outside the religious network. When specified for Roman- Catholics and Protestants, McDaniel et al. (2011) state that Protestants are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigrants because they are more likely to identify as religious nationalists. Therefore, we want to test whether or not there is a difference in anti-immigrant attitudes between the major two religious denominations, Roman Catholic and Protestants, therefore the second hypothesis is formulated: *II. Protestants express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than Roman Catholics.*

#### *Threats of immigrants to conservative religious*

In this thesis, we think it is important to examine the role of conservatism on anti- immigrant attitudes. We want to study if not only being member of a religious affiliation has an influence on anti-immigrant attitudes, but also if it matters how strictly someone practices their faith. Holdcroft (2006) stated in her article that, according to Lenski (1963), there are different ways to identify religiosity. For example, people can be religious but they do not necessarily practice their faith within a church. Or a person can be religious, but not live according to their religion (Holdcroft 2006). The importance of religion declined in the last decades. Since the industrialization of societies, secularization started, this divided people, some became true believers and others became non-religious. This development seems very similar all over Europe, leaving young people less religious than their parents (Bruce 2010). Because of the different ways to practice a religion, the questions rises whether religiosity matters or that conservatism is the more important determinant in the process

of anti-immigrant attitudes. In this section, we will examine the role of conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes.

Allport and Ross (1967) made a distinction in religiosity by extrinsic and intrinsic orientation of religion. Extrinsic religiosity concerns religion as used for personal purposes only and that faith provides status, sociability and self-justification. Religion is used for own ends and not explicitly displayed publically. On the other hand, intrinsic religiosity provides a master motive for the believer. Faith is displayed more publically and goes beyond church attendance only. *“Perhaps the briefest way to characterize the two poles of subjective religion is to say that the extrinsically motivated person uses his religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated lives his religion”* (Allport and Ross 1967:434). Extrinsic religiosity concerns whether an individual is religious or not. On the other hand, we think that intrinsic religiosity is a determinant of how conservative an individual is.

An example of the effect of intrinsic religiosity on anti-immigrant attitudes is given by Knoll (2009). He argues that individuals who belong to a conservative religious denomination are more faithful in the normative religious practices, such as church attendance. Individuals who attend church services more frequently are more likely to hold deeper religious convictions. Therefore, they are more likely to follow their church leaders and their norms (Knoll 2009). Conservative religious will feel more threatened by a group that does not follow this religious norms. This threat, caused by the immigrants who do not follow this religion, will provoke negative attitudes by the conservative religious toward the immigrants.

McDaniel et al. (2011) offer two explanations of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by conservatism. First, different religious denominations have different worldviews and therefore lead members to be less tolerant to those who threaten this worldview and standard of living, groups like immigrants. Members of conservative religious affiliations are more orthodox and less tolerant. This mechanism applies to out-groups in general. Secondly, members of conservative religious affiliations are more likely to identify themselves more strongly with the nation they live in. They tend to have a particular vision on their country and therefore perceive more threats from out-groups. Members of liberal religious denominations make the distinction between public and private religion and do not have an exclusive view on their country and therefore will feel less threatened. The scholars find that those who belong to a religious conservative denomination think that their religion offers the only truth and that religious conservatism is related to more negative attitudes toward immigrants. In this thesis, we also include attendance of religious services to test if and why conservative religious are more negative toward immigrants than moderate religious.

A part of the religious identity is the belief that someone's religion offers the only truth. This trust remains, although the truth of the religious beliefs cannot be proven. It is far more widespread than the faithfulness in the beliefs and the trust that this religion is the right one to follow (Ysseldijk, Matheson & Anisman, 2010). In this thesis, the belief that someone's religion is the only truth is considered as a measurement for conservatism. Also attendance of religious services, a form of intrinsic religiosity as mentioned before, will be included to test whether or not conservative religious are more negative than moderate religious. Therefore, the third hypothesis is formulated: *III. Members of conservative religious affiliations express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than members of moderate religious affiliations.*

#### *Symbolic threats versus realistic threats*

According to the Integrated Threat Theory, threats can be caused by four kinds of threats, like realistic and symbolic threats. Because we focused on symbolic threats and negative stereotypes and disregarded realistic threats we want to exclude the effects of realistic threats on anti-immigrant attitudes. Like mentioned before, religion is a source of social identity and we expect that religious are more likely to feel affected by symbolic threats than non-religious because their worldview will be threatened by immigrants. This religious worldview could be threatened by immigrants because of the differences in religion or other cultural differences (McDaniel et al. 2011). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is formulated: *IV. Religious and conservative religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats than non-religious.*

Realistic threats are threats that are affecting the existence, political- and economic power, the physical or material well-being of the in-group or its members (Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman, 1999). Previous research showed that religious and conservative religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than non-religious (McDaniel et al., 2011, Knoll, 2009). These anti-immigrant attitudes are not tested in regard to realistic threats. Therefore, we expect, when accounted for realistic threats, religious will express the same level of anti-immigrant attitudes. The following hypothesis is formulated: *V. Religious and conservative religious express the same level of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats as non-religious.*

#### *Personal characteristics*

This study focuses on the role of religion on anti-immigrant attitudes but other background characteristics are also of importance. The characteristics included in thesis will be: ethnicity, age, gender and education. Clements (2013) states that age affects anti-immigrant attitudes. In general, older people are less tolerant toward immigrants, this negative view increases with age. Von Hippel, Sylver and Lynch (2000) agree with this by stating that older people rely on stereotypes more and are more prejudiced than younger people. In addition, gender affects anti-immigrant attitudes but this

effect is not straightforward, whether men or women tend to hold more negative or less tolerant attitudes toward immigrants is not clear (Clements 2013). Finally, Clements (2013) argues that higher levels of education have a positive effect; people with a high educational level are more likely to be more tolerant and positive toward immigrants than lower educated. Rustenbach (2010) agrees with this by stating that individuals with a higher educational level are more tolerant toward immigrants.

## **Data, Measurements and Methods**

### *Data*

To test the hypotheses in this thesis, the European Values Study (EVS) will be used. This is a large-scale, cross-national and longitudinal survey research program based on basic human values, for example ideas, beliefs, preferences and more important for this thesis: attitudes of citizens in Europe about life, family, work, religion, politics and society. For this thesis, the fourth wave will be used, which is published in 2008. This wave contains of a random sample of 67786 adults of eighteen years old and older in 47 European countries. Interviews were taken face-to-face with a standardized questionnaire between 2008 and 2010.

A total of 3176 persons were asked to participate in this survey in the Netherlands. We restrict our sample to the Netherlands, of which 1554 respondents are involved in the EVS 2008, which leads to a response rate of 48,9 percent. It is a stratified random sample of persons 18 years or older who are resident within private households, regardless of nationality and citizenship or language. The distribution between males and females is more or less equal; 45,1 percent of the respondents is male, 54,9 per cent is female. Most of the respondents, a total of 25,6 percent, are in the educational category: complete secondary: university-preparatory type/full secondary". 94,1 percent of the respondents were born in the Netherlands.

### *Measurements*

We computed a scale for the dependent variable anti-immigrant attitudes on the basis of the different questions asked in the survey in regard to attitudes toward immigrants. To compute the scale of different statements we added up all answers which indicate an agreement with the statements and therefore a negative attitude. Because this is a skewed distribution we decided to compute a dummy variable which indicates that when a respondent scores zero, they disagreed with all of the statements which means they are very tolerant. When a respondent scores one, they agreed with at least one of the statements which means they are less tolerant.

The measured attitudes include the following statements about immigrants: 'they take away jobs', 'undermine the country's cultural life', 'increase crime problems', 'are a strain on the welfare system', 'will become a threat to society', 'maintain own / take over customs', 'are strangers and there are too many immigrants'. Respondents could answer to this statement with agreement or disagreement. Table 1 shows a high level of tolerance among the respondents, 79,1 percent disagrees with all of the statements mentioned above. For this scale, we can see that Cronbach's alpha is 0,784, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale with this specific sample.



To measure the difference in effect between symbolic and realistic threats, a distinction will be made between anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats and by realistic threats. With the theories in mind, we combined the following statements to measure anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats: ‘immigrants undermine a country’s cultural life’, ‘immigrants maintain own/take over customs’ and ‘immigrants living in your country: feels like a stranger’. Table 1 shows that 90 percent of the respondents disagrees with all of the statements in regard to symbolic threats and therefore they are very tolerant. The items indicating symbolic threats are not considered as a scale because there are too few items to compute a reliable scale. Instead, we combined these statements into a dummy variable because we think they measure symbolic threats and too few people agreed with the separate statements. The dummy variable indicates that when a respondent scores zero, they disagreed with all of the statements which means they are very tolerant. When a respondent scores one, they agreed with at least one of the statements which means they are less tolerant.

With the theories in mind, we included the following statements to measure anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats: ‘immigrants take away jobs’, ‘immigrants are a strain on welfare system’ and ‘immigrants will become a threat to society’. Table 1 shows that 88,5 percent of the respondents disagrees with all of the statements in regard to realistic threats and therefore they are very tolerant. Again, the items indicating realistic threats are not considered as a scale because there are too few items to compute a reliable scale. Instead, we combined these statements into a dummy variable because we think they measure realistic threats and too few people agreed with the separate statements. The dummy variable indicates that when a respondent scores zero, they disagreed with all of the statements which means they are very tolerant. When a respondent scores one, they agreed with at least one of the statements which means they are less tolerant.

To measure the first independent variable religiosity, we will use the response to the question “to which religious denomination do you belong to?” First, we will test whether there is a difference in attitudes between all religious denominations and non-religious. Second, we will test whether there is a difference in attitudes between the different religious denominations. To be able to do this, we created five dummy variables: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Free Church / Non-Conformist / Evangelical, Other (which contains Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and other religious denominations) and non-religious. Table 1 shows that the distribution between religious and non-religious is more or less equal: 52,4 percent of the respondents are religious and 47,6 percent consider themselves as non-religious. The distribution of the different religious denominations varies; 26,6 percent of the respondents consider themselves Roman Catholic, 13,6 percent Protestant, 8,5 percent Free Church / Non-Conformist / Evangelical and 3,7 percent belongs to the group other religions.

For our second independent variable, conservatism, we constructed the two variables ‘true religion’ and ‘attendance of religious services’. The variable true religion is derived from the statement “only one true religion or no religion offers any truths”. To be able to include this item we created a dummy variable, which results in a more explicit distinction between conservative religious and moderate religious. This dummy makes a differentiation between respondents who state that there is only one true religion, they receive a score of 1, and respondents who doubt this or disagree with this statement, they receive a score of 0. Respondents belonging to the first category are considered as conservative, the second group as moderate. Secondly, the attendance of religious services will be taken into account to measure the independent variable conservatism. To be able to include this variable in the analysis we created a dummy variable with respondents who attend a religious service (more than) once a week as conservative religious and respondents who attend a religious service once a month or less – once a month, only on specific holy days, once a year, less often or never, practically never- as moderate religious. Conservative religious receive the score of 1 and moderate religious the score of 0. As shown in table 1, most of the religious respondents are moderate. 83,1 percent has a low level of attendance of religious services and 90,1 percent disagree with the statement that there is only one true religion. These two variables do not exclude each other (Pearson correlation of 0,372).

To exclude the problem of correlation for the two variables ethnicity and other religions we computed the multicollinearity. The VIF value is 1,048, which indicates that there are no problems with correlation for these two variables. The highest percentage of missing’s in our analyses is 3,9 percent. Because this percentage is below five percent, we decided to not include them in our analyses. In the next section, the methods will be discussed.

Table 1. Descriptives (N = 1554)

Variable	Category	Valid %	SD
Immigrant attitudes	1 = Less tolerant	20,9	0,41
	0 = Tolerant	79,1	
Anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats	1 = Less tolerant	10	,30
	0 = Tolerant	90	
Anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats	1 = Less tolerant	11,5	,32
	0 = Tolerant	88,5	
Religiosity	Non- religious	47,6	1,74
	Religious	52,4	
	Roman Catholic	26,6	
	Protestant	13,6	
	Free Church / Non-Conformist / Evangelical	8,5	
	Other	3,7	
	Non-religious	47,6	
Attendance	(More than) once a week (conservative)	16,9	,38
	Less than once a week (moderate)	83,1	
True religion	1= There is only one true religion	9,9	,30
	0 = Disagree with one true religion	90,1	
Respondent born in the Netherlands	1 = Born in the Netherlands	94,1	,24
	0 = Born outside the Netherlands	5,9	
Age	15 – 24 years	12,8	1,51
	25 – 34 years	17,5	
	35 – 44 years	17,6	
	45 – 54 years	18	
	55 – 64 years	15,3	
	65 years and over	18,7	
Sex	1 = Female	54,9	,50
	0 = Male	45,1	
Education	Inadequately completed elementary education	3,2	2,03
	Completed (compulsory) elementary education	9,8	
	Incomplete secondary school technical/vocational	16,7	
	Complete secondary school: technical/vocational	9,4	
	Incomplete secondary: university-preparatory	11,7	
	Complete secondary: university-preparatory type	25,6	
	Some university without degree/higher education - lower-level tertiary	14,1	
	University with degree/higher education - upper-level tertiary	9,5	

## *Methods*

To test the hypotheses we will perform binary logistic regression analyses. Within all the analyses, the following control variables will be included: age, sex, highest educational level attained by the respondent and ethnicity. The variable ‘age’ contains of six categories of ten years, ranging from age 15 to 65 years and older. ‘Highest educational level attained’ contains of eight categories, ranging from no education until a university degree. ‘Ethnicity’ indicates whether or not the respondent was born in the Netherlands or elsewhere. Table 1 shows more detailed information.

To test the first hypothesis, *I. Religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than nonbelievers*, we conducted an analysis with religious, non-religious and the first scale with all items of anti-immigrant attitudes. A second analysis will be conducted with the different religious denominations, non-religious and the first scale with anti-immigrant attitudes. Non-religious will be used as reference category in both analyses.

To test the second hypothesis, *II. Protestants express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than Roman Catholics*, the members of the two denominations will be compared. Protestants are the reference category in this analysis.

To test the third hypothesis, *III. Members of conservative religious affiliations express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than members of moderate religious affiliations*, an analysis will be conducted with the first scale of anti-immigrant attitudes as dependent variable and attendance to religious services and “one true religion or no religion offers any truths” as independent variables.

In addition, we will conduct an analysis with the first scale of anti-immigrant attitudes as dependent variable and the different religious denominations and conservatism as independent variables.

To test the fourth hypothesis, *IV. Religious and conservative religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats than non-religious*, an analysis with the items of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats as dependent variable and religiosity and conservatism as independent variables will be conducted.

To test the fifth hypothesis, *V. Religious and conservative religious express the same levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats as non-religious*, we will conduct an analysis with the anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats as dependent variable and religiosity and conservatism as independent variables.

## **Results**

### **The effect of religiosity on anti-immigrant attitudes**

To test whether religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than non-religious, a binary logistic regression analysis is conducted. The scale with all statements of anti-immigrant attitudes will be included as dependent variable. As presented in table 2, this analysis shows that religious do not have a higher chance to be more negative toward immigrants than non-religious ( $b = -.031$ ,  $p = .818/2$ ). Therefore, the first hypothesis *I. Religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than nonbelievers* is rejected.

The first hypothesis is rejected, but it is possible that other results would be found for different religious denominations. Former studies showed that different religious denominations can provide different norms of behavior (McDaniel et al. 2011). Daniels and von der Ruhr (2005) show in their study that different religious denominations generate different types of social capital and therefore result in different approaches in attitudes toward others outside the religious network. Therefore, we want to test whether or not members of different religious denominations have a higher odd of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants. A binary logistic regression analysis is conducted with non-religious as reference category and with the different religious denominations (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Free Church / Non-Conformist / Evangelical and Other) as independent variables. As can be seen in table 2, the first hypothesis is still rejected because none of the results in this analysis showed any significant effect. This means that there is no difference in the odds of having negative attitudes toward immigrants between non-religious and the members of the four religious denominations.

### **The effect of Roman Catholics and Protestants on anti-immigrant attitudes**

To test whether Protestants have a higher chance of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants than Roman Catholics, a binary logistic regression analysis is conducted. In this analysis, Protestants were used as reference category. The results in table 2 show that there are no significant differences in odds between Roman Catholics and Protestants ( $b = -.018$ ,  $p = .929/2$ ). Therefore, the second hypothesis, *II. Protestants express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than Roman Catholics*, is rejected.

## **The effect of conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes**

To test whether conservative religious have a higher chance of holding negative attitudes toward immigrants than moderate religious, a binary logistic regression analysis is conducted. The analysis shows that people who attend religious services (more than) once a week have a significant higher chance to be more positive toward immigrants than people who attend religious services less than once a week ( $b = -.712, p < .01/2$ ). Table 2 shows more detailed information. We expected that religious who have a high frequency of attendance of religious services would have a higher chance of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants because they are more faithful to the normative religious practices such as church attendance. Therefore, they are more likely to follow the norms of the religious affiliation and are more likely to hold deeper religious convictions (Knoll 2009). Other groups, like immigrants, who do not follow these norms are seen as a threat. The results of the analysis are contrary to our expectations.

The analysis also shows that respondents who stated that only one religion offers the truth, the other measurement used for conservatism, have a significantly higher chance to be more intolerant than respondents who disagree with this belief ( $b = .466, p = .035/2$ ). This indicates that conservative religious have a higher chance to be more intolerant than moderate religious. The respondents who are conservative did agree with at least one of the statements in regard to anti-immigrant attitudes. This is an opposed direction than attendance of religious services, as showed in table 2. Therefore, based on the two variables of conservatism the third hypothesis *III. Members of conservative religious affiliations express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than members of moderate religious affiliations* is partially confirmed. When respondents have a high frequency of attendance of religious services, they are more tolerant toward immigrants, but when people state that their religion offers the only truth, they are more negative toward immigrants.

The results are surprising and not completely in line with our expectations. On the one hand, we did expect that people who state that only one religion offers the truth would have a higher chance of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants because they have a very strict worldview and will feel more threatened by other groups who do not share this worldview. In addition, prior studies showed that members of conservative religious affiliations are more orthodox and less tolerant (McDaniel et al. 2011) and will feel more threatened by a group that does not follow the same religious norms (Knoll 2009). On the other hand, we did not expect the result that people who have a high frequency of attendance of religious services have a higher chance of holding more positive attitudes toward immigrants than people who have a low level of attendance of religious services. A possible explanation for this results is that religion can increase tensions, but religious faith also can indicate solidarity, neighborly love and humanistic charity, resulting in a greater tolerance of others.

People who are active members of a religious voluntary organization are less likely to hold negative toward immigrants than passive members. Frequent attendees are more tolerant toward other groups than those who do not regularly attend, which is in line with the results in table 2. Membership of religious voluntary organizations and social involvement increases the generalized trust between people. Because of interaction and collaboration with others in religious organizations social trust increases, expands and includes other groups beyond the boundaries of the own group. So, the social identity is not threatened (Strømsnes 2008).

### **The effect of religiosity and conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes**

To test if the effects of religiosity and conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes differ with the effects when religiosity and conservatism are tested separately, both variables are included in one model and a binary logistic regression analysis is conducted. This analysis contains the dependent variable anti-immigrant attitudes, with all statements and independent variables, the different religious denominations and the two items indicating conservatism.

The analysis shows no new information, all effects remain the same. First, as can be seen in table 2, when compared for the different religious denominations and non-religious, there is no significant difference in odds of holding negative attitudes toward immigrants between religious or non-religious on anti-immigrant attitudes. Second, the attendance of religious services still does have a significant negative effect ( $b = -.806$ ,  $p < 0.01/2$ ). Third, stating that one religion offers the only truth does have a significant positive effect on anti-immigrant attitudes ( $b = .437$ ,  $p = .053/2$ ). This means that when religiosity is also included in the model, the third hypothesis still can be partially confirmed. Also, the first and second hypotheses are still rejected.

Table 2. Predicting anti-immigrant attitudes by religiosity and conservatism

	1. Religiosity <i>N</i> = 1529 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = ,115		2. Protestant / Roman Catholic <i>N</i> = 1529 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = ,116		3. Conservatism <i>N</i> = 1498 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = ,136		4. Religiosity + Conservatism <i>N</i> = 1493 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = ,137	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
Constant	-,709	,483	-,712	,476	-,641	,440	-,702	,449
Roman Catholic	-,021	,159	-,018	,206			,064	,165
Protestant	-,003	,198					,180	,216
Free Church	-,138	,252	-,136	,287			,150	,283
Other religion	,030	,371	,033	,399			,326	,394
Non-religious			,003	,198				
Attendance of religious services					-,712 **	,200	-,806 **	,219
True religion					,466 *	,221	,437 *	,226
Ethnicity	,141	,301	,141	,301	,111	,295	,134	,303
Age	,148 *	,050	,148*	,050	,165**	,050	,162 **	,051
Female	-,087	,132	-,087	,132	-,110	,135	-,104	,135
Education	-,305 **	,038	-,305**	,038	-,320 **	,039	-,319 **	,039

\* *p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01

### The effect of ethnicity, age, gender and education on anti-immigrant attitudes

As showed in table 2, the control variables ethnicity and gender do not have a significant effect on the odds of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants. As expected, age has a positive significant effect on the odds of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants. Education has a negative significant effect on the odds of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants. Previous studies have also shown that age affects anti-immigrant attitudes and older people are more negative toward immigrants. Older people rely more on stereotypes and are more prejudiced than younger people (Clements 2013, Von Hippel et al. 2000). In addition, prior studies showed that education also affects anti-immigrant attitudes. Higher levels of education have a positive effect on anti-immigrant attitudes, people who attained a higher educational level are more likely to be tolerant toward immigrants, this is also in line with our results (Clements 2013, Rustenbach 2010).



## **Symbolic threats versus realistic threats**

To test if anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats and realistic threats differ with the scale including all statements about anti-immigrant attitudes, a distinction is made between the two threats. The analysis of symbolic threats shows us different information than previous analyses. Non-religious are the reference category in this analysis. When Roman Catholics and non-religious are compared, there is no significant difference in the chance of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants caused by symbolic threats between these two groups. As presented in table 3, we did find a significant negative difference in the chance of holding anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats between Protestants and non-religious. Protestants appeared to have a higher chance to be more tolerant than non-religious ( $b = -.605$ ,  $p = .056/2$ ). This means that Protestants have a higher chance to be more positive toward immigrants in regard to symbolic threats than non-religious. The results in regard to the other religious denominations did not show any significant effects. When Protestant and Roman Catholic are compared, there are no significant differences in chance of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants caused by symbolic threats.

The analysis also shows a significant difference in chance of holding negative attitudes toward immigrants between conservative religious who attend religious services (more than) once a week and respondents who attend religious services less than once a week ( $b = -.639$ ,  $p = .034/2$ ). This indicates that conservative religious have a smaller chance of feeling threatened by symbolic threats than moderate religious and non-religious. On the other hand, as can be seen in table 3, the analysis shows no significant difference in chance between respondents who state that one religion offers the truth and respondents who disagree with this statement ( $b = .374$ ,  $p = .195/2$ ). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis, *IV. Religious and conservative religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats than non-religious* can be rejected.

Table 3. Anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats

	Religiosity + Conservatism <i>N</i> = 1493 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .113		Protestant / Roman Catholic <i>N</i> = 1493 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = .124	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
Constant	-1,867 **	,629	-2,472 **	,704
Roman Catholic	-,343	,222	,262	,323
Protestant	-,605 *	,316		
Free Church	-,058	,374	,548	,417
Other religion	,662	,462	1,267 **	,501
Non-religious			,605 *	,316
Attendance of religious services	-,639 *	,301	-,639 *	,301
True religion	,374	,289	,374	,289
Ethnicity	,347	,429	,347	,429
Age	,202 **	,071	,202 **	,071
Female	,053	,181	,053	,181
Education	-,331 **	,055	-,331 **	,055

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

We expected that in regard to realistic threats, religious will express the same level of anti-immigrant attitudes than non-religious. The analysis of realistic threats also shows us different information than previous analyses. None of the major religious denominations showed any significant odds in regard to realistic threats compared to non-religious. This means that there is no difference in odds of having anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats between the major religious denominations and non-religious. In addition, we compared Protestant and Roman Catholics; there is no significant difference in chance of holding more negative attitudes toward immigrants caused by realistic threats between members of these two religious affiliations. See table 4, for more detailed information.

The analysis shows that respondents who attend religious services (more than) once a week differ significantly with respondents who attend religious services less than once a week ( $b = -1.421$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This means that conservative religious have a higher chance to be less intolerant than moderate religious. Secondly, the analysis shows that respondents who state that one religion offers the truth differ significantly with respondents who disagree with this statement ( $b = .544$ ,  $p = .047$ ). This means that conservative religious have a higher chance to be more intolerant than moderate religious in regard to anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats. Because there is no difference between religious and non-religious and the contradicting attitudes of conservative religious, the fifth

hypothesis, *V. Religious and conservative religious express the same levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats as non-religious* can be rejected.

*Table 4. Anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats*

	Religiosity + Conservatism <i>N</i> = 1493 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = ,124		Protestant / Roman Catholic <i>N</i> = 1493 <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> = ,124	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
Constant	-1,427	,571	-1,301 *	,630
Roman Catholic	-,034	,208	-,161	,280
Protestant	,127	,271		
Free Church / Non Conformist / Evangelical	,524	,341	,397	,372
Other religion	,849	,453	,723	,480
Non-religious			-,127	,271
Attendance of religious services	-1,421**	,312	-1,421 **	,312
True religion	,544 *	,274	,544 *	,274
Ethnicity	-,005	,369	-,005	,369
Age	,179 **	,067	,179 **	,067
Female	-,038	,171	-,038	,171
Education	-,318 **	,051	-,318 **	,051

\* *p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01

## Conclusion

This thesis aims to answer the following question: *'to what extent can anti-immigrant attitudes among religious and non-religious Dutch be explained in terms of religiosity and conservatism?'* To be able to answer this question, two sub-questions will be answered: *'to what extent do the attitudes toward immigrants differ between religious and non-religious Dutch?'* and *'to what extent can the attitudes be explained by religiosity?'*

To explain whether or not religious and non-religious Dutch differ in anti-immigrant attitudes the Social Identity Theory and the Integrated Threat Theory are used. The starting point of the Social Identity Theory is that people aim to have a positive social identity. Differences with other groups and similarities within the own group are exaggerated to gain a positive group identity. Belonging to a religious denomination is considered as a part of the social identity (Tajfel 1981).

The Integrated Threat Theory contains different types of threats to social identity. For this thesis, the main focus is on symbolic threats and negative stereotypes to try to answer the main question. People who strongly identify themselves with their in-group are more likely to feel threatened by an out-group (Curseu et al. 2007). These perceived threats could play an important role in negative attitudes toward immigrants. Therefore, it is expected that religious will express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than non-religious, because they identify more strongly with their own group and therefore feel more threatened by another group, like immigrants.

To test the hypotheses, the fourth wave of the European Value Study is used, which was conducted in 2008. Only data concerning Dutch respondents are included in the analyses. Results from the binary logistic regression analyses show that there is no significant difference in anti-immigrant attitudes between religious and non-religious Dutch. Therefore, the first hypothesis *I. 'Religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than nonbelievers'* is rejected. To exclude the possibility of differences between the several religious denominations and non-religious, an additional logistic regression analysis was conducted. This analysis showed that there is no difference between non-religious Dutch and Roman Catholic, Protestant and other religious denominations in anti-immigrant attitudes.

We also expected that Protestants would express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than Roman Catholics. McDaniel et al. (2011) stated that because Protestants are more likely to identify themselves as religious nationalists, they are more likely to hold hostile attitudes toward immigrants than Roman Catholics. We did not find a significant difference in anti-immigrant attitudes between

followers of these two religious denominations. The second hypothesis, *II. Protestant express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than Roman Catholics*, is rejected.

With this in mind, the first sub question ‘*to what extent do the attitudes toward immigrants differ between religious and non-religious Dutch?*’ can be answered. Because the first two hypotheses concerning religious and non- religious were not significant, it can be stated that attitudes toward immigrants do not differ between religious Dutch and non- religious Dutch.

To answer the second sub-question, ‘*to what extent can the attitudes be explained by religiosity*’, we examined the role of conservatism in this process. Former studies have shown significant positive effects for the influence of conservatism on anti- immigrant attitudes (Mc Daniel et al., 2011). Knoll (2009) argues that individuals who belong to a conservative religious denomination are more faithful in the normative religious practices and are more likely to hold deeper religious convictions.

Therefore, we expected that conservative religious would feel more threatened by immigrants and will be more negative toward this group. The frequency of attendance of religious services and believing that their religion offers the only truth were considered to be conservative determinants in this thesis. Surprisingly, the two items both showed opposite results. When respondents have a high frequency of attendance of religious services, they are more tolerant toward immigrants, but when respondents believe that their religion offers the only truth, they are more negative toward immigrants. The third hypothesis, *III. Conservative religious affiliations express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes than moderate religious affiliations*, is partially confirmed.

We also tested if anti- immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats and realistic threats differ with the scale including all statements about anti- immigrant attitudes. We expected that religious are more likely to feel affected by symbolic threats than non-religious because their worldview will be threatened by immigrants. This religious worldview could be threatened by immigrants because of the differences in religion or other cultural differences (McDaniel et al. 2011). The analysis showed that there are no differences in anti-immigrant attitudes between the different religious denominations. Nevertheless, Protestants have a higher chance to be more positive toward immigrants in regard to symbolic threats than non- religious. The analysis comparing conservative and non-religious showed no new information. People who have a high frequency of attendance of religious services are more tolerant toward immigrants and people who believe that their religion offers the only truth are more negative toward immigrants. The fourth hypothesis, *IV. Religious and conservative religious express higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic threats than non-religious* is rejected.

In regard to realistic threats, we expected that religious will express the same level of anti-immigrant attitudes than non-religious. The analysis showed that there are no differences between religious and

non-religious in anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats. The effects for conservative religious appeared to be the same as in the analysis of symbolic threats. Because there is no difference between religious and non-religious and the contradicting attitudes of conservative religious, the fifth hypothesis, *V. Religious and conservative religious express the same levels of anti-immigrant attitudes caused by realistic threats as non-religious* is rejected.

In sum, our main question '*To what extent anti-immigrants attitudes among religious and non-religious Dutch can be explained in terms of religiosity and conservatism?*' can be answered in two parts. First, anti-immigrant attitudes do not differ among religious and non-religious Dutch. Second, anti-immigrant attitudes cannot be explained completely by conservatism. Religious who attend religious services (more than) once a week appear to be more tolerant toward immigrants but when respondents believe their religion offers the only truth, they hold more negative attitudes toward immigrants. Conservatism can provide as a starting point for further research.

## **Discussion**

### *Limitations and strengths*

There are a few limitations to this thesis. First, to measure the attitudes toward immigrants, eight statements were used. Respondents could only answer with 'agree, disagree or don't know'. These kinds of answer categories stimulate social desirable answers. Because the answer possibilities are extremes, they did not leave room for respondents to specify their answer. It would have been better when, for example, respondents could disagree or agree on a Likert scale from zero to seven or when they are given the opportunity to explain their answer. We tried to limit this issue by creating a dummy variable of the eight statements. If a respondent agreed with at least one of the statements, it scored a value of one and was considered less tolerant. It appeared that the distribution of the answers to these eight statements were very skewed, no less than 79,1 percent of the respondents scored a zero, which means that the respondent disagreed with all the eight statements and therefore is very tolerant toward immigrants. This is another confirmation that our measurement of anti-immigrant attitudes was not fully accurate and it is likely that some of the respondents have answered in a social desirable way.

Second, there is no equal distribution of respondents within the different religious denominations. Roman Catholics and Protestants are over represented. There is a very small amount, 3,7 percent, of respondents who considered themselves Jew, Muslim, Buddhist or member of another religious denomination. Especially for the Muslim and Buddhist it is likely they are immigrants or offspring of immigrants. This can influence the results because it is more difficult to compare the different groups when they are not equally distributed.

Third, there is no distinction made between the countries of origin in the questions about immigrants. Presently, immigrants from Eastern Europe – especially Poland – are put into discredit in the Netherlands. An example for this is ‘Het Polenmeldpunt’ invented by Geert Wilders (PVV). A couple of years ago, immigrants from North Africa – Morocco and Turkey – were put into discredit. It is possible that the attitudes toward immigrants from Eastern Europe and North- Africa differ among the respondents. A distinction between the countries of origin can be made in the following waves of the European Value Study. Also, in additional research a distinction can be made between anti-immigrant attitudes among immigrants from, for example, East- Europe and North- Africa.

At last, the measurement of ethnicity in the European Value Study only measures whether respondents were born in the Netherlands, neglecting second or third generation immigrants. Consequently, 94,1 percent of the respondents was born in the Netherlands. This criterion is not very specific. The respondent could be born in the Netherlands but also be an immigrant because one or both of the parents were born outside the Netherlands. The results could be positively biased because there could be a relatively large group of respondents who have affinity with immigrants. In 2013, 1.749.892 people living in the Netherlands have at least one parent born outside the Netherlands (CBS 2013). This number indicates that it is possible that there are respondents who associate strongly with immigrants but are considered Dutch, which could bias the results in this thesis.

A strength of this study is that it uses two solid theories that are widely used in other studies to this subject. These theories help to understand the ‘us versus them’ feelings of the Dutch population toward immigrants. Furthermore, this study uses two mechanisms to measure conservatism, attendance of religious services and the belief that only one religion offers the truth. This is a complement of former research.

In addition, eight statements were used to measure anti-immigrant attitudes. The items are divided in regard to anti-immigrant attitudes caused by symbolic and realistic threats. This gives a very complete view of possible causes of anti-immigrant attitudes. This study contributes to the nationwide debate about the attitudes toward immigrants in the Netherlands because it is a current issue in society.

#### *Recommendations for further research*

As mentioned before, the two items which indicate conservatism showed opposite results. When respondents have a high frequency of attendance of religious services, they are more tolerant toward immigrants, however when respondents believe that their religion offers the only truth, they are more negative toward immigrants. Conservatism should serve as a starting point for further research in anti-immigrant attitudes.

Strømsnes (2008) provides an explanation for the effect of attendance of religious services on anti-immigrant attitudes. She states that religion can increase tensions but religious faith also can indicate solidarity, neighborly love and humanistic charity, resulting in a greater tolerance of others. She shows that significantly fewer active members of religious voluntary organizations hold negative attitudes toward immigrants. On the other hand, passive members of religious voluntary organizations are less tolerant toward other groups, like immigrants. In her research, Strømsnes (2008) compares those who frequently attend church and those who seldom attend. She found that frequent attenders are more tolerant of other groups than those who do not regularly attend, this is similar to our findings. She states that membership of religious voluntary organizations and the social involvement that follows with this membership increases the generalized trust between people. Because of interaction and collaboration with others in religious organizations social trust increases, expands and includes other groups beyond the boundaries of the own group. So, the social identity is not threatened. In addition, Clements (2013) also shows that religious show more solidarity toward minority groups. He uses the importance of religion in daily life to indicate religious salience and finds that greater religiosity reduces negative attitudes toward minority groups.

McDaniel et al. (2011) provide a possible explanation for the effect of having a strict worldview on anti-immigrant attitudes. They showed that different religious denominations have different worldviews and therefore lead members to be less tolerant to those who threaten this worldview and standard of living, groups like immigrants. This is in line with the results in this thesis, respondents who believe that their religion offers the only truth hold more negative attitudes toward immigrants. The effect of a strict worldview – the belief that only one religion offers the truth - on anti-immigrant attitudes can be a starting point for further research.

To conclude, this thesis aims to examine the differences in anti-immigrant attitudes between religious and non-religious Dutch. It tried to explain the role of religiosity and conservatism on anti-immigrant attitudes. No differences are found between religious and non-religious Dutch, but the belief that only one religion offers the truth has a significant negative effect on anti-immigrant attitudes. This provides an opportunity for further research. The question rises if only religiosity matters or that conservatism is the most important determinant. This study also contributes to the nationwide debate about intolerance toward immigrants in the Netherlands. Further research could focus on the role of religious conservatism and conservatism in other fields of public life, like politics, on anti-immigrant attitudes.



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