



## Collective identity factors and the attitude toward violence in defense of ethnicity or religion among Muslim youth of Turkish and Moroccan Descent



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### ABSTRACT

Collective deprivation, connectedness to mainstream society (friendship and psychological closeness to majority individuals) and in-group identity factors (i.e. strength of in-group identity, and perceived in-group superiority) were investigated among Muslim Dutch youth of Turkish and Moroccan descent, in relation to their attitudes toward violence in defense of religion or ethnicity, and the willingness to use such violence. Data come from a sample of students ( $N = 398$ , age 14–18 years). Results show that perceptions of in-group superiority were predicted by higher connectedness to the in-group and lower connectedness to Dutch society in both ethnic groups and by collective relative deprivation among Moroccan-Dutch participants only. In both groups, attitudes toward violent in-group defense and violence willingness were predicted by perceptions of in-group superiority. Collective relative deprivation directly predicted more positive attitudes to violent in-group defense among Turkish-Dutch youth, as well as indirectly (via in-group superiority) among Moroccan-Dutch. Connectedness to the in-group directly predicted the willingness to use a violent in-group defense among the Turkish-Dutch participants and again indirectly (via in-group superiority) among Moroccan-Dutch participants. The results underline the relevance of collective identification processes to the attitudes of violent in-group defense among young Muslims of the second generation in a rather tensed socio-political climate. The study outcomes emphasize the importance of examining the dynamics between different Muslim groups, as their unique acculturation patterns yield particular pathways to the attitudes toward violent in-group defense and the willingness hereof.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. *Anti-Muslim sentiments in society and their impact on intergroup attitudes*

As a result of immigration Western European societies have witnessed a growth in ethnic and religious diversity, confronting native populations with new challenges to their identity and to intergroup relations. Muslim immigrants in particular are being depicted as the ‘negative other’ in several Western European countries (Betz & Meret, 2009) and the perception of a “Failure of Multiculturalism” (Modood & Ahmad, 2007) has become rooted. In the Dutch case, for instance, 50% of native youth reported negative attitudes about Muslims (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002), and that Islamic traditions are ‘incompatible with mainstream values and life style’ (Velasco González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008). Furthermore, the Dutch native population has become more assimilative in their orientation toward migrants over the past 15 years (Dagevos & Huijnk, 2012). The Dutch national populist party PVV (“Freedom Party”) which openly accuses Muslims of having a backward culture and religion, became the third largest party in the national elections in 2012.

According to some researchers, there seems to be a relationship between increasing anti-Islam sentiments in Western Europe and the emergence of (violent) radicalization in young European Muslims (Abbas, 2012; Moghaddam, 2005; Stroink, 2007). The Netherlands experienced a “homegrown” terrorist attack (e.g. the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh) and the formation of a “homegrown” terrorist network (the *Hofstadgroup*, see Vidino, 2007) by young second generation Dutch Muslims in 2004 and 2005. In addition, more recently the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice announced a considerable increase in Dutch Muslim youth traveling to Syria to fight for the cause of their Muslim brothers against the regime of Assad, alongside with Belgian, British, French and Swedish Muslim youth (NCTV, 2013). Although only a small number of individuals may eventually proceed to ethnic or religiously based action, there seems to be a fertile soil for intergroup antagonism, with the use of violence as a possible ultimate consequence (Veldhuis & Bakker, 2009).

The present research focuses on the important question of which factors can predict the attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others and the willingness of oneself to use such violence. As outlined in greater detail below, we expect collective relative deprivation of Muslims, the extent to which individuals feel connected to the society as a whole, a strong in-group identity and out-group friendship to be key factors. We expect that these factors influence the perception that the in-group is superior to other groups, a factor that has been found to be a key predictor of attitudes toward ideology-based violence in previous research (Doosje, Loseman, & Van den Bos, 2013). An additional aim of the present research is to investigate possible differences based on ethnic minority group membership regarding the attitudes toward ethnic and religious violence. As argued by Verkuyten and Zaremba (2005), much of the research focusing on intergroup attitudes tends to focus on dyadic in-group versus out-group relations, ignoring the dynamics of current multi-ethnic contexts in Western cities. As will be further outlined below, ethnic groups may differ in terms of risk and protective factors that influence their attitudes toward ethnic and religious violence. These factors include the societal status of ethnic groups and the social cohesion of ethnic communities. In the present research, we study two minority Dutch Muslim groups (i.e. Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch), which are expected to differ on factors predicting attitudes toward ideology-based violence and the willingness to use such violence.

### 1.2. *Dutch Muslim youth of Turkish and Moroccan Descent: migration history, community structure and identity processes*

Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch Muslims belong to the largest immigrant groups in the Netherlands (Huijnk & Dagevos, 2012), making up about 5% of the Dutch population. Turkish and Moroccan immigrants, coming from predominantly rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas, arrived as guest laborers to perform low-skilled factory work from the 1970s onwards (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2011). Initially, these male workers came on their own, expecting to eventually return to their home countries with their savings. From the 1970s onward, the number of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants increased through family reunification, family formation and marriage migration. The majority of those immigrants and their family members stayed in the Netherlands. The social and economic position of the Turkish and Moroccan-Dutch first and second generation immigrants is worse compared to that of majority individuals, as in several other Western European host societies (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2011). This is reflected in higher drop-out of education, higher unemployment rates, and more health problems. The Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch ethnic groups share in common their religious background in that most are Sunni Muslims (85% and 90% respectively, Maliepaard & Gijssberts, 2012).

Research indicates that the overlap between ethnic and religious identification in these groups is very high. Turkish and Moroccan immigrants who identify strongly with their religious group also identify more strongly with their ethnic group, and this interconnection is more pronounced among the second generation (Maliepaard, Lubbers, & Gijssberts, 2010; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2014). The overlap in ethnic and religious identities seems to be more profound among members of minority groups who hold numerous underprivileged statuses, as is the case for the Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2014). They experience deprivation associated with their collective identity categories in close connection and simultaneously, which is associated with intergroup threat. Together, these processes enhance the inclination for simplified (that is, overlapping) social identity structures (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2014). However, differences across minority groups can be expected as well, as outlined in the next section.

## 2. Differences based on ethnic group membership

Ethnic groups often have unique patterns with regard to acculturation and cultural integration aspects (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Turkish and Moroccan immigrant groups differ with regard to their ethnic identification and acculturation patterns, their positioning in the ethnic hierarchy (that is, the social status of an ethnic group based on out-group judgment), and in the level of perceived stigmatization. First, the strength of in-group connectedness seems to be different in both groups. This is observed, for instance, in the higher scores on cultural continuity and in-group cohesiveness of Turkish immigrants in Europe compared to Moroccan immigrants (Güngör, Fleischmann, & Phalet, 2011). Compared to Moroccan communities, Turkish communities are relatively close-knitted, as is shown by the high concentration of Turks in residential areas and the dense network of Turkish associations (Güngör et al., 2011). Turks also show higher levels of ethnic retention, for instance in terms of language and media use (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2011). Moreover, the Turkish state and Turkish umbrella organizations are active players aiming for continuation of the Turkish language use and maintenance of Turkish culture among Turkish immigrants (Pels, 2014).

Research by Huijnk and Dagevos (2012) suggests that feelings of connectedness to the in-group and mainstream society follow a different pattern for these two ethnic groups. The share of individuals of Turkish descent who socialize informally with in-group members is higher than among those of Moroccan descent (67% versus 57%) and more Turkish-Dutch youth than Moroccan-Dutch youth report to identify strongly with their ethnic in-group (63% versus 55%; Huijnk & Dagevos, 2012). Additionally, fewer Turkish-Dutch than Moroccan-Dutch report to “strongly feel Dutch” (28% versus 37%), and more Turkish-Dutch than Moroccan-Dutch individuals report to never socialize with a native Dutch person in their spare time (Huijnk & Dagevos, 2012). Based on this overview, we expect that Turkish-Dutch youth feel a stronger connection to their in-group than Moroccan-Dutch youth.

The degree of collective deprivation experienced by youth of these two groups seems to vary as well. Moroccan-Dutch are perceived by the native Dutch to be at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy, while Turkish-Dutch are perceived to be just above Moroccans (Hagendoorn & Pepels, 2003; Velasco González et al., 2008). Feelings of collective deprivation are often influenced by every day experiences of discrimination. Ethnic groups occupying a low position in the ethnic hierarchy often experience most discrimination. Indeed, Moroccan-Dutch youth report more experiences of stigmatization than Turkish-Dutch youth (45% versus 35%; Huijnk & Dagevos, 2012). We therefore expect levels of collective deprivation to be higher among Moroccan-Dutch youth than among Turkish Dutch youth. As will be explained in the next section, these two factors (collective deprivation and connectedness with the in-group) are important background variables of attitudes toward the use of violence to defend the own group.

## 3. Predictors of attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others, and the willingness to use a violent in-group defense

In this section we discuss social–psychological factors that are regarded as important predictors of attitudes toward ideology-based violence among Dutch young Muslims, and their willingness to use such violence themselves.

### 3.1. In-group connectedness and in-group superiority

Empirical results on the basis of the *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) demonstrate that a higher degree of personal identification with an ethnic or religious in-group influences the development of a strong collective identity. Previous research has shown that a collective identification with the ethnic or religious group one belongs to is a prerequisite for experiencing a threat against the in-group (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). Furthermore, studies among young Muslims in the Netherlands (Doosje et al., 2013; Stroink, 2007; Van Bergen, Ersanilli, De Ruyter & Pelsin preparation) indicate that the strength of in-group identification is positively associated with a favorable attitude to in-group superiority. In addition, a strong sense of connectedness to their ethnic in-group was related to them feeling superior as Muslim, which in turn has been related to favorable attitudes toward ideology-based violence (Doosje et al., 2013; Van Bergen et al., in preparation).

Strong ethnic and religious in-group identities to some extent coincide with the conviction of belonging to an in-group with better morals and values than the outgroup(s) (Mazarr, 2004), which appear to go hand in hand with more positive attitudes toward violent in-group defense among both Dutch minority and majority youth (Doosje, Van den Bos, Loseman, Feddes, & Mann, 2012; Doosje et al., 2013). In line with this, research by Ansari (2005) has demonstrated that individuals who regard their Islamic identity to be more important than their national or ethnic identity, express more positive views on themes related to religious violence, such as jihad and martyrdom. Hence, a stronger connectedness to the in-group is expected to be associated with stronger feelings of in-group superiority which, in turn, is expected to be associated with a more favorable attitude toward violent in-group defense (see also Doosje et al., 2013).

### 3.2. Collective relative deprivation and in-group superiority

Collective relative deprivation is the judgment that one's in-group is at disadvantage compared to other groups (whether in cultural, political, religious or socio-economic terms), a position which is deemed unfair. This judgment may be accompanied by feelings of anger, resentment and discontent (Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin & Bialosiewicz, 2012). Specific for collective

relative deprivation is that membership of the in-group is perceived as the reason for the unfair treatment (Smith et al., 2012). Collective relative deprivation has successfully predicted a wide range of significant outcome variables such as collective action, deviance and intergroup attitudes (Smith et al., 2012), and therefore seems to be a relevant background variable influencing the attitudes to violent in-group defense among Muslim youth (Doosje et al., 2013; Moghaddam, 2005; Stroink, 2007).

Seventy-two percent of Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch Muslims feel that native Dutch people hold far too negative opinions about Islam (Maliepaard & Gijssberts, 2012). About 40% of all young Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch Muslims feel that their ethnic group is subject to discrimination and about one-third assumes that their religion is the most important reason for this (Maliepaard & Gijssberts, 2012). A study by Feddes, Mann, de Zwart and Doosje (2013) showed how every day (perceived) experiences of being treated as inferior due to religious and/or ethnic group membership were a common narrative of Moroccan-Dutch youth. Discrimination by employers is one of the empirically established causes for high unemployment rates among Dutch Muslim populations (Dagevos & Gijssberts, 2011). Higher educated young Dutch Muslims more often than lower educated ones feel discriminated against and hold less positive attitudes to the host society as a result (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2014). Furthermore, in a study among young Muslims of Turkish and Moroccan descent in Amsterdam (age 16–18 years), 37% of the participants showed a combination of religious orthodoxy with the feeling that Islam is under attack by modern society and a focal point of political conflict (Slootman & Tillie, 2006).

'Islamophobia' and the pressure to assimilate may precipitate feelings of collective deprivation and trigger identity crises in second generation Muslims (Abbas, 2012; Stroink, 2007). As a consequence, feelings of Muslim superiority may arise as a coping mechanism in order to prevent a deterioration of their (collective) self-image (Geelhoed, 2012). Furthermore, individuals who respond to collective relative deprivation by representing the in-group as superior may displace their feelings of aggression and resentment onto out-groups as a consequence of their desire for retribution (Silke, 2008; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke 2001). It is expected, therefore, that more feelings of collective deprivation are associated with higher perceptions of in-group superiority, which are expected to be associated with a favorable attitude toward violent in-group defense (see also Moghaddam, 2005). Ultimately, this can lead to the willingness to use such violence themselves (Doosje et al., 2013).

In the next section we turn to possible protective factors, factors that may inhibit the development of positive attitudes toward violent in-group defense, and the willingness hereof.

### 3.3. *Out-group friendship, connectedness to mainstream society, and perceptions of in-group superiority*

A large meta-analysis on effects of intergroup contact on intergroup relations revealed that prejudice (e.g. stereotypes) decreases as a consequence of intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Therefore, positive contact with out-group members is also likely to serve as a protective factor against developing positive attitudes toward violent in-group defense. In line with this, a recent study (Van Bergen et al., in preparation) showed that Turkish-Dutch young Muslims who felt more connected with mainstream Dutch society, were less inclined to perceive Muslims as being superior. Consequently, they held less positive attitudes to violent in-group defense and reported less willingness to use such violence. In line with this, previous work focusing on relations between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland has shown that friendship with members of the out-group reduces anxiety for and increases trust toward that group (Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004). Therefore out-group friendship is likely to be negatively associated to feelings of in-group superiority.

In sum, we expect both a connection to mainstream society as well as cross-group friendship between Muslim-Dutch youth and majority Dutch to enhance psychological closeness to the majority Dutch. These factors can, therefore, protect youth against feelings of in-group superiority and, as a consequence, against favorable attitudes to violence as a means for defending their ethnicity or religion.

## 4. The present research

Based on the review above we expect Turkish-Dutch youth to have higher levels of in-group connectedness than Moroccan-Dutch youth (H1) and Moroccan-Dutch youth to experience higher levels of collective deprivation than Turkish-Dutch youth (H2).

In addition, we expect collective relative deprivation (H3) and in-group connectedness (H4) to be associated with more perceptions of in-group superiority and, in turn, to more positive attitudes to violent in-group defence by others and more willingness to use such violence one-self. Stronger feelings of connectedness to society (H5) as well as cross-group friendship (H6) are expected to be associated with less perceptions of in-group superiority and, in turn, to less positive attitudes to violent in-group defence by others. Violent in-group defence by others is associated with less willingness to use such violence (H7).

In addition, we explore whether there are differences regarding associations between predictor variables (connectedness to in-group, collective relative deprivation, connectedness to Dutch society, out-group friendship, and in-group superiority) and the two outcome variables: attitude toward violent in-group defense and own willingness to use such violence.

#### 4.1. Procedures and sample

##### 4.1.1. Procedure

We obtained data through the “Young and Diverse” survey. A survey website was designed especially for the study. The survey was dispersed in two different ways: via secondary schools and via websites. From April 2011 until July 2011, nine secondary schools in the Netherlands participated in the current study. The schools were selected on the basis of their ethnic composition. Schools with a high proportion of minority youth were oversampled. The board of eight of the participating schools notified the students’ parents about the study in writing, explaining the aim and topic of the study, and allowing the parents to opt their child out of the survey. The school board of one school stated that participation in a selected number of school surveys by their pupils was already incorporated in their school policy. Before filling out the survey, youth gave their written informed consent. The first author was present during data collection to introduce the study and to answer questions, while a teacher was present for keeping order. A total of 970 students filled out the survey at school; 141 participants were of Turkish origin and 168 participants were of Moroccan descent.

In a second step, in order to obtain a higher number of minority students, a self-administered online questionnaire was conducted from February 2012 to July 2012. Two of the most popular websites that target Turkish and Moroccan second-generation youth were used to advertise the survey; 400 youth (age 14–25) filled out the survey (after they gave their written informed consent). Both the respondents of the school survey and the Internet survey could participate in a lottery and win a voucher. In both settings the survey was introduced by explaining that researchers wanted to learn about youth’s perceptions of intergroup relations.

##### 4.1.2. Sample

For this paper, we included a subset of respondents of Turkish and Moroccan descent, who were aged between 14 and 18 years old and enrolled in secondary education. This resulted in a sample of 398 youth, 53% female and 47% male, 166 (41.7%) of Turkish background (mean age 15.70,  $SD = 1.02$ ) and 232 (58.3%) of Moroccan background (mean age 15.86,  $SD = 1.02$ ).

##### 4.1.3. Ethnicity and religion

Respondents filled out the country of birth of their father and mother respectively. We also asked for ethnic self-identification as some children have a mixed ethnic background and because of third generation immigrant youth who cannot be identified on the basis of country of birth of their parents. The respondents were classified by comparing country of birth of both parents and self-identification (the latter being prioritized in case of a mixed ancestry). At least one of the birth countries of the parents had to match self-chosen ethnicity (Turkish or Moroccan) in order for a respondent to be categorized as second generation Turkish or Moroccan. With the exception of one Moroccan participant whose parents were both born in the Netherlands, all participants were second-generation immigrants. Four respondents who reported not to be religious were removed from the analysis.

##### 4.1.4. Social economic status, level of education, gender, and sample (control variables)

As an indicator of social economic status (SES), participants were asked to report the highest completed education of both the father and the mother. The scales ranged from 1 (no education at all) to 5 (college or university). The *educational level* of the students was classified according to the Dutch system of secondary education: vocational training (*vmbo*) (Turkish  $N = 57\%$  or  $34\%$ , Moroccan  $N = 68\%$  or  $29\%$ ); higher secondary education (*havo*) (Turkish  $N = 65\%$  or  $39\%$ , Moroccan  $N = 99\%$  or  $43\%$ ); highest level of secondary education (pre-university education; *vwo*) (Turkish  $N = 44\%$  or  $27\%$ , Moroccan  $N = 65\%$  or  $28\%$ ). Fifty-three percent of the sample was female ( $N = 211$ ). Seventy-five percent of the respondents ( $N = 309$ ) completed the school survey (including 9 schools and 27 classrooms); 25% of the sample completed the Internet survey ( $N = 94$ ).

## 5. Instruments and measures of the model variables

### 5.1. In-group connectedness

We used the Dutch version of the Psychological Acculturation Scale (PAS, Stevens, Pels, Vollebergh, & Crijnen, 2004) that measures an individual’s sense of emotional attachment to, belonging to, and understanding of the culture of the ethnic group of origin (in-group). Respondents were asked to indicate their attachment to Turkish and Moroccan people respectively (T-PAS, M-PAS; e.g., “I feel comfortable with Turkish/Moroccan people”). Answers were given on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree”). The scale consisted of seven items; Cronbach’s alpha was high among both Turkish (T-PAS: .86) and Moroccan participants (M-PAS: .83).

### 5.2. Collective relative deprivation

Collective relative deprivation was assessed with three items taken from Doosje et al. (2013). Examples of these items are: “I think people of my ethnic background or religion do not get as many chances as other groups in the Netherlands”,

"It makes me angry how people of my ethnicity or religion are treated compared to other groups in the Netherlands". The alpha was .73 for both Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch participants.

### 5.3. Psychological connectedness to Dutch society

The Psychological Acculturation Scale (Stevens et al., 2004) was also used to measure psychological connectedness to Dutch society (D-PAS; e.g.: "Dutch people understand me", "I feel have a lot in common with people of Dutch descent"). Answers were given on a 5-point scale (1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree"). The seven items were found to be reliable for both Turkish (alpha of .88) and Moroccan (alpha of .87) participants.

### 5.4. Out-group friendship

The degree of interethnic friendship was measured by asking whether respondents had friends who were of Dutch descent. This was measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (=no Dutch friends), to 1 (=one Dutch friend), to 2 (=two Dutch friends), to 3 (=three or more Dutch friends).

### 5.5. Perceived in-group superiority

To assess perceived in-group superiority, three items were chosen from a longer version of a superiority scale (Doosje et al., 2013; e.g., "Muslims are better people than people with another religion"). Research indicates that the overlap between religious and ethnic identity is very high in the case of Turkish-Dutch youth (Maliapaard et al., 2010; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2014). Answers were rated on a 5-point scale (1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree"). Reliability scores were .67 for Turkish-Dutch and .73 for Moroccan-Dutch participants.

### 5.6. Violent in-group defense

The attitude toward, as well as the willingness to use violence as means to defend the in-group was assessed by two items, the first item (Doosje et al., 2013) was: "I can understand others who use violence to defend their ethnic or religious group". The answer was rated on a 5-point scale (1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree"). The willingness of participants to use violence for ethnic or religious reasons themselves was measured with the following item (Doosje et al., 2012, 2013): "I would use violence to defend my ethnic origin or religion", measured on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (=not true) to 3 (=very true).

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Preliminary analyses

We first conducted a factor analysis with PCA extraction and Varimax rotation to examine whether the items measuring in-group connectedness, connectedness to Dutch society, out-group friendship, collective relative deprivation, in-group superiority, attitudes to violent in-group defense by others and own willingness to use violence loaded on the expected constructs. As expected six factors emerged all with an eigenvalue larger than 1 which explained 62% of the variance. The items measuring in-group connectedness, collective relative deprivation perceptions of in-group superiority, and connectedness to Dutch society corresponded to the respective factors. The two items measuring attitude toward acceptance of violent in-group defense by others and own violent intentions scored high on one factor (respective scores of .77 and .78). We decided to maintain a distinction between the items measuring attitudes to violent in-group defense by others and own willingness to use such violence in accordance to previous work on radicalization processes (e.g. Doosje et al., 2012). This distinction is also in line with the observation that general attitudes only weakly predict behavior (Wicker, 1969) while a meta-analysis by Webb and Sheeran (2006) shows that a medium-to-large change in intent predicts only small-to-medium change in behavior.

### 6.2. Mean scores and correlations

The means and standard deviations for both groups are depicted in Table 1. Univariate analyses were conducted on all variables except the control variables with ethnicity as independent variable. As can be seen, results of univariate analyses showed that groups did not differ on in-group connectedness so Hypothesis 1 was not confirmed. As expected, Moroccan-Dutch participants reported more collective deprivation compared to Turkish-Dutch participants supporting Hypothesis 2.

In addition, a marginal significant difference between participants on willingness to use violence as a means of defending the in-group was found: Turkish-Dutch participants scored higher on this item than Moroccan-Dutch participants. Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch participants scored equally high on identification with their own group, perceptions of in-group superiority, connectedness to Dutch society, out-group friendship, and attitudes toward violence by others.

**Table 1**

Means (and standard deviations) for Turkish and Moroccan participants and results of univariate tests for differences across groups (test statistics *F*) on the main variables.

	Item scale range	Participants		Group effect
		Turkish	Moroccan	<i>F</i> -value
In-group connectedness	1 (low)–5 (high)	4.43 (.72)	4.34 (.71)	1.75
Connectedness to Dutch society	1 (low)–5 (high)	3.40 (.91)	3.54 (.86)	2.19
Out-group friendship	0 (none)–3 (three or more)	2.04 (1.22)	2.04 (1.18)	.001
Collective relative deprivation	1 (low)–5 (high)	3.40 (1.03)	3.72 (.98)	10.04**
In-group superiority	1 (low)–5 (high)	3.23 (1.12)	3.07 (1.22)	1.81
Attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others	1 (low)–5 (high)	2.73 (1.51)	2.53 (1.46)	1.75
Willingness to use a violent in-group defense	1 (low)–3 (high)	1.76 (.82)	1.61 (.75)	3.66†

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

†  $p < .1$ .

**Table 2**

Intercorrelations for Turkish ( $N = 166$ , above diagonal) and Moroccan ( $N = 232$ , below diagonal) participants on the main variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Connectedness to in-group	–	–.10	.06	.13	.29***	.16*	.32***
2. Connectedness to Dutch society	.03	–	.27***	–.32***	–.43***	–.28***	–.31***
3. Out-group friendship	–.03	.32***	–	–.05	–.18*	–.03	–.08
4. Collective relative deprivation	.16*	–.11	–.11	–	.25**	.23**	.33***
5. In-group superiority	.30***	–.18**	–.05	.30***	–	.32***	.42***
6. Attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others	.15*	–.08	–.06	.14*	.30*	–	.54***
7. Willingness to use violent in-group defense	.15*	–.11	–.03	.13†	.28***	.45***	–.11†

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*  $p < .05$ .

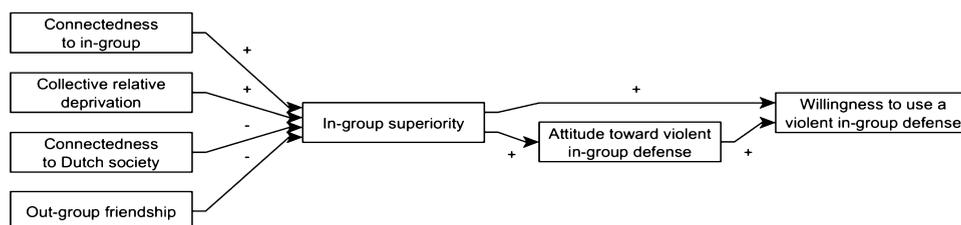
†  $p < .1$ .

Table 2 offers correlations for both groups. Those participants who felt connected to their in-group and participants who experienced collective relative deprivation also had a higher perception of superiority of their in-group. This was found among both Turkish- as well as Moroccan-Dutch participants. In contrast, those participants who felt connected to Dutch society had lower perceptions of in-group superiority. With regard to friendship it was found among both Moroccan- and Turkish-Dutch participants that those who reported more out-group friends also reported less in-group superiority. Participants who perceived their in-group as superior reported more positive attitudes toward violent in-group defense as well as the willingness to act accordingly. More positive attitudes toward violent in-group defense were positively associated with more willingness to use violence oneself.

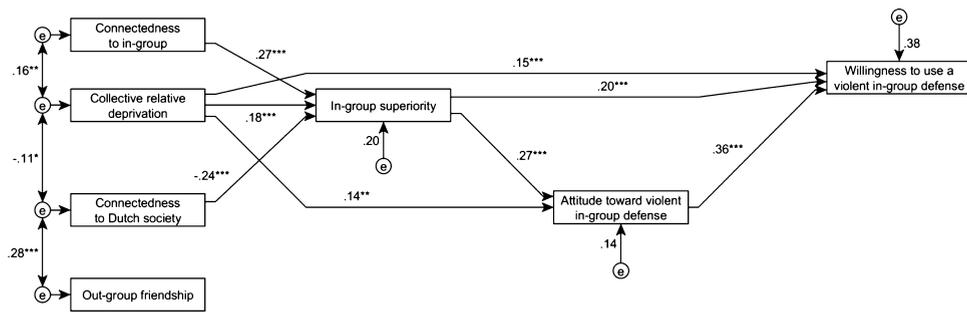
### 6.3. Structural equation modeling

To examine Hypotheses 3–7 we applied structural equation modeling (SEM), specifically path analysis (see Kline, 2005) using the program AMOS 21. First, we analyzed the results across all participants. Next, we examined possible differences across the two ethnic groups by means of multiple-sample analyses. In our analyses we controlled for sample (school vs. internet), age, gender (male vs. female), education and SES. Model fit was assessed using the chi-square test, the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). A reasonable fit is indicated by a non-significant chi-square, a CFI value greater than .95, an RMSEA smaller than .06, and an SRMR smaller than .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005).

First the hypothesized model as given in Fig. 1 was tested controlling for sample, age, gender, education, and social economic status. A model with autoregressive paths was tested in which manifest variables were used. The control variables were allowed to correlate, as well as the variables in-group connectedness, collective relative deprivation, connectedness to



**Fig. 1.** Hypothesized model. Collective identity factors, collective relative deprivation and cross-ethnic friendship groups among Muslim-Dutch youth in relation to attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others, and the willingness to use a violent in-group defense.



**Fig. 2.** Results of structural equation model for all participants ( $N = 398$ ) controlling for sample (school vs. internet), age, gender, education, and socio-economic status. Notes. Path values are standardized beta weights; model fit:  $\chi^2(34) = 42.570$ ,  $p = .149$ , CFI = .982, RMSEA = .025 with the 90% confidence interval .0001–.047, SRMR = .041; levels of significance: \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; † $p < .1$ .

Dutch society, and out-group friendship. A low model fit was found and modification indexes indicated the fit could be significantly improved:  $\chi^2(8) = 30.090$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .954, RMSEA = .083 with the 90% confidence interval .053–.116, SRMR = .030. Following the modification indices given by EQS we added two paths from collective relative deprivation to attitudes toward violence by others and own violent intentions.

Only significant paths, correlations and co-variances were maintained in the second model that was tested. This model fitted the data well and is depicted together with fit indices in Fig. 2.<sup>3</sup>

The explained variance of the willingness to use a violent in-group defense is quite high (.38). In line with Hypotheses 3 and 4, both collective relative deprivation as well as in-group connectedness were associated with higher levels of perceived superiority of the in-group. Higher superiority perceptions were, in turn, related to more understanding for ideology-based violence which, in turn, was related to own willingness to use violence. In-group superiority was also directly positively associated to own willingness to use violence to defend the in-group.

In line with Hypothesis 5 it was found that individuals who connected more strongly to Dutch society had less strong perceptions of in-group superiority. Hypothesis 6 was not confirmed: no direct significant association between cross-group friendship and perceptions of in-group superiority were found.

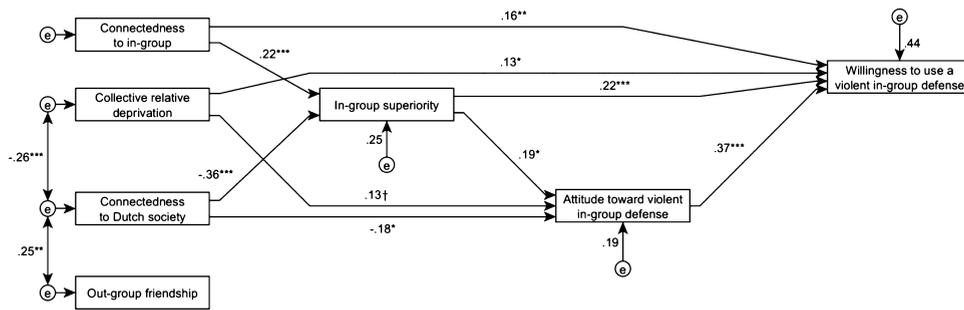
#### 6.4. Multiple-sample hypotheses and exploratory path analyses

The next step was to compare the model across ethnic groups. An advantage of multiple-sample path analysis over multiple regression analysis is that it allows for a direct comparison of different paths in the model. Specifically, estimations of model parameters were compared to see whether they are equal or different across groups. By specifying cross-group equality constraints, group differences for specific model parameters (i.e., specific paths in the model) can be tested. The fit of the model with constrained paths is compared to that of the unrestricted model without equality constraints (which needs to fit the data well). If the fit of the constrained model is significantly lower than the fit of the unconstrained model, it can be concluded that the parameters are not equal across the populations from which the samples were drawn, in our case the Turkish- and Moroccan-Dutch participants. Several indicators can be used for model comparison (Kline, 2005). One of these is the chi-square difference statistic ( $\chi^2_D$ ). If the chi-square of the constrained model is significantly larger than the chi-square of the unconstrained model, it can be concluded that the unconstrained model fits the data better (note that a chi-square of zero indicates perfect fit).

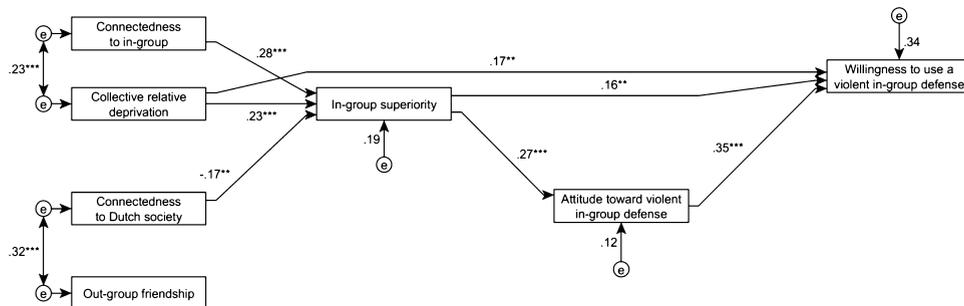
In order to examine possible differences across ethnic groups, we performed a hierarchical set of multiple-sample analyses. First, we examined the unconstrained model comparing the Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch participants. We then constrained path weights and covariance values to be equal across groups. A modest fit between the unconstrained model and data was found:  $\chi^2(68) = 96.288$ ,  $p = .014$ , CFI = .9944, RMSEA = .032 with the 90% confidence interval .015–.047, SRMR = .068. Based on the modification indices as given by EQS two paths were added namely (1) connectedness to mainstream society was found to be related to less positive attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others and (2) in-group connectedness was positively related to own willingness to use such violence. With these paths added, the fit of the unconstrained model greatly improved. Comparing the unconstrained model with the model with the path weights constrained to be equal revealed a significant change in the overall fit ( $\chi^2_D(24) = 47.370$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These results clearly show that there were differences between groups. The fit indices as well as the unconstrained models for the Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch participants are given in Figs. 3 and 4, respectively. The requirement of a fitting unconstrained model was met.

As shown in Figs. 3 and 4, among the Turkish-Dutch only, more connectedness to the in-group was found to be positively associated with the willingness to use a violent in-group defense. This finding suggests that the association between

<sup>3</sup> An alternative model for all participants was tested with collective relative deprivation and out-group friendship as predictors, and connectedness to the in-group, in-group superiority, and connectedness to Dutch society as mediators with attitudes toward violence and own violent intentions as outcome variables. The alternative model did not fit the data better than the theoretical model.



**Fig. 3.** Results of structural equation model for Turkish-Dutch participants ( $N = 166$ ) controlling for sample (school vs. internet), age, gender, education and socio-economic status. Notes. Path values are standardized beta weights; model fit:  $\chi^2(58) = 59.261$ ,  $p = .429$ , CFI = .997, RMSEA = .007 with the 90% confidence interval .0001–.032, SRMR = .046; levels of significance: † $p < .1$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ .



**Fig. 4.** Results of structural equation model for Moroccan-Dutch participants ( $N = 232$ ) controlling for sample (school vs. Internet), age, gender, education, socio-economic status. Notes. Path values are standardized beta weights; model fit:  $\chi^2(58) = 59.261$ ,  $p = .429$ , CFI = .997, RMSEA = .007 with the 90% confidence interval .0001–.032, SRMR = .046; levels of significance: † $p < .1$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

connectedness to the in-group and the willingness to use a violent in-group defense is stronger among the Turkish-Dutch than among Moroccan-Dutch participants. Among both Turkish-Dutch ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Moroccan-Dutch ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significant direct associations were found between collective relative deprivation and the willingness to use a violent in-group defense. With regard to attitude toward violent in-group defense there was a difference as this association was non-significant among Moroccan-Dutch participants whereas a marginal significant association was found among the Turkish-Dutch ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $p < .1$ ).

The following additional observations could be made: among both groups, connectedness to the in-group was positively related to more perceptions of in-group superiority. Among both groups collective relative deprivation was positively related to own violent intentions. Only among Turkish-Dutch this variable was positively related to attitude toward violence by others. Among Moroccan-Dutch, but not Turkish-Dutch, collective relative deprivation was positively related to in-group superiority. Among both groups connectedness to Dutch society was negatively related to in-group superiority. Only among Turkish-Dutch participants a negative association was found between connectedness to Dutch society and attitude toward violence by others. No significant direct associations between out-group friendship and the variables superiority, attitudes toward violence, or own violent intentions were found. Perceived in-group superiority was positively related to attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others as well as to violence willingness within both groups. In addition, in both groups attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others was positively related to the willingness to use such violence oneself/yourself.

Within both groups the levels of explained variance of the willingness to use a violent in-group defense are high (.44 among Turkish-Dutch and .38 among Moroccan-Dutch). The levels of explained variance of the attitude toward violent in-group defense are smaller within both groups (.19 among Turkish-Dutch and .14 among Moroccan-Dutch). Levels of explained variance of in-group superiority are moderate in both groups (.25 for Turkish-Dutch and .20 for Moroccan-Dutch).

Finally, bootstrapping analyses were performed to examine indirect effects. The results are given in Table 3. Hypothesis 3 was only confirmed for Moroccan, but not Turkish participants: more relative deprivation among Moroccan participants was negatively related to attitudes to violence and own willingness to use violence via perceptions of in-group superiority. In line with the indirect effects hypothesized in Hypotheses 4 and 5, among both groups significant indirect effects (even though sometimes modest in size) were found between in-group connectedness and connectedness to Dutch society via perceived in-group superiority on both attitudes toward violence by others and violence willingness. No significant indirect effect was found for cross-group friendship, in contrast to Hypothesis 6.

**Table 3**

Standardized indirect effects and 95% confidence intervals of background variables on the willingness to use a violent in-group defense, Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch participants (two-tailed significance).

	Standardized indirect effects and 95% confidence intervals on attitudes toward violent in-group defense by others		Standardized indirect effects and confidence intervals for willingness to use a violent in-group defense	
	Turkish	Moroccan	Turkish	Moroccan
Connectedness to in-group	.04 <sup>†</sup> [.001 to .10]	.07** [.03 to .13]	.06** [.02 to .13]	.07** [.03 to .13]
Connectedness to Dutch society	-.07 <sup>†</sup> [-.14 to -.01]	-.04** [-.10 to -.01]	-.17 <sup>†</sup> [-.25 to -.09]	-.05 <sup>†</sup> [-.12 to -.01]
Out-group friendship	–	–	–	–
Collective relative deprivation	–	.06** [.02 to .12]	–	.10** [.03 to .17]
In-group superiority	–	–	.07 <sup>†</sup> [.01 to .15]	.09*** [.05 to .17]

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*  $p < .05$ .

†  $p < .1$ .

## 7. Discussion

This study examined collective identity factors among young Muslims of Turkish and Moroccan descent in the Netherlands, in relation to their attitudes to violent in-group defense and the willingness to use such violence. This study is among the first to show that identity processes associated with the willingness to use a violent in-group defense can already be observed at a young age. This underscores the need for a developmental perspective in the study of attitudes toward violent in-group defense.

The overall dynamics of the paths in the model underline the relevance of collective identification processes to the attitudes toward violent in-group defense among Dutch Muslim immigrant youth of the second generation, and for their willingness to use such violence-mediated via in-group superiority, hereby supporting outcomes by [Abbas \(2012\)](#), [Stroink \(2007\)](#) and [Doosje et al. \(2013\)](#). The socio-political context of acculturating immigrant Muslim groups seems to be pivotal for attitudes toward a violent in-group defense. The study in particular underpinned the importance of collective relative deprivation to the willingness to use ethno-religious violence, in particular among the Moroccan-Dutch. This underlines the grievances that may emerge among Muslims of the second generation in Europe when they perceive that their in-group is treated as inferior in society due to ethnic and religious reasons, corroborating findings of [Dalgaard-Nielsen \(2010\)](#), [Stroink \(2007\)](#). Furthermore, the psychological ties to Dutch society as well as closeness to the in-group are important factors predicting the manifestation of religious superiority among Dutch young Muslims, which in turn relates to their violence willingness. This relates back to the work of [Martinovic and Verkuyten \(2014\)](#) who emphasize the critical role of dual (that is, host and national) identities to processes of religious-political mobilization of Dutch Muslims.

In line with the research by [Kunst, Tajamal, Sam, and Ulleberg \(2012\)](#), our findings imply that a hostile socio-political climate could fuel collective struggles among young Muslims over their in- and out-group identification and may hinder their loyalty to the host society. Furthermore, research by [Silke \(2008\)](#), [Dalgaard-Nielsen \(2010\)](#) and [Stroink \(2007\)](#) of radical youth involved in Jihadi violence has underpinned the importance of collective identity factors, in particular perceptions of collective deprivation and in-group superiority, for violent radicalization of Muslim youth. Our study links up with these findings, since it indicates the relevance of these collective identity factors to the attitudes toward violence to defend one's ethnic or religious in-group.

The results suggest that the hostility toward their religion faced by Muslims in the Dutch migration context forms a fertile soil for attitudes in support of violence, as indicated by [Geelhoed \(2012\)](#). The fact that in-group superiority was an important mediator between collective deprivation and attitudes toward violence in-group defense by others in Moroccan-Dutch youth is consistent with [Geelhoed's \(2012\)](#) argument that denigration could be responded to, besides the urge for revenge, by acquiring a more salient religious self-image as Muslim to compensate for the threat to one's identity.

Psychological closeness to mainstream society can serve as a buffer against a positive viewing of ethno-religious violence in defense of the in-group. This finding could be related to [Moghaddam's \(2005\)](#) claim that, in the process of radicalization, feeling alienated is a critical step in agreeing to violent means. Hence, an important societal implication of the study is that social policies that aim to improve the social cohesion among Muslim and native Dutch groups could assist in counteracting positive attitudes of violent in-group defense among Muslim minorities.

The study did not find support for our assumption inspired by [Pettigrew and Tropp \(2006\)](#), that interethnic contact is a crucial factor in protecting youth from having a favorable attitude to violent in-group defense. It may be that experiences of stigmatization, in comparison, have a much more profound impact on such attitudes in Muslim youth and hereby outweighing positive cross-cultural contact (e.g. friendship with native Dutch).

Research indicates that youngsters holding more positive *beliefs* about the use of violence in general are also more likely to be involved in aggressive behavior ([Farell et al., 2012](#)). Furthermore, the relation between intentions and behavior is stronger than between attitudes and behaviors ([Webb & Sheeran, 2006](#)). Together, these findings imply that our results have relevance for actual violent behavior in defense of the in-group, or the prevention hereof. Nevertheless, at this point

it is important to add a word of caution. Researchers in the field of violent radicalization acknowledge, as indicated by Moghaddam (2005), Silke (2008) and Stroink (2007), that no single combination of factors has hitherto been able to predict violent radicalization. It is improbable that a positive attitude toward ethnic or religious violence in itself will lead to violent radicalization (see also Slooman & Tillie, 2006).

This study is among the first to investigate factors influencing attitudes toward ethnic or religious violence among separate Muslim ethnic minority groups, i.e. Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch Muslim youth and the results confirm the importance of such differentiation as suggested by Verkuyten and Zaremba (2005). First, the commonalities in associations between collective identity factors and the acceptance of ethno-religious violence in both groups were evident, which may indicate that the hostile social climate affects Muslim migrant youth across ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the present research also provides evidence that different associations exist depending on ethnicity. The role of collective relative deprivation was more profound in Moroccan-Dutch youth than in Turkish-Dutch youth, at least indirectly through superiority. This could be explained by the position of Moroccan-Dutch at the bottom of the social status ethnic hierarchy and their high rate of perceived stigmatization compared to other ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands. In the case of the Turkish Dutch, in-group connectedness turned out to be more influential for a positive attitude toward a violent in-group defense, which may be understood through the higher level of ethnic retention and community cohesiveness among Turkish immigrants (Phalet & Heath, 2010). The complexity of multi-ethnic contexts in Western Europe renders intergroup comparisons important, and our study signals that differences between Muslim immigrant groups should be taken into account.

Regarding the social implications of our study, it is clear that in order to prevent radicalization, a hostile social climate needs attention, as do ties to mainstream society as a protective factor. This means that combating stigmatization should be high on the political agenda, as well as measures to improve immigrant youths' accessibility of the educational system and labor market. In addition, since processes of collective identity formation associated with radicalization may occur already at a young age, a focus on children's upbringing also seems to be in place. Parents as well as other adults with pedagogical responsibility (for instance teachers and imams) should be made aware of the risks children run and help them to develop protective factors, considering the challenges that growing up in a highly polarized context can bring about.

## 8. Limitations and future directions

Individuals who conduct violent action inspired by their religion often adhere to fundamentalism, and they justify their acts by a literal reading of religious texts (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010; Moghaddam, 2005). Therefore, it would be an asset to assess religious fundamentalism in future studies. Furthermore, the concept of stigmatization is relevant to the emergence of collective relative deprivation and would be interesting to include in future research. Next, we measured in-group connectedness by referring to ethnic background, and in-group superiority by referring to religion. Although the overlap in religious and ethnic identification is high in the case of Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch youth (Kunst et al., 2012; Maliepaard & Gijssberts, 2012), it is recommendable to study these two factors separately. Third, since the study was cross-sectional in nature, no definite conclusions can be drawn with regard to causality. Longitudinal studies or (quasi-) experimental designs may help in examining the dynamics of susceptibility to violence-proneness in youth over time. Finally, our study focused on Muslim youth of Turkish and Moroccan descent in the Netherlands. Future work could address the experiences and attitudes of majority youth populations in relation to attitudes of ethno-religious violence, and also include Muslims of different ethnicities. Hereby, our knowledge of conflicting intergroup relations among minority and majority in the context of migration will be enhanced, and critical patterns contributing to the emergence of violent ethnic group conflict could be further unraveled.

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