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Religious identity and acculturation of immigrant minority youth: Towards a contextual and developmental approach --Manuscript Draft--

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Full Title:	Religious identity and acculturation of immigrant minority youth: Towards a contextual and developmental approach	
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Abstract:	<p>This review proposes an integrative contextual and developmental approach of religious identity development and acculturative adaptation among adolescents with an immigrant background. Relevant research with minority adolescents has addressed three main research questions: (1) what is distinctive about religious identity development in (Muslim) minority youth? (2) how does religious identity relate to their acculturative adaptation? and (3) what is the role of interpersonal and intercultural relations in specific acculturation contexts? In line with multiple developmental pathways in specific acculturation contexts, Muslim youth in Europe showed either stability or an increase in religious identification throughout adolescence, yet religious identity development varied greatly across religious communities and receiving societies. In support of the adaptive function of identity development in acculturating youth, (2) the religious identity of Muslim adolescents contributed positively to their psychological adaptation through the commitment to heritage-culture values and identities; and it was either unrelated or conflicting with mainstream-culture adoption and socio-cultural adaptation, depending on specific acculturation contexts. Finally, religious identities reflect the bicultural social world of minority adolescents: strong and stable religious identities were premised on religious transmission in interpersonal relations with immigrant parents and minority peers. Moreover, religious identity conflict or compatibility with mainstream cultural values and identities was contingent on intercultural relations: perceived discrimination and Islamophobia fuel identity conflict in Muslim youth, whereas more harmonious intercultural relations enable compatible and adaptive pathways of religious identity.</p>	
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Corresponding Author:	Fenella Fleischmann, PhD Utrecht University Utrecht, Utrecht NETHERLANDS	
Order of Authors Secondary Information:		
Corresponding Author E-Mail:	f.fleischmann@uu.nl	
First Author:	Karen Phalet	
First Author Secondary Information:		
Other Authors:	Karen Phalet Jessie Hillekens	
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Response to Reviewers:	<p>Dear Special Issue Editor,</p> <p>thank you for providing us with the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript, and for being generous with the deadline of the revision. We found the comments of both reviewers very helpful in polishing the writing of our paper and pulling all findings together on the basis of an overarching theoretical framework. Both reviewers missed such a clear framework in the original submission, and we therefore made this more explicit in our introduction on p. 3 onwards, also including a figure to help clarify our approach. We also carefully went through the detailed comments that Reviewer 2 made on our writing and adjusted the text accordingly. Finally, we changed the order of the sections to further streamline our argument, and now build it up from religious identity development, via acculturative adaptation to the contextualisation of religious acculturation.</p> <p>We hope that these changes adequately address the comments of the reviewers and look forward to receiving your decision on our revised manuscript.</p> <p>Kind regards, The authors.</p>

Running head:

Religious identity and acculturation

Title:

Religious identity and acculturation of immigrant minority youth:

Towards a contextual and developmental approach

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Authors:

Karen Phalet

CSCP, University of Leuven

Karen.phalet@kuleuven.be

Fenella Fleischmann

ERCOMER, Utrecht University

f.fleischmann@uu.nl

Jessie Hillekens

CSCP, University of Leuven

Jessie.Hillekens@kuleuven.be

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Abstract (228 words)

This review proposes an integrative contextual and developmental approach of religious identity development and acculturative adaptation among adolescents with an immigrant background. Relevant research with minority adolescents has addressed three main research questions: (1) what is distinctive about religious identity development in (Muslim) minority youth? (2) how does religious identity relate to their acculturative adaptation? and (3) what is the role of interpersonal and intercultural relations in specific acculturation contexts? In line with multiple developmental pathways in specific acculturation contexts, Muslim youth in Europe showed either stability or an increase in religious identification throughout adolescence, yet religious identity development varied greatly across religious communities and receiving societies. In support of the adaptive function of identity development in acculturating youth, (2) the religious identity of Muslim adolescents contributed positively to their psychological adaptation through the commitment to heritage-culture values and identities; and it was either unrelated or conflicting with mainstream-culture adoption and socio-cultural adaptation, depending on specific acculturation contexts. Finally, religious identities reflect the bicultural social world of minority adolescents: strong and stable religious identities were premised on religious transmission in interpersonal relations with immigrant parents and minority peers. Moreover, religious identity conflict or compatibility with mainstream cultural values and identities was contingent on intercultural relations: perceived discrimination and Islamophobia fuel identity conflict in Muslim youth, whereas more harmonious intercultural relations enable compatible and adaptive pathways of religious identity.

Introduction

1
2 Public debates over immigration in Europe – and more recently across the Atlantic –
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4 highlight religious differences as one aspect of migration-related diversity. Feeding into
5
6 European debates are dramatic demographic changes in the scale and forms of demographic
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8 diversity over the last decades, in particular the presence of significant and increasingly
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10 internally diverse Muslim immigrant and refugee populations originating from North Africa,
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12 the Middle East, East- and West-Asia, and Eastern Europe. Despite Europe’s history of
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14 religious diversity and Islamic presence, public attitudes towards Muslim immigrants and
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16 minorities have long been ambivalent or overtly hostile – opposing Islam to liberal family
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18 values, democracy, and secularism (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Current geopolitical
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20 tensions and national security issues are further straining already tense intercultural relations
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22 with Muslim minorities in European societies. Moreover, restrictive European immigration
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24 policies complicate the social integration of many Muslim refugee families and children who
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26 are crossing the Mediterranean to escape political turmoil and economic hardship.
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34 Against this backdrop, the present review focuses on religious identity development
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36 and acculturation among adolescents with an immigrant background (shorthand minority
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38 adolescents). Until recently, psychological acculturation studies have neglected the religious
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40 identity development of minority youngsters and how it meshes with their (bi)cultural
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42 identities (Güngör, Fleischmann, Phalet, & Maliepaard, 2013). In parallel, most research on
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44 religious identity development is limited to majority Christian children and adolescents; and
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46 the few longitudinal studies of immigrant minority youth focus mainly on ethnic – rather than
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48 religious – identity development (cf. infra). Reviewing recent research among Muslim
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50 minority youth mainly – other religious affiliations than Christian or Muslim are usually too
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52 small in numbers to allow any specific conclusions – our focus is on the religious identity
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1 development of minority youth, its interplay with acculturation processes, and how religious
2 acculturation is shaped by specific acculturation contexts.
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5 In order to bridge parallel research streams on religious identity development and
6 acculturative adaptation in minority youth, we propose an integrative contextual and
7 developmental model of adolescent religious identity (see *Figure 1*). Taking a developmental
8 and contextual perspective on religious identity, we will address three main research
9 questions: (1) what is distinctive about religious identity development in Muslim minority
10 youth? (2) how does religious identity relate to their acculturative adaptation? and (3) how do
11 specific acculturation contexts shape the acculturation and religious identity of Muslim
12 youth? To conclude, we will summarize the state of the art, reiterate the need for more
13 longitudinal and cross-culturally comparative research, and briefly reflect on limitations as
14 well as wider scientific and applied implications.
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29 *Figure 1 about here*
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31 Our theoretical framework extends Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of
32 human development and Lerner's (2002) 'developmental contextualism' to the acculturation
33 context – as distinct from more commonly researched (allegedly) monocultural contexts of
34 development (Sam & Oppedal, 2003). The special focus of this review is on the development
35 of religious identity in minority adolescents. Religious identity is distinct from other
36 identities, such as ethnic identity, because of the uniquely self-defining and prescriptive-
37 normative qualities of specifically religious identity contents (Ysseldyk, Matheson, &
38 Anisman, 2010): believers find in their religious faith an eternal source of ultimate meaning
39 and moral direction. At the same time, religious identity formation is subject to general
40 developmental processes of identity exploration and commitment during adolescence
41 (Saroglou, 2012). We conceive of multiple pathways of adolescent identity development as
42 socially grounded in relationships with significant others and geared towards adaptation
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1 within specific socio-cultural environments (Sam & Oppedal, 2003). By implication,
2 acculturation processes are part and parcel of normal developmental processes during
3 adolescence. Acculturation refers specifically to the adaptation of (mainly) minorities to
4 growing up in a bicultural social world. As minority adolescents engage in social interactions
5 across mainly heritage cultural and mainstream cultural fields, they learn to navigate cultural
6 difference and minority status in their relations with (other) minority and majority friends and
7 peers (Sam & Oppedal, 2003). In parallel, later adolescents' enhanced capacity for
8 perspective taking and socio-moral development raise the awareness of (strained)
9 intercultural relations in the wider society (Rutland & Killen, 2015). Zooming in on religious
10 identity, and in line with Bornstein's (2017) 'specificity principle' in acculturation science,
11 we expect that minority adolescents' experiences and understandings of interpersonal and
12 intercultural relations will give rise to different pathways of religious identity development
13 with adaptive value in specific acculturation contexts. For instance, when Muslim minority
14 youth attend a school where headscarves are banned, this contextual constraint on the
15 expression of religious identity may entail the experience of their religious and mainstream
16 identities as less compatible, thus increasing the psychological costs of acculturative
17 adaptation (Fleischmann & Phalet, in press).

Religious identity development in immigrant minority youth

18 Compared to a large research literature on ethnic/racial identity development among youth
19 (see Umaña-Taylor, et al., 2014, for a recent review), there is relatively less research on the
20 role of religious development among children and adolescents. In their recent review of this
21 work, King and Boyatzis (2015) conclude that most research so far is based on adolescent
22 samples in the US and only few of these studies have explicitly paid attention to the role of
23 migration. Similarly, Suárez-Orozco, Singh, Abo-Zena, Du and Roeser (2011) state that the

1 literature on religion and migration has largely focused on adults and neglected children and
2 adolescents. Their empirical work is among the first to study religion among youth with a
3 migration background. Their analyses of the *Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation*
4 (LISA) survey of Asian-, Caribbean- and Latino-American immigrant youth in the Boston
5 area show that religious affiliation and participation are high in almost all immigrant families,
6 with recent Chinese immigrants as partial exception. They demonstrate the positive effects of
7 religious involvement, through increased religious identity, enhanced social support and more
8 positive peer networks, on well-being, sense of purpose and decreased risk behavior in 1.5
9 generation immigrant youth. Their additional qualitative findings reveal that adolescents turn
10 to religion as a moral compass for inspiration and to stay away from risk behavior. Moreover,
11 adolescents considered religion as containing the core cultural values that are transmitted
12 across generations within their immigrant family and community. Similarly, in a European
13 migration context the religious identity of Muslim youth was associated with cultural values
14 of interdependence, such as tradition, conformity and benevolence values, which are of
15 central importance in the heritage cultural context (Saroglou, Delpierre & Dernelle, 2004);
16 and which were reaffirmed by religious youth in the acculturation context (Güngör, Bornstein
17 & Phalet, 2012).

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41 Other US-based studies examined group differences in religious development between
42 ethno-racial categories of youth, which indirectly speak to the role of migration. A three-year
43 longitudinal study of 15-18 year old Latino, Asian American and European Americans found
44 that religious identification remained stable across the high school years whereas
45 participation in religious practices declined (Lopez, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2011). In line with
46 religious reaffirmation in acculturation contexts, Latino and Asian American youth in this
47 study, who were primarily second generation as well as first generation, reported higher
48 levels of religious identity than European American youth, who were mainly third or higher
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1 generation. When different religious affiliations were included in the analyses, however, the
2 ethnic differences in religious identification were much reduced. In the US context under
3 study, apart from a significant share of (self-defined) non-religious youth (around 30%),
4 religious affiliations were mainly limited to Christian denominations, except for a significant
5 share of Buddhists among Asian American adolescents. Although the evidence may be
6 limited to Christian affiliations in a predominantly Christian and religious receiving context,
7 these findings suggest that sustained religious identification may have specific adaptive
8 functions for minority adolescents in the acculturation context.
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19 In contrast with the US context, the European migration context is characterized by
20 substantially larger immigration from majority Muslim countries, in combination with more
21 ambivalent or overtly hostile public attitudes towards religion in general and Islam in
22 particular (cf. Voas & Fleischmann, 2012 for a review). In line with religious reaffirmation in
23 a European acculturation context, a three-year longitudinal study among Muslim Bulgarian
24 middle adolescents found religious identification to increase over time (Dimitrova, 2014). In
25 the Netherlands, another cross-sectional study with Muslim minority youth found the level of
26 religious identification to increase from early to mid-adolescence, and to decrease again from
27 mid- to later adolescence (from age 15 onwards; Verkuyten, Thijs, & Stevens, 2012).
28 Possibly, the latter finding of religious decrease in late adolescence reflects temporary
29 adaptations to life transitions in later adolescence. Thus, Phalet, Gijberts and Hagendoorn
30 (2008) estimated age-related trends in religious identification and practice while taking into
31 account life transitions in repeated cross-sections of Dutch Muslims. Controlling for life
32 transitions, the religious identification and practice of Dutch Muslims was mostly stable from
33 ages 15 to 20 and above. Specifically, entering higher education and leaving the parental
34 home entailed small decreases in religious practice, whereas transitions into marriage and
35 parenthood marked a rebound. We conclude that there seems to be converging evidence of
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1 stable or increasing religious identification among minority youth. Note that the absence of a
2 significant increase in religious identification in some studies may be due to ceiling effects in
3 view of relatively high mean levels of religious identification and restricted variation around
4 the mean among Muslim youth (Verkuyten, 2007).
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9 Further evidence of religious reaffirmation in European acculturation contexts comes
10 from comparisons of Muslim minority youth with their Christian peers. A cross-sectional
11 study comparing Muslim minority youth with majority Christian peers in Belgium contrasted
12 stable and significantly higher levels of religious identity from mid- to late adolescence (age
13 range 15 to 20) among Muslims with lower and declining religious identification among
14 majority adolescents (Güngör et al., 2012). Likewise, recent school-based surveys of self-
15 identified Muslim minority youth in four European countries (England, Germany,
16 Netherlands and Sweden) yielded no religious changes during mid-adolescence (14-17
17 years), in contrast with a significant overall decline in religious identification among their
18 minority as well as majority Christian peers in the same countries (Simsek, Fleischmann &
19 Van Tubergen, in preparation). Moreover, the same study found religious practices (service
20 attendance and praying) to decline more strongly and uniformly among Christian youth (both
21 minority and majority) as compared with their Muslim age-mates. Also, there is some first
22 longitudinal evidence of religious polarization among Muslim youth, such that religious
23 practices decreased over time for some Muslim minority youth and increased for others
24 (Simsek et al., in preparation). We conclude that apparent religious stability among Muslim
25 minority youth in Europe may result from aggregating multiple pathways of religious identity
26 development, which may be adaptive for specific acculturating individuals or groups in
27 specific acculturation contexts (Bornstein, 2017). Similarly, an overall trend towards
28 religious decline among Christian youth in European studies may be adaptive to specific
29 socio-cultural contexts. Thus, there is some longitudinal evidence of a distinct U-shaped
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1 curve of religious change, as well as religious polarization between low and high identifiers
2 among majority Christian adolescents in generally more religious US contexts of
3 development (Dillon, 2007; Hood, Hill & Spilka, 2009). Looking across different socio-
4 cultural contexts in the US and in Europe, Saroglou (2012, p. 397) proposed that religious
5 identity development serves “the more general adaptive functions of distancing oneself from
6 what is known and familiar and exploring new and challenging alternatives” - before
7 committing oneself to a newly redefined religious identity.
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17 Complementing European studies of religious trends among Muslim minority youth,
18 some studies with Muslim adolescents in the US add mainly qualitative insights into Muslim
19 religious identity in another migration context. Thus, in line with findings of persistently high
20 religious identification among European Muslims, Ajrouch (2004) found religion to be a
21 more salient identity marker than national origin (e.g. Lebanese, Palestinian) in focus groups
22 of 14-15 year old Arab Americans. Likewise, in their study of 12-18 year old Muslim
23 Americans in the Greater New York area, Fine and Sirin (2008) found religious identification
24 to be significantly higher than American identification, despite the fact that most adolescents
25 in the sample were born in the US or had spent the largest part of their life there. Addressing
26 the question of religious identity development, Cain et al. (2017) interviewed 13-19 year old
27 Muslim American youth about their experiences of religious change. About 60% reported a
28 change in their religious identification and religious practices, which often followed a shift in
29 their social and cultural environment around critical life transitions in their family life or
30 school career. Similarly, in her study of Muslim university students in two US states, Peek
31 (2005) found that leaving the parental home and entering college triggered qualitative
32 changes in religious identity development such that religious identity became a “chosen” or
33 even “declared” identity, after being a more unquestioned or foreclosed identity during
34 childhood and early adolescence. These findings echo Phinney’s (1989) approach to ethnic
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1 identity development among minority youth, as well as mainstream research on religious
2 identity development in majority youth (cf. Saroglou, 2012 for a review). While empirical
3 work applying a developmental perspective to the religious identities of minority youth is still
4 rare, Lewis (2007) used generic identity statuses (such as identity foreclosure, exploration, or
5 achievement) as interpretive framework for her qualitative data among British Muslim youth.
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7 Relatedly, in a four-wave longitudinal study among mostly Canadian-born late adolescents
8 and early adults, Hardy, Pratt, Pancer, Olsen and Lawford (2011) found declining rates of
9 religious identity diffusion, foreclosure and moratorium, but stability in the levels of religious
10 identity achievement over time. Their study analyzed religious identity development along
11 with the development of political and occupational identities, and found domain-specific
12 developmental pathways and cross-lagged effects of community ethnic and religious
13 involvement. Both ethnic and religious involvement were declining over the study period.
14 Yet, those who declined relatively less in religious involvement showed higher levels of
15 religious identity achievement and foreclosure, and lower levels of moratorium and diffusion.
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17 These longitudinal findings suggest that acculturation into religious communities indeed
18 stimulates the development of religious identities in youth, but it might foster commitment
19 without an elaborate exploration of alternatives (Saroglou, 2012). To what extent these
20 developmental pathways apply to the religious identities of Muslim minority youth in
21 European acculturation contexts, is yet to be examined.

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46 To address our first research question, we summarize what is distinctive about
47 religious identity development in Muslim minority youth. Overall, minority youth in general
48 and Muslims in particular seem to be more religious than their majority peers, yet
49 developmental trends suggest multiple pathways of religious identity development for
50 minority and majority adolescents in North America and in Europe, with comparatively most
51 stability or increase in the religious identification of Muslim youth in Europe. Reasoning
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1 from the adaptive function of identity development, high levels of religious identification
2 among minority adolescents suggest specific adaptive functions of religious identities in the
3 acculturation context, for instance, helping Muslim minority youth to cope with acculturative
4 stress or minority status. As Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011, p. 257) proposed, the adaptive
5 benefits of religious identity “are important for individuals all over the world, but they may
6 be particularly compelling for immigrants who are uprooted and feel disconnected from their
7 familiar roles and social ties.”
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17 In view of the key role of the socio-cultural context in shaping the religious identity
18 development of youth (King & Boyatzis, 2015), there is a need to further contextualize
19 different pathways of religious identity development in acculturating youth, which may in
20 turn contribute to different adaptation outcomes. With a view to further contextualize what is
21 distinctive about religious identity development in minority adolescents, there is a need for
22 longitudinal research on the effect of the migratory event, as well as for comparative studies
23 of immigrant children and adolescents across different types of migration, such as refugees
24 vs. labour migrants, which may overlap with religious group differences. Ideally, research
25 among acculturating youth should include pre-migration religious identification measures to
26 assess the influence of migration and culture contact on religious identity development. Such
27 studies among adult movers suggest that migration might be a ‘theologizing experience’
28 when religious ties are continued or replaced after migration (Connor, 2008; Massey &
29 Higgins, 2011; Van Tubergen, 2013). While there is indirect evidence of the distinct adaptive
30 value of religious identity for minority youth in the acculturation context, we do not know
31 how the migratory event impacts religious identity among minors whose religious
32 development is at an earlier stage. In the absence of pre-migration measures of religious
33 identity, most research relies on comparisons of broad ethno-racial categories, which differ
34 not only in religious affiliation but also simultaneously in their histories of migration and
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1 incorporation into different receiving contexts. As a first step towards considering the pre-
2 migration context of religious identities, Güngör et al. (2012) compared Muslim youth in
3 Turkey and in Belgium as sending and receiving societies respectively. Their comparative
4 findings suggest that religious identity is reaffirmed in the acculturation context, as Turkish
5 minority youth were more religious than their peers in Turkey; and this difference in religious
6 identity was maintained from mid- to late adolescence. Future research should further
7 contextualize the distinct adaptive functions of religious identity development in the
8 acculturation context, for instance, by disentangling ethnicity and religious affiliation,
9 migration generations, and receiving contexts.
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Religious identity and acculturative adaptation in immigrant minority youth

24 The psychological acculturation of minority adolescents refers to the process of adaptation to
25 the bicultural (or multicultural) social environment in which they grow up (Mesquita,
26 Deleersnyder, & Jasini, forthcoming). This adaptive process is part of general developmental
27 processes, which give rise to multiple pathways of identity development with adaptive value
28 in specific socio-cultural contexts. Yet, acculturative adaptation refers more narrowly to the
29 ways in which minority youth adapt to their bicultural social world. This review focuses
30 specifically on the role of religious identity in the acculturation and adaptation of minority
31 adolescents. While religious acculturation has been more extensively studied for immigrant
32 and minority adults (cf. Güngör et al., 2013 for a review), less is known about the religious
33 identity of minority children and adolescents and its interplay with acculturative adaptation.
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51 For Muslim youth their distinct religious identity is a salient marker of difference in
52 social interactions with friends or peers across heritage and mainstream cultural fields. In line
53 with a well-established bi-dimensional approach to acculturation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, &
54 Vedder, 2006), we distinguish between mainstream and heritage cultural attitudes and
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1 cultural identifications in minority youth – and related integrationist (combining both
2 cultures), assimilationist (prioritizing mainstream culture adoption) or separationist
3 (preferring heritage cultural maintenance) acculturation preferences (but see Brown &
4 Zagefka, 2011 for a critical review of different measures, outcomes and contexts of
5 acculturation). Importantly, the adaptive value of different acculturation attitudes depends
6 critically on the quality of intercultural relations in specific acculturation contexts. Thus,
7 integrationism has been associated with psychological (i.e., wellbeing, self-esteem) and
8 sociocultural adaptation (i.e., problem behavior, achievement) mainly among young adults
9 and in North American migration contexts (Berry et al., 2006). Yet, the adaptive benefits of
10 integrationism are less clear cut in adolescents at a younger age (e.g., Rutland et al., 2012) or
11 in European acculturation contexts (e.g., Brown et al., 2013). The latter findings suggest that
12 the integration of heritage and mainstream cultural attachments may be psychologically
13 demanding for individual minority adolescents in less supportive social environments, for
14 instance in societies that are less sympathetic towards multiculturalism.

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34 A growing body of research on Muslim minority youth documents adaptation
35 problems, such as heightened risks of depression (Fassaert, de Wit, Tuinbreijer, Knipscheer,
36 Verhoeff, Beekman, & Dekker, 2011 in the Netherlands), internalizing problem behavior
37 (Oppedal & Røysamb, 2007), or lower levels of psychological wellbeing (Stuart, Ward, &
38 Adam, 2010 in New Zealand; see Khawaja, 2016 for a review). These findings should be
39 qualified, however, for several reasons. As most studies lack a non-Muslim minority
40 comparison group, we do not know what is distinctive about the (acculturative) adaptation of
41 Muslim minority youth. Moreover, few studies have directly assessed religious self-
42 identification, hence adaptation problems cannot be unambiguously attributed to the religious
43 identity of Muslim minorities. Finally, a review of mainly qualitative and clinical studies with
44 Muslim American minority youth highlights a possible upside of religious identity as a
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1 source of psychological wellbeing, self-worth, and social support (Goforth, Oka, Leong, &
2 Denis, 2014). The latter findings raise the question whether a possible adaptive advantage of
3 religious identity generalizes to minority youth across the Atlantic.
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7 In a cross-cultural study including Muslim and non-Muslim youth on both sides of the
8 Atlantic, Berry et al. (2006) compare distinct patterns of acculturation and adaptation among
9 Muslim and other minority youth. Their comparative findings contrast prevailing
10 integrationism among Western and non-Western Christian minority youth with more
11 prevalent separationism among Muslim youth, as evident from high heritage culture
12 maintenance, strong ethnic identification, and sustained ethnic language use across
13 generations. To the extent that mainstream culture adoption contributes to the social
14 adaptation of minority youth, separationist minorities are likely to experience adaptation
15 problems, such as problem behavior or poor school achievement. Note, though, that Muslim
16 youth in this cross-cultural study were mainly sampled from European countries, where
17 Muslim communities face pervasive anti-Islamic prejudice and discrimination (cf. supra).
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34 Looking beyond cross-cultural comparisons of acculturative adaptation, some recent
35 studies with Muslim adolescents have included individual-level measures of religious identity
36 along with acculturation and adaptation measures. These studies allow a more direct
37 empirical test of the role of religion in the acculturation of Muslim youth. Religious parenting
38 in Muslim immigrant families and religious identity in Muslim minority adolescents are
39 associated with heritage culture maintenance and may thus contribute to psychological
40 adaptation. Thus, childhood religious socialization in Turkish-Belgian immigrant families –
41 as indicated by regular paternal mosque visits and Koran lessons outside school – predicted
42 enhanced and sustained culture maintenance into young adulthood (Güngör, Fleischmann &
43 Phalet, 2011). Likewise, comparing Muslim, Christian and secular minority youth in
44 Germany from 54 origin countries – including Turkish, Italian, Greek, Bosnian, Kosovar,
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1 Croatian, and Russian youth – the importance of religion at home predicted higher heritage
2 culture maintenance (Schachner, Van de Vijver and Noack, 2014). Comparing Muslim-
3 Belgian late adolescents to majority and other minority peers, Saroglou and Galand (2004)
4 reported that the former were not only more religious but also more strongly attached to their
5 heritage cultures. Also, more religious Turkish-Belgian early to mid-adolescents were more
6 oriented towards maintaining their Turkish cultural heritage (Güngör et al., 2012). Along
7 those lines, religiosity was found to increase self-esteem among Turkish-Dutch adolescents
8 who were high on culture maintenance (Bender & Yeresyan, 2014).
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19 Furthermore, religious and ethnic attachments form distinct yet related self-identities
20 in Muslim adolescents. Thus, more strongly ethnically identified Muslim-Belgian adolescents
21 were also more strongly committed to their religious identity, and more invested in
22 continuing and passing on their Islamic religious heritage; and religious identification
23 supported core heritage cultural values of interdependence, in particular tradition, conformity
24 and benevolence (Güngör et al., 2012; Saroglou & Galand, 2004). Moreover, religious self-
25 identification was related to more general processes of identity development during
26 adolescence, so that Muslim-Belgian adolescents with an identity status of achievement or
27 foreclosure (vs. exploration or diffusion) were most committed to their religious identity
28 (Saroglou & Galand, 2004). In a retrospective study of Muslim American youth, about 60%
29 reported meaningful qualitative changes in their religious commitment or understanding, or
30 towards new religious practices (Cain et al., 2017). As compared to their peers who did not
31 report religious change, they showed higher levels of ethnic identity exploration – and also
32 slightly higher levels of identity commitment. Interestingly, religious change was also related
33 to perceived discrimination in intercultural relations with mainstream society (cf. *infra*).
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56 Despite Berry et al.'s (2006) finding of more prevalent separationism among Muslim
57 minority youth, the evidence of culture conflict – opposing a distinctive religious identity to
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1 mainstream cultural identities – is mixed (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016), and it depends on
2 characteristics of specific acculturation contexts (cf. *infra*). To illustrate, studies among
3
4 Turkish-German adolescents consistently found negative associations of religious parenting
5 (Spiegler, Güngör & Leyendecker, 2016) and religious identification (Dimitrova & Aydinly-
6 Karakulak, 2016) with the adoption of, and identification with, the German mainstream
7 culture. In their cross-cultural study of minority youth in Germany, Schachner et al. (2014)
8 found that the importance of (Islamic or Christian) religion at home negatively predicted
9 mainstream German cultural orientation, and impacted negatively on adolescents' socio-
10 cultural adaptation in this country. In a similar vein, high intrinsic value of religious faith, as
11 well as religious certainty and practice, negatively predicted mainstream culture adoption and
12 identification among Muslim-Belgian late adolescents (Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Saroglou
13 & Mathijssen, 2007). On the other hand, studies with Turkish-Belgian and Turkish-Bulgarian
14 Muslim youth found that their religious identification was unrelated to mainstream culture
15 adoption (Güngör et al, 2011; Dimitrova & Aydinli-Karakulak, 2016). Whereas German
16 Muslims most consistently experience conflict between their religious and national identities,
17 findings in Belgium are mixed and suggest that identity conflict might be more likely at the
18 transition into young adulthood, or with more intense religious involvement and
19 understanding.

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44 To summarize, the religious identity of Muslim adolescents is entwined with their
45 attachment to heritage cultural values and identities and either unrelated or conflicting with
46 mainstream culture adoption. More research is needed to better understand when and how
47 religion entails identity conflict. From a contextual and developmental approach of religious
48 identity, however, religious change at the transition into adulthood as well as perceived
49 religious prejudice or discrimination in mainstream society seem potentially relevant factors.
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1 parallel evidence of a protective effect of strong and sustained religious identities in
2 acculturating youth, religion can contribute to psychological adaptation. At the same time,
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4 religion can come at the cost of socio-cultural adaptation in mainstream cultural settings, for
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6 instance in school, when minority youth perceive the mainstream culture as rejecting their
7
8 religious heritage. In line with an adaptive advantage of religious identity, for instance,
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10 religious identification was negatively associated with externalizing problem behaviors
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12 among Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch early adolescents (Maes, Stevens & Verkuyten, 2014).
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14 In the presence of perceived discrimination, however, more strongly religiously identified
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16 Muslim-Dutch girls in particular were more at risk of experiencing adaptation problems than
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18 their less religious peers (ibid.). The latter finding suggests that future research should inquire
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20 into the gendered nature of religious identity and acculturative adaptation (cf. Güngör &
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22 Bornstein, 2013).
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31 **Contextualizing religious acculturation**

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33 Adolescent experiences of acculturation and adaptation are anchored in their relationships
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35 with peers and parents as key developmental contexts. While immigrant parents transmit the
36
37 heritage culture to their children, social relationships outside the family become more
38
39 important during adolescence. Through daily social interactions with peers outside their
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41 home, minority youth learn to negotiate cultural difference and to balance mainstream and
42
43 heritage cultures. Adolescents' acculturation and adaptation primarily reflect parental
44
45 acculturation expectations: for instance, children were more oriented and better adjusted to
46
47 the mainstream culture when their parents valued adoption of mainstream customs
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49 (Schachner et al., 2014). In addition, peer norms of acculturation were also shown to impact
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51 adolescent acculturative adaptation. Thus, children whose acculturation preferences misfit
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53 with peer acculturation norms, for instance when they prefer integration and peers stress
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1 assimilation, experienced more peer rejection (Celeste, Meeussen, Verschueren & Phalet,
2 2016; Kunst & Sam, 2013). Looking beyond adolescents' personal relations with parents and
3
4 peers, the way in which culturally diverse schools, cities, or societies at large represent and
5
6 regulate intercultural relations makes for more friendly or hostile acculturation contexts. In
7
8 line with an intercultural relations approach to acculturation (Brown & Zagefka, 2011;
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10 Guimond, de la Sablonnière & Nugier, 2014), perceived discrimination was revealed as a
11
12 robust predictor of acculturative adaptation problems across minority youth in 13 countries
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14 (Berry et al., 2006). Conversely, perceived fair treatment or integrationist policies were
15
16 shown to protect minority well-being and achievement (Baysu, Celeste, Brown, Verschueren
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18 & Phalet, 2016; Hoti, Heinzmann, Müller & Buholzer, 2017). This final part of our review
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20 focuses on the role of parental, peer and intercultural relations in the religious acculturation
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22 of minority youth.
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Contextualizing acculturation: immigrant parents and peer relations

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32 Most immigrant parents effectively transmit their religious identities, beliefs, values and ties
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34 to the next generation such that more religious parents have more religious children. At the
35
36 same time, the success of religious transmission across generations should be qualified in
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38 light of the evidence of small but significant religious decline over generations (Maliepaard,
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40 Gijsberts & Lubbers, 2012; Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2013; Phalet et al., 2008). The evidence
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42 of overall religious decline among immigrant populations compared older to more recent
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44 migration generations while taking into account age-related religious changes throughout the
45
46 individual lifecycle. Importantly and in line with the previously described notion that religion
47
48 is considered central in the transmission of immigrant families' heritage culture, there is some
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50 evidence that religion is (even) more effectively transmitted to the next generation in
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52 immigrant families – and especially in Muslim families – than in majority families (De Hoon
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1 & Van Tubergen, 2014; Jacob & Kalter, 2013). In spite of relatively secular visions of
2 religion in Dutch society, for instance, religious preferences and practices were effectively
3 transmitted in Dutch-Muslim families (Maliepaard & Lubbers, 2013), and religious
4 socialization in childhood predicted sustained religious identification, belief and practice in
5 young adulthood for Turkish- and Moroccan-Belgian Muslims (Güngör et al., 2011). In
6
7 another study on Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch Muslims, Verkuyten et al. (2012) found
8
9 parental religious identification to be significantly positively related to the religious
10 identification of early adolescents, but by mid-adolescence, the association turned non-
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12 significant, attesting to the waning influence of parents on adolescents' religious identity in
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14 the course of development.
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24 As adolescents venture outside the home and peer relations gain in normative impact,
25 religious acculturation is also shaped by their social contacts with both co-ethnic and cross-
26 ethnic peers. In line with general findings in Muslim minorities aged 15 and older
27 (Maliepaard & Phalet, 2012), more minority contact with co-ethnic peers and more religious
28 peers reinforce – while more cross-ethnic contact with majority peers slightly attenuate –
29 religious identification and practice among Muslim youth (De Hoon & Van Tubergen, 2014).
30
31 Countervailing normative pressures from co-ethnic and cross-ethnic friends on religious
32 identity development should be situated against the background of significant ethnic and
33 religious segregation in adolescent friendship networks. Network studies show that cross-
34 ethnic friendships are more often unrealized or unreciprocated and also less embedded than
35 co-ethnic friendships – with Muslim minorities being among the most excluded groups
36 (Leszczensky & Pink, 2016; Schachner, Van de Vijver, & Noack, 2016). Along those lines,
37 Simsek, Van Tubergen and Fleischmann (under review) found evidence of religious
38 segregation in ethnically diverse classrooms in England, Germany, the Netherlands and
39 Sweden. In addition to similarity in religious affiliation and after taking into account
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1 preferences for same-ethnic and same-gender friends, sharing the same level of religious
2 identification predicted a greater likelihood to become friends.
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5 To summarize, the religious identity of acculturating youth – in particular Muslim
6 youth – is successfully transmitted by immigrant parents and further reinforced by religious
7 peer groups. In contrast, more majority contact has been related to attenuated religious
8 identification and practice among Muslim youth. In view of converging evidence of ethnic
9 and religious segregation in friendship networks, however, peer relations tend to reinforce a
10 shared religious identity in minority youth.
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22 ***Contextualizing religious identity: intercultural relations with receiving societies***
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24 Beyond the family and peer context, the acculturation of minority youth is affected by the
25 specific acculturation context in which they grow up. For Muslim minorities, in particular,
26 this context has become increasingly hostile in most Western immigrant-receiving societies
27 in the last two decades, which adds additional challenges to the religious identity
28 development and acculturation of this particular minority group (Phalet, Baysu & Van Acker,
29 2015). In their review of psychological research on Muslim minorities in North America,
30 Amer and Bagasra (2013) document that the amount of studies increased dramatically after
31 the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and the largest share of the literature published
32 after this date analyzes the position of Muslim minorities in the West from an intercultural
33 perspective. These studies contribute to our understanding of how acculturating Muslims deal
34 with the increasing and more blatant Islamophobia they encountered after this watershed
35 event, and most focus on measures of perceived discrimination in relation to religious identity
36 (development) and acculturation outcomes. However, most findings in this literature pertain
37 to (young) adults, and fewer studies have addressed Muslim youth' responses to the specific
38 acculturation context in which their religious development occurs.
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The 2017 study by Cain and colleagues is an exception as it documents an association between religious change during adolescence and heightened experiences of discrimination (Cain et al., 2017). This finding echoes the positive association between perceived discrimination and religious identification that has been found in (young) adult samples (Fleischmann, Phalet & Klein, 2011; Kunst, Tajamal, Sam & Ulleberg, 2012; Maliepaard, Gijsberts & Phalet, 2015; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Although these findings reveal that tense intercultural relations generally go together with increased orientations towards one's religious group, longitudinal or experimental evidence that establishes the causal order of the relation between discriminatory experiences and religious identification is lacking to date.

Going beyond religious identification, other studies additionally examined the national identification of Muslim minorities in line with a bi-dimensional approach to identification patterns among acculturating groups (cf. supra). This research attests to the importance of the local and national acculturation context in shaping the acculturation of Muslim minority young adults. Specifically, religious (and ethnic) minority identities were more negatively associated with European national identities across cities and countries at higher levels of perceived personal discrimination and Islamophobia, whereas the absence of discriminatory and prejudiced treatment implied greater compatibility between these identities, thus facilitating integrationist identification patterns (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2016; Kunst, Sadeghi, Tahir, Sam & Thomsen, 2015).

In addition to the local and national acculturation context, gender affects the acculturation process of Muslim minority youth and how they react to discriminatory experiences. In their comparison of middle and late adolescent Turkish-Belgian youth, Güngör and Bornstein (2009) found lower levels of perceived discrimination and better adaptation among girls compared to boys, and this gender gap was widening over time. This suggests that the challenges brought by a tense acculturation climate disproportionately

1 affects Muslim boys. Heightened levels of perceived discrimination do not only result in
2 lower identity compatibility and adaptation among acculturating Muslim boys, they were also
3
4 related to more conservative gender-role values which distinguished Turkish boys, but not
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6 girls, more strongly from the cultural values of the mainstream in a study of same-sex
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8 Turkish-German parent-child dyads (Idema & Phalet, 2007).
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12 To summarize, existing research documents that tensions in local and national
13
14 acculturation contexts are related to religious identity, its compatibility with other identities
15
16 and adaptation among Muslim youth and young adults. Against this background, the
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18 prevalent separationism among Muslim youth compared to the preference for integrationism
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20 among non-Muslim immigrant youth (Berry et al., 2006) may be explained from the more
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22 hostile acculturation climate that this religious minority group has been facing (Amer &
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24 Bagasra, 2013). Longitudinal and cross-cultural comparative evidence is needed, however, to
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26 assess the causal mechanisms involved, as most studies to date have been using cross-
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28 sectional designs and based developmental conclusions on the comparison of different age
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30 groups.
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39 **Conclusion**

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41 Against the background of increasing societal and scholarly interest in a religious dimension
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43 of acculturation, this review brought together empirical research on the role of religious
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45 identity in the acculturation of immigrant origin youth. Our overview mainly focused on
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47 Muslim minority youth (complemented with findings from (young) adults when no research
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49 on children and adolescents was available) since this religious minority is at the center of
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51 research attention as well as societal debates, and other religious minority groups are often
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53 not present in sufficiently large numbers to allow meaningful cross-cultural comparisons.
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56 While our review is thus able to shed light on acculturation among a religious minority group
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1 that is under heightened scrutiny and can therefore contribute to debunking some of the
2 recurrent ideas in public discourses about the position of Muslims in Western societies, it also
3 highlights the need for future research that takes a more comprehensive comparative
4 approach and also studies immigrant children with other religious denominations. With the
5 present state of the field, it is hard to say whether the patterns we identified are generic to the
6 role of religion in the acculturation of immigrant youth, or to what extent they document a
7 specific Islamic variant of religious acculturation.
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17 With this limitation in mind, we conclude our review by returning to the proposed
18 developmental and contextual approach (see *Figure 1*) with a view to answering our three
19 research questions. In reply to our first question which compared religious development of
20 Muslim minority youth with that of non-Muslim peers, we found that levels of religious
21 identification tend to be higher among Muslim youth compared to other minority and
22 majority youth at all ages. In line with multiple pathways of identity development, the
23 religious identification of Muslim minorities is mostly stable or increasing throughout
24 adolescence, yet the pace and direction of religious changes differ within and between
25 Muslim minority youth and their Christian minority and majority peers and across the
26 Atlantic. Second, we asked how religious identity affects the acculturative adaptation of
27 Muslim youth. In line with the adaptive function of identity development, and looking
28 beyond ethnic or religious group differences in adaptation problems, religious identification
29 contributed significantly and positively to the psychological adaptation of Muslim minority
30 youth. The adaptive benefits of religious identity in the acculturation context is related to the
31 fact that religious involvement is closely entwined with a strong orientation towards heritage
32 culture values and identities. At the same time, being a religious Muslim was either
33 dissociated or conflicting with being part of the mainstream culture: depending on the
34 specific acculturation context, a negative or no significant association was found. In
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1 Germany, for instance, being a religious Muslim negatively predicted German culture
2 adoption, which suggests an adaptive disadvantage for religious Muslim youth in mainstream
3 cultural settings. Third, we applied an ecological approach to the religious identity
4 development of minority youth. More specifically, we discussed how interpersonal relations
5 within immigrant families and adolescents' peer networks – and intercultural relations with
6 the majority society, for instance when minority adolescents perceive religious
7 discrimination, affect the acculturation and religious identity of Muslim youth. Not
8 surprisingly and in line with research among non-immigrant youth, religious identity
9 development is strongly tied to the religious identities of parents and (particularly co-ethnic)
10 peers. What is distinctive about Muslim youth, however, is the success of intergenerational
11 transmission, with less religious decline across generations compared to other minority and
12 majority youth. We have interpreted relatively strong and stable religious identities among
13 Muslim minority youth in light of religious reaffirmation within immigrant families and in
14 response to public hostility in the receiving societies. Moreover, Muslims either self-select or
15 are more channeled into co-ethnic and co-religious rather than cross-ethnic and cross-
16 religious friendship networks, which in turn bolster their religious identity. Starting from
17 findings of religious identity conflict with the commitment to mainstream cultural values or
18 identities in some acculturation contexts, our review revealed the importance of the quality of
19 intercultural relations for the acculturative adaptation of Muslim youth (and young adults).
20 Contradicting the widespread notion that – due to an allegedly inherent cultural conflict
21 between Muslim and Western values and life-styles – Muslim religious identity would be at
22 odds with an orientation towards the mainstream culture and identification with the receiving
23 society, several studies showed that this is only one possible outcome, which can be
24 explained from higher levels of perceived discrimination and Islamophobia. In a nutshell, this
25 review on the religious identity development and the acculturative adaptation of immigrant
26 youth

1 minority youth highlights multiple developmental pathways which come with adaptation
2 benefits as well as costs depending on the quality of interpersonal and intercultural relations
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4 in specific acculturation contexts.
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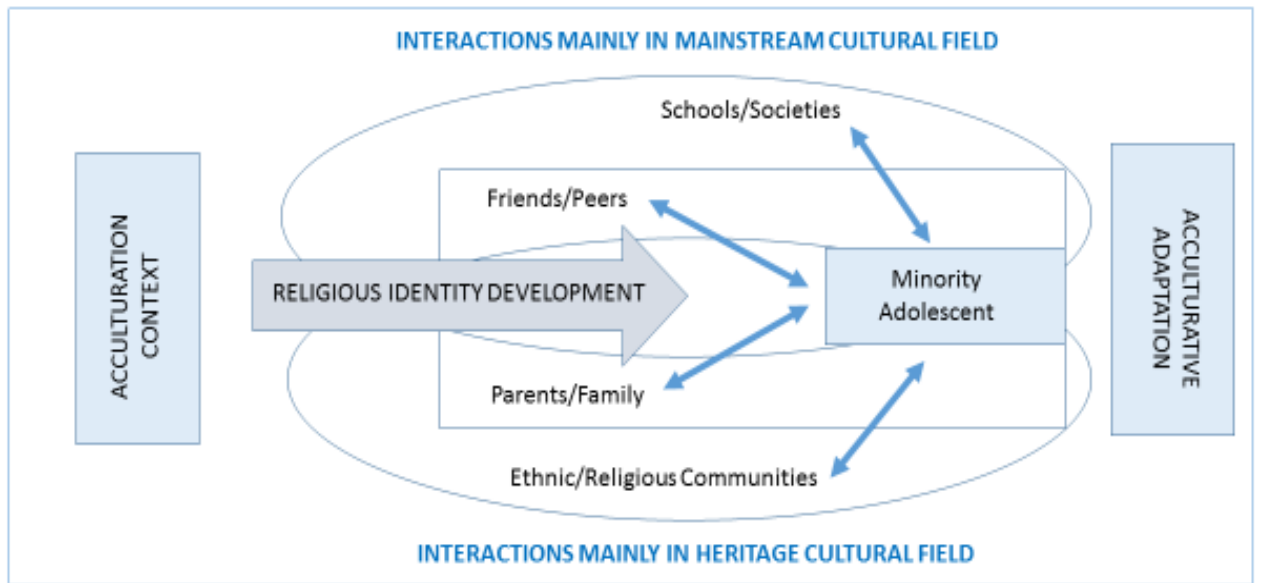


Figure. A contextual developmental model of religious identity and acculturative adaptation in minority adolescents

Dear Special Issue Editor,

thank you for providing us with the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript, and for being generous with the deadline of the revision. We found the comments of both reviewers very helpful in polishing the writing of our paper and pulling all findings together on the basis of an overarching theoretical framework. Both reviewers missed such a clear framework in the original submission, and we therefore made this more explicit in our introduction on p. 3 onwards, also including a figure to help clarify our approach. We also carefully went through the detailed comments that Reviewer 2 made on our writing and adjusted the text accordingly. Finally, we changed the order of the sections to further streamline our argument, and now build it up from religious identity development, via acculturative adaptation to the contextualisation of religious acculturation.

We hope that these changes adequately address the comments of the reviewers and look forward to receiving your decision on our revised manuscript.

Kind regards,
The authors.







Author biographies for ‘Religious identity and acculturation of immigrant minority youth:

Towards a contextual and developmental approach’

Karen Phalet is Full Professor of Social and Cultural Psychology at the University of Leuven, Belgium. She has published extensively in international psychology, sociology and migration studies journals on the interplay of migration-related diversity with old and new intergroup inequalities and conflicts with a special emphasis on minority perspectives in mainly European research contexts. Religious diversity and polarization vs. tolerance are an important and continuing line of inquiry within this broader research field.

Fenella Fleischmann is an Associate Professor at the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER) at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Her research studies the integration of immigrants and their children in European societies from a comparative perspective, with a focus on the role of religion among Muslim minorities.

Jessie Hillekens is a doctoral researcher at the Center for Social and Cultural Psychology at the University of Leuven. Her dissertation develops a social-developmental approach of acculturation processes and their interplay with peer relations among minority and majority adolescents.