SHORT PAPER

The vicious circle of religious prejudice: Islamophobia makes the acculturation attitudes of majority and minority members clash

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Abstract

Public discourse often portrays Islam as the main obstacle for Muslim minorities' integration, paying little attention to the contextual factors hindering this process. Here, we focus on islamophobia as one destructive factor that hinders the mutual integration between Muslim minority and Western majority members, affecting both groups. In Study 1, the more islamophobic majority members were, the more they expected Muslims to give up their heritage culture and the less they wanted them to integrate. In Study 2, only when Muslims experienced substantial religious discrimination did religious identity negatively relate to national engagement and particularly positively relate to ethnic engagement. Together, the studies suggest that religious prejudice in the form of islamophobia is a major obstacle to Muslims' integration because it increases the incongruity between majority and minority members' acculturation attitudes.

In many Western European countries, public discourse is characterized by the "idea that Muslim communities choose to 'self-segregate' in 'parallel societies'" (Fekete, 2008, p. 33). Indeed, compared with other religious groups, Muslim minorities, in particular, seem to culturally separate from the national culture of their societies of residence (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006b). Often, the latter tendency is publicly attributed to religious characteristics ascribed to Muslim minorities (Fekete, 2004, 2008), while little attention is paid to societal characteristics leading to worse minority–majority relations that hinder the process of integration (Vasta, 2007). Given the recent large-scale protests against Islam in many countries (e.g., Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident), the Islamist attacks on French, Danish, and US American cartoonists who have drawn the prophet Mohammed, and the waves of predominantly Muslim refugees from Syria arriving currently in Europe, it is important to identify the mutual dynamics between the attitudes of majority and Muslim minority members that may result in tense intergroup relations.

Various factors have been proposed to shape the interplay between minority and majority members' acculturation attitudes. For instance, Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, and Senecal (1997) proposed that integration policies at the macro-level should shape majority members' acculturation expectations towards minorities, and also minorities' own choice of acculturation orientation (also see Guimond et al., 2013). Similarly, Christ, Asbrock, Dhont, Pettigrew, and Wagner (2013) showed that the regional societal diversity climate impacts on minority members' acculturation, while Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, and Petzel (2001) highlighted mutual antipathy as an important additional factor. However, to our knowledge, no study has investigated the unique contribution of *religious prejudice* to acculturation dynamics between majority members and Muslim minorities, although it is currently subject to heated debates in contemporary Europe. Here, we do so by taking the perspective of both the minority and majority group: In Study 1, we investigate how religious prejudice in the form of islamophobia—that is, *fear* of Islam and Muslims—influences majority members' expectations of how Muslims should relate to the national sphere and their minority culture. Study 2 addresses how Muslim minority members actually orient themselves towards the process of integration as a consequence of the islamophobia they experience.

THE MAJORITY PERSPECTIVE: RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION, PREJUDICE, AND THE ACCULTURATION EXPECTATIONS OF MAJORITY MEMBERS

Societal majority members hold not only general evaluations and emotions towards cultural minorities but also specific expectations about how these minority members should relate to their own culture and the culture of the dominant, national society. Although these "acculturation expectations" were part of the well-known acculturation framework of John W. Berry already in 1974 (Berry, 1974), only in recent decades

have researchers become particularly interested in majority members' acculturation attitudes towards their minority counterparts (e.g., Bourhis et al., 1997; Kunst, Thomsen, Sam, & Berry, 2015; Phelps, Eilertsen, Türken, & Ommundsen, 2011; Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998).

Possibly, the most central and clear-cut acculturation expectations are integrationism, segregationism, and assimilationism. Integrationism involves the stand that minorities should adopt national cultural values while maintaining their heritage culture. Importantly, integrationism also requires some transformation of the majority society in order to accommodate minority members. In contrast, *assimilationism* expects minorities to adopt the national culture while giving up their heritage culture. Last, *segregationism* involves the cultural isolation of ethnic minorities, allowing them to keep their heritage culture but expecting them to stay separated from the national society. *Ceteris paribus*, majority members mostly endorse an integrationist orientation towards minorities (e.g., Bourhis, Barrette, El-Geledi, & Schmidt, 2009; Ljujic, Vedder, Dekker, & van Geel, 2010; Rohmann, Florack, & Piontkowski, 2006). However, they tend to expect more segregationism and assimilationism from devalued minorities than from valued minorities (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Safdar, Dupuis, Lewis, El-Geledi, & Bourhis, 2008) and especially from minority members who were born in the dominant national society (Kunst & Sam, 2013b).

In addition to the status of the acculturating minority out-group, recent studies identified other factors that may drive majority members' acculturation expectations. For instance, research has shown that those holding less welcoming acculturation expectations often show stronger in-group favoritism and more negative out-group bias and are more ethnocentric than those with more welcoming acculturation expectations (Barrette, Bourhis, Personnaz, & Personnaz, 2004; Bourhis & Dayan, 2004). Moreover, they tend to have less contact to immigrants (Barrette et al., 2004), to be socially more cynical, and to score higher on major predictors of intergroup bias such as social dominance orientation and authoritarianism (Barrette et al., 2004; Bourhis et al., 2009; Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Guimond et al., 2013).

However, two factors that appear particularly central and salient in the current discourse of many contemporary European societies remain untested, namely, religious identification and religious prejudice in the form of islamophobia. Today, increasing proportions of Western European populations comprise Muslim minority members (Pew, 2011). For many majority members, this demographic development may pose a threat to their Judeo-Christian identity, which in turn may make them less supportive of multiculturalism and Muslims' expressive rights (Mols & Jetten, 2014; Smeekes, Verkuyten, & Poppe, 2011). Although yet empirically untested, a similar process should shape majority members' acculturation expectations towards Muslims.

While little research so far has explicitly investigated religious identity and religious prejudice as predictors of the acculturation expectations of majority members, these likely influence each other: Whereas religiosity only predicts more prejudice when it is extrinsically motivated, identification with one's religion or religious group is known to increase out-group bias regardlessly (for a review, see Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010). This increase is, in turn, associated with higher levels of "unwelcoming" acculturation orientations such as segregationism and assimilationism (e.g., Bourhis et al., 2009; Zick et al., 2001). Hence, one can assume an indirect relation between religious identity and acculturation expectations towards Muslims that is mediated by religious prejudice. Put differently, precisely because religious individuals who identify strongly with their religion are more likely to be prejudiced, this should make them take a more unwelcoming stance towards minorities' acculturation.

THE MINORITY PERSPECTIVE: RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION, PREJUDICE, AND THE ACCULTURATION ORIENTATIONS OF MINORITY MEMBERS

While religiously motivated prejudice should influence the acculturation expectations of majority members, the experience of such prejudice should also influence the *actual* acculturation orientations adopted by religious minority members. As part of their acculturation, minority members have to relate to their heritage culture as well as to the national culture. According to Berry's (1980) bi-dimensional model of acculturation, relating to these two cultures involves (i) the degree to which they value the maintenance of their heritage culture and (ii) the degree to which they value the adoption of the national culture.

While personality variables such as openness, extroversion, self-esteem, and need for cognitive closure are known to predict minorities' acculturation orientations in general (Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Singh, 2004; Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000), religious identity and the experience of religious discrimination should interactively shape the acculturation orientations of members of religious minority groups in particular. This should especially be the case for people, such as Muslim minority members, who tend to identify very strongly with, and hence care much about, their religious group and at the same time experience particularly high degrees of societal devaluation (Kunst, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2013; Kunst, Tajamal, Sam, & Ulleberg, 2012; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007).

Generally speaking, among Muslim minorities, religious identity predicts a stronger preference for maintaining and engaging in their ethnic culture (Güngör, Bornstein, & Phalet, 2012; Güngör, Fleischmann, & Phalet, 2011), which makes sense because their religious and ethnic identity in fact often overlap (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012; Verkuyten & Yildiz,

2007). However, the little research that has investigated the relationship between religious identity and engagement in the national sphere has produced inconsistent results. For instance, Güngör et al. (2011) found that religious identity was negatively related to national cultural engagement only in one of their two study samples.

What might be the unexplored moderators accounting for such inconsistent results? The acculturation of minority members does not take place in a social vacuum (Horenczyk, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Sam, & Vedder, 2013) but is influenced by contextual factors such as the climate towards diversity, and the attitudes and behavior of majority members (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006a; Christ et al., 2013). For instance, group devaluation and rejection in the national media or within one's immediate living surroundings may lead minority members to increase their involvement in the heritage culture while detaching from the national society (Christ et al., 2013; Kunst et al., 2012). We propose that such contextual variables not only have direct effects on minority members' acculturation but may even set the very conditions under which their religious identity predicts separation-like acculturation orientations: In a society where one's religion is devalued, being religious may appear irreconcilable with engaging in the national sphere (Kunst et al., 2012). Hence, the more Muslim minority members experience religious prejudice and discrimination, the more negatively their religious identity should relate to engagement in the national sphere, precisely because the latter threatens their religious self-concepts (Friedman & Saroglou, 2010; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009). If minorities, however, experience no or only low degrees of religious discrimination, religious identity may be unrelated to how minority members relate to the national sphere because these two cultural spheres do not clash.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Here, we investigate the ways in which the interplay between religious identification and religious prejudice shapes majority and Muslim minority members' acculturation attitudes. The first study tests the hypothesis that the religious identity of majority members relates indirectly (mediated by islamophobia), but not directly, to more unwelcoming acculturation attitudes towards Muslims. Specifically, we test whether religious identity increases religious prejudice—in this case, islamophobic stereotypes and anxiety—that again fuel majority members' unwelcoming acculturation expectations towards Muslims.

It is important to note that islamophobia is a contested term with varying definitions (Bleich, 2011). For instance, it has been used to refer to hostility towards Islam (Runnymede Trust Commission, 1997), a general rejection of Islam and Muslims (Stolz, 2005), "anti-muslimism" (Halliday, 1999), racism (Love, 2009), or an irrational fear of Muslims (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008; Love, 2009). Recent social psychological work

appears to converge on an etymological operationalization of islamophobia as fear, avoidance, and danger-related attitudes towards Muslims (i.e., Kunst et al., 2013; Lee, Gibbons, Thompson, & Timani, 2009; Lee et al., 2013). We follow this definition in the present research. We do not argue that such out-group fear exclusively drives acculturation attitudes in contexts that involve Muslim minorities. However, we do regard it as a particularly potent factor here given the high levels of symbolic threat often perceived from Muslim groups (González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008; Obaidi, Kunst, Kteily, Thomsen, & Sidanius, 2015) as well as the frequent association of Muslims with (life)threatening groups such as terrorists and, more recently, extremist militant groups such as the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (e.g., Saeed, 2007).

Insofar as majority member are fearful of Muslims' religious culture, they should reject any acculturation that allows for maintenance of this culture. As such, islamophobic attitudes should be related to less integrationism because it makes it possible for Muslims to maintain their culture and involves a certain transformation of the majority society, which islamophobic majority members may perceive as a "sneak-islamization" of their culture. Instead, islamophobic individuals should demand assimilation where Muslims completely abandon the Islamic culture that islamophobes perceive as threatening. Last, one may also argue that islamophobia relates to more segregationism as a way of keeping the threatening Islamic culture separate from the majority society. However, we think this is less plausible because the segregation of Muslim minorities also may fuel islamophobes' fear of "islamist" parallel societies.

Shifting from the majority to the minority perspective, Study 2 tests the hypothesis that *only* when Muslim minority members experience considerable degrees of religious discrimination will their religious identity be negatively related to engagement in the national cultural sphere. Thus, we expect the experience of religious discrimination to moderate the relation between religious identity and acculturation among Muslim minority members.

Taken together, both studies test the broad working hypothesis that (i) islamophobia makes majority members demand that Muslim minorities assimilate while (ii) the experience of islamophobia makes Muslim minority members *less* willing to integrate and assimilate to the national cultural sphere. While we test each hypothesis separately, we theoretically assume both processes to be linked and to mutually reinforce each other (Figure 1): The islamophobia among majority members and the resulting assimilation expectation should increase experiences of islamophobia among Muslim minority members who consequently should be more inclined to separate from society as a counter-reaction (Kunst & Sam, 2013c). Conversely, this separation reaction should again fuel majority members' negative attitudes and assimilation expectations towards Muslims. We expect this "vicious circle" to make
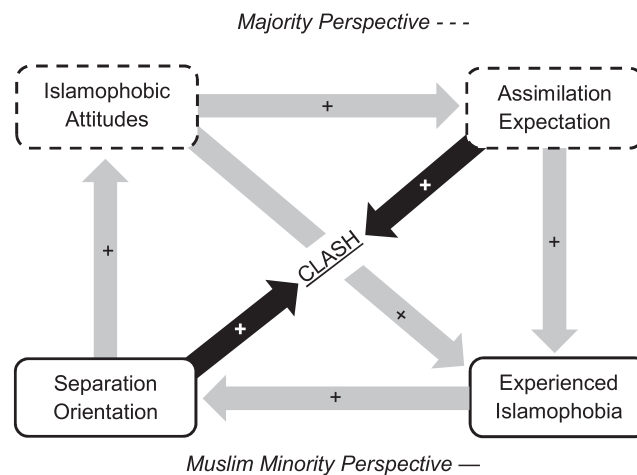
Majority Perspective - - -

Fig. 1: The vicious circle of islamophobia and acculturation

the acculturation attitudes of majority and minority members clash.

STUDY 1

Methods

Participants

A total of 202 native Norwegians completed the survey. Gender was approximately equally distributed (female: 55%), and most participants (80%) were in the age group 18–23 and indicated higher secondary school as their highest completed education (71.3%). To ensure full anonymity, no direct information about participants' specific religious denomination was collected. However, the fact that all participants were native Norwegian suggests that the vast majority were Christian or atheist.

Procedure

Respondents were recruited in undergraduate courses from a broad variety of disciplines at two Norwegian universities. Each respondent was informed about the aim of the study ("to investigate how ethnic Norwegians think that Muslims should relate to their own and the Norwegian culture"), confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from participation at any time. As an incentive to participate, each respondent could win a gift voucher equivalent to 500 Norwegian kroner (≈60 EUR).

Instruments

Religious identity. A measure developed by Plante and Boccaccini (1997b), which has demonstrated high internal consistency in previous research with Christians and atheists living in the West (Berman, Abramowitz, Pardue, & Wheaton, 2010; Plante & Boccaccini, 1997a; Plante, Yancey, Sherman, Guertin, & Pardini, 1999), was used to assess participants' religious identity ($\alpha = .96$). The uni-dimensional scale comprised 10 items (e.g., "My faith is an important part of who I am as a

person" or "My religious faith is extremely important to me"), which were rated on a 10-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 10 (*totally agree*).

Religious prejudice. The Islamophobia Scale developed by Lee et al. (2009) was used to assess the degree to which participants felt anxiety towards, and held negative stereotypes of, Muslims. As the suffix –phobia implies, the scale focused on fear-related and avoidance-related religious prejudice and has proven to be a valid and reliable measure (Lee et al., 2013). On a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 10 (*totally agree*), participants indicated their agreement with eight anxiety items (e.g., "If I could, I would avoid contact with Muslims"; $\alpha = .85$) and eight stereotype items (e.g., "I believe that Muslims support the killings of all non-Muslims"; $\alpha = .89$).

Acculturation expectations. As we are unaware of a standardized acculturation expectations measure adapted to the Norwegian context, we developed 3 six-items scales to measure assimilationist (e.g., "I think that Muslims should adapt to the Norwegian cultural traditions and not maintain their own"), segregationist (e.g., "I think that Muslims should maintain their cultural traditions but not adopt those of Norway"), and integrationist attitudes (e.g., "I think that Muslims should maintain their cultural traditions but also adopt to those of Norway"), closely following the four-statement measurement method of acculturation (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2006). We chose this approach because it allowed us to test our mediational model with separate, continuous measures and constitutes the standard approach for measuring acculturation *expectations* (Bourhis et al., 2009; Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013), although it has been criticized for using double-barreled statements (Rudmin, 2003; but see Berry & Sam, 2003). The expectation of exclusion/marginalization was not included in the study because its validity has been repeatedly contested (Boski, 2008; Kunst & Sam, 2013a; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008).

Each orientation was assessed in the domains of cultural values (refer to aforementioned items), identity,

friends, social activities, way of living, and news consumption. Responses were rated on 6-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*). Factor analyses indicated an unambiguous three factor solution, with factors representing integrationism ($\alpha = .77$), assimilationism ($\alpha = .79$), and segregationism ($\alpha = .76$).

Results

While 32 (possibly atheist) participants showed no religious identity whatsoever on the scale (i.e., the mode), responses did show considerable variance ($\sigma^2 = 5.51$). The means for all acculturation orientations differed significantly from each other, $F(2, 200) = 677.98$, $p < .001$. Integrationism ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.89$) was the most endorsed acculturation orientation, followed by assimilationism ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.03$) and segregationism ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.66$). Religious identity was unrelated to these acculturation orientations ($.088 < ps < .533$) but was positively correlated with islamophobic anxiety ($r = .19$, $p = .007$) and islamophobic stereotypes ($r = .26$, $p < .001$; Table 1). Both islamophobia variables, in turn, were substantially correlated with assimilationism (islamophobic anxiety: $r = .47$, $p < .001$; islamophobic stereotypes: $r = .45$, $p < .001$) and integrationism (islamophobic anxiety: $r = -.35$, $p < .001$; islamophobic stereotypes: $r = -.27$, $p < .001$) but were unrelated to segregationism (islamophobic anxiety: $r = .07$, $p = .299$; islamophobic stereotypes: $r = .02$, $p = .734$; Table 1).

Given these results, we performed a path analysis with a model where religious identity constituted the predictor variable, islamophobic anxiety and stereotypes the mediators, and integrationism and assimilationism the outcome variables. Education and gender were controlled for. As displayed in Figure 2, religious identity was related to higher levels of islamophobic anxiety ($\beta = .18$, $p = .009$), which was related to lower levels of integrationism ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$) and assimilationism ($\beta = -.31$, $p < .001$). Similarly, religious identity related to higher levels of islamophobic stereotypes ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), which in turn were positively related to assimilationism ($\beta = .24$, $p = .003$). Bootstrapping with 5000 random re-samples showed that the resulting indirect effects of religious identity on both assimilationism ($\beta = .12$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.21]) and integrationism ($\beta = -.06$, 95% CI [−0.13, −0.01]) were significant.

Preliminary Discussion

This first study supported the hypothesis that (presumably Christian) religious identity indirectly relates to more unwelcoming acculturation expectations towards Muslim minorities and that this relation is mediated by islamophobic stereotypes and anxiety. Results showed that religious identity was related to more islamophobia, which again was related to less integrationism and more assimilationism, that is, less support for Muslims to maintain their heritage culture. Hence, it is the islamophobia that religious identity brings along, rather than being religious per se, that is associated with unwelcoming acculturation orientations among majority members.

The finding that islamophobia was associated with less welcoming acculturation expectations is consistent with a recent study where islamophobia negatively predicted multiculturalism (Lee et al., 2009). In the present study, islamophobic anxiety in particular emerged as strong predictor. The fact that anxiety negatively related to integrationism and positively related to assimilationism suggests that one solution to deal with threatening out-groups is to expect assimilation and reject any form of maintenance of this threatening culture (Bourhis et al., 2009; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Rohmann et al., 2006; Tip et al., 2012). Islamophobic stereotypes, on the other side, were positively related to assimilationism only. Thus, although stereotypical associations of Muslims with evil terrorists made our participants more likely to demand that they give up their culture, *fear* of Muslims emerged as a particularly powerful predictor of both acculturation expectations.

The fact that islamophobia was unrelated to segregationism was somewhat unexpected given comparable studies showing such a relationship, albeit not with Muslims as an out-group (Barrette et al., 2004; Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Ljujic et al., 2010). Indeed,

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the main study variables in Study 1

	M (SD)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age[a]	N/A	−.12	.17*	.08	−.05	.01	−.01	−.11	.03
2. Gender[b]	1.55 (0.50)	—	.00	.01	−.08	−.04	−.05	−.06	.20**
3. Education[c]	2.34 (0.60)		—	.08	.14	.03	.02	.02	.05
4. Religious identity	3.04 (2.35)			—	.19**	.26***	.11	.07	.05
5. Islamophobic anxiety	2.03 (1.22)				—	.66***	.07	.47***	−.35***
6. Islamophobic stereotypes	2.70 (1.66)					—	.02	.45***	−.27***
7. Segregationism	1.70 (0.66)						—	.02	−.10
8. Assimilationism	2.73 (1.03)							—	−.17*
9. Integrationism	4.97 (0.89)								—

Note: [a]Age was measured in form of age groups: 18–23 years = 80.7%, 24–29 years = 14.9%, 30–35 years = 2.0%, 42–47 years = 2.0%, and 48–53 years = 0.5%.
[b]Gender: 1 = *male*, 2 = *female*.
[c]Education ranged from 1 (*primary school*) to 4 (*master's degree*).
*$p < .05$.
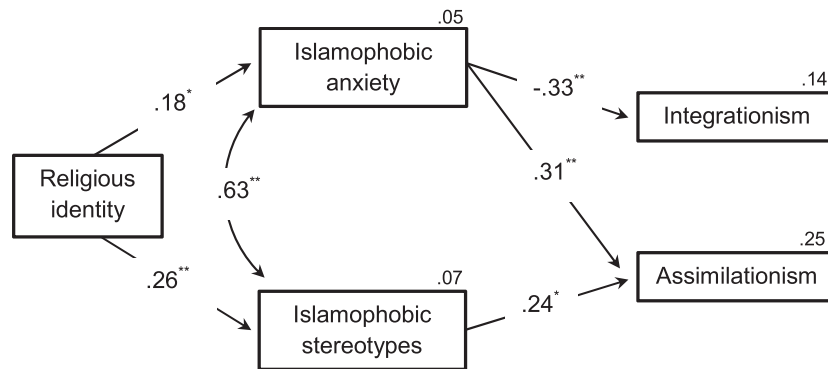**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

Fig. 2: Path model estimated among majority members in Study 1. Standardized coefficients, covariances, and explained variances are displayed. *$p < .01$, **$p < .001$

while showing good psychometric properties, the variable was orthogonal to all other study variables. On one hand, this zero-finding may be the result of some form of social desirability bias, as segregationism may be a rather extreme acculturation expectation for young student participants. On the other hand, one may speculate that islamophobic individuals simply do not see segregationism as a way to reduce the threat they perceive: While they may be inclined to support segregationism because it bans Muslims from mixing their culture with the majority culture, their fear of segregated "islamist" parallel societies may still prevent them from endorsing this acculturation expectation. Conversely, Thomsen, Green, and Sidanius (2008) demonstrated that social dominance orientation, which typically relates to greater islamophobia and explicit assimilation demands, nevertheless predicts support for ethnic persecution of immigrants when they do in fact assimilate, but not when they segregate. The authors argued that this effect was driven by status boundary enforcement motives to keep immigrants from infiltrating the dominant group through assimilation (see also Guimond, De Oliveira, Kamiesjki, & Sidanius, 2010). Future studies are needed to empirically disentangle the potential processes feeding into the reaction of islamophobic individuals to immigrant segregation.

STUDY 2

Whereas Study 1 showed detrimental effects of islamophobia on the acculturation expectations of majority members, the present study tests how the *experience* of perceived islamophobic discrimination determines the ways in which the religious identity of Muslim minorities relates to their actual acculturation. Specifically, we test the prediction that religious identity will relate to less national engagement *only if* participants experience considerable degrees of islamophobia.

Method

Participants

We reanalyzed a dataset used in Kunst et al. (2012) comprising 210 Norwegian–Pakistani Muslims. The average age was 25.15 ($SD = 7.38$), and most of the participants were female (66.3%) and first-generation immigrants (71.9%).

Procedure

Respondents were recruited through cultural organizations, personal contacts, and social networks. Each respondent received information about the study's aim and confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from participation at any time. As in Study 1, participants could win a gift voucher of 500 Norwegian kroner.

Measures

Unless stated otherwise, responses were scored on 6-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*).

Acculturation orientations. Using the standard two-statement method that has proven the psychometrically most sound measure for assessing minorities' acculturation *orientations* (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2007), we assessed participants' orientation towards the dominant, national culture, and their heritage culture separately. All in all, 24 items (of which four were negatively worded to prevent response bias) measured attitudinal (e.g., "I like to spend time with [native Norwegian/Pakistani] friends") and behavioral (e.g., "How often do you spend time with [native Norwegian/Pakistani] friends?") acculturation orientations towards the national and ethnic culture. The items assessed acculturation attitudes and behavior in the domains of language, media usage, socialization, and leisure activities in the private and public sphere. Attitudinal items were scored on 6-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 6 (*totally agree*), while the behavioral items were scored on 5-point scales ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Factor analyses supported a two-factor solution, with the first factor representing orientation towards the national culture and the second factor representing an orientation towards the ethnic heritage culture. After linear transformation of the behavioral items to match the 6-point range of the attitudinal items, 12-item mean scores were computed representing participants' ethnic ($\alpha = .84$) and national orientation ($\alpha = .78$).

Religious identity. To measure religious identity, we used a scale by Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007) that was

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the main study variables of Study 2

	M (SD)	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	25.15 (7.38)	−.30***	−.38***	−.03	−.09	.05	−.05
2. Gender[a]	1.66 (0.47)	—	.02	.05	−.08	−.00	−.00
3. Generational status[b]	1.72 (0.45)		—	.05	.04	−.05	.12
4. Religious identity	4.85 (1.00)			—	−.03	.30***	−.12
5. Perceived islamophobic discrimination	1.85 (0.69)				—	−.00	−.04
6. Ethnic orientation	4.27 (0.77)					—	−.25***
7. National orientation	4.27 (0.55)						—

Note: [a]1 = *male*, 2 = *female*.
[b]1 = *first generation*, 2 = *second generation*.
***$p < .001$.

specifically developed for, and is frequently used in, studies with Muslim participants (e.g., Kunst et al., 2013; Verkuyten, 2007). Here, participants rated their agreement with 13 items ($\alpha = .95$), such as "My Muslim identity is an important part of myself."

Perceived islamophobic discrimination. We adopted 16 items from Brondolo et al. (2005) to assess experiences of religious discrimination in the form of threats, stigmatization, exclusion, work discrimination, and harassment by the police, rated on a 5-point scale with 1 (*never happened*) and 5 (*happened very often*) as endpoints ($\alpha = .92$). Each item stressed the fact that the measure dealt with islamophobic discrimination based on one's religious belief (i.e., "How often have people called

you bad names (e.g., Terrorist) related to your religious belief?"), and the measure was introduced accordingly:

> '*People can be treated differently based on their religion. In these questions we ask you to indicate how often you have experienced the following events* **because you are a Muslim or because of your belief in Islam.**' (original survey formatting)

Results

Correlations and means for the main study variables are displayed in Table 2. On average, participants seemed to prefer integration, with both the national and ethnic orientation means being clearly above the midpoint of the scale (Table 2). Also when using the midpoint split procedure (Arends-Toth & van de Vijver, 2006), 78.5% of the participants preferred this strategy, followed by assimilation (14.4%) and separation (6.7%). However, we used the continuous orientation variables in further analyses, given that the use of such categorical variables (i.e., dummy coding the acculturation strategies) does not allow us to assess the actual variance in the acculturation orientations.

In a regression model with national orientation as dependent variable, $F_{(6, 203)} = 2.29$, $p = .037$, $R^2 = .06$, only the interaction term between religious identity and experienced islamophobic discrimination obtained significance ($\beta = -.17$, $p = .013$; Table 3). As expected, simple slopes (Figure 3) showed that for participants experiencing low degrees of islamophobic discrimination, religious identity was unrelated to their national orientation ($B = 0.01$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 0.25$, $p = .802$). In contrast, for those experiencing high degrees of discrimination, religious identity was negatively and highly significantly related to their national orientation ($B = -0.15$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = -3.05$, $p = .003$).

In terms of ethnic orientation, a regression analysis showed that both religious identity ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$) and the interaction between islamophobic discrimination and religious identity ($\beta = .14$, $p = .046$) obtained significance, $F_{(6, 203)} = 4.25$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .11$. Although religious identity generally was positively related to ethnic orientation, this relation was particularly pronounced when experienced discrimination was high ($B = 0.33$,

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analyses predicting the ethnic and national orientation in Study 2

	National orientation		Ethnic orientation	
Predictor	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.02		.00	
Age		−.02		.03
Gender[a]		−.05		.01
Generational status[b]		−.11		−.04
Step 2	.04		.09**	
Age		−.03		.04
Gender		−.05		−.01
Generational status		.11		−.05
Religious identity		−.13		.32***
Perceived islamophobic discrimination		−.05		.01
Step 3	.06*		.11***	
Age		−.01		.02
Gender		.07		.00
Generational status		.14		−.07
Religious identity		−.13		.30***
Perceived islamophobic discrimination		−.07		.01
Religious identity * discrimination		−.17*		.14*

Note: [a]1 = *male*, 2 = *female*.
[b]1 = *first generation*, 2 = *second generation*.
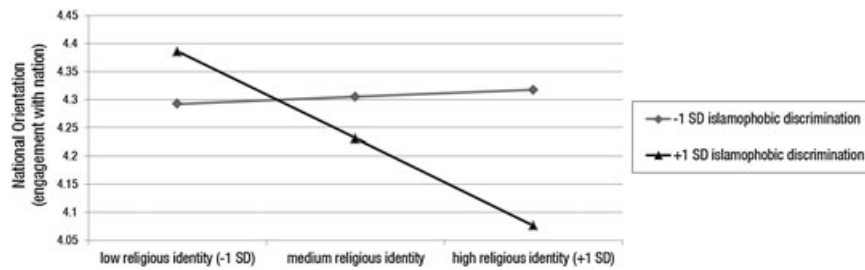*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

Fig. 3: Simple slopes for national orientation among Muslim minority members experiencing low (−1 *SD*) and high (+1 *SD*) degrees of perceived islamophobic discrimination in Study 2 are displayed
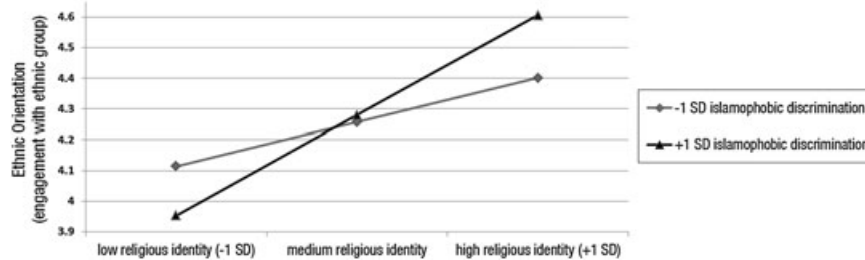

Fig. 4: Simple slopes for ethnic orientation among Muslim minority members experiencing low (−1 *SD*) and high (+1 *SD*) degrees of perceived islamophobic discrimination in Study 2 are displayed

$SE = 0.07$, $t = 4.73$, $p < .001$) but to lesser degree when it was low ($B = 0.14$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = 2.10$, $p = .037$; Figure 4).

Preliminary Discussion

As expected, only in the presence of islamophobia was the religious identification of Muslim minority members negatively related to engagement in the national culture. When participants experienced only low degrees of islamophobia, both constructs were virtually unrelated. Analogous to earlier studies (Güngör et al., 2012; Güngör et al., 2011), religious identity was related to higher levels of ethnic orientation. Yet, the experience of religious discrimination further amplified this relationship as the simple slopes indicated: Their religious identity related especially strongly to an ethnic orientation when participants experienced high degrees of islamophobia. Hence, combining the results from both regressions, only when Muslims experienced high islamophobic discrimination did their religious identity relate to *less* national and *more* ethnic engagement, an overall strategy that describes the acculturation strategy of separation.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In his essay "The Clash of Civilizations?", Huntington (1993) argued that conflict in the post-Cold War era would be driven largely by irreconcilable cultural and religious differences, particularly between Islam and the West. Mirroring this notion, Western public discourse has often portrayed Islam as an obstacle to successful multiculturalism (Fekete, 2008), while little attention has been paid to other factors such as islamophobia. Combining majority and minority perspectives, the present paper demonstrated that islamophobia and the perception thereof lead to diametrically opposite acculturation

attitudes among Western majority and Muslim minority members: For majority members, religious identity was related to *more* islamophobia, which in turn was related to increased demands that Muslim minorities assimilate, that is, that they engage *more* in the national culture and *less* in their religious culture. Although islamophobic stereotypes were associated with more unwelcoming acculturation attitudes to some degree, islamophobic anxiety towards Muslims and Islam especially appeared to drive these attitudes. For Muslim minority members, however, the perceived islamophobic discrimination made strong religious identifiers distance themselves further from the national sphere, while increasing their ethnic orientation. Insofar as Muslim minorities in various European countries perceive high degrees of islamophobia (Kunst et al., 2013), this process likely influences the acculturation orientations of religiously identified Muslims in Europe to large degrees.

Using a Norwegian minority and majority sample allowed us to investigate processes within two interrelated social groups situated in the same societal context. Yet, it has to be noted that the empirical approach in our study of course only allows for indirect and non-causal inferences about interactive majority–minority group processes as put forward in our theoretical model. Future, multi-level analyses, preferably using longitudinal data sets, should allow for a more direct assessment of such dynamics (e.g., Christ et al., 2013; Guimond et al., 2013). While our study supported theoretically grounded predictions, it did so with cross-sectional data sets within a single societal context. Hence, it is important to test whether our findings hold in other national contexts and whether experimental or longitudinal studies do in fact support the causality proposed here. Given the international urgency and societal implications of the topic of research, future studies replicating and shedding further light on group processes are important.

Societal Implications

It has been argued that the more incongruent majority and minority members' acculturation preferences are, the more conflictual intergroup relations will turn out to be (Bourhis et al., 1997; Zagefka & Brown, 2002). The results of the present studies demonstrate that religious prejudice held by majority members and experienced by minority members may increase this gap: The greater the fear of Islam, the greater the demand that minorities assimilate—the greater the perceived islamophobia, the greater the separation of minorities and the greater the fear of them (Figure 1). This points to the responsibility of majority members for the integration of minority members and the societal climate in general (Kunst et al., 2015; Phelps et al., 2011). Instead of labeling Muslims as a societal group that islamizises society or refuses to integrate owing to cultural or religious characteristics, public discourse might fruitfully engage with the underlying mechanisms that further such tendencies. As our studies demonstrate, islamophobia may be particularly detrimental in this regard.

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