

# Understanding the religious behaviour of Muslims in the Netherlands and the UK

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## *Abstract*

The position of Muslims in Western societies is the subject of intense study and debate. However, remarkably little attention has been paid to the practice of European Muslims and how Muslim religiosity relates to conventional measures of social and economic integration. In this paper we draw on theories of secularization, assimilation, revitalization and integration to explore the correlates of attendance at religious meetings for Muslims of different backgrounds in the Netherlands and the UK. We conclude that patterns of religiosity and secularisation cannot be generalised across national contexts.

**Keywords:** Religion, Muslim, Religiosity, Immigrant, Netherlands, UK

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## **1. Introduction**

The position of Muslims in Western societies is the subject of intense study and debate (Modood 1998). In particular, multiculturalism as both policy and concept has come under attack (Joppke 2004), though there have been attempts to defend – and reformulate – it (Parekh 2000; Modood 2007). At the same time there is increasing recognition of the economic disadvantage experienced by Muslims in many European countries (Ansari 2002; Platt 2007; Vasta 2007). However, while Islam is regarded as an obstacle to incorporation within European societies, little attention has been paid to the religious practice of European Muslim immigrants and their descendants and to how Muslim religiosity relates to conventional measures of social and economic integration. Phalet and Haker 2004; and Maliepaard et al. 2010 provide exceptions for the Netherlands. This contrasts with the strong US tradition of analysing religious practice as a route to integration for immigrants and their children (Foner and Alba 2008).

Current debates about Muslims in Europe are typically underpinned – implicitly or explicitly – by a universalising frame of reference that assumes transnational continuity in religious beliefs and practices, and their correlates. However, the extent to which such assumptions are valid and are a persistent phenomenon of Muslim identity and practice requires interrogation in more than one national context and ideally at periods both prior to and subsequent to the recent debates surrounding multiculturalism. In this paper, therefore, we investigate Muslim religiosity in the 1990s, exploring similarities and differences in the correlates of religiosity in different national contexts, and in the period before 2001 and the enhanced politicisation of the discourse surround Islam that has marked the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Specifically, we investigate attendance at religious

meetings in two increasingly secular societies, the UK and the Netherlands. These two countries are both comparable and distinct and allow for investigation of differentiation (Foner and Alba 2008; Kelly and De Graaf 1997). By detailed case study comparison we can explore which secularising processes impact different Muslim populations, and whether differences in national context or national origin of Muslims remain pertinent to a consideration of Muslim religiosity. We draw on theories of secularization, assimilation, revitalization and integration, to identify potential correlates of religiosity.

## **2. Background and key concepts**

We frame our discussion and analysis in relation to theories of secularization (Durkheim 1995 [1912]; Berger 1967; Norris and Inglehart 2004), assimilation (Park and Burgess 1969 [1921]; Gordon 1964) revitalization (Laurence and Vaise 2006; Statham 2004; Jacobsen 1997), and integration (Durkheim 1963 [1897]) and identity (Tajfel 1981). We use the term revitalisation to refer to both the institutionalisation of religious practice within country of migration, through, for example the construction of mosques and the provision of religious education, and to re-Islamization (Laurence and Vaise 2006), or the assertion of overarching transnational religious identities, often replacing strong ethnic affiliation among the second generation of minorities (Alam and Husband 2006).

Between them, these theories imply a role for educational and economic attainment, length of time in the destination country, generation, majority exposure and identification for the intensity of religious practice in highly secular societies.

### **Secularization: the role of education and economic security**

The founders of sociology claimed that not only the belief in religion among people but also the central role of religious institutions would decrease as economic security increased and the state took on the functions of religious institutions (Durkheim 1995 [1912]). At the same time, standard theories based on enlightenment perspectives have suggested that with education people learn to see religions as forms of superstition (Weber 1930 [1904]; Berger 1967). This view of the gradual disappearance of religion through security and education has dominated the sociological debate on religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tenets of secularism have more recently been subject to re-evaluation (Smith 2008), but it is clear that affiliation and traditional forms of observance are on the decline in Western European countries.

We might anticipate, therefore, that both the acquisition of qualifications and economic security would lead towards a decline in religiosity for Muslim minorities faced with life in a secular society, as Kelly and De Graaf 1997 have found. However, it is helpful to distinguish education as personal learning or exposure to ideas, from educational contexts as providing contact or exposure to secular individuals.

Education as a form of contact with non-religious, secular individuals or those of another religious affiliation may challenge beliefs or lead to convergence. General integration theory proposes that the more people integrate in social groups the more likely they are to follow the rules of these groups (Durkheim 1963 [1897]). In educational institutions, such ‘integration’ depends on whether individuals are enabled to foster their religious identity, and the extent to which that is congruent with academic success.

Participation in schooling among the second generation is a reflection of such potential contact, but may vary according to the national structure of educational institutions.

Education can also lead to greater understanding and intellectual commitment to one's religion. Contrary to stereotypes, education may not be regarded as a threat to faith: for example there has been a rapid expansion in the number of women from Muslim families in the UK entering higher education (Georgiadis and Manning forthcoming; Hussain and Bagguley 2007); and there is substantial evidence of the positive relationship between religious observance and educational attainment (Lehrer 2008) as well as on the increased income associated with religiosity in high income countries (Bettendorf and Dijkgraaf 2007; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Even as secularization would suggest a negative relationship between qualifications and religiosity, the story may be more complex.

Related to the concept of education as insight leading to rejection of religious attachment, Muslims with good host country language proficiency are more likely to come in contact with secular worldviews in the destination society. Indeed, host language fluency may both be a precondition for adopting a more secular outlook and, conversely, may be less necessary to those who are embedded in ethnically specific religious practices and institutions.

Socio-economic position also may impact on religiosity both via social contact as well as via the security it offers. Labour market participation typically involves contact with majority society members, and has also been seen as representing a measure of engagement with or integration into the host society. According to Logan and Alba (1993), labour market integration is likely to lead to similar levels of secularisation to

non-immigrant counterparts. Conversely, the low participation rates of Muslim women have been related to religious norms and proscriptions, though there is some evidence of change across generations (Dale et al. 2006; Georgiadis and Manning forthcoming). However, such a notion of the ‘well-integrated’ being less secular is open to contestation. Ethnic attachment does not necessarily decline with resources; in fact greater economic assimilation will increase the relative power and position of minority groups and allow them more choices, including the choice to associate with those felt to be similar (Dorsett 1998). On the other hand, religion and religious institutions can act as a ‘resource’ in times of difficulty and therefore may be most important to those who are not in work and with lower levels of income.

### **Assimilation and re-Islamization: religious expression over time and in the second generation**

For assimilation theories time is a crucial factor: as immigrants spend longer in a country, they are assumed to be more likely to take on board the values, norms and expectations of their country of residence (Gordon 1964). This would suggest that Muslims entering a secular country would be more likely to become secular themselves over time and across generations. However, the functions of religious participation, in terms of providing meaning in adversity and community support may in fact become more important over time, and the passage of time can allow greater institutionalisation of religious practices and settings. There is also increasing recognition that for second and subsequent generations, Islam can offer a meaningful source of identification for those at odds

between the homeland identification of their parents and their exclusion within their country of birth (Statham 2004, Alam and Husband 2006).

Moreover, it is important to recognise that even apparently secular Western states are often imbued with specific religious symbolism, assumptions and privileges (Foner and Alba 2008). Convergence therefore represents not the gradual abandonment of a particular belief system, but by implication the tacit acceptance of an alternative one. In the face of such a 'choice' more powerful adherence to religion of birth and upbringing over time and into the second generation starts to seem more likely.

### **Integration: religion as a resource and intergroup relations**

Religious identification can be regarded as a resource, where identity is used to pursue interests (Barth 2010). At the same time ascription to particular identity categories can inform behaviour and group attachment (Tajfel 1981). While there have been challenges to the concept of 'identity' and the meaning of 'ethnic group' within social science (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, Carter and Fenton 2010), identification and sense of in-group belonging is recognised as being both consequential for well-being (Thoits 1983) and contributing to understanding of inter-group relations, however loosely the term group is conceived (Jenkins 2008). While much of the discussion of identity has focused on ethnic identification, the pertinence of religious identities is increasingly being recognised as significant for our understanding of social identity (Ysseldyk et al 2010) and its consequences (Modood 2010), as well as inter-group relations (Verkuyten 2005). At the same time, the nature of overlapping social identities (Roccas and Brewer 2002),

in particular ethnic and religious identities, are drawing increasing empirical and conceptual attention in Western Europe.

Religious identification and accordance with norms associated with that identity can therefore both stem from patterns of social contact and engagement and contribute to shaping them. Thus we would expect to see greater religiosity paralleled by both greater in-group identification and by other demonstrations of group related behaviour, such as greater in group and less out group contact. This latter also accords with the more general expression of integration theory (Durkheim 1963 [1897]), whereby greater in-group contact is likely to be associated with greater religiosity and greater out-group contact to be associated with lower religiosity.

Moreover, ethnically based association and clubs build community resources and create opportunities for integration (Putnam, 1995; Portes, Fernández-Kelly and Haller 2005; Zhou and Xiong 2005). Their function as a resource can be particularly important in less receptive contexts (Connor 2010). Such associations often have their basis in organised religious activities and therefore involvement in them implies greater levels of attendance at religious meetings. Conversely, involvement in interethnic associations may offer a substitute to association based on religious practice. Social identities conceived in terms of interest, following Barth (1969), may thus link patterns of association with religiosity.

Finally, the geographical concentration of groups has been linked to group-related preferences or the enforcement of group norms. Exclusion and self-separation are debated in literatures on ethnic enclaves (Borjas 1998; Clark and Drinkwater 2002; Cutler and Glaeser 1997), ‘oppositional identities’ (Battu *et al.* 2005), and the marginalization of



minorities in general and Muslims in particular (Ansari 2002; Platt 2007; Vasta 2007). Whether the emphasis is on allocation or on preferences, neighbourhood concentration is likely to be consequential for behaviour, with concentrations of residents of the same minority faith or religious identity associated with greater religious participation. Furthermore, people tend to establish their religious institutions and social contacts in places where their religious groups are concentrated (Ebaugh, O'Brien and Chafetz 2000), facilitating access in such areas. Ethnic concentration seems to be more powerful than specifically religious concentration in fostering shared association (Peach 2006); but given the substantial overlap between religious and ethnic identities for both the UK's and the Netherlands' largest Muslim minorities, the level of concentration of Muslim minorities' own ethnic group can be expected to play a part in reinforcing Muslim religious involvement (Van Tubergen 2007).

### **The importance of context – origin and destination factors**

The majority of Muslims in Europe are either immigrants or the children of immigrants who have typically emigrated from countries where Islam is the majority religion and where participation in religious activities is higher than in the destination countries. However, within this general pattern there is great diversity in terms of both origin societies and destination countries.

We therefore explore two broadly comparable but nevertheless distinct 'destination' contexts and examine the contribution of ethnic origins. These ethnicities reflect complex histories of migration, and settlement as well as diverse historical and cultural heritages with different religious interpretations and practices. Muslims in Britain

mostly originate from the South Asian countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, while Muslims in the Netherlands predominantly came from Turkey and Morocco.<sup>1</sup>

Drawing on Norris and Inglehart (2004) and their axioms for levels of religious adherence, we would expect religiosity to be affected by the degree of development of the origin country, whether it is primarily agrarian or industrial and whether it is religiously plural. On this basis, to what extent are Muslims in our study likely to differ from one another in terms of their religiosity? Turning first to the Netherlands, Turkey is an industrial nation while Morocco, Suriname and the Antilles are agrarian societies. In terms of religiosity, Turkey and Morocco are predominantly Islamic societies while Suriname has a mix of Hindu, Protestant, Catholic and Islamic heritage and the Antilles have a predominantly Christian culture. The UK's Muslims are predominantly Pakistani and Bangladeshi, though Indian Muslims (from both India and East Africa) make up a sizeable share. Both Pakistan and especially Bangladesh are agrarian societies and they are both Islamic societies. Indian Muslims from East Africa were a primarily urban minority, and Muslims are a (substantial) religious minority in India. In line with Norris and Inglehart (2004), we might therefore expect that Moroccans attend religious meetings more often than Turks and Surinamese in the Netherlands while Bangladeshis and Pakistanis would show more religious observance than Indians and African Asian in the UK.

When we turn to compare the two destination countries, both countries are predominantly protestant; but in the UK state and church are merged whereas in the Netherlands there is a principle of pillarization, enabling the separate development of religious community institutions. In both countries there are multicultural agendas; but

differently played out. In the UK, these mostly revolved around ‘race’ and minority status. Until recently, religions were only covered by anti-discrimination legislation if they could be shown to be ethno-cultural entities – so, through case law Jews and Sikhs came to be covered but not Muslims. Muslims were also not covered by blasphemy laws. Equalities legislation now explicitly covers religion but that development postdates the period of our study.

In the Netherlands the multicultural project extended to religion from the start: Muslims organized themselves within the tradition of pillarization. Its success, however, has been contested. Critics later argued that it encouraged a separatist approach and did not foster ‘integration’ (Landman 2002); while others have highlighted the ways in which it did little to address the marginalised situation of Dutch Muslims (Vasta 2007).

In line with Inglehart’s theory, these factors would suggest a greater tendency towards secularization for Muslims in the Netherlands compared to Muslims in the UK. While we cannot make a direct comparison between the two countries relating to the extent of religiosity, these contextual factors are likely to influence the ways in which economic, educational, integration and identification factors play out in the two settings.

### **3. Data, variables and methods**

#### *Data*

For the Netherlands, we use the Social Position and Provision Ethnic Minorities Surveys (SPVA) collected in 1998 (N = 7553) (Martens 1999). The SPVA-survey includes the four largest ethnic minority groups - Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans - in the Netherlands, based on the citizenship or country of birth of the respondent. The

sampling focused on those conurbations where the majority of minorities live, allows the survey to cover 80 per cent of the minority groups, and the representation has been validated against national statistics (Martens 1999). Within the municipalities that form the basis of the sample, selection for the survey is random.

For the UK, we use the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (FNSEM) 1993 (Modood *et al.* 1997). The survey comprises a sample of ethnic minorities selected across areas of high (>10%), medium (0.5%-10%) and low (<0.5%) minority group density and covers Indians, African Asians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Black Caribbeans and Chinese as well as a comparison sample of the White majority. Weights were calculated to adjust for the sample design and to enable the results to be representative of minorities in England and Wales. We have employed these weights in all analyses. The questionnaire was split to increase the content covered across the sample, so that while a question on religion was asked of all and allows us to identify around 2000 Muslims in the sample, religious practice, which includes our measure of religiosity was only asked of half the respondents to the survey.

The designs of the surveys for both countries focus on areas of high ethnic minority concentration and aim to be representative; and information on religion is highly comparable. In both cases we are able to analyse patterns of religiosity and their correlates in a period before 2001. We use the SPVA from 1998 because it is the first survey in the Netherlands that contains information on religion and is closest to the date of the British survey. In both surveys we selected only those who reported themselves to be Muslim. Furthermore, we have excluded the small numbers of Muslim respondents from the ethnic majority group. We are therefore left with a total of around 2,300

Antilleans, Turks, Surinamese and Moroccans in the Dutch data, and around 950 Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians and East African Asians in the UK data.

### *Dependent variable*

Our key dependent variable is attendance at mosques and religious meetings, which is asked in a very similar way in both surveys: ‘how often do you attend religious meetings?’ In the Dutch survey, the answer categories were 0) ‘never’, 1) ‘a few times in a year’, 2) ‘a few times in a month’ and 3) ‘once or more a week’. The British question has one more category ‘less than once a year’. We dichotomised these variables into 1) once or more a week and 0) else. The use of a measure of weekly attendance for cross-national studies is well-attested in existing studies (Ruiter and van Tubergen 2009; van Tubergen 2006). The distributions across the response categories nevertheless vary somewhat between the countries, as can be seen from the Appendix table, which also includes descriptives for our other variables.

### *Education and labour market participation*

We harmonised education into five categories of ‘no qualification’, ‘primary / basic’, ‘secondary/O-level’, ‘A-level’, and ‘higher education’. We measured language skills with the question from the SPVA: ‘do you have difficulties in speaking Dutch?’, where the answer categories are 0) mostly, 1) sometimes and 2) never. We took category 2 to represent fluency in Dutch. In the UK data, English speaking skills were evaluated by the interviewer, and we created a comparable category of speaking English fluently. We included a dummy variable for whether employed.<sup>2</sup>

### *Second generation and duration in destination country*

We include a dummy variable representing second generation which covers those who were born in the UK/NL or who migrated when younger than seven. We operationalise duration as current age minus age on migration.

### *Interethnic contact*

We use a measure of membership of (NL) or activity in (UK) an association: 1) no membership of / not active in an association; 2) membership of / active in an ethnic association, and 3) membership of / active in a predominantly majority association.

In the SPVA, the respondents could either identify with their own ethnic group or with being Dutch. However, in the British survey respondents were asked separately about their identification with being British and with their own group. Both of these identification scales are included in the British models.

To characterise the local neighbourhood we use the percentage of own ethnic group in the respondents' postcode area (Dutch data) or ward (UK data). The UK included this measure in the data set, but the Dutch data only included the postcode of the respondents. We therefore manually collected and matched in the percentage of own group living in that postcode for 1998 or the nearest year.<sup>3</sup> This provides us with a small area measure of concentration; and, since minorities are strongly geographically concentrated in the Netherlands at the small area level, the average proportion of own group is relatively high. To avoid underestimating the standard errors for the relationship between geographical concentration and our dependent variable (Moulton 1990), in our

analysis we allow for correlations between errors at the postcode level. The UK data provided the information in seven categories rather than exact percentages, ranking from 0 to more than 33 per cent. We therefore took the midpoint of each category and constructed a linear variable. We do not know the actual neighbourhood of each observation, so to ensure that we do not overestimate the statistical significance relating to the impact of area concentration, we allowed errors to be correlated across all those with a similar level of own group concentration. This provides a conservative estimate of the relationship between area concentration and religiosity.

#### *Origin country*

The Dutch data cover Moroccans, Turks, and an amalgamated category of Surinamese/Antilleans, while the British data contain Indians / East African Asians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis.

#### *Demographic factors*

We control for sex, age and partnership, which are typically associated with religious activity. Research shows that women tend to be more religious than men (De Vaus and McAllister 1987; Becker and Hofmeister 2001). However, Muslim women do not typically attend Friday prayers in the mosque. Studies of religiosity using a similar dependent variable have highlighted the finding that women attend less frequently (Van Tubergen 2006). It is therefore important to control for sex. There is nevertheless a distribution of responses for both men and women across the categories, which supports a pooled model. For example, in the UK data around half of the women attend at least

weekly. For robustness we also estimated models on men only. Although smaller sample sizes rendered it harder to attain statistical significance, the results were largely consistent in size and direction with those presented here from the pooled model. (Tables available from authors on request.)

In cross-sectional surveys, it is problematic to disentangle cohort, period and age effects. In fact, those studies which have been able to separate the effects of age from those of cohort do not find aging influences religiosity (Tilley 2003; Crockett and Voas 2006; Norris and Inglehart 2004). We control for age as an important demographic characteristic, but recognise that we cannot distinguish it from cohort; and it is potentially confounded with duration.

### *Method*

We estimated logistic regression models. We estimated six models for each country to separately identify the different sets of potential associations, including a basic model which includes only sex, age and partnership status, and a seventh model that includes the full set of independent variables.

## **4. Results**

### *The Netherlands*

The first model of Table I is our baseline model which includes basic demographic data on sex, age and partnership status. Women are less likely to attend regularly than men. This is a specific feature of Muslim public religious participation (see also Van Tubergen 2006). Those with a partner are also more likely to attend, consistent with existing



research (Becker and Hofmeister 2001). Age is associated with increased attendance. We explored whether there was any evidence for a non-linear relationship between age and attendance, but found no support for such a relationship. All three basic demographic factors persist across all models including other variables and in the full model.

In Models 2 and 3, we estimate the relationship between educational and economic indicators and religious attendance, thus testing hypotheses relating to secularization and security. Being educated is associated with a lower propensity to attend, in line with the standard secularisation thesis, and there is some indication that this effect increases with educational level. Religious attendance among Muslims with good language skills is significantly lower than among those with poor Dutch language skills, according with the hypothesis that competence in Dutch is a precondition for absorbing a more secular worldview and conversely more necessary for those who are less religious, who will have more incentive to draw on alternative forms of social support and contact. Consistent with theories relating to both security and contact, and the potential of religious institutions as a resource, Muslims with a paid job attend religious meetings less often than unemployed Muslims (Model 3). All these effects persist in the final model.

*[Table I about here]*

Our discussion indicated that longer duration would be associated with assimilative processes and therefore lower attendance, especially for those socialised from an early age into Dutch society. However, we also discussed the view that revitalization and the

substitution of religious for more narrowly 'ethnic' identities could be associated with higher levels of attendance among the second generation. In fact, in Model 4, we find no support for either assimilation over time or for a second generation effect, once we have taken age into account. Younger minority group Muslims are less likely to attend, but that is the case regardless of generation. Being born or brought up in the Netherlands, over and above its potential for increasing probability of Dutch fluency, does not of itself enhance the tendency to assimilate to secular norms. Interacting ethnic group with duration (not illustrated) we found that there is a slight, but significant, tendency for Moroccan attendance to *increase* with duration, once we have controlled for age, suggesting that those groups with fewer infrastructural resources require time to establish the institutional arrangements to enable attendance. For Turks the probability of attendance remained constant with duration. Therefore even for particular groups, there is no evidence of assimilation; though it may be our cross-sectional data disguises cohort differences with earlier, more religious cohorts converging to the levels of later less religious ones. Without longitudinal data, this must remain at the level of conjecture, however.

Forms of contact with the majority and identification with the majority were anticipated to reduce Muslim religiosity; and such integrative effects are partly found in the fifth model. It is worth noting the strong negative correlation between Dutch identification and attendance. This would appear to suggest that Muslim piety and Dutchness are in some ways at odds, as is often posited in current debates. We return to this issue when exploring the UK results, below. Interestingly, however, there is no evidence that living in a neighbourhood with a higher concentration of own group is

associated with greater religious attendance. It is worth noting that, unlike previous studies, we have used a measure of own group in the locality rather than simply the concentration of “non-Western” individuals. Our measure is clearly more relevant for hypotheses relating to group norms and contact. For the Netherlands at least, Muslim religiosity would not appear to be structured by local opportunities or group norms.

Finally, origin effects partly accord with our expectations deriving from Norris and Inglehart’s classification of societies (Model 6), since Surinamese and Antilleans who come from countries with minority Muslim populations attend less frequently. But Turks, despite coming from an industrial country, attend significantly more frequently than the reference category of Moroccans. We speculated that there were two possible reasons for this apparently surprising outcome. First, the greater capacity among Turks to develop group level institutions and resources may encourage and support attendance Canatan (2001). This is supported by analysis exploring the interaction of duration with ethnicity, discussed above, which shows that Moroccan attendance increases with duration, whereas Turkish attendance rates remain largely constant. Second, and potentially related to the issue of institutional structures, we identified that greater attendance among Turks was largely driven by differences between Turkish and Moroccan women, with insignificant differences between Turkish and Moroccan men. The fact that Turks are, contrary to our hypothesis, no less likely to attend, may accord with the institutional infrastructure, while the greater attendance of Turkish women may be influenced both by infrastructure which facilitates their attendance and by origin country differences in gendered patterns of attendance that work in the opposite direction

to the industrialisation thesis. Future research with more origin countries and more extended measures of institutional provision may help to illuminate this question.

### *The United Kingdom*

Table II shows that the UK reveals a rather different set of associations. While the smaller sample size reduces the chances of achieving statistical significance in some cases, an inspection of the sign and size of the coefficients show that there are differences between the two countries. Model 1 shows that, as with the Netherlands, being a woman is negatively associated with attendance, while age is positively associated and being partnered is positively though not significantly associated. In Model 2, we see that education is not clearly associated with attendance, as it was for Dutch Muslims. Closer inspection shows that part of any education effect comes through greater English language fluency (and thereby also partly by generation). The sign for some of the education dummies is in the expected direction and further aggregation could produce some significant differences in the reduced model, but overall, the secularising power of education for UK Muslims, over and above these exposure effects does not seem clear cut as it does for Dutch Muslims. Fluency in English is also associated with lower attendance, as Dutch fluency was for the Netherlands. This again emphasises the ways in which competence in English may be a precondition for absorbing a more secular world view and also be more necessary for those who are less religious. Economic security as measured by employment (Model 3) is again negatively but not significantly associated with attendance, and this association is weakened further in the full model, thus providing only limited support the relevance of security in the secularising process. Overall, then

the UK does not provide strong support for process of secularisation operating among British Muslims in the ways they do for Dutch Muslims.

*[Table II about here]*

Similarly, assimilation in terms of duration of stay (Model 4) is not associated with either greater or lesser religiosity, once age is taken into account; and in this model the age coefficient itself becomes non-significant. However, being second generation is highly significantly related to decreased attendance. Unlike in the Dutch data, where being second generation was only relevant in so far as it was associated with youth, either via an age or perhaps more probably a cohort effect (Crockett and Voas 2006), in the UK second generation and the implied greater assimilation to more secular norms stemming from that is significant in its own right.

This indicates that religiosity is sensitive to local conditions and exposure and that is also supported by the integration model. Being active in an own group association is not significant in the simple model, but it becomes so in the final model when we control for other relevant factors. Test also confirm that participation in an own ethnic group organisation differs significantly from the effect of belonging to a majority organisation, relative to no organisation. The association between ethnicity and association may well imply reverse causation since religious participation and attendance facilitates organisational involvement (Ruiter and de Graaf 2006), but could also relate to mutually reinforcing group norms. Unlike in the Netherlands, the increased group norms or resources implied by own group area concentration have a positive relationship with

religiosity, and this association persists in the final model. Again we may be seeing reverse causation, in that religious people may choose to co-reside in places where they have access to religious institutions. More important, for our purposes, however, is the fact that this association is found here but not in the Netherlands, despite – or perhaps because of – the high degree of ethnic group concentration in the Netherlands.

A particularly striking finding for the UK is the positive relation between self-identification with British society and religious attendance, which remains in the full model. This is at odds with our expectations relating to integration and contrasts with the Dutch results. It is perhaps particularly worthy of note given that in the UK, by the date of our data, the Rushdie affair had already politicised perceptions of British Muslims and reshaped debates on ethnicity and integration within the UK (Ahmad and Evergeti 2010; Modood 2009). This association between British identification and higher rates of attendance is robust to the inclusion of identification with own ethnic group, which is also positive, in line with expectations. Thus, it is not simply that those more attached generally who are more religious, but among those with different levels of own group attachment British identity is still associated with greater religiosity. Despite debates about ‘oppositional’ cultures (Battu *et al.* 2005), religious practice in the UK would appear to have an integrative role in terms of destination country identification. Put otherwise, strong national identification is not felt to be at odds with devout religious practice (cf. Manning and Roy 2010). It may be that we are seeing the integrative role of religious institutions themselves, which can foster more general feelings of belonging and associated self-confidence (Foner and Alba 2008; Furbey *et al.* 2006).

Finally, Bangladeshis are significantly more likely to attend regularly than Pakistanis (Model 6). This is in line with our expectations concerning level of industrialisation in the origin country.

In the Netherlands, then, there would appear to be indications of some secularising tendencies within patterns of Muslim religiosity, and conversely little evidence of revitalisation. While in the UK there is far less support for secularisation as a general process but exposure and contact seem much more pertinent to levels of attendance, though, as in the Netherlands, duration among the first generation is not associated with declining religiosity. Two particularly distinctive and contrasting features across the two countries relate to assimilation and integration arguments. In the Netherlands there was no specific second generation association that would imply a specific impact of upbringing and schooling (regardless of qualifications) on religious behaviour. By contrast, in the UK the second generation were significantly less likely to attend regularly, even after controlling for age, suggesting that upbringing – perhaps though greater contact with non-Muslims in school – matters. In the UK, British identification was positively correlated with attendance, while in the Netherlands Dutch identification was negatively correlated. These differences could tell us something about the distinctiveness of the different institutional settings and reception of Muslims in the two countries. For example, pillarization could help to account for the lack of a second generation effect in the Netherlands. However, equally important as differences in national context could be the differences in the ethnic origins of Muslims in the two countries.

Clearly we cannot present a counterfactual of the religious behaviour of Moroccan Muslims in the UK or Bangladeshi Muslims in the Netherlands, which might isolate ethnic origins from institutional effects, but given the differences between ethnic groups within each country we explored further the extent to which some of these key features were ethnically specific *within* each country, by estimating models with interactions between ethnicity and these apparently counter-intuitive associations, namely for the Netherlands, second generation, and for the UK British identity. (Tables available from authors on request.) However, these models resulted in no statistically significant differential probabilities for the interactions.

## **5. Conclusions**

There is increasing scholarly interest on the experience and practice of Muslims in European countries (Phalet and Haker 2004; Maliepaard 2010; Conner 2010). Our work contributes to these by a specific investigation – and comparison – of the factors associated with Muslim religiosity, in two rich Western countries in the period before 2001. Single country studies provide a rich understanding of the Muslim patterns of attendance and the factors that shape them, yet they implicitly suggest a continuity of experience across Muslims of different origins and in different settings (e.g. Phalet and Haker 2004; Maliepaard 2010), enhanced in a period in which the strong politicisation of discourses surround Muslims tend to assume cross-national continuities. Conversely, multiple-country studies can legitimately claim a greater degree of generalisation, but may obscure the specifics and complexities of correlates of Muslim religiosity as they are played out in particular national contexts (Ruiter and Van Tubergen 2009) or may not



have the scope to address minority religions in the countries considered (e.g. Kelley and De Graaf 1997). A case study approach, such as that pursued here, can retain some of the richness of analysis and interpretation of the single country studies, while highlighting the extent to which findings and theoretical frameworks of explanation can or cannot be applied consistently across more than one setting.

Such an approach does not come without its difficulties in terms of harmonisation of data sources and of disentangling institutional impacts across the two countries from the differences in countries of origin of their Muslim groups, and these limitations clearly lead to caution in extrapolating from the results presented here. Yet the insights are potentially valuable in highlighting diversity and similarity among Muslims of different backgrounds and in different institutional contexts and in providing an agenda for future research.

Moreover, our findings help to highlight the extent to which the questions asked in different national contexts are premised on particular assumptions processes of integration and ethnic attachment. Thus, the question on Dutch identity required people to position themselves as either Dutch or as of minority ethnicity, and an inspection of the Dutch results alone might have led to the inference that greater religiosity fosters lower Dutch identification and by extension to an assumption that religious Muslims were somewhat alienated from the host society. However, the question itself fails to recognise that own group and majority group attachments represent different dimensions of identity rather than two ends of a single pole, and operate in different ways in relation to host country interaction, as Schaafsma et al (2010) have recently shown. When we turn to the

British data we see these different dimensions in the joint association of ethnic identity and British identity with greater religiosity.

The Netherlands results provide some support for secularisation as a common process affecting minority Muslims in Western societies as well as the majority members of those societies themselves. There is much less support for such processes operating among British Muslims, and the differential role of education and security are worthy of further scrutiny. Neither country provides evidence of processes of revitalisation, though it is interesting that the exposure to the host country implied by longer duration does not have an impact over and above that of age (for the Netherlands) or generation (for the UK), which refutes assimilation expectations. The two countries provide only partial evidence (in the form of ethnic associational participation and, in the UK, area concentration) for the assumed association between integration and weaker religious attachment that underpins much of the current heated debate about the extent to which Muslims ‘fit’ within Western democracies (Vasta 2007). Moreover, the UK evidence presented here challenges us to rethink the finding from the Netherlands that implies an inherent contradiction between Muslim affiliation and destination country national identification (see also Manning and Roy 2010, Verkuyten and Yildiz 2007).

Overall, our study has indicated that the answers to questions about factors shaping religiosity can be highly context specific, and say as much about the national settings within which Muslims practice and their own histories and origins, as about the determinants of religious practice themselves.

## Notes

1. These cover the major Muslim groups in Europe by country of origin.
2. We also tested whether annual household income is related to attendance in the two countries. There are a large number of missing values on income which reduces sample size. We also replaced the missing values by imputing these values or using the mean of household income. None of the versions revealed significant association with attendance. We did not include income in our final specification.
3. We gathered this information from the website for statistics on municipalities in the Netherlands ([www.incijfers.nl](http://www.incijfers.nl)) or from the research centres of the city councils.

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Table I: Binary Logistic Regressions of Weekly Attendance: Netherlands 1998

	Basic	Secularisation	Security	Assimilation	Integration	Ethnic origins	Full
Women	-1.10*** (0.13)	-1.13*** (0.13)	-1.24*** (0.13)	-1.06*** (0.13)	-1.07*** (0.14)	-1.03*** (0.13)	-1.11*** (0.15)
Partner	0.65*** (0.11)	0.66*** (0.12)	0.69*** (0.11)	0.62*** (0.11)	0.63*** (0.12)	0.59*** (0.11)	0.60*** (0.13)
Age	0.05*** (0.00)	0.04*** (0.00)	0.04*** (0.00)	0.05*** (0.01)	0.05*** (0.00)	0.06*** (0.00)	0.04*** (0.01)
No qualification		Ref.					Ref.
Basic		-0.18 (0.12)					-0.19 (0.13)
Secondary		-0.49*** (0.15)					-0.52** (0.17)
A level		-0.50* (0.20)					-0.49* (0.23)
University		-0.94*** (0.24)					-0.78** (0.25)
Fluent in Dutch		-0.43*** (0.11)					-0.30* (0.14)
Employed			-0.47*** (0.10)				-0.30* (0.12)
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation				-0.16 (0.22)			-0.01 (0.27)
Duration of stay				0.01 (0.01)			0.01 (0.01)
Dutch identity					-0.94*** (0.28)		-0.74* (0.31)
No association					Ref.		Ref.
Ethnic association					0.41** (0.15)		0.56*** (0.17)
Majority association					-0.14 (0.22)		0.19 (0.23)
Own group area					0.00 (0.00)		-0.00 (0.00)
Moroccan						Ref.	Ref.
Turkish						0.21* (0.10)	0.19 (0.13)
Surinamese						-1.21*** (0.23)	-0.85** (0.27)
Constant	-2.40*** (0.18)	-1.61*** (0.24)	-1.89*** (0.21)	-2.30*** (0.20)	-2.47*** (0.23)	-2.58*** (0.19)	-1.50*** (0.29)
pseudo $R^2$	0.13	0.15	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.17
Log likelihood	-1411	-1327	-1398	-1372	-1384	-1389	-1259
$N$	2354	2263	2352	2288	2322	2354	2181

Standard errors in parentheses +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  Standard errors for area effects take account of correlation of errors across areas.

Table II: Binary Logistic Regressions of Weekly Attendance: UK 1993

	Basic	Secularisation	Security	Assimilation	Integration	Ethnic origins	Full
Woman	-0.92*** (0.18)	-1.13*** (0.20)	-0.97*** (0.20)	-1.00*** (0.20)	-0.92** (0.31)	-0.89*** (0.19)	-1.03*** (0.30)
Partner	0.33 (0.21)	0.18 (0.23)	0.35 (0.22)	-0.09 (0.25)	0.25 (0.23)	0.31 (0.22)	-0.12 (0.25)
Age	0.01* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01+ (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
No qualification		Ref.					Ref.
Basic		-0.15 (0.29)					-0.15 (0.43)
Secondary		0.27 (0.35)					0.25 (0.26)
A level		-0.50 (0.33)					-0.50 (0.33)
University		-0.08 (0.39)					0.16 (0.53)
Fluent in English		-0.68** (0.25)					-0.32+ (0.18)
Employed			-0.18 (0.23)				0.05 (0.28)
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation				-0.80* (0.32)			-0.40 (0.29)
Duration of stay				0.01 (0.02)			0.01 (0.01)
British identity					0.27** (0.09)		0.25*** (0.07)
Own ethnic identity					0.26* (0.12)		0.23* (0.10)
No association					Ref.		Ref.
Ethnic association					0.35 (0.39)		0.65* (0.31)
Majority association					-0.30 (0.29)		-0.22 (0.33)
Own group area					0.02+ (0.01)		0.02*** (0.01)
Pakistani						Ref.	Ref.
Bangladeshi						0.41+ (0.22)	0.54 (0.34)
Indian / African Asian						-0.29 (0.27)	-0.14 (0.40)
Constant	0.45 (0.28)	1.25** (0.39)	0.53+ (0.30)	1.47*** (0.41)	-1.92** (0.70)	0.35 (0.29)	-1.14 (0.71)
pseudo $R^2$	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.06	0.13
Log likelihood	-375	-345	-375	-359	-350	-373	-307
$N$	944	877	944	917	895	944	808

Standard errors in parentheses +  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$  All models are estimated applying design weights. Standard errors for area effects take account of correlations across area categories.

**Appendix: Variable Descriptives**

	Netherlands		UK*	
	N	Mean / %	N	Mean / %
Attendance	2399	47	944	67
Women	2411	22	1028	49
Partner	2406	71	1028	70
Age (years)	2380	39	1028	36
Educational qualifications	2358		1016	
No qualifications		37		50
Basic		31		16
Secondary		21		14
A levels		7		9
University		5		11
Fluent in Dutch / English	2371	33	968	45
Employed	2414	50	1028	29
2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	2414	8	994	32
Duration in country (years): for 1st generation	2125	17	752	19
Dutch identity	2387	2		
Strength of British identity (score out of 5)			984	3.6
Strength of own ethnic identity (score out of 5)			994	4.3
Associational activity	2405		1022	
No association		87		79
Ethnic group association		8		8
Majority association		5		12
Group proportion in postcode (%)	2414	34	1028	14
Ethnic group	2414		1028	
Turkish		45		
Moroccan		49		
Surinamese / Antillean		6		
Pakistani				64
Bangladeshi				21
Indian / African Asian				15

Note: all are proportions (percentages) except age, duration and British and own ethnic identity. \*UK statistics are weighted to adjust for design effects, but the Ns are unweighted.