Abstract:
In light of current societal debates about the integration of Muslim minorities into European societies, this dissertation analysed structural integration and religion among the Turkish and Moroccan second generation. Throughout, a comparative perspective was taken by studying two second-generation groups in several local and national receiving contexts in North-Western Europe. Two broad questions guided the dissertation, namely (i) does religion function as a bridge or barrier for the inclusion of Muslim minorities in European societies?, and (ii) to what extent is religion a source of disadvantage among the second generation?

These broad questions were answered through six empirical studies based on multi-level analyses of Belgian Census data and multi-group analyses of new primary survey data on the Turkish and Moroccan second generation (TIES, The Integration of the European Second generation, cf. Crul & Schneider, 2010). The dissertation incorporates different explanatory approaches derived from social and cross-cultural psychology as well as sociology in order to study two explananda: structural integration and religion. Concretely, I drew on comparative stratification (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 1993; Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993) as applied to ethnic minorities (cf. Heath & Cheung, 2007) to explain structural integration in terms of educational attainment of the second generation (Esser, 2000, 2001). When linking structural integration to religiosity among the second generation, I looked at national opportunity structures in terms of the institutional accommodation of Islam (cf. Koopmans, Statham, Guigni, & Passy, 2005) as contextual moderator. Muslim minorities in Europe are acculturating groups due to their migration background, which raises interesting questions about the role of acculturation orientations (cf. Berry, 2001; Bourhis, et al., 1997) in the process of intergenerational religious transmission (cf. Nauck, 2001; Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001). Finally, focusing on religion as a social identity (Verkuyten, 2007; Ysseldyck, Mathson, & Anisman, 2010), I studied identity multiplicity (Brown, 2000; Roccas & Brewer, 2002) and politicisation (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008), asking in which intergroup contexts Muslim identity is compatible or conflicting with civic identities and when and why it is politicised or de-politicised.

Summarising the findings across the six chapters, there is little evidence that Islam is a barrier to the integration of the second generation per se, because Islamic religiosity was found to be decoupled from structural integration (chapter 4) and from adoption of the host culture (chapter 5) in most contexts. However, these findings need to be assessed against the background of severe disadvantage in educational attainment among the Turkish and Moroccan second generation (chapters 2 and 3). Moreover, the comparative perspective highlights contextual differences in these relationships. Thus, structural integration and
religiosity were found to be inversely related in contexts where Islam as a minority religion is not recognised and accommodated institutionally (chapter 4). In addition, different modes of incorporation (cf. Portes & Rumbaut) of the Turkish and Moroccan second generation were revealed in terms of different effects of ethnic density on school attainment (chapter 3) and more effective intergenerational transmission of religion (chapter 5) among Turks in line with more social cohesion and cultural continuity in the latter group (cf. De Valk & Liefbroer, 2007; Phalet & Heath, 2010). Finally, the quality of intergroup relations, particularly experiences of personal discrimination, explained differential patterns of identification and politicisation. Thus, higher levels of personal discrimination were found to go together with more identity conflict (chapter 6) and more readiness to take political action to defend Islam – but decreased support for political Islam (chapter 7).

In conclusion, the results of this dissertation provide little evidence for the notion that Islam is a barrier to the integration of the second generation or that Islamic religiosity is mainly a response to societal exclusion – despite persistent disadvantage in education and on the labour market (cf. Heath & Cheung, 2007; Heath, Rothon, & Kilpi, 2008). Instead, Islamic religiosity is mainly (re-)created within immigrant families and communities as a crucial element of cultural maintenance in acculturating contexts. However, Islam may be a barrier for civic integration in more hostile intergroup contexts where Muslim identity and civic identification are in conflict and the second generation mobilises around religious group goals.