

Conversion: Conflict or Comfort?

WOMEN CONVERTING TO ISLAM IN THE
NETHERLANDS; HOW DO PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS
INFLUENCE THE CONVERSION, AND VICE VERSA?
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Introduction

Being a Muslim in the Netherlands comes with certain prejudices and a stigma. Ever since the events in September 2001, the worldwide media has painted a certain picture of Islam and Muslims. For example, in 2010 President Obama banned terms such as “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic extremism”, and “Jihad” from the documents outlining the U.S. national security strategy. He banned these terms because he saw that they created a prejudice against Islam in the public eye and in the media. Whenever a terrorist attack happens in the world, the media immediately blames it on Islamic terrorists. Even in cases where it turned out to be a Christian fanatic, such as the 2011 Norway terrorist attack.¹ This negative picture has influenced politics and the way people view this religion and its followers around the globe. When in 2014 a violent group of Muslims known as the “Islamic State (IS)” started wreaking havoc in the world, the media coverage of these events only made the image of Muslims and Islam worse.²

Many people in the West started to dislike, fear and judge Islam and Muslims, a phenomenon called islamophobia.³ One example that clearly shows this fear is the overestimation of the number of Muslims living in the Netherlands. A quantitative research conducted by Ipsos from 2016 shows that Dutch people believe that 19% of Dutch population is Muslim, while in reality only 6% is Muslim. This trend was also found in other European countries. For example, in France they found a large gap between people’s estimation (31%) and the real percentage (7,5%) of Muslims living in France.⁴

Another example that shows the fear of Islam may be found in the way people talk about the religion. In 2015 the Dutch TV channel the KRO-NCRV aired a show called “*Van Hagelslag naar Halal*”.⁵ This show followed three Dutch women who converted to Islam accompanied by their Dutch mothers on a trip in Jordan. During the introduction of the participants of this show one of the mothers said the following: “I am scared that if she (her daughter) gets into a relationship with an Islamic man, the only right she will have is the right to be in the kitchen and to have children. Then she will have to stay inside while her husband is out in some teahouse.”. While another mother said: “Her choice really goes against my beliefs. I think it is really weird she would pick Islam because I think they repress women.”.

The goal of the aforementioned television show was to heal the relationships between the daughters and the mothers. The first episode showed how the relationships had changed after

¹ Alghamdi, E. (2015). The Representation of Islam in Western Media: The Coverage of Norway Terrorist Attacks. ResearchGate: 198.

² Ruthven, M. (2002). Islam in the Media. In *Interpreting Islam*. SAGE Publications: 52.

³ Perocco, F. (2018). Anti-migrant Islamophobia in Europe. Social roots, mechanisms, and actors. REMHU: Revista Interdisciplinar Da Mobilidade Humana, 26(53), 25–40.

⁴ Het aantal moslims stijgt, maar met hoeveel? (n.d.). Retrieved 27 March 2020, from <https://nos.nl/1/2163084>

⁵ Translation: from a typically Dutch delicacy (Hagelslag) to an Islamic term (Halal).

the conversion. All said that their relationship had been good before the conversion but got worse or bad after. One daughter said “My mother talks about me like I am dead. Like she lost me, but I am still here, I am still the same, I am still her daughter.”. During the show they tried to create a better understanding for both sides. As such the television-show gave a great insight in the way a mother-daughter relationship can change when a daughter converts to the Islam, a religion that evokes fear in many people.

In this thesis, I am in particular interested in *relational* aspects of the conversion process: how conversion may change the relationship with close others (i.e. one’s parents, family, friends, God) and, vice versa, how relationships with close others (one’s parents, family) may affect how the conversion process proceeds.

Conversion is studied from different angles and disciplines. The academic study of conversion that pays attention to relational aspects of conversion (to Islam) seems to focus in particular on the importance of having a supportive relationship with people within the religion one is converting to.⁶ However, there seems to be less attention for the perceived support for the conversion (or disapproval) of close others (i.e. one’s parents, family) and changing relations during the conversion process.

There are two underlying questions:

1. How may conversion change the relationship with close others?
2. How may relationships with close others affect how the conversion process proceeds?

In order to answer these questions, we first look at the extent to which relational aspects play a role at all in the academic literature on conversion stages and on conversion motives. In the first chapter, we not only discuss theory, but also recent empirical study amongst women who have converted to Islam.

In the second chapter, we discuss a theory that focuses on relational ties between children and parents, but that has also been used to understand adult conversion motives: the attachment theory.

In the third chapter, we discuss a pilot survey study conducted amongst 30 Dutch women who converted to Islam, asking specifically about their perceived support of parents during conversion and (changing) relationships with parents, partners, and God.

⁶ Nieuwkerk, K. van. (2006). *Women embracing Islam: Gender and conversion in the West*. University of Texas Press: 233.

Chapter 1: Conversion to Islam

1.1 Introduction

A religious conversion is a life changing event. It changes a person's outlook on life and will impact day to day life. Conversion influences thoughts, actions, and social relationships. It is a personal process and can be different for every individual. To understand conversion better this chapter will give a few definitions of conversion and a few theories from the psychology of religion, but first we will look at conversion to Islam in the Netherlands.

Conversion to Islam in the Netherlands: some figures

In Islam, the rules to convert are quite simple. According to most denominations of Islam, everyone is born a Muslim. Therefore, it is not difficult to become a Muslim, you are merely re-establishing what you already are. All one needs to do is to declare the shahada, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. It literally means: "Formula of witness". The shahada is the declaration of the main dogma of Islam and reads as follows: *"I witness/declare that there is no God but God and I witness/declare that Muhammad is the Messenger of God."*⁷

In 2015, the Dutch media stated that each year around 500 women convert to Islam in the Netherlands. However, it is extremely difficult to trace these numbers exactly because they are not registered anywhere. Nevertheless, one scholar has written about the number of converts in the Netherlands in her article *"Muslim converts in the Netherlands and the Quest for a 'Culture-free' Islam"*. Vanessa Vroon-Najem is an anthropologist specialized in conversion to Islam. She is currently employed at the University of Amsterdam. Between 2006 and 2011 she did fieldwork at five Muslim women's groups in Amsterdam. In her article she states the following: *"In the Netherlands, conversion to Islam is a growing phenomenon."* She does acknowledge the difficulty in finding statistics on this, but sees the growing of organizations and platforms for converts as evidence of a growing Muslim population.⁸ The internet provides an easily accessible way of getting in contact with other Muslims and many organizations have taken advantage of this medium. The rise in the amount of these kinds of organisations that support new Muslims most likely represents the need for them.

Another method of trying to establish how many women convert to Islam in the Netherlands, is looking at the bigger numbers. According to the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) the percentage of Muslims in the Netherlands has stayed the same between 2010 and 2018. This amounts to approximately 6% of the population. The number of Muslims has increased, but it did so at the same rate of growth as the rest of the Dutch population. Therefore, it is still 6%.⁹

⁷ Shepard, W. E. (2009). *Introducing Islam*. Routledge: 6.

⁸ Vroon-Najem, V. (2019). *Muslim Converts in the Netherlands and the Quest for a "Culture-Free" Islam*. *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, n° 186(2), 33–51.

⁹ Statistiek, C. B. voor de. (N.d.). *De jaren tien in cijfers* [Webpagina]. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. Retrieved 19 April 2020, from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2019/53/de-jaren-tien-in-cijfers>

One platform for Dutch converts produced their own numbers. They claim there are about 17.000 converts in the Netherlands. The basis for this number comes from the CBS, which says there are 12.000 “native”¹⁰ Dutch Muslims. A “native” Dutch person is someone whose parents were both born in the Netherlands, and who themselves were also born in the Netherlands. The website turns this number into 17.000, because they include possible converts that do not fall within the guidelines for being a “native”. However, not all “native” Muslims are converts, many third-generation migrants that are Muslim have parents that were born in the Netherlands. The numbers provided by this organisation could be true, but they remain an estimation. Unfortunately, there are no hard numbers on this topic.¹¹

What is conversion? Some definitions

Conversion is an extremely complex phenomenon that comes in many shapes and sizes. It is a different process and experience for any individual that goes through it. Conversion has many different definitions; this thesis focussed on two of these. The first is by Nicolette Hijweege, a Dutch scholar who has published about the psychological aspect of converting. Her definition is “A change in the self within a social medium, in which new values are created to form the perception of reality.”¹²

The second is by Lewis Rambo, an important scholar in the academic field of conversion. He defines conversion as a complex process “that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, event ideologies, institutions, expectations and orientations.” He made a model containing different phases of conversion. In this model the relationships the convert has play an important role.

Both definitions stress the importance of social influences on the self. This is relevant for this research, because this thesis is interested in the relational aspects of conversion, which can be found in nearly all of the phase in Rambo’s model. Most clearly in the most important one: context. The term ‘context’ entails all different kind of contexts, for example the relationships the convert has create a context, because these close relationships have an influence on the convert during the conversion process.

What is changing during conversion and why?

Raymond F. Paloutzian is a scholar of psychology of religion. His book “*Invitation to the Psychology of Religion*” is a great introduction to this academic field. He makes a distinction between big and small belief changes. A small belief change is going from being uncommitted to a religion to being committed. A big belief change is converting from one religion to another

¹⁰ Autochtone Nederlanders.

¹¹ Aantal bekeerlingen in Nederland en België (statistiek). (2015, October 15). Stichting Bekeerling. <https://www.stichtingbekeerling.nl/aantal-bekeerlingen-in-nederland-en-belgie/>

¹² Translated by author. Hijweege 2004.

religion, or from no religion to a religion. An example of a small belief change is someone who was brought up in the Christian tradition, but who has never actively participated in Christianity, what becomes highly active in this religion. An example of a big belief change is when someone who is not affiliated with any religion becomes active in, for example, a local Christian denomination. A person who is not religious, can become a Muslim through a big belief change.¹³

After this distinction between small and big belief changes is established, Paloutzian turns towards the way in which belief systems are changed. He creates a diagram with three steps. The first step is called 'Inputs', which represents the different kinds of reasons a conversion can take place. The second step is 'effects on the meaning system components' in this step he dissected components of which a meaning system or religion is made up of. The last step is 'output', which means the kind of belief change that occurs. Either a small or a big belief change. The diagram looks as follows:

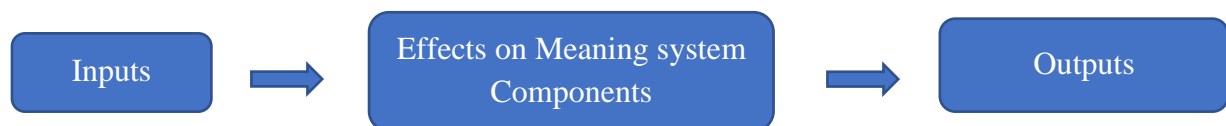


Figure 1: Paloutzian's diagram changes of the belief system¹⁴

He gives a few examples of possible inputs. One is doubt created by newly found scientific data or education. A second example is social influence, group pressure or an individual example can be reasons that affect the meaning system. The inputs can be received conscious or unconscious. A third example can be the need for something, for example a need for survival or a purpose. Attachment theory comes into play here. In the case of attachment theory, the "something" one needs is believed to be an attachment figure. The next chapter will go deeper into this theory. The components Paloutzian names in his diagram are beliefs, attitudes and values, goals, purposes, self-identity and worldview, and ultimate concerns. More components could be found in a belief system, he just provides these as examples.¹⁵

1.2 Conversion stages

Rambo's model: the importance of context

In order to clarify conversion, he created a model containing seven phases: context, crisis, encounter, commitment, consequences, interaction, and quest. They can occur in different orders depending on the convert.

¹³ Paloutzian, R. F. (2017). *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Third edition). The Guilford Press: 221.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Paloutzian, R. F. (2017). *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Third edition). The Guilford Press: 222.

The **context** phase is overarching, it is the environment in which the conversion takes place. This includes the place the convert lives in, meaning the context of the country and the town they live in, but it also means the immediate world of the converts. This means their family and other personal relationships.¹⁶

The **crisis** phase can be the start of the conversion, the reason someone starts to search for something like a religion. When an answer to the crisis is found, the convert has entered the **quest** phase. This phase is characterized by motivation “to experience pleasure and avoid pain, maintain a conceptual system, enhance self-esteem, establish gratifying relationships, and attain a sense of power and transcendence”¹⁷

In the next phase the convert seeks interaction with people representing the religion they are interested in, which Rambo calls **encounter**. When this interaction becomes more intense and regular, they come into the **interaction** phase. In this stage the convert learns about the rituals and practices from the religious community. The **commitment** phase is when the convert decides to officially convert. In Islam this would be the moment to declare the shahada. This openly admitting your conversion can lead to the next phase: **consequences**. This is the effect the conversion has on your daily life and the way your personal relationships react to the new you.¹⁸

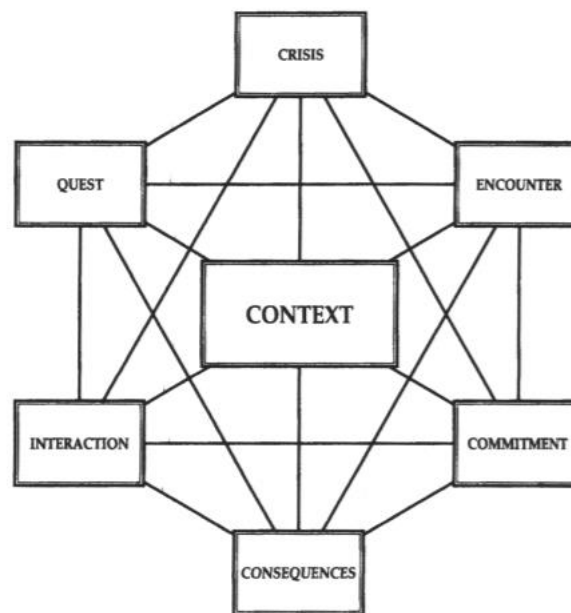


Figure 2: Rambo's table of conversion stages¹⁹

¹⁶ Rambo, L. (1993). Understanding religious conversion. Yale University Press: 22.

¹⁷ Ibid: 167.

¹⁸ Ibid: 216.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Personal relations in different conversion stages

All Rambo's phases contain an important element of personal relations. Since they all happen in the context of social relationships it only makes sense that they also have this element as well.

The **crisis** phase can be caused by a faulty personal relationship. For example, a death in the family or a breakup can be the trigger that causes a crisis. Both examples can lead to questions about life and death, or the meaning of life. The next paragraph will go deeper into this theory as we discuss conversion motives and bibliographical crises as a trigger to convert. The **quest** phase has the least influence on personal relationships because this phase is about personal motivation. Nevertheless, a convert can ask for help and support in this phase.

The next two stages have the most obvious element of personal relationships. The **encounter** and **interaction** phases are reserved for meeting, talking with, and learning from people from the desired religious community. Therefore, these stages are more about meeting new people and creating new relationships than they are about the way personal relationship influence the conversion process and vice versa.

This comes into play with the last two phases: **commitment and consequences**. What happens with the personal relationships in these stages are what this thesis is most focused on. The commitment phase is a difficult phase because it is the moment the convert tells their social circle about the conversion. Dutch converts usually are a part of an Islamic community that is influenced by a specific culture, like a Turkish or Moroccan one, since these are the two biggest Islamic communities in the Netherlands. The way these cultural groups practice Islam is influenced by their culture. Turkish Islam can differ from Moroccan Islam and so on. For example, the way a woman wears her headscarf is highly influenced by culture. Dutch Muslim converts, as a group, usually try to find a form of Islam without any influence from culture. They can do this, because they come from of a different cultural context and read the Islamic texts without the cultural bias of an Islamic inspired culture, thus they see things differently. A Dutch convert can either try to mix Dutch culture with Islam, adapt to the cultural influences from the community they become a part of, or they can try to look for a culture-free Islam.²⁰

The **consequences** phase comes with a number of difficulties. The first is the way your relations react to the 'new you'. This stage is where we see the relationships change, either for the best or for the worse. The second difficulty for women converting to Islam lies with their decision to wear a veil. If they do, they attract prejudice from Islamophobic Dutch people. Since Islam still does not have the best reputation in the Netherlands, many people view it as a religion that oppresses women. If a converted Dutch woman decides to wear a veil this will make her

²⁰ Vroon-Najem, V. (2019). Muslim Converts in the Netherlands and the Quest for a "Culture-Free" Islam. Archives de sciences sociales des religions, n° 186(2), 33–51: 43.

conversion visible for everyone to see.²¹ By making her new religious identity visible she becomes visible for people to judge her decision. Many people will assume she has to wear a veil because her Islamic husband tells her to, but even if they do not go that far, people will still see her differently. They will see her religious identity before they see her. This can create a challenge for converted Dutch women.

The third difficulty according to Vroon-Najem is the clash between Dutch identity and Islamic identity. Being a part of the Dutch culture is based on certain values that do not always go well with Islamic ones. Furthermore, Dutch culture has a few characteristics that are not compatible with mainstream Islam. An example is the drinking culture in the Netherlands. Many companies use their Friday afternoon as a time for drinking and socializing with colleagues. This so-called *vrinibo* (Friday afternoon drinks) is a nationally acceptable event in which Muslims have a harder time participating since they generally do not drink alcohol. This incompatibility can work two ways. For example, Dutch culture is not exactly known for its hospitality without an appointment. On the contrary, many cultures that have been influenced heavily by Islam, such as Turkish and Moroccan communities, are known for their hospitality. When you convert, this is something that needs to be adjusted, especially if you marry into an Islamic family.²²

1.3 Conversion ‘triggers’

Conversion motives: intellectual, moral, experiential, and social

Many scholars have tried to establish a few key motives for converting that apply to the majority of conversions. Not all have the same amount of motives, but there are few that come back in more studies. One scholar of the psychology of religion that mentioned conversion motives is Vassilis Saroglou. He devised a theory that divided religion into four psychological dimensions: believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging. He made an integrative model of the major aspects and dimensions of religion. One aspect is called “transcendence”, which consists of four motives for conversion: intellectual, moral, experiential, and social.²³

Many websites about conversion to Islam are a place where converts share their stories. When reading these conversion stories Saroglou’s conversion motives are found and confirmed. The following paragraph combines his motives with quotes from these websites.

The first motive is what Saroglou calls **intellectual**. It can be found in people who were looking for answers to life questions, such as why am I here? Or what happens after death? These people find the answers in Islam. One convert on this website says the following: “*I started wondering*

²¹ Ruthven, M. (2002). Islam in the Media. In *Interpreting Islam*. SAGE Publications.

²² Vroon-Najem, V. (2019). Muslim Converts in the Netherlands and the Quest for a “Culture-Free” Islam. *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, n° 186(2), 33–51: 40.

²³ Saroglou, V. (2011). Believing, Bonding, Behaving, and Belonging: The Big Four Religious Dimensions and Cultural Variation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42(8), 1320–1340:1325.

what am I doing in this world? What am I missing? There was an emptiness in my heart. I thought maybe there is a God or something. I started searching, what makes my life complete? Who am I? I started getting that kind of life questions”²⁴

The second motive, **moral**, is the need for a set of rules to live by. Some converts say they lived very loose lives, but that this lifestyle did not make them happy. Some people look for a set of rules to help them be good and morally just. These rules are then found in Islam. The following quote confirms this: *“The rules are strict, which makes it easier to follow for me. Christianity is too loose; you can do whatever you want.”*²⁵

The third motive is the **experiential** one and is expressed through the need of finding a place or space of their own. Many converts say Islam immediately felt like home, or it was the most logical way to become a Muslim. Another example can be a woman who has an unhealthy relationship with her mother, she is too attached and cannot seem to start a life of her own, without her mother. By converting to Islam, she can create a distance and create her own identity or space. One woman on a conversion website says the following: *“In desperation I went to the bookstore and bought a translation of the Quran. That day I started reading, and I felt like this book was written for me personally. I read so much, and I cried so much it blew my mind. I had never expected to find all the answers I was looking for.”*²⁶

The fourth motive is **social** and is about finding an Islamic partner or becoming friends with a group of Muslims. For example, one would feel comfortable with a group of Muslims in their class and become their friend, then they would learn more and more about what it means to be Muslim and become interested in converting. For example, the following quote from a convert on this website: *“At a certain moment I met a Moroccan girl, she became my co-worker. She wore a khimaar (veil) and I asked her why she did that. I had a huge prejudice against Islam, without knowing it. She then said why do not I take you with me to the Mosque someday. We did that and from then on, I went every Sunday. It just felt that good, I felt freedom. It really felt like this was it, this is what I want, this is what makes me happy.”*²⁷

Here is an overview of Saroglou’s four motivations for conversion, in the corresponding dimension of religion.

²⁴ Samantha werd moslim. (n.d.). Wat weet jij over de Islam? Retrieved 14 June 2020, from <https://www.bekeerlingen.nl/bekeerlingen/samantha-werd-moslim/>

²⁵ Wijnen, F. (2017, December 22). Hoe Ruby (21) zich bekeerde: “Alles wat in de Koran stond, klopte voor mij”. StampMedia. <https://www.stampmedia.be/artikel/hoeruby-21-zich-bekeerde-alles-wat-de-koran-stond-klopte-voor-mij>

²⁶ Ex-Atheïst Amber over de Koran: ‘Ik had het gevoel alsof dit boek voor mij persoonlijk was geschreven’. (2019, October 3). Stichting Bekeerling. <https://www.stichtingbekeerling.nl/ex-atheist-amber-over-de-koran-ik-had-het-gevoel-alsof-dit-boek-voor-mij-persoonlijk-was-geschreven/>

²⁷ Tamira werd moslim. (n.d.). Wat weet jij over de Islam? Retrieved 14 June 2020, from <https://www.bekeerlingen.nl/bekeerlingen/tamira-werd-moslim/>

	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Transcendence</i>	<i>Conversion motives</i>
1	Believing	Intellectual	Life questions
2	Behaving	Moral	Looking for rules to live by
3	Bonding	Experiential	Finding yourself in Islam or feeling at home in Islam
4	Belonging	Social	Meeting Muslims

Figure 3: Conversion motives according to Saroglou with examples from conversion stories

Relational ‘needs’ as trigger

The crisis stage of Rambo’s conversion model has been an inspiration for another scholar to create a conversion motive. This scholar is Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, she is a scholar who studies conversion in the United States and Germany. Currently she is a professor at Leipzig University.²⁸ She sees biographical crises as a beginning point for conversion. Her definition of conversion is the following: “*Conversion is a symbolic transformation of experiences that relate to a biographical crisis, that results in a major reorientation in life.*”. With this definition she means that a crisis in one’s life can lead to a conversion. The crisis leads to a reorientation on life, which can be found in a religion. Wohlrab-Sab makes a distinction between three types of biographical crises: (1) Implementation of honour, (2) methodization of life conduct, and (3) symbolic emigration and symbolic battle. The first is related to issues of sexuality and gender, such as children from broken families who look for boundaries related to sexuality because they have not got those from their parents. This is an interesting one, because attachment theory comes into play here again. The next chapter will go deeper into this, but here we see that children from broken families, or children that did not get boundaries from their parents are more likely to experience a crisis that leads to conversion. The second relates to social mobility. This can be a drug addiction or being on a path to criminal activity. Here Islam provides a new path to take in life that leads to better opportunities. The third relates to problems with belonging. Here Islam provides a community to be a part of, or a feeling of home.²⁹ Her types can be seen as what Paloutzian would call needs, however Wohlrab-Sab connects these needs to crises in one’s life.

According to the theory by Wohlrab-Sahr a motive to convert comes from a biographical crisis. For example, a divorce, drug problem or experiencing domestic abuse can lead to conversion as they are a biographical crisis. Famous Irish singer Sinéad O’Connor converted to Islam in 2018 after a life with suicidal thoughts and a drug overdose. However, beside this clear biographical crisis that fits into Wohlrab-Sahr’s theory, O’Connor has also been famous for

²⁸ Prof. Dr. Monika Wohlrab-Sahr | Kulturwissenschaften. (n.d.). Retrieved 18 April 2020, from <https://www.sozphil.uni-leipzig.de/cm/kuwi/mitarbeiter/monika-wohlab-sahr/>

²⁹ van Nieuwkerk, K. (2008). Biography and Choice: Female Converts to Islam in the Netherlands. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 19(4), 431–447: 435.

being a female priest within the Catholic church, for speaking about against abuse within the church and for openly attacking the pope. This shows that not only biographical crises are the reason to convert. Wohlrab-Sab's crisis theory is a useful one, but it is important to remember there are hundreds of other possible reasons for someone to convert. This is merely one theory.³⁰

1.4 Looking forward

This chapter looked at conversion in more depth. The phases by Rambo, the biographical crises, and the conversion motives are all relevant when studying women converting to Islam in the Netherlands. This thesis wants to focus on the family relationships the convert has. This comes back in Rambo's phases and in the first category of crises Wohlrab-Sahr describes. The next chapters will focus on what happens when converts arrive at the commitment phase. They show their conversion to the public and their social circle. This research is interested in how the reaction from close relations influence a conversion. In order to zoom into this relational aspect, the next chapter will discuss attachment theory, a much-tested theory in the psychology of religion.

Chapter 2 Attachment theory

Most people will agree that parents and upbringing have a huge influence on a person's later life. Childhood is an important factor in becoming the person one becomes later in life. Some scholars of the psychology of religion would argue that certain aspects of adult religiosity can be predicted by looking at a person's childhood. Especially by looking at the relationship a person developed with their parents during those early years. Insight into this relationship could even help predict if a person is more, or less, likely to convert to a new or different religion.³¹ The foundation for these statements is attachment theory. This chapter is dedicated to explaining this theory and to show its usefulness for the study of religion, and this particular research. First, this chapter explains how attachment theory came to be and what it is about. Second, it will provide three examples of religious studies that used attachment theory. Third, some critique on the theory will be explained. Last, this chapter looks at how attachment theory will be used in this thesis.

2.1 What is attachment theory?

Attachment theory was born in the 1930's, its creators were John Bowlby (1907-1991) and Mary Ainsworth (1913-1999). Bowlby studied at the University of Cambridge to become a child psychiatrist. Ainsworth was specialized in security theory. She wrote her dissertation about the idea that small children need a secure space with their parents in order to explore the

³⁰ Beaumont-Thomas, B. (2018, October 26). Sinéad O'Connor converts to Islam, taking new name Shuhada' Davitt. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/oct/26/sinead-oconnor-converts-to-islam-shuhada-davitt>

³¹ Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Shaver, P. R. (1990). Attachment Theory and Religion: Childhood Attachments, Religious Beliefs, and Conversion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 29(3), 315–334. JSTOR: 315.

world in a safe manner.³² Both Bowlby and Ainsworth lived in an academic world dominated by Freudian ideas. This clearly left a stamp on their attachment theory. A stamp that can still be seen in studies done on attachment, today. About half of the articles discussing attachment theory in relation to religion start with a variation of the following quote by Freud:

“The psychoanalysis of individual human beings, however, teaches us with quite special insistence that the god of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father, that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh and oscillates and changes along with that relation, and that at bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father.”³³

The use of this quote is understandable as it contains a lot of different ideas that can be used in attachment theory. Freud hints at the idea that our image of God is related to the image of our fathers and that our relationship with God depends on the relationship we form with them. An often-made claim based on this quote is that parental relationships have an influence on religious relationships.³⁴

Now that we established the academic context in which attachment theory was born, let us look at what it pertains. In short, attachment theory looks at the type of attachment a child has with their caregiver. Originally, there were three types of attachment: secure, insecure, and avoidant. Later a fourth was added: disorganized. The attachment type is established in the formative years of a child’s upbringing.³⁵ The types represent the level of security a child received in which he or she got to explore the world. This security influences the way this child sees the world during adulthood. Here we clearly see Ainsworth’s contributions to the theory.³⁶

Bowlby and Ainsworth performed extensive empirical research on attachment. As a child psychologist, Bowlby saw a lot of children and his observations helped create his theory. Ainsworth created an experiment to establish a child’s attachment to its mother. “The Strange Situation” was first coined by Ainsworth in 1969. This experiment is still used today and to see how it works videos of this experiment are easily accessible on sites such as YouTube. In most variations of the experiment, a mother and its child are placed in a room that is new to the child. The room is filled with toys and new and exciting items for the child to discover and play with. First the mother is with the child and plays along with the child. In most experiments a stranger is then sent into the room. The stranger and the mother interact, then the stranger starts playing

³² Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(5), 759–775: 759-760.

³³ Freud, S. (2003). *Totem and Taboo*. Routledge: 171.

³⁴ Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Shaver, P. R. (1990). Attachment Theory and Religion: Childhood Attachments, Religious Beliefs, and Conversion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 29(3), 315–334. JSTOR: 315.

³⁵ Zo zorg je voor een veilige hechting tussen jou en je baby. (n.d.). 24Baby.nl. Retrieved 14 June 2020, from <https://www.24baby.nl/baby/verzorging-baby/hechting/>

³⁶ Paloutzian, R. F. (2017). *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Third edition). The Guilford Press: 87-89.

with the child while the mother stops playing. Not long after, the mother is told to leave the room. This causes the child to start crying, the stranger will try to calm the child, which usually does not work. The stranger leaves and the mother returns. The essence of this experiment is found in the way the child reacts to the return of its mother. There are a few options for the child to react. The child can seek touch and comfort from its mother, after which they are calm and starts playing again. Another option is that the child will not be calmed and will even be angry when the mother tries to initiate playing again. The first reaction points to a secure attachment, the second to an insecure attachment.³⁷

2.2 Types of attachment

The type of attachment a child has can be used to predict and explain events and choices later in life. For example, a religious conversion, the way one behaves in a romantic relationship, and even the way one acts as a caregiver. Now we will take a closer look at the different general characteristics in each type of attachment. It is important to remember that this is a theory and there are always exceptions to these typologies. The characteristics raised in the next part are generalized. This thesis looks at the secure type and the anxious-preoccupied insecure type. Within the insecure type there are three different kind of types: avoidant, anxious-preoccupied, and disorganized. The avoidant and disorganized insecure type are not discussed in this thesis. When this thesis refers to the insecure type, it means the anxious-preoccupied insecure type.

Type 1: Secure

People who fit into the attachment type ‘secure’ are comfortable with intimacy and independence. They hold a positive view of themselves, their partners, and their romantic relationships. Their caregivers are described as warm and responsive, supportive but also helping in becoming independent. When the child in type 1 would meet a new person, their caregiver would be there to provide a sense of security. This makes the experience of meeting new people and exploring the world secure for the child, giving them the confidence to explore.³⁸

Type 2: Insecure

People in this type are seeking for large amounts of intimacy, affirmation, and acknowledgment from partners. This can lead to a high level of dependence on a relationship. Type 2 people may express high levels of worry, impulsive behaviour, and emotional expression in their relationship. As a child, these people have experienced a high level of inconsistency from their caregiver’s reactions. This caused an unsure and insecure home from which the child would

³⁷ van Rosmalen, L., van der Veer, R., & van der Horst, F. (2015). Ainsworth’s Strange Situation Procedure: The origin of an instrument. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 51(3): 264.

³⁸ Paloutzian, R. F. (2017). *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Third edition). The Guilford Press: 88-89.

discover the world. With one new thing the caregiver's reaction would be positive, with another it would be negative. This unpredictable behaviour creates confusion.³⁹

Effects of the types on religious conversion

As indicated before, the type of attachment can influence one's decisions later in life. In case of religious conversion there is a general correlation between a person's type of attachment and their likeliness to convert. On the one side, people who fit into the secure type of attachment are less likely to a convert to new or different religion. If they were raised within a certain religion, they are more likely to stay within that religion than those who do not fit the secure typology, and if they were raised non-religious they are more likely to stay non-religious. On the other hand, people in the insecure typology are more likely to convert to a new or different religion in their adulthood. In this typology people are looking for intimacy and affirmation, which they can get out of a relationship with a religious deity.

2.3 Researches of attachment theory in religious studies

Attachment theory shows that the quality of interactions with your caregiver at a young age influences your perspective on yourself and on your relationships. This goes for romantic relationships, friendship, and also for a potential relationship with God. Attachment theory has been used by many scholars in psychology, and in the psychology of religion. It can provide a useful tool to understand the relation between upbringing, parental relationships, and a relationship with God. In order to look at this specific relationship between a person and God, the next paragraph will provide a few example studies done in order to understand this attachment relationship. These empirical studies will lead us to two pathways a person can take when converting: the compensation pathway and the correspondence pathway. Both coined by Pehr Granqvist, a scholar specialized in psychology and attachment theory in various aspects of religion, who currently works at the University of Stockholm.⁴⁰⁴¹

Attachment to God Inventory

In order to use attachment theory on a relationship with God, we need to see if this kind of relationship is possible and if it is in the same league as a relationship with a parent or partner. One empirical study that has tried to prove this is possible was done in 2004. Richard Beck and Angie McDonald conducted a study involving three tests. The first was done with 507 undergraduate and graduate students from Abilene Christian University. The second test was done at the same university with 118 students. The third study was conducted under 109 adults who were a part of three churches adult education programs. After these tests they made a

³⁹ Paloutzian, R. F. (2017). *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Third edition). The Guilford Press: 88-89.

⁴⁰ Pehr Granqvist—Stockholm University. (n.d.). Retrieved 29 May 2020, from <https://www.su.se/english/profiles/pgran-1.186804>

⁴¹ Granqvist, P., Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2010). Religion as Attachment: Normative Processes and Individual Differences. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14(1), 49–59: 51.

survey which tested if a relationship with a god can fall within the attachment theory categories. They created the “Attachment to God Inventory”, which measured an attachment to God on two dimensions. The first dimension is avoidance of intimacy, the second is anxiety about abandonment. These dimensions were based on the criteria Ainsworth stated were needed to talk of an attachment bond. These criteria are: (1) maintaining proximity with the attachment figure, (2) seeing the attachment figure as a secure base of explorative behaviour, (3) considering the attachment figure as providing a haven of safety, and (4) experiencing separation anxiety when removed from the attachment figure. In their study they limited themselves to a Judeo-Christian God.⁴²

God Images

The second example of an empirical study focuses on God images. This means the way a believer views their God. For example: is it a loving or a vengeful God? This empirical study was done in 2014 by Duane Reinert and Carla Edward. They tested their thesis that God concepts would be influenced to some degree by attachment to the mother, under 223 students. Freud plays an important role in creating this thesis. His theory that God is formed after one’s image of an exalted father influenced Reinert and Edward in this study. They are interested in the difference between the attachment with mother and father. In their study they asked about the attachment with both parents and how the respondents imagined their God. The result showed that some aspects of a God image have to do with an attachment to the mother, and others with an attachment to the father. An image of a loving God is related to attachment to the mother. A controlling God is related to both parents, and a distant God is related to experiencing difficulties with both parents, but primarily with the father.⁴³

Conversion and attachment theory

The third example is an empirical study done by one of the leading scholars in the field of attachment theory and psychology of religion: Lee Kirkpatrick. He has especially written a lot about attachment theory in relation to conversion. In 1990 he published an article with Phillip Shaver in which they tried to find a correlation between the three attachment types and chances of conversion during adulthood. They published a call for respondents to participate in their study. They got 213 responses of people who filled out the survey. During their study they found that respondents who fell into the type avoidant (insecure), were more religious as adults than those who fell into the other two types. In the group of the people who fit into the avoidant category there were higher rates of sudden religious conversions. The conclusion of this study

⁴² Beck, R., & McDonald, A. (2004). Attachment to God: The attachment to God inventory, tests of working model correspondence, and an exploration of faith group differences. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 32(2), 92–103.

⁴³ Reinert, D. F., & Edwards, C. E. (2014). Attachment Theory and Concepts of God: Parent Referencing Versus Self-Referencing. *SAGE Open*, 4(4), 2158244014560547:1.

was that God and religion may function as a compensation for the avoidant attachment they had with their caregiver. God could be a substitute attachment figure.⁴⁴

The compensation and the correspondence pathway

Granqvist is a scholar who focusses on attachment and conversion to new age religions. In 2001 he conducted a study in Sweden. Its purpose was to test his compensation theory. His group of respondents contained of 193 participants from upper secondary school classes, Christian youth organisations, and new age establishments in Stockholm. As predicted, his theory was confirmed. The conversion to new age was directly linked to attachment insecurity.⁴⁵

This study is one of the foundations used by Granqvist for his compensation pathway. One aspect he stresses in that pathway is that people are more likely to turn towards God in times of need. He used the quote “There are no atheists in foxholes” to emphasise that people in crisis are more likely to act or become more religious. People are more likely to turn to God as a substitute attachment figure in situations including loss or separation from a primary attachment figure, war, and other crises. He also adds that sudden religious conversion is mostly found with people who have an insecure attachment relationship with their caregiver(s). However, this group can also find compensation for their insecure attachment with their parents, in a successful romantic relationship. In short, a person with an insecure attachment with their caregiver(s) is more likely to experience a sudden conversion. Either God or a romantic partner can be compensation for the insecure attachment with one’s parents.⁴⁶

Simultaneously, Granqvist also presented the correspondence pathway. In short this means that someone with a secure attachment with their caregiver(s) will also have a secure attachment with God, and someone with an insecure attachment will also have an insecure relation with God. The attachment type you have with your parents corresponds with the type of attachment you have with God. The type of attachment influences one’s image of God, a secure type will see God as a secure environment, while an insecure type will either be more comfortable in religions such as atheism, or see God as a more distant and punishing deity. Here the second mentioned empirical study about God images is influential.

2.5 Attachment theory in this research

Now that the possible flaws with attachment theory have been explained, it is time to look at the role of attachment theory in this thesis. Nicole Bourque, a scholar in social anthropology at

⁴⁴ Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Shaver, P. R. (1990). Attachment Theory and Religion: Childhood Attachments, Religious Beliefs, and Conversion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 29(3), 315–334. JSTOR:315.

⁴⁵ Granqvist, P., & Hagekull, B. (2011). Seeking Security in the New Age: On Attachment and Emotional Compensation. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40(3), 527–545:527.

⁴⁶ Granqvist, P., Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2010). Religion as Attachment: Normative Processes and Individual Differences. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14(1), 49–59:53-54.

the university of Glasgow⁴⁷, wrote a book chapter about the conversion process of women to Islam and creating a female Muslim identity. In her chapter she signals three issues that are neglected in current academic research on conversion, especially on women converting to Islam. The first issue is lack of consideration to how conversion to Islam requires a renegotiation of social, gender and national identities. The second is how these new identities are embodied through taking up bodily practices. The third is the importance of the wider context and interaction with other Muslims in creating an Islamic identity.⁴⁸

The three issues Bourque raises are important, and she tries to fill these gaps in literature by going deeper into these issues. Especially the third, the interaction with other Muslims, is indeed vital in the converting process and in forming a new religious identity. However, there is one important factor she and most other academic works miss: the interaction with the already established relationships during the conversion process, and the reaction of the parents, family, friends, and possible partner during the conversion process. In other words, the support or disapproval of the attachment figures in the convert's life. This is exactly the gap in academic literature that this thesis tries to fill.

Testing the compensation pathway

The focus of this thesis is on the influence personal relationships have on the conversion process of a female convert to Islam. Attachment theory can be used here to measure the relationship a woman has with her family, compared to the one she has with her newfound Islamic God. A part of this thesis is trying to figure out if these women filled a missing attachment with their caregiver with a new religion. Did they replace the attachment with their caregiver for an attachment to God? In a way we are testing the compensation pathway Granqvist introduced.

Testing the way the relationships change after the conversion

The second research question of this thesis is how the parent-child relationship changes after the conversion. In order to investigate this question further, the next chapter will introduce the quantitative explorative survey study performed for this thesis. Two exemplary questions that the next chapter tries to answer are: does converting to Islam have a negative or positive effect on the parent-child relationship? And how does the level of support the convert receives from their parents influence the way their relationship changes?

⁴⁷ Bloomsbury.com. (n.d.). Bloomsbury—Nicole Bourque—Nicole Bourque. Retrieved 30 May 2020, from <https://www.bloomsbury.com/author/nicole-bourque>

⁴⁸ Nieuwkerk, K. van. (2006). *Women embracing Islam: Gender and conversion in the West*. University of Texas Press:233.

Chapter 3: Results from an explorative survey study amongst Dutch female converts

Now that we have a better understanding of the underlying theories and academic discussions surrounding conversion, this chapter will present the data collected with the survey designed for this research. First, this chapter will introduce the aim of the survey and how it was designed, including a discussion on the two academically established indexes that were used. The second part of this chapter will present the results of the survey and will try to answer some of the research questions.

3.1 Procedure

In the period between the end of April and the beginning of June, this survey was open and distributed. It was sent to the authors personal network and it was distributed on websites that are meant for Dutch Islamic converts, for example <https://www.stichtingbekeerling.nl/>. By the time it closed there were thirty full and useful responses. These were all women of a variety of ages, born between 1971 and 2000, all of whom had converted to Islam. Most woman said that between the moment they wanted to convert and the moment they declared the shahada there was a period of less than one year.

3.2 Measures

The entire survey can be found as appendix 1. It is made up out of three components. The first part asks for background information such as age, gender, and home situation. The second part focusses on why the respondent converted to Islam and what their conversion process looked like. The third and most important part asks about the respondent's relationship with her direct family, other family, partner, and God. In order to get an accurate idea about these relationships two academically established surveys were incorporated in an adjusted way. The two surveys used are the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI)⁴⁹ and the Attachment to God Inventory⁵⁰ (AGI). Both were translated and shortened. They were translated because the survey was targeted to Dutch women, they were made shorter so the survey overall would not be too long and would be easier to fill in.

Parental Bonding Instrument

The PBI was created by Gordon Parker, Hilary Tupling and L.B. Brown, and is published for free use on the Black Dog Institute website.⁵¹ The goal of the instrument is to measure how a

⁴⁹ Cavedo, L., & Parker, C. (1994). Parental Bonding Instrument. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 29(2), 78-82.

⁵⁰ Beck, R., & McDonald, A. (2004). Attachment to God: The attachment to God inventory, tests of working model correspondence, and an exploration of faith group differences. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 32(2), 92–103.

⁵¹ See Appendix 2 for full Parental Bonding Instrument.

person is bonded or attached to their parents. It contains twenty-five questions about various attitudes and behaviours of parents. The respondent needs to answer these twenty-five questions for both their father and mother as how they remember them in the first sixteen years of their life. The PBI contains statements such as “My father spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice” or “My mother made me feel like I wasn’t wanted”. The respondent can decide between four options for each statement: very like, moderately like, moderately unlike, and very unlike. Not all items are scored in the same direction. The higher the score a respondent is believed to have had a better attachment relation with the parents.

For this survey only seventeen out of the twenty-five items were used, and they were asked about both parents at the same time.

Attachment to God Inventory

The AGI was created in 2004 by Richard Beck and Angie McDonald.⁵² They were influenced by the work of Lee Kirkpatrick and his theory that a person can create an attachment bond with God. They decided to create an inventory to measure this relationship. Chapter 2.3 of this research goes deeper into the theoretical background of the AGI.

The inventory is made up out of twenty-eight statements about one’s relationship with God. The respondent is asked to fill in if they agree with the statements on a seven-point scale, where one is ‘disagree strongly’ and seven is ‘agree strongly’. Some questions receive a reversed scoring. In the end the higher the score, the better the attachment relationship with God. For this survey ten of the twenty-eight statements were picked and translated.

3.3 Results

In this short survey with a small sample group, there are a few overarching themes that we can see. The most important question that this thesis is interested in how conversion may change the relationship with close others, and vice versa; how may the relationship with close others change the conversion process. In order to try and answer this, the survey asked about five important issues. The first is the perceived relationship with the converts parents before the conversion. The second is the total score on the parental bonding instrument (PBI), which shows the attachment level the convert has with their parents. The third is the perceived support of the parents during the conversion. The fourth is the perceived relationship with the parents after the conversion. The fifth is the total score on the attachment to god inventory (AGI), which shows the current level of attachment to God. However, first we will look at some descriptive findings relating to these five main points.

⁵² See Appendix 3 for full Attachment to God Inventory

Descriptive findings

Relationship parents

Only 30% of the respondent lived with their parents during their conversion. In response to the question if they felt supported in their decision to convert to Islam almost half said they felt they had to defend their choice a lot. Fifteen percent said they did feel supported by their parents. The rest did not feel supported, but also did not feel attacked.

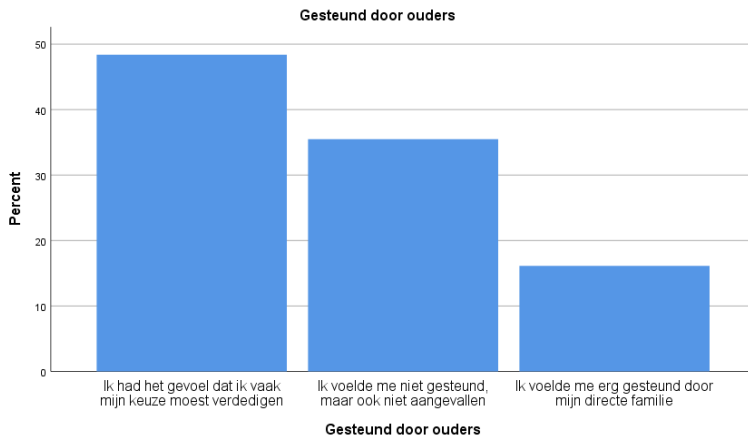


Figure 4: Perceived support received from the parents during conversion process

The reaction of the parents to the news of their daughter converting to Islam, were mostly neutral. However, there is a bigger group who experienced a negative reaction than a positive reaction. Only fifteen percent experienced a positive reaction, while forty percent got either a negative or an extremely negative reaction.

However, 77,4% of the women say that the relationship with their parent either did not change or got better after they became Muslim. This is an incredibly high percentage, especially since only 22,6% felt their relationship became worse. There is a correlation between the question asking the respondents if they felt supported in their conversion and this question about the change of the relationship. This means that if they felt more supported by their parents, their relationship stayed the same or got better.

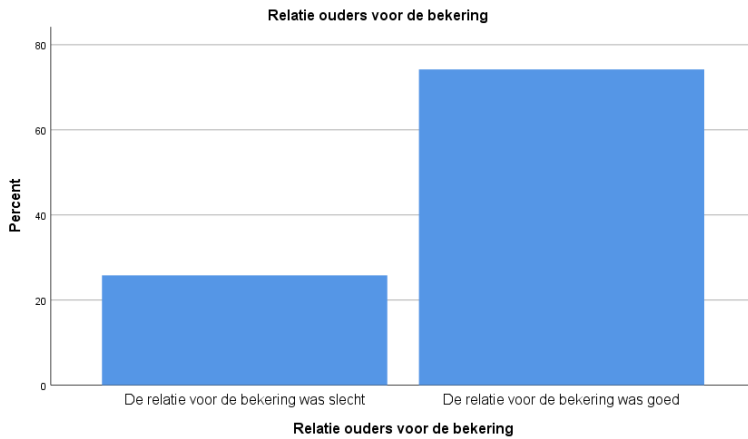


Figure 5: Perceived relationship with the parents before conversion

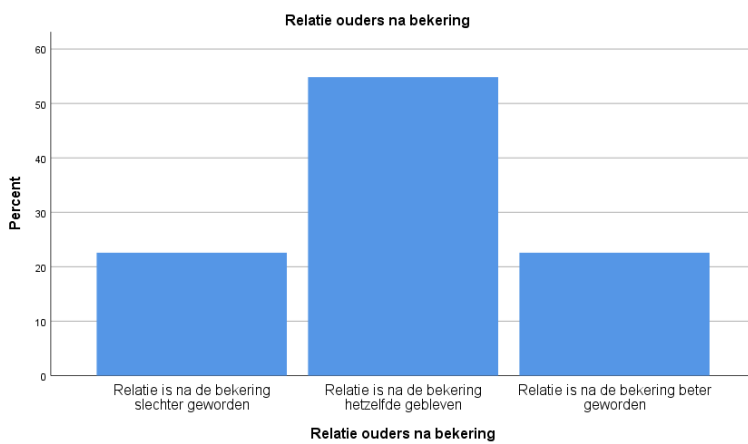


Figure 6: Perceived relationship with the parents after the conversion

Rituals and daily practices in Islam

Furthermore, we asked about certain rituals and practices in Islam, and the influence of their direct family during those rituals. The level of interest and participation these relatives show, could speak for the level of acceptance. For the converts it shows how comfortable they are with showing their Islamic side with these relatives.

We asked if they pray in the same room as their close family, and almost half of the woman say they never pray in front of their direct family.

The survey also asked about where these converts got support during Ramadan, and who in their social circle showed interest in the Ramadan by asking questions about the rules and maybe partook in a dinner during Ramadan. They were able to give more answers to this question. The table below shows how many times the respondents mentioned receiving support from a particular social group. According to the respondents, most support during Ramadan comes from God, then the partner and then friends and close family. Interest in Ramadan came

mostly from close family and the partner. Something that is noticeable is that 3 women added their in-laws as a source of support.

<i>Social group</i>	<i>Support during Ramadan</i>	<i>Interest in Ramadan</i>
<i>God</i>	20	-
<i>Partner</i>	17	6
<i>Friends</i>	13	4
<i>Close family</i>	10	13
<i>Further removed family</i>	1	2
<i>Religious community</i>	4	1
<i>In-law family</i>	3	-
<i>Co-worker or Neighbour</i>	-	1

Figure 7: Perceived support received during Ramadan

The last cluster of questions were about the reactions of their relations to their veil if the convert decided to wear a veil. 66% of the woman said their close family reacted in a negative way, when they first saw them wearing their veil. One respondent said that her mother especially had a very outspoken negative reaction, while the rest of the family was more neutral or positive. Another respondent said that her direct family was neutral or positive to her face, but that she later found out that behind her back they were being very negative.

Correlations

Parental bonding and attachment to God

The PBI and the AGI were put into this survey to help figure out the relation between the attachment relationship with your parents and the attachment to God. The PBI measures the attachment relationship between the respondent and their parents and the AGI measures the attachment relationship between the respondent and their God.

Bases on the compensation theory by Granqvist, one would expect that people who have a worse relationship with their parents are more likely to convert to a religion in an attempt to find an attachment person which whom they can have a healthy attachment.

The results of this small survey show that there is a small significant negative correlation of -0,29 between the PBI and the AGI. This means that when the score on the one is higher, the score on the other one is lower. This correlation confirms the idea that when the attachment with the parents is lower, the attachment with God is higher, therefore it confirms Granqvist's compensation theory.

Perceived relationship before conversion and parental bonding

The respondents were asked how they perceived the relationship with their parents before the conversion process. 74% said their relationship was good before conversion, while the rest said it was bad. This means 23 respondents perceived their relationship as good, while 7 respondents perceived it as bad.

Based on the fact that a higher score in the PBI would mean a better relationship with the parents, we would assume that the correlation between this and the perceived relationship before conversion would be a positive one. The results show a 0,36 correlation. This is a positive one. Therefore, we can say there is a possibility that a higher attachment to your parents could mean a better perceived relationship with them.

Perceived relationship before conversion and PBI versus perceived support

Combining the perceived relationship before the conversion and the score from the PBI together creates a good understanding of the relationship the converts have before converting. This, put against the level of support the converts felt during their conversion, can tell us something about how conversion influences personal relationships.

There are two possible ways of looking at the outcome for this. The first is that if the parent-child relationship is good, the parents do not have to fear their relationship getting worse because their daughter converts. If they have less to fear, they are possibly more likely to act in a supportive way during that conversion. Because their relationship is good, their relationship will not be influenced in a negative way. Furthermore, when the relationship is good, the parents might have seen the conversion coming. They might have seen their daughter gain an interest in Islam, and maybe have seen her change her behaviour. When the relationship with the parents is bad, they might be more likely to fear the relationship getting worse, and they might have not seen the conversion coming, and therefore will be less supportive during the conversion.

The second way we can look at this is if the parent-child relationship is good, the parents have more to lose. They might be more hurt by their child's decision and be less supportive during the conversion. While parents with a bad parent-child relation do not have a good relationship, they can lose more and can therefore be more supportive.

The PBI together with the perceived relationship the convert has with her parents against the perceived support during the conversion shows a significant correlation of 0,54. This means that the higher the score in the PBI and the perceived relationship, the higher the chance the parents will be more supportive during the conversion. This means that the first option sketched above is confirmed.

Perceived support and perceived relationship after conversion

Half of the women in this survey did not feel supported during their conversion, they felt attacked and the need to defend their decision. Only 15% did feel supported, while the other 35% felt neither supported nor attacked. We also asked the respondents how they viewed their parental relationship after the conversion. 22,6% said their relationship had gotten worse, 22,6% said their relationship had gotten better, and 54,8% said their relationship had stayed the same.

Between the perceived support and the perceived relationship after the conversion there is a correlation of 0,60. This means that when a convert has received more support from her parents during the conversion process there is a high possibility their relations will be better after the conversion.

Attachment to God and perceived relationship after conversion

A correlation between these two variables can prove the correspondence theory in a reverse way. Attachment theory shows that once a secure attachment is established, the other relationships in that persons live also become more secure. This would mean that when a convert has established a secure relationship with God, which is measured by the AGI, their relationship with their parents should become better. However, there is a negative correlation of -0,27, which means that when their relationship with God got better, their relationship with their parents did not. Therefore, this correlation does not support the correspondence theory, however it does support the compensation theory. It is possible that these women did not feel supported during their conversion and they found a compensating, better relationship with God.

However, this negative correlation can be explained, the small data set this thesis relies on has a group of 54,8% that says their relationship has stayed the same. 22,6% say their relationship got better and 22,6% says it got worse. Perhaps because the biggest percentage of this group still perceive their parental relationship the same, it is difficult to say that their newfound attachment with God made their relationship better. Any explanation given; this negative correlation brings the most discussion. A bigger data sample could provide more insight on this topic.

3.4 Conversion motives

One open question in the survey asked about if they missed something in their life before converting to Islam, and if so, what this was. The most frequent answers were about finding peace, warmth, love, answers and a set of rules or guidelines for life. Other answers were about finding a goal, a truth, and a community. Some even made the comparison with finding a new home. The same themes came up with the open question “Why did you convert to Islam?”. Most respondents talked about their search for something to give them answers and meaning. They describe how they found Islam and started to read more and more about it. During this research they found that Islam gave them answers and a feeling of warmth, peace, truth, and

home. Most women came into contact with Islam through friends and other social contacts. Interesting here is that the answer given by the respondents all fit into the different kind of conversion motives Saroglou established.

	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Transcendence</i>	<i>Conversion motives</i>	<i>Times mentioned in survey</i>
1	Believing	Intellectual	Life questions	6
2	Behaving	Moral	Looking for rules to live by	10
3	Bonding	Experiential	Finding yourself in Islam or feeling at home in Islam	28
4	Belonging	Social	Meeting Muslims	2

Figure 8: Conversion motives according to Saroglou, with examples from conversion stories, and how many times these motives were mentioned by the converts in the survey.

Conclusion

This thesis consists of a literature study focussed on conversion theories and attachment theory, and an explorative survey study. In academic literature we see that there is a gap in the way personal relationships influence the conversion. Scholars are interested in the relationship between the convert and other people of that faith, but they gloss over the already established relationships such as family and partners. That is why this thesis looked at Dutch women converting to Islam and focused on the relationship side of their conversion. We looked at two important questions:

1. How may conversion change the relationship with close others?
2. How may relationships with close others affect how the conversion process proceeds?

Firstly, we established that conversion is an impactful process for a person to go through, it is different for each individual, and it has an influence on their everyday life. In Rambo's conversion model we saw that it also influences the converts personal relationships and vice versa. In his model the 'context' phase even includes the context created by personal relationships. His model shows that conversion and close relationships of the convert have an impact on each other.

Secondly, Saroglou's conversion motives contain two categories in which personal relations play an important role: the experiential and the social category. There are many conversion motives, but in the explorative survey study most reasons given for converting fit into these two categories. Showing that relational needs are an important conversion motive.

Thirdly, attachment theory was used as a way of investigating the influence of parental relationships on the conversion and vice versa. Especially the idea that a bad attachment to one's parents increases the chance of them converting. Attachment theory in this way is also focussed on the way personal relationship influence the conversion. The survey results show that attachment theory gets confirmed in the case of Dutch female converts. There is a negative correlation between an insecure attachment with one's parents and a better attachment with God. In this case the Islamic God. Therefore, we can say that attachment theory work for female Muslim converts. In addition to this, the numbers from the explorative survey shows that the compensation pathway by Granqvist also works. However, according to these same numbers the correspondence pathway does not. These two conclusions about Granqvist pathways raise the most discussion. In order to be absolutely certain of these conclusions a bigger data sample is needed.

Critique

The main theory in this thesis is attachment theory, which is a great addition to the study of psychology of religion and can help explain why some people are more likely to convert. Nevertheless, it is not perfect. It is important to look at a few issues within this theory. The same goes for the explorative survey conducted for this thesis. The following paragraph will discuss some of the critique point in attachment theory and the explorative survey.

Monotheistic God as attachment figure

The part of attachment theory that says one can form an attachment with a God is mainly talking about a Judeo-Christian God. The questions asked in the attachment to God inventory are mostly guided towards the relationship with the Christian God. For most questions, the Islamic God also works, but for a two or three the underlying idea is different for Muslims. Nevertheless, it can be used to measure the relationship with the Islamic God if these questions are removed. The Islamic God also fits into this idea, but for polytheistic religions this might be more difficult to measure, because people will need to make a relationship with multiple gods or supernatural forces.

The bigger picture

Attachment theory looks at the attachment relation between children and parents, without looking at why parents act a certain way. For example, someone who themselves had an insecure attachment relationship with their parents can create the same kind of relationship with their child. There could also be other issues in a person's life that make them form an insecure attachment relationship with their child. Perhaps attachment theory could take these larger trends more into consideration. Most studies only look at the way it effects the child. More studies should be done on the way in influences the caregiver(s).

Lack of empathy

There is a lack of empathy in the studies done about attachment theory. Secure is good, insecure is bad. This black and white distinction takes away context and the fact that people can grow. When a person is able to fill their attachment issues in a relationship, a job, a hobby or in a religion, that could really change a person's life and perspective. This is not only bad; it has a good side and can be meaningful for a person's life. Research around attachment theory could be elevated if the bigger picture and what it means for people's lives was taken more into account.

Retrospective questions in the survey

Most questions in the survey asked about the past. In doing this the respondents had to think back in retrospect. This means that they might remember certain moment or feelings differently than they were. Women whose parental relationship got better after converting, might look back on their past relationship in a more positive way then it was. While women who now have a bad parental relationship might project these negative feelings on the past.

The size of the sample

The size of data collection of this explorative survey is small. With only 30 respondents it is difficult to say a result goes for the entire group of Muslim female converts. However, for such a small data collection it is remarkable so many correlations were found. When a bigger study on this topic is conducted, with a bigger sample size, it is extremely likely these same correlations will be found.

Answering the research questions

When answering the first question we look at the influence of the relationship with the parents on the conversion. The results of the survey show, that only 15% felt supported during their conversion. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that when a relationship with the parents is better, they are more supportive during the conversion. Furthermore, we see that an insecure attachment with the parents leads to a more secure attachment with God. These two results represent the way in which the parental relationship influences the conversion.

When answering the second question and looking at the influence of the conversion on the personal relationships we see that after the conversion 77% of the respondents say the relationship with their parents got better or stayed the same. Even more interesting is that when the convert establishes a secure relationship with God, the relationship with their parents becomes better. This means that through converting to Islam most respondents create a better or equal relationship with their parents.

It could be good to know for Dutch parents that even if your daughter converts to Islam, your relationship has a 77% change of staying equally good or becoming better. This is ground-

breaking news and further research is needed to see if this percentage stays as high when tested in a bigger group, if it the same with male converts, and if parents view this the same. If this does hold up, it is good to know not only for parents, but for the entire Dutch society. Especially, because there is a fear in the Netherlands about losing your children when they convert.

An example is in the Dutch show ‘*Van hagsag naar halal*’, which was discussed earlier in this thesis. It was a show made and produced by the public broadcasting station, and it emphasised the rift that grew between mother and daughter, because the daughters converted to Islam. One of the daughters on the show said that she felt like her mother talked about her as if she had died. They did not do anything together anymore. Another mother and daughter couple still lived together in the same house, but because of the daughter’s conversion they did not even have dinner together anymore. This emphasis on the gap between mother and daughter because of Islam is one that is felt throughout Dutch society.

Women who convert because they fell in love with a Muslim, have an extra stigma. Many conversion stories stress the fact they did not convert for their Islamic partner, because this is the common connotation. People might assume a woman converted to Islam because her partner made her. However, if a bigger scale research confirms the finding from this thesis that relationships with parents don’t change that much, or change for the better, this could have a positive impact on this fear and the ‘bad’ reputation Islam has in general. It could show parents they have nothing to fear.

In conclusion, this thesis confirms attachment theory in the group of Dutch women converting to Islam. Furthermore, it shows that personal relationships can have an effect on the conversion process. The insecure attachment can be a part of the reason one wants to convert and that when a close relationship is better, they are more likely to support the conversion process. Lastly, it shows how the personal relationship can change because of the conversion. Namely, when the convert creates a secure attachment with God, their personal relationship can become better. Also, the parent-child relationship that was good before conversion has a high change of staying good or becoming better. With a bigger research on this matter, the negative way Islam in the Netherlands is viewed, can perhaps become more nuanced.

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Appendix 1: Survey

Thesis Survey

Hallo, mijn naam is Laurance en ik ben momenteel bezig met mijn afstudeerscriptie aan de Universiteit Leiden. Binnen mijn master Religiewetenschappen doe ik onderzoek naar Nederlandse vrouwen die zich bekeerd hebben tot de islam. Ik ben benieuwd naar de invloed van de reactie van familie en een eventuele partner op het bekeringsproces. Het onderzoek is anoniem en je antwoorden worden strikt vertrouwelijk behandeld. Heel erg bedankt dat je de tijd wil nemen om mij hierbij te helpen door de volgende enquête in te vullen. Hier zal je ongeveer 10 minuten over doen.

In welk jaar ben je bekeerd tot de islam?

Hoe lang duurde het bekeringsproces (vanaf het moment dat je je wilde bekeren tot het moment dat je de shahada uitsprak)?

- Minder dan 1 jaar
- Tussen 1 en 2 jaar
- Langer dan 2 jaar
- Anders, namelijk _____

Waar/hoe ben je voor het eerst in aanraking gekomen met de islam?

- Vrienden of sociale contacten
- Familie
- Internet of andere media
- De moskee
- Zelf op zoek gegaan
- Anders, namelijk _____

Waarom ben je bekeerd tot de islam?

(In hoeverre) gaf de islam je iets wat je miste? Zo ja, kan je uitleggen wat je miste?

De volgende paar vragen gaan over de relatie met je directe familie (vader/moeder/voogd/broers/zussen) en hoe zij op je bekering reageerden.

Woonde je tijdens je bekeringsproces in bij je directe familie (vader/moeder/voogd)?

- Ja

- Nee
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wanneer heb je je directe familie (ouders/verzorger/broer/zus) verteld dat je wilde bekeren tot de islam?

- Binnen 1 week na besluit
- Binnen 1 maand na besluit
- Binnen 3 maanden na besluit
- Binnen 1 jaar naar besluit
- Anders, namelijk _____

Hoe reageerde je directe familie op het nieuws dat je je tot de islam wilde bekeren?

- Heel positief
- Positief
- Neutraal
- Negatief
- Heel negatief

Welk gevoel gaf je directe familie je tijdens je bekeringsproces?

- Ik voelde me erg gesteund door mijn directe familie
- Ik voelde me niet gesteund, maar ook niet aangevallen
- Ik had het gevoel dat ik vaak mijn keuze moest verdedigen

Op welke manier heeft je bekering de relatie met je directe familie veranderd?

- De relatie was voorheen goed en is nu nog beter
- De relatie was voorheen goed en is hetzelfde gebleven
- De relatie was goed en is nu slechter geworden
- De relatie was niet goed en is nu beter
- De relatie was niet goed en is hetzelfde gebleven
- De relatie was niet goed en is nu slechter geworden

Heb je het gevoel dat je directe familie voldoende weet over de Islam?

- Ja, ze hebben zich ingelezen en stellen me soms vragen om een beter beeld te krijgen
- Ze hebben de basiskennis
- Nee, ze hebben zich er niet in verdiept en hebben een verkeerd beeld van wat de islam inhoudt
- Anders, namelijk _____

De volgende stellingen gaan over de houding en het gedrag van je ouders richting jou. Geef aan in hoeverre je je ouders herkent in de stellingen zoals je ze herinnert in de eerste 16 jaar van je leven.

	Erg herkenbaar	Redelijk herkenbaar	Niet herkenbaar	erg	Helemaal herkenbaar	niet
Leken emotioneel koud tegenover me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Leken mijn problemen en zorgen te snappen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Waren liefdevol tegenover mij.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Wilden graag dat ik mijn eigen beslissingen maakte.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Probeerden mij te controleren.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Respecteerden mijn privacy niet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Genoten ervan om dingen met mij te bespreken.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Glimlachten vaak naar me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Behandelden mij als een kind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Snapt niet wat ik nodig had en wat ik wilde doen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Lieten mij mijn eigen keuzes maken.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Gaven me het gevoel dat ze me niet wilden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Praatten niet veel met me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	
Probeerde me het gevoel te geven dat ik afhankelijk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	

was van mijn
ouders.

Gaven me het
gevoel dat ik niet
voor mezelf kon
zorgen.

Gaven me alle
vrijheid die ik
wilde.

Lieten me uitgaan
wanneer ik wilde.

De volgende paar vragen gaan over de relatie met je verdere familie (opa/oma/tante/oom/neven/nichten) en hoe zij op je bekering reageerden.

Wanneer heb je aan je verdere familie (opa/oma/oom/tante/neef/nicht) verteld dat je moslim wilde worden?

Binnen 1 week na besluit

Binnen 1 maand na besluit

Binnen 3 maanden na besluit

Binnen 1 jaar na besluit

Anders, namelijk _____

Hoe reageerde je verdere familie op het nieuws dat je je tot de islam wilde bekeren?

Heel positief

Positief

Neutraal

Negatief

Heel negatief

Welk gevoel gaf je verdere familie je tijdens je berekingsproces?

Ik voelde me erg gesteund door mijn directe familie

Ik voelde me niet gesteund, maar ook niet aangevallen

Ik had het gevoel dat ik vaak mijn keuze moest verdedigen

Op welke manier heeft je bekering de relatie met je verdere familie veranderd?

- De relatie was voorheen goed en is nu nog beter
- De relatie was voorheen goed en is hetzelfde gebleven
- De relatie was goed en nu slechter geworden
- De relatie was niet goed en is nu beter
- De relatie was niet goed en is hetzelfde gebleven
- De relatie was niet goed en is nu slechter geworden

Heb je het gevoel dat je verdere familie voldoende weet over de islam?

- Ja, ze hebben zich ingelezen
- Ja, ze stellen me soms vragen om een beter beeld te krijgen
- Ze weten de basis
- Nee ze hebben zich er niet in verdiept en hebben een verkeerd beeld van wat de Islam is
- Anders, namelijk _____

De volgende vragen gaan over je relatie met een eventuele partner voor, tijdens en na je bekering. Bij elke vraag is er de optie om aan te geven dat je op dat moment geen partner had.

Had je voor je bekering een partner?

- Ja
- Nee
- Anders, namelijk _____

Indien je een partner had voor je bekering, was dit een goede relatie?

- Ja
- Nee
- Ik had geen partner voor mijn bekering
- Anders, namelijk _____

Ben je nu nog steeds bij dezelfde partner als voor je bekering?

- Ja
- Nee

- Ik had geen partner voor mijn bekering
- Anders, namelijk _____

Had je tijdens je bekering een partner?

- Ja
- Nee
- Anders, namelijk _____

Reageerde je partner positief op je bekering?

- Ja
- Nee
- Ik had geen partner tijdens mijn bekering
- Anders, namelijk _____

Voelde je je gesteund door je partner tijdens je bekering?

- Ja
- Nee
- Ik had geen partner tijdens mijn bekering
- Anders, namelijk _____

Als je nu een nieuwe partner zou mogen uitkiezen, is het dan een belangrijke factor dat deze moslim is?

- Ja
- Maakt me niet veel uit
- Nee
- Anders, namelijk _____

De volgende tien stellingen gaan over je relatie met God. Geef aan in hoeverre je het eens bent met de stellingen. 1 is helemaal niet mee eens, 4 is neutraal en 7 is helemaal wel mee eens.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	helemaal			neutraal			Helemaal
	niet mee						mee eens
	eens						
Ik maak me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
zorgen om							

mijn relatie met God.

Als ik niet zie dat God in mijn leven werkt, dan word ik boos en verdrietig.

Ik ben geheel afhankelijk van God in alle aspecten van mijn leven.

Soms heb ik het gevoel dat God meer van anderen houdt dan van mij.

Mijn ervaringen met God zijn emotioneel en intiem.

Ik prefereer het om niet geheel afhankelijk te zijn van God.

Zelfs als ik faal, weet ik dat God tevreden met me is.

Ik geloof dat mensen niet afhankelijk moeten zijn van God op het gebied van dingen die ze voor

zich zelf
moeten
doen.
Ik wil graag
bevestiging
van God dat
God van mij
houdt.
Ik laat God
de meeste
beslissingen
in mijn
leven
maken.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hoe vaak ga je naar de moskee?

- 1 keer per week of vaker
- 1 keer per maand
- Alleen met speciale gelegenheden
- Nooit
- Anders, namelijk _____

Bid je weleens in het bijzijn van je directe familie?

- Ja, regelmatig
- Ja, als het niet anders kan
- Nee, nooit
- Anders, namelijk _____

Bid je weleens in het bijzijn van je verdere familie?

- Ja, regelmatig
- Ja, als het niet anders kan
- Nee, nooit
- Anders, namelijk _____

Bid je weleens in het bijzijn van je partner?

- Ja, regelmatig

- Ja, als het niet anders kan
- Nee, nooit
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wat vind je directe familie ervan als je meedoet met de Ramadan?

- Leuk, ze steunen me altijd in die periode
- Prima, maar ze snappen het niet
- Neutraal, ze hebben zich er nooit over uitgesproken
- Stom, elk jaar zeggen ze weer wat een onzin het is
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wat vind je verdere familie ervan als je meedoet met de Ramadan?

- Leuk, ze steunen me altijd in die periode
- Prima, maar ze snappen het niet
- Neutraal, ze hebben zich er nooit over uitgesproken
- Stom, elk jaar zeggen ze weer wat een onzin het is
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wat vind je partner ervan als je meedoet met de Ramadan?

- Leuk, mijn partner steunt me altijd in die periode
- Prima, maar mijn partner snapt het niet
- Neutraal, mijn partner heeft zich er nog nooit over uitgesproken
- Stom, elk jaar zegt mijn partner weer wat een onzin het is
- Anders, namelijk _____

Van wie ontvang jij steun tijdens de Ramadan? Je mag meerdere antwoorden kiezen.

- Mijn directe familie
- Mijn verdere familie
- Mijn partner

- Mijn vrienden
- Mijn gemeenschap uit de moskee
- God
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wie heeft interesse getoond in de Ramadan door te vragen wat de regels precies zijn of door een keer mee te doen aan iftar o.i.d? Je mag meerdere antwoorden kiezen.

- Mijn directe familie
- Mijn verdere familie
- Mijn partner
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wat was de eerste reactie van je directe familie toen ze je voor het eerst zagen met een vorm van hoofdbedekking? Indien je geen hoofdbedekking draagt kan je deze vragen over slaan.

- Positief
- Neutraal
- Negatief
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wat was de eerste reactie van je verdere familie toen ze je voor het eerst zagen met een vorm van hoofdbedekking? Indien je geen hoofdbedekking draagt kan je deze vragen over slaan.

- Positief
- Neutraal
- Negatief
- Anders, namelijk _____

Wat was de eerste reactie van je partner toen deze je voor het eerst zag met een vorm van hoofdbedekking? Indien je geen hoofdbedekking draagt kan je deze vragen over slaan.

- Positief
- Neutraal

- Negatief
- Anders, namelijk _____

Als laatste onderdeel volgen hier een aantal achtergrondvragen.

Geboortejaar: _____

Geslacht

- Vrouw
- Man
- Anders
- Zeg ik liever niet

Huidige relatiestatus

- Alleenstaand
- Relatie
- Verloofd
- Getrouwd
- Geweduwd
- Anders, namelijk _____

Huidige woningstatus

- Inwonend bij ouders/voogd/familie
- Op kamers
- Alleen wonend
- Met partner
- Met partner en kinderen
- Anders, namelijk _____

Heb je nog vragen of opmerkingen?

Dit is het einde van de enquête. Heel erg bedankt voor het invullen!

Appendix 2: Parental Bonding Instrument

This questionnaire lists various attitudes and behaviours of parents. As you remember your MOTHER in your first 16 years would you place a tick in the most appropriate box next to each question.

	Very like	Moderately like	Moderately unlike	Very unlike
1. Spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did not help me as much as I needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Let me do those things I liked doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Seemed emotionally cold to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Appeared to understand my problems and worries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Was affectionate to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Liked me to make my own decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did not want me to grow up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Tried to control everything I did	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Invaded my privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Enjoyed talking things over with me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Frequently smiled at me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Tended to baby me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Did not seem to understand what I needed or wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Let me decide things for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Made me feel I wasn't wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Could make me feel better when I was upset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Did not talk with me very much	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Tried to make me feel dependent on her/him	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Felt I could not look after myself unless she/he was around	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Gave me as much freedom as I wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. Let me go out as often as I wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Was overprotective of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Did not praise me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Let me dress in any way I pleased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 3: Attachment to God Inventory

The following statements concern how you feel about your relationship with God. We are interested in how you generally experience your relationship with God, not just in what is happening in that relationship currently. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Agree Strongly

- ____ 1. I worry a lot about my relationship with God.
- ____ 2. I just don't feel a deep need to be close to God.
- ____ 3. If I can't see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.
- ____ 4. I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life. (R)
- ____ 5. I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.
- ____ 6. It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.
- ____ 7. Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.
- ____ 8. My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional. (R)
- ____ 9. I am jealous at how close some people are to God.
- ____ 10. I prefer not to depend too much on God.
- ____ 11. I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.
- ____ 12. I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.
- ____ 13. Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me. (R)
- ____ 14. My prayers to God are often matter-of-fact and not very personal.*
- ____ 15. Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from "hot" to "cold."
- ____ 16. I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.*
- ____ 17. I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.
- ____ 18. Without God I couldn't function at all. (R)
- ____ 19. I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.
- ____ 20. I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.
- ____ 21. I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.
- ____ 22. Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God. (R)
- ____ 23. I am jealous when others feel God's presence when I cannot.
- ____ 24. I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.
- ____ 25. I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.
- ____ 26. My prayers to God are very emotional. (R)
- ____ 27. I get upset when I feel God helps others, but forgets about me.
- ____ 28. I let God make most of the decisions in my life. (R)