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# Prayers and Politics:

## non-religious, Christians, Muslims and political participation in Western Europe

*As cornerstone of liberal democracies, political participation is necessary among all social groups. The participation levels of Christians, Muslims and non-religious people in a subset of Western European countries are analyzed through their political trust, service attendance and perceived religious discrimination levels. A distinction is made between institutional (IPP) and non-institutional forms of political participation (NPP). The analyses are realized through the comprehensive 8th wave European Social Survey dataset (N = 14.298). A number of conclusions are derived; probabilities on IPP significantly differ, where Christians score the highest, followed by non-religious people and at last Muslims, as well as that service attendance has a positive effect on these probabilities for the religious. Also, perceived religious discrimination has a positive effect for Muslims and a negative effect for Christians on their probabilities of IPP. An informative conclusion on NPP items taken as a whole cannot be derived, but interesting results emerge when these are analyzed separately. Christians have higher estimated probabilities on 'working in non-political organizations', Muslims have higher estimated probabilities on 'joining demonstrations' and 'online activity', and non-religious people have higher probabilities on 'signing petitions'. Differences in 'wearing badges' and 'boycotting' are less evident. This research shows that religious groups' political participation varies depending on the type of behavior examined.*

**Keywords:** Political participation; non-religious; Christians; Muslims: political trust; religious service attendance; religious discrimination

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**Academic year:** 2019-2020

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# INTRODUCTION

**Political Participation**

Political participation, or rather the lack of it in certain social groups in the 2016 Brexit-referendum is seen as a main reason for the eventual outcome (BBC, 2018; The Conversation, 2016). Especially younger people and ethnic minorities seemed less likely to vote in the referendum, while research by Alabrese et al. (2019) additionally shows that especially older and white respondents were more likely to support Brexit. As the difference was only marginal on whether or not to leave the European Union it poses the question what would have been the result if all social groups would have been proportionally represented in the vote. The issue of political participation is of course not only relevant to the UK, as there are many other democracies in the world. It can be assumed that the level of political participation, especially in the form of voting, in non-democratic countries or severely corrupt democracies is meaningless as these results will inherently be biased (Matlary, 2017). On the contrary, for Western European democracies, which are the countries of interest in this paper, the issue of political participation is prominent. It is necessary to research the mechanisms that affect political participation as disproportionate representation between groups can have serious consequences. In a functioning democratic state the political course is shaped by the political participation of its citizens Yoldaş (2015) argues, which is why participation leads to the legitimization of the social order through two paths. First of all Yoldaş states, when political participation is high in society it legitimizes the ruling power as people chose the politicians they deemed able to represent them and secondly, other forms of political participation pressure politicians into obeying the demands of the people, for example in the shape of protests. The first path Yoldaş mentions is a form of institutional political participation (IPP), while the second path refers to non-institutional political participation (NPP). These are important concepts which will be elaborated upon later in this article.

Political participation, in the context of party membership and voting is declining throughout Western Europe (Van Biezen, Mair & Poguntke, 2012), which they ascribe to some parties renouncing formal memberships and affiliation with a political party in itself being less important to people. Another point of worry is the fact that there is also significant variation between social groups (Quintelier, Hooghe & Marien, 2011), as

illustrated by the Brexit example. An often investigated topic in this variation of political participation is the impact of religion. Grzymala-Busse (2012) describes religion as a belief system that connects large groups of people in a society, that determines the relation of individuals with the sacred through certain practices and constraints. This unified nature and its separation from governing institutions, Grzymala-Busse states, is why religion often clashes with politics. This tension between religion and politics, however, seems inevitable in Europe as secularism is seen as main prerequisite for politics in European democracies (Banfi, Gianni & Giugni, 2016). Casanavo (2006) states that tension arises as religious groups feel more or less requested to keep their religious values private in order to make way for individual freedom, independence and autonomy in a secular Europe. Casanavo states that as secular values are seen as the most effective path to liberal tolerance they are believed to be incompatible with religious values, and thus religious groups feel threatened. While it can be assumed that Christian groups might be more adjusted to secular values, the extent to which Islam is compatible with secular values is a recurring subject in debates on the position of Muslims in Europe. It is argued that the lower level of approval of secularism, and consequently political participation among Muslims is because of the fact that their religious beliefs are in conflict with secular Western beliefs. Banfi, Gianni and Giugni state that in the public debate and academic literature Muslims are assumed to be less supporting of democracy and Western politics as opposed to non-Muslims. The perceived incongruence of their religious beliefs and values held in high regard through secularism is a point of worry and is seen as an important obstruction of successful integration of Muslims (Banfi, Gianni & Giugni, 2016). One of the reasons it is seen as a concern is because successful integration is an important condition for eventual political participation (Armingeon & Schädel, 2015). This is illustrated by the conclusions from a meta-study by Cesari (2014) as he first of all concludes that Muslims report lower voter turnout rates than non-Muslims, and secondly that Muslims, when participating, more often do so non-institutionally, but still report lower levels of non-institutional participation than non-Muslims. While it could be argued from a normative perspective that it is one's own responsibility to be engaged in politics, the consequences of selection effects in political participation can lead to more deprivation of underrepresented groups, which ultimately affects society as a whole in a negative way (e.g. more relative deprivation). In short, as religious groups differ it makes it

necessary to research what differences there are in the levels of political participation. Therefore, the main research question of this article is the following :

*To what extent do Muslims, Christians and non-religious people vary in political participation and what are the mechanisms that affect this?*

In order to answer the research question of influence of religion on political participation it is important to distinguish some underlying mechanisms and these are levels of political trust, religious service attendance and perceived religious discrimination.

**Political trust**

Aldashev (2015) contributes a part of the variation in political participation as a consequence of the variation in political trust. In this context trust, first of all, entails that when people place trust in an institution it means they believe this organization is capable, responsible and is of use to the general public, and secondly refers to the collection of underlying assumptions and expectations regarding these institutions (Devos, Spini & Schwartz, 2002). Trust in the political system and its institutions are paramount for a healthy society as it advocates and sustains involved citizenship and cohesion, acceptance of a political loss and paves the way for agreement on political issues, Newton, Stolle & Zmerli (2018) argue. As political trust is often found as important predictor of various forms of political participation, it is a valid indicator of political participation and being religious is often associated with higher levels of political trust (Marien & Hooghe, 2011). For Muslims in Europe the general positive effect of religion on political trust is less clear as research shows that Muslims minorities in the Netherlands show even lower levels of political trust than other minorities (Fennema, & Tillie, 1999). Their research underlines this complex relation between trust and political participation among ethnic and Muslim communities, as they conclude that ethnic voters with low levels of political trust are less likely to vote and to be sceptic of authorities, especially if there are big perceived differences with the nation´s majority population. In short, their conclusion on political trust and political participation is that the majority who participates also report higher levels of trust, but that for some ethnic groups this relation is complex as participation can also be high, because they do not trust political institutions. However, there is also research that concludes British Muslims report higher levels of political trust than their Christian counterparts (Maxwell, 2010) as well as research showing Muslims place more trust in

institutions like the EU, in contrary to Christians and non-religious people (Isani & Schlipphak, 2017). These latter findings of higher levels of trust in political institutions among Muslims in contrast to Christians and non-religious people poses questions as Muslims are, in general, perceived as disadvantaged outsiders at risk of estrangement (Maxwell, 2010), which is associated with lower levels of trust in political institutions. In short, it can be concluded that the relation between religion and politics is multidimensional and differs between religious groups in the literature.

**Service attendance**

For those who affiliate with a religious group, levels of religious practice also affect political participation. Where Omelicheva and Ahmed (2018) find evidence that belonging to a religious group, rather than the level of religiosity, has a positive effect on political participation this is in contradiction to Just, Sandovici & Listhaug (2014) who state that religion generally leads to less political engagement. Arikan and Bloom (2019) also show there is a more balanced relation, because it matters in what form people practice their religion as they find that personal religious beliefs decrease political activity, while attending services and membership of a religious network increase political activity. This mechanism is also found by Glazier (2019), who finds that individuals with stronger religious beliefs tend to be less political active, but that membership of a religious group is what increases the likelihood of political activity. This is in line with Jamaal's (2005) research that mosque participation for Arab Muslims in the U.S. is directly associated with political participation. In Europe, it is found by Gerber, Gruber and Hungerman (2016) that church attendance has a positive effect on political participation for Christians and the same is also true for European Muslims (Oskooij & Dana, 2018; Cesari, 2014). The latter researchers conclude that the same mechanism applies for Muslims, as Muslims who frequently attend services in mosques report higher levels of political participation than Muslims who less frequently attend services.

This does imply higher political participation rates among Muslims in contrast to people who do not belong to a religious group at all, as Cinallia and Giugni (2016) conclude that political participation, in the form of voting, of European Muslims is still lower than that of their fellow citizens' rates. Fleischmann, Martinovic and Böhm (2016), add to this that even different Muslim groups differ in the effect of service attendance on political participation. They conclude that Turkish Muslims in the

Netherlands who frequently attend religious services are more likely to vote, but the same effect does not apply to Moroccan Muslims. These researchers argue that this difference could be the result of Turkish Muslims who more frequently visit mosque service have more co-ethnic contacts with the majority population in other associations than their Moroccan counterparts. While this apparent difference in the Muslim group should be taken into account, this conclusion is out of the scope of the present article as the current aim is to examine the effect of service attendance on political participation for religious groups in general, as well as how they differ from the non-religious group in political participation.

**Perceived discrimination**

Related to the earlier mentioned compatibleness of peoples´ religious values and European secular values, is the discrimination of religious groups. Research shows that when Christian groups feel threatened in their religious beliefs, political action tends to increase (Achterberg, 2009), which is also true for Muslim groups (Fleischmann, Phalet & Klein, 2011). Social identity threats in the form of religious discrimination are strong stimulants for political behavior, as both the social group and peoples´ inherent beliefs are threatened. For this reason it is assumed to be one of the strongest influences on political participation in relation to other forms of perceived discrimination (Ysseldyk et al., 2014). They conclude that when religious people perceive discrimination on the basis of their religious identities this leads to more engagement and active behavior at both the individual, as well as the collective level. Furthermore, Achterberg found that in the Netherlands group identification and the call for political influence increases among Christians, while the size of the group is decreasing. Those that remain feel more threatened and this leads to more political engagement. A similar mechanism concerning perceived threat and political engagement is also applicable to Muslims, as Dana, Barreto and Oskooij (2011) find that as discrimination towards Muslim in the aftermath of 9/11 increased, the networks of Muslims in mosques facilitated increased political participation. While prior research shows that there is evidence for an effect of religious threat and discrimination on political participation, a possible difference in this effect between Muslim and Christians in Europe is not yet researched. Therefore an additional aim is to research in what way Christians and Muslim differ in the effect of perceived discrimination on political participation, if such a difference exists at all.

In order the answer to what extent the (non-)religious groups of interest vary in political participation the relation of political trust will be assessed, while additionally only for religious groups the impact of service attendance and perceived religious discrimination will be analyzed as these mechanisms are only applicable to the religious groups. The data that is used to research these mechanisms originate from the ESS Wave 8 (2016), and contains a vast amount of political, as well as religious variables. In the remaining of the article, the contradicting theories on the relation between religion and political participation will first be introduced. Also, political trust, service attendance and religious discrimination will be further framed from which hypotheses will be derived. Secondly, the data and methods will be summarized, followed by the empirical analyses and results. At last, the final part contains discussions on the findings and inferences of the present study.

# THEORY & HYPOTHESES

To answer the research question;

"*To what extent do Muslims, Christians and non-religious people vary in political participation and what are the mechanisms that affect this?"*,

it is important to get a more detailed perspective on what political participation entails. As mentioned in the introduction a clear distinction is made between institutional (IPP) and non-institutional political participation (NPP) as the causes and consequences of both differ significantly (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier´s (2010) research on the apparent increase of NPP in contrast to the decrease in IPP, perhaps describes the most elegant boundary between the two concepts. IPP refers to forms where there is a direct attempt to influence politics, behaviors such as voting and contacting a politician, while NPP involves more indirect forms of political participation, such as protesting and signing petitions (Stolle & Hooghe, 2011).

**Positive effect of being religious**

One of the mechanisms that influence political participation, in the context of religious groups, is political trust. The positive effect of political trust on IPP is one that is found often in the existing literature. Hooghe and Marien (2012) state that people with higher levels of political trust are more likely to vote and be politically active through institutions in comparison to people with low political trust, they argue that this is

because people need a basic level of trust in the process itself, prior to institutional participation. At the same time, they find that people low in political trust are more likely to participate via NPP, such as joining protests. Schwartz (1994; 2012) offers a framework which explains why religious people vary in political trust and political behavior in comparison to non-religious people from the assumption that personal values influence each other and consequently their behavior. First of all, the level of political trust people have can be explained through their religious values as political institutions on one hand facilitate order and structure in a civilization, but on the other hand they also inhibit personal freedom. Secondly, from this perspective it can be assumed that people who value conformity more as opposed to change are more likely to trust institutions that evolve around maintaining the status quo. An indicator of this mechanism is also found by Pitlik and Rode (2017) as they find that higher levels on the value of self-direction lowers the assessment of political intervention. They argue that this is because government intervention reduces the feeling of self-control in individuals. Conservative values advocating stability and traditionalism could be a focal point for a conservative religious group, while more liberal groups prioritize independence and change, which from Schwartz' perspective will lead to different forms of political behavior. According to Devos, Spini and Schwartz (2002), religious people score higher on values that indicate appeasement with overarching authority and traditions and at the same time report lower levels on values that accentuate personal fulfillment and self-control. Omelicheva and Ahmed (2018) also state that the different beliefs, values and practices these religious groups have, result in different levels of political participation of the members in these groups.

Social movement theories seek to explain the difference in political participation between groups and state that communication within groups is central in this (Tshifhumulo, Amaechi & Masoga, 2019) and that at the individual level there are certain aspects that influence political participation, which are *motives, the political opportunity structure and incentives* (Omelicheva & Ahmed, 2018). *Motives* relate to the underlying demands of a person that lead to a political act. These actions take place within a certain context with conditions that determine whether or not these demands are feasible; the *political opportunity structure*. The role of *incentives* in this context relates to the cost and benefit of political participation. Omelicheva and Ahmed state that religion facilitates political participation when religious topics that have an

impact regarding the values of religious people become political issues. An example of this is the resistance and protesting behavior - a typical form of NPP - among religious groups against the legalization of same-sex marriages. Religious interests cause the faithful to become politically active if these interests are perceived to be in danger. Furthermore, Omelicheva and Ahmed´s perspective also states that religious groups are more powerful than non-religious associations in mobilizing political activity as they are at an advantage concerning political opportunities in contrast to secular associations. These advantages Aminzade and Perry (2001) state are among others, in the form of tax privileges and the fact that in Western societies religious places are respected for their sacredness. which tends to makes supervision of groups difficult that hold more extreme political ideas and groups that specifically target young people. Bloom and Arikan´s (2013) perspective on the effect of religion on politics further underlines that religious people are more likely to be more politically active, as they state that religious groups also function as settings that can mobilize people effectively. In short, Bloom and Arikan argue that religious participation in a group develops a sense of political consciousness and political interest among its members. This increased political interest leads to a better understanding of the processes at work in politics and leads to the belief that participating in politics can make a difference in society.

As religious people tend to be more trusting toward overarching rule and authority of political institutions and when the political mobilization possibilities of religious networks versus those of non-religious networks are taken into account, the following hypotheses can be derived.

*H1a : Christians report higher levels of institutional political participation than non-religious people*

*H1b: Christians report higher levels of non-institutional political participation than non-religious people*

*H2a : Muslims report higher levels of institutional political participation than non-religious people*

*H2b : Muslims report higher levels of non-institutional political participation than non-religious people*

**Positive effect of being non-religious**

However, it can also be argued that secular institutions find more general support in the non-religious group. Political institutions in Europe are likely to be more approved by non-religious people as this group holds more secular values and are more supporting of democracy in comparison with Christians and Muslims. The relation between religion and less support for democracy, due to traditional values, is also stated by Arikan and Bloom (2013). While non-religious people might have less trust in institutions in comparison to religious people, as Schwarz (2002) would explain because of the overarching and authoritative nature of these institutions, this does not imply that the support among non-religious people for secular institutions is lower. This assumption is in line with Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier (2010) who find that in Western Europe a group they categorize as postmaterialists, report lower levels of political trust but are similar in support for democracy in comparison to other groups. They are more skeptical of institutional political processes, an indicator of a lower level of political trust, but this does not inherently imply lower political participation through institutions as it could be that their secular values lead them to be more politically active through these secularized institutions compared to people who hold religious values. Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier additionally state that in modern liberal societies NPP is typically more common among postmaterialists, who are characterized by a desire to refrain from party politics and prefer more independent ways to engage politically. The same trend is found by Theocharis (2011); who found that postmaterialists display higher levels of NPP in comparison to more conservative groups. Research from Kaase (1999) already described the positive effect of low political trust on NPP. Kaase finds an explanation for this relation in the fact that discontent citizens in the West in the twentieth century vented their frustrations in “newer” non-institutional forms. To summarize Kaase, it is a lack of political confidence that leads to more NPP. From the arguments that non-religious people hold more secular values that approve of democracy and are more likely to report lower levels of political trust, the following hypotheses can be derived:

> *H3a: Non-religious people report higher levels of institutional political participation than Christians and Muslims*
>
> *H3b: Non-religious people report higher levels of non-institutional political participation than Christians and Muslims*

**Positive effect of being Christian over Muslim**

So far the constructed hypotheses examine the differences in IPP and NPP between the non-religious and the two religious groups, but an important topic in this research is the fact that in Europe a participation gap exists between Muslims and Christians. In the literature it is often found that Muslims show lower levels of political participation in Europe (Cesari, 2014). Giugni, Michel & Giagni (2014) explain this gap by using the social capital theory, which states that this form of capital is a particular type of advantage related to the connections and bonds in groups and between individuals. Fennema & Tillie (1999) related this theory to the political participation of ethnic minorities and state that social trust emerges from the associations people have, which in turn leads to a higher likelihood of political participation. Giugni, Michel & Giagni´s framework also includes the difference in effect of ethnic and cross-ethnic connections, where ethnic refers to associations with people with the same ethnicity and cross-ethnic implying the associations with the nation´s majority group. Putnam´s (2000) concepts of *bonding* and *bridging* fit into this context as ethnic connections implicate bonds within a specific community and cross-ethnic relations reflect the bridges between ethnic communities. For Muslim minorities in Europe these voluntary cross-ethnic associations - bridges - are an important predictor for eventual political participation, while Morales & Pilati (2011) state that the bonds within certain ethnic communities could even disconnect member further from society and decrease political engagement. When considering the impact of social resources on political participation the additional hypotheses can be derived concerning Christian and Muslim networks

> *H4a : Muslims report lower levels of institutional political participation than Christians*
>
> *H4b : Muslims report lower levels of non-institutional political participation than Christians*

**Religious service attendance**

Besides merely analyzing the effect that feeling affiliated towards a religious group has on political participation, the religious practice among those who belief is an important indicator to predict political participation. Through attending religious services people develop social capital and social skills and this furthermore increases the likelihood of feeling connected with their surroundings, which are all conditions for more political

participation. Amman (2014) argues these conditions are necessary for political participation and can grow because religious places are political and drive people to embrace political ideas held by the congregation and its leaders. At the same time, the relations people develop in their religious group leads to stronger connections with their community, which not only leads to more civic engagement, but also political participation in general. This is in line with Verba et al. (1995) who conclude that even if people attend religious services that entail no political substance at all, they still train abilities that are necessary for political engagement. Verba et al. subsequently argue that as a result, even people who might seem to be less politically active regarding other characteristics (e.g. lower vocational occupations) their religious service attendance ultimately increases the likelihood of political participation. The following hypothesis can be derived from this point of view:

> *H5a: Attending religious service leads to higher levels of political participation*

This widely researched mechanism is contradicted by Driskell, Embry and Lyon (2008) who find a negative relationship of religious service attendance on political participation and ascribe this result as an ´economy-of-time effect´. This effect was already found by Iannaccone (1990) who states that higher levels of religious practice result in lower levels of political participation and that this is due to the fact that the more time and effort one spends on religion, the less time and effort will be available for other issues including forms of political participation. Smith & Walker (2013) subsequently claim that this effect should be more evident in more exhausting political activities, such as participating in a demonstration. But Smith and Walker also argue that even voting is a political activity that requires a considerable amount of time which cannot be allocated towards other issues. The cost of voting is time, which of course cannot be retrieved. From the economy-of-time effect the following hypotheses can be derived:

> *H5b: Attending religious service leads to lower levels of political participation*

**Religious discrimination**

Religious affiliation has become less prominent in European countries in recent decades, but Achterberg (2009) does conclude that those that remain are more keen to increase the public importance of their religion in society. When political discourse

in a society has implications for the this aspect of religious' lives, religious groups feel threatened which increases the motivation to participate politically (Basedau et al., 2011). Omelicheva and Ahmed (2018) underline this mechanism as they explain this through the fact that increased political participation results from wanting to safeguard religious interests from politics. Religious group membership is experienced as crucial in the self-definition and as a response to threats, taking action is only a logical consequence. At the same time it is also found that perceived rejection in turn has a positive effect on even stronger group-identification (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). Paradoxically, Achterberg finds that in societies where the overall impact of religion on politics is diminishing, the call for influence on politics among religious groups grows, which leads to further perceived relative deprivation among these groups. The interpretation of feeling threatened on the ground of their religion is assumed to differ for European Christians and European Muslims and is important to take into account. While Christians who feel discriminated against are more certain this is just because of religious differences, the concept of "Muslim" is less clear in the literature and in society (Giugni, Michel & Gianni, 2014). They state that this concept refers to a more difficult social identification, as Muslim groups in a country often differ in ethnic background too and furthermore, some people identify as Muslim while in fact they are actually not religious at all. The reasons for this is the associations they have between ´being Muslim´, their ethnic background and the social networks they are part of (Giugni, Michel & Gianni, 2014). Because of this distinction between perceived Christian discrimination and perceived Muslim discrimination the effect of perceived religious discrimination is likely to differ for Christians and Muslims. On one hand as Muslims feel additionally marginalized on the ground of their religion, as well as their ethnicity this might cause perceived religious discrimination to have a stronger effect for Muslims than for Christians. It can be argued that Muslims do not differ in the assessment of ethnic and religious discrimination as these are perceived to be similar and are hard to distinguish. On the other hand, it can be assumed that Christian networks do however have more resources at their disposal, as explained earlier through available social capital, which they can rely upon when they feel marginalized which would result in a stronger effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation. From these perspectives the following contradicting hypotheses can be derived:

*H6A: The effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation is larger for Muslims than for Christians*

*H6B: The effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation is larger for Christians than for Muslims*

Summarized, on one hand a set of hypotheses are formulated in which religious groups are more engaged in politics, and on the on the other hand it can also be argued that the non-religious group is more engaged in politics. In both of the sets Muslims are stated to be less political active than Christians. Furthermore, the effect of regular religious service attendance on political participation is also hypothesized both ways, a positive effect is expected from the social network and mobilization theories and a negative effect is expected from the economy-of-time effect. At last, two hypotheses entailing an interaction-effect of being either Christian, or Muslim on the effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation are posited. One in which this effect is expected to be larger for Muslims and the other in which it is expected that this effect is larger for Christians.

# DATA & METHODS

Totest the hypotheses the European Social Survey Round 8, fielded in 2016 - 2017 is used, containing 44.387 respondents from 23 countries. This is the most coherent and recent set of data available that is known for its representativeness and its inclusion of both questions on religion, and of questions on politics with a minimum target response rate of 70% in all countries. In order to obtain such high rates the ESS is conducted by trained interviewers in a face-to-face setting. The present research aims to analyze differences in political participation between Muslims, Christians and non-religious people in Western Europe and combines data from multiple countries. This means country-levels characteristics and differences are overlooked. This is important to notice, but as Muslims are underrepresented in individual country-level data it is also unavoidable with the current resources available. To some degree, this problem of underrepresentation and overlooking country level differences is solved. In the analyses a product of the post-stratification and population size weights is used, as this reduces non-response and sample bias when combining ESS country data (ESS, 2014).

## Selection

Some decisions regarding the data decrease the initial sample size. First of all, as the focus of this paper is on the differences between Christians, Muslims and non-religious people in Western European countries a selection is made from respondents from Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland; thus respondents from other European countries and respondents in the above mentioned countries who feel affiliated with a different religious group are excluded. The selection of these specific countries does not only depend on geographical location but also on the severe underrepresentation of Muslims in other countries. Furthermore, as voting is the indicator used to measure IPP, respondents who were not eligible to vote in the last general election are excluded. After exclusion of the respondents with missing values on these variables a total of 14.816 cases remained. Furthermore, 121 cases are removed with a missing value on one of the six indicators of NPP, as well as the 138 respondents with three or more missing values on the set of seven items measuring political trust, as such these variables can be viewed as continuous. After these selections a total number of cases of 14.557 remained. Subsequently, nine cases are removed as these contain religious people who have missing values on a measure regarding religion and can therefore not be analyzed. After the selection of respondents who additionally responded on the control variables the total number of cases is 14.346. At last, when the data is screened on outliers some implausible values were found, four respondents were removed who answered they had followed 33 or more years, as well as minors who did not indicate they were *"Ineligible to vote"* but rather responded *"No"* on this question and for whom the interviewers did not correct this. After these deletions the valid number of cases is 14.298.

## Operationalization

In order to test the hypotheses some of the variables of the original dataset are reconstructed. The following section will discuss the construction of each variable. Table 1 below describes each variable's mean, range, number of cases and, if applicable its standard deviation.

*Political participation*

As political participation can be clearly distinguished between IPP and NPP, two different constructs were created. The main indicator for IPP, which is voting, is

measured through the formulation *"Some people don't vote nowadays for one reason or another. Did you vote in the last national election?"* A dummy variable is constructed where people who voted were given the value "1" and those who did not are assigned a "0". NPP is constructed by taking several statements for which the respondents could also answer "Yes· or "No". The statements were formulated as such *"There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Have you... ...worked in another organization or association?* (non-political)*/ …worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?/ …signed a petition?/ …taken part in a lawful public demonstration?/ …boycotted certain products?/ …posted or shared anything about politics online, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter?"* To construct a continuous scale for NPP, dummy variables are created for every statement, with a *"Yes"* given a value of 1 and every *"No"* a value of 0. After this construction a sum variable adds these dummy variables together, where higher values on NPP indicate more participation through non-institutional ways. The Cronbach's Alpha for the NPP items is .601, which can be interpreted as a sufficient correlation between these six items, excluding items does not increase correlation between the items, therefore this sum-measure is taken.

*Political Trust*

Similar to political participation, political trust is often distinguished into underlying concepts, such as trust in non-partisan institutions, for example the judicial system and trust in governing institutions, for example parliament (Newton, Stolle & Zmerli, 2018). In research from Hooghe (2011), however, it is concluded that political trust can indeed be measured through one dimension as he finds that people do not vary in their assessment of different political institutions and thus rate the operation of political institutions as a whole in their assessment of political trust. Therefore, to construct a single valid measure for political trust a mean score of the following items is taken, if respondents had five or more valid values on these. *"Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly…[respondent country]'s parliament?/ …the legal system?/…the police?/ …politicians?/ …political parties?/ …the European Parliament?/ …the United Nations?"* The final correlation between these seven trust measures is very high, as

the Cronbach's Alpha is .900. This indicates that this mean-score is a very reliable measure for political trust.

*Religion*

The question *"Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?"* was posed to construct respondents´ religious beliefs. When people answered *"No",* they are categorized as Non-religious in the present data, while respondents who responded *"Yes"*, were subsequently asked which religious group they feel affiliated with. Respondents indicating they belong to a Christian group are categorized together, as the differences among Christian groups is not the point of interest in the present research. The third religious group in the present data consists of Muslim respondents.

As the second part of the analysis entails only the Christian and Muslim respondents, only they are assigned scores in the two variables that measure religious characteristics. Non-religious people could have been included in this comparison, but this would have created biased results as the non-religious of course score very low on these measures and this distorts the relations of the religious predictors and outcome. A dummy variable is created for which religious respondents indicating they attend service more than once a month are grouped together, as are those that attended service less than once a month. That question was posed the following *"Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?",* for which answer categories ranged from *"Never"* to *"Every day"*. The second variable regarding religious people is the perceived religious discrimination they experience and was questioned as following *"On what grounds is your group discriminated against?"*, answer categories for this question were not exhaustive and included *"religion"*. When respondents indicated they feel discriminated because of their religion, in the present data they are assigned to the *"Yes"* group and the religious people who do not experience religious discrimination are assigned to the opposing group.

*Controls*

In the context of political participation, the respondents´ indication of their confidence in their ability of politics is measured on a 5-point scale range where 1 indicates *"Not at all confident"* and 5 indicates *"Completely confident"* as well as their level of political interest, for which a dummy variable is constructed were a 1 indicates *"Quite or Very*

*interested"* and a 0 indicates *"Hardly and Not at all interested".* Furthermore, standard control variables such as respondents' gender, age and education in years are also taken into account. In the analyses the mean score of age and education in years is subtracted for each value for interpretation purposes.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics.

| Variable | Min. | Max. | Mean | SD | Number of cases |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Institutional political participation | 0 | 1 | 0.83 | - | 14.298 |
| Non-institutional political participation | 0 | 6 | 1.30 | 1.39 | 14.298 |
| Political trust | 1 | 11 | 6.11 | 1.82 | 14.298 |
| Confident own political ability | 1 | 5 | 2.40 | 1.07 | 14.298 |
| Interest in politics | 0 | 1 | 0.60 | - | 14.298 |
| Non-religious | 0 | 1 | 0.49 | - | 14.298 |
| Christian | 0 | 1 | 0.48 | - | 14.298 |
| Muslim | 0 | 1 | 0.03 | - | 14.298 |
| Service attendance | 0 | 1 | 0.30 | - | 7.243 |
| Religious discrimination | 0 | 1 | 0.03 | - | 7.243 |
| Female | 0 | 1 | 0.51 | - | 14.298 |
| Age | 18 | 100 | 52.08 | 17.42 | 14.298 |
| Education in years | 0 | 30 | 13.47 | 3.68 | 14.298 |

*Note.* "Service attendance" and "Religious discrimination" only constructed for religious groups

## Analysis strategy

The analyses that involve IPP are done with logistic regression and those with NPP as outcome are modelled with OLS linear regression, both types of analyses are conducted using the statistical software program R (Version 1.2.5042) and the unstandardized coefficients as well as the standard errors are reported. For logistic models the McFadden and accuracy are reported and for linear models the adjusted $R^2$ is reported to evaluate model fit. Additionally, the hypotheses concerning the effect of religious attendance and perceived religious discrimination are only done for the religious groups and thus this interaction term was added to research the difference in effect of religious discrimination between religious groups on political participation. For clarity, first the models concerning IPP will be stated in a single table and the models concerning NPP will be evaluated in a separate table.

# RESULTS

Differences are to be expected between religious groups in their level of political participation. To come back the research question: *To what extent do Muslims, Christians and non-religious people vary in political participation and what are the mechanisms that affect this?*", multiple contradicting hypothesis were posited concerning the effect of various religious characteristics and two forms of political participation. These forms entail IPP and NPP, where the former consists of behavior that directly affects politics through political institutions, the latter refers to behaviors that less directly influence politics. For clarity, IPP and NPP will be elaborated upon individually

**institutional political participation**

Table 2 depicts the models regarding IPP, where the coefficients are the log of the odds for each variable. In general, the pseudo $R^2$ values indicate reasonable model fit for each model. Model 1 and 2 have a pseudo $R^2$ of .150. Keep in mind that these models are the same as only the reference category differs. For Model 3 the pseudo $R^2$ is .121, while this is .122 for Model 4. Another indicator of reasonable model accuracy is the confusion matrix (Appendix B), from which it can be derived that the overall accuracy of Model 1 ≈ .83, and that specifically the detection of those who engaged in IPP is very high, as the specificity of the model is ≈ .97. For clarity, in the remainder of this section the expected probabilities will be interpreted for these models instead of its log odds. The detailed calculations can be found in Appendix A. Models 1 and 2 show the results regarding hypotheses *H1a*, *H2a*, *H3a* and *H4a* on the inter-group differences between Muslims, Christians and non-religious people in IPP. Christians are the reference group in Model 1 and significantly differ from Muslims and non-religious people in the probability of IPP. The results are displayed in boxplots in Figure 1, which immediately shows the apparent variation of probability in IPP of each group based on Model 1 and 2, with the mean-value of the groups depicted as red asterisk.

**Table 2.** Logistic regression coefficients of religious and political variables and social characteristics on IPP.

| | Models with IPP of all groups | | Models with IPP of only Christians and Muslims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
| Political trust | .157***<br>(.011) | .. | .117***<br>(.016) | .117***<br>(.017) |
| Confident own political ability | .184***<br>(.021) | .. | .210***<br>(.033) | .209***<br>(.033) |
| Interest in politics | .970***<br>(.043) | .. | .785***<br>(.064) | .785***<br>(.064) |
| Non-religious | -.267***<br>(.042) | .211*<br>(.099) | -- | -- |
| Christian | *Ref* | .478***<br>(.101) | *Ref* | *Ref* |
| Muslim | -.478***<br>(.101) | *Ref* | -.590***<br>(.103) | -.723***<br>(.120) |
| Religious discrimination | -- | -- | -- | -.580**<br>(.212) |
| Religious discrimination * Muslim | -- | -- | -- | .974***<br>(.295) |
| Service attendance | -- | -- | .233***<br>(.068) | .251***<br>(.069) |
| Female | .048<br>(.040) | ..<br>.. | -.104<br>(.060) | -.120*<br>(.060) |
| Age | .037***<br>(.001) | ..<br>.. | .033***<br>(.002) | .033***<br>(.002) |
| Education in years | .099***<br>(.007) | ..<br>.. | .095***<br>(.010) | .094***<br>(.010) |
| Constant | -.169*<br>(.085) | -.647***<br>(.124) | .109<br>(.122) | .124<br>(.123) |
| McFadden $R^2$ | .150 | .150 | .121 | .122 |
| Number of cases | 14.298 | 14.298 | 7.243 | 7.243 |

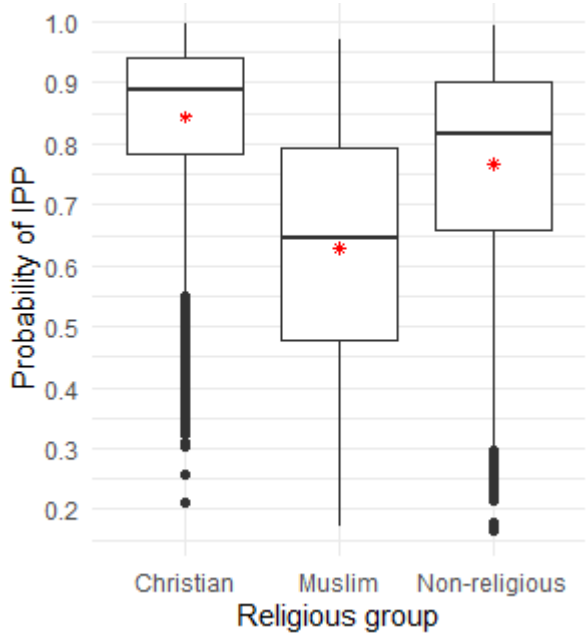
*Note.* "IPP" measured as dummy variable where Yes (= 1). Standard error coefficients in parentheses. "Age" and "Education in years" centered to the mean. AIC in sequence (15.495, 15.495, 7.238, 7.232). *$p$ < .05, **$p$ < .01, ***$p$ < .001 (two-sided).

An example based on Model 1 and 2; the expected probability for mean-educated and -aged Christian men, with little or no interest in politics, who score 3 on confidence in own ability and 6 on the political trust scale is .79 and this significantly differs from their probability of Muslim and non-religious peers, who respectively have a probability of .70 and .74. Thus, the probability of IPP is significantly higher in the Christian group as opposed to the Muslim and non-religious groups; all else being equal, they score 9 percentage points more on IPP than Muslims and 5 percentage points more l than non-religious people. Model 2, which takes the Muslim group as reference category, shows

that the 4 percentage point difference between Muslims and non-religious people is also significant. In short, Model 1 and Model 2 provide evidence that H1a – *Christians report higher levels of IPP than non-religious people* – is true, as well as that H4a – *Muslim report lower levels of IPP than Christians* – is true. On the contrary, H2a – *Muslim report higher levels than non-religious people* - is disproven, which implies H3a - *Non-religious people report higher levels of IPP than Christians and Muslims* – is partly confirmed as non-religious people are less likely in relation to Christians, but more likely than Muslims to IPP.

Continuing with Model 3 and 4 of Table 2, which further analyze the effects of several religious mechanisms on IPP, a general effect of religious service attendance (Model 3) exists as well as a significant difference in effect of religious discrimination between Christians and Muslims (Model 4). the probability for mean-educated and -aged Christian men, with little or no interest in politics, who score 3 on confidence in own ability and 6 on political trust, who more frequently attend religious services is .84, in comparison to .81 for Christian peers who less frequently attend service. For Muslims the probability of IPP is .75 when services are more regularly attended and this decreases to .70 when religious services are less frequently attended. Whether or not the difference in effect of service attendance on IPP varies between Muslims and Christians is not in the scope of the present article but it can be concluded that, in general, attending religious services more frequently leads to higher probabilities of IPP, which confirms H5a - *Attending religious service leads to higher levels of political participation* – and disproves H5b - *Attending religious service leads to lower levels of political participation* -, but so far only in the context of IPP. At last, there also seems prove that the effect of religious discrimination on IPP is stronger for Muslims than for Christians. The probability for Christians who experience religious discrimination, with the same characteristics as earlier examples and additionally indicate they are less

**Figure 1. Probability boxplots of IPP**



frequent attendees of services is .71, whereas Christians with the same characteristics who do not experience religious discrimination is .81. In contrast, the probabilities for Muslims in this regard are respectively .75 for those who perceive to be religiously discriminated and .67 for those who do not experience religious discrimination. Thus, not only is the effect larger for Muslims, the effect of religious discrimination on IPP seems to be opposed for the two religious groups. Where Christians who feel discriminated have a lower probability of IPP in comparison to other Christians, Muslims who feel discriminated have a higher probability of IPP in comparison to other Muslims. Therefore, H6a - *The effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation is larger for Muslims than for Christians* – is proven, which means H6b - *The effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation is larger for Christians than for Muslims* – is disproven in the context of IPP. This difference between Muslims and Christians in this mechanism is an interesting result as discrimination leads to lower probabilities on IPP for Christians, but higher probabilities for Muslims. Some more general conclusions that can be derived from Table 2 are that higher levels of political trust, confidence in own political ability and interest in politics all have a positive effect on the probability of IPP, with the log odds increasing significantly with each unit increase in these variables. Additionally, as Model 1 and 2 include the non-religious group, it is an interesting result that the effect of *political trust* is higher on the log odds of IPP as compared to Model 3 and 4 where only the religious groups are analyzed; meaning that *political trust* could be a more important facilitator of IPP for non-religious people than for religious people, who might be expected to be more accepting of authority and hence participate via these institutions anyway. A similar indicator is found for *interest in politics,* while it could be that *confidence in own political ability* is a stronger predictor for religious people on IPP as opposed to non-religious people. Finally, there is also an indication of a moderation of gender and religion on IPP, as gender is not a significant predictor in difference between IPP in Model 1 and 2, but increases in effect size when only religious groups are examined. In other words, the log odds decrease with .120 for women in Model 4, and is significant ($p < .05/2$), while in the models with all groups, gender is not a significant predictor of IPP, which implies there could be a gender-effect in IPP between religious groups as religious women have lower probabilities of IPP than non-religious women. Age and education are also flagged as significant, but this increase is rather small for every 1-

unit increase, for example the log-odds increment in Model 1 for age is B = .099, and for education this is B = .037.

**Non-institutional political participation**

Table 3 depicts the models regarding NPP, where the coefficients are the absolute differences in the scale of the outcome. In general, the adjusted $R^2$ indicates moderate model fit for each model as all are ≈ .200. As opposed to Table 2, the results are less significant and even non-existent in the context of the effect of religious group on NPP.

**Table 3.** OLS linear regression coefficients of religious and political variables and social characteristics on NPP.

| | Models with NPP of all groups | | Models with NPP of only Christians and Muslims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
| Political trust | -.034***<br>(.006) | ..<br>.. | -.034***<br>(.008) | -.030***<br>(.008) |
| Confident own political ability | .327***<br>(.011) | ..<br>.. | .342***<br>(.015) | .341***<br>(.015) |
| Interest in politics | .456***<br>(.023) | ..<br>.. | .408***<br>(.033) | .406***<br>(.033) |
| Non-religious | .045*<br>(.022) | -.013<br>(.061) | -- | -- |
| Christian | *Ref* | -.058<br>(.062) | *Ref* | *Ref* |
| Muslim | .058<br>(.062) | *Ref* | .036<br>(.062) | -.092<br>(.074) |
| Religious discrimination | -- | -- | -- | .308**<br>(.112) |
| Religious discrimination * Muslim | -- | -- | -- | .130<br>(.168) |
| Service attendance | -- | -- | .118***<br>(.031) | .102**<br>(.031) |
| Female | .140***<br>(.021) | ..<br>.. | .064*<br>(.029) | .058*<br>(.029) |
| Age | -.006***<br>(.001) | ...<br>.. | -.006***<br>(.001) | -.006***<br>(.001) |
| Education in years | .068***<br>(.003) | ..<br>.. | .059***<br>(.004) | .057***<br>(.004) |
| Constant | .304***<br>(.047) | .362***<br>(.073) | .304***<br>(.063) | .283***<br>(.063) |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | .194 | .194 | .194 | .196 |
| Number of cases | 14.298 | 14.298 | 7.243 | 7.243 |

*Note.* "NPP" measured as sum of six binary items of NPP. Standard error coefficients in parentheses. "Female" and "Education in years" centered to the mean. *$p$ < .05, **$p$ < .01, ***$p$ < .001 (two-sided).

Model 1 shows there is a collective effect that is significant of the predictors on the value of NPP (F(8, 14.289) = 430.7, p < .001/2), but the individual effects seem to be less evident than in Table 2. There seems to be hardly any difference between religious groups on NPP, with only non-religious people reporting significant higher levels of NPP (B = .045, t(14.289) = 2.054, p = .040). However, an increase of .045 on the scale of NPP is rather low, and should therefore not be given too much weight. Although, the *Beta* coefficient of Muslims is higher, .058, it is deemed not significant as the standard error is likely to be too large because the group of Muslims is significantly smaller.

An interesting finding of the models in general, is that while higher levels of *political trust* result in a significant higher probability of IPP, higher levels of political trust seem to result in lower levels of NPP, for Model 1 and 2; (B = -.034, t(14.289) = -5.782 p < .001/2), which is in line with the reasoning that *political trust* is on one hand, a positive indicator for participation via institutions, and on the other hand a negative indicator for non-institutional participation. This results should however be interpreted with caution as its effect sizes are relatively small. Other predictors, apart from age, indicate significant positive effects, but when examining the effect sizes of these compared to the measurement scales the results in Model 1 and Model 2 should be considered rather uninformative as well.

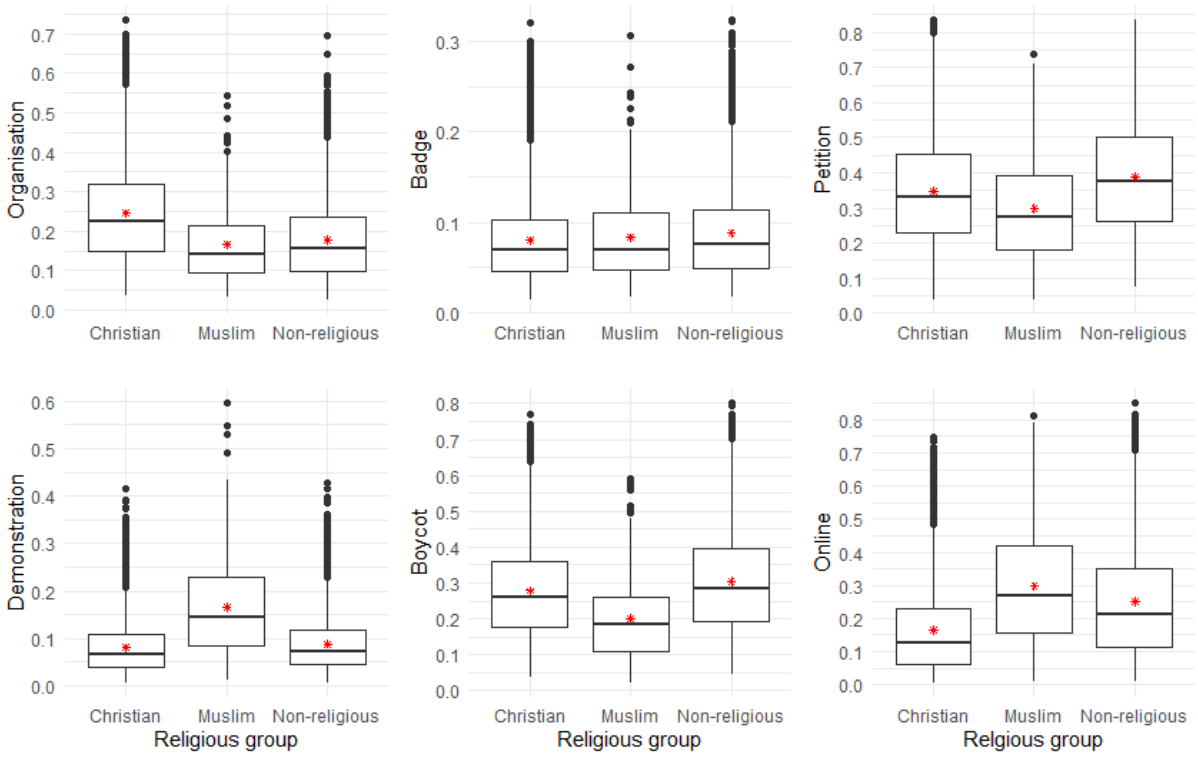
The same conclusion applies to Model 3 and 4, when only the religious groups are considered. Attending service on a regular versus non-regular basis is flagged as a significant predictor but an increase of .118 on a 0 to 6 scale is again rather small and the same can be said for the difference in perceived religious discrimination. All else being equal, reference Christians who do not perceive to be religiously discriminated are expected to have a value of (Constant = ) .282 on NPP in comparison with (.282 + .308 = ) .590 of discriminated Christians, while for Muslims this is (.282 + .308 - .092 = ) .498, and (.282 + .308 - .092 + .130 = ) .818 when they experience religious discrimination. Summarized, the effect sizes of the predictors in Table 3 are rather small and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

**Variation in NPP**

However, as the sum of multiple items is taken to construct the scale of NPP, this does not imply similarity in NPP behavior apparently. Exploratory research by means of logistic regression analysis for each of the six items shows that the probabilities on

each item vary significantly over the religious groups, as Figure 2 shows. Figure 2 displays each respondent's probability of participation while controlling for the same predictors as in Models 1 and 2. There seems to be some degree of variation in forms of NPP between the religious groups. As it is out of the scope of the current research to more precisely examine these differences, the six models are displayed in full in Appendix B. The boxplots do show interesting preliminary results, however, which will be covered briefly.

**Figure 2. Probability boxplots of NPP items**




First of all, Christians seem to have a significantly higher probability, around .25, in *working in non-institutional organizations* in relation to Muslims and non-religious people, who do not seem to differ from each other on this item. The second boxplot refers to respondents' probabilities of *wearing badges*, but there does not seem to be significant variation between groups, with all three group-mean probabilities being below .10. Furthermore, there also seems to be different probabilities in *boycotting* behavior between the Muslim group and the others, as the former has a mean probability of around .20 and the non-Muslim groups of around .30. A similar pattern is found in the probability of *signing petitions* as the non-religious' mean of around .40 is higher than that of the religious groups. At last, in contradiction to prior findings,

Muslims do have a higher probability of *participating in demonstration* and *posting or sharing political content online* with probabilities of around .15 and .30. These final results show that while NPP as a whole does not seem to differ drastically between religious groups, significant variation in probability emerge when individual items are analyzed.

In conclusion, Table 2 showed that there is significant variation in IPP between religious groups, as Christians have a higher probability on this outcome as opposed to Muslims and non-religious people, that attending religious service has a positive effect on IPP and that religious discrimination has a positive effect on the probability for Muslims and a negative effect on the probabilities for Christians. Table 3 showed that differences in NPP are rather small, but did show that unlike any other variable on the effect of IPP the effect of *political trust* switches when it involves NPP. People with lower levels of political trust are more likely to participate politically via a non-institutional way. But because the effect sizes are too small to really give any weight to their differences and because Figure 2 shows that there are significant differences within forms of NPP, a general conclusion about the effect of religion on NPP cannot be defended and hypotheses regarding NPP neither proven or disproven.

Therefore, besides the posited hypotheses that were confirmed in the case of merely IPP; H1a – *Christians report higher levels of IPP than non-religious people*, H4a – *Muslim report lower levels of IPP than Christians* – and H3a - *Non-religious people report higher levels of IPP than Christians and Muslims* – which is partly confirmed, additionally H5a - *Attending religious service leads to higher levels of political participation,* and H6a - *The effect of perceived religious discrimination on political participation is larger for Muslims than for Christians are* partly proven, as it remains unclear what the effect is on different forms of NPP and it is unrealistic to deduct conclusions from the analyses that poses to measure NPP as a whole.

# CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

Religious groups in Western Europe differ in the effect they have on the political participation of their followers. This is illustrated by the variation in probabilities on various forms of political participation. Because of the importance of voting, as illustrated by the Brexit example in the introduction, especially the differences in IPP

between religious groups should be considered. The present research has some interesting results as it poses to answer the question;

"*To what extent do Muslims, Christians and non-religious people vary in political participation and what are the mechanisms that affect this?".*

First of all, in the context of institutional political participation, the probabilities are highest for Christians, followed by non-religious people and at last Muslims, as well as that attending religious services increases the probability for religious individuals. Evidence is found that Christian networks are effective in mobilizing their followers to be politically active. A reason for Muslim networks to have less influence on the political participation of its members could be because of the fact they are less integrated in the political system in Western Europe. Christian networks are better integrated in the political system of Western European democracies in comparison to Muslim networks in terms of presence of Christian-oriented political parties, while it is additionally reasonable to assume the average Christian is better integrated at a socio-economic level in Western societies than the average Muslim, which results in higher levels of political engagement among Christians. Political parties with a strong Christian emphasis have participated in government for decades, while parties such as Denk in the Netherlands, that try to reach Muslim minorities have only formed more recently. It will be interesting to see in coming years, if an increasingly more visible presence of Muslim politicians will lead to more political participation through institutions by Muslims.

Furthermore, for Christian and Muslims the effect of perceived religious discrimination has opposite directions; Muslims are more likely to participate via institutions, whereas Christians become less likely to do so when experiencing religious discrimination. This specifically opposes Achterberg's (2009) perspective that Christians desire more influence in the public sphere when they perceive to feel more threatened in their religious beliefs. Achterberg does not include Muslims in his research, but from his perspective experiencing religious discrimination is assumed to be a main predictor for a *desire* for political action among Christians. The present research finds that this desire for political action only transforms into actual political participation among Muslims, while the effect of perceived religious discrimination for Christians actually decreases the likelihood of political participation. Future research

should aim to uncover the precise mechanisms that result in this differing effect between Christians and Muslims in Europe and should make a clear distinction between ethnic - and religious discrimination. This distinction should be made as the interpretation of religious discrimination differs between Muslims and Christians; it can be assumed Christians are better able to identify religious discrimination in Western Europe, whereas for Muslims the concept of religious discrimination is harder to separate from ethnic discrimination as the term 'Muslim' is often used for both its religious meaning as well as when used to refer to Arab and Middle Eastern ethnicities as a whole. It should be noted that the amount of Christians and Muslims who perceived to be religiously discriminated was respectively only 87 and 97, but this moderation result does give an insight in the different effect perceived discrimination can have depending on the targeted group.

The also seems to be a gender-gap difference which is important to further explore as religious women have lower probabilities on participation via institutions than religious men, but the gender-effect does not appear when non-religious people are included. Subsequent research should make a distinction between Christians and Muslims in the gender-effect to give insight if religion, in general, decreases the probability for women or if this varies for religious groups as well. An explanation could be found in the fact that religious groups hold more traditional gender-roles, while non-religious people tend to hold more liberal views on gender-roles (i.e. more equal). While religious groups have been part of the same societies that have implemented equal rights for men and women decades ago, there still seems to be a difference in political participation between religious men and religious women. Thus, the costs of political participation, which can be viewed in traditional roles as more in the realm of men , are higher for religious women as opposed to non-religious women and therefore leads to less political participation among religious women. The effect of gender on political participation is likely to vary between Muslims and Christians too based on the basis of integration arguments mentioned before. As explained in the introduction; a liberal democracy functions most effectively when social groups are equally represented and the present research finds clear evidence this is not the case for religious groups. Unravelling what the precise differences are, will give policy-makers more insight which groups to target to incite political engagement and interest, important predictors for eventual political participation.

The results when non-institutional political participation is taken as multidimensional concept are rather irrelevant, with only non-religious people having higher levels than Christians, but as this effect size is so minimal its impact in reality is only small. The same is true for other indicators of the analyses for which the outcome, NPP, is taken as a sum. Items that can be viewed as indicators for non-institutional participation should be categorized on the dimension of political participation they measure (e.g. through exploratory factor analysis) to be able to analyze differences between groups more thoroughly. In other words, the current construction of non-institutional political participation is too diverse in the behaviors that it measures (Cronbach's Alpha = .601) to generalize the effect of religion on non-institutional political participation as a whole. But, exploratory research in the present research does indeed find differences in probabilities between groups when NPP items are analyzed separately. It seems there is no apparent variation in *wearing badges,* but that Christians have higher probabilities of *working in organizations*, Muslim have lower probabilities for *boycotting*, but higher ones for *joining demonstrations* and *online posting* and non-religious people have higher probabilities on *signing petitions.* This provides evidence that religious groups express their political values through different mediums. The finding that non-religious people have the highest probabilities on signing petitions is similar to Marien, Hooghe & Quintelier's (2010) reasoning that signing petitions has become an popular method among post-materialists, as this type of participation is very individual and has a low threshold. Hereby a reasonable assumption is made that non-religious people are overrepresented in this liberal post-materialistic group. The social pressure in religious groups to collectively participate in a political action is greater than in non-religious groups, which partly explains the different methods people use to express their political opinion. However, this perspective would also assume post-materialists to perhaps be more active in other individual behaviors, such as *online posting* and *boycotting*, than currently predicted. The relatively high predicted probability for Christians on *working in organizations* can be seen as an indicator for higher civic engagement among Christians in their communities. Christians are apparently more likely to work in (non-political) organizations. A possible explanation for this could be that Christians in Western Europe perhaps feel more connected to their communities in comparison with other religious groups and therefore are more likely to engage in such associations, on top of the social pressure Christians might experience to be involved in such organizations. Muslims have the highest probabilities on *joining demonstrations* and

*online posting*, while having the lowest on other forms of political behavior in the present research. As protests are typically opposed to the status quo in society and Muslims are disproportionally represented in marginalized communities, and thus have greater interest in changing the status quo, this could explain some of the variance in these probabilities. At last, the finding that Muslims are also more likely to be politically active online could be because this is an accessible method to express political ideas over a community that is spread over different countries, such as the Turkish communities that are spread over Western Europe. These could be possible explanations for the variation in non-institutional political participation and precise mechanisms should be explored more thoroughly. While these items in itself are less important than voting behavior, it is reasonable to assume that engaging in these types of political behaviors can evoke interest in politics and confidence in people's own political ability, which are strong predictors for eventual electoral voting too. Therefore it is worthwhile to more thoroughly explore the relations between religious groups and different types of non-institutional political behaviors. Political participation through non-institutional ways could be a gateway for people to also participate via political institutions as political engagement and peoples' confidence in their own political ability are enhanced. More insight into what forms of non-institutional political participation are more likely for certain groups is informative for policy makers who wish to invoke political interest and institutional participation among underrepresented social groups.

The main limitation of the present data is that the Muslim group is underrepresented in comparison to the Christian and non-religious group, which can only be partly restored by applying the weighting tools recommended by the ESS. A suggestion for future research, when the resources are available, is to sample more Muslim respondents. Earlier cited research from Fennema & Tillie (1999) and Fleischmann, Martinovic & Bohm (2016) already concluded group differences within different Muslim communities in the Netherlands in the context of political trust and political participation. Whether these differences exist because of variation in integration levels remains unclear and could be researched by sampling more Muslim respondents. This would make it possible to further analyze differences not only between Muslims and other groups, but also within the Muslim-group of a specific country and compare these. This is important because although the weights used, allow for some correcting of overlooking country-specific differences it is fair to assume

that the Muslim group in the UK for instance, which consists predominantly of South Asian Muslims, differs from the predominantly Turkish Muslim group in Germany and that of the predominantly North African Muslim group in France. Due to the relatively low numbers of Muslims in the individual countries, this generalization of groups was necessary however, and as the researched countries are Western European societies founded on similar principles it is also reasonable to assume the same general differences between Christian, Muslims and non-religious are applicable in each country. Another possible suggestion on the basis of the current research is that there are some issues with the homogeneity of the variances in the models and that there are some cases with huge standardized residuals that influence the models quite strongly as well. In other words, there is a set of individuals that disproportionally influence the current regression lines, and this could perhaps mean a non-linear relation exists between some of the predictors and the eventual probabilities of political participation. Especially in the case of wanting to more accurately predict probabilities on participation this should be taken into account, but the downside is that interpretation of the model becomes more complex.

All in all, while there are some limitations in the present study concerning underrepresentation, combining country-level data and some outlier issues, first of all strong evidence is found for the difference in probabilities of institutional participation between religious groups. This is a reason for concern as a liberal democracy functions most effectively when all groups are equally represented. Secondly, the effect of religious service attendance is an important predictor of political participation as well as religious discrimination, which has a positive effect for Muslims and a negative effect for Christians. At last, while non-institutional participation, in general, does not seem to differ between religious groups, exploratory research indicates differences in various forms of it between religious groups do exist. This emphasizes the necessity to research types of political behaviors individually as religious groups differ significantly in the mediums use to express political ideas.

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# APPENDIX A: CALCULATIONS

**Probabilities: Table 2**

**P = Exp(B0 + …) / (1 + Exp(B0 + …) →** Logistic Beta to probability function

Table 2 Model 1 (Model 2 has same outcomes)

- *Christian - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 )
  (.184 * 3) + (.157 * 6) -.169 = 1.325
  P = Exp(1.325) / (1 + Exp(1.325) = .790
- *Muslim - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3)
  (.184 * 3) + (.157 * 6) -.169 -.478 = .847
  P = Exp(.847) / (1 + Exp(.847) = .700
- *Non-religious - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 )
  (.184 * 3) + (.157 * 6) -.169 - .267 = 1.058
  P = Exp(1.058) / (1 + Exp(1.058) = .742

Table 2 Model 3

- *Christian - female ( 0 ), mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), Political trust ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), service attendance ( 1 )*
  (.210 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .109 + .233 = 1.674
  P = Exp(1.674) / (1 + Exp(1.674) = .842
- *Christian - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), *service attendance ( 0)*
  (.210 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .109 = 1.441
  P = Exp(1.441) / (1 + Exp(1.441) = .809
- *Muslim - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), *service attendance ( 1 )*
  (.210 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .109 + .233 -.590 = 1.084
  P = Exp(1.084) / (1 + Exp(1.084) = .747
- *Muslim - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), *service attendance ( 0 )*
  (.210 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .109 - .590 = .851
  P = Exp(.851) / (1 + Exp(.851) = .701

Table 2 Model 4

- *Christian - female ( 0), mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), Political trust ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3), service attendance ( 0 ), discrimination ( 0 )*
  (.209 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .124 = 1.453
  P = Exp(1.453) / (1 + Exp(1.453) = .810
- *Christian - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), *service attendance ( 0), discrimination ( 1 )*
  (.209 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .124 -.580 = .873
  P = Exp(.873) / (1 + Exp(.873) = .705
- *Muslim - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), *service attendance ( 0 ), discrimination ( 0 )*
  (.209 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .124 -.723 = .730
  P = Exp(.730) / (1 + Exp(.730) = .675
- *Muslim - female ( 0 )*, mean-age ( 0 ), mean-education ( 0 ), no interest in politics ( 0 ), *Political trust* ( 6 ), Confidence ( 3 ), *service attendance ( 0 ), discrimination ( 1 )*
  (.209 * 3) + (.117 * 6) + .124 -.723 - .580 + .974 = 1.124
  P = Exp(1.124) / (1 + Exp(1.124) = .755

**Confusion Matrix: Table 2, Model 1**

| | True | |
|---|---|---|
| Predicted | No IPP (0) | IPP (1) |
| No IPP (0) | 460 | 462 |
| IPP (1) | 1960 | 11.416 |

The confusion matrix immediately shows the weakness and strength of the predictive power of the model. While, it , for a large part, correctly predicts when people participated, it fails to correctly predict when people did not participate. Overall the accuracy of the model ≈ .83. Of the 11.878 respondents classed as IPP it correctly predicted that 11.416 respondents participated, a specificity rate (True Positive) of ≈ .96. The sensitivity rate (True Negative) is not really high, as this is ≈ .19.

# APPENDIX B: TABLE 4

**Table 4.** Logistic regression coefficients of religious and political variables and social characteristics on six indicators of NPP.

| Variable | *Organization work* | *Worn badge* | *Sign petition* | *Protest* | *Boycott* | *Post online* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political trust | .076*** | .007 | -.033*** | -.120*** | -.097*** | -.080*** |
| | (.012) | (.016) | (.009) | (.015) | (.010) | (.011) |
| Confident own political ability | .341*** | .391*** | .335*** | .340*** | .334*** | .434*** |
| | (.019) | (.027) | (.017) | (.026) | (.018) | (.020) |
| Interest in politics | .411*** | .446*** | .612*** | .617*** | .594*** | .769*** |
| | (.045) | (.066) | (.037) | (.065) | (.039) | (.046) |
| Non-religious | -.414*** | .073 | .142*** | -.025 | .129*** | .350*** |
| | (.040) | (.056) | (.034) | (.055) | (.035) | (.041) |
| Muslim | -.256* | .062 | -.192 | .775*** | -.262* | .433*** |
| | (.120) | (.158) | (.100) | (.123) | (.111) | (.104) |
| Christian | *Ref* | *Ref* | *Ref* | *Ref* | *Ref* | *Ref* |
| Female | -.232*** | .198*** | .327*** | .011 | .304*** | .204*** |
| | (.038) | (.054) | (.033) | (.053) | (.035) | (.039) |
| Age | .008*** | -.008*** | -.007*** | -.013*** | .003** | -.040*** |
| | (.001) | (.002) | (.001) | (.002) | (.001) | (.001) |
| Education in years | .077*** | .035*** | .091*** | .084*** | .091*** | .069*** |
| | (.006) | (.008) | (.005) | (.008) | (.005) | (.006) |
| Constant | -2.665*** | -3.927*** | -1.812*** | -3.044*** | -1.774*** | -2.944*** |
| | (.090) | (.130) | (.075) | (.122) | (.078) | (.092) |
| McFadden $R^2$ | .080 | .050 | .084 | .073 | .071 | .150 |
| Number of cases | 14.298 | 14.298 | 14.298 | 14.298 | 14.298 | 14.298 |

*Note.* Indicators measured as dummy variable where Yes (= 1). Standard error coefficients in parentheses. “Age” and “Education in years” centered to the mean. Reference group is “Christians”. AIC in sequence (16.284, 9.418, 21.374, 10.134, 19.929, 15.994). *$p$ < .05, **$p$ < .01, ***$p$ < .001 (two-sided).