



Universiteit Utrecht

VERWEY Instituut
JONKER

**Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging in Dutch Society: A Mixed-Method Study
among Moroccan-Dutch Muslim Youngsters in the Netherlands**

Donya M.M.A. Yassine (5846188)

Graduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences
Utrecht University

Master Youth, Education & Society
YEP-track

YES07: Thesis (201600407)

Supervisor: Dr. Tessa Scheffers-van Schayck
Second assessor: Dr. Annika de Haan

Organization: Verwey-Jonker Institute
Supervisor: Mehmet Day, PhD.

June 21, 2021

Abstract

This mixed-method study explores how Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters (18-25 years old) give meaning to their religious identity and how this might influence their sense of belonging to the Netherlands. For the quantitative study, data was collected during online surveys amongst 134 youngsters with an average age of 20.47 ($SD = 2.26$). And the data for the qualitative study was collected via semi-structured interviews with 15 youngsters with an average age of 22.60 ($SD = 2.35$). A correlation was performed for the quantitative part, while thematic analysis was used to interpret the interviews. The quantitative results indicated that religious identity is positively, but weakly, correlated to sense of belonging. This was also supported by the qualitative study, showing that Muslim youngsters place great importance to their religion, while they also feel belonged to Dutch society. At the same time, however, belonging does not always go without any challenges. Youngsters mentioned that as Muslims, they sometimes feel the need to prove themselves as valid members of Dutch society and that they are faced with tackling challenges based on their existing levels of their religion. Among a few youngsters, these challenges also brings uncertainty about their future in the Netherlands. This study highlights the importance to be aware that Muslim youngsters might face difficulties in feeling belonged and at home and that this does not stem from not wanting to, rather, it often is the result of the missing of acceptance and sensitivity from their fellow nationals.

Keywords: religious identity, Muslim, Islam, sense of belonging, Moroccan-Dutch.

Samenvatting

Deze mixed-methode studie onderzoekt hoe Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslimjongeren (18-25 jaar) betekenis geven aan hun religieuze identiteit en hoe dit mogelijk hun gevoel van verbondenheid met Nederland beïnvloed. Voor het kwantitatieve onderzoek zijn gegevens verzameld via online-enquêtes onder 134 jongeren met een gemiddelde leeftijd van 20.47 ($SD = 2.26$) en de gegevens voor het kwalitatieve onderzoek zijn verzameld via semigestructureerde interviews met 15 jongeren met een gemiddelde leeftijd van 22.60 ($SD = 2.35$). Voor het kwantitatieve deel is een correlatie uitgevoerd, terwijl voor de interpretatie van de interviews gebruik is gemaakt van thematische analyse. De kwantitatieve resultaten gaven aan dat religieuze identiteit positief, maar zwak, gecorreleerd is met het gevoel van verbondenheid. Dit werd ook ondersteund door het kwalitatieve onderzoek, waaruit bleek dat moslimjongeren veel belang hechten aan hun religie en zich ook verbonden voelen met

Nederland. Tegelijkertijd gaat deze verbondenheid niet zonder uitdagingen. Jongeren gaven aan dat ze als moslims soms het gevoel hebben zichzelf te moeten bewijzen als volwaardig lid van de Nederlandse samenleving en dat ze worden geconfronteerd met uitdagingen op basis van hun religie. Bij enkele jongeren zorgen deze uitdagingen ook voor onzekerheden over hun toekomst in Nederland. Deze studie benadrukt het belang om te beseffen dat moslimjongeren moeilijkheden kunnen ondervinden om zich thuis te voelen en dat dit niet voorkomt uit het niet willen, maar eerder het gevolg is van het ontbreken van acceptatie en sensitiviteit van hun landgenoten.

Sleutelwoorden: religieuze identiteit, Moslim, Islam, verbondenheid, Marokkaans-Nederlands.

Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging in Dutch Society: A Mixed-Method Study among Moroccan-Dutch Muslim Youngsters in the Netherlands

The religious landscape of the historically Christian and highly secularized Western-European cities changed remarkably in the last couple of decades, partly due to the immigration influx (Cipriani, 2009). Muslims constitute an important part of this diverse religious landscape. However, the attitudes towards this new religious diversity have been mixed and have become more overtly anti-Muslim in the aftermath of September 11th (Pew Research Center, 2011). In much of the Western debate, Islam is labelled as a monolithic religion characterized by irrationality, medieval backwardness, and misogyny (Eid & Karim, 2014). Furthermore, European politicians have publicly described Islam as a “problem” and “backward religion” that seriously threatens society (Verkuyten, 2014). The media plays a significant role in their portrayal of Muslims living in the West. For example, in Great Britain, the media frequently described Muslims in terms that connote their existence in society as un-British, living in parallel cultures, and as aliens to the British society (Saeed, 2007). As a result, Muslim’s religiosity and their place in Western society have become of central question to late modern Western life (Foner & Alba, 2008). With the years, the Western majority started to believe that even Muslims born and educated in Western democracies pose a serious threat to public safety and social stability (Simonsen, 2018).

The Netherlands is known to be one of the most secularized Western societies (Gorski & Altinordu, 2008). A study by Pew Research Center (2005) showed that the Netherlands hold the most unfavorable views of Muslims compared to other Western countries. The results of this study showed that 51% of the Dutch majority hold unfavorable views of Muslims, compared to 15% and 11% of unfavorable views of Christians and Jews, respectively. Moreover, research has shown that the negative attitudes towards Muslims are increasing with the years, while attitudes towards other groups have remained stable (Jaspers et al., 2009). And with the years, Dutch people’s tolerance of Muslims has declined (De Hart & Dekker, 2006), leading to widespread resistance to Muslims’ religious way of life (Phalet & Gijsberts, 2007; Maliepaard & Gijsberts, 2012). For example, the suspicion towards Muslims has increased (Pehrson & Green, 2010) and the general public has become more openly anti-Islamic (Allen & Nielsen, 2002). Muslims are seen as the “other” as their religion is viewed as opposed to liberal values, democracy, and secularism (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). As a result, people in Dutch society feel that Muslim and Dutch values are incompatible (Dagevos & Gijsberts, 2007).

These findings are not much of a surprise as the fear of Islam in the Western world is as old as Islam itself (Taras, 2012). This fear affected the Dutch political discourse for almost two decades. In these two decades, some Dutch politicians have repeatedly criticized Islam. Nowadays, it is Geert Wilders who has constantly been warning society against “the Islamization of the Netherlands”. His political party, the Part of Freedom (in Dutch: *Partij voor de Vrijheid*), mentioned in its recent party program, that “Islam does not belong to the host nation” and that they want to establish a new Ministry of Immigration, Remigration, and De-Islamization (Election Program PVV, 2021). Such political statements characterize a strong anti-Islamic discourse, making it difficult for Muslim citizens to feel fully accepted in Dutch society, even to those who have been born in the Netherlands (De Koning, 2008). And such distrusts have led to Muslim youth to become further disillusioned with Dutch society (Welten & Abbas, 2021).

Religious Identity

During adolescence, identity formation becomes particularly important as youngsters strive to develop a sense of self and are trying to find their place in society (Arnett, 2014). Identity is generally known to describe the sense of self, group affiliations, structural positions, and achieved statuses of an individual (Peek, 2005). An important, yet largely overlooked, influence on a person’s identity is the role of religion (Chaudhury & Miller, 2008). There has been little work on the role of religion in adolescent identity development (King & Boyatzis, 2004; King & Roeser, 2009). Religion can be defined as “a system of ideas that provides a convincing world image” (Erikson, 1968, p. 31). Erikson (1968) argued that making religious commitments is an important part of identity formation for most people as religion provides salient ideologies for youth to adopt. In addition, religion is among the most important markers of group identity, as religious groups may serve important functions and people may affiliate with such groups for socialization reasons (Peek, 2005). Being a member of a religious group may offer psychological and social benefits, including community networks, trust, and support (Chen, 2002).

Religion is known to function as a resource in positive development among youth (Furrow et al., 2004). Indeed, religiousness may positively affect the physical and mental health of a person, while acting as a buffer against risk behavior and anxiety (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010). As such, religion has been recognized to visualize a worldview composed of beliefs and values embedded within social relations to provide a young person with a sense of purpose and belonging (Erikson, 1959). Especially Muslim youngsters living in the West are likely to recognize religion as an important life area (Maliepaard & Phalet, 2012; Martinovic

& Verkuyten, 2012; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). From the perspective of Muslim minorities, their religious identity is a highly valued source of cultural continuity and social support (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Furthermore, the religious identity is seen to be an important source of collective self-worth, shared values, and social support within families and communities (Güngör et al., 2011). These results suggest that religious identity and participation may be particularly strong among Muslim youngsters in the Netherlands.

Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging

Humans have a basic need to feel that they belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This belonging involves identifying with and feeling attached to a social group. Belonging is a universal characteristic of human beings and is seen as a basic human need (Maslow, 1970). As highlighted by Skey (2013), belonging involves ideas of connection and embeddedness related to the experience of being part of a bigger community. A sense of belonging not only includes emotional attachments, but also entails the notion of feeling at home and feeling safe (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this sense, “home” does not refer to the physical place but to the symbolic space of comfort, familiarity, and emotional attachment (Antonisch, 2010). Furthermore, belonging is not only about how one sees oneself, but it focuses also on how someone relates to others and the other way around.

The concept of belonging might be especially relevant for people with a migration background as, in contrast to the national residents, their national belonging might not be taken for granted because they are more likely to be considered as outsiders (Skey, 2013). This might be especially the case for Moroccan-Dutch youngsters as they are born in the Netherlands or started living there before the age of seven, speak the Dutch language fluently, have been brought up in national institutions, and may have national citizenship. Yet, at the same time, they show markers of difference, as they might not look typically Caucasian. This might lead to the thought that the Dutch majority does not always identify them as fellow nationals. Another reason why they may be visibly different from majority members might be due to their religious way of dressing, like wearing the *hijab* (Islamic veil). Although a lack of belonging among members of this group cannot stem from being unfamiliar with the Dutch society, Moroccan-Dutch youngsters still might experience a hard time in feeling a valued member of society.

Moroccan-Dutch Muslim Youngsters

The Moroccan Dutch make up 2.37% of the Dutch population in 2021, making them the second largest migration group in the Netherlands (Central Bureau for Statistics, 2021). From the late 1960s onward, Moroccans came as guest workers to the Netherlands (Gijsberts

& Dagevos, 2010). In the last decade, Moroccan-Dutch Muslims are exposed to frequent discrimination in Dutch society, and their religious traditions are negatively stereotyped as incompatible with mainstream values and ways of life (Phalet & Gijsberts, 2007). It is even more difficult for this group as they are considered to be the least accepted minority group living in the Netherlands (Gijsberts & Dagevos, 2010). Therefore, it can be struggling for these youngsters to position themselves in Dutch society (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012).

Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters might feel the need to continuously negotiate their religiousness in a society where politicians publicly show discontent towards Islam (Verkuyten, 2014). This rejection and not being fully recognized as a group member can be perceived as painful. It makes people uncertain about oneself and their position in the group (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Moreover, this rejection can lead to a significant decrease of feeling belonged (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). A way to cope with this identity threat is to adopt group-based strategies and to distance yourself from the majority group (Hogg, 2000). In the case of Moroccan-Dutch Muslims, it is therefore possible that they might distance themselves from Dutch society. This might be plausible, as longitudinal evidence shows that discrimination may negatively impact the national identification among minorities (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2008). Another study by Martinovic and Verkuyten (2012) found that higher perceived discrimination was related to stronger Muslim identification. In the case of Moroccan-Dutch Muslims in the Netherlands, it can thus be expected that when Muslims identify stronger with their religion, they might experience lesser national belonging to the Netherlands.

The Present Study

This mixed-methods study examines how youngsters of Moroccan descent give meaning to their religious identity and how this might affect their sense of belonging to the Netherlands. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of the significance of religion among Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters living in the Netherlands. This study also expands knowledge regarding minority groups distinguished first and foremost by religion, rather than by race or ethnicity. Therefore, this study contributes to the research on religious identity and Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters. This is scientifically important as most research on religion has focused mainly on a Christian perspective (Small & Bowman, 2011).

In the backdrop of the political discontent towards Muslims in the Netherlands, it is important to gain a better understanding of this group to prevent further actions of intolerance and to provide Muslim youngsters with a society that will meet their unique needs. This study therefore aims to make a bridge between the scientific literature and the daily experiences of

Muslim youngsters, especially in regard with their belonging to the Netherlands. This is important because the media, is not always positive when they talk about the Muslim populations and are leaving little room for the day-to-day experiences of Muslim youngsters. This creates a gap between facts and the discourse about Dutch people with a Muslim identity (Crul & Heerin, 2008). Additionally, this study might be societal relevant as it brings information for anyone involved in the religious identity of Muslim youngsters. This study can thus lay the foundation for the reflection on pedagogical implications for schools and parents.

The main research question of this mixed-methods study is as followed: *How do Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters perceive and shape their religious identity and how does this influence their sense of belonging to the Netherlands?* For the quantitative part, the aim is to examine the possible association between religious identity and sense of belonging. Based on previous research, it is hypothesized to find a negative association, meaning that the higher the perceived religious identity is, the lower their perceived belonging to Dutch society will be (Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2008; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). For the qualitative part of this study, the following three sub-questions have been formulated:

1. How do Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters give meaning to their religious identity in the Netherlands?
2. How do Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters perceive the relationship between their own religious identity and the place in society in which they live?
3. What are possible struggles of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters when expressing their religious identity in the Netherlands?

Methods

A mixed-method approach of a quantitative survey along with a qualitative participant interview was used for this study. The quantitative study will be described first, followed by the qualitative study.

Quantitative Study

The data used for the quantitative research approach in this study, were already collected in a previous study, named *Geboren & Getogen 2.0* [Born & Raised 2.0] done by Day and Badou (2020) from the Verwey-Jonker Institute. The aim of the *Geboren & Getogen 2.0* study was to investigate the multiple identity perceptions of young people (16-25 years old) with a migration background. The study aimed to investigate how youngsters deal with their multiple identities and how these identities influence their daily life.

Participants

In total, 794 youngsters participated in the *Geboren & Getogen 2.0* study (Day & Badou, 2020). Given the focus of the present study on religious identity and sense of belonging among Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters, a subset of the *Geboren & Getogen 2.0* sample was used ($N = 134$). Participants were included if either one of the parents or grandparents were born in Morocco. When participants had a dual identity, they were included when they answered to think of Morocco as their country of origin. Other inclusion criteria were that participants were between the age of 18 and 25 years old, and that they were following a higher education degree or already obtained one. The average age of these 134 participants was 20.47 years ($SD = 2.26$) and consisted mostly of females (76.9%). The participants were predominantly born in the Netherlands (95.5%) or came to the Netherlands before the age of 7 (4.5%). From this sample, 129 participants followed a university or university of applied science study and 5 had already graduated.

Recruitment and Procedure

The data collection for the *Geboren & Getogen 2.0* study was done by Labyrinth, a research and advising agency in the Netherlands. They recruited the participants through their own youth panels. They also went to secondary schools and to schools for secondary vocational education, where youngsters could complete the online questionnaire on a tablet. Before filling in the questionnaire, participants had to give consent by agreeing with the terms that were written on the first page of the questionnaire. It was mentioned that by giving consent, participants agreed to be clearly informed about the aim and method of the study, that they voluntarily agreed to participate in this study, and that they realized that they could stop the study at any time and reserve the right to withdraw their consent without having to give a reason. The data for the quantitative study were collected between the summer of 2019 and February 2020. On average, it took participants 38.18 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, each participant was rewarded a gift voucher of 10 euros.

Measures

Religious Identity. Religious identity comprised seven statement items that ask about the importance of and identification with Muslim identity. Each item consists of a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree* and 5 = *totally agree*). An example of a statement is: “My religion plays an important role in who I am”. Cronbach’s alpha was .91, which showed that the items had a high reliability.

Sense of Belonging. To measure sense of belonging, two variables were combined. The first variable is “geographical connectedness” and examined the way participants feel

belonged to the Netherlands, while the “feeling at home” variable examined the way participants feel at home in the Netherlands. The first variable, “geographic connectedness”, was measured using three items consisting of a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *totally not connected* and 5 = *totally connected*). An example of a question is: “To what extent do you feel connected to the Netherlands?”. The other variable was “the feeling at home” variable. This scale was measured using three statement items consisting of a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree* and 5 = *totally agree*). An example of a statement is: “I feel at home in the Netherlands”. Cronbach’s alpha was .79, which showed that the items all together had a high reliability.

Strategy for Analysis

To examine the relationship between religious identity and sense of belonging, a correlation was performed that defined the religious identity scores as dependent variable and the sense of belonging scores as independent variable. Based on listwise deletion, five cases were excluded from the study because they had incomplete data. Prior to calculating the correlation, the assumptions of normality and linearity were assessed. The Shapiro-Wilk test and boxplots indicated that the assumption of normality could be met as it showed that the data were normally distributed. However, a visual inspection of the scatterplot showed that the assumptions of linearity could not be met. Therefore, Spearman’s rho was used to perform the correlation test. The analysis was carried out using SPSS Statistics 27.

Qualitative Study

Participants

Participants were included to take part in a semi-structured interview if they were of Moroccan descent, if they were between the age of 18 and 25 years old, and if they were following or graduated from a higher education degree in the Netherlands. In total, 15 participants, five men and ten women, participated in the qualitative part of this study. The average age of these participants was 22.60 years ($SD = 2.35$). Participants were either born in the Netherlands (86.7%) or migrated to the Netherlands before they reached the age of seven (13.3%). 11 of the participants were following a study at higher education, while four of them were already graduated for no longer than three years.

Recruitment and Procedure

The participants who took part in the interviews, were not the same participants as those who filled out the questionnaire, as these participants were collected by the researcher itself. The data for the interviews were collected in April 2021. Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling in the Netherlands. The participants were

contacted via social media channels (i.e., Facebook) and by the use of the personal contacts and friends of the researcher. A flyer was used to collect the participants. Those who were interested in taking part in the research were contacted by email and received an information letter and an informed consent form in which the purpose and the procedure of the study were explained as well as information about the rights of the participants and how the data would be handled with respect to the GDPR-rights. After obtaining written consent, participants took part in a 45 to 60 minutes online semi-structured interview via Microsoft Teams. The average length of the interviews is 42.26 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. After all transcripts were made, the recordings were deleted. To ensure anonymity, the names of the participants were omitted in the transcripts.

Measures

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner and explored issues such as religious identity, belonging to the Netherlands, possible challenges as living as Muslims in the Netherlands, and their future prospects. At first, some background information was asked about their age, gender, and study or occupation. Subsequently, several questions were asked regarding their religious identity and their belonging with the Netherlands. Since the interview was semi-structured, a topic list with 21 questions was used as a guidance for the interview (Appendix A), making the qualitative data more comparable (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enabled elaboration on certain topics. This gave participants the freedom to openly express their views and allowed them to bring forth relevant topics connected to the interview objectives (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

To maintain the validity of the research, the respondents should require to be a homogenic group to ensure saturation (Sim et al., 2018). This is ensured in the study as the participants are selected based on specific characteristics. They were selected based on the fact that they have a Moroccan background, are Muslim, are studying or recently graduated from higher education, and are all between the age of 18-25. Moreover, in qualitative study it is best to use at least 12 respondents to ensure validity (Sim et al., 2018). Due to having 15 interviews, this requirement was met. Reliability is tried to be ensured by precisely writing every step of the methods.

Analyses

For the analyses of the qualitative data, thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) was used to define themes in the data. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the software program NVivo 12 Pro. The analytical approach was inductive, meaning that the chosen themes do not arise from a larger theoretical framework, rather, they are strongly

correlated with the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step in the analyzing process was transcribing all interviews and start labeling. All the important aspects of the interviews were highlighted. After coding the single concepts per interview, the codes were compared to draw up certain labels who served as the sub-themes. Lastly, the sub-themes were divided into overarching themes. The themes were identified based on the explicit meaning of the data and therefore a semantic, essentialist approach was used (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

Quantitative Results

Association between Religious Identity and Sense of Belonging

The first aim of this study was to examine the size and direction of the linear relationship between religious identity and sense of belonging. Spearman's rho indicated the presence of a weak but positive correlation between religious identity ($M = 30.12$, $SD = 4.97$) and sense of belonging ($M = 30.12$, $SD = 3.74$), $r_s = .32$, $p < .001$, two-tailed, $N = 129$. This means that youngsters who have a higher religious identity reported higher on social belonging.

Qualitative Results

Four different themes emerged from the qualitative analyses, all with their own subtopics. The first theme focuses on the meaning youngsters give to their religious identity. The second theme concerns their sense of belonging to the Netherlands, while the third theme highlights the challenges they experience. Lastly, the fourth theme focuses on their future prospects.

Theme 1: Meaning of Religious Identity

When responding to the question what the role of religion is in their life, each participant placed at least some level of importance of the Islamic faith in their life. The way in which they expressed this meaning differed according to their own preferences and life perspectives. However, participants overall mentioned that religion provides them with a guide through life and they find it very important to act as a role model for the Islam.

Religion as a Life Guide. Participants mentioned quite often that they see their religion mainly as a guide for making important choices in life. More specifically, their religion gives them a life purpose and influences the way they construct their life. Furthermore, the results showed that participants also try to make their life fit with the appropriate rules and ways that Islam ascribes to them. Participants explained that they try to pray five times a day, to fast during the month Ramadan, and to give alms to the poor. Besides

these activities, the results showed that participants also use Islam as a guide to be the best version of themselves and how to be a good citizen in this world. One participant said the following about how he uses the Islam as a life guide:

To me, religion is a tool to be a good person, for myself, for my family, and for my environment. To me, religion is more than just practicing it for myself, but it is more than that. Religion is also about dealing with social problems in life. (participant 7, male, 23 years old)

Role Model for the Islam. The results showed that eight out of the 15 participants viewed themselves as role models for the Islam. Being a role model is especially important for them as they are living in a Western country where not every person has a positive view about Islam and Muslims in general. Therefore, they see it as their goal to show good behavior and to build good character. As one of the participants said:

You have to have good character [as a Muslim]. Also, because you have an exemplary function. The people here [in the Netherlands], they only know Islam from TV or from the newspapers. So yeah, you really have to give a good example as a Muslim here, to show them how Islam actually really is. (Participant 7, male, 23 years old)

Moreover, being a role model is not only important to them due to the negative stereotypes of Islam. Their religion also influences them to shape good character and to show good behavior, like helping others when possible. For example, one interviewee explained how religion positively influences her as a person, while she simultaneously uses this influence to act as an ambassador for Islam:

It [the religion] forms you as a person so to speak. So, religion helps me a lot to get through daily life, in a good, more efficient manner, but also in a very friendly way, because I am also very aware that I am an ambassador of Islam itself. (participant 8, female, 23 years old)

Theme 2: Some Sense of Belonging with the Netherlands

When it comes to the sense of belonging of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters, participants shared different stories about their connection with the Netherlands. In short,

according to the results, participants mentioned to have some belonging to the Netherlands. Although they feel some kind of connection and belonging to the Netherlands, they still struggle with feeling fully belonged as well. However, their belonging depended on the physical location and the places where they live.

Feeling Some Sense of Belonging. All participants mentioned that overall, they feel some sense of belonging with the Netherlands. They ascribed this sense of belonging mostly to the fact that they were born and/or grew up in the Netherlands. Therefore, they are familiar with the system, speak the language, and participate in society as they study or work in the Netherlands. However, three participants explicitly mentioned that despite the fact that they have never lived in another country, they have a hard time in feeling fully connected to Dutch society. They explained that they do not feel fully accepted here as a Muslim and that people do not always consider them Dutch, due to the fact that they do not seem to look Dutch. Furthermore, the negative reporting about Islam also makes it more difficult for them to feel completely at home in the Netherlands. As one participant explained:

I constantly have the feeling that I always have to fight for my place in [Dutch] society as a Muslim, so that I don't just let myself be put away by someone else with his prejudices.... And as a result, I do not feel fully at home here in the Netherlands (participant 15, female, 25 years old)

Sense of Belonging Could Depend on the Physical Location. Eight of the 15 participants also explained that for them, their belonging to the Netherlands, depends on the place where they live or where they go to. They told that they especially feel at home when they are surrounded by other Muslims as it brings familiarity, and it makes it easier for them to be themselves. The results therefore showed that many participants thought that it might be easier for Muslims to live in the bigger cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, as these cities are known for their multiculturalism. One interviewee (female, 20 years old) told that she is really happy to be living in Amsterdam, she said:

I am really happy to have such freedom while living in the Netherlands, or at least in Amsterdam. In the bigger cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam or Utrecht, well, I can be who I want to be. I can wear my hijab, my long clothes if I want to wear them, and basically no one says anything to you about it. At least, I have never experienced that someone commented on my way of dressing. (participant 9, female, 20 years old)

Theme 3: Daily Challenges as a Muslim in the Netherlands

All participants shared different kind of challenges they experience as a Muslim youngster living in the Netherlands. The challenges that were mentioned the most are holding on to your religion, having to constantly prove yourself, and to being held accountable as a Muslim.

Sticking to Islamic Faith. Participants mentioned that they sometimes find it difficult to stick to their religion as it feels not always fully accepted to act religiously in the Netherlands. This feeling is mainly fueled by the negative stereotypes Dutch people may have of the Islam. As a result, staying committed to the Islam can be difficult. The results showed that participants are constantly in an internal conflict on how to stay committed to their religion while participating in society. For example, a couple of participants said that they have a hard time to ask for permission to pray at their work or internship place. They are especially scared for any negative reactions or that they will be perceived as weird. Therefore, to prevent such confrontations, some participants decided to not bring their religion to work and to only pray at home. Conversely, other participants stated that they want to try to ask for permission but are still waiting for some courage to do so. As one participant said:

I do not always feel very confident sometimes. So for example with praying, I find it very scary if I am new at work or at a new school, where I still have to find my way and to just say “hey, can I pray here? Is it okay if I go into a room to perform my prayers?” In moments like that I feel very hindered. (participant 13, female, 23 years old)

Constantly Having to Prove Yourself. The results showed that participants have a hard time to feel fully accepted as who they are as a Muslim in the Netherlands. A reason they gave for this feeling is that Islam can be seen as a negative influence in the Netherlands. Participants explained that they find it also very difficult that there are Dutch politicians who seem to be against the Islam. As one participant said:

I find it very difficult and a pity that there are some political parties, and I do not have to mention which parties, are putting the Islam in a bad light. This really makes me think: wow, okay, do you see me as a second-class citizen just because I adhere a particular religion? (participant 4, male, 24 years old)

As such, participants feel that they are already 1-0 behind only because of their religion. It therefore feels for them as that they constantly have to prove their worth as a Muslim Dutch citizen.

Being Held Accountable as a Muslim. Not only did participants mentioned that some of them feel the need to constantly prove their worth, seven out of the 15 participants mentioned as well that they feel that they are being held accountable for stereotypical thoughts people have about Islam. One participant in particular told that during the time when different terrorist attacks were carried out in the name of Islam, he had a very tough time as everyone was looking at him for explanations, being one of the only Muslims at school. However, none of the participants approved such terrorist attacks. Yet, people still look biased at them. They explained that they find it nice when people are interested and ask questions about the Islam, however, they condemn when people make them feel that they should be held accountable for actions they did not commit nor approve.

Theme 4: Future Prospects for Muslims in the Netherlands

When participants were asked about the future of Muslims in the Netherlands, the majority were quite positive about their future and see their future in the Netherlands. However, at the same time, they shared some concerns.

Being Positive About the Future Prospects. Overall, participants were quite positive about the future prospects for Muslims in the Netherlands. They do not worry a lot about the future due to the fact that there are constitutions that guarantee the freedom of religion in this country. Other positive aspects are that there are more political parties that represent the Muslim populations like DENK or Nida. And since the political elections in 2021, the Netherlands has now the first political member with a hijab in the House of Representatives. Furthermore, the results showed that some of the participants are positive about the future because Muslims are more integrated in the Netherlands and because more Dutch people are becoming familiar with Islam. As one interviewee said:

How I think the future will look like? I think that it will be very positive, because, especially this generation, we are at school, we know the [Dutch] language better, we know the [Dutch] culture better. But simultaneously, they also know us better. ... So if you ask me, I think that it would be more positive, as we have more knowledge nowadays. We understand each other better. (participant 1, male, 24 years old)

Concerned for the Future. While many participants expect the future to be positive, there are still some hesitations among a few. Indeed, some argued that they are still concerned that it may become more difficult to live as a Muslim in the Netherlands. For example, some participants mentioned that since not so long ago, there is a nikab ban deployed in public areas in the Netherlands. In addition, six out of the 15 participants are especially scared for influences from France and Belgium, as these two countries have more rules against wearing the hijab. The participants think that it might be possible that within a few years, the same rules could apply here in the Netherlands. As one participant said:

I am worried about the future. Because if I look at France for example, there they have the hijab ban now. And in Belgium they are doing the same. So this really scares me that it will influence the Netherlands to do the same thing. So yes, I am a bit fingers crossed looking to the future. (participant 9, female, 20 years old)

Sees Future Here, but Made Plans for Emigration “Just in Case”. The results showed that almost everyone agreed that they see their future in the Netherlands. As one participant explicitly mentioned: “Of course, I want to be here in the future, because well, I was born and raised here, and yes, I wouldn’t even know where to go to anyway” (participant 14, female, 18 years old).

This shows that participants want to stay here as they have built their future in this country. While a few mentioned that they would love to live for some time in another country, just for the experience, they said that they would always come back to the Netherlands. Yet, a few of the participants were still scared for the future. Although they do not want to leave, they would make plans for emigration when in the future it will be too difficult to live as a Muslim in the Netherlands. For them, it is very important to be able to practice their religion in the Netherlands. When this will no longer be possible, they would leave.

Discussion

The main aim of this mixed-method study was to examine the way Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters perceive and shape their religious identity and how this might influence their belonging to the Netherlands. In contrast to the hypothesis, the results from the quantitative study showed a positive, but weak, correlation between religious identity and sense of belonging. This indicates that a higher religious identification is related to a higher sense of belonging to the Netherlands. This positive correlation is also supported by the results from the qualitative study. Indeed, the qualitative results showed that overall,

Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters place great importance to their religious identity while they simultaneously feel belonged to Dutch society. This is a result that might be contradicting to the popular thoughts that those who place high importance to their religious identity, may imply low belonging, or even de-belonging, with the Dutch. Religious identity is thought to be in contrast with belonging to the Netherlands because of incompatible values, norms, and beliefs (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Hence, the findings from this study imply that placing great importance to religion and feeling belonged to Dutch society are not seem to be mutually exclusive. An explanation for this result could be that the participants in this particular study perceived little incompatibility between their religion and their sense of belonging. Indeed, some studies found that higher Muslim religious identification was associated with lower national identification, but only for those participants who perceived a high value incompatibility (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). However, in both the quantitative and qualitative part of this study, value incompatibility was not one of the concepts being studied. Future research could study value incompatibility to improve our understanding of how religious identity and sense of belonging might influence one another.

Another finding of this study is that religious identity for Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters is shown to be very important to them, making this result in line with previous findings (Maliepaard & Phalet, 2012; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The way how these youngsters place great importance to their religious identity is by letting their religion guide them through certain life choices. However, the results of the qualitative study also showed that fully staying committed to the Islam might sometimes be difficult for these youngsters. Muslim youngsters face daily challenges in constantly balancing their commitment to religion while participating in society. One of the challenges that was mentioned many times is to whether to ask for permission to pray at a work or internship place. Such challenges among Muslims is not new and has been mentioned more often in studies (see, e.g., Fadil, 2013). These findings show that although Muslim youngsters place great importance to their religion, this does not go without challenges. Therefore, an implication for future research could be to examine these challenges in a more advanced level to understand how they can be combatted in the future.

Moreover, the belonging that these Muslim youngsters feel with the Netherlands, does not come without any struggles nor concerns. Indeed, the results from the qualitative study showed that some still struggle to feel fully belonged to Dutch society, due to the fact that they do not always feel accepted for who they are and the choices that they make as part of their religion. Some constantly had the feeling that, as a Muslim, they needed to prove

themselves as valid citizens. Besides that, some also showed concerns for their future as a Muslim in the Netherlands. The interviewees mentioned that they want to live and build their future in the Netherlands, yet, some are scared that it will be harder for Muslims to live here. This is in line with other studies who showed the same results (see, e.g., Karlsen & Nazroo, 2013; Simonsen, 2018). Such struggles might negatively influence Muslim youngster's sense of belonging to the Netherlands and can have an impact on youngster's sense of efficacy (Simonsen, 2018).

Whereas belonging among the majority members of a society may be taken for granted as they might not experience it as something that plays a role in everyday life, questions of belonging seems to pop up on a daily basis in the lives of the participants in this study. As such, this study brings to light that – contrary to popular stereotypes – the difficulties of belonging to Dutch society does not come from not wanting to. Yet, they want to live their lives and want to be part of the society in which they feel most at home. What is missing is not commitment, but rather a feeling of acceptance as fellow nationals. Improving religious integration in Dutch society would therefore appear to be best achieved by treating people with respect and supporting them to live their lives free from the risk of social exclusion.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study had multiple strengths that are worth mentioning. An important strength of this study was that it paid attention to the religious identity among Muslim youngsters in the Netherlands. Until today, research has not paid much attention to religious identity (Schweitzer, 2014). This is unfortunate because religion is an important dimension for developing a positive social identity (Erikson, 1968). Indeed, most research has ignored the role that religion plays in the formation of identities for groups and individuals (Peek, 2005). Another strength is that this study is one of the few that has examined both religious identity and sense of belonging among Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters in the Dutch context. Most studies done in the Netherlands, were focusing on the Turkish-Dutch target group or studied on a sample with participants from multiple ethnic groups (see, e.g., Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012). Thus, the results of this study help expanding our understanding of the interplay between religious identity and sense of belonging. A third strength is that this study is based on a mixed-method with a quantitative survey along with interviews. An advantage of mixed-method studies is that it allows for exploring more divergent viewpoints on the same issue and that it might provide more contextual

understandings shaped by real life experiences (Creswell et al., 2011; Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

The present study also had several limitations. First, this study used a correlational design, which resulted in the fact that no information could be given of the direction of causality (Field, 2013). The proposed direction of religious identity on sense of belonging therefore needs to be evaluated using a longitudinal design model (Maxwell & Cole, 2007). This way, a better understanding of the relationship can be provided. Second, the scope of the qualitative study was limited to a convenience sample of self-identified Moroccan-Dutch Muslims in the Netherlands. It can thus be questioned whether the findings from the qualitative study can be generalized to other people or other countries. Third, it would be recommended for further studies to expand the number of participants to make broader generalizations. A last limitation is that this study only looked at one dimension of the social identity of a person, namely the religious identity, as it was beyond the scope of this study to incorporate multiple dimensions of social identity. However, as other researchers have mentioned, it would be insightful that future research needs to go beyond single-item and unidimensional approaches to identification when studying minorities' identity multiplicity (Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016).

Implications for Practice

This study provides insight into the perspectives and views of Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters living in Dutch society concerning their national belonging. Therefore, these results have implications for policies and practices in multicultural societies. This study generated important knowledge for anyone involved in the religious identity of youngsters in Moroccan-Dutch communities. The results of this study can therefore lay the foundation for developing pedagogical implications for schools, parents, and others involved with these youths. Such implications can foster the understandings of the way how Muslim youngsters might perceive and shape their religious identity.

Moreover, it is important that those who work in multicultural places become aware of the way that Muslim youngsters might feel excluded from the national majority. Practical programs can be developed for both managers and employees to understand the way Muslim youngsters might perceive their religion. These programs must also contain information that helps to combat discrimination and racism against Muslim youngsters at internship or work places. For example, dialogue sessions could be promoted between Muslims and other communities to create better understanding. Lastly, the media can also be made more sensitive to the feelings of Muslims when reporting issues involving their religion. Such

actions may help in creating a cohesive society in which Muslims can feel more included so that they do not have to worry about their future.

Conclusion

Reflecting on this study's approach and results, new light was shed on the way Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youngsters perceive their religious identity and their sense of belonging to the Netherlands. The quantitative part of this study examined that youngsters who place high importance to their religion, also show high feelings of belonging to the Netherlands, which shows to also be in line with the qualitative study results. The current findings also show that the youngsters in this study attach great importance to their religion, whereby this religion influences the choices they make in their lives. While the Muslim youngsters argued that they feel belonged, feel at home, and see their future here in Dutch society, they sometimes still struggle in being fully recognized as part of Dutch society. Future studies on both the origin and consequences of these daily struggles should be done to hopefully prevent any further distancing between groups.

References

- Allen, C., & Nielsen, J. S. (2002). *Summary report on Islamophobia in the EU after September 11 2001*. EUMC on Racism and Xenophobia.
- Antonisch, M. (2010). Searching for belonging. An analytical framework. *Geography Compass*, 4, 644-659. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00317.x>
- Arnett, J. J. (2014). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. (2nd ed.) Oxford University Press.
- Baumeister, R., & Leary, M. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. In R. Baumeister & M. Leary (Eds.), *Interpersonal development* (pp. 497-529). Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/147888706qp063oa>
- Chaudhury, S. R., & Miller, L. (2008). Religious identity formation among Bangladeshi American Muslim adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 23, 383-410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407309277>
- Chen, C. (2002). The religious varieties of ethnic presence: A comparison between a Taiwanese immigrant Buddhist temple and an Evangelical Christian church. *Sociology of Religion*, 63, 215-238. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712566>
- Cipriani, R. (2009). Religion in Europe. *Religion*, 39, 109-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.religion.2009.01.017>
- Cohen, D., & Crabree, B. (2006). *Qualitative research guidelines project*. Retrieved from: <http://www.qualres.org/HomeSemi-3929.html>
- Central Bureau for Statistics. (2021). *Hoeveel mensen met een migratieachtergrond wonen in Nederland?* [How many people with a migration background live in the Netherlands?]

<https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/dossier/dossier-asiel-migratie-en-integratie/hoeveel-mensen-met-een-migratieachtergrond-wonen-in-nederland->

Creswell, J. W., Klassen, A. C., Plano Clark, V. L., & Smith, K. C. (2011). *Best practices for mixed method studies in the health sciences*. National Institutes for Health.

<https://obsr.od.nih.gov/training/online-training-resources/mixed-methods-research/>

Dagevos, J., & Gijsberts, M. (2007). *Jaarrapport Integratie 2007* [Year rapport Integration 2007]. Social and Cultural Plan Bureau (SCP-publication, 27). <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/148293559.pdf>

Day, M., & Badou, M. (2020). *Geboren & getogen 2.0. Onderzoek naar de meervoudige identiteit van jongeren met een migratieachtergrond van de tweede en derde generatie* [Research into the multiple identities of young people with a migration background of the second and third generation]. https://www.kis.nl/sites/default/files/bestanden/Publicaties/kis_geboren-en-getogen_2.pdf

De Hart, J., & Dekker, P. (2006). Kerken in de Nederlandse civil society: Institutionele grondslag en individuele inspiratiebronnen [Churches in the Dutch civil society: Institutional foundations and individual sources of inspiration]. In W. B. H. J. van de Donk, A. P. Jonkers, G. J. Kronjee, & R. J. J. Plum (Eds.), *Geloven in het publieke domein. Verkenningen van een dubbele transformatie* (pp.139-169). Amsterdam University Press/WRR.

De Koning, M. (2008). *Zoeken naar een 'zuivere' Islam: Geloofsbeleving en identiteitsvorming van jonge Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims* [Searching for a 'pure' Islam: Faith experience and identity formation of young Moroccan-Dutch Muslims]. Bert Bakker.

Eid, M., & Karim, K. H. (2014). *Re-imagining the other. Culture, media, and Western-Muslim intersections*. Springer.

- Election Program PVV (2021). *Het gaat om u. Verkiezingsprogramma 2021-2025* [It is about you. Election program 2021-2025]. <https://www.pvv.nl/verkiezingsprogramma.html>
- Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers*. International Universities Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. Faber & Faber.
- Fadil, N. (2013). Performing the *salat* [Islamic prayer] at work: Secular and pious Muslims negotiating the contours of the public in Belgium. *Ethnicities*, 13, 729-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812471129>
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering Statistics using SPSS* (4th edition). SAGE.
- Fleischmann, F. L., & Verkuyten, M. (2016). Dual identity among immigrants: Comparing different conceptualizations, their measurements, and implications. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 22, 151-165. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000058>
- Foner, N., & Alba, R. (2008). Immigrant religion in the U.S. and Western Europe: Bridge or barrier to inclusion? *International Migration Review*, 42, 360-392. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2008.00128.x>
- Friedman, M., & Saraglou, V. (2010). Religiosity, psychological acculturation to the host culture, self-esteem and depressive symptoms among stigmatized and nonstigmatized religious immigrant groups in Western Europe. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 32, 185-195. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4153097>
- Furrow, J. L., King, P. E., & White, K. (2004). Religion and positive youth development: Identity, meaning, and prosocial concerns. *Applied Developmental Science*, 8, 17-26. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0801_3
- Gijsberts, M., & Dagevos, J. (2010). *At home in the Netherlands*. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. <https://www.narcis.nl/publication/RecordID/oai:scp.nl:d9483546-3929-46d0-b872-f106488bb7ad>

- Gorski, P. S., & Altinordu, A. (2008). After secularization? *Annual Review of Sociology*, *34*, 55-85. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134740>
- Güngör, D., Fleischmann, F., & Phalet, K. (2011). Religious identification, beliefs and practices among Turkish- and Moroccan-Belgian Muslims: Intergenerational continuity and acculturative change. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*, 1356-1472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111412342>
- Hogg, M. A. (2000). Subjective uncertainty reduction through self-categorization: A motivational theory of social identity processes. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *11*, 223-255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14792772043000040>
- Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Liebkind, K., & Solheim, E. (2008). To identify or not to identify? National disidentification as an alternative reaction to perceived ethnic discrimination. *Applied Psychology*, *58*, 105-128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2008.00384.x>
- Jaspers, E., Van Londen, M., Lubbers, M. (2009). Een longitudinale studie naar veranderde ethnocentrische reacties in Nederland [A longitudinal study of changing ethnocentric reactions in the Netherlands]. *Migrantenstudies*, *25*, 106-127.
- Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. Y. (2013). Influences on forms of national identity and feeling 'at home' among Muslim groups in Britain, Germany and Spain. *Ethnicities*, *13*, 689-708. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812470795>
- King, P. E., & Boyatzis, C. J. (2004). Exploring adolescent spiritual and religious development: Current future theoretical and empirical perspectives. *Applied Developmental Science*, *8*, 2-6. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0801_1
- King, P. E., & Roeser, R. W. (2009). Religion and spirituality in adolescent development. In R. M. Lerner, & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology: Individual bases of adolescents development* (pp. 435-478). John Wiley & Sons Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470479193.adlpsy001014>

Maliepaard, M., & Gijsberts, M. (2012). *Muslims in Nederland* [Muslims in the Netherlands]. Institute for Social Research.

Maliepaard, M., & Phalet, K. (2012). Social integration and religious identity expression among Dutch Muslims: The role of minority and majority group contact. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 75, 131-148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0190272511436353>

Martinovic, B., & Verkuyten, M. (2012). Host national and religious identification among Turkish Muslims in Western Europe: The role of ingroup norms, perceived discrimination and value incompatibility. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 893-903. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1900>

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality*. Harper and Row.

Maxwell, S. E., & Cole, D. A. (2007). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation. *Psychological Methods*, 12, 23-44. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.12.1.23>

Morse, J. M., & Niehaus, L. (2009). *Mixed method design: Principles and procedures*. Left Coast Press.

Peek, L. (2005). Becoming Muslim: The development of a religious identity. *Sociology of Religion*, 66, 215-242. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4153097>

Pehrson, S., & Green, E. G. (2010). Who we are and who can join us: National identity content and entry criteria for new immigrants. *Journal of Social Issues*, 66, 695-716. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-460.2010.01671.x>

Pew Forum Center. (2005). *Religion & public life: A faith-based partisan divide*. <https://www.pewforum.org/2005/01/26/religion-amp-public-life-a-faith-based-partisan-divide/>

Pew Forum Center. (2011). *The future of the global Muslim population*. <https://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>

Phalet, K., & Gijsberts, M. (2007). When ways of life collide: A minority perspective. In E.

- Poppe, & M. Verkuyten (Eds.), *Culture and conflict: Liber Amicorum for Louk Hagendoorn* (pp. 141-154). Aksant.
- Saeed, A. (2007). Media, racism and Islamophobia: The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media. *Sociology Compass*, 2, 443-462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00039.x>
- Schmitt, M. T., & Branscombe, N. R. (2002). The meaning and consequences of perceived discrimination in disadvantaged and privileged social groups. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 12, 167-199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/147927721430000058>
- Schweitzer, F. (2014). Religion in childhood and adolescence: How should it be studied? A critical review of problems and challenges in methodology and research. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 27, 17-35. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15709256-12341290>
- Sim, J., Saunders, B., Waterfield, F., Kingstone, T. (2018). Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 21, 619-634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643>
- Simonsen, K. B. (2018). What it means to (not) belong: A case study of how boundary perceptions affect second-generation immigrants' attachments to the nation. *Sociological Forum*, 33, 118-138. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12402>
- Skey, M. (2013). Why do nations matter? The struggle for belonging and security in an uncertain world. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 64, 81-98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12007>
- Small, J. L., & Bowman, N. A. (2011). Religious commitment, skepticism, and struggle among U.S. College students: The impact of majority/minority religious affiliation and institutional type. *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, 50, 154-174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2010.01557.x>
- Sniderman, P., & Hagendoorn, L. (2007). *When ways of life collide*. Princeton University

Press.

Taras, R. (2012). *Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe*. Edinburgh University Press.

Verkuyten, M., & Yildiz, A. A. (2007). National (dis)identification, and ethnic and religious identity: A study among Turkish-Dutch Muslims. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33, 1448-1462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207304276>

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40, 197-214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331>

Ysseldyk, R., Matheson, K., & Anisman, H. (2010). Religiosity as identity: Toward an understanding of religion from a social identity perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14, 60-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309349693>

Welten, L., & Abbas, T. (2021). “We are already 1-0 behind”: Perceptions of Dutch Muslims on Islamophobia, securitization, and de-radicalization. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 14, 90-116. <https://doi.10.1080/17539153.2021.1883714>

Acknowledgments

By submitting this thesis, I have come to the end of my master's degree in Youth, Education & Society at Utrecht University. This also means the end of my period as a student. During these years, I have noticed myself growing, both academically and personally. I look back at a period of pure joy, happiness, dedication, and hard work and I am looking forward to the future. Coming this far, however, only became a reality due to all the support and help from many individuals. Therefore, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of them.

First of all, I want to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Tessa Scheffers-van Schayck, for her help and commitment to getting me through this process, despite all the challenges during this half year of hard work. Her dedication, support, and enthusiasm pushed me a lot to continue the work. She has been such an inspiration for me when it comes to the work of a researcher.

I would also like to thank Dr. Annika de Haan, my second assessor, for her help during the earliest parts of the thesis. I am also extremely thankful for Mehmet Day for all the support and enthusiasm throughout my internship period at Verwey-Jonker Institute and for all the brainstorm sessions to help me in this thesis process.

I also am very grateful and thankful for all the 15 participants who took part in the interviews. Without their input, time, and stories, this thesis would never have been possible. I therefore dedicate this thesis to the Muslim community, and especially to those 15 participants, who work hard every day to succeed in this society.

Finally, I am extremely thankful to my family and friends for their immense support during this period. I am especially very much grateful to my husband for his love, understandings, and continuous support.

Appendix A

Achtergrondgegevens

- Naam
- Leeftijd
- Gender
- Opleiding/werk
- Gezinssamenstelling

Religieuze identiteit

- Je definieert jezelf als moslim; wat is de rol van je religie in jouw dagelijks leven? Hoe uit zich dat in jouw dagelijks leven (bidden, kledingvoordrachten etc.)? Hoe heeft zich dat bijvoorbeeld de afgelopen week geuit? Heb je hier een voorbeeld van?
- Wat vind jij het belangrijkste aan het zijn van een moslim?
- Heb je religie vanuit huis meegekregen of ben je later zelf op zoek gegaan?
- Wat betekent het voor jou om moslim te zijn in Nederland?
- Wat waardeer je aan het zijn van een moslim in Nederland?
- Wat vind je de grootste uitdaging van het zijn van een moslim in Nederland? Kan je specifieke voorbeelden noemen?

Binding met Nederland

- Hoe zou je de Nederlandse samenleving omschrijven?
- Voel je je verbonden met Nederland? Waarom wel/niet?
- Voel je je Nederlands? Waarom wel/niet?
 - Zo ja: wat betekent het voor jou om Nederlands te zijn?
 - Zo nee: wat voel je je wel? Zijn er bepaalde redenen waarom je je niet Nederlands voelt?
- Wat betekent het voor jou om moslim te zijn op (de campus van) het hbo/de universiteit of tijdens je werk?
- Hoe kijk je naar de politieke/maatschappelijke geluiden over moslims in Nederland?
- Maak je je zorgen over de toekomst van moslims in Nederland? Zo ja, wat maakt dat je je zorgen maakt?
- Hoe participeer je momenteel in de Nederlandse samenleving? Is het zijn van een moslim hieraan gerelateerd? Hoe?

- Hoe zie je jouw toekomst in de Nederlandse samenleving? Op welke manier zou je willen bijdragen aan de Nederlandse samenleving? Speelt het zijn van een moslim een rol in deze keuze(s)?