The role of ethnic school segregation for adolescents' religiosity

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Abstract

Public concerns over the possible effects of school segregation on immigrant and ethnic majority religiosity have been on the rise over the last few years. In this paper we focus on (1) the association between ethnic school composition and religious salience, (2) intergenerational differences in religious salience and (3) the role of ethnic school composition for intergenerational differences in religious salience. We perform analyses on religious salience, one five-point Likert scale item measuring religious salience among 3,612 16-years old pupils in Belgian secondary schools. National origin was used as a proxy for ethnicity. Ethnic minorities in schools with a higher share of ethnic minorities tend to be more religious. This relation holds for Muslim as well as other religious and ethnic minorities. Ethnic school composition also moderates the relationship between migrant generation and religious salience: second generation migrants tend to be more religious in ethnic minority dominated schools. For ethnic Belgians the association is moderated by their religious affiliation: Catholics tend to be more religious while non-affiliated ethnic Belgians are less religious in schools with a higher share of ethnic minority pupils.

Introduction

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Over the last few years we have witnessed increasing concerns in Europe about the religiosity of immigrants, focusing predominantly on Muslim immigrants. More recently, worries about the religious fervor of adolescents and the role of school segregation have been raised. After some highly debated cases in the public media of peer pressure by devoted fellow students, a prohibition on wearing a headscarf was installed in Flemish public schools (northern part of Belgium). A similar ban has been in effect in France since 2004. In the UK, the school inspection bureau has launched inquiries into some Muslim-majority school governing bodies and found that at least some of them try to promote Islam in schools and remove un-Islamic topics and activities from the school. Ethnic school segregation in Europe is clearly causing increasing concerns with regards to both ethnic minority pupils as the whole school population in general. Religiosity is now added to the list of possible correlates of ethnic school segregation, along with worries about educational achievement and the social integration of ethnic minority students (The authors, 2011).

This growing public attention has not been paralleled in academic research, however. Only a handful of studies have examined the relationship between school context and adolescent religiosity (Regnerus, Smith and Smith, 2004; Barrett et al., 2007; De Hoon and Van Tubergen, 2014). In general, these studies found that pupils' religiosity is positively associated with the average religiosity of peers in the school they attend. The influence of schools is not surprising: adolescents spend most of their waking hours in schools, making schools the main stage for socialization and contact with peers. Schools are therefore one of the most important social institutions for shaping adolescents' values and beliefs. Given that adolescence can be a pivotal life phase in forming individuals' religiosity and spirituality (King and Boyatzis, 2004; Norris and Inglehart, 2004), the influence of schools on religiosity cannot be overlooked.

One of the remaining questions concerning the role of schools on adolescents' religiosity is precisely the influence of school segregation. Since large-scale immigration to Europe took off after the second World War, most Western European countries have absorbed substantial ethnic minorities, often from majority Muslim countries in North Africa or the Middle East (Voas and Fleischmann, 2012). The incorporation of these immigrants in the school system has been skewed, however, leading to large-scale ethnic school segregation (The authors, 2011). Most Western European countries have therefore schools on a continuum from no ethnic minority students to only ethnic minority students. Given that ethnic minority pupils in general, and Muslims in particular, are more religious than the ethnic majority in Western Europe (De Hoon and Van Tubergen, 2014), the concentration of ethnic minorities might affect the religiosity of pupils in these schools. Ethnic school segregation can affect pupils' attitudes and behavior due to more salient religious prescriptions. In the Netherlands and Norway, for instance, pupils in schools with more Muslims consumed less alcohol, regardless of their own ethnic background (Amundsen, Rossow and Skurtveit, 2005; Van Tubergen and Poortman, 2009). Surprisingly, previous research has not examined how ethnic school segregation may affect religiosity in itself.

This ethnic school composition is one of the social contexts in which individuals interact. Differences in ethnic minority religion according to the context are often explained in terms of social integration effects (Durkheim, 1986 [1897]): the more socially integrated individuals are in a certain social group, the more they conform to the values, norms and beliefs of that social group. Previous research has for instance shown that through contact with the ethnic majority, ethnic minorities conform to the general level of religiosity in the host society and the more they are socially integrated into the host society, the higher their level of conforming (Van Tubergen, 2006). This social integration is also the explanation of intergenerational differences in religiosity: second generation ethnic minorities conform more

to host society religiosity than their first generation counterparts (The authors, 2013). Although there has been an increase in academic attention towards intergenerational differences in ethnic minority religiosity, these differences have not been tested among adolescents. Given the pivotal role of adolescence in the development of religiosity, the question remains whether these intergenerational differences already occur during adolescence or whether they develop later. Moreover, ethnic school composition plays an important role in this respect. The opportunities for intergenerational conforming might depend upon the ethnic composition of the school. In ethnic minority-dominated schools, intergenerational differences in religiosity might be reduced due to a social integration into ethnic minority groups, rather than in ethnic majority social groups. For a better understanding of intergenerational differences in religiosity, the literature would benefit from an assessment of this topic among adolescents and the impact of the ethnic school composition upon them.

With this study, we examine the associations between (1) ethnic school segregation and adolescent religious salience, (2) intergenerational differences in ethnic minority religious salience and (3) the role of ethnic school composition for intergenerational differences in ethnic minority religious salience. Although ethnicity can have a wide variety in definitions and applications, in this paper ethnicity is used to denote the national origin of individuals in terms of immigrant descent. Therefore, 'ethnic Belgians' means individuals in Belgium who are not from immigrant descent, whereas 'ethnic Turkish' are individuals who originate from Turkey through migration. We derive hypotheses from Durkheim's social integration theory (1986 [1897]), which states that social integration into certain groups leads to sharing the values and beliefs of that group and from Blau's (1977) structural opportunity theory, which states that group sizes and distributions shape the opportunities for inter-group contact. This leads to the central propositions of this paper. First, given the higher religiosity of ethnic minorities in Western

European countries, pupils in schools with a higher proportion of ethnic minority peers will be more religious than pupils in schools with a lower proportion. Second, religiosity will be lower among second and third generation migrants than among their first generation counterparts. Third, these intergenerational differences will be smaller for adolescents in schools with a higher proportion of ethnic minority peers. To test these hypotheses, we apply cross-classified multilevel models on 3,612 16-years old adolescents from 48 different national origins in 55 Flemish (northern part of Belgium) secondary schools. We analyze variance in religious salience, i.e. the importance of religiosity to secondary school pupils (Roberts, 1998), measured by one five-point Likert scale item.

Theory and hypotheses

Ethnic school segregation

In his seminal work *Le Suicide*, Durkheim (1986 [1897]) introduced social integration theory. The more frequent social contact is between individual members of a group, the more socially integrated that group is. Due to this contact, individuals become immersed in the values and ideas of the social group. These values guide each individuals' behavior and helps them to play their social role in their respective groups. This means that the integration of individuals within social groups determines their values, ideas and beliefs. Differences in values, ideas and beliefs between individuals is in other words caused by integration into different social groups in society. This theory has been applied successfully to religious groups: people conform to the religiosity of the social group in which they are integrated (Need and De Graaf, 1996). Among immigrants, previous studies have shown that immigrants also conform to levels of religiosity in the host society and that more integrated migrants conform even more to ethnic majority religiosity (Van Tubergen, 2006; The authors, 2013). The other way round, ethnic minorities with less ethnic majority friendships resemble the religious behavior of the own ethnic group more (Maliepaard and Lubbers, 2013). Given the importance of

schools in adolescents' lives, this means that pupils might be expected to conform to levels of religiosity in the school they attend. Previous research in the US has indeed found that pupils who attend schools with more religious peers tend to become more religious over time (Regnerus, Smith and Smith, 2004).

Pupils' opportunities for social integration within schools depend on the social composition of their school, however. The sociological laws of contact within and across groups was stipulated by Blau's (1977) structural opportunities theory. According to this theory, heterogeneity in a society determines the opportunities for contact across social groups. Based on the assumption that people prefer in-group associations over out-group associations in the first place and prefer associating with out-group members over not associating at all, Blau (1974) deducts that group size governs the probability of intergroup relations. Members of small groups have more opportunities to associate with members of other groups than members of larger groups. In other words, minority group members have more contact with majority group members than the other way round. Indeed, previous research found that inter-ethnic friendships are more common in schools with higher ethnic heterogeneity (Johnson, Crosnoe and Elder, 2001; The authors, 2009). Hence, school composition might determine the opportunities for social integration: smaller groups within schools will have a higher propensity to integrate into larger school-groups than the other way round.

In most Western European countries, the religiosity of minorities from immigrant descent is higher than those among natives (Voas and Fleischmann, 2012; De Hoon and Van Tubergen, 2014), the proportion of ethnic minorities in schools might determine the opportunities for social integration into either a more religious ethnic minority group or a lesser religious ethnic Belgian group. Therefore, we hypothesize that: *the higher the*

proportion of ethnic minorities in a school, the higher the religious salience among pupils (H1).

Intergenerational differences

Social integration theory has also been successfully applied to the intergenerational integration of immigrants in their respective host society. The primary socialization of second generation migrants in the host society plays a vital role for their social integration into that society. Apart from socio-economic integration (Portes and Zhou, 1993), the socio-cultural integration of second generation migrants is also more pronounced than that of their first generation counterparts. Second generation migrants tend to have more ethnic majority friends (Martinović, 2013), political attitudes more similar to those of the ethnic majority (Maxwell, 2010) and identify more often with the host society (Fokkema et al., 2012) than first generation migrants. These results indicate a higher conformism to the ethnic majority through a better social integration for second than for first generation migrants. This effect has also been shown for religiosity. Although migrants in general conform to the general religiosity of the host society (Van Tubergen, 2006), conforming is more pronounced among second generation migrants (The authors, 2013). As yet, no study has assessed whether these intergenerational differences manifest themselves during adolescence already. Moreover, most research has only focused on differences between first and second generation migrants. It is unclear how religion evolves in later migrant generations. Based on previous research on the differences among adults between first and second generation migrants we hypothesize that: *the religious salience among second and third generation migrant adolescents will be more similar to that of ethnic Belgians than that of first generation migrants (H2).*

Intergenerational differences and ethnic school segregation

One of the reasons for studying intergenerational differences in religiosity among adolescents is the possible association with the ethnic school segregation in many Western European countries. Although social integration is expected to be associated with lower religiosity among later generation ethnic minority pupils, schools with a higher percentage of ethnic minorities might function as a buffer against this intergenerational waning of religiosity. The transmission of cultural traits from one generation to the next is, according to social psychologists, influenced by three different sources: vertical interactions, i.e. through parents, horizontal interactions, i.e. through peers, and oblique interactions, i.e. through other individuals and social institutions (Berry and Georgas, 2008). Although parental transmission of religiosity is generally effective (Myers, 1996), it is dependent upon the religious context in which it takes place (Kelley and De Graaf, 1997). Moreover, interactions with ethnic majority peers and social institutions of the destination country might weaken the impact of parental transmission (The authors, 2015). The influence of schools in the host society has already been demonstrated: previous studies have repeatedly shown that higher education is associated with lower levels of religiosity among ethnic minorities (Van Tubergen, 2006; The authors, 2013). The share of ethnic minorities in a school might determine the intergenerational transmission of religiosity however: in schools with a higher share of ethnic minorities, pupils are more isolated from host society influences and influenced more by the higher religiosity of the ethnic community. Therefore, we hypothesize that: *in schools with a higher proportion of ethnic minority pupils, second and third generation migrants' religious salience will differ more from ethnic Belgians than in schools with less ethnic minority pupils (H3).*

Context

The migration history of Belgium is comparable to that of most Western European countries (The authors, 2014b). After the Second World War, Western European governments regulated the influx of labor migrants from first Southern Europe and subsequently Turkey and North Africa. Labor markets had high demands of unskilled labor, which could not be filled domestically, resulting in migration flows of lower educated labor migrants (The authors, 2012). Decades of follow-up migration through family formation and family reunion has transformed traditionally ethnic homogeneous nations into a multiethnic society.

However, while the migration history of Belgium is comparable to that of most Western European countries, the school segregation is not. School segregation is more pronounced in Belgium, which makes Flanders a very interesting case (Jacobs et al., 2009). An important reason for this more pronounced school segregation is the educational policy of free parental school selection. Since every parent can choose a school for their child and there are no regulations, parents can select or avoid a specific school because of the student composition. Especially for secondary education, the proximity of the school is not the first concern of the parents (Creten et al., 2000). They are more concerned with the 'reputation' of the school, the offered fields of study and the religious affiliation of the school. However, since middle class, mostly ethnic Belgian parents, have more resources to act upon their wish to send their children to a 'good white middle class school', the free parental choice resulted in socio-economic, ethnic and religious segregation. The latter is a consequence of the origin of most labor migrants, who came from more religious, often Muslim majority, countries. This religious diversification coincided with a period of secularization in Western Europe (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). The ethnic segregation has therefore also created schools on a continuum of only Christian or non-affiliated ethnic Flemish pupils on the one hand and schools with only ethnic minority pupils who affiliate predominantly with Islam.

Data and methods

We used data from RaDiSS (Racism and Discrimination in Secondary Schools) (The authors, 2014), a survey conducted during the school year 2011-2012 among 4,322 third-grade students (i.e. Grade 9 in U.S. school system terms) in 55 secondary schools in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking, northern part of Belgium. Students were selected through multi-stage sampling. In the first stage, 104 schools were sampled according to the urbanization of the school neighborhood and ethnic composition of the students. Secondary schools are regularly asked to participate in academic research in Flanders and therefore often apply the principle of 'first come, first served'. A total of 55 secondary schools were willing to participate in the survey, resulting in a response rate at the school level of 53%. The non-response was not selective on the ethnic composition of schools. The ethnic composition of the participating schools ranges from 4.2% to 100% ethnic minority students. All third-grade students present were asked to complete a written questionnaire, in presence of a researcher and one or more teachers. Non-response at the level of students was due to students' absence at school, for instance due to illness. This results in relatively high response rates at the student level, with 92.5%, and a non-response which is only selective insofar as the absence of students is selective, for instance due to students' (chronic) ill health. After listwise deletion of individuals with missing values for the variables in the analysis we retain 3,612 pupils. The loss in information is mainly due to a lack of data on the socio-economic status of the parents. Additional analyses without including socio-economic status of the parents reveal similar results, however.

Variables

As dependent variable, we used *religious salience*. Students were asked "How important is religion to you". Answers were recorded on a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from "Not at all

important" to "Very important". A higher score on this variable indicates a higher religious salience.

Independent variables

We distinguished between variables at the level of students and at the level of schools and between independent and control variables. We subsequently introduce the independent and control variables at the student and school level.

Migrant background is a categorical variable, indicating whether adolescents have a migrant background, and if so, to which migrant generation they belong. This variable has four categories: 'ethnic Belgian', 'first generation', 'second generation' and 'third generation'. First generation migrants are adolescents who have been born outside of Belgium. Second generation migrants are adolescents who were born in Belgium but have at least one parent with a foreign nationality. Third generation migrants are adolescents who are born in Belgium, whose parents have the Belgian nationality but who have at least one grandmother with a foreign nationality. Ethnic Belgians are adolescents who are born in Belgium and who have parents and grandmothers with the Belgian nationality. Ethnic Belgian adolescents form the reference category in our analyses. Given that we base ethnicity on the national origin of individuals, the category of 'Ethnic Belgians' comprises different ethnic groups if other aspects, for instance language, are used. The same applies to other ethnic origins as well. Ethnic Turkish pupils might comprise pupils from different ethnic groups.

At the student level, we control for *age*, *sex*, *denomination*, *socioeconomic status*, *track* and *ethnic minority friendships*. *Age* is a metric variable in full years, based on the reported birth year of individuals in the questionnaire. *Sex* is a dichotomous variable with categories 'Male' (0) and 'Female' (1). *Denomination* is a categorical variable comprising four categories: 'Catholic', 'Muslim', 'other affiliation' and 'no affiliation'. This variable has been constructed from respondents' answers to the question 'What is your religion?'. Given

the small number of respondents who answered 'Protestant' or 'Jewish', we collapsed these categories with the answer category 'other affiliation'. Answers to the category 'liberal' and 'no affiliation' were combined in the category 'no affiliation'. Given that the 'Catholic' category contains the most respondents, this category will serve as reference category in our analyses. *Socioeconomic status* (SES) was measured using the International Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI) (Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman, 1992). This results in a metric variable with a range from 16 to 90. For each parent, the ISEI was derived from the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88), and the highest score out of both parents was assigned as socioeconomic status to the students. As already indicated, SES was the variable with a considerable proportion of missing values. Imputing values for parents' SES was considered unreliable, however, given that we dispose of very few information on parents' characteristics. Imputing parental SES based on their children's characteristics was considered unfeasible. *Track* is a categorical variable with three categories, distinguishing between an academic, technical and vocational track. *Ethnic minority friendships* is a metric variable, indicating how many friends with a non-Belgian ethnicity students had. Answers to the question "How many of your friends are from non-Belgian descent" were recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from 'nobody' to 'all'.

At the school level, we introduce the independent variable *percentage ethnic minorities*, as well as the control variables *school size* and *school sector*.

Percentage ethnic minorities is a metric variable, indicating the percentage of ethnic minorities in respondents' own grade year. This variable has been constructed by aggregating the percentage of respondents not in the category 'ethnic Belgian' of the migrant background variable at the school level. This variable thus measures the percentage of non-ethnic Belgians in the same grade as respondents.

School size is an indicator of the total number of students enrolled in a certain school. The data has been obtained from the Flemish Educational Department. *School sector* is a dichotomous variable, distinguishing between Catholic and Public schools. Although both are financially supported by the Flemish government, there is a difference in religious education. In public schools, religious education is provided for each student according to the denomination they adhere. In Catholic schools, only Catholic education is available for students, irrespective of students' individual religious adherence. For Muslim students in the sample this means that Islamic religious education is available in public schools, while they have to attend Catholic classes in Catholic schools. Between 70% and 75% of Flemish students attend Catholic schools.

Methods

The students in the sample are nested in schools, which means that the most appropriate estimation technique for analyses of religious salience among adolescent Muslim ethnic minorities is multilevel modeling (Hox, 2010). Given that previous studies demonstrated that migrant religiosity is to a large extent dependent upon variations in religiosity in their respective origin countries (Van Tubergen, 2006, The authors, 2014a), we also take the level of ethnic origins into account. For this level, we derived the ethnic origin based on respondents' place of birth, the nationality of their parents and the nationality of their grandmothers, in accordance with the migrant background variable. This means that first generation migrants received their country of birth as ethnic origin, second generation migrants the nationality of their mother, or father if only the father had a foreign nationality and for third generation migrants the nationality of their foreign born maternal grandmother, or their other grandmother if the maternal grandmother was foreign-born. In this way, we were able to assign 97.6% of respondents to an ethnic origin, with the Belgian group being the

largest. Given that this also resulted in a considerable number of ethnic groups with very few members, often only 1, we limited the analyses to ethnic origin groups with at least 4 members. This reduced the number of ethnic origins from 108 to 48. This reduction and the listwise deletion of respondents for whom no ethnic origin could be assigned resulted in a drop of 240 respondents from the analyses. Given that the ethnic origin and the school level are not hierarchical, we apply cross-classified linear three-level models, with (1) 3,612 individuals nested in (2) 48 national origins and (3) 55 secondary schools. All analyses have been performed in R, using the lme4 package.

We present three different models. In the first model, we include all individual and contextual main effects. With this model, we can test the first two hypotheses, concerning respectively the association between ethnic school composition and religiosity and the intergenerational differences in religiosity. To test these hypotheses, we respectively examine the statistical effects of the percentage of ethnic minorities in school and the migrant background effects. In the second model, we include an interaction effect between migrant background and the percentage of ethnic minorities in schools. In the second model, we add an interaction effect between the percentage ethnic minorities of the school and the migrant background. This model enables us to test the third hypothesis, which stated that the intergenerational difference might differ according to the ethnic school composition of adolescents. To test this hypothesis, we look at the interaction terms estimating the differences in religiosity according to different levels of ethnic composition of the different schools (Figure 1). The third model is presented to highlight differences in the effect of ethnic segregation in schools for adolescents with different denominations, by adding an interaction between denomination and the percentage of ethnic minority pupils in schools. All metric variables in the analyses have been grand-mean centered.

Results

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of the dependent, independent and control variables, for the full sample and for ethnic Belgians and ethnic minorities separately. In the last column, the table shows the significance level of the difference in means between ethnic Belgians and ethnic minorities for all metric variables in the table. We notice from the table that, in line with previous research, ethnic minorities report significantly higher levels of religious salience than ethnic Belgians. The distribution of religious denominations is also fundamentally different between ethnic Belgians and ethnic minorities. Among ethnic Belgians, the Catholic form a majority, with 56.1%, and the remainder are mostly not affiliated. Among ethnic minorities, there is a slight majority of Muslims, with 51.2%, almost a quarter identify as Catholics and only 18.2% consider themselves not affiliated to a denomination. Ethnic minorities tend to have significantly more ethnic minority friends than ethnic Belgians. The table also shows the disadvantageous position of ethnic minorities compared to ethnic Belgians in Flemish schools. Ethnic minorities are significantly older. This means that among ethnic minority pupils, a higher proportion have been retained at least a year. They are also underrepresented in the academic and overrepresented in the vocational track and have a significantly lower socio-economic status.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

The intertwined nature of school segregation is illustrated by table 2, which displays bivariate correlations between all school-level indicators. This table shows that ethnic and religious segregation is intensively associated: the percentage of ethnic minorities and the percentage of self-identified Muslims is 0.933 correlated. This segregation is also associated with differences in the mean level of religious salience in schools: the mean religious salience is

0.908 correlated with the percentage of ethnic minorities and 0.959 with the percentage of self-identified Muslims. Schools with a high proportion of ethnic minorities are therefore also schools with a high proportion of self-identified Muslim adolescents and a higher religious salience. Ethnic and religious segregation are further also associated with socio-economic segregation: the higher the percentage of ethnic minorities in a school, the lower the mean socio-economic status. The percentage of ethnic minorities and self-identified Muslims is also higher in public schools, which is in turn associated with a lower mean religious salience and a higher mean socio-economic status in Catholic schools. In what follows we test the hypotheses by looking at the results of the cross-classified multilevel analyses in table 3.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The first hypothesis, predicted that a higher percentage of ethnic minorities in schools would be associated with a higher level of adolescents' religious salience (H1). We find support for this hypothesis (first model Table 3): there is a significant positive effect of the percentage of ethnic minorities in schools on adolescents' religious salience. Adolescents in a school with the highest proportion ethnic minorities (100%) have a 0.309 higher predicted value of religious salience than adolescents in a school with the lowest proportion of ethnic minorities (4.2%). This is a considerable effect on a five-point scale, indicating that there is indeed an association between the percentage of ethnic minorities in a school and pupils' religious salience. Therefore, we conclude that this hypothesis is supported by the results.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The second hypothesis predicted that the difference in religious salience between ethnic Belgians and second and third generation migrants would be smaller than the difference between ethnic Belgians and first generation migrants (H2). To test this hypothesis, we look at the first model in table 3. Our findings somewhat support this hypothesis. Although first generation migrants in our sample are more religious than ethnic Belgians, this difference is only marginally significant ($p = 0.069$). Second and third generation migrants on the other hand do not differ significantly from the ethnic majority in Belgium. This suggests that conforming to ethnic majority religiosity might also occur to a great extent among first generation migrants. This somewhat contradicts previous research, which found differences in religiosity across different migrant generations (The authors, 2013). This might mean that conforming to levels of religiosity among ethnic Belgians occurs equally among first as among later generation migrants. We therefore conclude that this hypothesis is not supported by our results.

The intergenerational differences might vary according to the ethnic composition of the schools which adolescents attend, however. The third hypothesis predicted that the difference between ethnic Belgians and second and third generation migrants would be higher for adolescents in schools with a higher proportion of ethnic minority pupils (H3). To test this hypothesis, we look at the interaction effects of the second model in table 3. The interaction effects are also displayed in figure 1. Figure 1 contains the predicted religious salience of first, second and third generation migrants compared to ethnic Belgian religious salience, in a school with the least ethnic minority pupils, a school with 50% minority pupils and a school with 95% ethnic minorities. For each migrant generation, the top of the bar indicates significant differences compared to ethnic Belgian religious salience. At first glance, it is obvious that migrant religious salience is to a large extent associated with the percentage of ethnic minorities in the school they attend. First generation migrants' religious salience differs

only marginally significant (p = 0.058) from ethnic Belgian religious salience in schools where ethnic Belgians do not form a majority, while it is significantly higher in schools with 95% ethnic minority pupils. Second generation migrants' religious salience only differs significantly from ethnic Belgian religious salience in schools with a very high proportion of ethnic minority pupils. In schools with very few ethnic Belgian pupils, first and second generation migrants are significantly more religious than ethnic Belgians, while this is not the case in schools with few ethnic minority pupils. There is no significant difference between ethnic Belgian religious salience and third generation migrant religious salience, however. Therefore, we can conclude that we have found partial support for the third hypothesis: second generation migrants' conformism to ethnic Belgian religious salience is associated with ethnic school composition, while this is not the case for third generation migrants, who resemble ethnic Belgian religious salience regardless of ethnic school composition.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The second model gives the impression that ethnic school composition is only associated with adolescent religious salience for pupils with a migrant background. The third model contradicts this interpretation, however. In this model, we added an interaction effect between denomination and ethnic school composition. This reveals that the association between ethnic school composition and religious salience was suppressed for ethnic Belgians due to denominational differences in the effect. The main effect of ethnic school composition in model 4 is the effect for Catholic ethnic Belgians, since these form the reference categories of migrant background and denomination. For Catholic ethnic Belgians, we notice a positive effect, meaning that Catholic ethnic Belgians tend to be more religious in schools with more ethnic minority pupils. Non-affiliated ethnic Belgians on the other hand, tend to be less

religious in schools with a higher proportion of ethnic minorities. Religious ethnic Belgians are thus more religious in schools where they are a minority. Non-religious ethnic Belgians are less religious in schools where they are a minority. This indicates that ethnic school composition is also associated with ethnic Belgians adolescents' religious salience, although this is mediated by whether or not they consider themselves affiliated to a religious denomination.

Conclusion and discussion

With this study, we addressed (1) the association between ethnic segregation and religious salience among ethnic minorities and ethnic Belgians, (2) intergenerational differences in religious salience among ethnic minorities and (3) the role of ethnic segregation for intergenerational differences. We applied social integration theory and structural opportunities theory on adolescent religious salience of ethnic minorities and ethnic Belgians in Flemish schools by performing cross-classified linear three-level models on 3,612 adolescents from 48 different national origins in 55 different secondary schools. From these analyses, we draw two important conclusions.

First, we found that adolescents in schools with a higher share of ethnic minorities tend to be more religious. This finding is comparable to previous research in the U.S. (Regnerus, Smith and Smith, 2004; Barrett et al., 2007), in that the religious make-up of schools is associated with their pupils' religiosity. Previous research already reported that ethnic residential segregation is associated with higher religiosity among Muslims in Western Europe (Voas and Fleischmann, 2012). Next to residential segregation, ethnic school segregation might also create a bubble of higher religiosity and form an environment in which

religiosity flourishes, in an otherwise relatively secularized society (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). However, this association between ethnic school composition and religiosity is not limited to ethnic minorities. Ethnic school composition also affects ethnic Belgians' religiosity, although this association depends upon their religious affiliation. Among Catholic affiliated pupils, attending a school with a higher share of ethnic minorities is associated with a higher religiosity, while the opposite is true for non-affiliated ethnic Belgians. The ethnic school composition might create more salient religious fields within schools, which could affect the whole school, regardless of the specific denomination adolescents affiliate with. Confronted with a relatively religious school population, non-affiliated adolescents might avert themselves even more from religiosity.

Second, the intergenerational differences in religiosity among ethnic minority adolescents in secondary schools reveal more intricate patterns than previously reported. Among first and second generation migrant adolescents, levels of religious salience do differ from that of the ethnic majority, but only in schools in which ethnic minorities are the numerical majority. Previous studies found a conformism among immigrants to levels of ethnic majority religiosity and that this conformism was more pronounced among second generation migrants than among first (Alanezi and Sherkat, 2008; The authors, 2013). For third generation migrants, we found no difference in religious salience compared to ethnic Belgians, regardless of the ethnic school composition. This is in line with previous research in the US, where it was found that by the third generation, ethnic minorities showed no difference in religiosity compared to the ethnic majority (Stark, 1997). The results for the second generation might indicate the importance of the ethnic school composition: although clear intergenerational differences have been found among adults, ethnic minority dominated schools might serve as a sort of microcosm in which religion flourishes. Previous research among Muslims in Western Europe reported that ethnic residential segregation is associated

with higher religiosity (Voas and Fleischmann, 2013). Apart from residential segregation, ethnic school segregation might therefore also reinforce ethnic minority religiosity by limiting contact with, generally less religious, ethnic majority peers. When these interactions increase at later age, this might lead to more conformism among ethnic minorities during adult life, as previously reported. Further research could examine this thesis by examining longitudinal data and examining how religiosity develops from adolescence into adult life.

One of the major limitations of this research are possible selection effects, meaning that schools might be selected by parents and students based on religious preferences. Given the free choice of schools in Belgium (The authors, 2011), adolescents and parents who attribute more importance to religiosity may therefore chose schools with a higher proportion of co-ethnics and co-religionists, as previous research in the Netherlands has shown (Maliepaard and Lubbers, 2012). A Flemish study confirms that 60% of the parents take the religious affiliation of a secondary school into account (Creten et al., 2000). However, in Flanders this equates to a choice between Catholic versus public schools, where the first have a better reputation than the second. There is the idea that Catholic schools provide the best education, are strict and give your child the best chances to succeed in higher education. As a consequence, many parents do not choose a Catholic school based on religious preferences, but because of their quality perceptions. In a similar system in the Netherlands, the ethnic school composition has shown to be of little influence on the school choice (The Authors 2014c). Moreover, it would be especially unlikely for more religious Catholic ethnic Belgian pupils to select ethnic minority-dominated schools, which are generally populated by Muslim pupils. Yet, we found that religious Catholic ethnic Belgian pupils in ethnic minority-dominated schools tend to be more religious. Previous research in the U.S. has indicated that attending schools with peers who are more religious has an effect on students' religiosity, after taking into account prior levels of religiosity (Barrett et al., 2007). Therefore, we can

expect that, even if selection of schools on religious grounds happens among ethnic minorities, this is likely to ultimately reinforce religiosity among all adolescents in those schools, ethnic Belgian and minorities. Further research could test this prediction by using longitudinal data.

A second limitation is that we were unable to fully disentangle religious school segregation from other forms of school segregation, such as ethnic and socio-economic segregation. Given that religious, ethnic and socio-economic segregation are largely intertwined in Flemish schools, we were unable to distinguish between these forms of segregation. However, this interwoven pattern of school segregation is the specific school context in which most of ethnic minority adolescents in Western Europe are socialized. As already indicated, it is exactly this pattern which possibly creates a bubble in which groups of ethnic minority adolescents grow up in Western European countries. Disentangling the different aspects of this environment may be more a theoretical discussion than an analysis of the sociological processes present in this environment.

Third, due to the nature of the dataset, we were unable to examine multiple dimensions of religiosity among ethnic minority adolescents. Most scholars agree that religiosity is a multi-dimensional concept (McAndrew and Voas, 2011). In this paper, we only focused on religious salience. Further research would do well to analyze other dimensions of religiosity as well, as previous research has indicated that religiosity might differ according to the dimension focused upon (Davie, 1990).

A fourth limitation to this study is that we had to define ethnic groups in terms of their national origin. This might obscure differences between ethnic groups within origin countries or similarities between the same ethnic group in different origin countries. Therefore, further research could improve upon this study by using a more fine-grained measure of ethnic origin.

In sum, this study gives a unique insight in how religious patterns differ according to the ethnic composition of the school. First, a higher percentage of ethnic minority students is not only associated with more religious fervor among ethnic minority students, but also among Catholic students of Belgian descent. Second, no differences can be found between first and second generation ethnic minority students and ethnic Belgian students in terms of religiosity in schools with few ethnic minority students, while in schools with almost exclusively minority students, significant differences can be found between these two groups of students. Hence, this study shows that religious fervor is an outcome worthwhile discussing in relation to ethnic segregation in school.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	Full sample			Ethnic Belgians			Ethnic minorities			
	Range	**#/Ave.**	**(%)/(Std.)**	**Range**	**#/Ave.**	**(%)/(Std.)**	**Range**	**#/Ave.**	**(%)/(Std.)**	**Sig. Diff.**
Dependent										
Religious salience	1-5	2.803	(1.443)	1-5	2.146	(1.012)	1-5	3.761	(1.442)	***
Individual										
Independent										
Migrant background										
Ethnic Belgian	0/1	2142	(59.3%)	0/1	2142	(100.0%)	0/1	0	(0.0%)	
First generation	0/1	399	(11.0%)	0/1	0	(0.0%)	0/1	399	(27.1%)	
Second generation	0/1	880	(24.4%)	0/1	0	(0.0%)	0/1	880	(59.9%)	
Third generation	0/1	191	(5.3%)	0/1	0	(0.0%)	0/1	191	(13.0%)	
Control										
Age	13-21	15.49	(0.756)	13-18	15.244	(0.53)	14-21	15.848	(0.883)	***
Sex										
Male	0/1	1876	(51.9%)	0/1	1114	(52.0%)	0/1	762	(51.8%)	
Female	0/1	1736	(48.1%)	0/1	1028	(48.0%)	0/1	708	(48.2%)	
Denomination										
Catholic	0/1	1538	(42.6%)	0/1	1201	(56.1%)	0/1	337	(22.9%)	
Muslim	0/1	813	(22.5%)	0/1	13	(0.6%)	0/1	800	(54.4%)	
Other affiliation	0/1	112	(3.1%)	0/1	35	(1.6%)	0/1	77	(5.2%)	
No affiliation	0/1	1149	(31.8%)	0/1	893	(41.7%)	0/1	256	(17.4%)	
Socio-economic status	16-90	50.096	(16.875)	16-90	54.937	(15.649)	16-90	43.041	(16.098)	***
Track										
Academic	0/1	1609	(44.5%)	0/1	1191	(55.6%)	0/1	418	(28.4%)	
Technical	0/1	943	(26.1%)	0/1	531	(24.8%)	0/1	412	(28.0%)	
Vocational	0/1	1060	(29.3%)	0/1	420	(19.6%)	0/1	640	(43.5%)	
Ethnic minority friends	1-5	2.454	(1.041)	1-5	2.016	(0.694)	1-5	3.092	(1.129)	***
School										
Independent										
Percentage Ethnic Minorities	0.042-1	0.421	(0.278)	0.042-0.976	0.29	(0.197)	0.042-1	0.613	(0.267)	***
Control										
School size	82-1170	643.929	(275.461)	82-1170	683.44	(275.199)	82-1170	586.357	(265.607)	***
School sector										
Public	0/1	1539	(42.6%)	0/1	698	(32.6%)	0/1	841	(57.2%)	
Catholic	0/1	2073	(57.4%)	0/1	1444	(67.4%)	0/1	629	(42.8%)	

*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05 (Two-sided tests)

Table 2: Bivariate school variables correlation

	% EM	% Muslims	Mean religious salience	Mean SES	School size	School sector
% EM	1					
% Muslims	0.934***	1				
Mean religious salience	0.908***	0.959***	1			
Mean SES	-0.791***	-0.748***	-0.717***	1		
School size	-0.200	-0.236	-0.190	0.126	1	
School sector	-0.406***	-0.371**	-0.284*	0.370**	0.111	1

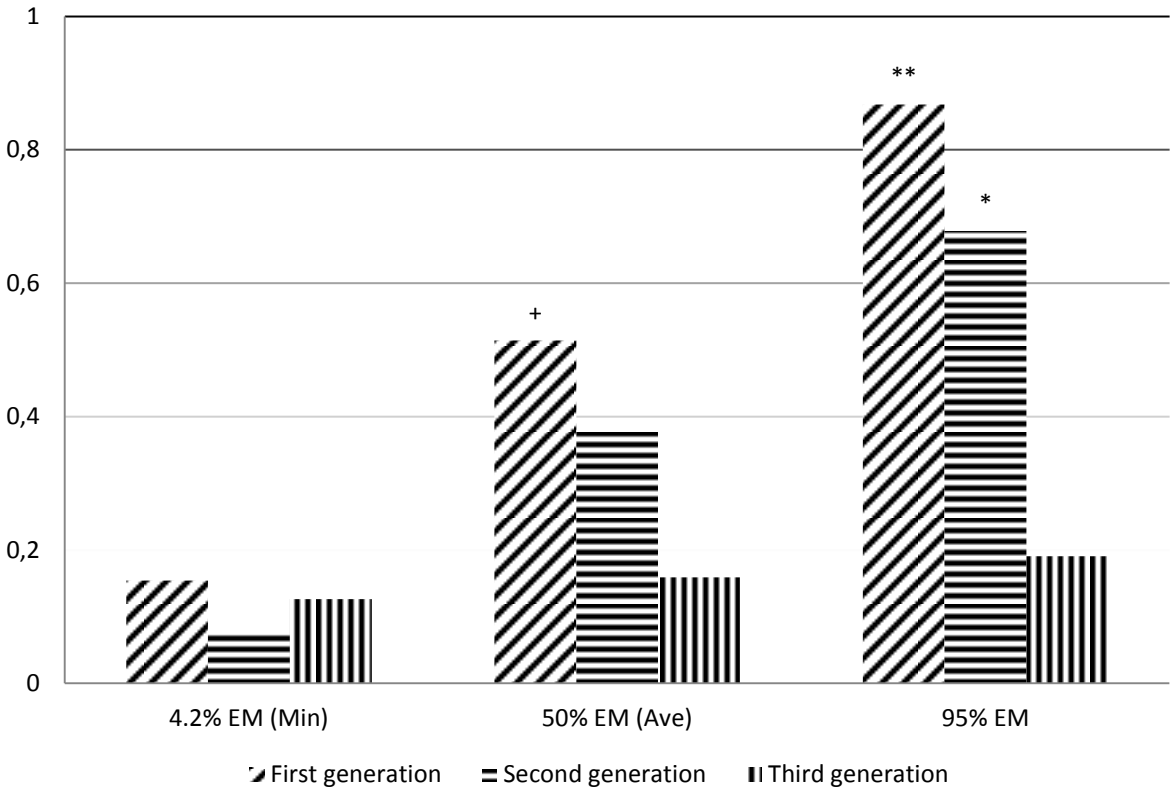
*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05 (Two-sided tests); N = 55

Table 3: Cross-classified multilevel analyses of religious salience among adolescents

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coef.	**(S.E.)**	**Coef.**	**(S.E.)**	**Coef.**	**(S.E.)**
Intercept	2.650***	(0.269)	2.660***	(0.264)	2.726***	(0.253)
Individual						
Age	0.017	(0.023)	0.008	(0.023)	0.007	(0.023)
Female	0.036	(0.030)	0.038	(0.030)	0.042	(0.029)
Denomination						
Catholic	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Muslim	1.280***	(0.072)	1.210***	(0.072)	1.177***	(0.080)
Other affiliation	0.668***	(0.088)	0.617***	(0.088)	0.599***	(0.094)
No affiliation	-1.097***	(0.035)	-1.101***	(0.036)	-1.178***	(0.038)
Socio-economic status	0.001	(0.001)	0.002+	(0.001)	0.002+	(0.001)
Track						
Academic	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Technical	0.007	(0.047)	-0.023	(0.045)	-0.032	(0.045)
Vocational	0.034	(0.049)	0.002	(0.048)	-0.006	(0.048)
Migrant background						
Ethnic Belgian	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
First generation	0.495+	(0.272)	0.456+	(0.272)	0.426	(0.261)
Second generation	0.314	(0.270)	0.331	(0.267)	0.311	(0.255)
Third generation	0.102	(0.275)	0.154	(0.272)	0.130	(0.261)
Ethnic minority friends	0.085***	(0.017)	0.088***	(0.017)	0.085***	(0.017)
Contextual						
School size	-0.012	(0.008)	-0.011	(0.008)	-0.009	(0.008)
Catholic school	-0.067	(0.048)	-0.071	(0.047)	-0.074	(0.048)
Percentage Ethnic Minorities	0.322**	(0.102)	-0.020	(0.127)	0.436**	(0.154)
Interaction						
First generation * Percent EM			0.786***	(0.204)	0.712**	(0.230)
Second generation * Percent EM			0.662***	(0.161)	0.598**	(0.188)
Third generation * Percent EM			0.070	(0.276)	0.048	(0.276)
Muslim * Percent EM					-0.399+	(0.218)
Other affiliation * Percent EM					-0.515	(0.316)
No affiliation * Percent EM					-0.821***	(0.157)
Variance						
School	0.012		0.011		0.011	
Origin	0.068		0.067		0.061	
Individual	0.681		0.677		0.672	
Deviance	8950.12		8926.383		8898.574	

*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05; + p<0.1. (Two-sided tests); $N_{individual}$ = 3612; N_{origin} = 48; N_{school} = 55

Figure 1: predicted effect of ethnic school composition, by migrant background



*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05; + p<0.1.