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Much ado about Islam: The political integration of Muslim minorities in Guyana and Suriname

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Much Ado about Islam: The Political Integration of Muslim Minorities in Guyana and Suriname

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Much Ado about Islam: The Political Integration of Muslim Minorities in Guyana and Suriname

Abstract

Differently to large parts of the scholarship assessing the impact of religion on the integration of Muslim minorities in Europe, the case selection employed in the present study allows for controlling relevant sociodemographic variables, namely migration background or rather generation and nationality or rather ethnicity. In contrast to the findings of a number of previous studies, this article's results increase doubts regarding the explanatory power here of "Islamic faith" and largely suggest a null finding hereon. Its findings show that alternative variables have significant effects on Muslim integration, such as generation, ethnicity, religiosity, gender, education, and age. Hence, adherence to the Islam turns out to be a weak predictor here. However, it is to be noted that significant effects for adherence to the Islamic faith were found for individual items composing the index on democratic values, though these findings don't appear to follow a homogenous pattern.

Keywords: Guyana, Suriname, political integration, Muslim integration, Muslim minorities

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Article Outline

1 Introduction

Migration and the integration of Muslim immigrants have in the past few decades been the subject of heated public debate in Europe. In its attempt to identify the variables that positively or negatively affect the integration of Muslim immigrants, the scholarship has mainly focused on Europe. Given socio-political developments and the intensifying public debate, "the role of

religion, in particular Islam" (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011, 209) has implicitly or explicitly been extensively studied in recent years (Banfi, Gianni, and Giugni 2016; Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel 2009; Doerschler and Jackson 2012; Dollmann 2022; Glas 2021; Joppke 2009; Norris and Inglehart 2012; Pfaff and Gill 2006; Röder and Mühlau 2014; Spierings 2014; Stockemer and Moreau 2021; Tillie 2004). In spite of its repeated analysis as a predictor of integration, there have been ambiguous findings in these studies on the role here of the Islamic faith to date. Muslims have only rather recently migrated extensively to the regions constituting the focus of this research. However, "migration background" as a variable has in most cases not been controlled for. Moreover, "nationality" or rather "ethnicity" has in many studies been used as a proxy for "religion" and its effect on integration, which creates measurement errors in not isolating people's faith per se (De Wit and Koopmans 2005; Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel 2009; Doerschler and Jackson 2012; Dollmann 2022; Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011; Fleischmann and Phalet 2018; Norris and Inglehart 2012; Tillie 2004). It is therefore unclear if the findings generated in the Global North persist in other geographic contexts elsewhere.

Though migrants from predominantly Muslim countries have dispersed all over the globe, studies of their political integration have focused mainly on societies with a Christian heritage in Europe, while equivalent countries outside of Europe have been widely absent in this body of research (see Pedroza 2020). This paper attempts to take a step toward remedying this by examining the political integration of Muslim minorities in Guyana and Suriname, which have the largest Muslim populations in Latin America and the Caribbean. An advantage of the selected cases versus the many studies undertaken in European countries is the fact that it is possible to control for "ethnicity" here (following a similar strategy to Adida, Laitin, and Valvort 2016), as most Hindus and Muslims share a common ethnic provenance in specific regions of Southeast Asia. Moreover, and unlike the extensive work focusing on European countries, the paper controls for people's migration background: most Muslim families in the two countries have lived there for six or more generations and can therefore no longer be considered migrants.

While individual-level variables mainly take sociodemographic influences on political integration into consideration, macro-level ones address the individual's surrounding social and political context. The focus here will, then, be on explanatory approaches at the individual level. The paper pursues the research goal of reviewing the explanatory value of Muslim religion for political integration while adding relevant control variables that have been missing in many studies on European countries and attempts to explore two non-European societies, which have been left aside in research on integration by now. The analysis is based on an original dataset collected by the author. The findings suggest that, in the cases under examination, "Islamic religion" proves a weak predictor for integration among the included variables. In contrast, all other independent variables produce significant results, though varying across dimensions of political integration and the two countries.

2 Theoretical Approaches to Muslim Political Integration and Hypotheses

"Political integration" refers to the way social groups integrate into their respective societies and their systems of governance. Studies hereon widely agree on what the concept's core dimensions are. Dollmann (2022, 1093–94) differentiates between indicators as part of the phenomenon's attitudinal and behavioural dimensions. While identification with the overall society in question (Martiniello 2006), adherence to democratic values (Martiniello 2006; Tillie 2004), and political trust (Martiniello 2006) would be subsumed under the attitudinal dimension, different forms of political participation would belong to the behavioural one (Martiniello 2006; Tillie 2004).[1]

As to explanatory variables for political integration, we can distinguish between approaches at the individual and the macro level. While individual-level variables mainly take sociodemographic influences on political integration into consideration, macro-level ones address, as noted, the individual's surrounding social and political context. Explanatory variables on the individual level that have been frequently tested regarding their impact on the political integration of immigrants are gender, age, generation, family, education, socioeconomic status and employment, nationality and regional provenance within a given country, as well as ethnic and cross-ethnic membership (Dollmann 2022; Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011; Tillie 2004). Findings on individual-level variables suggest that "gender" has a significant effect on political participation, with women less involved than men. However, Tillie (2004, 536) found that political participation varies between nationalities—as depending on social capital. Surprisingly, unemployment seems to enhance political participation, but loses its significance when controlling for other variables (Tillie 2004, 536). Persons who are currently employed tend to lose identification with their original (Islamic) religion more quickly than those who are unemployed (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011, 220). Hence, the findings on employment are mixed with regard to its benefits for political integration. In their review of 29 studies on Muslim immigrants' integration in the Western world, Stockemer and Moreau (2021, 226–227) reveal that the variation herein can be heavily explained by education. The latter has positive effects on individuals' sense of belonging to their country of residence and on their trust in political institutions. Highly educated persons lose identification with their countries of birth and with their original (Islamic) religion and forego their native languages more quickly than the less educated do (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011, 219). Highly educated immigrants, persons currently employed, and persons whose families had been living in place for a long time already—measured in generations—tend to adopt the country of residence's culture more extensively (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011, 223–24). Persons who had recently migrated show

1 Moreover, Martiniello includes the rights granted to immigrants by the host society in his concept of "political integration." I understand the latter as part of the institutional framework on the macro level, potentially having an impact on the political integration of social groups, and not as part of the set of individual-level variables. I therefore exclude this dimension from my own concept of "political integration."

only modest levels of political trust in their country of residence meanwhile (Dollmann 2022, 1103).

The effect of "religion" on the political integration of immigrants in Europe has implicitly or explicitly been the subject of numerous scholarly studies on Muslims' integration into Western societies in recent decades. This debate has turned in part around the question of whether adherence to the Islamic faith is an implicit obstacle to integration (Doerschler and Jackson 2012; Joppke 2009; Pfaff and Gill 2006). As Stockemer and Moreau (2021, 229) remark, related findings are highly conflictive and in part not generalizable due to the heterogeneous methodologies used in the respective studies hereon. To give one example, Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel (2009, 278) showed that strong religious belief tends to stabilize attitudinal and behavioural gender traditionalism among Turkish immigrants across generations, while Norris and Inglehart revealed that "Muslim migrants […] gradually absorb much of the host culture" (2012, 228). In contrast, Spierings found that "among [Turkish] lineages that settle in Europe, migration seems to speed up the assimilation process of becoming more supportive of gender equality" (2014, 749).

Several multivariate studies have identified significant negative effects associated with religion (Islam) vis-à-vis political integration, and it is worthwhile taking a closer look at these findings. Norris and Inglehart (2012, 245), in their analysis of Muslim immigrants in 22 OECD member countries, showed that adherence to the Islamic faith among immigrants accounts for differences between themselves and host societies regarding democratic values and gender equality—though this gap closes over subsequent generations. Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel (2009) revealed in their study on religiosity and attitudes toward gender equality among Christian Germans and Muslim Turks in Germany that high degrees of religiosity tend to have a negative effect on attitudes toward gender equality independent of one's denomination. These attitudes manifested on the behavioural level only among Turkish respondents. At the same time, their study found that when trying to explain attitudes toward gender equality and related behaviours among the German Christian control group, religiosity turned out to be just one factor out of several and not a distinctly relevant one. "Age" was revealed to have significant effects on attitudes and behaviours regarding gender equality among all control groups. The authors note that "further research is needed to disentangle the different cultural and religious aspects of Muslim migrants' attitudes and behaviours" (Diehl, Koenig,and Ruckdeschel 2009, 278).

The latter conclusion is upheld by Spiering's (2014) own study on attitudes toward gender equality among Turks in Western Europe and Turkey as well as on the impact of parental attitudes here. Spiering found that the children of migrants who returned to Turkey displayed more traditional attitudes toward gender equality than those from the same area of origin who had not migrated, whereas the children of Turkish migrants who remained in Europe were hardly influenced by their parents' attitudes and developed outlooks supportive of gender

equality. The latter finding—that the assimilation of the host society's views on gender equality happens gradually over generations—is supported by Röder and Mühlau (2014), who, moreover, proved that "gender" has a considerable impact on respective attitudes and that women tended to adopt these values already in the first immigrant generation.

Another study that inspired doubts about the explanatory power of religion vis-à-vis democratic values was the one conducted by Banfi, Gianni, and Giugni (2016). It showed that religious identity alone cannot sufficiently explain the adoption or refuting of democratic values and demonstrated that the embracing of those values by Muslim immigrants in Europe varies depending on their affiliation to minority branches of Islam and possible experiences of political persecution in their home countries related thereto. They therefore suggested examining religiosity "as a multifaceted phenomenon in relation to other religious collective identities" (Banfi, Gianni, and Giugni 2016, 304). Their findings are complemented by Glas's (2021) study on the impact of one's Islamic denomination on integration, likewise finding that members of marginalized religious minorities in migrant communities are more welcoming of the host society's values than peers from the dominant branches of the faith are. She concluded "that the patterns […] are context-dependent — shaped by both the origin country and the country of residence" (Glas 2021, 102). Hence, analysing the context conditions that determine integration is key.

Even though adherents vary in their religiosity and Islam comprises different confessions, Muslims are often treated as but a homogenous unit—one inherently representing nondemocratic values. Norris and Inglehart, for example, consider "forced marriages, polygamy, domestic violence and honour killings, as well as patriarchal beliefs about the traditional roles of women in the family and the symbolic wearing of the hijab, niqab and burqa" as "Muslim practices" that conflict "with the more egalitarian gender roles, the liberal social values and the secular legal frameworks prevailing in Western countries" (2012, 229)—the latter equally treated as a homogenous cultural unit. Stockemer and Moreau (2021, 227) identify the overlooking of variance among Muslims—regarding ethnicity, gender, generation, denomination, strength of religiosity, country of residence, and similar—as a serious flaw in the research done to date.

In a similar vein, the operationalization of Islam as a variable has also occasionally been problematic. For example, in several works "nationality" or "ethnicity" have been treated as a proxy for "religion" (e.g. Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011; Norris and Inglehart 2012), making it impossible to separate these variables' respective effects—even though countries with predominantly Muslim populations do have non-Muslim minorities and Muslim immigrants stem from a wide variety of national origins. Moreover, and relatedly, studies focusing on Muslim immigrants face the difficulty of separating the variables "Islamic faith" and "migration background." Immigrants are likely to have undergone socialization processes that are different in nature to the ones playing out in countries of residence in terms of political values as well as social and cultural norms. Besides, immigrants often experience discrimination and

marginalization in their host societies because they are marked as "foreign"—with one's religion being just one of several possible markers of "otherness." Both of these aspects—socialization and experiences of discrimination—are to varying degrees related to the condition of being an immigrant, having specific impacts on integration. When analysing the latter and its drivers, "migration background" as a variable should be controlled for, or else the findings for the effect of "religion" cannot be isolated (e.g. Adida, Laitin, and Valvort 2016).[2] To overcome this, it seems promising to study non-European societies where Muslims constitute minorities but are no immigrants. The narrow geographic focus in research on integration in the Global North has been pointed out before, and comparison with countries in the Global South suggested as a useful counterbalance to it (Pedroza 2020, 5).

As noted previously, seemingly not all variation vis-à-vis the integration of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim societies can be explained by individual-level variables; it is, rather, ultimately context-dependent (Banfi, Gianni, and Giugni 2016; Glas 2021; Spiering 2014). In their review article on Muslim integration in the Western world, Stockemer and Moreau (2021) found large variation in Europe and assumed that this could likely be explained by predictors at the macro level in the specific country of residence. Analyses of macro-level variables as possible predictors have so far considered integration, immigration, and citizenship policies (Berger and Koopmans 2004; Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011; Joppke 2009; Laurence 2012; Pfaff and Gill 2006; Strijbis 2015), representations of national belonging and structural discrimination (Dollmann 2022; Fleischman and Phalet 2018), group status in terms of minorities and majorities (Banfi, Gianni, and Giugni 2016; Glas 2021), as well as respective socialization processes (Spiering 2014). Systematic global comparisons, as proposed by Stockemer and Moreau (2021), would certainly be useful for achieving a deeper understanding of macro-level predictors.

This paper attempts, then, to add to the debate on Muslims migrants' political integration by introducing findings from a non-Global North context. It will open up this field by testing the effect of individual-level variables that have yielded significant results in studies turning to Europe, to reveal their impact on political integration in two Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries. It will reveal the effect of adherence to the Islamic faith on political integration while effectively controlling for people's ethnicity and migration background.

2 The problematic implications of blurry operationalization become obvious in the mentioned study, not only because "migration background" in general is not controlled for but also due to the authors identifying poor proficiency in the country of residence's native language as something inherent to Muslim immigrants to Christian societies—despite language ability and religion not correlating (Adida, Laitin, and Valvort 2016, 90).

3 Case Selection

To conduct this analysis, I selected two countries, Guyana and Suriname, which share important commonalities. Both form part of the same geographic location and have a similar colonial past, and they are each home to multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies as a result of colonial-era immigration policies. The two countries exhibit not only a considerable number of coexisting ethnic groups and adherents of different religions, but also a great inner confessional diversity. Christianism, Hinduism and Islam comprise several confessional branches, which partly differ between the two countries. Guyana and Suriname have the largest Muslim populations within the LAC region. The vast majority of Muslims here have their roots in Southeast Asia, just as most Hindus do, allowing us to control for "ethnicity" (see Figures 1 and 2 below).

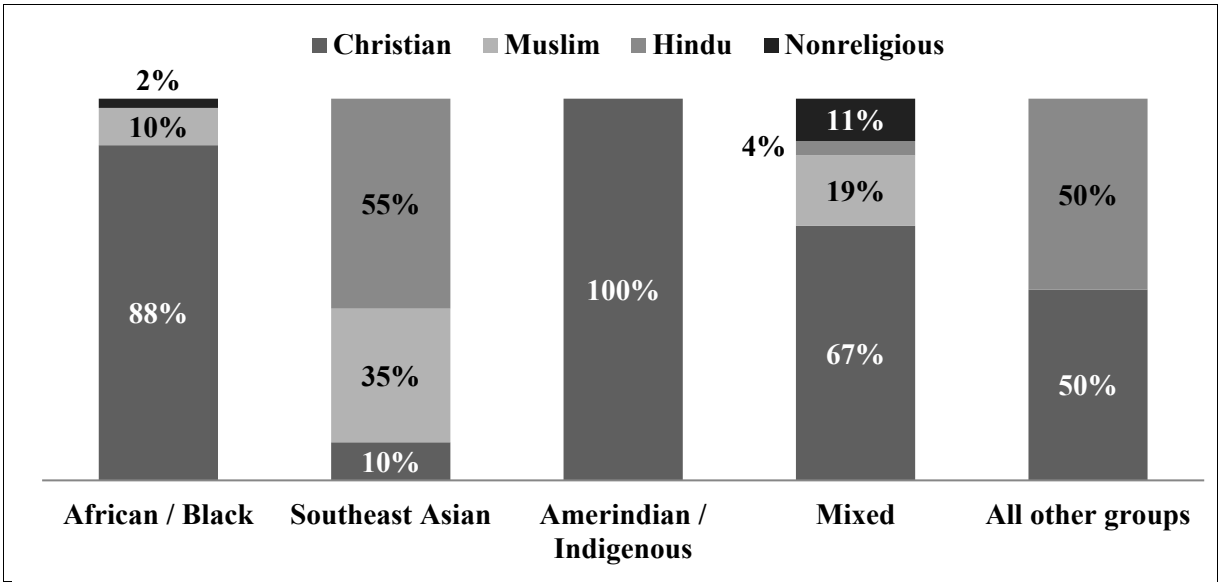
Muslim immigrants arrived already from the 1830s onward in the case of Guyana and from the 1860s in that of Suriname as indentured labourers assisting with the maintenance of the plantation industry after the abolition of slavery. Hence, unlike for the majority of Muslims in Europe, where most are first, second, or third generation immigrants and where it is consequently difficult to disentangle "religion" and "migration background", adherents of the Islamic faith in Guyana and Suriname date back six, seven, or more generations. This permits in-depth testing of the effect of "generation" on political integration.

Just like in Europe, Muslims represent here a numerical minority among the overall population. While Guyanese Muslims roughly equate the share of their peers living in many European societies at 6.77 percent of the total population, Muslims in Suriname represent nearly 14 percent thereof. Suriname (since 1996) and Guyana (since 1998) are member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation—the only countries in the Americas to be so. Furthermore, while Surinamese Muslims have diverse ethnic origins, counterparts in Guyana share a single ethnic provenance.

Guyana

The largest ethnic group in Guyana comprises people of Asian descent, making up 39.8 percent of the population (43.4 percent in 2002) according to the 2012 census (Guyana Bureau of Statistics 2016, 2). They are followed by the Afro-Guyanese, who total 29.3 percent of the populace (30.2 percent in 2002). Both groups are diminishing compared to former censuses, while the group of persons with mixed heritage (19.9 percent in 2012; 16.7 percent in 2002) is increasing. Indigenous people (locally called "Amerindians") comprise 10.5 percent of the population.
As to religious groups, Christians constitute the majority faith in Guyana in forming about 58.5 percent of the population according to the 2012 census. Hindus comprise about 24.8 percent and Muslims, as noted above, about 6.77 percent thereof respectively (Guyana Bureau of Statistics 2016, 36). Except for a very minor number of converts, the large majority of Guyana's Muslims have their roots in present India.

Figure 1. Overlapping of Ethnicity and Religion in Guyana

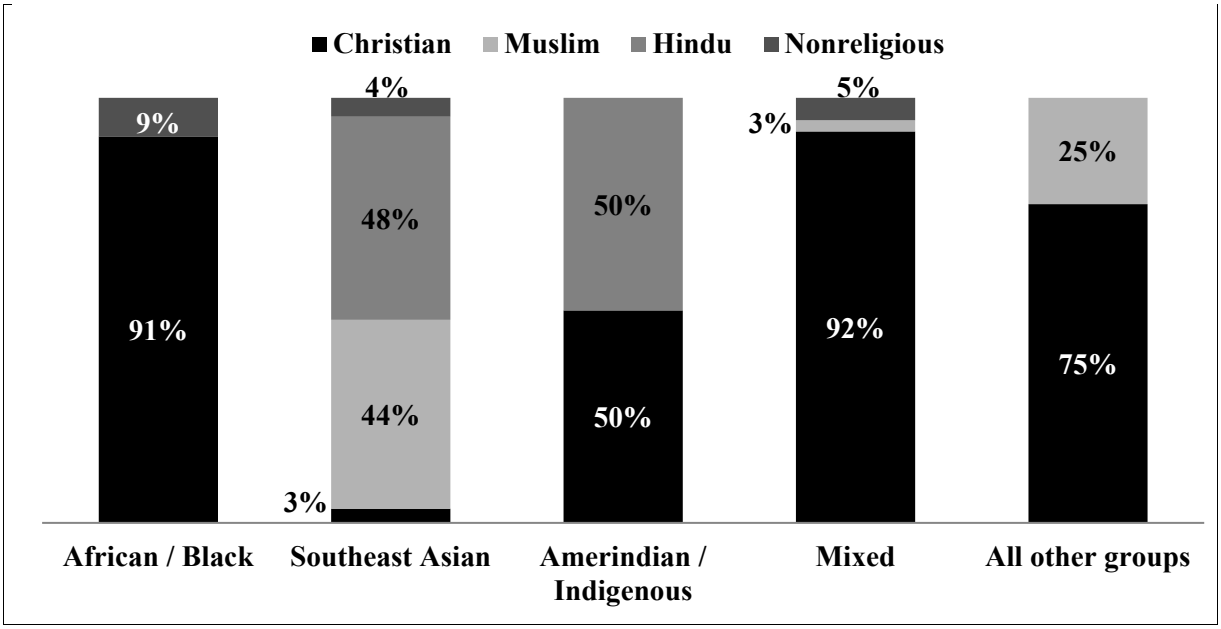


Source: Author's own compilation.

Suriname

The largest ethnic group in Suriname is made up of people of Asian provenance, at 41 percent of the country's overall population according to the 2012 census, of whom 27 percent stem from present India and 14 percent from the Indonesian island of Java. They are followed by the Afro-Surinamese, constituting 38 percent thereof (Suriname General Bureau of Statistics 2012). Meanwhile, 13 percent of the population identify themselves as mixed and 4 percent as Indigenous ("inheems").

Figure 2. Overlapping of Ethnicity and Religion in Suriname



Source: Author's own compilation.

Christians also form the majority in Suriname (49.7 percent), followed by Hindus (22.3 percent) and then Muslims (13.9 percent) respectively (Suriname General Bureau of Statistics 2012). The latter exceeds the shares of Muslims in the countries of Europe, varying there between 5 and 8 percent (Suriname General Bureau of Statistics 2012). Surinamese Muslims stem predominantly from India and Java.

Ethnicity and Politics in Guyana and Suriname

Social and political divisions are more present along ethnic lines than along religious ones. Ethnic cleavages are rooted in the colonial division of labour on the sugar plantations after the abolition of slavery, which was also reflected geographically in separated settlements (Chickrie 1999; Soeropawiro 2016; Thomas 1984). While politics were dominated by people of African heritage, East Asians controlled the economic sphere (Chickrie 2011, 2002, 1999; St. Hilaire 2001). The fact that most ethnic and religious groups represent numerical minorities in both Guyana and Suriname and none of them constitute major population shares comparable to European societies might have contributed to the relatively peaceful coexistence witnessed between people of diverse cultural backgrounds (Hassankhan 2016, 185). However, politics in both countries reflects their respective ethnic divides and parties represent either people of African descent or people of Asian descent. Throughout history, party leaders stoked ethnic identities in order to maintain control over the political process and party affiliation (St. Hilaire 2001, 1006)—whereby "ideological differences became intertwined with racial identity [after independence]" (Ellis 2019, 2).

Ethnic tensions emerged in both countries after achieving nationhood in the second half of the twentieth century. In the case of Guyana, especially the 1960s were marked by "racial violence" (Smith 1995, 224; Singh 2008, 72). But many elections following independence in 1966 have been accompanied by violent clashes between the Afro-Guyanese and the Indo-Guyanese, as fuelled by rumours of voter fraud (Chaubey, Mawson, and Kuris 2011). Mars (2001, 357) holds that inequalities in terms of political representation and resource distribution across ethnic groups contribute to an ongoing crisis of political legitimacy in Guyana. In Suriname, meanwhile, ethnic tensions have flared up at different moments in time (Choenni 2014, 423). Power-sharing between the major ethnic groups was established after independence in 1975: the posts of President and Vice-President were shared between Creoles and Hindustanis. Still, ethnicity has remained salient and politicized among the country's smaller groups (Javanese and Maroons), with them demanding political representation and "ethnic accommodation" (Choenni 2014, 424–427).

4 Theoretical Measurements and Methods

Data Collection

The questionnaire (see Appendix, also for more information on the included variables) was designed by the author on the basis of surveys employed both in Europe and worldwide (European Social Survey Questionnaire 2016/17; Pew 2011; World Values Survey Questionnaire 2012) in order to ensure comparability and validity. The quantitative data, made up of 301 cases, was collected by means of a survey conducted in Paramaribo, Suriname, and Georgetown, Guyana, in September and October 2018. The questionnaires were distributed in religious temples to adherents of the Christian, Hindu, and Muslim faiths. About one-quarter of the questionnaires per country were completed in shopping malls by random customers. The samples collected in temples likely imply a bias regarding the high religiosity of respondents. It was accounted for by adding the sample type (religious temple versus shopping mall) to the employed regression models as control variable.

Dependent Variable

This analysis studies the effect of individual-level variables on political integration. Drawing on the studies of Dollmann (2022), Martiniello (2006), and Tillie (2004), I identified four dimensions of political integration. For each, I developed an index based on the mean sums of several variables: (1) identification with the overall society in question; (2) internalized democratic values; (3) trust in the political system; and (4) political participation. The indexes as dependent variables make up the overall concept of "political integration," as our object of analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (dependent variables)

	Guyana				Suriname			
	N	Mean	SD	Variance	N	Mean	SD	Variance
Identification scale	146	0.81	0.20	0.04	147	0.83	0.22	0.05
Democratic values scale	147	0.52	0.14	0.02	148	0.52	0.16	0.02
Trust in political system scale	130	0.90	0.68	0.46	142	0.76	0.79	0.62
Participation scale	137	0.53	0.21	0.04	146	0.47	0.19	0.04
Valid observations (listwise)	129				141			

Source: Author's own compilation.

With the objective of presenting a general picture of the prevailing attitudes among the sample of Guyanese and Surinamese respondents, a few descriptive analyses are included in Table 1 below. They show the number of valid responses (N), mean, standard deviation, and variance

for each dependent variable. Table 1 reveals that there are 129 valid observations on all dependent variables for Guyana and 141 for Suriname. The mean values for "identification" and "democratic values" are nearly the same in both countries, with "identification" being high. The means of "trust in the political system" and "participation" are slightly higher in Guyana than they are in Suriname. There is variance for each dependent variable, most of which can be found regarding "trust in the political system" in both countries.

Explanatory Variable

The analysis tests the effect of individual-level variables, employing the "religion" of individual respondents as its main explanatory variable. The Islamic faith has received significant attention in public and scholarly debate on integration in Europe in recent years yet, as an explanatory variable, has yielded ambivalent findings in previous studies. This paper hence attempts to contribute to the furthering of this debate. To this end, I created dummy variables for "religious denomination," controlling for "Christian," "Hindu," "Muslim," and "nonreligious" as the reference categories here.

Control Variables

The political integration of Muslims in Guyana and Suriname could be affected by other variables that, for this specific study, are included as controls.

First, assuming that the respondents sampled in temples are of above-average religiosity, the (high) degree thereof might have an impact on their individual political attitudes. For this reason, I employed "religious temple sample" as a proxy for "religiosity" and created a dummy variable for this item.

Second, it is important to control for "ethnicity". "Ethnicity" and "nationality" have, as noted, often been used as proxies for "religion" in studies on political integration in Europe, despite "ethnicity" and "religion" having different meanings and potentially encompassing diverging sets of values. Different to many studies on Muslim migrants' integration, it is possible to control for "ethnicity" as a variable in this analysis and separate its effect from "religion," as in Guyana and Suriname the vast majority of both Hindus and Muslims stem from Southeast Asian ancestors. I created a dummy variable for "Southeast Asian," while overall controlling for "African/Black," "Southeast Asian," "Amerindian/Indigenous," "mixed," and "all other groups" as the respective reference categories used here.

Third, one's generation has been shown to have significant effects on political integration in previous research, as it has been proven that immigrants adopt the host culture during subsequent generations (Norris and Inglehart 2012). Moreover, the scholarship has revealed that "education" impacts political integration significantly (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2011). In addition, "age" might determine attitudes and behaviours in terms of identification, democratic values, or political interest. Finally, "gender" might impact democratic values or affect political

participation should women not engage in the public sphere, with "female" being the reference category here. Descriptive statistics for the independent variables are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics (explanatory variables)

		Guyana		Suriname	
		N	%	N	%
Religion	Christian	64	43.5%	52	35.1%
	Muslim	35	23.8%	41	27.7%
	Hindu	45	30.6%	44	29.7%
	Other	0	0.0%	3	2.0%
	Nonreligious	3	2.0%	8	5.4%
Sample type	religious temple	95	64.6%	105	70.9%
	shopping mall	52	35.4%	43	29.1%
Ethnicity	African/Black	40	27.2%	11	7.4%
	Southeast Asian	77	52.4%	91	61.5%
	Amerindian/Indigenous	2	1.4%	2	1.4%
	Mixed	26	17.7%	40	27.0%
	All other groups	2	1.4%	4	2.7%
Generation of immigration	Myself	2	1.5%	1	0.7%
	my parents	0	0.0%	2	1.4%
	my grandparents	18	13.3%	29	20.7%
	my great-grandparents	15	11.1%	27	19.3%
	my great-great-grandparents	22	16.3%	25	17.9%
	my great-great-great-grandparents	31	23.0%	20	14.3%
	my family is Indigenous or has always lived here	47	34.8%	36	25.7%
Age	18–29 years	56	38.1%	42	28.4%
	30–39 years	32	21.8%	31	20.9%
	40–49 years	23	15.6%	34	23.0%
	50–59 years	17	11.6%	19	12.8%
	60–69 years	13	8.8%	16	10.8%
	>70 years	6	4.1%	6	4.1%
Education	primary school	8	5.6%	9	6.2%
	secondary school	57	39.6%	68	46.9%
	professional training	29	20.1%	21	14.5%
	University	50	34.7%	47	32.4%
Gender	Male	70	47.6%	65	43.9%
	Female	77	52.4%	83	56.1%

Source: Author's own compilation.

Methods

I apply linear regression models and test if one or more of the included individual-level variables likely have had an effect on the political integration of the respondents in my sample. Model 1 includes "Muslim religion" as explanatory variable and "sample type" as control variable. Model 2 includes "Muslim religion" as explanatory variable, while "sample type", "Southeast Asian ethnicity," "generation," "age," "education," and "female" form the control variables.

5 Results

I now analyze how the four dimensions of political integration mentioned earlier are affected by the individual variables of "religion," "sample type," (as a proxy for religiosity) "ethnicity," "generation," "age," "education," and "gender." For each of the four mean sum indices I will offer both a model where I only control for "religion" and the "sample type" in the form of a dummy variable and contrariwise a second model with the aforementioned additional control variables now included.

Identification with the Overall Society in Question

In a first model with "Islam" as the explanatory variable and "sample type" as control variable, the former turns out not to be a significant predictor for identification either in the case of Guyana or in that of Suriname (see Table 3). The coefficients are not only insignificant but also substantially small.

Table 3. Linear Regression for Identification with the Overall Society in Question

	Guyana		Suriname	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	-0.033	0.003	0.008	-0.012
	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.041)	(0.050)
Temple sample	0.038	0.005	-0.001	0.006
	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.049)
Southeast Asian		-0.072**		-0.005
		(0.036)		(0.046)
Generation		-0.022		-0.019
		(0.012)		(0.014)
Age		0.023		0.005
		(0.013)		(0.015)
Education		0.011		0.010
		(0.018)		(0.021)
Female		0.111***		-0.022
		(0.036)		(0.042)
Valid observations (N)	146	132	147	137
R2	0.011	0.148	0.000	0.023

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

In a second model including the five other independent variables, "female" turns out to have the greatest impact on identification in the case of Guyana. It is the variable with the highest explanatory power compared to other variables, and is highly significant. "Ethnicity" likewise

emerges as significant, though to a lesser degree. In this combined model, the coefficient for "Islam" remains substantially small.

These findings do not apply to Suriname, where none of the included variables proves significant. All variables have modest effects on identification and, again, "Islam" proves insignificant.

Democratic Values

Model 1, again, contains merely "Islam" as an independent variable and "sample type" as control variable. Adherence to the Islamic faith proves insignificant in Guyana and Suriname as an explanatory variable on the dimension "democratic values" (see Table 4 below). "Sample type", or rather religiosity, manifests itself as highly significant predictor in Suriname.

Model 2 includes "religion" and the remaining variables, showing that "ethnicity" and "education" are highly significant as predictors for democratic values in Guyana. Additionally, "age" also proves significant. In Suriname, contrariwise, "generation" turns out to be a highly significant predictor for democratic values. Furthermore, the "sample type" is highly significant again.

Table 4. Linear Regression for the Adoption of Democratic Values

	Guyana		**Suriname**	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	-0.003	0.017	-0.054	-0.014
	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.027)	(0.031)
Temple sample	0.005	-0.012	0.131***	0.149***
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.031)
Southeast Asian		-0.074***		-0.045
		(0.024)		(0.029)
Generation		0.004		0.028***
		(0.008)		(0.008)
Age		0.022**		0.006
		(0.009)		(0.009)
Education		0.044***		-0.003
		(0.012)		(0.013)
Female		0.030		0.000
		(0.024)		(0.026)
Valid observations (N)	147	133	148	137
R2	0.000	0.201	0.146	0.248

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

Accordingly, the value of "Islamic faith" seems low for the explanation of democratic values for both Guyana and Suriname. However, when looking at the results for the individual democratic values, "Islamic faith" does prove significant for some of them. The mean sum index seems to have neutralized the variance in the significant results for "Islamic faith" for different values.

Curiously, the results don't point in one direction and seem incoherent. For example, different questions have been asked to cover the range of respondents' perspectives on citizen equality. Adherence to Islamic faith turns out as a significant and positive predictor for the support of women's right to divorce in Suriname in model 1 and, even more so, as an extremely significant positive predictor in model 2 (see Table 5). That is, larger shares of Muslim respondents supported this right compared to the shares in the Christian or Hindu respondents. In contrast, Muslim respondents in Guyana were less approving of an equal share of their father's heritage for daughters than Christian or Hindu respondents and considered it fair for daughters to receive a smaller share than their brothers. "Islamic faith" proves extremely significant for this value in model 1 and very significant in model 2 in Guyana (see Table 6).

Table 5. Linear Regression for the Support of Women's Right to Divorce

	Guyana		**Suriname**	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	0.016	0.018	0.108*	0.185***
	(0.029)	(0.034)	(0.049)	(0.056)
Temple sample	-0.030	-0.020	-0.049	-0.049
	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.049)	(0.057)
Southeast Asian		0.003		-0.139**
		(0.028)		(0.054)
Generation		-0.002		-0.021
		(0.010)		(0.016)
Age		-0.013		-0.027
		(0.011)		(0.017)
Education		-0.019		-0.025
		(0.015)		(0.024)
Female		-0.023		0.045
		(0.028)		(0.048)
Valid observations (N)	143	120	146	136
R2	0.011	0.035	0.035	0.118

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

Table 6. Linear Regression for the Approval of an Equal Share of Their Father's Heritage for Daughters

	Guyana		Suriname	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	-0.297***	-0.245**	-0.120	-0.125
	(0.086)	(0.094)	(0.090)	(0.105)
Temple sample	-0.069	-0.128	0.098	0.137
	(0.076)	(0.081)	(0.089)	(0.105)
Southeast Asian		-0.126		-0.068
		(0.078)		(0.099)
Generation		0.032		0.068
		(0.027)		(0.029)
Age		0.055		0.058
		(0.029)		(0.032)
Education		0.115**		-0.013
		(0.040)		(0.034)
Female		0.089		-0.077
		(0.077)		(0.089)
Valid observations (N)	144	130	143	132
R2	0.089	0.186	0.018	0.134

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

When it comes to equal rights for homosexuals, "Islamic faith" emerges as very significant in model 2 in Guyana, likewise in Suriname in model 1 and, even more, as extremely significant in model 2, resulting in an above average support of Muslim respondents for gay marriage (see Table 7).

These results don't allow identifying a clear tendency in Muslim values on citizen equality in the two countries, though Muslim respondents in Suriname seem to be more progressive than their Guyanese co-believers.

In terms of the respondents' stance towards the rule of law, Islamic religion shows significant results for two values. Firstly, "Islamic faith" has a very significant negative effect on the acceptance of police interference in case of domestic violence in the Guyanese sample, but only in model 1. Its significance dissolves when adding further predictors. Secondly, "Islamic faith" proves very significant in Suriname in model 1, having a negative effect on the refusal of bribing of public officials. Again, this effect dissolves when adding further predictors.

Lastly, as to political pluralism, "Islamic faith" reveals having a significant negative effect on the approval of a free opposition in both model 1 and 2 in the Surinamese sample. This is not the case in the Guyanese sample and hints to examining the political context in both countries, especially past and present Muslim political representation.

Table 7. Linear Regression for the Acceptance of Gay Couples' Right to Marry

	Guyana		Suriname	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	0.171	0.301**	0.221**	0.351***
	(0.098)	(0.109)	(0.090)	(0.099)
Temple sample	0.148	0.147	0.197*	0.114
	(0.084)	(0.091)	(0.090)	(0.100)
Southeast Asian		-0.291***		-0.313***
		(0.088)		(0.096)
Generation		0.001		0.063*
		(0.030)		(0.028)
Age		-0.009		0.061*
		(0.033)		(0.031)
Education		0.023		-0.053
		(0.045)		(0.034)
Female		0.046		-0.032
		(0.087)		(0.084)
Valid observations (N)	141	127	139	129
R2	0.049	0.136	0.090	0.233

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

Trust in the Political System

In model 1 including "Islam" as explanatory variable and "sample type" as control variable, none of these variables shows significant effects on an individual's trust in the political system in either Guyana or Suriname. Consequently, it cannot account for the development of trust in the political system in either of the two LAC countries.

Model 2 does reveal some interesting findings: Again, "ethnicity" and "age" turn out to be significant predictors for individuals' political trust in Guyana (see Table 8 below). Accordingly, "ethnicity" and "age" also exhibit the greatest impact on the development of political trust.

On the other hand, none of the included variables proves to be significant in Suriname. However, the variables with the highest impact on political trust are "female" and "education", though this effect is ultimately rather modest.

Table 8. Linear Regression for Trust in the Political System

	Guyana		Suriname	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	0.001	0.177	0.034	0.073
	(0.142)	(0.140)	(0.153)	(0.187)
Temple sample	0.039	-0.047	0.048	0.085
	(0.124)	(0.119)	(0.150)	(0.184)
Southeast Asian		-0.268**		-0.026
		(0.115)		(0.178)
Generation		-0.072		-0.029
		(0.041)		(0.051)
Age		0.111**		-0.048
		(0.045)		(0.056)
Education		-0.096		0.080
		(0.061)		(0.079)
Female		0.149		-0.178
		(0.116)		(0.155)
Valid observations (N)	130	119	142	131
R2	0,001	0.177	0.001	0.034

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

Political Participation

Model 1 with "Islam" as explanatory variable and "sample type" as control variable proves both are insignificant predictors for political participation in the cases of Guyana and Suriname alike (see Table 9 below).

When we look at Model 2, in the case of Guyana none of the included predictors prove significant— though this time "Islam" comes close.

As to Suriname, none of the included predictors demonstrate significance—though "ethnicity" is near to doing so. It also displays the greatest variance with regard to political participation.

Table 9. Linear Regression for Political Participation

	Guyana		Suriname	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Muslim	-0.043	-0.027	0.036	0.057
	(0.043)	(0.049)	(0.036)	(0.043)
Temple sample	0.006	0.015	-0.076	-0.064
	(0.038)	(0.042)	(0.035)	(0.042)
Southeast Asian		-0.074		-0.078
		(0.041)		(0.040)
Generation		-0.008		-0.011
		(0.014)		(0.012)
Age		-0.011		-0.016
		(0.015)		(0.013)
Education		0.000		0.023
		(0.021)		(0.018)
Female		-0.051		-0.046
		(0.041)		(0.036)
Valid observations (N)	137	126	146	135
R2	0.007	0.051	0.034	0.110

Source: Author's own compilation.

Notes: Religion: Christian, Hindu, and nonreligious; Ethnicity: African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, mixed, and all other groups; Gender: male. Standard errors in parentheses. **p-value < 0.05; ***p-value < 0.01.

6 Conclusions

This paper has examined the political integration of Muslim minorities in two Caribbean countries: Guyana and Suriname. Different to most studies on European countries vis-à-vis Muslim immigration, it was possible to control for "ethnicity" in this study and also implicitly for "migration background". While "religion" turns out to be a weak predictor for political integration, other sociodemographic variables are able to explain variance therein—as differing across respective dimensions and countries.

The study's results enhance the previous doubts regarding the explanatory power here of "Islamic faith" and in large parts support the null findings exhibited in parts of the research on Europe. Still, some significant effects for adherence to the Islamic faith were found for some of the individual democratic values. These findings don't seem to follow a homogenous pattern. As they point in opposing directions, they don't allow drawing general conclusions on Muslim democratic values in Guyana and Suriname.

The study complements the discoveries on the impact of "Islamic faith" by showing the overriding salience of "ethnicity" in the cases under study. Besides, the obtained results suggest that different variables might be more or less relevant in respective geographic contexts—namely in terms of conditions in host societies and of the dimensions of political integration.

For example, the fact that "ethnicity" turns out to be more salient in the Guyanese sample might be related to the fact that certain dimensions of political integration—that is, identification with the overall society, democratic values and trust in political institutions—are ethnically more politicized there than they are in neighbouring Suriname.

The results of this analysis certainly have limited explanatory power due to the relatively small sample size and to the employed methodology, which is why they do not meet the criteria for claiming representativeness. Future studies should employ larger and more random samples with the purpose of generating such representative results. Besides, the findings' heterogeneous nature indicates that a closer study of the context might be promising. Further, complementing the analysis of individual-level predictors of integration with macro-level ones tested in non-European countries could prove worthwhile—with socioeconomic disadvantages and discrimination, attitudes toward immigrants and host societies' inclusiveness, the latter's integration policies, variation in the size of particular social groups, state consolidation, and welfare-state regimes just a few pertinent examples here.

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Appendix

Dependent Variable

The overall dependent variable "political integration" was split into four mean sum indexes corresponding to each of its four dimensions. Every item in each index is coded between 0 and 1, with 0 meaning no integration and 1 denoting full integration. Likert scales are coded as decimals until 1.

1) The index "identification with the overall society in question" is based on two items: "Which place on Earth would you call your home?" (question 7) and "Which group do you identify with first and foremost?" (question 8). The latter is a Likert scale.
2) The index "internalized democratic values" contains 18 items, covering between one and three questions in each of the following areas: equality of all citizens before the law, acceptance of the rule of law, freedom, division of powers and independence of the courts, pluralism of political parties, lawfulness of the administration, and solidarity (questions 9–25).
3) The index "trust in the political system" consists of three items: "trust in political parties and politicians," "trust in parliament," and "trust in the legal system" (questions 26–28).
4) The index "political participation" comprises four items: "interest in politics," "talk about your country's politics," "engagement in a political party," and "participation in the last election" (questions 29–32).

Explanatory and Control Variables

My analysis is based on "religion" as the explanatory variable. I coded the nominal variable "religion" as dummy ones for each large religious group—Christians, Hindus, and Muslims. "Muslim" is the explanatory variable, which is why I included this dummy in the regression analysis.

As to the control variables, I created a dummy for the value "religious temple sample" of the nominal variable "sample type" and included it in the two models, for the purpose of controlling for potential bias regarding the above-average religiosity of the respondents who were surveyed in temples (versus in shopping malls).

I also employed dummies for "ethnicity" as a nominal variable, coding one dummy variable per ethnic group—African/Black, Amerindian/Indigenous, East Indian, mixed, all other groups. "Southeast Asian" is the reference category included in the regression analysis. The terms for specific ethnic groups were based on the related denominations employed in the country's last census.

"Generation" as an ordinal variable was coded from 1 to 7, with 1 referring to persons who immigrated into the country themselves through the sixth generation (my great-great-great-

grandparents) coded as 6. Meanwhile, 7 denotes persons with Indigenous roots and no migration background.

"Age" as an ordinal variable was coded in grades of nine or more years, starting at the age of 18. The first category 18–29 years was coded as 1, proceeding in nine-year groupings through age 70 or over (coded as 6) as the last.

"Education" as an ordinal variable was coded in four grades, with 1 referring to "primary school education" and 4 to "university" as the highest level of education.

"Gender" as a nominal variable was, again, coded as dummy ones, with "female" being the reference category included in the regression analysis.

Questionnaire

The words in square brackets were not part of the original questionnaire and were introduced here for better readability.

Do you have Guyanese / Surinamese nationality?	
□ yes	□ no
If no, questionnaire doesn't apply	

Demographic basics

1	**Gender**	
	I am	
	□ male	□ female

2	**Age**		
	I am		
	□ 18–29 years old	□ 30–39 years old	□ 40–49 years old
	□ 50–59 years old	□ 60–69 years old	□ > 70 years old

3	**Education**			
	My highest level of education is			
	□ primary school	□ secondary school	□ professional training	□ university

4	**Religion**				
	I am				
	□ Christian	□ Muslim	□ Hindu	□ Other:	□ Nonreligious

5	**Ethnic affiliation**				
	□ African/Black	□ Amerindian/ Indigenous	□ Southeast Asian	□ Mixed	□ All other groups

6	**Who of your direct family members was the first to touch ground in Guyana?**
	□ myself
	□ my father / my mother
	□ my grandfather / my grandmother
	□ my great-grandfather / my great-grandmother
	□ my great-great-grandfather / my great-great-grandmother
	□ my great-great-great-grandfather / my great-great-great-grandmother
	□ My family is Indigenous or we have always lived here

1) Identification

Please choose one of the options listed below

7	Which place on Earth would you call your home?	
	□ Guyana / Suriname	□ Place outside of Guyana / Suriname

8	Which group do you identify with first and foremost?
	□ Guyanese / Surinamese society
	□ My ethnic/religious community
	□ I identify with both equally

2) Democratic values

Please state whether you agree (yes) or not (no) with the following statements

[Equality of all citizens before the law]

9	A woman shall be allowed to freely take the decision to divorce her husband, just like a man can take this decision	
	□ yes	□ no

10	A woman should inherit a smaller share of her father's heritage than her brother	
	□ yes	□ no

11	Gay couples should have the right to marry	
	□ yes	□ no

[Acceptance of the rule of law]

12	When a man beats his wife, it is a family matter and police should stay out of it	
	□ yes	□ no

[Freedom]

13	A woman should have the right to choose her husband or partner freely, inside or outside her own confessional group. Parents should not pick partners for their daughters.	
	□ yes	□ no

14	Everybody should have the right to practice their religion freely, wherever and however they consider appropriate	
	□ yes	□ no

[Division of powers / independence of the courts]

Please choose one of the two options

15	□	If a court takes an unfair decision, the president should correct this decision	□	The president needs to accept any court decision due to the independence of the judiciary

16	□	Religion should be kept separate from the public sphere	□	Religion and politics should be interwoven in the same system

17	□	It would be ideal to have a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and the judiciary	□	The best thing would be to have a government, a parliament, and a judiciary that are equal and mutually control each other

[Pluralism of political parties]

Please state whether you agree (yes) or not (no) with the following statements

18	Having many political parties brings conflict and is confusing. It would be ok to have just one political party to have a straightforward path in government.	
	□ yes	□ no

19	The opposition can block the work of the government. Its role should be restricted so that the government can work without inconvenience.	
	□ yes	□ no

20	Diverging opinions and interests are part of democratic societies. They are reflected in a pluralistic landscape regarding political parties.	
	□ yes	□ no

[Lawfulness of the administration]

21	A public official should have the right to take the decisions he/she considers correct, without the need to make things transparent or react to individual objections	
	□ yes	□ no

22	Public administration is there to serve the people's needs	
	□ yes	□ no

23	It is acceptable that public officials attend first to those citizens who pay a little extra for their services	
	□ yes	□ no

[Solidarity]

Please choose <u>one</u> of the two options

24	□	Large disparities in people's incomes are acceptable to properly reward differences in talent and effort	□	For a society to be fair, differences in people's standards of living should be small

25	□	Social services cost individuals too much in taxes and charges	□	Social services lead to a more equal society

3) Political trust

	How much do you trust each of the following institutions?				
		not at all	essentially	mainly	completely
26	Political parties & politicians	□	□	□	□
27	Parliament	□	□	□	□
28	Legal system	□	□	□	□

4) Political participation, mobilization, and representation

29	How interested would you say you are in politics?			
	□ very interested	□ somewhat interested	□ not very interested	□ not at all interested

30	How often do you talk about Guyanese / Surinamese politics?			
	□ never	□ every month	□ every week	□ every day

31	Are you an active member of a political party?	
	□ yes	□ no

32	Did you vote in the last national election?		
	□ yes	□ no	□ not eligible

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