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Elite and popular religiosity among Dutch-Turkish muslims in the Netherlands

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1. Introduction

In this first chapter of our study of elite and popular religiosity among Dutch-Turkish Muslims, we present the fundamental outlines of our research. The first section (1.1) will discuss my positionality as a Turkish Muslim researcher in the Netherlands. The second section (1.2) will give a brief overview of the current situation of Islam in Europe and in the Netherlands. This will be followed by a survey of previous studies on Islam in Europe and in the Netherlands (1.3). In the subsequent section (1.4), we will describe why we are interested in studying the phenomenon of elite and popular religiosity. Following this, we will focus on the definition of elite and popular religiosity specifically with reference to Islam (1.5). The objectives, problems and research questions of the present study are set out in section 1.6. The methodology of our study is outlined in section 1.7. Then we shall present the conceptual model in subsection 1.7.1. The final section (1.8) will provide an overview of the remaining chapters of the study.

1.1. *Positioning Myself Within the Research*

In the present study, I follow two distinctive paths: first, analysing from my position as an insider, as a member of the group; second, analysing in light of my position as an outsider, as a sociologist of religion. This is first and foremost an empirical study of religiosity among Dutch-Turkish Muslims that was conducted by a Turkish Muslim scholar who lives in the Netherlands. It is important, therefore, to begin this study with a discussion of my own positionality as a Muslim researcher. My background was relevant to the research methodologies and the conceptual development used in this thesis. As an insider, I had access to many private and public religious experiences such as *ṣalah*, *ṣawm*, *ḥajj* etc. while these experiences took place. At the same time, I evaluate these practices in the light of a social scientific study of religion. In this section, therefore, I will discuss the experienced benefits and possible challenges that were produced by my specific background.

One of the essential instruments of the ethnographic method is participant observation. This includes gathering social data in their natural social setting, in which researchers have access to the meaning of events and social interactions as understood by the group or organization under study. Different typologies of participant observers were developed according to their role during the course of research. The basic typology formulated by Gold (1958) defined four so-called field roles: ‘the complete participant’, ‘the participant-as-observer’, ‘the observer as participant’, and ‘the complete observer’. In the ethnographic part of this study, I usually took on the role of ‘complete participant’ (in virtue of my background) and of ‘participant-as-observer’, in order to gain access to a wider group of participants in their social connections. These insider positions provided me with excellent opportunities for in-depth interaction with various sections of the Turkish community in the Netherlands, in order to understand the meaning they ascribed to culture and religion within the context of a multicultural society.

The reason for accepting an insider role was to get close to the behaviours and everyday experiences of the Turkish Muslim community in the Netherlands. “Getting close”, according to Emerson (1995, pp. 1-2) requires “physical and social proximity to the daily rounds of people’s lives and activities; the field researcher must be able to take positions in the midst of the key sites and scenes of others’ lives in order to

observe and understand them” (for examples of this positionality, see: 4.3.1 Qualitative Data Collection; Participant Observation).

The particularities of my life made this process even easier. I was born in Germany in 1982. I was educated in Turkey until I was 9 years old. I first came into contact with the Turkish community in the Netherlands when the Turkish Presidium of Religious Affairs (Diyamet) sent my father and his family to the Netherlands to work there as an imam in 1992. During his period of office in the Netherlands, I attended several cultural and religious courses and public meetings with the Turkish community in Deventer. I went to the Hagenpoort, one of Deventer’s primary schools. Through my studies at the Hagenpoort I built up good relations with numerous friends. Although I was a child, these early meetings provided the early experience that inspired my future research interests. After nearly three years in the Netherlands, I returned to Turkey in 1996, when my father’s period of office ended.

Many issues and experiences persisted in my imagination when I returned to Turkey. I developed a greater interest in reading literature and watching broadcasts about Turkish communities, the largest ethnic group amongst Muslims in Europe. Accordingly, an intellectual enthusiasm emerged to conduct this research even before entering the field.

In August 2007 I made my second contact with the Turkish community in the Netherlands, and during my MA studies in Leiden I attended various volunteer activities. During my studies at Leiden University I built up good relations with plenty of people and Muslim foundations with various social-cultural and political backgrounds. This second round of experiences strengthened my interest in studying the Turkish Muslim community in the Netherlands. When I began my PhD research in Leiden, I understood that my earlier observations and involvement in various gatherings and ceremonies were all significant sources of background information.

In addition to these advantages, researching from an insider position provided me with some further critical benefits. Because I already had a network of people who trusted me, visiting cultural establishments, religious and political institutions, weekend schools and sport clubs was easy. I attended meetings, lectures, ceremonies and various other events of these organizations to observe the processes while they were taking place. Moreover, the extensive knowledge about my own religion that I

possessed prevented me from committing basic mistakes. Perhaps the greatest advantage was the capacity for *empfinden* (intuition or empathy), the ability of taking the native point of view: only people who have or have had religious experiences are able to understand the meaning of religious commitment (Geertz, 1999).

The insider position I took on had some disadvantages as well. Someone living within a religious tradition may not be able to maintain the necessary distance to conduct a reliable and valid analysis. This is partly due to intellectual limitations: one is so familiar with one's own tradition that it is almost impossible to analyse one's own background with a critical eye. A religious attitude can also blind a scholar to possible connections between religious expressions and their social context. A sociologist is hardly able to construct an interpretation of a 'pure' religion that exists independently of a social context. Strong loyalty to a particular religious tradition can create difficulties in producing unbiased analyses of other traditions (Furseth, Repstad, & Woodhead, 2006, pp. 206-7). To avoid these problems, I made every effort to benefit from the outsider's point of view that came from a team of supervisors with expertise in various fields, including sociology, psychology, anthropology of religion and history of religions.

Moreover, the goal of the present study is not to evaluate (either positively or negatively), but simply to describe the diversity, similarity and complexity of human religious beliefs and behaviours. Therefore, in order to overcome various difficulties that stem from the insider approach, the present study opts for a *mediating stance*. This approach attempts to remain neutral when it comes to questions of truth and value; instead, it focuses on issues of accurate description and comparison at the expense of drawing value judgments. This approach attempts to bracket out, or avoids asking, all questions about the truth of a person's claims, termed methodological agnosticism (MacCutcheon, 1999). From this point of view, when it comes to writing and analyzing the data coming from both qualitative and quantitative research, this study is a form of social scientific research that is fully in line with the methods of sociology of religion.

1.2. *Islam in Europe and the Netherlands*

Islam is the second largest and fastest-growing world religion today, with majority populations in 56 countries extending from North Africa to Southeast Asia and encompassing significant minorities in Europe and the United States (Lipka & Hackett,

2007). The Netherlands is one of the countries in which Islam is a fast-growing religion (CBS, 2009a). Although this growth is fairly recent, Muslims are no strangers to the Dutch society. The Netherlands became familiar with Muslims centuries ago in its role as a trading nation and colonial power (Rath, Meyer & Sunier, 1997). Before the Second World War, small numbers of Indonesian students visited the Netherlands, their colonial ‘mother country’, and in the 1950s a few Moluccans (from Indonesia) and Hindustani Surinamese (of Indian descent) decided to settle there. These communities consisted mainly of Christians and Hindus respectively, but they included small numbers of Muslims as well. The number of Muslims increased significantly after 1965 as a result of the arrival of foreign workers and their families from North Africa (Morocco) and Turkey. The estimated number of Muslims in the Netherlands in 1971 was approximately 50,000; in 1975 about 100,000; in 1995 about 626,000 (Rath, 1997, p. 389) and in 2012 about 825,000 or 4.5% of the Dutch population (CBS, 2012). In-depth interviewing in 2015 showed about 5% to be Muslim.¹

There are many different groups of Muslims in the Netherlands, of different denominations and countries of origin. If we look at the ethnic origin², we see that the vast majority (two-thirds) of Muslims are of Turkish or Moroccan descent. According to the latest estimate of CBS, there are 296,000 Muslims of Moroccan descent and 285,000 Muslims of Turkish descent living in the Netherlands (CBS, 2009a), which accounts for 68% of all Muslims in the country (See Figure 5 in the appendix two for Muslims in the Netherlands by ethnic origin).

Debates on ‘European Islam’ figure largely in the discussion of whether Islam has already undergone a process of localization by adapting to the European context, or whether it is and will “remain an alien transplant” (Yükleyen, 2009). Cherribi (2003, p. 196) observes that “over the past three decades Islam has become increasingly

¹ Up to a few years earlier, the number of Muslims was estimated on the basis of the religious makeup of the country of origin of the parents of citizens. Following this method, the number of Muslims was overestimated. For example, in 2004, the CBS estimated the number of Muslims in the Netherlands to be 944,000 (almost 6% of the Dutch population) (CBS, 2006, 2009b). In 2010, Kettani estimated the number to be 966.000, amounting to 5.8% of the Dutch population (Kettani, 2010).

² Here, ‘ethnic origin’ means belonging to or deriving from the cultural or religious traditions of a specific country.

visible in the European public space”. The appearance of Islam took the Dutch by surprise. At the height of secularization, the country was surprised to be confronted with communities in which religion is very much alive and flourishing, and is furthermore a noticeable basis for social organization (Maliepaard & Gijsberts, 2012). Muslims currently make up about five percent of the total population³ and Islam has become a cultural factor in Dutch society.

Despite Islam’s rapid growth in Europe and the Netherlands, many in the West know little about the religion and are only familiar with the actions of a minority of radical extremists. Islam has had a significant impact on world affairs, both historically and in the current era (Cesari, 2015; Ramadan, 2009b; Shadid & Koningsveld, 2002b). Muslims understand Islam as more than a religion: it is a comprehensive way of life that includes spiritual, social, economic and political dimensions (Turner & Nasir, 2013; Turner, 2003a, 2003b). The reality of European Islam is also very diverse (Cesari, 2015). The differences are related to national, cultural, religious and linguistic elements and these elements definitely remain important (Dassetto, Ferrari, & Maréchal, 2007 p. 3; Huijnk, 2018; Yükleyn & White, 2007). Anyone working on the sociology and anthropology of Islam will be aware of this extensive diversity in Muslim beliefs and practices. The first problem is therefore one of organizing this diversity in terms of an adequate concept (Asad, 1986, p. 5). Unfortunately, this challenge has not yet been met successfully with the existing conceptualizations and the use of the twin concepts “Islam/Islamic” does not express a coherent object of meaning (Ahmed, 2016).

The Direction of Islam in Europe

For centuries, Muslim countries and Europe have engaged one another through theological dialogues, trade and diplomatic missions, and power struggles. Over the last thirty years, however, and to a large extent as a result of globalization and migration, the debate has ceased to be a debate of remote and isolated communities and has become a debate of endogenous, face-to-face cultural and religious interaction. The recurrent question nowadays is: are Islamic religious principles compatible with liberal secular European values? (Cesari, 2015, p. 1). There are several models that try

³ See Figure 7 - Population of the Netherlands from 2010 to 2015, by religion

to answer this question and try to explain the direction of Islam in Europe by focusing on a particular aspect of Muslim immigrant life.

On the one hand, there are some studies that suggest that an inner incompatibility between Islam and the West determines the direction of their religious choices. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States, the train bombings in Madrid of 11 March 2004, and the London metro bombings of July 2005 have increased the tensions between European society and its Muslim minorities and lent support to the essentialist argument of an inner incompatibility between Islam and Western democratic, liberal, and secular culture. Some scholars suggested that Islam was the new ‘other’ of ‘the West’ incompatible with Western values of freedom, liberty, and democracy. Political scientist Samuel Huntington (1993) suggested that global politics would be dominated by a “clash of civilizations” in which Islam would replace Communism as the “other” of the Western world. Historian Bernard Lewis supported these predictions with historical arguments about an inner incompatibility between Islam and Western culture. According to his arguments, the textual sources and historical development of Islam are inherently hostile to democracy, freedom, liberalism and even peace. He argued that this inner structure of Islam would not change over time and was not adaptive, either in Europe or in Muslim societies (Lewis, 1990).

Other scholars, on the other hand, with representatives such as Bulliet (2004), Bassam Tibi (2001, 2014), Mohammed Arkoun (1996, 2003), Nasr Abu Zayd (2006), and Tariq Ramadan (1999, 2004, 2009, 2012) reinterpret Islam in accordance with democracy, liberty, and secularism in Europe. Bassam Tibi proposes the emergence of Euro-Islam, a form of Islam that is assimilated into the secular European public sphere (2014, 2001). This Euro-Islam would limit itself to the private sphere, be pursued as an individual form of spirituality and would assure peaceful Muslim participation in European cultural pluralism. Tibi speaks out in favour of an enlightened and open-minded Islamic identity that would be compatible with European civic culture. Bulliet argues that Islam and Christianity have the same cradle of a common civilization from which they descended “as siblings” in the sixteenth century. He emphasizes the similarities in the developments and experiences of the two civilizations (2004).

In the present study, we are planning to explore the inner differences of Dutch-Turkish religiosity in relation to social, economic, and cultural aspects. By means of

this exploration we intend to examine the possible directions Islam is taking in Europe. We seek a middle ground between two types of essentialist argumentation: one is to theorize incompatibility between Islam and European culture, and the other is to theorize compatibility between them. As many scholars who study Muslim society have noted, Islam, like any other religion, does not develop in a monolithic form, whether it is hostile to European values or assimilated, as the term 'Euro-Islam' suggests. It develops in a multiplicity of forms, such as political Islam, official Islam, popular Islam, spiritual Islam and radical fundamentalism, combining both radical and moderate religious voices. This inner-Islamic difference is important in order to understand what Muslims make of their religion in Europe, and to grasp the direction that Islam is taking on the continent. This then brings us to the argumentation suggested by Nielsen (1999, 2007), in which he points to the fact that since there is more than one way of being European, in terms of religious practice, culture, and identity, there are more ways than one for Muslims to become European.

1.3. Academic Research into Islam in Europe and the Netherlands

Studies on Islam in Europe address multiple subjects such as the development of mosques and Muslim associations, the struggle to establish Muslim schools in the European context (Daun & Walford, 2004; Doornik, 1991; Wetering & Miedema, 2012), the status of religious leaders such as imams (Boender, 2007; Ghaly, 2008), the history of Islam in the West (Berger, 2014), and social responses to the establishment of Muslim institutions (Boender, 2006; Esch & Roovers, 1987; Rath, Penninx, Groenendijk, & Meyer, 2001; Rath, 1996, 2005; Rath, Meyer & Sunier, 1997; Waardenburg, 1991). Others have elaborated specific social or institutional aspects of Islam in Europe, such as the problems of Muslim youth (Nilan, 2017; Vertovec & Rogers, 1999), political participation (Cesari, 2013; Klausen, 2005; Shadid & Koningsveld, 1996), legal questions and secularism (Berger, 2013; Cesari & McLoughlin, 2005; Ferrari & Bradney, 2000; Nielsen, 1979, 1987; Rohe, 2007), radicalization of Muslims (Coolsaet, 2008; Pargeter, 2008), and conversion to Islam (Köse, 1996), the complexity of the increasing presence of a multitude of Muslims (Vinding, Račius, & Thielmann, 2018). There is hardly a topic relating to Muslims or Islam that has not been researched in Europe (Cesari, 2015).

Islamic studies has also become a well-established discipline in the Netherlands (Berger, 2015). From the 1980s onwards, scholars increasingly turned their attention to the religious beliefs and practices of Muslim migrants in the Netherlands (Broex, 1982; Custers, 1985; Koningsveld & Shadid, 1992, 1997). Initially, the focus was on Islam in general (Jansen, 1987; Koningsveld, 1982) and the ways in which it was practiced by Muslims (Landman, 1992a, 1992b; Waardenburg, 1983). Some of the literature was about Islamic education and how it should be provided by schools (Ter Avest & Bakker, 2013; Esch & Roovers, 1987; Genç, Ter Avest & Miedema, 2011; Rietveld-van Wingerden et al., 2009; Ter Avest & Rietveld-Van Wingerden, 2016; Wagtendonk, 1987). Some studies focused on Islamic minority law (*fiqh al-aqalliyāt*) (De Kroon, 2016; Shadid & Koningsveld, 1996a).

After the 1990s, a tradition of anthropological and ethnographic research developed concerning Muslim experiences of religion and religious identity (Andree & Jonge, 1990; Ter Avest & Bakker, 2009; Dessing, 2001; Rath et al., 1997; Sunier, 1996; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2010; Verkuyten, Thijs, & Steven, 2012; Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009).

In the 2000s, while the public and political debate on integration focused increasingly on Muslims, academic research rose to the challenge in order to answer basic questions such as: Who are the Muslims?, What do they want? and What is the role of Islam in their lives? This research into the praxis of Islam would soon dominate the study of Islam in the Netherlands (Berger, 2015). This resulted in studies on a diversity of issues, such as religion and culture (Buijs, 2009; Buitelaar, 2006; Huijnk, 2018; Phalet & Wall, 2004), Muslim youth (Bartels, 2000; De Koning, 2011, 2008; Heijden, 2009; Nabben, Yeşilgöz & Korf, 2006; Pels, Gruijter, Doğan & Hoek, 2006; Phalet, Lotringen & Entzinger, 2000; Roeland, Aupers, Houtman, De Koning & Noomen, 2010), everyday lived Islam (Dessing, 2013), mosque architecture (Arab, 2013; Roose, 2009), female circumcision (Bartels, 2004; Dessing, 2001; Kolfshoeten, 2004; J. Smith & Longbottom, 1995), choice of marriage partners (De Koning & Bartels, 2005; Hooghiemstra, 2003; Speelman, 2001), experience of the public sphere (De Koning, 2010), headscarf issues (Hoekstra & Verkuyten, 2014; Lorasdağı, 2009a, 2009b; Moors, 2009; Motivaction, 2011), socio-psychological matters (Hoffer, 2009; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2012; Speelman, 2016; Verkuyten, 2010; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012), use of multi-media (Konijn et al., 2010). After

that, many studies on radicalization and orthodox trends among young Muslims began to appear (Cherribi, 2010; De Koning, 2009, 2013; Gielen, 2008; Komen, 2014).

Challenges in Studying Islam

As is understood from this large body of research, the examination of the religiosity of Muslim individuals has gained increasing salience, and the 'native voice' has become an important topic nowadays. However, very little information has been gathered about the daily practices of Muslims in ways comparable to how information has been gathered about other religious groups. In this regard, sociology, psychology and anthropology of religion - specifically the European social sciences - still remain marginal when it comes to Muslims and production of data that can be compared to those existing for Protestants, Catholics, or Jews (Cesari, 2015, p. 3).

One of the problems here is the scant attention paid to non-Christian religious experience. In the last few decades, approaches to religious orientation employed to measure various ways of being religious have emerged strongly in Western scientific literature, focusing in particular on Christian religious experience. The divisions that have been applied in the study of religion draw on a range of terms such as 'authoritarian' and 'humanistic' religion (Fromm, 1950), 'primary religious behaviour', 'secondary religious behaviour' and 'tertiary religious behaviour' (Clark, 1958), 'committed' and 'consensual' religion (Spilka & Allen, 1967), 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967), 'mythological' and 'literal' religion (Hunt, 1972), Religion as 'ends', religion as 'means' (Batson, 1976), 'high-involvement religion' and 'low-involvement religion' (Beit-Hallahmi, 1989) and so forth. To a certain extent, these various terms and propositions used in different disciplines exhibit characteristics comparable to those of 'elite' and 'popular' religiosity, as conceptualized by scholars studying Islam.

Although the notion of elite and popular religiosity has been in circulation since the 17th century, its usage in both theoretical and practical Islamic studies was vague and ill-defined until the last few decades, when there was an increase in studies with this angle. However, field studies in this area have been few compared to theoretical studies (Çapçioğlu, 2004, p. 210).

This religious diversity forms a challenge for Turkish research in sociology of religion of Islam. The challenge lies in the task to find the appropriate measurements

that will allow us to comprehend the different characteristics of religiosity in Turkey. The measurements which assume a monolithic and one-dimensional Turkish Islam no longer seem to be sufficient. There is a growing need to assess the varieties of religious orientations, such as intrinsic versus extrinsic, ultimate versus instrumental, personal versus institutional motivations in ritualistic dimensions; esoteric versus exoteric, differentiated versus undifferentiated knowledge in the intellectual dimension (see section 3.3).

Adaptation of Scales in Studying Islam

At the end of the 20th century, scholarly interest expanded to include living Muslim peoples as a subject of study, and studies in the field of sociology gained in importance through this time.⁴ Many multidimensional religiosity scales have been proposed in recent years (see Appendix five: Measurements in Turkish Sociology and Psychology of Religion). They are either inspired by or adapted from European or American religiosity scales and have been translated into Turkish (Zuhal Ağilkaya-Şahin, 2012). The most influential approach to developing religiosity scales in Turkey is the multidimensional approach of Glock and Stark (1969). Early efforts (e.g. Yaparel's (1987) Religious Life Inventory) as well as later attempts (e.g. Ayten's (2009) Brief Islamic Religiosity Scale) referred to Glock and Stark's (1969) model and developed multidimensional religiosity scales for the study of Turkish Islamic religiosity.

Allport & Ross' concept of religiosity is another inspiration to Turkish sociology and psychology of religion research, when it comes to developing measurements of religiosity. Scales based on religious orientation (e.g., Hoge, 1972) have been identified as suitable for measurements in different religious contexts since they do not refer to a single explicit religious system (Karaca, 2001a). Kayıklık (2000) was one of the researchers who adapted the Religious Orientation Scale by Allport & Ross (1967) to Turkish culture. With minor differences, Gürses (2001) advanced an equivalent measure. According to their results, religion is an aim for the intrinsic religious person. Hökelekli (2005) defined this kind of religiosity as '*psychological needs religiosity*'

⁴ Over the last two decades, the number of field studies has exceeded theoretical studies in Turkey. According to Şerif Mardin, field studies in sociology of religion that are conducted to explore the Islamic understanding of the masses supply more important and valuable data than theoretical or normative studies of the country's religious landscape (Mardin, 2012).

in relation to the functions of religion. In contrast, for the extrinsic religious person, religion is a means by which he/she intends to achieve goals such as social acceptance.

The elite and popular religiosity scale developed in this study is inspired by both the Glock and Allport scales and will be the combination of these two. In chapter 3 we will discuss this issue in depth by indicating pros and cons of these two measurements.

1.4. *Elite and Popular Religiosity - Contested Concepts*

If we look at the comprehensive academic literature on popular religiosity, the difficulty of our task is immediately apparent: scholars do not even agree on the choice of a term to refer to the phenomenon. In our view this is mainly due to the fact that they come from considerable different scientific backgrounds. Many academic disciplines, in particular since the 1970s, have contributed to the study of popular religiosity: social sciences (sociology, anthropology, psychology), religious studies (comparative, historical), theology (systematic, liturgical, practical) have approached this complex phenomenon from different viewpoints, creating the confusion mentioned above. Examples of terminological differences are diffused religion, folk religion, mass religion, common religion, popular piety, popular faith and popular Islam. We should indicate that the term ‘popular religion’ is preferred in Anglophone literature, while the term ‘popular religiosity’ is found in other language areas, such as in German (Volksfrömmigkeit or Volksreligiosität), Italian (religiosità popolare) and Spanish (religiosidad popular) (Zaccaria, 2010, p. 4). These examples make us understand Badone’s (1990, p. 4) comment that “as a scholarly category popular religion is problematic”. This causes frustration among scholars about a term whose meaning has become increasingly less clear over the past few decades (Carrol, 1992, p. 6), so much so that some have advocated abandoning it (Christian, 1981; Grehan, 2014). Given the complexity of the debate on popular religiosity, we definitely cannot hope to offer a comprehensive, unifying conceptual definition. Instead, in line with Berlinerblau, we suggest that the term must be used with some caution, thereby making it clear that the term cannot be regarded as unproblematic and conceptually unambiguous (Berlinerblau, 2001, p. 607).

However, this does not mean that the term is abandoned in the present study. On the contrary, we will use it, but, rather than looking for just one academically unifying, acknowledged term, we will attempt to clarify what we mean by the term ‘popular’

within ‘popular religiosity’ as employed by us in our research. This means that instead of a conceptual universal definition, we will offer an operational contextual definition of both elite and popular religiosity. Namely, we will offer a list of contents, motivations and cognitive styles that, in our view, characterize popular religiosity, which differ from the contents, motivations and cognitive styles that characterize elite religiosity. These can be analytically and empirically investigated in the Dutch-Turkish Muslim community (see 3.3).

It can be said that no universally accepted definitions of Religion, Culture, and Popular Religion have been produced. Working definitions are not necessarily perfect, complete, or universally accepted, but they can provide a practical starting point for further exploration (Clark, 2012, pp. 2-3). Contextualization of our object of study will enable us to overcome the lack of consensus among scholars of popular religiosity: the attempt to offer a-historical and universal definitions of religion (Asad, 1993, p. 29). From this perspective, religion is not considered as absolute in the trans-historical and transcultural sense but is subject to historical and cultural differences. Considering Berger’s approach (2014, p. 26), when we speak of ‘Islam’, this is with the understanding that these notions and their interpretations are specific to their time and place, whether as a doctrine or a cultural system. Therefore, our approach to elite and popular religiosity in this study can be seen as the opposite of universalisation: the elite and popular religiosity that we are dealing with is neither a-historical nor universal in character, because we investigate elite and popular religiosity in Muslim society, more precisely in the Turkish Muslim society, and more specifically in the Dutch-Turkish Muslim society existing in the Netherlands.

1.5. Definition of Elite and Popular Religiosity

Most researchers who have written about religion in general seem to agree that there is no single religious orientation, but rather a wide range of different experiences that can be focused on religious objects (Allport, 1950; Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 1996; Spilka & Allen, 1967; Weber, 1963)

Many scholars who study Muslim society have also noted that Islam, like all religions, is not monolithic. Although most Muslims adhere to certain fundamental tenets, the practices, interpretations, images and realities of Islam differ across time and space (Ahmet, 2016). Max Weber indicated that investigators of human culture do

not want to discover universal rules that will help them to explain a particular culture; but rather want to understand the uniqueness and particularity of a culture (1949, p. 72).

The variety of Muslims living in Europe in terms of regional origin and ethno-national identity plays an important role in the make-up of Islamic religiosity in Europe, because the Islamic orientation in the countries of origin is still influential on Muslim immigrants, especially when it comes to Turks (Huijnk, 2018, p. 83). Olivier Roy argues that ethno-cultural differences are going to disappear as Muslims in Europe de-link culture from religion (Roy, 2004). However, he notes that, in comparison with other Muslims, Turks tend to preserve their language and ethnonational identity (Ibid, 123). Other scholars suggest that the religious and ethno-national identities of Muslims in Europe are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing (Cesari, 2004, p. 178). Observations on Turkish Muslims in the Dutch society confirm this (Yükleyen & White, 2007). The ethno-national division among Muslims justifies examining the diversity of Islam within one group, such as Pakistani, Moroccan, or Turkish Muslims, because the religious organizations of Muslims are divided along ethno-national lines.

The focus on one faith group, however, bears the risk of constructing Muslims as a coherent group while ignoring the inner-Islamic difference and the characteristics that some of them share with other individuals and groups (Spielhaus, 2011). There are various sources of religious diversity within a single ethno-national Muslim community, and Turkish society today experiences various types of religiosity as well. Data from both theoretical and practical studies confirm the existence of different religious orientations (Akşit, Şentürk, Küçükural, & Cengiz, 2012; Arslan, 2003, 2004, 2008b; Coştu, 2009; Kirman, 2005; Tanyu, 1976). Therefore, the inner-Islamic difference to which we draw attention here is of great importance in understanding and explaining this religious diversity. Taking this inner-Islamic difference into account, this study is concerned with investigating the distinctive characteristics of Islam in Turkish culture. In order to do so, we suggest two conceptions related to the Islamic tradition, namely *khawāşş* (elite) and *‘awāmm* (popular).

The notions of *khawāşş* and *‘awāmm* have deep roots, dating back to the initial period of the Muslim tradition. Before offering our contextual and operational definition, we would like to introduce some earlier approaches to these concepts. There are two general approaches that stress the differences between elite and popular

religiosity; (1) the *praxis approach*, which refers to the religious practices and beliefs of individuals (2) the *economic and social approach*, which refers to the social or economic status of a group. In this section, I will briefly review how the concepts of *khawāṣṣ* and *‘awāmm* are evaluated by these approaches.

Ethical traditions in Islam, in particular all Sufi traditions, generally classify the whole of humanity into three ranks to point out the inner-Islamic differences and to address the different religious contents, motivations and cognitive styles that lie behind religious beliefs and practices. The ranks are: the common folk or general mankind (*‘awāmm*); the elect or elite (*khawāṣṣ*); and the super-elect (*khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*). The ordinary level of religious experience refers to *‘awāmm* while elite religious experience commonly refers to *khawāṣṣ* and only rarely to *khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*. On the one hand, the concept of *‘awāmm* is mostly used for those who pay attention to Sharia law, the exoteric side of religion. Simultaneously, *‘awāmm* refers to those who are formalistic and yet cannot grasp the inner aspect of religion, the esoteric side of religion. The concept of *khawāṣṣ*, on the other hand, is used to indicate inner aspects of religious beliefs and practices.

The fasting of the general public (*‘awāmm*) involves refraining from satisfying the appetite of the stomach and the appetite for sex. The fasting of the select few (*khawāṣṣ*) is to keep the ears, the eyes, the tongue, and hands, and the feet as well as the other senses free from sin (Ghazālī, 1938, book 6, trans. 1992).

This brief anecdote from Al-Ghazālī’s *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, one of the Sufi classics from the 11th century, illustrates the use of *the praxis approach* in the ritualistic aspect of religion. Here, *‘awāmm* refers to ordinary types of religious behaviour, namely popular religiosity, while *khawāṣṣ* refers to the spiritual, inner aspect of religious behaviour, namely elite religiosity.

Khawāṣṣ and *‘awāmm* types of commitment can be exemplified in light of the other four dimensions of religiosity as listed by Glock, i.e. the ideological, intellectual, experiential and consequential dimension - in addition to the ritualistic dimension. There appear to be at least two forms of religious belief that fall within the ideological dimension. Elites (*khawāṣṣ*) tend to emphasize verification (*taḥqīq*) of beliefs, which includes doubt (*irtiyāb*) and questioning (*tafakkur*). Those who experience popular religiosity (*‘awāmm*), on the other hand, tend to emphasize imitation (*taqlīd*) through a blind trust in tradition, which implies that family elders, the cultural environment and

society are imitated as a second-hand experience. Among the beliefs and practices discussed by Muslim ethicists and Sufis, there are verification (*taḥqīq*), doubt (*irtiyāb*), questioning (*tafakkur*), and imitation (*taqlīd*) or second-hand experience. When we look at these kinds of examples given by Muslims ethicists and Sufis, we can say that ‘elite and popular religion’ needs to be defined on the basis of the religious practices and beliefs of individuals - not on the basis of the non-privileged social or economic status of a group.

Nearly comparable conceptions of ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ are used by sociologists to explain the structure of Muslim society. Gellner identifies unvarying features of Muslim societies. Building on the work of Ibn Khaldūn, he suggests a dialectic between city and tribe, each with its own form of religion. According to him, the central characteristic of Islam is that it was divided internally into the high Islam of the elite and the popular (‘low’) Islam of the common people. High Islam, Gellner believes, is carried by urban elites who are largely recruited from the bourgeois trading classes, and it reflects the tastes and values of the urban middle class. Popular Islam, on the other hand, is usually associated with the pre-urban stages or nonurban, nonliterate/illiterate levels of society and is produced by the village, or the common people (Gellner, 1983). In the same way, in Şerif Mardin’s writings on Turkish religiosity, this inner-Islamic difference, as mentioned above, is associated with central Islam (*Merkez İslami*) and peripheral Islam (*çevre İslami*) - generally based on the distinction according to lifestyle (urban/rural) (2006). As one can immediately understand, these sociologists have put the *economic and social approach* at the centre and have explored religiosity in the context of socio-economic conditions. Within the economic and social approach, elite and popular religiosity refers to the religious tendencies of strata characterized by a high or low degree of social and economic status. Among the groups discussed by Gellner and Mardin are the urban elite, the bourgeois trading classes, the lower middle class, the middle class, urban middle classes, labourers, peasants, central Islam and peripheral Islam... On this basis, it could be assumed that when these sociologists spoke of ‘elite and popular religion’, they proposed a type of religiosity associated with a given society’s economically or socially privileged classes or non-privileged groups, instead of referring to the religious practices and beliefs of individuals.

When we look at studies on Turkish religiosity, it can be said that theoretical research in religious studies (theology, ethics) was indeed insufficient to determine these concepts in relation to socio-economic terms, but that at the same time practical research (sociology, anthropology) is also inadequate to explore Muslim religiosity in terms of inner-Islamic differences. The spiritual and intrinsic dimensions of religiosity were mostly ignored or studied separately by the sociologist, without taking the interrelatedness of elite and popular religiosity into account, while the relation with social and economic factors was largely neglected by the scholars of religious studies.

This is also the case for the Dutch Muslims. As Berger points out, there is very little information in the literature about socio-economic issues relating to Muslims: but more information is available on Moroccans and Turks (Berger, 2015). Religion is neither used to identify inner-Islamic pluralities nor to explain the behaviour of individuals in socio-economic terms. In order to fill this gap in the present study we plan to concentrate both on the inner-Islamic differences of religiosity and their relation with the socio-economic situation in the Netherlands. From this point of view, the approach to elite and popular religiosity that we use takes the following form:

‘Elite religiosity’ and ‘popular religiosity’ are constituted by specific types of religious praxis and belief generally exercised by certain socio-economic strata.

This approach suggested by Jaques Berlinerblau (2001) is called the *synthesis approach* and is inspired by the works of Max Weber. This approach will be developed in more detail in chapter 2. We believe that this approach will help us to understand the inner aspects of religiosity without losing sight of the influence of social and economic factors.

Here, we briefly anticipate the way in which we interpret elite and popular religiosity, the object of our research. In the context of the present study, elite religiosity is understood to refer to the spiritual, internalized, intrinsic, and committed outlooks of Turkish religious experience that are highlighted by ethicists and Sufis, but also by sociologists and psychologists of religion, by exploring the religious cultural system that is generally produced by spiritual elites primarily for their own religious life and tradition. Popular religiosity in this context refers to the conventional, extrinsic, and consensual elements of Turkish religious experience, which are emphasized by sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists of religion by exploring

the religious cultural system generally produced by the masses for their own religious life, likely to include beliefs, practices, religious knowledge, and religious experiences of individuals. The main focus is on the characteristics of religiosity and its relation with socio-economic factors rather than on the content of particular theological beliefs. We also assume that certain objective positions within the socio-cultural field generally go hand in hand with certain forms of religiosity. Chapter 2 of this study is dedicated to understanding elite and popular religiosity in depth. In this chapter, we will elaborate on the relations between religiosity and culture. This chapter describes the theoretical perspectives of *social stratification* and *religious market* with respect to the emergence of elite and popular religiosity. Chapter 3 will further elaborate on these conceptions, particularly with a view to the Islamic context.

1.6. *Objectives, Research Problems and Research Questions*

The objective of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge about the characteristics of religiosity of Turkish-Dutch Muslims in diaspora, in relation to socio-economic aspects of the Dutch plural society. Our research is exploratory and descriptive. It seeks to examine and understand Muslim beliefs and practices from the perspective of elite and popular religiosity, exploring the characteristics of both kinds of religiosity, considering demographic and socio-economic factors in relation to both. The aim is to discover the relationship between elite and popular religiosity and the various sociological consequences of both in the context of the plural society of the Netherlands. The choice for explorative and descriptive research is motivated by the fact that there is no strong theory formation available regarding elite and popular religiosity and its relation to socio-economic aspects, in particular regarding Muslims in a plural context.

In light of this objective, the problem under investigation is the characteristics of religiosity of Dutch-Turkish Muslims in the Netherlands and how this relates to their socio-economic status, which will be investigated in this study using the theoretical elaborations presented in chapter 2. In our research, we formulate hypotheses about this relation. We cautiously call them hypotheses, we might also say expectations because of the exploratory character of our study and the lack of robust theory on elite and popular religiosity and their relation with cultural and social differentiation in diaspora. Still, we draw on existing literature and preliminary observations in the field

in order to arrive at a number of hypotheses. Based on the results of the analyses of our empirical findings, we will then see whether these hypotheses can be confirmed or need to be refuted.

The main research questions have been formulated in relation to our objective and the problem we have stated above; (1) ‘What forms and motivations characterize elite and popular religiosity, what are the patterns in the relationship between elite and popular religiosity, and how does this relate to the socio-economic status of Dutch-Turkish Muslims living in the Netherlands?’ (2) ‘What are the socio-psychological differences in behaviour and attitudes among Dutch-Turkish Muslims who experience elite and popular religiosity, respectively?’ These questions will be further explored in the following chapters, and they will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

1.7. *Methodology of the Thesis*

Sociology of religion is the study of beliefs, practices, and organizational forms of religion using the tools and methods of the discipline of sociology. This study follows a structural-functionalist approach. In this model religion has reciprocal relations with other elements of the social structure, and therefore a change in the structural elements of society will be reflected in religion and religious phenomena, or vice versa, a change in the position of religion will bring about certain changes in society. According to this approach, religion has functions in every social layer of a society and corresponds with various social functions and roles within these different layers (Cunningham, 1999, p. 42).

This objective investigation may include the use of quantitative methods such as surveys, polls, demographic and census analysis, or qualitative methods such as participant observation, interviewing, and analysis of archival, historical and documentary material, or may draw on a ‘mixed-methods’ approach combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The design of the present study has been shaped by a ‘mixed-methods’ approach, in which quantitative and qualitative methods are merged into one research project.

Scholars have identified various possible forms of mixed-methods design and have even devised a classification based on a basic typology in the field of evaluation (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). This classification distinguishes four types:

complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion. (1) Complementarity seeks to use the results of one method to elaborate on the results of another method; (2) development seeks to use the results of one method to help develop or inform another method; (3) initiation seeks to recast the results or procedures of one method in order to question the results of another method; (4) expansion seeks to extend the breadth or scope of an inquiry by using different methods for different research components (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259). Our method is based on the first and second types. Figure 1 illustrates the design we use in this study.

Figure 1 - *Exploratory mixed method design*



This design is typically used to develop quantitative instruments when the variables are not known, or to explore preliminary qualitative findings collected from a small group of people with a randomized sample from a larger population.

Within a four-year period (2010 - 2013), the project began with qualitative research to explore the various forms and motivations of elite and popular religiosity and the social location of these religiosities, particularly focusing on Dutch-Turkish Muslims living in the Netherlands. One of the essential instruments we used was participant observation, which was briefly discussed already in section 1.1. As a cross-sectional study, the research design also included an extensive literature review, so that the results of the qualitative research and literature review could serve as a basis for aspects of the quantitative approach.

The second method was a questionnaire survey that formed the main part of the project, with the clear research goal to investigate Muslim beliefs and practices in the context of elite and popular religiosity. We used four different questionnaires; (1) a general religiosity scale, (2) an elite religiosity scale, (3) a popular religiosity scale and (4) measurements for the consequential dimension.

The general religiosity scale (1) was designed to obtain information under the five dimensions based on Glock and Stark (1962). This part of the questionnaire focuses

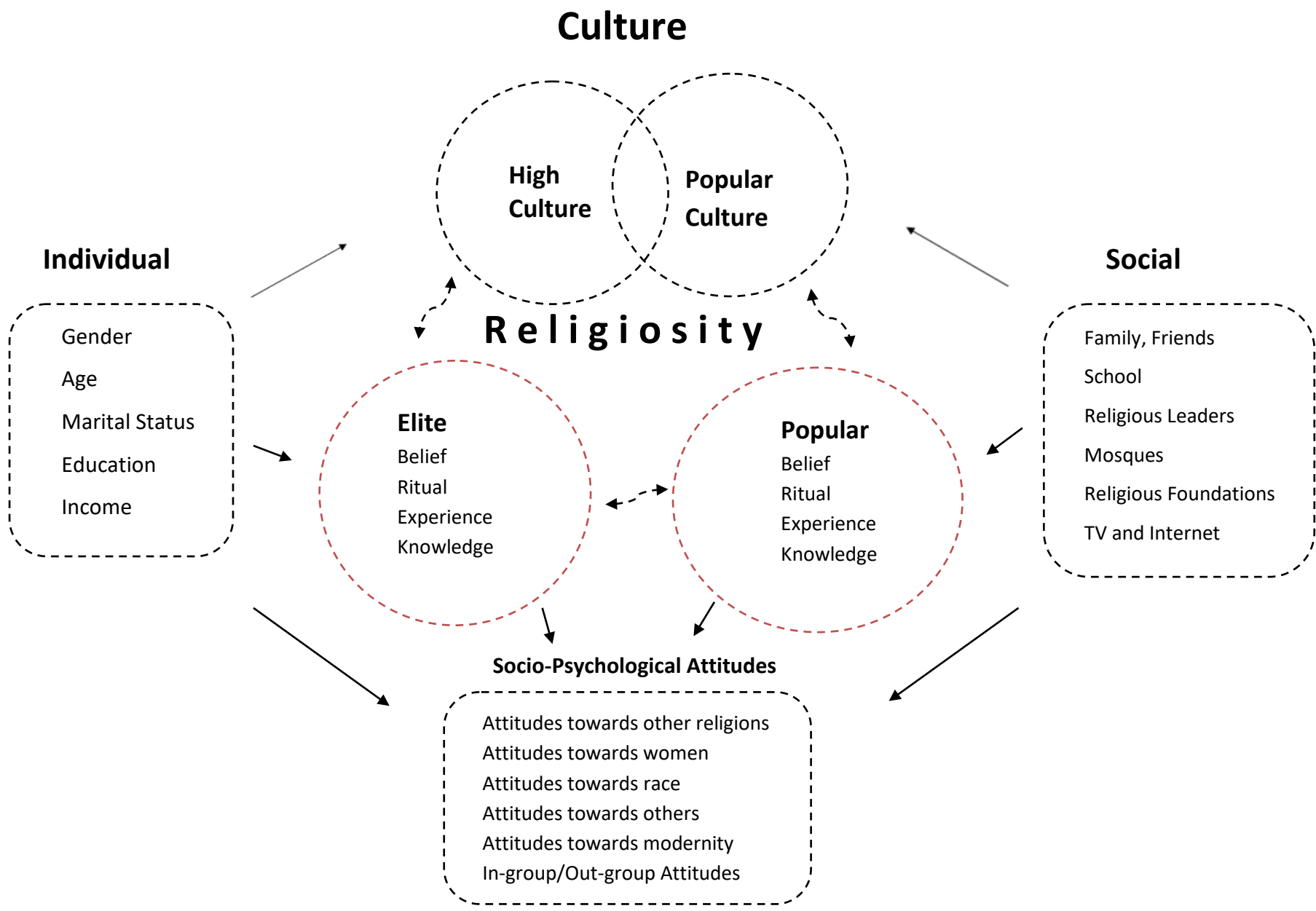
on high and low religiosity. The result of this part of the survey was used to identify respondents who experience a low level of religiosity and to remove them from the sample, because they are unable to assist us in our search for three elements of religious orientation, namely motivation, cognitive style, and content.

The use of an elite religiosity scale (2) and a popular religiosity scale (3) distinguishes the present study from most other studies. These instruments are developed through the operationalization of concepts we use in our study of elite and popular religiosity. This part of the questionnaire was designed to highlight the intra-dimensional aspects of Glock's five dimensions by considering the 'elite' and 'popular', 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' aspects of religiosity. This part of the study is therefore not designed to examine the difference between high and low religiosity, but rather the difference between elite and popular religiosity. Our initial method, consisting of participant observation and literature study, was generally useful to design this part of the questionnaire.

The consequential dimension (4) is considered here as the relation(s) or even possible influence(s) of being an elite or popular religious person. This part of the questionnaire will reveal the effects of elite and popular religiosity in peoples' day-to-day lives. The consequential dimension was chosen to cover a wide range of life issues, including modernity, gender issues, sectarian issues, segregation issues, in-group attitudes, social relations, and attitudes towards Christianity. These four measures were developed to obtain a quantitative picture of Muslim religiosity and its sociological manifestations. The methodology of this study will be elaborated in detail in chapter 4.

1.7.1. *Conceptual Model*

In order to achieve our goal and to face our research difficulties, this study uses the concepts that are illustrated schematically in the following figure:



This model illustrates the possible relations between the concepts used in our study. The model indicates that the notion of elite and popular religiosity is localized under the umbrella of high and popular culture. Consequently, one of the sub-questions to answer our first research question⁵ is ‘How can the relation between religion and culture be characterized, and how do we understand popular and elite religiosity?’ A justification for the study of religion by relating it to cultural differentiation can be found in different disciplines such as sociology, psychology and anthropology of religion (Bell, 2006; Belzen, 2010; Forbes & Mahan, 2005; Foucault & Carrette, 2013; Geertz, 1971, 1973; Mirsepassi, 1992; Scupin, 1993). Our study analyses high and popular culture on this basis.

Furthermore, we try to understand the concepts of elite and popular religiosity by conducting a social scientific study of religion. The above schematization of elite and popular religiosity represents these forms of religiosity as two circles. However, the present study does not view the relation between elite and popular religiosity as static and clear-cut. We will not overlook the dialectical character of their interrelatedness. The second sub-question of this study deals with these aspects of religiosity: ‘What are the characteristics of elite and popular religiosity in the context of the Turkish - and possibly also Dutch - society and how is this related to socio-economic status?’ This entails exploring the relation between elite and popular religiosity in terms of beliefs, rituals, experiences and knowledge, while monitoring the effect of population characteristics. The following population characteristics will be taken into account: gender, age, educational level, income, and generational differences. These characteristics are included in our model because, according to the existing literature, they can influence the relation between elite and popular religiosity.

The lower part of the model represents socio-psychological attitudes related to elite and popular religiosity. To measure various non-religious attitudinal affects in response to the second major research question stated above, the present study makes use of several attitude scales.

⁵ *RQ1*: What forms and motivations characterize elite and popular religiosity, what are the patterns in the relationship between elite and popular religiosity, and how does this relate to the socio-economic status of Dutch-Turkish Muslims living in the Netherlands?’

1.8. *Organization of the Thesis*

This concluding section of the introductory chapter provides an overview of the following chapters. The thesis is divided into six chapters.

Chapter 1 includes a general overview of the study. This part introduces the theme of the thesis, and the immediate cause that led to the research questions, and presents an overview of the chapters.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical background of the main concepts in light of a social scientific study of religion. The notions of great and little traditions, high and popular culture are introduced and developed upon in a broader context (2.1). First, we discuss how the category of the ‘popular’ is approached by structuralists and culturalists (2.1.1) Second, this concept is elaborated upon in light of Turkish sociology. More specifically, this section seeks to investigate the links between culture and religiosity drawing on the works of Ziya Gökalp and Fuad Köprülü (2.1.2). After elaborating these approaches, we propose a third approach based on Gramsci’s writings. In this part we highlight the importance of investigating the cultures of the elites through comparison and synthesis with the cultures of the masses. (2.1.3).

After presenting this introduction on elite and popular culture, this study will shed light on the notion of elite and popular religion and its acquired meaning and content in the social scientific study of religion (2.2). I will explain Weber’s status stratification (2.2.1) and religion and rational choice theories (2.2.2) in order to explain elite and popular religion from a sociological perspective. Following this, we will discuss the earlier usage and meaning given to the terms elite and popular religiosity in different disciplines (2.2.3). This study will then propose adding a different definition of ‘elite’ based on a synthesis approach (2.2.4). Our operational definition will be particularly built in chapter three, however. Finally, the criticisms levelled against the concepts of elite and popular religiosity and against similar or overlapping concepts such as great and little traditions, will be considered and refuted up to some degree (2.2.5).

Chapter 3 will shed light on a somewhat narrower context and will focus on elite and popular religiosity in Islam. In part 3.1, I will indicate discussions on the conceptualization and operationalization of religiosity. Here I will elaborate on how the subdivision between ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ influences research in the social scientific

study of religion. The first section of this part mainly discusses two-dimensional religiosity scales (3.1.1). The second section of this part, I will make a comparison between the two-dimensional scale devised by Allport and Ross (1967) and the multidimensional religiosity scales conceived by Stark and Glock (1968) (3.1.2).

In part 3.2, continuing from chapter 2, I will try to evaluate elite and popular religiosity in the context of Muslim sociology. I will try to show what the concepts of great and little Islam mean, and how these terms apply to the case of Islam, by drawing on the works of Ernest Gellner and Clifford Geertz (3.2.1). I shall then focus particularly on Turkish sociology of Islam by drawing on Şerif Mardin, Ahmed Karamustafa and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay (3.2.2). In section 3.2.3, I will discuss some criticisms of elite and popular religiosity and come up with some suggestions. In the next section (3.2.4) I will elaborate on the study of elite and popular religiosity in Muslim philosophy of religion, thereby referring in particular to the works of Al-Ghazālī.

The remainder of the chapter (3.3) discusses the theoretical framework of this study and develops various hypotheses that will be tested in chapter 5. I will present the possible content of the components of religious commitment under five headings: the ideological dimension (3.3.1), ritualistic dimension (3.3.2), intellectual dimension (3.3.3), experiential dimension (3.3.4) and consequential dimension (3.3.5). These parts of the study provide an operational definition of elite and popular religiosity. This section proposes an understanding of elite and popular religious forms and motivations through observation of Dutch-Turkish Muslims in context.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology for the study (4.1). The objectives, research questions and hypotheses are discussed in more detail in part 4.2. I will then continue to discuss the research design and the working methods in section 4.3. In this section I will explain how I use a mixed-methods approach. Then, I will discuss the collection of qualitative data during my research and problems I faced during field work (4.3.1). Then, in section 4.3.2, I will indicate quantitative tools for data collection; paper-based survey and web-based survey. Further on in the chapter, I will address measuring instruments that were developed through operationalization of the concepts that I used in this study of elite and popular religiosity (4.4). Reliability analyses of the scales are rendered in section 4.5. The data analysis methods are explained in section 4.6.

Chapter 5 provides findings and data analysis, testing the hypotheses developed in chapters 2 and 3. In this chapter, I first present the demographic characteristics of the sample as drawn from the 2013 Census information (5.1). Secondly, I analyse data from the general religiosity scale (5.2).

Then I turn to the other part of the empirical question posed in this chapter: what is the social location of elite and popular religiosity? (5.3) This discussion begins with the factor analysis of the elite religiosity scale and the popular religiosity scale (5.3.1). Next, I address the average means of elite and popular religiosity (5.3.2). Subsequently, I continue to determine which population characteristics (gender, age, educational level, income etc.) have a significant correlation or association with the elite and popular religiosity scales. A series of ANOVA analyses will be applied in this section (5.3.3). Next, I present some social factors influence religious education of the respondents in relation to elite and popular religiosity (5.3.4). Then I will shed light on socio-psychological attitudes that are affected by elite and popular religiosity (5.3.5). This part of the scale constitutes our consequential aspect. The consequential aspect will reveal the effects of elite and popular religiosity in peoples' day-to-day lives.

Finally, *chapter 6* consists of three parts. We start by summarizing the main hypotheses of the thesis and the empirical results (6.1). The discussion section (6.2) is divided into five parts. First, 'Reflections on Glock's Five-dimensional Scheme' (6.2.1) discusses the validity of Glock's 5-dimensional scale in light of the findings of this study. Second, 'Multi-voiced-ness of Religious Identity' (6.2.2) will discuss the patterns of the relationship between elite and popular religiosity. Third, 'Social-Cultural Factors Affecting Religiosity' (6.2.3) will discuss factors that may have an impact on elite and popular religiosity. Fourthly, in section 6.2.4 'Socio-Psychological Factors Affected by Elite and Popular Religiosity', we continue to examine the processes and mechanisms by which religiosity may affect the socio-psychological attitudes of general populations. Finally, section 6.2.5 'Spirituality and Religiosity' illustrates the relevance and significance of spirituality in the sociology of elite and popular religiosity. Finally, we conclude by presenting some recommendations for future research (6.3).

