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Tolerance of Muslim beliefs and practices: Age related differences and context effects

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Tolerant judgments of Muslims' political rights and dissenting beliefs and practices by ethnic Dutch adolescents (12–18 years) were examined. Participants ($N = 632$) made judgments of different types of behaviors and different contexts in an experimental questionnaire study. As in other studies, tolerance was found to not be a global construct. Adolescents took into account various aspects of what they were asked to tolerate and the sense in which they should be tolerant. The type of actor, the nature of the social implication of the behavior, the underlying belief type, and the dimension of tolerance, all made a difference to the tolerant judgments. Additionally, the findings strongly suggest that tolerance judgments do not develop through an age-related stage-like sequence where an intolerant attitude is followed by tolerance. For females, there were no age differences, and older males were *less* tolerant than younger males. There were also gender differences with males being less tolerant for some types of behavior and females being less tolerant for behaviors that negatively affected Muslim females. Level of education had a positive effect on tolerance. The findings are discussed with reference to social-cognitive domain theory.

Keywords: adolescence; contexts; education; religion; tolerance

In many societies around the world there is a growing concern around tolerance of diversity. Ethnic, cultural and religious differences are hotly debated and societies, organizations, and institutions such as schools are increasingly pluralist. Tolerance for dissenting beliefs and practices is a key condition for citizenship and democracy (Sullivan & Transue, 1999).

Tolerance is not the absence of prejudice but rather a separate construct that emphasizes forbearance, or "putting up with" without interference. Considering its central importance, this construct should be examined from a developmental perspective (Vogt, 1997). However, in contrast with the large body of research on stereotypes and prejudice, the development of tolerance has been under-researched.

Existing research focuses on political and belief discrepancy tolerance (see Robinson, Witenberg, & Sanson, 2001). Political scientists and sociologists have examined political tolerance and found that adolescence and early adulthood is the period in which tolerance increases significantly. The findings relating to belief discrepancy also suggest a gradual age-related progression to more tolerance toward those with dissenting beliefs. However, both lines of research highlight the contextual nature of tolerance: what adolescents are asked to make judgments about influences their level of tolerance. Tolerance appears to depend on which, what and when adolescents are asked to tolerate dissenting beliefs and practices. For example, Siegelman and Toebben (1992) found that no single construct of tolerance emerged after context and content were taken into account. Wainryb, Shaw, and Maianu (1998) found that adolescents tolerated the holding of beliefs about harmful practices more than acting on these beliefs, and that they were more tolerant toward dissenting information than dissenting

moral values. They concluded that "tolerance and intolerance coexist at all ages" (p. 1541).

The theoretical implication is that the social-cognitive domain model (see Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006; Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 2002) seems more adequate for understanding the development of tolerance than a cognitive developmental framework that proposes increasingly advanced stages of tolerance (e.g., Enright & Lapsley, 1981; Enright, Lapsley, Franklin, & Streuck, 1984). The domain model emphasizes that children and adolescents apply different domains of knowledge in their social reasoning and judgments. Not only moral considerations but also societal and psychological ones are applied to evaluations of a range of social events. Furthermore, individuals' interpretation of context is considered part of their judgment and related to the type of reasoning that is applied to the situation.

Despite the rejection of a single global construct of tolerance, there are few extensive investigations into the manner by which contextual factors affect tolerance judgments. In this study, we predicted that tolerance judgments would vary depending on the context. The study examines tolerance of Muslim beliefs and practices among ethnically Dutch adolescents. In the Netherlands, as in other countries, the problems of a multicultural society are increasingly discussed in relation to Islam. In the media, Islam has become a symbol of problems related to ethnic minorities and immigration (see Ter Wal, 2004). As a result, public discussion focuses predominantly on Turks and Moroccans, and on the need to compel these two Islamic groups to assimilate. In this discussion, Islam has been defined as being a backward religion that seriously threatens Dutch society and culture. Other minority groups,

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such as ex-colonials, are rarely mentioned and are not presented as a similar threat (Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Hence, the devaluation of people because they follow the Islamic faith has increased, and there is a change from ethnic prejudices to religious ones.

The development of tolerance toward Muslims is a particularly important issue among adolescents. This is because in democratic societies an important socialization goal is to teach youth tolerant reactions to dissenting others. Adolescence is the salient time or critical period for the learning of political, and other forms of, tolerance (e.g., Avery, 1989; Berti, 2005). This learning takes place within the interpretations and representations circulating in the society in which people live. Current debates in many western societies including the Netherlands focus on religious diversity and the position of Islam in particular. Therefore, the development of tolerance among adolescents toward Muslims is a key issue to address for understanding intergroup relations in the Netherlands and other countries. To address this we conducted a study with participants between 12 and 18 years of age in which various aspects of tolerance were investigated, such as actor, social implications, belief type, and group memberships. We used an experimental questionnaire design to examine the effects of age, gender, level of education, and own religiousness.

Tolerance

Tolerance can be conceptualized in various ways, such as the valuing and celebrating of difference, the absence of prejudice, and the putting up with something that one disapproves of or is prejudiced against (Robinson et al., 2001). Our focus is on this latter conceptualization in which not begrudging other people their own ways is central. Moreover our conceptualization includes tolerance as an option when one dislikes something or someone and tolerance as the opposite of discrimination when one endures or refrains from action although other's beliefs and practices are disapproved of or rejected. This kind of tolerance is the most basic level of positive relations between groups. Nevertheless, it is crucial because it is the first and necessary step toward civility and foundational for a just society. As Vogt (1997, p. xviii) argues:

> "Tolerance is vitally important because of the inevitability of diversity and the apparent inevitability of stereotyping, bias and prejudice. But discrimination and persecution are not inevitable. Tolerance keeps negative attitudes and beliefs from becoming negative actions."

Some degree of tolerance is necessary for a diverse and equal society. People may disagree with one another, may have stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes but should at least agree about how to disagree. Historically, the concept of tolerance evolved from efforts to deal with the harmful and violent effects of religious conflicts (Sullivan & Transue, 1999). The presence of a great number of Muslims in western European countries has given a renewed urgency to the idea of tolerance as a mechanism for dealing with religious diversity.

People can be both tolerant and intolerant of diversity because tolerant judgments seem to depend on many factors, such as what and who people are asked to tolerate, the sense in which they are asked to be tolerant, and the underlying belief they are asked to accept. In our research, we examined tolerant judgments in relation to five aspects of tolerance. These aspects relate to *what* individuals are asked to tolerate, *how* they are asked to be tolerant, and *who* they are asked to tolerate. The first three aspects relate to the content and consequences of what individuals are asked to tolerate, the fourth one to the sense in which they are asked to be tolerant, and the fifth one to the distinction between ingroup and outgroup members.

The first that we deal with here focused on the endorsement of political tolerance. The great majority of existing research examines levels of political tolerance, particularly the endorsement of freedoms and civil liberties. There are various studies on adolescents' political thinking and behavior (see Berti, 2005). Among other things, these studies show that adolescents tend to support democratic rights in the abstract. However, similar to adults, adolescents often do not endorse the same rights in concrete circumstances. It is one thing to endorse the freedom of speech and demonstration in general, and another thing to apply these freedoms to, for example, Muslim groups living in a secular or Christian country. We focused on two concrete examples of specific rights, namely the right to found one's own schools and the right to demonstrate and protest. Both rights are guaranteed by the Dutch constitution. We used a between-subjects design to compare the tolerant judgments toward Muslim and non-Muslim groups. We expected that the participants would be less tolerant toward the former than the latter.

The second aspect we examined was the social implications of particular acts performed by Muslims. Tolerance always has limits and should be evaluated in relation to other principles and values (Vogt, 1997). Most of the same people do not support freedoms and rights when they are in conflict with other considerations. For example, one's own freedom ends where the freedom of others is threatened, and intolerance should not be tolerated. In addition, the right to act differently is limited by principles of equality and by operative public norms that govern the civic relations between people (Parekh, 2000). In our research, we contrasted the freedom of clothing (wearing of a headscarf) with, respectively, democratic principles, the value of the neutrality of the state, and the operative public norm of interpersonal communication. For all three contrasts we used a between-subjects design in order to make a distinction between "minimal" and "maximal" social implications. This distinction refers to the extent to which the act contradicts the other principle or norm. It was expected that the participants would be less tolerant in the maximal compared to the minimal conditions.

The third aspect we examined was how adolescents' tolerant judgments can depend on the underlying belief type. A basic distinction in belief type is between what one believes to be true and what one believes to be right. The former are beliefs about matters of fact and the latter are value judgments. Across a broad age range, developmental studies have found that children and adolescents distinguish between informational and moral beliefs and use this distinction in their judgments of social practices. For example, in a study among an ethnically mixed sample from the San Francisco Bay area, Wainryb (1993) showed that children and adolescents (9 to 23 years) contextualized their own judgments when they apply them to unknown cultural outgroups ('a country') with different informational beliefs (what they belief to be true), but not when they apply them to outgroups with different moral beliefs (what they believe to be right). In another study among European Americans, Wainryb et al. (1998) found that children and early adolescents (7 to 14 years) are more tolerant when the

underlying dissenting beliefs were informational as opposed to moral (see also Wainryb, 1991). Hence, the distinction between what one believes to be true and what one believes to be right seems to be important for tolerant judgments. One reason for this is that the type of underlying belief can be used to infer intentions behind the practice that one dislikes or rejects, but is asked to tolerate. Ignorance and misinformation can be inferred from informational dissent, whereas badness or immorality is a more likely inference from moral dissent. Following previous studies we expected participants to be more tolerant of Muslim "harmful" practices based on informational beliefs than on moral beliefs. We used a between-subjects design to examine this expectation.

In addition to examining the effects of varying the content of the underlying beliefs, the fourth aspect we focused on was the different senses in which people may be asked to be tolerant. Accepting that people hold dissenting beliefs does not have to imply that one tolerates the public expression of such beliefs or the actual practices based on such beliefs (Vogt, 1997). These dimensions of tolerance can trigger different levels of endorsement. In their study, Wainryb et al. (1998) found, for example, that European-American children and early adolescents were more tolerant of dissenting speech than practices (see also Witenberg, 2002). In the present study, we focused on the tolerant judgment of actual dissenting practices by Muslim parents toward their children, and of the public expression aimed at trying to convince other parents to act similarly. In general, we expected that adolescents would be relatively tolerant toward public expressions because this is linked to freedom of speech, can be thought to stimulate debate and does not directly cause harm or injustice to other people (see Wainryb et al., 1998). In contrast, actual practices based on dissenting beliefs can involve harmful and unfair consequences and therefore less tolerance was expected for this dimension.

For our fifth and final aspect we used a between-subjects design to examine tolerance of dissenting practices and its public expression by either an outgroup (Turk) or an ingroup member (Dutch). From an intergroup perspective that takes into account the motive to evaluate the own group more positively than other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), it can be argued that participants will be more tolerant toward the ingroup than the outgroup. However, ingroup favoritism depends, among other things, on the normative context. For example, Killen and Stangor (2001) found that early adolescents did not display racial ingroup favoritism in their judgments about social exclusion in stereotypical race group contexts. In addition, research on what is referred to as the "black sheep effect" indicates that a dissenting or deviant ingroup member may be disliked equally or even stronger than a similar outgroup member (Marques & Paez, 1994). This effect has also been found among children and adolescents and seems to increase with age (e.g., Abrams, Rutland, & Cameron, 2003). These intergroup studies typically focus on evaluations and are not concerned with tolerant judgments per se (but see Witenberg, 2002). Rather than making specific predictions, we explored the relevance of group membership for these judgments.

Age, gender, education, and religiousness

Enright and Lapsley (1981) have described a developmental progression from a generally intolerant attitude during the childhood years through to increasingly tolerant judgments during adolescence (see also Enright et al., 1984). The sequence they proposed runs parallel with changes in perspective-taking and Kohlberg's stages of moral development (see Berti, 2005). Other studies have also found age-related increases in tolerance, which are attributed to increasingly complex and principled forms of reasoning (e.g. Thalhammer, Wood, Bird, Avery, & Sullivan, 1994). In their study, Bobo and Licardi (1989), for example, found that cognitive skills accounted for a third of the variance in political tolerance.

However, there are also studies that do not find age differences in moral judgments (e.g., Wainryb, 1991, 1993) or find that older adolescents are less tolerant than younger ones (e.g., Witenberg, 2002). Other studies have found that individuals sometimes become more accepting of, for example, social exclusion with age, rather than less (e.g., Killen et al., 2006). In addition, Sotelo and Sangrador (1997) found a relationship between age and tolerance, but not between tolerance and moral development. Furthermore, in these developmental stage studies, tolerance is typically examined as a single, global construct and the focus is on the judgment of the personal worth of dissenting individuals. Other dimensions of tolerance and types of dissenting beliefs and practices are not considered. Studies that do take different aspects of tolerance into account give a more complex picture of age differences with tolerance and intolerance coexisting at all ages (e.g., Wainryb et al., 1998; Wainryb, Shaw, Laupa, & Smith, 2001). The context-dependence of tolerance makes it unlikely that there is an age-related global developmental trend. Hence, we did not expect a consistent positive effect for age.

In addition, age effects have been found to differ between males and females (e.g., Helwig, 1997). In her study, Witenberg (2002), for example, found that in early adolescence males were more tolerant than females, whereas the reverse was true for late adolescence. In our study we also examined the role of gender. A key reason for doing so, is that analyses and perceptions of differences between the western and the Muslim world emphasize differential gender relationships. The ideal of egalitarian gender arrangements in western societies is contrasted with the patriarchal and unequal gender relations in Muslim communities. Obedience to the father and various restrictions being placed on the activities of females (e.g. regarding leisure time, sexuality, marriage and the distribution of household tasks) is more common in some of these communities. Tolerance toward Muslim gender arrangements and practices was considered in our study and we explored whether male and female participants differ in their tolerant judgments of these practices.

Chronological age is often used as a marker for the degree of cognitive and moral development. Age differences are typically interpreted to be the result of increased cognitive skills and greater knowledge. The ability to think critically, to consider the practical and moral consequences of actions, and having a broader knowledge base are likely to be relevant factors for the development of tolerance. The importance of these factors is also suggested by the positive relationship between education and forms of tolerance. In his review, Vogt (1997) concludes that there is clear evidence that education increases tolerance. Both the number of years of education and the level of education seem to contribute to tolerance. In our study and in addition to age, we focused on the level of education by making a distinction between participants engaged in the highest level of secondary education in the

Netherlands and participants at one level below. It was expected that level of education would have a positive effect on tolerance.

In general, there is a close relationship between religion and prejudice. The more religious an individual is, the more prejudiced he or she is likely to be (see Batson & Burris, 1994; Scheepers, Gijsberts, & Hello, 2002). In particular, people whose religious beliefs provide clear-cut moral truths tend to be negative toward outgroups. The lives of observant believers are organized around their religious beliefs, values and practices. These ideas and values involve religious truth-claims and absolute moral principles that define what it means to be a believer of a particular religion and that lead to religious ethnocentrism and dogmatic thinking (Altemeyer, 2002, 2003). This kind of thinking contradicts tolerance (see Vogt, 1997) leading us to expect a negative relationship between religiousness and tolerance.

To summarize, the main purpose of this investigation was to examine the contextual nature and development of tolerance of Muslim beliefs and practices among ethnically Dutch adolescents. The study focuses on different forms and aspects of tolerance by examining political tolerance (religious versus secular), contrasting values (freedom versus other principles), belief type (informational versus moral), dimensions of tolerance (public speech and acts), and group membership (ingroup versus outgroup). In general, participants were expected to be less tolerant toward Muslims than toward other non-Muslims, less tolerant toward practices that are more difficult to reconcile with other values, less tolerant of practices based on dissenting moral beliefs than informational beliefs, and less tolerant toward acts as opposed to public speech. We also explored the effect of group membership and we examined age differences by making a distinction between young (12–14 years) and older (15–18 years) adolescents. In addition, we examined gender differences, and the role of educational level and religiousness. We explored gender differences and we did not expect to find a consistent effect for age. However, we expected less tolerance among participants attending the lower level of education and among relatively religious participants.

Research on tolerance has been criticized for lacking relevance and logical validity. Studies have examined, for example, the endorsement of abstract principles such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion. However, principle considerations differ from (the lack of) support for practical implications and situations (Vogt, 1997). Most debates on tolerance and diversity are not about principles per se but rather about whether a principle is appropriate for a specific case at hand and how exactly it should be interpreted. Furthermore, studies that do use concrete examples, for example in dilemmas and vignettes, tend to use rather unfamiliar and hypothetical scenarios. In our study, we tried to maximize the relevance and validity of the research by using cases and situations that currently are, or recently were, debated in Dutch society.

Method

Participants

The sample included 632 participants between 12 and 18 years of age ($M = 14.41$, SD = 1.53). In total, 49.4% were females and 50.6% were males. Of the participants, 48.8% were in the highest level of secondary education (Gymnasium), and 51.2% followed upper general secondary education (HAVO/VWO). There were no participants from lower general secondary education or from preparatory vocational training (VMBO). Age was unrelated to educational level because at both levels of education all age groups participated. Both parents of the participants were ethnically Dutch. The pupils participated on a voluntary basis and the anonymous paper-and-pencil questionnaire was administered in separate class sessions and under supervision.

Design and measures

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the contextual nature of adolescents' judgments toward Muslim beliefs and practices. Therefore, different types of tolerance questions were used and the stimuli in the study varied. Because the different tolerance judgments were expected to be relatively independent, the measures were not counterbalanced but given in a fixed order.

For examining the types of tolerant judgments an experimental between-subjects questionnaire design was used. First, for measuring the *endorsement of political rights* the participants were asked to what extent people have the right to found separate schools[1] and have the right to demonstrate and protest. The type of actor trying to effect these political rights was varied in a between-subjects design. For half of the participants the actors in both cases were Muslims and for the other half these were non-religious actors. The question for "school" was "Should people have the right to found Islamic [expensive elite] schools to which only Muslims [children of very rich parents] can go?". Subsequently, two statements were presented and the participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each using five-point scales ranging from "totally do not agree" (–2) to "totally agree" (2). The first statement was "No, because this is bad for social cohesion in society," and the second was "Yes, because one should always respect the freedom of education." The question for "demonstration" was "A group of Muslims [Surinamers[2]] wants to hold a demonstration against the anti-Muslim feelings in the Netherlands [the Dutch history of slavery]. Is it ok when they burn the Dutch flag during the demonstration?" The first statement following this was "No, because that is a lack of respect for Dutch identity," and the second statement was "Yes, because every group has the right to demonstrate and protest." For both questions, the level of agreement with the two statements was strongly related ($r = -.69$ and $r = -.56$, respectively). Therefore, we reversed the score of one of the two questions and computed two sum-scores whereby a higher score indicates a more tolerant judgment toward each political right.

Then, to examine whether *tolerant judgments toward Muslim practices* depended on the degree to which these contradict with other values and norms, we presented three short stories about woman's clothing (in this case a headscarf). Each story had either a "minimal" version in which the practice had rather

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[1] Article 23 of the Dutch constitution guarantees "freedom of education" and provides equal public funding for all schools, religious and non-religious. In the last 15 to 20 year, Islamic groups have used this right to establish Islamic schools. However, there is a continuing debate about these schools, predominantly because they would hamper integration.

[2] The group of Surinamese is one of the largest minority groups in the Netherlands. They originate from the former Dutch colony of Surinam (in South America) and most of them came to the Netherlands in the 1970s.

modest implications or a "maximal" version in which the practice had more far-reaching consequences. Participants were presented with either the minimal or the maximal versions for all the three stories.

In the first story it was stated, "Democracy and people's freedom to make their own choices are central values in Dutch society. Imagine that an Islamic political party gets the majority vote in a local election in a Dutch city or village. This party can then decide to make the area more Islamic by asking women to wear a headscarf [by making the wearing of a headscarf obligatory]." The level of tolerance was tapped by assessing participants' answer to the question "What should the Dutch government do about this party's decision?" There were four response categories: "Simply not tolerate this decision" (1), "Try to convince the party to reconsider the decision, but forbid it when they do not agree" (2), "Try to convince the party to reconsider the decision, but allow it when they do not agree" (3), and "Do nothing and accept it" (4). Subsequently, the participants were asked to indicate their own general feeling toward the party concerned. For this a five-point scale was used ranging from "negative" (–2) to "positive" (2).

The second story was about clothing at school: "It is important in Dutch society that people can communicate with each other in an open way. Another important value is that people themselves can decide which clothes they like to wear. Imagine that there is a group of pupils at your school that voluntarily decides to wear a headscarf that covers only their hair [that not only covers their hair but also their face]." The participants were asked what the school should do about this: "Simply not tolerate it" (1), "Try to convince them, but expel them from school when they do not agree" (2), "Try to convince them, but allow it when they do not agree" (3), and "Do nothing and tolerate it" (4). Subsequently, the participants were asked to indicate their own feeling toward these pupils on the same five-point scale.

In the third story it was stated, "Last year there was a public debate about a Turkish women who wanted to wear a headscarf while doing her job in the courtroom. According to some people this should be allowed because she only had supportive duties and therefore did not threaten the neutrality of the court [should not be allowed because the court always has to be completely neutral]." The participants were asked what should be done: "Simply not tolerate it" (1), "Try to convince her, but exclude her from the courtroom when she does not agree" (2), "Try to convince her, but allow her to work in the courtroom when she does not agree" (3), and "Do nothing and tolerate it" (4). Additionally, the participants were asked to indicate their own general feeling toward the women.

To examine *two dimensions* of tolerance and participants' acceptance of practices based on *different beliefs*, two short stories were used. Both described parents who (from a western point of view) engage in a harmful or unfair practice because they have either an informational belief or a moral belief with which the participants themselves disagree.[3] The type of

dissenting belief was varied in a between-subjects manipulation in which participants got either the one or the other belief for both stories. In the first story it was stated, "A very light form of female circumcision is sometimes compared with male circumcision. Some parents practice this light form because they think it is good for the healthy physical development of girls [because it is required by their religion and culture]." In the second story an additional manipulation was used that made a distinction between an ingroup and an outgroup: in the story the father was either Turkish or Dutch. The story stated, "A Turkish [Dutch] father allows his sons to go out as often as they like, but he forbids his daughters to do the same. The father does this because of the fact that girls run more risks and are more vulnerable [because he finds it good and right that boys have more freedom than girls]."

For both stories, two dimensions of tolerance were tapped by assessing participants' judgments about the act based on the belief (*act*), and parents campaigning to convince other parents to do the same (*public speech*). For the "act" the questions were respectively, "Should it be allowed that parents have their daughters circumcised in this way?," and "Should it be allowed that the father treats his sons and daughters differently?" There were five-point scales ranging from "no, certainly not" (1) to "yes, certainly" (5). For "public speech" the questions, with the same five-point scales, were, "Should it be allowed that these parents campaign in order to try to convince other parents to do the same?," and "Should it be allowed that this father campaigns in order to try to convince other fathers to do the same?" For both stories there was a third question measuring the participant's own opinion. Using the same five-point scales the participants were asked whether they themselves approved of this form of circumcision and whether they themselves approved of this form of differential treatment of sons and daughters.

Finally, for measuring *religiousness* two statements were presented and the participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each using a five-point scale ranging from "totally do not agree" (–2) to "totally agree" (2). The two items were, "God and religious rules are the most important guidelines in my life," and "I find it very important to be religious." The responses for both statements were highly correlated and Cronbach's alpha was .86. The distribution of scores for this two-item scale was positively skewed (1.364) with 49% of the participants having the lowest possible score (–2) and 74.4% scoring below the neutral mid-point (0) of the scale. Therefore, for the analysis we made a distinction between no-religiousness (<0) and religiousness (>0).

Analyses

The results are presented in four sections. In the first, we present the results for the two questions on the political rights. In the second, we discuss the data on the experiment for the minimal and the maximal manipulation. In the third, we examine the role of underlying beliefs and the difference between the two dimensions of tolerance. While, in the fourth we present the results for the additional factor of ingroup versus outgroup.

In all cases, we performed analyses of variance on participants' responses. In these analyses, the experimental manipulation was used as a factor in addition to gender, age (12–14 versus 15–18 years of age), level of secondary education (highest level versus lower level), and religiousness (no versus yes).

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[3] These scenarios are taken to refer to Islam because they are understood in this way in public discourse and debate. In these debates, female circumcision is typically discussed in relation to Islam. The practice, however, originated long before the spread of Islam and is also conducted in many societies that are not Muslim (Gregg, 2005). In the story about the differential gender treatment by the father we used the label "Turkish" to refer to the Muslim outgroup father. In public discourse the Turks are typically understood as Muslims and Islam is the core defining feature of Turkish identity for Turkish people living in the Netherlands (Verkuyten, 2007).

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Results

Endorsing political rights

The participants were asked to what extent people have the right to establish separate schools and to demonstrate and protest. The type of actor effectuating these political rights was varied in a between-subjects design. For half of the participants the actors were Muslims and for the other half they were non-religious actors. We conducted a repeated-measures ANOVA with the two political rights as a repeated-measures factor. The between-subjects factors were: actor (Muslim vs non-religious), gender, age, education level, and religiousness. The analysis yielded a significant main effect for political rights, $F(1,631) = 74.89$, $p < .001$. Participants rejected both political rights but the rejection was stronger for the right to demonstrate and protest, ($M = -.94$, $SD = 1.06$) than for the right to found separate schools ($M = -31$, $SD = 1.24$).

The between-subjects effects indicated a significant result for actor, $F(1,631) = 51.91$. For both rights, the rejection was stronger for the Muslim than for the non-religious version (for "school", $M = -.59$, $SD = 1.35$ and $M = -.03$, $SD = 1.34$, and for "demonstration", $M = -1.20$, $SD = 1.14$ and $M = -.68$, $SD = 1.25$). Hence, compared to the tolerance toward non-religious groups, participants were less tolerant toward Muslims exercising their right to establish their own schools and to demonstrate and protest.

This effect was qualified by a three-way interaction effect between political rights, actor and age, $F(1,631) = 12.09$, $p < .001$. Simple main-effect analyses indicated that the interaction between actor and age was significant for the rights to found separate schools, $F(1,631) = 19.87$, $p < .001$. For the non-religious actors, the older participants endorsed this right more strongly than the younger participants ($M = .16$, and $M = -.23$, $t = 2.73$, $p < .01$), whereas, in contrast, for the Muslim actors the older participants rejected this right more strongly ($M = -.87$) than the younger participants ($M = -.23$), $t = 4.74$, $p < .001$.

For the right to demonstrate, the interaction between actor and age turned out not to be significant. There was a significant interaction effect, however, between gender and age, $F(1,631) = 6.34$, $p < .01$. Older males rejected the right to demonstrate more strongly than younger males ($M = -1.05$, and $M = -.74$, $t = 2.83$, $p < .01$). In contrast, we found no difference between the two age groups for females. No other effects were significant, including those for religiousness.

Minimal and maximal implications

The participants were asked to make tolerant judgments for three stories about the clothing (headscarf) of women. There were two versions of each story that were varied in a between-subjects design. In one version the goal of the Muslim actor was minimal and in the other it was maximal.

First, we examined the participants' own feelings toward the Muslim claims. Factor analyses were conducted to examine the dimensionality of the three questions. The three questions loaded on a single factor that accounted for 60.99% of the variance. Hence, the responses on these questions were summated and Cronbach's alpha was .68. The mean score was on the negative side of the scale ($M = -.46$, $SD = .85$) and 77.8% of the sample scored on or below the neutral midpoint

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of the scale. Hence, the majority had negative feelings toward the Muslim actors in the scenarios.

The sumscore was examined as a dependent variable in ANOVA with version (minimal vs maximal), gender, age, level of education, and religiousness as factors. There was a main effect for version, $F(1,631) = 4.02$, $p < .05$. Participants' feelings were more negative in the maximal version condition ($M = -.56$, $SD = .79$) than in the minimal condition ($M = -.37$, $SD = .89$). There were also main effects ($p < .01$) for gender and for age, but these effects were qualified by an interaction effect between gender and age, $F(1,631) = 5.16$, $p < .05$. Older males ($M = -.85$, $SD = .81$) had more negative feelings than younger males ($M = -.39$, $SD = .79$), $t = 5.04$, $p < .001$. Age difference was not significant for the females (for the old, $M = -.34$, $SD = .76$, and for the young, $M = -.25$, $SD = .88$).

Table 1 shows the percentages of tolerant and non-tolerant responses by version for the three scenarios. In all three scenarios, the number of tolerant responses is higher for the minimal than for the maximal version. In addition, there are differences between the three scenarios. To examine these differences, a repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted with the three scenarios as a repeated-measures factor and the continuous four-point scales as dependent variables. Version, gender, age, education level, and religiousness, were the between-subjects factors. The analysis yielded a significant difference between the three scenarios, $F(2,631) = 122.19$, $p < .001$. Participants were significantly less tolerant in the Muslim party scenario ($M = 2.0$, $SD = .92$) than in the other two cases that did not differ significantly from each other ($M = 2.76$, and $M = 2.77$).

The effect was qualified by a significant interaction effect between scenario and version, $F(2,631) = 17.16$, $p < .001$. Simple main-effect analyses indicated that version made a difference for the case of the school ($p < .05$) and the court-room ($p < .001$). In both scenarios the level of tolerance was lower for the maximal compared to the minimal condition. For the Islamic political party scenario the difference between both

Table 1

Percentages of (in)tolerant judgments for the three scenarios and two experimental conditions

	Social implications	
	Minimal	*Maximal*
Scenarios		
Democratic party		
Tolerant	34.4	28.0
Non-tolerant	65.6	72.0
Clothing in school		
Tolerant	66.2	57.6
Non-tolerant	33.8	42.4
Clothing in courtroom		
Tolerant	78.3	48.9
Non-tolerant	21.7	51.1

Note. Tolerant is the combination of the response categories "do nothing and allow it", and "try to convince them not to do it but allow it when they do not agree." Intolerance includes responses in the categories "simply not allow it," and "try to convince not to do it and not allow it when they do not agree".

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versions was only marginally significant (p = .067). The between-subjects results indicated significant effects (ps < .05) for gender, level of education and for the interaction between gender and age.

We conducted factor analyses to examine the dimensionality of the three tolerant judgments. The three judgments loaded on a single factor that accounted for 52.83% of the variance. Hence, the responses on these questions were summated and Cronbach's alpha was .62. This sumscore was examined as a dependent variable in ANOVA with gender, age, level of education, and religiousness as factors. There was again a main effect for version, $F(1,631) = 26.78$, $p < .001$. Tolerance was higher in the minimal versions (M = 2.66, SD = .71) than in the maximal versions (M = 2.32, SD = .75). Educational level had also a main effect on tolerance, $F(1,631) = 4.15$, $p < .05$. The level of tolerance was higher at the higher level of education (M = 2.58, SD = .73) compared to the lower level of education (M = 2.34, SD = .75). The significant main effects for gender and age were, again, qualified by an interaction effect between gender and age, $F(1,631) = 6.33$, $p < .01$. Older males were less tolerant (M = 2.26, SD = .78) than younger males (M = 2.62, SD = .73), $t = 4.48$, $p < .001$. There was no age difference for the females (M = 2.61, SD = .81, and M = 2.59, SD = .79).

Tolerance is particularly important in situations where people have a negative attitude toward outgroups. However, 22.8% of the participants did not report a negative attitude toward the Muslim actors. Therefore, we also examined the level of tolerance among only those participants that reported a neutral or negative attitude. ANOVA indicated similar results as for the analysis on the total sample. The main effect for version was significant, $F(1,487) = 17.99$, $p < .001$, and the effect for educational level was marginally significant, $F(1,487) = 3.28$, $p = .084$. In addition, the interaction effect between gender and age was also significant, $F(1,487) = 7.42$, $p < .01$.

Beliefs and dimensions of tolerance: Circumcision

We began by examining whether the participants themselves approved of the very light form of circumcision. In total, only 2.5% of the participants did approve of this practice. Hence, the great majority were against it, which makes it a relevant case for examining the level of tolerance. Two dimensions of tolerance were tapped: the actual *act* of this form of circumcision and the seeking of *public support* by campaigning for it. In addition, the type of belief forming the basis of the act was varied in a between-subjects design by presenting half of the participants with a moral argument and the other half with an informational argument.

The tolerance score was examined as a dependent variable in a repeated-measures ANOVA by dimension, belief type, gender, age, level of education, and religiousness as factors, with dimension as a repeated measure. There was a significant effect for dimension, $F(1,631) = 65.83$, $p < .001$. Overall, participants were more tolerant of campaigning for public support (M = 2.67, SD = 1.25) than for the actual act of circumcision (M = 2.08, SD = 1.08). This effect was qualified, however, by an interaction effect between dimension and age, $F(1,631) = 4.61$, $p < .05$. Both the younger and older participants were equally against the act of circumcision. However, the older (M = 2.76, SD = 1.25) compared to the younger (M = 2.55, SD = 1.24) age group was more tolerant of people trying to get public support for it, $t = 2.32$, $p < .05$.

We performed separate ANOVAs by age, gender, belief type, level of education and religiousness on the judgments for both dimensions. For the *act* of circumcision, there was a significant effect for level of education, $F(1,631) = 4.77$, $p < .05$. Participants in the highest level of secondary education were more tolerant than the other participants (M = 2.16, SD = 1.01, and M = 1.97, SD = 1.12, respectively). There was also a significant main effect for gender, $F(1,631) = 12.03$, $p < .001$, with males being more tolerant than females (M = 2.24, SD = 1.11, and M = 1.92, SD = 1.03, respectively). The gender effect was qualified, however, by a significant interaction effect between gender and age, $F(1,631) = 5.14$, $p < .05$. Older males were less tolerant than younger males (M = 2.09, SD = 1.11, and M = 2.37, SD = 1.10, respectively), $t = 2.03$, $p < .05$. The older and younger females scored similarly (M = 1.98, SD = 1.11, and M = 1.89, SD = .96, respectively). The effects for belief type and religiousness were not significant.

For campaiging for public support, there was only a significant effect for gender, $F(1,631) = 16.28$, $p < .001$. Female participants (M = 2.48, SD = 1.19) were stronger against this dimension of tolerance than male participants (M = 2.86, SD = 1.28). There were no other significant effects.

Beliefs and dimensions of tolerance: Gender differentiation

We asked the participants to evaluate the differential treatment of sons and daughters by a father who was either an in-group or an out-group member and who based his behavior on either informational or moral beliefs. Of the total sample, only 5.2% approved of the differential treatment of sons and daughters by the father. This percentage was similar for the ingroup and the outgroup. Thus, as expected the great majority were against this practice which allows us to examine the level of tolerance.

The tolerance score was examined as a dependent variable in a repeated-measures ANOVA by dimension (act versus public speech), belief type (informational versus moral), group (in-group versus out-group) gender, age, level of education and religiousness as factors, with dimension as a repeated measure. There was a significant effect for dimension, $F(1,631) = 48.57$, $p < .001$. Participants were, again, more tolerant of campaigning for public support (M = 2.69, SD = 1.24) than for the actual act of differential treatment (M = 2.16, SD = 1.13).

Again, we performed, separate ANOVAs by age, gender, belief type, group membership, level of education, and religiousness were on the judgments for both dimensions. For the *act* of differential treatment, four significant main effects and two interaction effects were found. First, there was a significant effect for belief type, $F(1,631) = 6.60$, $p < .01$. Participants made more tolerant judgments when the underlying belief was informational (M = 2.42, SD = 1.15) as opposed to moral (M = 1.95, SD = 1.08). This effect was qualified, however, by a significant interaction effect between belief type and group membership, $F(1,631) = 4.60$, $p < .05$. As shown in Table 2, informational belief was associated with higher tolerance toward the ingroup father compared to the outgroup father, whereas no group distinction was made for moral beliefs.

Second, participants in the highest level of education were more tolerant (M = 2.30, SD = 1.13) compared to lower educated participants (M = 2.0, SD = 1.15), $F(1,631) = 4.18$, $p < .05$. Third, males were more tolerant than females

Table 2

Mean tolerance scores and standard deviations (between brackets) for belief type by group membership

	Belief type	
	Informational	*Moral*
Group membership		
In-group	2.46 (1.13)	2.28 (1.23)
Out-group	2.01 (1.11)	1.96 (1.16)

($M = 2.37$, SD = 1.16, and $M = 1.99$, SD = 1.08), $F(1,631)$ = 10.58, $p < .001$. Fourth, older participants were more tolerant ($M = 2.31$, SD = 1.09) than younger participants ($M = 2.03$, SD = 1.10), $F(1,631) = 6.03$, $p < .001$. These latter two main effects were qualified, however, by a significant interaction effect between age and gender, $F(631,1) = 5.89$, $p < .05$. Older males ($M = 2.14$) were less tolerant than younger males ($M = 2.51$), whereas there was no difference between older and younger females.

This was one other interaction effect, between gender and group membership, $F(1,631) = 4.19$, $p < .05$. Males were more tolerant toward an ingroup father than an outgroup father ($M = 2.57$, and $M = 2.14$, respectively). For females, there was no difference between ingroup and outgroup ($M = 1.98$, and $M = 2.0$, respectively).

For campaigning for *public support*, there was a significant positive effect for level for education, $F(1,631) = 8.34$, $p < .01$, with participants at the highest level making more tolerant judgments. There were also a gender differences, $F(1,631) = 10.63$, $p < .001$. Males were more tolerant ($M = 2.86$, SD = 1.26) than females ($M = 2.51$, SD = 1.19). No other effects were significant.

Relations between tolerant judgments

Correlations among the different tolerant judgments were computed for the total sample and for the two age groups. The correlations for the total sample are shown in Table 3. The highest correlation was found between the judgments for the acts of circumcision and the differential gender treatment ($r = .54$). In addition the two dimensions of tolerance (act and public speech) were positively related ($r = .41$, for circumcision, and $r = .38$, for gender differentiation). All other of the 21 correlations between the different tolerant judgments were associated < .20. Most of these associations are significant but the low correlations indicate that the different judgments are relatively independent. The pattern of associations was similar for the younger and the older adolescents.

Discussion

This research bears on how ethnic Dutch adolescents apply tolerant judgments to (assumed) beliefs and practices of the Muslim minority. Tolerance is not the absence of prejudice or negative outgroup feelings, but a separate construct. It is concerned with forbearance or "putting up with" dissenting beliefs and practices, and is considered foundational for democracy and a just society (Sullivan & Transue, 1999). However, in contrast to the large body of work on stereotypes

Table 3

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the different tolerant judgments: total sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Political rights						
1. Schools	—					
2. Protest	.12**	—				
Social implications						
3. Muslim practices	.10*	.12**	—			
Female circumcision						
4. Act	.05	.06	.19***	—		
5. Public speech	.09*	.17***	.15***	.41***	—	
Gender differentiation						
6. Act	.09*	.02	.08	.14**	.14**	—
7. Public speech	.13**	.09*	.10*	.17***	.54***	.38***

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

and prejudice, little is known about the development of tolerance. Furthermore, research on tolerance has been criticized for lacking relevance and logical validity. In response to this criticism we examined tolerance judgments towards Muslims, a group that has become the prototypical "other" in many western countries including the Netherlands (Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Furthermore, we focused on concrete cases rather than abstract principles, and used realistic and debated issues instead of unfamiliar and hypothetical scenarios.

Rather than expecting a stage-like development of increasing tolerance with age, we expected that tolerant judgments would vary depending on the context. Based on a social-cognitive domain model (Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 2002) one can argue that individuals' interpretation of context is part of their judgment and related to the type of reasoning that is applied to the situation. By examining different aspects of tolerance, the findings of this study offer insight into the context dependent nature of tolerance towards Muslim beliefs and practices. In general, the participants expressed moderate levels of tolerance. However, in agreement with social-cognitive domain theory and research (e.g., Wainryb, 1993; Wainryb et al., 1998; Witenberg, 2002), the different tolerant judgments were not strongly associated indicating that no single construct of tolerance emerged. The low associations also suggest that it is unlikely that the fixed order in which the measures were presented did affect the findings. In addition, we found that tolerant judgments are sensitive to the context of beliefs and social interactions. Adolescents take into account various aspects of what they are asked to tolerate, the sense in which they should be tolerant and who they are expected to tolerate. The content and the nature of the social implications, the dimension of tolerance and the group membership of the actor, all made a difference to the tolerant judgments.

First, the participants rejected the political rights to found separate schools and to burn the national flag in a demonstration, but these rights were more strongly rejected for Muslims than for non-Muslim actors. Hence, participants were less tolerant toward Muslims effectuating their political rights than toward other groups.

Second, participants had more negative feelings and were less tolerant toward Muslim practices (the wearing of a headscarf) that contrasted more strongly with other values and

operative public norms (maximal versus minimal condition), and therefore had more far-reaching societal consequences. Thus, the level of tolerance was lower when the social implications were greater.

Third, participants were more tolerant of practices based on dissenting informational beliefs than on dissenting moral beliefs. This result is in agreement with other studies (e.g., Wainryb, 1993; Wainryb et al., 1998), but was only found for one of the two scenarios. Moreover, there was an interaction effect with group membership. Belief type was related to tolerance for the ingroup but not for the outgroup. For the dissenting moral belief, participants made no distinction between the ingroup and outgroup, whereas ingroup tolerance was higher than outgroup tolerance for the informational belief. This result is in agreement with the social-cognitive domain model and research that has found that children and adolescents identify moral considerations as general and generalizable to a variety of contexts and groups (Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 1983). In contrast, informational beliefs are similar to social-conventional issues that are seen as group and context-specific. Hence, the well-known pattern of positive intergroup differentiation that is typically found among children and adolescents (see Bennett & Sani, 2004) does not seem to appear when moral considerations are involved (see Killen et al., 2006).

Fourth, and also in agreement with other studies (e.g., Wainryb et al., 1998, Witenberg, 2002), adolescents made a distinction between dimensions of tolerance. They were more tolerant of parents campaigning for public support for a particular practice (very light form of female circumcision and differential treatment of sons and daughters) than for the actual act itself. Not only is the higher acceptance of the public expression of the dissenting beliefs consistent with the idea of free speech, it can be seen as stimulating debate and as causing less direct harm or injustice than the actual act.

The pattern of results demonstrate that adolescents use different forms of social reasoning to evaluate complex social issues of tolerance. In addition, the participants' judgments depended on age, gender and educational level. In contrast to the idea of an age-related progression from less to more tolerance toward dissenting beliefs and practices (e.g., Enright & Lapsley, 1981), the present results show no consistent age effects (see also Wainryb, 1993; Wainryb et al., 1998). Rather, the age differences that were found indicate both less and more tolerance among the older (15–18 years) than the younger (12–14 years) adolescents. The older participants accepted the political rights for the non-religious groups more strongly than the younger participants, but were less accepting than the younger group of similar rights for Muslims. Further, older participants were more tolerant of Muslim parents campaigning to convince other parents, but they also had a more negative attitude toward Muslims. In addition, there were several age-related gender differences (see also Helwig, 1997; Witenberg, 2002). For females, age did not moderate the tolerant judgments, but older males were found to be less tolerant than younger males. Compared to younger males, the older ones had more negative feelings towards Muslims, rejected the right to demonstrate more strongly, were more strongly against the wearing of a headscarf by Muslim women, and were less accepting of the light form of female circumcision.

As a whole, these findings strongly suggest that tolerance judgments do not develop through a stage-like sequence where an intolerant attitude is followed by tolerance. For females,

there were no age differences, and for males there was an increase in intolerance with age. In addition, compared to males, female participants were more strongly against parents campaigning for public support in the case of female circumcision and the differential treatment of sons and daughters. The findings indicate that decisions over whether something should be tolerated involve a variety of considerations including one's own gender. In contrast to studies that show that female adolescents are less prejudiced than male contemporaries (e.g., Powlishta, Serbin, Doyle, & White, 1994; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001), our results show that females are not necessarily more tolerant. In particular, they are less tolerant when the harm or injustice ensuing from specific practices affects female Muslims. This could be construed as being in agreement with the idea that females are more likely to use a care or welfare perspective, whereas males would reason more from a rights perspective (Gilligan, 1982). However, this idea cannot explain the age difference for the males. Furthermore, it would need to be tested in situations which presented the participants with harmful and injustice acts that were carried out on both males and females. In the present study, the questions used may have made the female participants' gender identity salient. As a result, their responses could have been influenced by their shared gender identity with the Muslim females in the scenarios.

Level of education was found to have positive effect on several measures. On this, the results are in agreement with the research literature (see Vogt, 1997). There were no effects on political tolerance, but higher education was associated with more tolerance toward the wearing of a headscarf by Muslim females, the light form of female circumcision, and the differential treatment of sons and daughters by the father. Hence, education mattered, despite the fact that only the two highest forms of secondary education were considered. A broader range of educational levels would probably have resulted in stronger educational effects. That education encourages tolerance does not explain, however, how it fosters such an attitude. A likely answer is to be found in the direction of cognitive sophistication in which reasoning skills, cognitive flexibility and knowledge base are considered. Higher education can be expected to lead to higher cognitive sophistication which results in greater tolerance (see Vogt, 1997).

We expected religiousness to have a negative effect on tolerant judgments of Muslim beliefs and practices. The lives of observant believers are organized around their religious beliefs, values and practices and often involve religious ethnocentrism and dogmatic thinking (Altemeyer, 2002, 2003). However, we found no effects for religiousness. A likely reason for this is the fact that the sample was low on religiousness. Almost three-quarters of the participants indicated that for them being religious and following religious rules was not important. Another possible reason is that Dutch adolescents' attitude towards Muslims is more an issue of national identity than of religiousness. In the Netherlands, Islam has become symbolic of problems related to ethnic minorities and immigration and has increasingly been defined as seriously threatening Dutch society, culture and identity (Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005). Further, people for whom considerations of Dutch national identity matter have been found to be more negative towards Muslims (Sniderman, Hagendoorn & Prior, 2003). The role of national identification might also explain the lower tolerance of older males. In general, males are more concerned with group status, prestige and competition than

are females, and this concern may increase with age. The results indicate, for example, that males were more tolerant towards an ingroup father than an outgroup father, whereas there was no difference for females. Hence, it seems important for future studies on tolerance to include measures of national group identification.

There are some other limitations of the current research that should be considered and that give suggestions for further study. For example, a domain-specific perspective does not preclude development. There are, for example, age-related changes in the ability to conceptualize and assess the information of complex situations, in the consistency of applying principles, and in adolescent epistemological understanding (e.g., Kuhn, Cheney, & Weinstock, 2000; Mansfield & Clinchy, 2002). By including measures of dogmatism, epistemological development and knowledge about Muslim beliefs and practices, it should be possible to improve our understanding of the development of (in)tolerant judgments. The present study, however, underscores the importance of distinguishing, at all ages, between different aspects of these judgments and to examine the social reasoning involved.

It also seems pertinent for future studies to assess other types of belief. Social-cognitive domain theory makes a distinction between moral considerations, social-conventional issues and psychological concerns. Following Wainryb and colleagues (1998) we examined the difference between moral and informational beliefs. However, the distinction between the two may not always be straightforward and can also be operationalized in different ways. For example, religious and cultural expectations do not only have to indicate moral considerations but may also involve social-conventional concerns. In addition, there are different kinds of moral principles, such as fairness and equality, and different kinds of social-conventional issues, such as group functioning and tradition. Furthermore psychological concerns can be involved in tolerance judgments because what one is asked to tolerate may affect personal freedoms and interests (e.g., Helwig, 1997).

Despite these qualification and limitations, we think that the present research makes a contribution to our understanding of the development of intergroup relations. In contrast to the large body of research into ethnic and racial stereotypes and prejudice, we focused on religious differences, examined social reasoning and studied tolerance. Little is known about adolescents' attitudes towards religious outgroups, about their intergroup social reasoning and about the development of tolerance. However, understanding tolerance is an important research goal both theoretically and practically. Tolerance is a separate and complex construct that emphasizes forbearance and self-restraint, and that involves specific forms of social reasoning. Practically, tolerance is foundational for equality and the development of harmonious intergroup relations. Most lines of thinking argue that the reduction of stereotypes and prejudice is necessary for these kinds of relationships to develop. However, our knowledge and ability to reduce stereotypes and prejudice remains limited. Generalized perceptions and negative beliefs and feelings do not appear to be easy to change or to reject. The importance of tolerance is that it keeps these beliefs and feelings from becoming negative actions thereby forming the first crucial step towards civility or the last barrier to conflict (Vogt, 1997). Tolerance also does not imply the relativism (Wainryb, Shaw, Langley, Cottam, & Lewis, 2004) found in some forms of multiculturalism: a multiculturalism that only celebrates diversity and argue that one should refrain from value judgments about other groups. Tolerance always has limits and does not imply a full acceptance and valuing of all social practices of other groups, such as potentially harmful activities, illiberal internal rules, and ingroup oppression of, for example, some Muslim women and children. A decision of whether a particular practice should be tolerated always involves a variety of considerations and the results show that adolescents weigh-up different aspects of behaviors, and their contexts and consequences. Tolerance is not by definition good and intolerance is not by definition bad. This means, for example, that effective education has to focus on the related questions of what should and what should not be tolerated and why.

A diverse, equal and peaceful society does not require that we all like each other, but it does necessarily mean that people have learned to tolerate one another. We have to agree how to disagree and we need to understand how children and adolescents think about different types of disagreement and develop tolerant and intolerant judgments. The present research has tried to make a contribution to this understanding.

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