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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Prejudice in interreligious context: The role of metaprejudice and majority–minority status

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Abstract

Samples of two hundred forty-five majority Sunny Muslims, 87 Ahmadiyya Muslims, and 145 Christians were used to investigate the determinants and mediators of prejudice in interreligious context in Indonesia. First, the study extends the idea of in-group and out-group metaprejudice; both of which were found to mediate the relationship between perceived quality of intergroup relationship and personal prejudice. Second, we expected that majority members are more likely to reject a minority and that a minority is more likely to more strongly reject another minority than the majority for self-serving reasons. Additionally, the Sunni majority will prejudice and reject the Ahmadiyya minority more than the Christian minority due to the strained religious relation between the two Muslim groups. The hypotheses were confirmed. The findings are discussed in the context of stereotyping, and prejudice dynamics in other intergroup conflicts and ways of coping with such conflict are suggested.

KEYWORDS

intergroup relations, majority–minority, meta-knowledge, meta-perception, prejudice

1 | INTRODUCTION

Post-World War II, studies on intergroup relations have focused on the issue of why people denigrate or hate each other. Although prejudice and denigration has nearly always been an issue between groups, nowadays prejudice and collective violence occur increasingly between religious groups and less between nations (Sen, Wagner, & Howarth, 2014,). The present study takes up this issue and explores the predictors and dynamics of prejudice in interreligious relations. This research is located in Indonesia where Human Rights Watch (2013) points out an increased tendency of violence by the majority against minority religious groups.

1.1 | Intergroup relationships and prejudice

Allport (1954) mentioned that prejudice contains two essential ingredients; one is an attitude of favour or disfavour, and the other is an overgeneralised belief. "I don't want to be friends with a Chinese" is a prejudiced attitude, while

"Jews are evil" is a prejudiced belief. Our use of the term "prejudice" is similar to Allport's notion of overgeneralised belief. In this understanding, prejudice is about characteristics of out-groups and their members that are negatively evaluated (see e.g., Putra, 2014; Reicher, 2012) even though in a few cases prejudice may also be positive.

In social identity theory, prejudice is understood as a result of in-group–out-group categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Group members usually see their group as an important source of pride and self-esteem, which can be bolstered by enhancing one's own group's image or by denigrating the out-group depending on the context (Billig, 1985).

Generally, the quality of intergroup relationships and mutual prejudiced perception has to do with the existence of conflict: In the case of conflict, people attribute characteristics onto the out-group that are opposite to the characteristics they deem typical of their own group (Riketta, 2004). In the case of cooperative relations, out-groups are seen as relatively similar to one's ingroup (Riketta, 2008). Protracted disharmonious intergroup relationships contribute to maintaining or even increasing mutual prejudice as, for example, in the Israeli–Palestinian case. In such situations, the opponent in a conflict is the target of particularly strong prejudice such as some Israeli Jews who devalue their prejudice target more negatively than other negative targets (Bar-Tal & Teichmen, 2005).

Survey research about intergroup relations in Yugoslavia before the outbreak of war in 1991 showed that intergroup tensions and hostility were the least frequent in most multiethnic parts of Yugoslavia. To the surprise of researchers, however, it was in these parts where the most outrageous intergroup violence occurred. What the survey researchers seemed to have forgotten was a question about people's knowledge of interethnic group relations (Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011). In a later survey including this question revealed that people in Yugoslavia described interethnic relations in these regions to be worse than bad (Elcheroth, Reicher, & Penic, 2009; Sekulic, 2014). Obviously, it is people's perception and not only the objective fact of intergroup tensions that allows to predict which levels of prejudice exist and how these relations will develop.

Taken together, the quality of a relationship between groups depends on many factors such as a troublesome past encounter or conflict that figures strongly in a group's collective memory and that is seen to justify prolonged hostility (e.g., Kello, 2016; Sen & Wagner, 2005). Another example that is particularly pertinent to the present case is when groups have split in the past and develop slightly divergent and supposedly insurmountable constitutional worldviews. Religious groups with a history of schisms very often maintain a century-long animosity about miniscule differences in their interpretation of a holy book. This can be observed in Christianity and is the case with Sunni, Shiite, and Ahmadiyya Muslims. In such cases, the quality of intergroup relationships takes on a perpetual ideological character and becomes part of religious beliefs.

1.2 | Metaprejudice

Members of reflexive groups, that is, individuals who are mutually aware of forming a group, are also grossly aware of what others think and believe about the group itself and about relevant social objects (Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Social comparison theory also describes how individuals tend to implicitly or explicitly compare their own beliefs and opinions with those of their group-compatriots as a means to calibrate their own thinking with regard to novel situations (e.g., Forsyth, 2000; Putra, 2014).

A similar process occurs when groups confront each other in conflict, and in-group metaprejudice is formed. Individuals will compare their own prejudice about the out-group target with the level of prejudice among their group comembers. Such a kind of conformism in adhering to norms may provide subjective security and acceptance in one's own group (Sloan, Berman, Zeigler-Hill, & Bullock, 2009). For example, when expressing prejudice toward black people is normatively acceptable, white individuals tend to support racial prejudice compared to those who consider prejudice as normatively unacceptable. Prejudice will be suppressed when explicit prejudice expression is considered as unacceptable (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002).

Metastereotypes are people's beliefs and perception of how they are viewed and stereotyped by others (Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2008). Similarly, out-group metaprejudice is the evaluative version of a metastereotype (Putra, 2016a): How do members of the out-group evaluate me as a member of the in-group.

Mutual knowledge of opponents' ways of thinking is an unavoidable precondition of interaction. It allows people to develop an idea of what to expect from the other person in order to engage in concerted interaction (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). Consequently, prejudiced people will depend on what they imagine their opponent thinks about themselves (Putra, 2014). Take, for example, this extract, "I don't like Arabs, I don't trust them. I think that by nature they don't want peace with us" (An interview with Ana, Jewish woman from Tel Aviv, in Salinas, 2007, p. 17) and this extract "[…] I can see the hate and anger in their eyes, […] Our only alternative is to fight them […]" (An interview with Soha, a Palestinian woman from Jenin, in Salinas, 2007, p. 22–23). The extracts illustrate how people imagine what out-group members are thinking (out-group metaprejudice) and that this perception has an impact on one's own confrontational expectations. It will influence one's own negative evaluations of out-group members.

In confrontational settings, it is safe to assume that a person's negative prejudice against the out-group will be mirrored by the out-group members' negative prejudice against the in-group. If this confrontational setting is volatile and changeable, the in-group's response may be directed at disconfirming negative perceptions (Verkuyten, 2003; Wagner, Holtz, & Kashima, 2009). Members of a negatively prejudiced group may, for example, become empathically helpful to out-group members in order to disconfirm the prejudice (Hopkins et al., 2007). If the setting appears reified and the opponents' attitudes and prejudices essentilised, the response will be to perpetuate the confrontation: "I hate you because you hate us."

Given that individuals are always part of the group (Reynolds, Haslam, & Turner, 2011) and that the in-group usually is a strong normative point of reference, in-group metaprejudice should play an important role for individuals' personal judgement. The group's dominant attitude against an out-group, on the other hand, will tend to be influenced by the out-group's metaprejudice as an indicator of hostility (Putra, 2014). Thus, in order to understand personal prejudice, we consider it important to see the entire process and interaction of the perceived quality of intergroup relationship, of out-group and of in-group metaprejudice.

It should be noted that even though out-group metaprejudice looks like a proxy of perceived intergroup relationship, it is not the same. The degree to which individuals perceive out-group members' prejudicing against them qua representatives of a particular in-group is more situational and ephemeral than an ideological and historically based intergroup relationship. Individuals usually do not organise their day-to-day encounters along religious and ideological lines. Only in times of political friction and hostility will personal attitudes become more aligned with overarching group ideologies (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Sen & Wagner, 2009).

1.3 | Majority and minority status and social rejection

More often than not, societies are divided into subgroups that form a majority and one or more minorities. Equally often, the status between subgroups differs according to their numerical dominance (e.g., Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007; Zeromskyte & Wagner, 2016). Group status and dominance correlate with ethnic and religious characteristics that define the boundaries of subgroups (Dahinden & Zittoun, 2013; Holtz, Dahinden, & Wagner, 2013).

Generally, prejudice is found in majority and minority groups; however, we suggest that prejudice will be expressed differently by majority and minority group members. By expressing one's prejudice, we understand the tendency to openly discriminate, reject, or exclude out-group members (see for comparison Allport, 1954).

It has been shown that lower status minority groups are expected to adhere more to societal norms than majority groups (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008). This motivates them to tolerate others and to act in nondiscriminating ways. However, a minority may endorse discrimination as well as social rejection when it faces another minority group (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008). One reason for this tendency can be that by rejecting an out-group cominority, people hope to divert discrimination from their own group. This aspect will be addressed in the present study.

1.4 | Religious groups in Indonesia

The present study is in the context of interreligious relations in Indonesia where religion is one of the pivotal elements, which influence social interaction and everyday life. Religion is one of Indonesia's state ideological pillars (Mashuri et al., 2013). In public schools and universities, courses on one's chosen religion are compulsory.

In the general population, Sunni Islam is the largest religious group. Ahmadiyya Muslims are a minority subgroup of Islam across the world in general and in Indonesia in particular. Among dominant Muslim groups, Ahmadiyya is considered different for several reasons: First, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of Ahmadiyya, is believed by the Ahmadis (Ahmadiyya follower) as the savior and the prophet who does not bring a new religion and sacred text. This belief is different from most other Islamic groups (e.g., Shia and Sunni). Second, Ahmadis can only perform congregational praying behind the prayer's leader (Imam) from their own group. This practice is different to most other Islamic groups where each Muslims can perform congregational praying even if the praying leader is from a different school of thought. Third, Ahmadiyya uses Quran as their sacred text; however, they exclusively use Tafsir (the interpretation) of Quran from their own interpreters (Hanafi, 2011). In fact, Ahmadiyya's existence has triggered fierce debates within majority Sunni Muslim groups about whether Ahmadiyya is part of Islam or not.

Unlike Ahmadiyya, the existence of Christianity (i.e., Catholic and Protestant) in Indonesia is not debated (Syihab, 2013). Along with Islam, Hindu, Buddhism, and Confucianism, Christianity is recognised as one of the important religions. In fact, some important or holy days in Christianity are included as national holiday. However, in social life, tensions and frictions between Muslims and Christians often occur and in places where Sunni Muslims are the majority, Ahmadiyya Muslims and Christian groups are equally the victims of discrimination and aggressions. Often, the tensions appear to be triggered by proselytisation attempts (Bertrand, 2004). In Indonesia, proselytism is considered a sensitive issue, especially in Muslim–Christian relations.

1.5 | Hypotheses

A perceived conflictual relationship between two groups increases in-group and out-group metaprejudice of group members. As a consequence, in-group and out-group metaprejudice are expected to have an effect on direct prejudice. This brings the following hypotheses. We expect two effects where the first effect is divided into three subeffects. All hypotheses refer to regression measures:

H1.1 The perceived quality of the intergroup relationship will influence the degree of perceived in-group and out-group metaprejudice and subsequently personal prejudice. There should be a positive regression path from perceived intergroup relationship to the mediating in-group and out-group metaprejudice.

H1.2 There should be a positive path from the mediating in-group and out-group metaprejudices to personal prejudice. Due to the mediating effect, the direct path from perceived intergroup relation quality on personal prejudice will be lower than without mediation.

H1.3 Besides being important in forming the in-group's dominant attitude against an out-group, out-group metaprejudice will also influence perceived in-group metaprejudice. We expect a significant positive path from out-group metaprejudice to in-group metaprejudice and also to personal prejudice.

H2.1 We argued before that a majority will be more likely to reject a minority and that a minority is more likely to reject another minority than the majority for self-serving reasons. This should show in a 2*2 analysis of variance with "negativity against out-group" (personal prejudice vs social rejection) and kind of target (minority vs majority) as independent variables. We expect a statistical interaction between negativity and target for minority respondents.

H2.2 Given the strained relationship between the two Muslim subgroups, we expected that the Sunni majority will prejudice and reject the Muslim Ahmadiyya minority more than the Christian minority.

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Sample

We collected data from 245 majority Sunni Muslims (151 males and 94 females, age range 16 to 58 years, *M* = 23.97 years); from 87 Ahmadiyya Muslims (61 males and 26 females, age range 19 to 64 years, *M* = 30.40 years); and from 145 Christians (i.e., Protestant and Catholic; 54 males and 91 females, age range 16 to 57 years, *M* = 22.5; 4 did not report their age).

Participants were presented two items from a six-point scale asking for the degree of religious identification with one of the three groups of interest: Sunni, Ahmadiyya, and Christian (Catholic, Protestant; Verkuyten, 2007). The scale consists of "For me becoming part of [an ingroup] is very important" and "I feel a strong bond with other members of [the ingroup]". Respondents scoring higher than 3.5 were included in the analysis. Cronbach alpha values were α = .92 for Muslims, α = .88 for Ahmadiyya, and α = .91 for Christians.

2.2 | Material

2.2.1 | Prejudice

Data were collected using questionnaires. The first part of the questionnaire was an informed consent with which to confirm participants' agreement to voluntarily participate in this research. Subsequently, participants were asked to fill scales related to their own group and two target out-groups, that is, quality of intergroup relationship, in-group metaprejudice, out-group metaprejudice, personal prejudice, and social rejection. Lastly, participants were asked to fill out gender, age, ethnicity, institution, and activity in religious organizations. All scales were six-point scales.

We used six items of a bipolar personal prejudice adjective scale (Putra, 2014). Participants responded to "do you think [out-group] is" threatening–trustworthy, hostile–friendly, slothful–industrious, evil–good, stupid–clever, and unworthy–dignified. The scale values were reversed for further calculation such that a high score meant a high-negative evaluation.

Cronbach alpha scores for personal prejudice by members of each group were

Sunni respondents prejudicing against Ahmadiyyas: α = .93.

Sunny respondents prejudicing against Christians: α = .91.

Christian respondents prejudicing against Ahmadiyyas: α = .94.

Christian respondents prejudicing against Sunnis: α = .94.

Ahmadiyya respondents prejudicing against Christians: α = .93.

Ahmadiyya respondents prejudicing against Sunnis: α = .93.

2.2.2 | Metaprejudice

The same measures were used for metaprejudice (Putra, 2014): Participants were asked to indicate how they perceived their own group's average prejudice against the two out-groups "Do you think that in Indonesia [ingroup] perceive [outgroup] as [bipolar adjective pair]".

Cronbach alpha scores for in-group metaprejudice as perceived by members of each group within their in-group were

In-group metaprejudice against Ahmadiyyas perceived by Sunni respondents: α = .91.

In-group metaprejudice against Christians perceived by Sunni respondents: α = .92.

In-group metaprejudice against Ahmadiyyas perceived by Christian respondents: α = .95.

In-group metaprejudice against Sunnis perceived by Christian respondents: α = .90

In-group metaprejudice against Christians perceived by Ahmadiyya respondents: α = .93.

In-group metaprejudice against Sunnis perceived by Ahmadiyya respondents: α = .94

Out-group metaprejudice was assessed in an analog way: "Do you think that in Indonesia [outgroup] perceive [ingroup] as [bipolar adjective pair]". Again, all scales were reversed for high values meaning high-negative evaluation.

Cronbach alpha scores for out-group metaprejudice against their in-group as perceived by members of each group were

Out-group metaprejudice perceived by Sunni respondents targeting Ahmadiyyas: α = .93.

Out-group metaprejudice perceived by Sunni respondents targeting Christans: α = .94.

Out-group metaprejudice perceived by Christian respondents targeting Ahmadiyyas: α = .97

Out-group metaprejudice perceived by Christian respondents targeting Sunnis: α = .93.

Out-group metaprejudice perceived by Ahmadiyya respondents targeting Christians: α = .89.

Out-group metaprejudice perceived by Ahmadiyya respondents targeting Sunnis: α = .91.

2.2.3 | Intergroup relationship

Respondents answered three items on six-point bipolar scales: "Do you think that the relationship beween [ingroup] and [outgroup] is" bad–good, disharmonious–harmonic, or hostile–friendly. Again, the scale was reversed with high scores reflecting a bad intergroup relationship.

Cronbach alpha scores for quality of intergroup relationship as perceived by members of each group were

Intergroup relationship perceived by Sunni respondents versus the Christian group: α = .92;

Intergroup relationship perceived by Sunni respondents versus the Ahmadiyya group: α = .94.

Intergroup relationship perceived by Christian respondents versus the Ahmadiyya group: α = .93

Intergroup relationship perceived by Christian respondents versus the Sunni group: α = .96.

Intergroup relationship perceived by Ahmadiyya respondents versus the Christian group: α = .96.

Intergroup relationship perceived by Ahmadiyya respondents versus the Sunni group: α = .93.

2.2.4 | Social rejection

We used a four-item modified political tolerance scale to assess social rejection (Sullivan, Pierson, & Marcus, 1982). It reflects whether the activities of an out-group are considered tolerable or not: "If someone from [the outgroup] moves to my neighborhood, I will accept them openly (Reverse-scored)", "It is a problem if members of [the outgroup] perform religious activities in my neighborhood", "It is difficult for me to accept those from (the outgroup) teaching in public school", and "I accept religious activities of (outgroup) being broadcast on TV" (reverse-scored).

Cronbach alpha scores for social rejection as expressed by members of each group were

Sunni respondents rejecting Ahmadiyyas: α = .78

Sunni respondents rejecting Christians: α = .73.

Christian respondents rejecting Ahmadiyyas: α = .72

Christian respondents rejecting Sunnis: α = .65.

Ahmadiyya respondents rejecting Christians: α = .59.

Ahmadiyya respondents rejecting Sunnis: α = .60.

2.3 | Procedure

Data were collected mostly in Java Island, except for a small number of Christian respondents who were approached in the province of Riau. In all of these places, Sunni Muslims represent the majority.

The questionnaire was in Indonesian language and participants with a clear religious affiliation were invited to participate. The study was presented as a research about interreligious relations in Indonesia. Upon finishing the questionnaire, participants were debriefed.

3 | RESULTS

In order to include all available data in the analysis, we used the expectation–maximization technique for data imputation on each psychological scale with missing items. Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) was performed for information that missing data were completely random (Acock, 1997).

3.1 | Preliminary analysis

The results of independent-sample *t* test showed that there were gender differences in Sunni participants on social rejection toward Christians (t (228) = −3.76, p < .001; M_{male} = 2.95, SD = .93; M_{female} = 2.51, SD = 0.75) and in Ahmadiyya participants on prejudice toward Christians (t (84) = 2.07, p < .05; M_{male} = 1.98, SD = .72, M_{female} = 2.34, SD = .74). With Christian participants, we did not find any gender differences in all key variables. To anticipate the effect of gender, educational level, and age in our mediation analysis, we included these variables as control variables.

3.2 | Mediation of in-group and out-group metaprejudice on the relationship of perceived intergroup relation onto personal prejudice (Hypothesis 1)

In our mediation analysis of predictors of prejudice, we treated intergroup relationship as predictor (X), out-group metaprejudice as first mediator (M1), in-group metaprejudice as second mediator (M2), and prejudice as the outcome (Y). We used SPSS PROCESS (Model 6; Hayes, 2013) as it provides total, direct, and indirect effect in one step. On the other hand, to get a good or strong standard error and confidence intervals (95%) of indirect effect, we decided to use bootstrapping technique of 5,000 times resampling data (Hayes, Preacher, & Myers, 2011). In the following section, we report the results of mediation analyses ordered by the targeted group: Ahmadiyya as a target for Sunnis and Christians, Christians as a target for Sunnis and Ahmadiyya, and Sunnis as a target for Christians and Ahmadiyya.

3.2.1 | Ahmadiyya as target

A total effect of perceived intergroup relationship on prejudice (see Figures 1a and 1c) was positive and significant with Sunni (b = 0.37, SE = 0.06, p < .001, 95% CI [0.26, 0.48]) and Christian participants (b = 0.29, SE = 0.07, p < .001, 95% CI [0.16, 0.43]). However, when the effect of perceived intergroup relationship was controlled for by

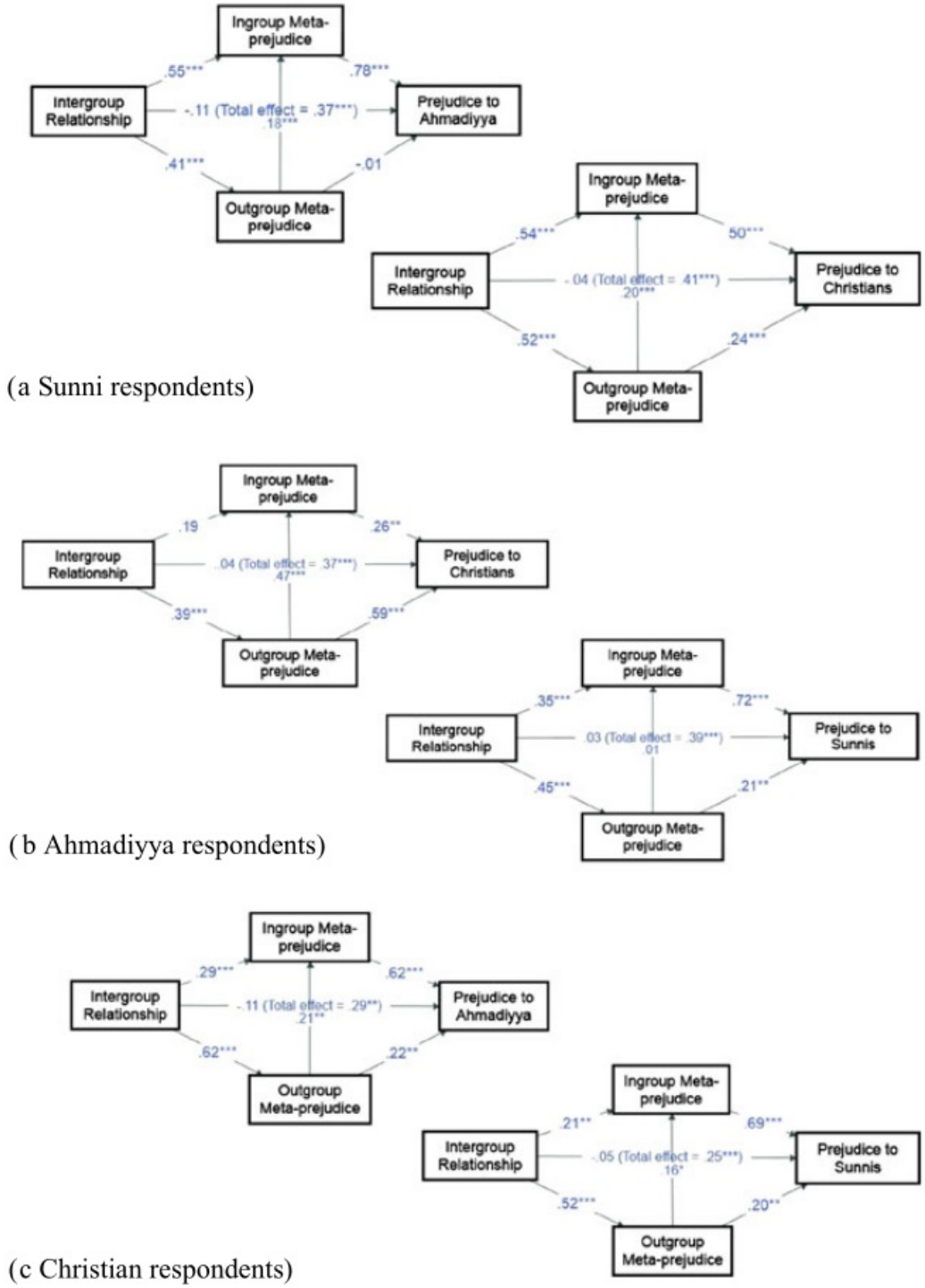

FIGURE 1 (a) Mediation analysis for Sunni respondents judging Ahmadiyyas and Christians. (b) Mediation analysis for Ahmadiyya respondents judging Christians and Sunnis. (c) Mediation analysis for Christian respondents judging Ahmadiyyas and Sunnis. *Note*. Path coefficients are unstandardized estimates. The analysis controlled for gender, age, and education. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; †$p < .10$. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

in-group and out-group metaprejudice, the effect of perceived intergroup relationship dropped to nonsignificant in either Sunni ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .11$, 95% CI [−0.26, 0.03]) or Christian participants ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .120$, 95% CI [−0.24, .03]). Further, the calculation of 5,000 resampling data for standard error and (95%)

confidence intervals of indirect effects revealed a significant indirect effect of perceived intergroup relationship on prejudice via in-group metaprejudice in Sunni (b = 0.43, *Boot SE* = 0.07, 95% Boot CI [0.31, 0.57]) and Christian participants (b = 0.18, *Boot SE* = 0.06, 95% Boot CI [0.09, 0.32]). There was also a significant three-step indirect effect from perceived intergroup relationship to out-group metaprejudice, to in-group metaprejudice, and finally to personal prejudice in Sunni (b = 0.06, *Boot SE* = 0.02, 95% Boot CI [0.02, 0.11]), but not in Christian participants. On the other hand, perceived intergroup relationship on prejudice via out-group metaprejudice was not significant both with Christian (b = 0.13, *Boot SE* = 0.07, 95% Boot CI [−0.00, 0.27]) and with Sunni participants.

Using LISREL version 8.8, we also checked the fit indices of the model for prejudice as the outcome (Y) and intergroup relationship as the predictor (X) when out-group metaprejudice (M1) did and did not set to relate with in-group metaprejudice (M2). Across all three samples eliminating the path from out-group metaprejudice to in-group metaprejudice, the model did not fit the data (RMSEA > 0.10, p < .05; with the exception of Ahmadiyyas targeting Sunnis, the model fit, but not perfectly, RMSEA < 0.05, p = .552). The model was saturated, however, when including the path from out-group metaprejudice to in-group metaprejudice (RMSEA = 0.00, p = 1.00). These findings thus show the superiority of our model.

3.2.2 | Christians as target

The effect of intergroup relationships on prejudice (see Figure 1a and 1b) dropped to nonsignificant with Sunni (b = −0.04, *SE* = 0.04, p = .43, 95% CI [−0.16, 0.07]) and Ahmadiyya participants (b = 0.04, *SE* = 0.09, p = .66, 95% CI [−0.13, 0.21]) after controlling in-group and out-group metaprejudice, whereas the total effect of this relationship was found to be significant with both, Sunni (b = 0.41, *SE* = 0.05, p < .001, 95% CI [0.30, 0.51]) and Ahmadiyya participants (b = 0.37, *SE* = 0.11, p < .001, 95% CI [0.16, 0.59]). Moreover, with Sunni participants, intergroup relationship significantly predicted prejudice mediated by in-group metaprejudice (b = 0.27, *Boot SE* = 0.06, 95% Boot CI [0.15, 0.39]) as well as by out-group metaprejudice (b = 0.12, *Boot SE* = 0.04, 95% Boot CI [0.06, 0.22]). Instead, there was also a significant three-step indirect effect from perceived intergroup relationship to out-group metaprejudice to in-group metaprejudice, and to personal prejudice in Sunni participants (b = 0.05, *Boot SE* = 0.02, 95% Boot CI [0.03, 0.10]). On the other hand, the significant indirect effect in Ahmadiyya participants was only found between intergroup relationship to out-group metaprejudice and to personal prejudice (b = 0.23, *Boot SE* = 0.11, 95% Boot CI [0.08, 0.53]).

3.2.3 | Sunnis as target

The total effect of intergroup relationship on prejudice (see Figure 1b and 1c) was significant with Ahmadiyya (b = 0.39, *SE* = 0.08, p < .001, 95% CI [0.23, 0.55]) and Christian participants (b = 0.25, *SE* = 0.06, p < .001, 95% CI [0.14, 0.36]). However, the effect of perceived intergroup relationship on prejudice was nonsignificant when controlling for in-group and out-group metaprejudice both with Ahmadiyya (b = 0.03, *SE* = 0.07, p = .62, 95% CI [−0.10, 0.17]) and with Christian participants (b = −0.05, *SE* = 0.06, p = .41, 95% CI [−0.16, 0.07]). Nevertheless, there were significant indirect effects of perceived intergroup relationship on prejudice through in-group metaprejudice in Ahmadiyya (b = 0.26, *Boot SE* = 0.11, 95% Boot CI [0.08, 0.58]) and Christian participants (b = 0.14, *Boot SE* = 0.06, 95% Boot CI [0.04, 0.27]). Additionally, for Ahmadiyyas out-group metaprejudice was a significant mediator (b = 0.09, *Boot SE* = 0.04, 95% Boot CI [0.03, 0.20]) as well as for Christian participants (b = 0.10, *Boot SE* = 0.04, 95% Boot CI [0.02, 0.18]). None of the two groups showed a three-step indirect effect.

3.3 | Prejudice and social rejection

Hypothesis 2.1 states that minority groups will be prejudiced against the majority but refrain from rejecting it openly. Instead, fellow minority groups will be targeted for being socially rejected. This was tested by a 2*2 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA; within subjects) with the factor "kind of negative out-group evaluation" (prejudice vs. social rejection; repeated) and the factor target group (other minority group vs. majority; repeated) across the two minority group samples of Ahmadiyyas and Christians.

There was a significant interaction according to Hypothesis 2.1 (F (4.48, 0.32) = 13.94, p < .000, η^2 = 0.058). The level of prejudice against the majority (M = 2.84, SD = 0.98) was the same as against the other minority (M = 2.87, SD = 1.11). The level of social rejection of the majority was significantly less (M = 2.13, SD = 0.69) than social rejection of the other minority (M = 2.44, SD = 0.83; t (225) = 7.62, p < .000; Figure 2).

Hypothesis 2.2 states that with the majority there will primarily be a main effect in judging the two distinct minority groups. Given the strained relationship between the different Muslim subgroups, it was likely that the Muslim Ahmadiyya minority will be prejudiced and rejected more than the Christian group. We performed a 2*2 MANOVA (within subjects) with the factor "kind of negative out-group evaluation" (prejudice vs. social rejection; repeated) and the factor target group (Ahmadiyya vs. Christian; repeated).

The expected main effect for target minority was significant (F (287.27, 1.04) = 276.75, p < .000, η^2 = 0.55; Figure 3). Ahmadiyyas were prejudiced (M = 3.86, SD = 1.17) and rejected more (M = 3.66, SD = 1.08) than Christians were prejudiced (M = 2.50, SD = 0.85) and rejected (M = 2.78, SD = 0.89).

There was also a significant interaction (F (13.61, 0.29) = 46.19, p < .001, η^2 = 0.17). As shown in Figure 3, this interaction marks a slight reversal in the levels of prejudice and social rejection of the two minority groups that explains 17% of variance. Given that the main effect explains 55% of variance, the interaction effect appears negligible in this MANOVA.

4 | DISCUSSION

In this study, we tested the predictors and consequences of prejudice under the condition of religious majority and minority groups in Indonesia. We conducted a mediation analysis where the impact of the perceived quality of

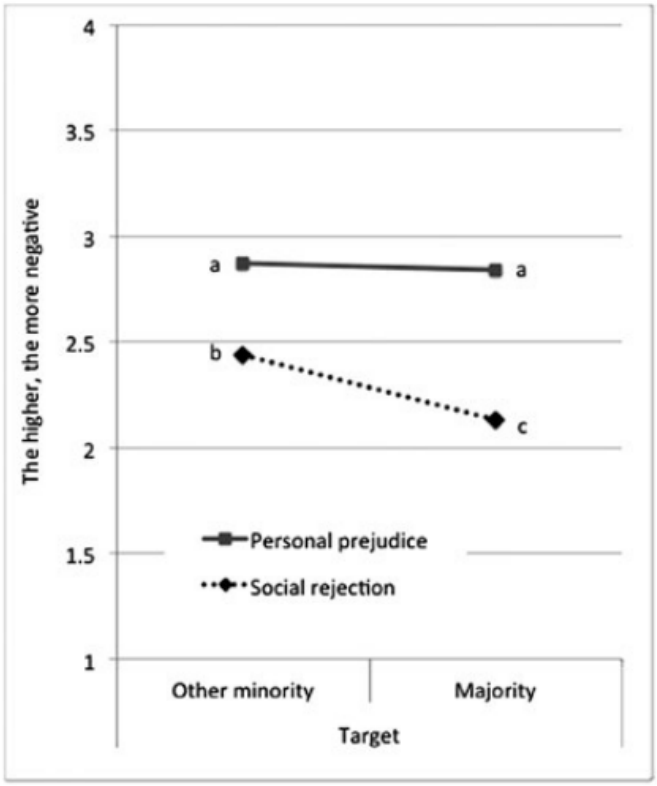

FIGURE 2 Means of personal prejudice and social rejection by minority versus majority target for the two religious minorities (Ahmadiyya and Christian)

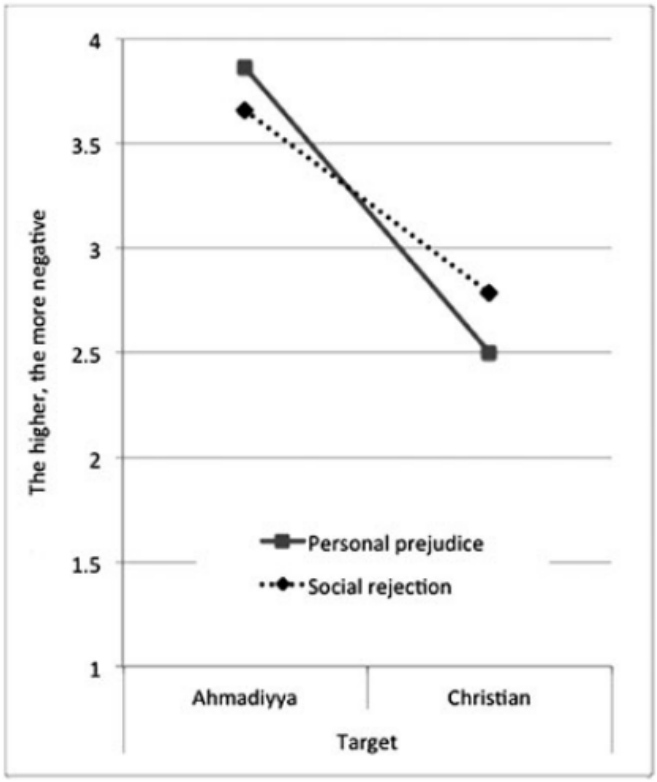

FIGURE 3 Means of personal prejudice and social rejection by Ahmadiyya versus Christian target group for Sunni majority

intergroup relations onto personal prejudice was mediated by out-group and in-group metaprejudice. Indeed, including the mediating variables in the path design significantly reduced the regression beta of intergroup relationship onto personal prejudice. The importance of the perceived in-group level of prejudice determining the individuals' personal prejudice was significant. Respondents based their individual expressed prejudice largely on in-group metaprejudice. The effect of how much a respondent perceives his or her in-group as the target of the out-group's prejudice, that is out-group metaprejudice, onto personal prejudice against the out-group is most of the time smaller than the effect of in-group metaprejudice, notwithstanding minor variations between sample-target combinations.

The second hypothesis that minorities will generally despise the dominant majority and consequently be prejudiced against it, but will openly reject the majority less than another minority, was confirmed. This effect can be interpreted as an outcome of interminority competition, where minorities in a society strive for social acknowledgement and status. Frequently, religious groups also differ in their social and economic status creating envy and enmity with competing groups. Hence, social and economic status may equally play a role in determining the quality of intergroup relationships, particularly between minorities that feel like losing out against another, seemingly more successful minority. One symbolic way of defending one's status is by devaluing competing minorities as nicely seen in the present example. An alternative explanation could be that individuals suppress their prejudice according to group norms; that is, whether the expression of prejudice is considered appropriate or not (Crandall et al., 2002). As we had no measure of group norms, we cannot decide whether they played a role in producing the observed effect. Given the cultural background, though, we consider minority competition to be more plausible than norms.

Our findings emphasise the importance of perceived quality of the relationship between the in-group and the out-group for personal prejudice. This study about majority Sunnis and minority Ahmadiyyas and Christians in Indonesia replicate what has been observed before and during the Yugoslavian war: Perceived intergroup relationship was a good predictor of prejudice and probably also of intergroup violence (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Sekulic, 2014).

Besides perceived intergroup relationship, significant proximal predictors of prejudice are in-group and out-group metaprejudice for the level of personal prejudice. In our findings in-group and out-group metaprejudice significantly modify the relationship between perceived intergroup relationship and personal prejudice. An exception were Ahmadiyya participants targeting Christians, where out-group metaprejudice is a stronger predictor of prejudice than in-group metaprejudice. In certain contexts, out-group metaprejudice may play a key role in guiding people to hate out-group members, in other conditions the effect may be less. The key role of in-group metaprejudice in informing personal prejudice brings to the fore the relevance of in-group conformism for the quality of intergroup conflict.

Sunnis prejudice and reject Ahmadiyya group members more than Christians. We expected this to be due to the Sunnis' belief that the enemy within Islam is more dangerous than any enemy from the outside. A Sunni respondent of Alam's (2008) study conducted in North India mentioned that "they claim to be Muslims and yet are leading the Muslims astray. They are the greatest enemy of Islam" (Alam, 2008, p. 605). The same idea exists in Indonesia. Rizieq Syihab (2013), an Islamic cleric in Indonesia and the leader of Front Pembela Islam (FPI; i.e., a fundamentalist and radical group), argued that Islam cannot tolerate Muslims who are believed to have tainted the Islamic values. In his book, he states that "Ahmadiyya consider themselves Muslims, but they distort Islamic teachings, thus they have attacked, disrupted, and undermined Islam. It is religious desecration. Therefore, they must be fought and eliminated to protect the purity of Islamic teachings" (p. 160).

In European history, a similar fierce opposition and conflict existed between Catholic and Protestant Christians after Luther's reformation when his version gained spread. From 1562 to 1598, for example, there were eight wars in France against the protestant Huguenots including the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in August 1572 with many thousands of victims.

Wrapping up, the present study emphasises again the importance of religious identity in fuelling intergroup conflict even though, religious conflicts and wars were always used for power plays were religion only was a tool. This political versatility of religious identities comes from their perception as essentialised and naturalised attributes of people that imply immutability, exclusiveness, and intolerance against other beliefs. This constellation is rarely amenable to change in intergroup relations (see e.g. Putra, 2016b; Wagner, Raudsepp, Holtz, & Sen, 2017). Sadly, many contemporary global political and military events come immediately to mind.

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