

## Religiosity and Tolerance in the MENA

# The Multidimensional Impact of Islamic Religiosity on Ethno-religious Social Tolerance in the Middle East and North Africa

Niels Spierings, *Radboud University—Radboud Social Cultural Research*

Ethno-religious tolerance is crucial for establishing sustainable democracy, which is scarce in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This study provides an empirically grounded and nuanced critique of Orientalist studies simply pointing at Islam. It presents a systematic analysis of the impact of religious *belonging*, *belief*, and *behavior* on social tolerance in the MENA, based on 32 uniquely synchronized Arab Barometer and World Values surveys. This study's major contributions are that it (a) provides unique empirical insights into the multifaceted impact of religiosity on social tolerance in the region, (b) develops the 3-Bs approach to a context-sensitive framework, and (c) shows that and explains why Islam has both negative and positive influences. The analyses show (i) that the degree to which people identify with their religion has *no negative* impact on social tolerance, with exception of the few cases in which Islamist forces hold power; (ii) that under "normal" circumstances orthodox-literalist believers are *more* tolerant towards others, but less so if they feel repressed or threatened in society (which only holds for a few cases); and (iii) that mosque attendance has a negative impact on ethno-religious social tolerance, and this effect is particularly strong if conservative Islamist states coercively regulate religion and its content, such as communication via sermons. All things considered the multifaceted 3-B approach is found to hold well once the MENA-specific aspects and its diverse society-state-religion relations are incorporated as sources of both possible threats and socialization.

## Introduction

Recent work shows that the Arab Uprisings and their aftermath dealt a heavy blow to ethno-religious social tolerance across the region (Spierings 2017). This is worrisome not just because of the decline in tolerance itself, but also because of tolerance's importance for sustainable democracy in general (Lipset 1959; Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1994; Sullivan and Transue 1999) and

*The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO 451-15-006). Address correspondence to Dr Niels Spierings, Radboud University, Department of Sociology | Radboud Social and Cultural Research, Thomas van Aquinostraat 6.01.36, 6525 GD Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 243612037; e-mail: [n.spierings@ru.nl](mailto:n.spierings@ru.nl)*

democratic support in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in particular (Ciftci 2010; Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007; Tessler 2002). While Islam has gotten much scholarly attention in explaining explicit support for democracy (e.g., Fish 2002; 2011; Moaddel 2002; Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007; Spierings 2014; Tessler 2002), its impact is largely absent from the MENA literature discussing ethno-religious tolerance (i.e., the willingness to live in the same locale as people with a different ethno-religious background).

There are some studies that touch on related issues, though. Based on in-depth interviews in Oman, Al Sadi and Basit (2013, 447) actually conclude that youngsters' religion is crucial in determining their tolerance for people with different worldviews. Spierings (2014) also finds that religious identification has clear but different effects in five MENA countries, but he leaves out religiosity's behavioral dimension and does not address context dependency in depth. So while there are clear indications that religiosity matters, the impact of different behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of religion (see Kellstedt et al. 1996; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello 2002; Stark and Glock 1968) has not yet been thoroughly theorized or systematically studied for the MENA region (cf. Ciftci 2010; Spierings 2014).

To theorize the relationship between religiosity and tolerance in the MENA, I apply the three-Bs perspective—the three Bs referring to the distinction between religious *Belonging*, *Belief*, and *Behavior* as different explanatory dimensions—which has already proven to help understand the complex influence of religiosity on other topics (Kellstedt et al. 1996; Smidt, Kellstedt, and Gudt 2009; Wald and Wilcox 2006). It allows me to theorize the differential impact of these three dimensions in the MENA. As such, this study assesses whether insights from the Western-oriented literature on the religiosity–tolerance linkage are generalizable to the MENA context, and under what conditions. Also, by considering Islamic religiosity in a multidimensional way, this study provides an empirically informed critique of civilizationist and Orientalist studies that present Islam as a singularly (negative) driver of liberal political attitudes (e.g., Huntington 1996; Norris and Inglehart 2012; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay 2007).

Moreover, such Orientalist studies essentialize the MENA region to one homogenous bloc of “Islamic countries” (cf. Spierings 2015), while there is substantial macro-level diversity in society–state–religion relations across the MENA (e.g., Fox 2013, 2015; Owen 2004). The latter insight, however, has not yet been translated to micro-level studies. In this study, I acknowledge and utilize the *differences among* MENA countries by actually theorizing and showing how this diversity in society–state–religion relations shapes religiosity's impact on ethno-religious tolerance at the individual level (cf. Fox 2013, Chapter 6).

Empirically, this study is based on thirty-two synchronized Arab Barometer and World Value surveys for thirteen countries, the years ranging from 2001 to 2014. Using pooled multilevel regression models, I estimate the general relationships between religiosity dimensions and social tolerance. Moreover, I apply multilevel models with cross-level interactions as well as country-disaggregated analyses to study how these linkages between religiosity and tolerance vary by the countries' society–state–religion relationships.

## Theoretical Background and Expectations

### ***Ethno-Religious Social Tolerance***

The literature on the relationship between people's religion and ethno-religious tolerance lies at the crossroads of the more sociological literature on ethnocentrism and prejudice (e.g., Allport and Ross 1967; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello 2002; Steiber 1980; Strabac and Listhaug 2008) and the more political-science-oriented literature on tolerance (e.g., Bloom and Arikan 2012; Bloom and Bagno-Moldavsky 2015; Gibson 1992). The first literature generally focuses on people's attitudes regarding ethno-religious out-groups, whereas the latter defines social tolerance as "the preparedness to co-exist [and] the willingness to maintain personal contact with the member of the disliked group, such as by having him or her as a neighbor" (Bloom and Bagno-Moldavsky 2015, 626; see also Gibson 1992). Located exactly at this crossroads, ethno-religious social tolerance can thus be defined as follows: *the willingness to co-exist in the locale with people who have a different ethno-religious background from oneself*.

Ethno-religious social tolerance is an important positive explanatory factor of people's support for democracy in the MENA region (Ciftci 2010; Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007); however, hardly any MENA study has tried to explain individual-level tolerance (cf. Al Sadi and Basit 2013). Here, I do so by building on the three-Bs multidimensional concept of religiosity (Bloom and Arikan 2012; Kellstedt et al. 1996) combined with social-identity theory (see Al Sadi and Basit 2013; Brown 2000; Tajfel 1981) and socialization theory (see Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre 1997).

### ***Belonging, Belief, and Behavior***

Religiosity is a container concept harboring a multitude of related but distinguishable dimensions (Fox 2013; González 2011; Hassan 2007; Moaddel 2006; Moaddel and Karabenick 2008; Stark and Glock 1968). These dimensions have each been shown to have different relationships with tolerance in established Western democracies (e.g., Bloom and Arikan 2012; Eisenstein 2006; Kellstedt et al. 1996) and with other attitudes in the Middle East (Kucinkas 2010; Kucinkas and Van der Does 2017; Spierings 2014; Tessler 2002). The distinction between belonging, belief, and behavior has proven particularly useful in theorizing these different influences (Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt, Kellstedt, and Gudt 2009; Wald and Wilcox 2006) and is here applied to the MENA context. First, I will discuss insights from the existing Western literature per "B." In the next section after, I will then bring in the MENA context and formulate (context-specific) hypotheses.

*Belonging* refers to whether people consider themselves religious, particularly to what extent religion is part of their social identity (Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015; Gibson 2006; Kellstedt et al. 1996). This identification leads to intergroup tensions as a positive view of the in-group is brought about by contrasting it with out-groups. Consequently, stronger or more activated in-group identification is often related to feeling threatened by other

ethno-religious groups and intolerant views becoming more likely (Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015; Djupe and Calfano 2013; Scheepers, Gijssberts, and Hello 2002; Wilcox and Jelen 1990). This negative relationship has been widely confirmed in the literature, particularly among majority group members; studies that seemingly show otherwise either collapse “belonging” with other dimensions of religiosity or do not control for those (e.g., Eisenstein 2006; Verkuyten et al. 2014).

*Belief* refers to people’s understanding of their religion. The tolerance literature shows that people’s understanding often revolves around compassion, arguing that all the so-called Religions of the Book have benevolence at their core, as well as a common understanding that their god created all people and holds final judgment. So it is often suggested that the more a person believes in the literal interpretation of scripture, the less individualistic that believer is and the more likely to think in terms of helping others. Starks and Robinson (2009, 652), for instance, discuss this in terms of moral cosmology, whereby believing in god as the ultimate basis of moral rule and considering scripture as the word of god is linked to a form of communitarianism whereby one’s neighbors and the economically worse off are considered part of one’s community.

The main caveat here is that this expected benevolence is generally only directed towards the broadly defined ethno-religious in-group (Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015; Djupe and Calfano 2013; Norenzayan 2014; Scheepers, Gijssberts, and Hello 2002). People who believe in literalist interpretations of scripture are generally religiously more extreme and are likely to see their religion as the only true one. Consequently, they are said to have increased negative orientations towards out-groups, and thus scriptural literalism often relates negatively to *ethno-religious* tolerance (see Eisenstein 2006; Scheepers, Gijssberts, and Hello 2002).

*Behavior* is arguably given the least attention in the tolerance literature, partly because it is generally seen as an antecedent or consequence of belonging or beliefs (e.g., Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015; Fox 2013). However, from a socialization perspective, attending services should be seen as an activity that also independently decreases tolerance (Bloom and Arikan 2012; Scheepers, Gijssberts, and Hello 2002; cf. Eisenstein 2006; Kucinskas 2010). Attendance can directly feed negative attitudes towards other (religious) groups, as attendees consume and are socialized in ethno-religious exclusionist or prejudiced messages, assuming that religious services convey such messages.

### ***Theorizing Religiosity and Tolerance in the MENA Context***

Reflecting on the mechanisms formulated above from a MENA perspective draws attention to both how society–state–religion relations in the MENA differ from those in the West and how they vary across the MENA (Moghadam 2013; Owen 2004). I argue that these relationships are not only the product of religious struggles (Fox 2015), but in themselves also shape the religious competition at the citizen level (cf. Fox 2013). Moreover, building on Hassan’s discussion of religiosity in a Muslim context (2007), I contend that the distinction among belonging, belief,

and behavior is also relevant in the MENA, but that these dimensions might manifest themselves differently in the MENA (see also [González 2011](#)).

*Belonging*—people’s degree of identifying as a member of a religion—is linked to tolerance through social identification and threat perception. In the MENA, these threat perceptions, and thus the linkage between belonging and intolerance, can be considered more strongly activated. The region at large is characterized by religious conflict and violence (e.g., the Arab–Israeli conflict, the Arab Uprisings), and violence activates religious grievances towards others ([Grim and Finke 2010](#); [Netterstrøm 2015](#); [Spierings 2017](#)). Moreover, it seems likely that the negative linkage between religious belonging and ethno-religious social tolerance is particularly strong in those countries where religious fractionalization is salient and actual religion-based violence a daily reality, which is not the case in all MENA countries.

Threat perception might also be particularly salient among *non-Muslim* citizens in the predominantly Muslim MENA. From studies on minority groups in the West, we know that among minority groups, increased threat perception also translates to ethno-religious prejudice and intolerance ([Berry 1999, 2006](#)). In the MENA, it is particularly strongly religious non-Muslims who have reason to feel threatened. For instance, across the region, the three-fold distinction among (a) Muslim believers, (b) Christians and Jews (also referred to as the other People of the Book, *Ahl al-Kitab*, or *Dhimmi*), and (c) non-believers (also *kafir* or *kufr*) is regularly interpreted as a hierarchical one, with those ranked lower deserving fewer rights or respect (e.g., [Geaves 2006](#)). Although this hierarchical notion is theologically and societally contested ([Al Sadi and Basit 2013](#); [Abou El Fadl 2002](#)), it follows from this that people who strongly oppose Islam—strongly religious non-Muslims—particularly experience threats and grievances within this violence-ridden context ([Grim & Finke 2006](#)), which translates to ethno-religious intolerance.

All this directs me to propose the following three hypotheses about belonging:

*H1: The more a person identifies as religious, the lower the person’s ethno-religious social tolerance.*

*H1a: The stronger a country’s religious fractionalization and conflict, the stronger the negative relation between religious identification and ethno-religious social tolerance.*

*H1b: Among non-Muslims, the negative relation between religious identification and ethno-religious social tolerance is stronger than among Muslims*

Regarding *belief*—or, more specifically, scriptural literalism—reflecting on discussions of Islamic scripture further underscores the mechanism formulated on belief in the previous section: in short, while *Zakat* (almsgiving) is one of the five pillars in (almost all) forms of Islam and prescribes believers to show compassion ([Geaves 2006, 121](#)), there is a great deal of societal discussion on what the Qur’an and Hadith say about compassion towards non-Muslims. It is not uncommon to find a position that only showing compassion towards in-groups is legitimate. Given the focus on ethno-religious tolerance here, it is therefore

likely that people holding more scripturally literalist beliefs have lower levels of ethno-religious social tolerance.

However, this relationship should also be seen in light of the different positions more orthodox or scripturally literalist groups take across the MENA. Though some MENA governments are themselves orthodox, just as many MENA governments have at times repressed orthodox movements or interpretations of Islam (e.g., Grim and Finke 2010). Both Ben Ali's Tunisia and Mubarak's Egypt, for example, banned social and political expressions of religion, and Saddam Hussein negatively interfered with the *Haji* (pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina) in Iraq (El-Ghobashy 2005; Owen 2004). Building on social-identity theory, such threats to more orthodox people are expected to activate their orthodox identity and feed into intolerance. As Grim and Finke put it, intolerance can be considered "the price of freedom denied" (2010, 10).

At the same time, from a belief-centered approach, others have theorized that repression might actually increase tolerance (cf. Djupe and Calfano 2013; Meyer, Rizzo, and Ali 2007; Spierings 2014). At the core of this argument is the notion of "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you." While not literally written in Islamic scripture, analogous *Shura* include 24:22 and 83:1–6. Scripturally literalist believers experiencing discrimination can particularly be expected to fall back on this, leading to contradictory expectations regarding the contextual moderation (H2a1 vs. H2a2).

To summarize the expectations on beliefs:

*H2: The more people are scriptural literalists, the lower their ethno-religious social tolerance.*

*H2a1: If orthodox Islam is repressed in a country, scriptural literalism has a stronger negative relationship with ethno-religious social tolerance than if orthodox Islam is not repressed in a country.*

*H2a2: If orthodox Islam is repressed in a country, scriptural literalism is positively related to ethno-religious social tolerance.*

Regarding the dimension of *behavior*, it is crucial to understand that attendance of services is considered a social activity in the MENA, strongly subject to the customs of one's direct environment (e.g., Hassan 2007, 442). Mosque attendance should thus not be too quickly interpreted as a purely religious act or a statement of support for the preached messages. This makes it even more likely that attendance has an independent effect on tolerance, as discussed above.

At the same time, we should acknowledge that the messages preached by clergy (e.g., imams) differ strongly in the degree to which they denounce other religions. As Al Sadi and Basit (2013) showed for Oman, the actual message communicated by figures of authority matters in shaping children's ethno-religious social tolerance. Translating this to the diversity of the MENA draws attention to how strongly an exclusionary conservative form of Islam is engrained in the state structure and in the extent to which MENA governments regulate religious matters (e.g., Cesari 2014; Fox 2015). In Saudi Arabia, for instance, the government enforces a very intolerant form of Islam (*Salafi* or

*Wahhabi* Islam) and runs the central council of clerics that issue the *fatwas* imams communicate during their services (see Boucek 2010). Similar situations are found in Algeria, Bahrain, and Yemen (for full details see the operationalization of the contextual variables below and Appendix C2). If this combination of exclusionist state Islam and strict religious regulation is present, I will speak of a “hegemonic Islamic state,” and, in such states, mosque attendance is expected to foster intolerance most (see also Moaddel and Karabenick 2008).

The hypotheses on behavior thus read as follows:

*H3: Communal attendance is negatively related to ethno-religious social tolerance.*

*H3a: If a country is a hegemonic Islamic state, attendance has a stronger negative relationship with ethno-religious social tolerance than when it is not a hegemonic Islamic state.*

## Data and Method

### Data Sources and Models

For this study, I combined all thirty-two Arab-country World Value and Arab Barometer surveys that include items for each of the core theoretical concept (AB 2006–2014; WVS 1981–2014). These nationally representative surveys represent 13 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen. All data were collected between 2001 and 2014. See Appendix A for detailed information per survey.

Random-intercept multilevel models with survey and country as higher levels were estimated. These pooled multilevel models prevent any false positive conclusions on the micro-level effects due to correlated errors. The hypotheses on the context-dependency of the individual-level relationships are tested with cross-level interaction terms. These models are estimated using random slopes for the religiosity dimensions in order to avoid false positives on the interaction terms. In addition, I estimated standard OLS-regression models per country (table 2). These models help to assess the internal generalizability of the pooled models (see Spierings 2016) and determine whether different effects across contexts really indicate context-dependency or are due to different surveys or outliers being included (see below). This dual approach allows me to transcend current practices in the MENA public-opinion literature, which is dominated by (a) single-country studies in which the external generalizability of the results cannot be assessed and (b) pooled “civilizationist” studies comparing the MENA to the West that ignore the internal diversity of the region (see Davis and Robinson 2006, 167; Spierings 2015, Chapter 2).

### Combining Surveys

For the comparative analyses, the surveys were synchronized: all include items per theoretical concept, but not all items or wordings are exactly the same.



Building on the logic at the core of comparing the impact of different variables within one regression model— $z$ -value based standardized scores (the Beta coefficients)—I use intra-survey standardized scores for different items that tap the same concept. Doing so, I create variables that can be used to compare the direction of effects across surveys. After standardizing values per item and survey, the average  $z$ -value per respondent was calculated for all items available for that respondent.<sup>1</sup> Items have only been combined when they relate to the same concept, that is, when the questions were very similar but with different answering categories (such as on attendance) or when different items can theoretically be considered part of the same concept and also load on one underlying factor (e.g., tolerance).

The advantages of such a large-scale comparative approach evidently do come at a cost. Different understandings on concepts, item availability, and issues of translation might lead to different results across countries. By using relative intra-country scores and performing several robustness tests, I, however, minimized and assessed the likelihood of this driving the outcomes. More details are provided below. Moreover, the breadth of this study limits its depth, particularly when it comes to introducing more detail on some of the religiosity dimensions. I return to this in the conclusion.

The robustness tests include (a) the models being estimated with other operationalizations of the dependent variable (see below); the core model being estimated (b) on subsamples, such as only Muslim respondents; (c) with income as an additional control variable (see below); and (d) with an additional operationalization of beliefs, only available for a few surveys (see below). The outcomes of these robustness tests are provided in [Appendix D1](#) and discussed in the Results section. Unless mentioned otherwise, the results are robust. In [table 1](#), I present the models with the largest sample of surveys and respondents.

### ***Ethno-Religious Social Tolerance***

Based on the existing literature, I defined ethno-religious social tolerance as *the willingness to co-exist in the locale with people who have a different ethno-religious background from oneself*. Given this definition, the common operationalization of tolerance in studies on non-Western countries also seems suitable here: whether people would accept or object to having neighbors of a different race, color, or ethnicity, or with a migration background (see also [Ciftci 2010](#); [Dixon 2008](#); [Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007](#); [Spierings 2014](#)). Moreover, all thirty-two datasets include two or more items from the following list of groups to which someone might object: ethnicity, religion, race, or migration background (see [Appendix B1](#)). Reliability tests and factor analyses on these items show that the items form a valid and reliable scale.<sup>2</sup> Crucially, for all surveys, the items includes ones that refer to religion and ethnicity in general terms, not naming specific groups (e.g., non-Muslims or Christians). Thus, the tolerance measurement includes intolerance towards people identifying with other ethno-religious subgroups *within Islam*. I synchronized the data across surveys as discussed above, also taking into account, for instance, that people tend to



object slightly less to living next to a person of a different race than of a different religion. A higher score on the final variable indicates more tolerant attitudes.

Additionally, I used the neighbor items to construct a second dependent variable as a robustness test: the simple additive score on the two items on neighbors of a different religion and race. These two items are available in most surveys, but only using them still leads to the loss of six datasets and about ten thousand respondents. While this alternative measures the same theoretical concept, other forms of (ethno-religious) tolerance of course exist as well.

First, the focus of this study is on social tolerance; political tolerance (i.e., extending political right to (least-liked) groups) falls beyond its scope. For political tolerance, different mechanisms can be expected (see [Djupe & Calfano 2013](#); [Eisenstein 2006](#); [Sullivan & Transue 1999](#)), and none of the thirty-two surveys includes items on the political rights of members of other religious groups, which makes it impossible to make a direct comparison in this study.

Second, I focus on social tolerance in the broader sense here—co-existing as neighbors—whereas more specific and close-by forms of co-existence can be worth considering too. Five surveys also include the item “to what extent do you consider the following factors obstacles to accepting your son/daughter/sister/brother’s marriage?,” including “race,” “religion or denomination,” and “nationality.” I have also estimated the direct-effects model on these five surveys using this alternative dependent variable (see column F in [Appendix D1](#)). These results are included in the discussion of the results below.

### ***Dimensions of Religiosity***<sup>3</sup>

The *degree of religious identification* (belonging) is measured through three items of which all surveys include at least one: To what extent do you consider yourself religious (not, somewhat, religious); Are you a religious person? (no, including atheists; yes); How important is religion in your life? (0–3). In multiple WVS surveys, the last two items are both included, and a factor analysis shows that they load on one singular dimension. Although these items do not tap into social identification directly, they do indicate to what extent people’s religion is a salient part of their identity (cf. [González 2011](#); [Spierings 2014](#)). The final variable is calculated using the synchronization procedure discussed above. A higher score indicates stronger religious identification. [Appendix B2](#) presents the items included per survey.

To assess belonging’s differential impact among members of minority and majority religious groups (H1b), denomination could be included as a dichotomous variable indicating whether a respondent is Muslim or not. Algeria 2006, Morocco 2006, and Yemen 2011 include no information on denomination, but in those countries, 98–100 percent of the population is Muslim. Moreover, these countries’ surveys from other years only include fifteen non-Muslims out of over 10,000 respondents. For these three country-year points, I assume all respondents are Muslim. Such an assumption could not be made for two other surveys without information on denomination, so they were excluded.<sup>4</sup>

*Scriptural literalism* (beliefs) is measured in each survey through people's views on a set of acts that are by and large considered *haram* and literally noted as such in Islamic scripture. The more a respondent thinks these things are not justified, the more they take a scripturally literalist position. The surveys' issues include suicide, alcohol, euthanasia, charging interest, divorce, and participation in a lottery (see [Appendix B2](#)). On the synchronized index, a higher score indicates a more literalist or orthodox position. While the items on interest, alcohol, and lotteries are particular to *Islamic* scripture, the others are not. The disaggregated analyses, however, show that the effects for scriptural literalism do not systematically differ between countries for which the more general issues are available and those for which the more Islam-oriented ones are.

For sixteen WVS surveys, an indicator was available that taps into the concept of moral cosmology—whether respondents consider god or the individual to be the ultimate basis of moral rule—which is part of the mechanism theorized above. On a 10-point scale, people could indicate whether they consider god to be important in their life (1 = not at all; 10 = very). This variable is used in an additional robustness test (see [Appendix D1](#)).

Last, *attendance* of communal services (behavior) was included across surveys in a similar way through items on how regularly a respondent attends Friday prayer (or Sunday service) or whether the respondent prays in church or mosque, and how often (see [Appendix B2](#)). A higher synchronized score indicates that a respondent attends communal services more than the other respondents in that country and year. As [Brenner \(2013\)](#) shows that women in Muslim countries tend to over-report attendance more than men, the impact of attendance is also estimated for women and men separately as an additional robustness test.

### **Micro-Level Control Variables**

To control for confounding effects, core explanatory variables from the literature are included (see [Bloom and Arikan 2012](#); [Moaddel 2002](#); [Scheepers, Gijssberts, and Hello 2002](#); [Spierings 2014](#); [Tessler 2002](#)): employment status, education, sex, age,<sup>5</sup> age squared (capturing curvilinear effects), and marital status. Respondents' household income is only added in robustness analyses, as it has a large number of missing values across surveys: 4,563. Income is a synchronized score based on ten-point variables that use somewhat different metrics across the surveys. Descriptive information on all micro-level variables is provided in [Appendix C1](#).

### **Contextual Variables**

The macro-level scores are obtained from existing data sets and studies, or coded specifically for this study. An overview of all scores is given in [Appendix C2](#).

The degree of religious fractionalization and violence (H1a) was measured by two variables. The first is the degree of *religious fractionalization* as provided by

Alesina and colleagues at the country level, which is measured in demographic terms and thus fairly stable over a period of at most fourteen years (2003, 7). The second is the level of *religion-based violence* in society. For this variable, I used multiple indicators from the Global Restrictions on Religion Data (GRRD [ARDA 2017]), which covers 2007 onwards, and the International Religious Freedom data (IRF [ARDA 2018]), which covers 2001 through 2008. From these datasets, I used the specific items that focus on the prevalence of actual violence against religious groups or religion-based violence, which is at the core of the theoretical mechanism. As also argued for by others, the measurement focuses on the actual situation and goes beyond state efforts and actions by including violence from other actors too (see Fox 2015, 6; Grim and Finke 2010, 10). Both the GRRD and the IRF include items on violence, but not exactly the same ones. Consequently, I estimated three differently models. The first including a newly created index based on an average of the year of the survey and the year before (if available), averaging, respectively, seventeen (GRRD) and fifteen (IRF) items,<sup>6</sup> all coded to run from 0 to 1. For the second and the third, I estimated the interaction models with the country-average GRRD and IRF scores, because the country-year scores (see Appendix C2) mainly differ between countries (not between years within countries), and differences between the GRRD and the IRF might influence results. The third model is included in table 1, but the two other models lead to exactly the same conclusion, as discussed below.

The impact of scriptural literalism was argued to vary by the state *repression of orthodox Islam* (H2a1, H2a2). For this, I created a new indicator, as existing data does not specifically focus on orthodox Islam.<sup>7</sup> The indicator classifies country-years in three groups: (1) countries in which Islamic parties are forbidden to organize politically or where main orthodox religious groups were deprived or repressed in society, economy, and politics, as was for instance the case with the Muslim Brotherhood in Mubarak's Egypt (e.g., Owen 2004)<sup>8</sup>; (-1) countries in which Islamic actors are in power politically<sup>9</sup>; or (0) countries in which neither was the case.

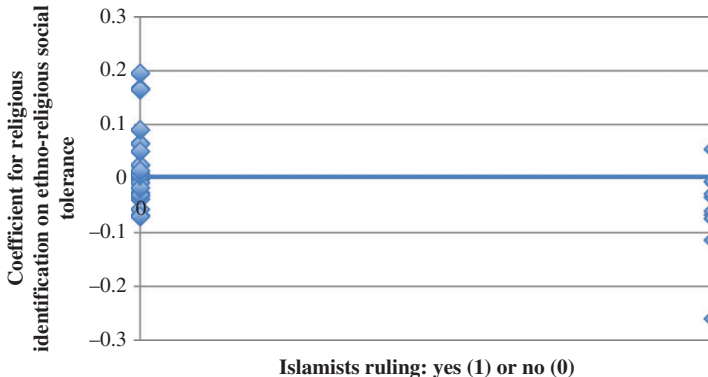
Lastly, I combined two data sources to create an indicator as to which countries and years can be considered to reflect a *hegemonic Islamic state* (HIS) (H3a): the government has control over what is preached in mosques and the country is an Islamic and religiously exclusionary state. States that only have one of these characteristics or, for instance, regulate religions less strictly via funding (see Grim and Finke 2006) are not considered HIS. Regarding the first dimension, the GRRD (see above) includes information on whether the government has a body that regulates or manages religious affairs. I use the score of the closest available years for the missing years (2014 and the earliest surveys). Only a score indicating strict and *coercive* regulation was considered as sufficient for scoring a yes on this element (see Fox 2015; Grim and Finke 2006). Next, to measure the extent to which a state is exclusionary Islamic, I used the Islamism indicator based on countries'

constitutions introduced in [Spierings, Smits, and Verloo \(2009\)](#) and updated in [Spierings \(2015\)](#).<sup>10</sup> As [Cesari \(2014, 31\)](#) notes “References to Islam in a state’s constitution often reinforce the negation or minimization of religious and/or ethnic diversity”.<sup>11</sup> A state is considered exclusionary Islamic if a country meets three out of four of the following criteria: there is no institutional religious freedom; the state is labeled Islamic; laws are *Shari’a*-based; and only a Muslim can become head of state. Overall, six country-years are considered hegemonic Islamic states, as they score yes on both elements (see [Appendix C2](#)). All these six are found in the later years, which is in line with Fox’s general observation that states are becoming more involved in religion, which he also predicted for the Arab Spring’s aftermath (2015).

## Results

Table 1 presents the pooled micro-level models (Model 1), the micro-level interactions (H1b) (Model 2), as well as the cross-level interaction models (Models 3–5). The latter models are estimated with a random slope. The *p*-values of religiosity’s micro-level direct effects are, therefore, overestimated, but not the cross-level interaction terms, which are the reason for estimating these models. To further assess the cross-level interaction effects’ validity, (a) the country-disaggregated models (table 2) are included in the interpretations, and (b) the country-year disaggregated coefficients are plotted against the context-variable scores (figures 1–3). Similarly, in my discussion of the results, I include the outcomes of the robustness tests (e.g., [Appendix D1](#)). Overall, the models seem valid, as the control variables’ results are in line with previous work: particularly education relates positively and strongly to tolerance (see e.g., [Scheepers, Gijssberts, and Hello 2002](#); [Spierings 2014](#)). I will now discuss the results per dimension of religiosity.

**Figure 1. Context-dependent impact of religious identification (each marker represents a survey).**



**Table 1. Multilevel regression models estimating the impact of religiosity on ethno-religious tolerance**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Direct effects	Individual-level interaction (H1b)	Cross-level interaction with		
			Belonging	Scriptural literalism	Attendance
<b>Fixed effects</b>					
Intercept	-0.1407***	-0.1397***	-0.1282**	-0.1431***	-0.1443***
<i>Religion</i>					
Belonging	-0.0088*	-0.0090*	0.0044	-0.0086*	-0.0084
*Non-Muslim		-0.0006			
<i>Non-Muslim (ref = Muslim) (main effect)</i>		-0.0491**			
*Religious fractionalization (context)			-0.0122		
*Religious-based violence (context)			-0.0342		
Scriptural literalism	0.0124**	0.0118**	0.0134**	0.0063	0.0127**
*Orthodox Islam being oppressed (context)				-0.0385*	
Attendance	-0.0224***	-0.0221***	-0.0228***	-0.0212***	-0.0144
*Hegemonic Islamic State (context)					-0.0660*
<i>Controls</i>					
Employment (ref = employed)					
Retired	-0.0226	-0.0239	-0.0241	-0.0237	-0.0237
Housewife	-0.0176	-0.0179	-0.0201	-0.0210	-0.0165
Student	0.0141	0.0140	0.0143	0.0120	0.0165

(Continued)

Table 1. *continued*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Direct effects	Individual-level interaction (H1b)	Cross-level interaction with		
			Belonging	Scriptural literalism	Attendance
Not employed other	-0.0045	-0.0053	-0.0062	-0.0070	-0.0009
Education (ref = no)					
Primary completed	0.0747***	0.0753***	0.0772***	0.0742***	0.0772***
Secondary completed	0.1171***	0.1179***	0.1199***	0.1196***	0.1204***
At least some tertiary	0.1811***	0.1820***	0.1833***	0.1831***	0.1855***
Sex (Ref = male)	-0.0093	-0.0088	-0.0075	-0.0080	-0.0148
Age (0-7)	0.0266**	0.0272**	0.0275**	0.0275**	0.0270**
Age squared	-0.0005	-0.0005	-0.0006	-0.0006	-0.0005
Marital status (ref = married)					
Single	0.0361**	0.0369*	0.0360**	0.0378**	0.0365**
Other (incl. divorced, widowed)	0.0243	0.0241	0.0245	0.0243	0.0244
<i>Contextual factors</i>					
Religious fractionalization (country)			-0.0425		
Religious-based violence (country)			-0.0127		
Orthodox Islam being suppressed (country year)				0.0016	
Hegemonic Islamic State (country year)					0.0137
<b>Random effects</b>					
<i>Survey level</i>					

Intercept	0.000000	0.000000	0.000037	0.000153	0.000000
Belonging					
Scriptural literalism				0.003807**	
Attendance					0.002741**
<i>Country level</i>					
Intercept	0.000514	0.000417	0.000568	0.000593	0.000530
Belonging			0.002082		
Scriptural literalism					
<b>Attendance</b>					
Model statistics					
BIC	86,091.016	86,096.651	85,957.743	86,025.926	85,982.456
Nind	38,907	38,907	38,907	38,907	38,907
Nsrvy	32	32	32	32	32
Nctry	13	13	13	13	13

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ . *Data source:* AB and WVS surveys; GRRD data; [Alesina et al. \(2003\)](#), [Spierings, Smits, and Verloo \(2009\)](#), [Spierings \(2015\)](#), and own codings.



**Table 2. Impact of religious belonging, scriptural literalism, and attendance on ethno-religious social tolerance in thirteen MENA countries**

	Belonging	Scriptural literalism	Attendance
Algeria (3,811)	0.082***	0.002	-0.080***
Bahrain (340)	-0.038	-0.176**	0.037
Egypt (4,032)	-0.003	0.031 <sup>#</sup>	-0.018
Iraq (6,422)	0.004	0.010	-0.012
Jordan (4330)	-0.002	0.017	-0.010
Lebanon (3085)	0.031*	-0.013	-0.039**
Libya (1712)	0.009	0.010	0.035*
Morocco (3290)	0.038*	0.020	-0.007
Palestine (1934)	-0.104***	0.048*	0.019
Saudi Arabia (2236)	-0.079***	0.061**	-0.048**
Sudan (1270)	-0.060**	-0.044*	-0.045*
Tunisia (2253)	-0.044*	0.035 <sup>#</sup>	-0.002
Yemen (4546)	0.016	0.055**	-0.062**

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; <sup>#</sup> $p < 0.10$ .

All models are controlled for employment status, education, marital status, sex, and age.

**Bold** = the same direction as relationship in pooled analyses (table 1, Model 1).

### ***Belonging: Religious Identification***

Model 1 suggests that people in the MENA who identify more strongly as religious are on average somewhat less tolerant towards other ethno-religious groups, but this difference is neither statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) across models, nor found consistently across the countries (table 2) or alternative models (Appendix D1). Also, belonging does not turn consistently significant if attendance, as a possible mediator, is left out of the model. Regarding H1b, Model 2 gives no clear indication that the effect is considerably stronger among Muslim citizens.<sup>12</sup> In short, no clear unitary effect on tolerance is found for religious identification.

It should be noted, while not at the core of this study, that Model 2 shows non-Muslim citizens to be on average less ethno-religiously tolerant than Muslim citizens (see also Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007, 1156). This goes against the civilizationist literature that suggests that non-Muslims are generally *more* tolerant (Fish 2011; Inglehart and Norris 2003). The results here lend support to the idea that it is not one's denomination, but one's status as a religious minority that leads people to be less socially tolerant towards people of other religions (i.e., the religious majority) (see Spierings 2014; Verkuyten et al. 2014).

Regarding the context-dependent effect of religious belonging, Model 3 shows that the variance in the relationship is not significantly related to a country's religious fractionalization or its degree of violence: the interaction coefficients are

not statistically significant (refuting H1a), and these relationships also remain far from statistically significant using the alternative operationalizations.<sup>13</sup> The disaggregated results (table 2), however, do suggest another pattern: all statistically negative relationships are found in countries that were ruled by Islamist political actors at the time (see Appendix C2). Figure 1 plots this against the disaggregated coefficients of belonging, and a rather clear pattern surfaces<sup>14</sup>: in countries not ruled by Islamists, the impact of belonging centers around zero; in the countries where Islamists were in power (Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, and Tunisia in 2011), those who identify as religious strongly tend to have lower ethno-religious social tolerance. If anything, this shows that state structures matter in translating individual-level religiosity to (in)tolerance. As I discuss more elaborately in the conclusion, it might be that Islamist rule legitimizes intolerance, but it might equally be the case that Islamist regimes cause the less religious in particular to become more tolerant.

To summarize, there is no clear general negative impact of religious belonging on ethno-religious social tolerance, but in countries where Islamists are in political power, people who more strongly identify as religious tend to be less tolerant.

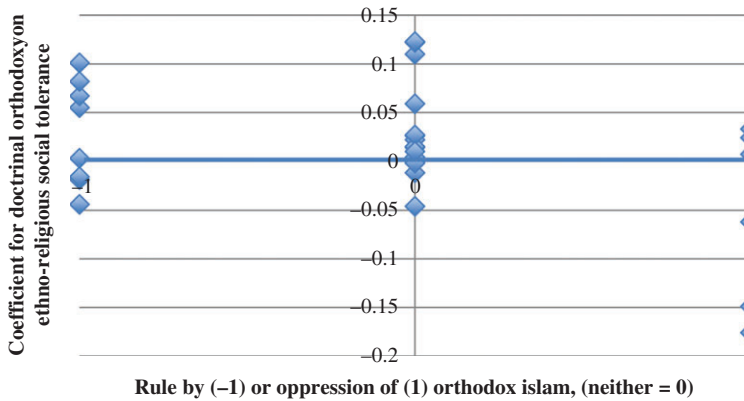
### ***Belief: Scriptural Literalism***

Table 1 shows a rather stable and positive relationship between scriptural literalism and social tolerance: the more orthodox people are, the *more* tolerant (refuting H2).<sup>15</sup> The robustness tests largely confirm this relationship, with the alternative operationalization of orthodox beliefs—moral cosmology: the importance of god—for instance also showing a significant positive effect (Appendix D1). Also, running the models without attendance—which might actually obscure a negative effect of literalism on tolerance through attendance—shows a similarly strong and significant positive impact of scriptural literalism. The additional models (Appendix D1), however, do suggest that the positive effect of scriptural literalism does not extend from tolerance towards neighbors to tolerance towards the closest personal sphere (i.e., in-law children and siblings), at least not for the five country-years for which these data were available.

In terms of context-dependency, the effect of scriptural literalism on ethno-religious social tolerance is separately reproduced for the majority of countries (table 2): in ten of the thirteen countries, corresponding positive coefficients are found, and in five, the coefficients and sample are large enough for the relationship to reach statistical significance. At the same time, the positive effects varied in strength and three negative effects were found, two of which being statically significant.

Model 4 and figure 2 provide strong support for the idea that the impact of scriptural literalism is strongly negative if orthodox Muslims are repressed (supporting H2a1; refuting H2a2). Model 4 shows a positive main effect of scriptural literalism on tolerance in countries in which orthodox Muslim are in power or not suppressed, but a very strong negative effect if they are suppressed. This significant negative interaction effect is also reproduced in models with the

**Figure 2. Context-dependent impact of scriptural literalism (each marker represents a survey).**



alternative dependent variable and in both the Muslim and non-Muslim samples (Appendix D1). The disaggregating analyses indeed show that the negative effect is strongly present for Bahrain, where the religious Shi'a majority feels suppressed by the Sunni royal family. But also in Lebanon (2013), where Sunnis were politically intimidated in 2012/2013, a statistically negative effect was found, and for Morocco—where Islamist parties are forbidden to run for elections—the positive effect was absent across surveys.

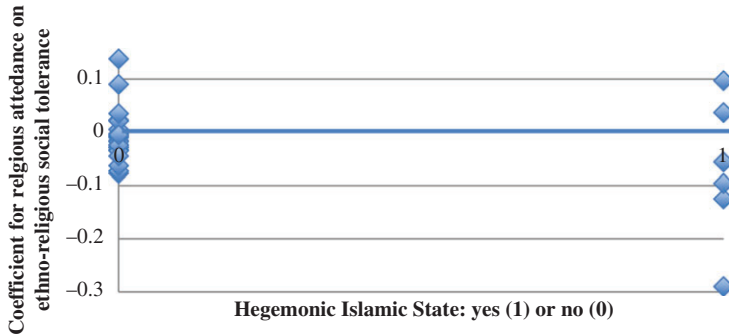
Summarizing, under adverse conditions, the more orthodox turn less tolerant, but under “normal” circumstances more orthodox people are on average more tolerant towards people with other ethno-religious background in their neighborhood (but not in their family).<sup>16</sup>

### **Behavior: Attendance**

Lastly, communal attendance has a clear and robust negative relationship with ethno-religious social tolerance in all models.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the effect is reproduced in ten of the thirteen countries and reached statistical significance in five (table 2). Nevertheless, the impact differs by context.

Model 5 and figure 3 show that the negative effect is far stronger in hegemonic Islamic states than in countries and years in which Islamic states did not coercively regulate religious messages (confirming H3a). In figure 3, all very strong negative effects are indeed found in hegemonic Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia (2011) and Yemen (2014), in which central government bodies enforce and regulate a conservative and intolerant interpretation of Islam. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, Wahhabi clerics are highly represented in the religious hierarchy of the state, which controls the content of sermons, and the grand mufti and others do not shy away from preaching about enemies of Islam (Boucek 2010; Gause 2014, 8). Attendees in these countries are particularly exposed to and socialized in such intolerant messages.

**Figure 3. Context-dependent impact of religious attendance (each marker represents a survey).**



The insignificant main effect of attendance in Model 5 might suggest that the negative effect is absent in the other countries; however, the overall effect among the countries not coded as hegemonic Islamic states remains negative and is statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) in an interaction model without random slopes. This general negative effect can also be derived from figure 3, in which most cases on the left-hand side (nineteen of twenty-six) are found below zero.

Thus, the more people attend religious services, the more likely they are to object to living next to people with different ethno-religious backgrounds, and this effect is stronger in hegemonic Islamic states.

## Conclusion

The relationship between individual-level religiosity and social ethno-religious tolerance has hardly gotten any attention in the public-opinion literature on the MENA, although many pundits and Orientalist studies tend to equate Islam to intolerance (e.g., Huntington 1996; Norris and Inglehart 2012; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay 2007). As the lack of details and nuance can lead to grave misconceptions and lead to overlooking important avenues for societal change for the better, this study set out to provide a systematic understanding of this relationship. I did so starting from the three-Bs approach (e.g., Kellstedt et al. 1996; Leege and Kellstedt 1993), which provides a general understanding of how religiosity has multiple interrelated dimensions. Applying this perspective to the MENA is pivotal, as on the one hand, it helps unpack the complex impact of religiosity on tolerance (unlike the essentializing above-mentioned civilizationist studies), and it, on the other hand, provides a better understanding of how contextual differences—between and within regions in the world—shape the impact of individual-level religiosity. Regarding this context, this study focused particularly on society–state–religion relationships. Others have shown that these differ substantially, also within the MENA (Davis and Robinson 2006, 167; Fox 2013, 2015; Owen 2004), but we know little about how those differences influence the impact of people’s religiosity.

Moving on to the results, first, the impact of the degree of belonging is largely absent overall, and not particularly negative among Muslims or in societies characterized by religious fractionalization and violence, as was expected based on the Western literature (cf. Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015; Djupe and Calfano 2013; Hutchison and Gibler 2007; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello 2002; Wilcox and Jelen 1990). However, non-Muslim minority-group members are particularly less tolerant, which might reflect grievances stemming from violence and threat perception (see also Grim and Finke 2006). Moreover, the analyses show that where Islamists rule, religious belonging seems more likely to lead to intolerance (among majority population members). This does not, however, mean that Islamic rule leads the more religious to become more intolerant. This finding might also reflect that in countries that prescribe and enforce certain religions, religion is generally seen as being less part of the self (see Elliott and Hayward 2009; Moaddel 2006). In other words, it might be that in the most Islamist countries, people become less attached to their religion and thus more tolerant. While the latter explanation seems more likely, given the overall results, only future research can shed more definite light on this.

Second, the impact of scriptural literalism was rather consistently positive when it comes to peoples' neighbors, and did not depend on in-group and out-group orientation. This finding goes against some of the Western literature highlighting this mechanism as only reserved for in-groups (cf. Djupe and Calfano 2013; Norenzayan 2014; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello 2002), and it might provide important tools for fostering tolerance towards other religious groups by actually appealing to orthodox people's religious beliefs. Muslims who attach more value to living by the rules of the Qur'an and Hadith and the moral authority of God seem to leave judgment to Allah, which confirms Starks and Robinson's (2009, 652) American-based reasoning regarding a more communitarian attitude among the orthodox when it comes to feeling connected with one's neighbors.

Still, the analyses also show that this positive relationship turns negative in places and times where certain religious groups are suppressed or under threat. Again, threat perceptions—this time among more orthodox groups—provide an explanation for this effect. An important (policy) implication of this finding extends to Europe, as it also explains why different effects are found for the impact of orthodoxy on ethno-religious tolerance among Muslims in European countries and Muslims in MENA countries (cf. Dixon 2008; Fish 2011; Verkuyten et al. 2014): orthodox Muslims are a minority in the former, while generally a unrepressed majority in the latter. Summarizing, under "normal" circumstances more scriptural-orthodox people are on average *more* tolerant, but this effect is reversed if they feel repressed and threatened.

Third, religious socialization through communal attendance has an overall negative effect on tolerance (see also Bloom and Arikan 2012; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello 2002), and the socialization mechanism is further supported by the finding that the effect is particularly strong in hegemonic Islamic states.

At the same time, we do not know exactly what is preached in mosques. Although this study and other projects provide us with important comparative context-level data (e.g., Fox 2015; Grim and Finke 2006), information on mosque regulation is relatively crude and limited to the country level. This is certainly a challenge for future research. Nevertheless, it seems safe to conclude that the more people attend religious services, the less tolerant they are, particularly in hegemonic Islamic states.

All in all, a combination of identity-based threats, socialization, and following scriptural rules links people's multifaceted religiosity to their social tolerance towards people from other ethno-religious groups. The three-Bs approach proved valuable in understanding this multifaceted, and not just negative, impact of religiosity on tolerance towards neighbors with a different ethno-religious background. This is important as the concept of tolerance used here has, for instance, been shown to be important for sustainable democracy (see Ciftci 2010; Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, and Meyer 2007; Sarkissian 2012; Tessler 2002). At the same time, it needs to be noted that this is just one type of tolerance; for others, religiosity's impact might differ. When considering people's objection towards their child, brother, or sister marrying a person with a different ethno-religious background, for instance, the effect of scriptural literalism was found to be reversed. The mechanism of compassion and communitarianism seems to be weaker when it comes to the most intimate social sphere. This could, however, only be studied for five of the thirty-two surveys; more research on other dimensions of tolerance along the lines of this study seems valuable.

Finally and more generally, this study showed the importance of conditioning clauses to understand how the mechanisms linking religiosity to tolerance manifest differently in different contexts. This is crucial for implementing effective policy interventions. The conditioning factors include the repression of religious groups and the threat to religious minorities, as well as governments controlling mosque sermons. Such conditioning clauses can also be applied to the study of religiosity and tolerance in Western countries. For instance, we should be very careful not to take an Orientalist approach and ascribe any differences in tolerance across denominational groups (e.g., Muslims and Christians) to the content of these religions. Contrasting the results of this study with the existing literature suggests that it is actually the status of a denominational group as a minority/majority and being stigmatized or repressed that is crucial, not anything supposedly intrinsic to a denomination.

## Notes

1. Due to this procedure also being applied to the dependent variable, I cannot assess the direct impact of country-level factors or compare results with macro-level studies' (e.g. Grim and Finke 2006, 2010; Fox 2015). For cross-level interactions, equalized averages are not problematic.
2. Cronbach's alphas on the most prevalent sets of items are above 0.6: (1) other race, religion, language, and migrant background 0.718; (2) other race, religion, migrant background, and refugees 0.771; (3) other race, religion, and migrant background

0.650. Each set of indicators load on one dimension, with loadings above 0.7, barring one exception (0.69).

3. The three dimensions of religiosity are related in a statistically significant way, but the correlation coefficients are 0.122 or lower. Substantively, less religious people (belonging) and people who interpret religious sources more freely (scriptural literalism) also attend services frequently. Similarly, not all scriptural literalists visit the mosque daily. Statistically, their interrelatedness does not cause statistical problems.
4. Bahrain 2014, Egypt 2012.
5. In seven categories, because for Morocco 2006 only five-year categories are available. Using age, excluding this survey, leads to similar results.
6. GRRD (17): (i) mob violence related to religion; (ii) acts of sectarian or communal violence between religious groups; (iii) activity of religion-related terrorist groups; (iv) extensiveness of a religion-related war or armed conflict; (v) violence resulting from tensions between religious groups; (vi) organized groups using force or coercion in an attempt to dominate public life with their perspective on religion; (vii) religious groups attempting to prevent other groups to operate; (viii) use or threat of violence to try to enforce religious norms; (ix) assaults and displacements from homes in retaliation for religious activities; (x) incidents of hostility over proselytizing; (xi) hostility over conversions from one religion to another; (xii) harassment or intimidation of religious groups by social groups motivated by religious hatred or bias; (xiii) destruction of personal or religious property motivated by religious hatred or bias; (xiv) detentions or abductions motivated by religious hatred or bias; (xv) any displacement of individuals from their homes motivated by religious hatred or bias; (xvi) physical assaults motivated by religious hatred or bias; (xvii) deaths motivated by religious hatred or bias.  
 IRF (15): According to the report: (i) Did terrorism impede religious practice? (ii) Do people face hassles if they do not belong to the dominant religion(s) of the country? (iii) What type of "holy sites" are in the country, e.g., shrines or places of pilgrimage? (iv) Are people threatened by social movements or political parties, based on religion? (v) Are people put into prison based on religion? (vi) Do Government or security authorities harass or allow harassment based on religious brand? (vii) Does the Government (or military) confiscate, desecrate, or destroy religious sites or facilities? (viii) Does the Government expel, exile, deport, or deny entry to people based on their religious brand? (ix) Were there any reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations? (x) Are there social movements that have religious agendas and are violent? (xi) Are tensions related to religion reported? (xii) Are religious brands harassed by members of other religious groups? (xiii) Were there cases of vandalism towards religious properties or cemeteries by citizens? (xiv) Were there cases of bombings or burnings of religious buildings or murders of religious persons by citizens? (xv) Are or were there religious militias/vigilante groups or is the military (including de facto structure) structured along religious lines?
7. The GRRD and IRF include information on political parties, but not on religious or orthodox ones specifically.
8. Also: Bahrain, where the Shi'a majority is discriminated against ([Gengler 2013](#)); Islamist parties being forbidden to run for elections in Morocco ([Owen 2004](#)); and the Lebanese Sunnis being politically intimidated in 2012/2013 ([BBC 2016](#)).
9. With Hamas ruling in Gaza, the Palestinian territories are included from 2006 onwards; the others are Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia (2011), Egypt (2012), and Yemen.



10. For the missing years, I complemented the data based on the original coding scheme. Moreover, Algeria's score was corrected from 3 to 5. Algeria has no explicit freedom of religion, the head of state must be Muslim, un-Islamic practices are forbidden (implying the importance of *Shari'a*), and Islam is the state religion.
11. Evidently, governmental behavior does not always reflect constitutional clauses: Fox and Flores (2009) demonstrate that constitutions guaranteeing religious freedom are not sufficient for governments not to discriminate against certain religions. However, the focus here is on the opposite: a government formulating strong religious restrictions. On that, Fox and Flores (2009, Table 3) show that a constitutional indicator does work: in countries with a constitution allowing discrimination, discrimination is found.
12. Models on non-Muslim citizens show no statistically significant effect either.
13. Using the country average based on the IRF data produces an interaction term of 0.0355 ( $p = .722$ ), and using the combined country-year scores shows an interaction term of 0.0397 ( $p = .561$ ). Using an alternative operationalization of fractionalization—the maximum of religious-, ethnic-, and language-based fractionalization (Alesina et al., 2003)—shows no statistically significant effect either.
14. Modeled, this cross-level interaction effect is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).
15. This effect was consistent for people scoring differently on a proxy of in-group orientation. Religious in-group orientation was operationalized using six items on the extent to which religion is important in selecting and judging one's first-degree relatives (see Appendix B2). The interaction was only marginally significant and at best indicated a variation in the degree of the positive relationship.
16. The country-disaggregated analyses also suggest that religious fractionalization moderates the impact of scriptural literalness, with the effect disappearing or turning negative in the more fractionalized countries (Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Sudan). Interaction models return a statistically significant result at  $p < .10$ . These results provide further support for the underlying reasoning, as fractionalization also taps the mechanism of threat perception.
17. This holds among Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover, as attending mosque services has different functions and as self-reporting for men and women differs (e.g., Brenner 2013; González 2011; Moaddel 2006), I also tested this relationship for men and women separately. The coefficient for men was  $-0.020$  ( $p = .001$ ) and  $-0.018$  ( $p = .001$ ) for women; the difference was not significant in an interaction model ( $p = .776$ ).

# Appendix

## Appendix A1. Survey information

Country	Year	Survey organization	Wave <sup>1</sup>	N	N in analyses	Survey weight
Algeria	2002	WVS	4	1,282	1,164	N
	2006	AB	1	1,300	667	N
	2011	AB	2	1,216	911	Y
	2013	WVS	6	1,200	1,066	N
Bahrain	2009	AB	1	435	340	N
Egypt	2001	WVS	4	3,000	2,864	N
	2011	AB	2	1,219	1,172	Y
Iraq	2004	WVS	4	2,325	2,176	N
	2006	WVS	5	2,701	2,078	N
	2011	AB	2	1,234	1,064	Y
	2013	WVS	6	1,215	1,123	N
Jordan	2001	WVS	4	1,223	1,189	N
	2006	AB	1	1,143	911	N
	2010	AB	2	1,188	1,026	Y
	2014	WVS	6	1,200	1,199	N
Lebanon	2007	AB	1	1,195	954	N
	2011	AB	2	1,387	1,308	Y
	2013	WVS	6	1,200	1,002	N
Libya	2014	WVS	6	2,131	1,751	Y
Morocco	2001	WVS	4	1,251	1,190	Y
	2006	AB	1	1,277	942	N
	2007	WVS	5	1,200	1,157	N
Palestine	2010	AB	2	1,200	1,053	Y
	2013	WVS	6	1,000	889	N
Saudi Arabia	2003	WVS	4	1,502	1,337	N
	2011	AB	2	1,404	1,068	Y
Sudan	2011	AB	2	1,538	1,245	Y
Tunisia	2011	AB	2	1,196	1,102	Y
	2013	WVS	6	1,205	1,156	N
Yemen	2007	AB	1	717	514	N
	2011	AB	2	1,200	886	Y
	2014	WVS	6	1,000	929	N
				43,484	37,413 (86%)	

**Appendix B1. Items included in operationalization of tolerance**

Country year	Does (not) object to mentioned type of neighbor												
	Other race or color	Migrant or guest work/expatriate workers	Jew	Other religion	Other country	Christians	Kurds	Other language	Sunnis	Shiites	Refuges	Immigrants	Other religious sect
Algeria 2002	X	X		X									
Algeria 2006	X	X	X										
Algeria 2011	X	X		X							X		
Algeria 2013	X	X		X				X					
Bahrain 2009	X	X	X										
Egypt 2001	X	X	X										
Egypt 2011	X	X		X							X		
Iraq 2004			X	X		X	X		X	X			
Iraq 2006			X	X		X	X		X	X			
Iraq 2011	X	X		X							X	X	X
Iraq 2013	X	X		X				X					
Jordan 2001	X	X		X	X								
Jordan 2006	X	X		X									
Jordan 2010	X	X		X							X		
Jordan 2014	X	X		X				X					
Lebanon 2007	X	X		X									

(Continued)

Appendix B1. *continued*

Country year	Does (not) object to mentioned type of neighbor												
	Other race or color	Migrant or guest work/expatriate workers	Jew	Other religion	Other country	Christians	Kurds	Other language	Sunnis	Shiites	Refuges	Immigrants	Other religious sect
Lebanon 2011	X	X		X							X		
Lebanon 2013	X	X		X				X					
Libya 2014	X	X		X				X					
Morocco 2001	X	X											
Morocco 2006	X	X		X									
Morocco 2007	X	X		X				X					
Palestine 2010	X	X		X									
Palestine 2013	X	X		X				X					
Saudi Arabia 2003	X	X		X									
Saudi Arabia 2011	X	X		X							X		
Sudan 2011	X	X		X							X		
Tunisia 2011	X	X		X							X		
Tunisia 2013	X	X		X				X					
Yemen 2007	X	X		X									
Yemen 2011	X	X		X							X		
Yemen 2014	X	X		X				X					

**Appendix B2. Items included in operationalization of religiosity dimensions**

Country year	Belonging			Scriptural literalism				Religious in-group orientation				Attendance								
	To what extent do you consider yourself as religious? (not, somewhat, religious)	Are you a religious person? (yes, no incl. convinced atheist)	How important is religion in your life? (0-3)	Divorce	Suicide	Drinking alcohol	Euthanasia	Participate in a lottery	Charging interest contradicts Islam	Charging interest must be Forbidden	Not praying is an obstacle in accepting the marriage of first-degree relative (0-3)	Being from different religion/denomination is obstacle in accepting marriage of first degree relative (0-3)	Important child qualities: religious (no/yes)	Important for considering who is a suitable spouse for son or daughter: praying (0-3)	Important for considering who is a suitable spouse for son or daughter: fasting (0-3)	Most important for considering who is a suitable spouse for son/daughter (fasting or praying)	Do you attend Friday prayer? (0-4)	How often do you attend religious services? (0-4)	Do you pray in Church or Mosque (no, yes)	How often do you attend Friday prayer or Sunday services (0-3)
Algeria 2002		X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X							X
Algeria 2006	X							X	X					X						X
Algeria 2011	X							X	X	X		X								X
Algeria 2013		X	X	X	X	X	X						X					X		
Bahrain 2009	X							X	X					X						X
Egypt 2001		X	X	X	X	X	X						X					X		
Egypt 2011	X							X		X										X
Iraq 2004		X	X	X						X			X					X		
Iraq 2006		X	X	X									X					X		
Iraq 2011	X							X	X	X	X	X								X

(Continued)

Country year	Belonging			Scriptural literalism							Religious in-group orientation					Attendance	
Iraq 2013	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jordan 2001	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jordan 2006	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jordan 2010	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jordan 2014	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lebanon 2007	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lebanon 2011	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lebanon 2013	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Lilya 2014	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Morocco 2001	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Morocco 2006	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Morocco 2007	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Palestine 2010	X						X	X	X										X
Palestine 2013		X	X	X											X				X
Saudi Arabia 2003		X	X	X	X	X									X				X
Saudi Arabia 2011	X						X	X	X										X
Sudan 2011	X						X	X	X										X
Tunisia 2011	X						X	X	X									X	
Tunisia 2013		X	X	X	X	X									X				X
Yemen 2007	X						X	X					X	X	X				X
Yemen 2011	X						X	X	X										X
Yemen 2014		X	X	X	X	X									X				X



**Appendix C1. Descriptive statistics of micro-level variables**

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Frequency
<b>Tolerance</b>					
Ethno-religious social tolerance	0.00	0.73	-3.62	2.05	
<b>Religion</b>					
Belonging (religious identification)	0.02	0.86	-11.77	1.60	
<b>Majority status</b>					
Muslim					94.3
Non-Muslims					5.7
Scriptural literalism	0.01	0.83	-2.94	6.13	
Religious in-group orientation	0.02	0.91	-4.28	2.04	
Attendance	0.00	1.00	-5.74	1.68	
<b>Controls</b>					
<b>Employment</b>					
Employed					62.6
Retired					3.7
Housewife					20.1
Student					6.6
Not employed other					7.0
<b>Education</b>					
No education					27.7
Primary completed					22.3
Secondary completed					27.8
At least some tertiary					22.2
<b>Sex</b>					
Male					51.2
Female					48.8
Age (in 7 cat.)	1.77	1.42	0	6	
<b>Marital status</b>					
Married					64.5
Single					30.4
Other (incl. divorced, widowed)					5.1

## Appendix C2. Macro-level scores per country or country year

Country year	Religious fractionation <sup>a</sup>	Religion-based violence <sup>b</sup>	Religion-based violence <sup>c</sup>	Orthodox Islam being repressed <sup>d</sup>	Hegemonic Islamic state <sup>e</sup>	Islamists in power <sup>f</sup>
Algeria	0.0091	0.54				
Algeria 2002			0.73	0	0	0
Algeria 2006			0.67	0	0	0
Algeria 2011			0.55	0	1	0
Algeria 2013			0.54	0	1	0
Bahrain	0.5528	0.39				
Bahrain 2009			0.39	1	1	0
Egypt	0.1979	0.77				
Egypt 2001			0.80	1	0	0
Egypt 2011			0.77	0	0	0
Iraq	0.4844	0.80				
Iraq 2004			0.77	0	0	0
Iraq 2006			0.87	0	0	0
Iraq 2011			0.78	0	0	0
Iraq 2013			0.82	0	0	0
Jordan	0.0659	0.44				
Jordan 2001			0.40	0	0	0
Jordan 2006			0.47	0	0	0
Jordan 2010			0.56	0	0	0

(Continued)

Appendix C2. *continued*

Country year	Religious fractionation <sup>a</sup>	Religion-based violence <sup>b</sup>	Religion-based violence <sup>c</sup>	Orthodox Islam being repressed <sup>d</sup>	Hegemonic Islamic state <sup>e</sup>	Islamists in power <sup>f</sup>
Jordan 2014			0.32	0	0	0
Lebanon	0.7886	0.63				
Lebanon 2007			0.54	0	0	0
Lebanon 2011			0.57	0	0	0
Lebanon 2013			0.78	1	0	0
Libya	0.0570	0.82				
Libya 2014			0.82	0	0	0
Morocco	0.0035	0.33				
Morocco 2001			0.53	1	0	0
Morocco 2006			0.80	1	0	0
Morocco 2007			0.33	1	0	0
Palestine	0.1719	0.74				
Palestine 2010			0.69	-1	0	1
Palestine 2013			0.79	-1	0	1
Saudi Arabia	0.1270	0.59				
Saudi Arabia 2003			0.50	-1	0	1
Saudi Arabia 2011			0.59	-1	1	1

Sudan	0.4307 <sup>1</sup>	0.58				
Sudan 2011			0.58	-1	0	1
Tunisia	0.0104	0.43				
Tunisia 2011			0.26	-1	0	1
Tunisia 2013			0.59	0	0	0
Yemen	0.0023	0.66				
Yemen 2007			0.64	-1	0	1
Yemen 2011			0.71	-1	1	1
Yemen 2014			0.63	-1	1	1

<sup>a</sup> *Source:* [Alesina et al. \(2003\)](#).

<sup>b</sup> *Source:* Own calculations based on GRRD data.

<sup>c</sup> Own calculations based on GRRD and IRF data, scores in italics are IRF based.

<sup>d</sup> *Source:* coded by author.

<sup>e</sup> *Source:* based on GRRD, [Spierings, Smits, and Verloo \(2009\)](#) and [Spierings \(2015\)](#).

<sup>f</sup> *Source:* code by author.

*Notes:* (1) This figure is from before South Sudan became an independent country; however, taking this into account when assessing the macro-level plots does not suggest this has refutes the hypothesis on the moderation impact of religious fractionalization.

## Appendix D1. Robustness analyses of main analyses (cf. Table 1, Model 1)

	Robustness test with data available for most surveys				Robustness test only possible on a small subset of surveys			
	Original model: Table 1, Model 1	A: Only Muslim	B: Including income	C: DV on two items (0-2)	D: All of the before	E: Including moral cosmology	F1: ethno-religious family tolerance as DV <sup>a</sup>	F2: Original model on same cases <sup>a</sup>
<i>Effects of interest: religiosity</i>								
Belonging	-0.0088*	-0.0086 <sup>#</sup>	-0.0028	-0.0208***	-0.0191***	-0.0154*	-0.0155	0.0170
Scriptural literalism	0.0124**	0.0157**	0.0230***	0.0094 <sup>#</sup>	0.0203***	0.0271***	-0.0807*	-0.003
Moral cosmology: importance of God in your life (1-10)						0.0244***		
Attendance	-0.0224***	-0.0213***	-0.0206***	-0.0221***	-0.0185***	-0.0087 <sup>#</sup>	-0.0809*	-0.0768***
Income (-2.47; 3.85)			0.0207***		0.0184***			
<i>Model statistics</i>								
BIC	86,091.016	82,307.251	73,203.536	66,079.149	54,159.629	50,164.519	24,422.552	12,346
Nind	38,907	32,163	32,847	31,332	24,438	22,973	5,178	5,178
Nsrvy	32	32	32	29	28	16	5	5
Nctry	13	13	13	13	13	11	5	5

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; <sup>#</sup>  $p < .10$ .

Data source: AB and WVS surveys.

Notes (1) surveys included are: Algeria 2011, Iraq 2011, Sudan 2011, Tunisia 2011, Yemen 2011. All models are controlled for the same variables as given in table 1 Model, following the same procedures.

## About the Author

Niels Spierings is an Assistant Professor in Sociology, Radboud University (The Netherlands). His work focuses on socio-political attitudes and behavior in Europe and the Arab MENA. His MENA publications include a monograph on women in Muslim countries (Palgrave) and journal articles on Islam, gender equality and democracy (Gender & Society; Social Indicators Research; Politics & Religion), women's economic participation (Journal of Marriage and Family), and the Uprisings' impact on trust & tolerance (Politics & Governance).

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