The Hijab and Muslim women's employment in the United States

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A B S T R A C T

A substantial body of empirical evidence suggests that employment benefits women, yet Muslim women consistently work for pay less than other women. This article extends the question of religion differences in employment to the United States, where—due to a paucity of data—we know little about Muslim women and their economic outcomes. The analysis uses the only known probability-sample surveys of Muslims in the U.S., conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2007 and 2011. These are pooled with the 2010 General Social Survey to provide the first comparative analysis of employment among Muslim and nonMuslim women using probability samples. I assess whether Muslim women in the United States work for pay less than their nonMuslim counterparts, and whether socio-demographic characteristics explain these differences. I find that the likelihood of employment for Muslim women who do not wear the hijab does not differ significantly from the likelihood of employment for nonMuslim women. However, women who wear the hijab have a much lower likelihood of employment than nonMuslim women or non-veiling Muslim women. The remainder of the analysis focuses on intra-Muslim differences, exploring what factors mediate "the hijab effect" on women's employment. I find that demographic, human capital, and household composition variables mediate about one third of the effect, while the rest remains unexplained.

1. Introduction

Muslim women's political and economic outcomes continue to be a subject of both scholarly and public debates, with the role of Islam hotly contested. Muslim women's participation in paid work has played an important role in these debates, because employment tends to benefit women, and because Muslim women tend to work for pay less than other women.[1]

This article extends the question of religion differences in women's employment to the United States. Due to significant conversion to Islam among African Americans, bifurcated immigration laws drawing both middle class and working class immigrants, and geographic dispersion within the United States, American Muslims are particularly ethnically, racially, geographically and socioeconomically diverse (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2011, 2009; Curtis, 2002; Read, 2008; Smith, 2010). This

makes for an interesting contrast with other Western contexts, particularly Europe, where Muslims are socioeconomically marginalized and typically live in ethnically homogenous enclaves (Foner & Alba, 2008; Heath, Rothon, & Kilpi, 2008). European Muslim women's low employment could be a result of economic and geographic isolation rather than religion; it is notoriously difficult to disentangle the impact of these factors (Heath & Martin, 2013; Khattab & Modood, 2015; Lindley, 2002). American Islam, on the other hand, offers an opportunity to understand predictors of Muslim women's employment in a context of relative economic integration.

There is a paucity of data on American Islam. Since they only constitute about 1% of the U.S. population (Pew Research Center, 2015), Muslims are often invisible in surveys of the United States such as the General Social Survey. The Census does not inquire about religious affiliation, so they are impossible to identify there either. This

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[1] Single women typically need employment to have a decent standard of living for themselves and any children they have. As for married women, there is evidence that those who bring money into their households are better able to bargain for what they want in their relationships with their husbands, and are more able to leave unsuitable relationships (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003; England & Kilbourne, 1990; Sayer, England, Allison, & Kangas, 2011; Schoen, Astone, Kim, Rothert, & Standish, 2002). Moreover, despite the fact that employed women often experience a "double shift" of job plus housework, many studies nonetheless find that employment has a positive effect on women's health (Frech & Damaske, 2012; Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Repetti, Matthews, & Waldron, 1989). Employed women are also more likely to participate in politics (Schlozman, Burns, & Verba, 1999), and women's employment may help transform gender relations on a national level (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Cherlin, 2010; Goldin, 2006; Moghadam, 1999, Moghadam, 1998).

study takes advantage of the only known probability-sample surveys of Muslims in the U.S., conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2007 and 2011. I combine these with the 2010 General Social Survey (GSS) to offer a unique comparative look at Muslim women's employment in the United States. The analysis assesses whether Muslim women work for pay less than their nonMuslim counterparts and whether socio-demographic characteristics explain these differences. To foreshadow, I find that the likelihood of employment for Muslim women who do not wear the hijab does not differ significantly from the likelihood of employment for nonMuslim women.[2] However, women who wear the hijab have a much lower likelihood of employment than either nonMuslim women or non-veiling Muslim women. The remainder of the analysis focuses on intra-Muslim differences, exploring what factors mediate "the hijab effect" on women's employment. I find that demographic, human capital, and household composition variables mediate about one third of the effect, while the rest remains unexplained.

2. Literature review

2.1. Islam and women's employment?

The relationship between Islam and women's paid work could be investigated on two levels. Scholars could ask if societies that are more Muslim have lower women's employment overall—there has been mixed evidence regarding this question (Bayanpourtehrani & Sylwester, 2013; Fish, 2011; Ross, 2008). Scholars could also inquire whether within country Muslim women have lower employment than women of other faiths. Cross-national studies with individual-level data have consistently found that Muslim women have the lowest employment of any religious group (H'madoun, 2010; Pastore & Tenaglia, 2013). Abdelhadi and England (2018) examine both within- and between-country components of employment differences between Muslim women and women of other religions worldwide using a hybrid model that combines fixed and random effects. They find that Muslim women are less employed *within* country, but there are no systematic differences in women's employment rates between Muslim and nonMuslim majority nations.

Indeed, scholars who use samples from a single country tend to find that Muslim women are employed less than women of other religions, even after controls for immigration history as well as household and human capital characteristics. This is true for the United Kingdom (Connor & Koenig, 2015; Khattab, Johnston, & Manley, 2017), Germany (Diehl, Koenig, & Ruckdeschel, 2009), the Netherlands (Khoudja & Fleischmann, 2015), Canada (Dilmaghani, Dean, & Tyler, 2016; Reitz, Phan, & Banerjee, 2015), Australia (Vella, 1994), India (Klasen & Pieters, 2012), and Malaysia (Amin & Alam, 2008). The remainder of this literature review focuses on intra-national studies in the West, since these are the most relevant as background for an analysis of Muslims in the United States.

2.2. Why might Muslim women in the West be less employed?

Current literature explores several potential explanations for the gap in employment between Muslim and nonMuslim women in Western countries. Being migrants and children of migrants, Muslim women may have lower proficiency in the language of their host country or lower levels of education, which could reduce their employment.

Earlier and more frequent marriage and childbearing could also lower participation in paid work since both marriage and childbearing tend to reduce women's paid work (Casper & Bianchi, 2002; Fitzgerald & Glass, 2012). Lastly, Muslim women's lower employment could reflect discrimination and/or ethno-religious penalties faced by all Muslims.[3]

2.3. Migration, human capital and demographic differences

Migration history could impact employment through length of stay in the host country or citizenship status; presumably immigrants who have been in the country longer could have more labor market opportunities than recent arrivals and citizenship could ease restrictions around employment (Heath et al., 2008). Migrants and their children could also have lower levels of English proficiency or education than natives or more established immigrants. These factors were found to mediate some of the employment gaps between Muslims and others in European contexts (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier, & Zenou, 2011; Connor & Koenig, 2015; Koopmans, 2016).

Another potential explanation for differential levels of employment is human capital in the form of education or parents' education. On average, education tends to promote employment for American and European women (England, Garcia-Beaulieu, & Ross, 2004; England, Gornick, & Shafer, 2012; Evertsson et al., 2009; Fagan, Rubery, & Smith, 2003; Juhn & Murphy, 1997), but several studies establish that Muslims in Europe have lower levels of education than other religious groups (Aleksynska & Algan, 2010; Heath et al., 2008; Lessard-Phillips, Fibbi, & Wanner, 2012). If this were also the case for American Muslim women, we would expect lower levels of education to explain at least part of the employment gap between Muslims and nonMuslims.

Alternatively, educational attainment could fail to improve employment for Muslim women for cultural reasons. Read and Cohen (2007) use Census data and find that higher education only weakly predicts higher employment for Arab women. In a qualitative follow up, Read and Oselin (2008) undertake interviews and ethnography in an Arab church and an Arab mosque to explain this disparity. They find that Arab women, both Christian and Muslim, use their education as a resource to fulfill their duties as wives and mothers, instead of translating it into workplace attainment. They call this the education-employment paradox. Read's work is an important first step, because Arabs are a significant proportion of Muslims in America (25%). However, we know little about the labor market outcomes of the remaining 75% of Muslim women who are of other ethnicities.

Women's employment differences could also be attributed to differences in marriage and fertility behavior, which have been shown to influence women's employment in the United States (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milke, 2006; Fitzgerald & Glass, 2012, 2014). If Muslim women bear children more frequently and earlier, this could impede their participation in paid work outside the home. To build on these literatures, the analysis below will test for mediation by migration, human capital and household composition differences.

2.4. Discrimination or ethno-religious penalties

Employment gaps could also result from labor market disadvantage facing Muslims. Ethnic minorities, mostly immigrants and their children, fare worse than members of the ethnic majority on European job

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[2] Employment refers to those who hold a current, paid job; labor force participation also includes those who are looking for work but do not currently hold employment. Some studies look at labor force participation while others focus on employment; I discuss both types in the following literature review though the analysis is of employment patterns among working age women (who are not students) since data on labor force participation was unavailable for the full sample.

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[3] Other candidate explanations for employment gaps are religiosity and conservative gender ideology, which, if higher among Muslim women and associated with reduced employment could explain Muslim-nonMuslim gaps. However, recent literature stands against these hypotheses. Using the same data as this study, Abdelhadi (2017) finds no negative relationship between religiosity and employment for Muslim women in the United States. While worldwide, Abdelhadi and England (2018) find that Muslim women have more conservative gender ideology but this does not predict employment or mediate the gap between their employment and nonMuslim women's.

markets (Crul & Doomernik, 2003; Heath et al., 2008; Herzog-Punzenberger, 2003; Simon, 2003; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, & Crul, 2003; Worbs, 2003), and many note that Muslim ethnics face the largest disadvantages, even compared to other migrants and co-ethnics (Cheung, 2014; Crul & Doomernik, 2003; Heath & Martin, 2013; Kanas, Tubergen, van, & der Lippe, 2011; Khattab & Modood, 2015; Lessard-Phillips et al., 2012; Lindley, 2002; Silberman, Alba, & Fournier, 2007; Valfort, 2018; Worbs, 2003). Though studies consistently find them, the source of these ethno-religious penalties is not clear.

Even less clear is whether these ethno-religious penalties are gendered. Some studies establish a gap between women and men's employment among Muslims (Lessard-Phillips et al., 2012). However, men's employment outpaces women's employment in every nation in the world, so the relevant question is whether the gender gap in employment is larger for Muslims than it is for other groups. Several studies using the European Social Survey suggest that both genders face the same ethno-religious disadvantage (Aleksynska & Algan, 2010; Connor & Koenig, 2015; Fleischmann & Dronkers, 2010). Looking at Muslims in Great Britain, Khattab and Modood (2015) find mixed evidence; wherein Muslim men outpace Muslim women on some outcomes and Muslim women outpace Muslim men on others. In Germany and France scholars find similar labor market disadvantage for Muslim women and men (Kanas et al., 2011; Silberman et al., 2007; Simon, 2003), while one study suggests that labor market access is easier for Turkish immigrant women than Turkish immigrant men in Germany (Luthra, 2013).

In the United States, we have little to no evidence on the labor market experiences of Muslims regardless of gender. Recent resume studies, however, have shown that Muslims are facing discrimination when applying for jobs (Wallace, Wright, & Hyde, 2014; Wright, Wallace, Bailey, & Hyde, 2013), and we might expect this disadvantage to affect women more strongly since hijab renders a significant portion of Muslim women highly visible. This article attempts to parse out the degree to which supply-side factors such as demographic characteristics, human capital and migration history could account for any existing gaps between Muslim women and nonMuslim women. Unexplained gaps could serve as preliminary evidence of ethno-religious Muslim penalties in the US context.

2.5. Hijab

Little to none of the literature explores a potential relationship between wearing the hijab and participating in paid employment.[4] Hijab is notoriously difficult to study; as Homa Hoodfar puts it, "it is an institution that has communicated different messages in different societies and during different historical periods" (1990, p. 104). Its currently recognized form first surfaced among middle and lower middle class urban women in mid 20th-Century Egypt (Ahmed, 2014; El Guindi, 1981; Hoodfar, 1990; Mule & Barthel, 1992; Zuhur, 1992). At the time, wearing the hijab tended to signal membership in the rising Islamic revival movement—later termed Islamism by Western scholars (Ahmed, 2014, p. 3). Islamism and the hijab were not limited to Egypt but spread in parallel ways across the Muslim world, though in minority contexts the hijab held a different valence (Brenner, 1993; Naidu, 2009; Wagner, Sen, Permanadeli, & Howarth, 2012). Today, hijab no longer necessarily signifies a relationship to Islamism (Ahmed, 2014). Once a rare sight in urban settings, it is now so common in some Muslim countries as to be normative regardless of one's political affiliation. Media estimates of the prevalence of the hijab among Muslim women in Egypt, for example, rest around 90% (Slackman, 2007).

The link between hijab and employment is important, because scholars have long understood dress as mediating Muslim women's relationships with the public sphere (Ahmed, 2014; Carvalho, 2013; Hoodfar, 1990). Historians of the hijab and those who studied it at the time of its re-emergence agree that upwardly mobile urban women wore it to be able to participate in paid employment and education without having their morality or religiosity questioned (Hoodfar, 1990). Thus it allowed women to "protect the gains of modernity" while maintaining the respectability and rights associated with following traditional norms.

The idea that hijab protects women as they enter school, the street or the workplace persists among Western Muslims (Read & Bartkowski, 2000). Other reasons women in the West give for wearing the hijab include strengthening social networks with other Muslin women, following a religious obligation, reflecting essential beliefs about gender, and signaling Muslim identity to the broader society (Atasoy, 2006; Droogsma, 2007; Furseth, 2011; Gurbuz & Gurbuz-Kucuksari, 2009; Haddad, 2007; Read & Bartkowski, 2000; Welborne, Westfall, Russell, & Tobin, 2018; Williams & Vashi, 2007). These qualitative interviews and ethnographies tend to feature college-educated women from immigrant backgrounds. We know little about the demographic profile of veiling women in the U.S and even less on how it may relate to employment.

There is growing evidence that women who veil in the West face lower call backs as well as workplace harassment (Aziz, 2014; Ghumman & Ryan, 2013; Moore, 2007; Syed & Pio, 2010; Valfort, 2018), but to what degree do these translate into systematic gaps in employment between veiled and unveiled women—Muslim or otherwise? The present offers preliminary answers to this question, treating the hijab as a marker of Muslim visibility rather than a proxy for religiosity. Included here is the first descriptive information showing demographic differences between Muslim women who wear the hijab, Muslim women who do not wear it, and women of other faiths in the United States. I establish the employment differences between these three groups and then explore explanations for the gaps.

3. Data and methods

3.1. Pew survey of Muslim Americans

In 2007 and 2011, the Pew Research Center conducted the only known surveys of a probability sample of Muslims living in the United States.[5] The 2007 sample was constructed using three sources: a Random Digit Dial (RDD) sample of the general public, a commercial database of American households, and a re-contact sample of English-speaking Muslim households from previous Pew Research Center nationwide surveys conducted since 2000. Interviewers screened 57,549 households from the RDD frame, taking a probability sample that led to 354 interviews with Muslim respondents. They also identified 450,000 households that included individuals with Muslim names, out of a commercial database of 110 million households, and interviewed a probability sample of them. This, along with the re-contact sample led to the remaining 696 interviews. The resulting 2007 sample included 1050 Muslim adults ages 18 and up.

The 2011 sample was constructed using three frames: previously identified Muslim households in the Pew Research Center's interview database and households that reported containing a Muslim person in either a landline RDD or a cellphone RDD. Researchers stratified the general sample from the landline RDD by the estimated density of the Muslim population, which they culled from a database of more than 260,000 survey respondents and U.S. Census Bureau data on ethnicity

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[4] Here, I define wearing the hijab as veiling one's hair, which is usually accompanied by clothing that covers the rest of the body except the face and hands. Hijab takes many culturally specific forms such as the *burka,* the *khimar,* or a scarf combined with modest Western clothing.

[5] Data from both survey years are publicly available on the Pew Research Center's website: www.pewresearch.org. Analysis was conducted using Stata 15, and all do files associated with the project are available upon request.

and language. Another stratum was a commercial list of over 608,000 households believed to include Muslims. These two groups yielded 632 interviews. The cellular RDD frame was also stratified and yielded 227 interviews. They also used previously identified Muslim households drawn from the Pew Research Center's interview database and other RDD surveys from recent years. These resulted in a combined 174 interviews. The total 2011 sample includes 1033 Muslim adults ages 18 and up.

Both samples were weighted to adjust for the differing probabilities of selection given the sampling frames and non-coverage of geographic areas with low density of Muslims. Interviews were conducted by phone in English, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi; the questionnaires gathered information on demographic characteristics, household composition, political opinions, and religiosity (Pew Research Center, 2007, 2011).

3.2. General social survey

The GSS is an annual data collection project conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago; it is one of the most reliable sources of data in the social sciences, and it contains a bevy of demographic, behavioral and attitudinal questions. The survey is conducted using a full-probability sampling design and has a response rate of 70%. I use the 2010 cross section, which includes 4901 adults, 2770 of them women.

3.3. Analytic sample

I restrict analysis to women from the GSS and both years of the Pew Survey, of which there are a total of 3726. I remove those who are retired, students, or 65 or more years old. I also remove all religions in the GSS except Protestants, Catholics, and those who say they have no religion (hereafter called Nones). Other groups were too small to be included in the analysis.[6] After these substantive restrictions, the sample was of 2451 women, 1774 nonMuslims from the GSS and 677 Muslims from the Pew surveys. Finally, I deleted, listwise, respondents who were missing on any variables in the models (111 cases, about 5% of eligible respondents), leaving a total pooled sample of 2340 women.[7] Of this analytic sample, 629 women are Muslim and 1711 are not.[8]

3.4. Analytic approach[9]

The analysis is twofold. The first part compares Muslim and

nonMuslim women; here, I look at whether Muslim women have lower employment than nonMuslim women by pooling the GSS and Pew datasets and conducting logistic regressions where employment is the outcome and religion is the primary independent variable.[10] I do this in two steps; the first pools all Muslim women and the other splits them based on whether or not they wear the hijab. For both, I show results from models with and without controls to indicate the degree to which demographic variables, migration history, human capital, and household composition account for inter-religious differences.

Having established that only Muslim women who wear the hijab differ significantly in employment from Protestant, Catholic or None women, I explore the hijab effect in the second part, which I call the intra-Muslim analysis. Here too, I nest the models to show whether and to what degree intervening variables such as demographic characteristics, migration history, human capital, and household composition account for the hijab effect.[11]

3.5. Variable construction

3.5.1. Outcome variable

Employment is an indicator variable coded 1 if the respondent is working full time or part-time, and 0 if the respondent is not employed.[12]

3.5.2. Independent variables

Religion is the primary independent variable in the comparative portion of the analysis, and it is a set of four indicators for Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, and None; Protestant is always the reference category.

In the intra-Muslim analysis, whether the respondent wears the hijab is the independent variable of interest. Pew interviewers asked female respondents *When you are out in public, how often do you wear the head cover or Hijab?* I created a dichotomous hijab variable wherein those who answered *all the time* or *most of the time* were coded as one and those who answered *only some of the time* or *never* were coded as zero.[13]

(*footnote continued*)

I refer to coefficients as "effects," following conventional usage.

[10] I choose to focus on employment because labor force participation is only available for one year of the Pew Survey—2011. As a sensitivity check, I replicate the findings below using only the 2011 data and labor force participation as the outcome. Though magnitudes differ slightly, the overall story presented below holds even with labor force participation as the outcome. Hijabi women are far less likely to participate in the labor force whereas non-Hijabi women do not differ significantly from Protestants or Catholics, and this relationship does not change after the addition of controls.

[11] An earlier iteration of this analysis included variables for census region, Pew survey year, whether the respondent was Sunni, whether the respondent was a convert, as well as importance of religion. The results were virtually identical without the inclusion of these variables—meaning the hijab effect remained the same regardless of whether these variables were included, and the variables themselves had no significant association with employment. I excluded them from the models for brevity.

[12] Separately, on both the Pew and GSS surveys respondents were asked if they were self-employed. As a sensitivity check, I created a three-category outcome variable that separates the self-employed from wage workers. It's worth noting that Muslim women were far more likely to report self-employment than non-Muslim women. However, self-employment was evenly distributed between Hijabis and nonHijabis. High rates of self-employment are not surprising given this population is almost entirely made up of immigrants and their children (Borjas, 1986; Lofstrom, 2004).

[13] The most of the time category is very small, including only 56 women. To ensure that results are not sensitive to this coding scheme, I created a three-category hijab variable where those who report wearing hijab some of the time are separated from those who never wear it. Table C1 in the Appendix C reports the results of that analysis. Those who wear the hijab only some of the time

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[6] For example, there were only 17 Hindus, 41 Buddhists and 90 Jews surveyed in the 2010 GSS.

[7] To ensure the results were not biased by missing data, I used multiple imputation to fill in unobserved responses in both parts of the analysis. Multiple imputation produces complete cases by creating a predicted score for the missing variable based on the respondent's observed characteristics. The imputation model I used for the comparative analysis included all variables in Model 4 of Table 2, including the outcome; and the model used for the intra-Muslim analysis included all variables in Model 5 of Table 3. I used fully conditional specifications where separate models are specified for each missing variable across 20 iterations conducted in Stata 15's mi package. Results using the imputed data are virtually identical to those presented below; tables are available upon request.

[8] The intra-Muslim analysis has a slightly larger sample (642), because it uses ethnicity rather than race. Ethnicity, as will be explained below, was constructed using ancestry question. Therefore, for thirteen Muslim respondents who skipped the race question, ethnicity was observable.

[9] This is a descriptive study. I use the best available data to ascertain the relationships between U.S. women's religion and employment. In interpreting empirical results, I use words like "effect" because causal effects are of theoretical and policy interest, and a causal interpretation is more credible given the fairly rich array of control variables in the analysis. However, I am aware that the data used here are cross-sectional, and non-experimental, and thus that I cannot claim to have shown causality. This caveat should be remembered when

3.5.3. Migration, human capital and demographic variables

Both sets of models include controls for socioeconomic characteristics. These are important, because each is associated with labor market outcomes for women and, as the literature review suggests, could differ across religious groups.

Age is included as a continuous variable, and I adjust for race by including four dichotomous variables, one for White, one for Black, one for Asian and one for Other. These are imperfect categories, particularly for capturing the racial identification of Arabs and South Asians (Gualtieri, 2001; Morning, 2001)–the two largest groups among Muslims—but they do allow for comparison across the datasets. For the intra-Muslim analysis, I use birthplace of respondents for those born outside the United States, and parents' birthplace for respondents born in the U.S. to create more precise and relevant categories, which are 1) Arab or North African if the respondent or her parents were born in the Middle East, 2) South Asian if the respondent or her parents were born in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh, and 3) non-Hispanic Black if the respondent identifies as Black but has parents that are not from the Middle East or South Asia, and 4) Other. The residual category Other, includes everyone who is neither Arab nor South Asian and does not identify as non-Hispanic Black. (This includes people from other countries in Asia, Hispanics, and some ethnically "white" Muslims.)[14]

I also adjust for whether or not the respondent is an immigrant using a set of three indicators. The reference is coded one if both the respondent and her parents were born in the United States, meaning she is third generation or more. The second-generation immigrant indicator is coded one if the respondent is American born with foreign-born parents. Lastly, the first generation indicator is coded one if the respondent is foreign-born herself. There is also a separate indicator for citizenship, which includes all those who were born in the U.S. as well as those who were foreign born then subsequently naturalized.

I use language of interview and education as measures of human capital. Pew surveys were conducted in English, Farsi, Arabic or Urdu; GSS interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish. I create an indicator for whether the language of the interview was English and include it in both the comparative and intra-Muslim models. Education is a series of indicators where High School Degree or Less is the

reference. Marital status is also included in the analysis as a set of three indicators: never married, previously married (including widowed, divorced and separated) and married; married is the reference category. I also include indicator variables for number of children in the household, the reference being zero.

4. Results

4.1. Comparative demographic profile

Table 1 shows that hijab-wearing women (Hijabis) and non-hijab wearing Muslim women (nonHijabis) differ substantially from each other on almost every variable; and non-hijab wearing women are indistinguishable from nonMuslim women on several measures.[15] The mean employment of nonHijabis is only three percentage points lower than that of nonMuslim women (69% compared to 72%), and both are about twice as much as the rate of employment among Hijabis (36%).

Hijabis are the youngest of the three groups. Ethnically, they are more likely to be Arab (38% compared to 17% of nonHijabis) or Black (24% compared to 14% of nonHijabis), whereas Other, a category that includes white contains the bulk of nonHijabis (40%). Despite this racial/ethnic difference, there are not large differences in immigrant history between Hijabis and nonHijabis. In fact, Hijabis are somewhat more likely to be third generation or more (23% compared to 18%) and nonHijabis are more likely to be first generation (73% compared to 69%).

Muslim women, both those wearing Hijab and those not wearing it, are more educated than nonMuslim women. Less than a third of nonMuslim women have a bachelor's degree or higher (29%) compared to about half of Muslim women (54% of nonHijabis and 44% of Hijabis). The differences in human capital among Muslim women, however, are stark. Three fourths of nonHijabi Muslim women (74%) have attended at least some college, whereas the plurality of Hijabis have only a high school degree or less (42%). Women wearing hijab were also far less likely to give an English interview (73% compared to 92% of nonHijabis).

Among Muslim women, marital status does not differ much by whether the woman wears hijab, but Muslim women are, on average, more likely to be married than Protestant, Catholic or None women. The number of children in the household, however, differs both across religions and among Muslims. NonHijabi Muslim women have more children than nonMuslim women, but they are still quite far behind Hijabis' fertility levels.[16] Whereas 40% of nonHijabi women live in households with zero children, this is only the case for 22% of Hijabis. The percentage of Hijabi women in households with three or more children is more than twice that of nonHijabi women in such households (37% compared to 15%).

4.2. Comparative analysis

Table 2 shows predicted probabilities of employment by denomination with and without controls—thus establishing whether Muslim women in the United States have lower employment than nonMuslim women. These probabilities are derived from logistic regression models where the outcome is employment and the primary independent variable is religion. Models 1 and 2 compare all Muslim women to Protestants, Catholics and Nones; we can see that Muslim women have substantially lower predicted probability of employment (56%)

(*footnote continued*)

have the same levels of employment as those who never wear it. The two groups do not differ significantly from each other before or after the inclusion of controls; this supports the choice to dichotomize the hijab variable in the main analysis.

[14] This approach is not perfect. By definition, the Arabs and South Asians are only composed of second and first generation respondents, since grandparents' birthplace and general ancestry were not asked on the survey. While the models also include indicators for immigrant status, any third generation Arabs or South Asians in the survey would count in the Other ethnicity category. Thus, we cannot be sure whether ethnic differences are unique to the first and second generation of Arabs or would persist into the third generation or beyond. The history of Arab and South Asian migration to the United States suggests there are probably very few Arabs or South Asians in the third generation category, however. Very few Arabs and virtually no South Asians migrated into the United States before the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 removing national quotas on non-Western European countries. An early wave of Levantine immigrants to the United States at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century were mostly Christian. Large-scale migration to the United States by Muslim Arabs and South Asians did not occur until the 1980s and 1990s, a cohort too young to have parented an adult third generation by 2007 or 2011 (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2011; Curtis, 2009; Gualtieri, 2009). Further evidence of this is the fact that 70% of this sample is foreign-born. As a sensitivity check, I combined generation and ethnicity into five indicators: Arab 1st or 2nd Generation, South Asian 1st or 2nd Generation, Other 1st or 2nd Generation, Black 3rd Generation or More, and Other 3rd Generation or More, while also controlling for whether the respondent was born inside or outside the United States. Though also imperfect, this approach gave the same substantive results described below.

[15] I borrow the colloquial terms Hijabi and nonHijabi, which are popular among U.S. Muslims, for brevity.

[16] I use children in the household as a proxy for fertility, since only the 2011 survey asked for fertility along with the overall number of children in the household. When both questions were asked, the number of children in the household and the respondents' fertility were highly correlated.

Table 1
Means and Standard Errors for Women on All Variables in Analysis.

	All Muslims	Hijabis	Non-Hijabis	Non-Muslim Women
Employment	0.56	0.36	0.69	0.72
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Hijab	0.40	1.00	0.00	NA
	(0.02)	(.)	(.)	
Age	40.63	38.98	41.73	42.75
	(0.46)	(0.74)	(0.57)	(0.29)
Race[a]				
White	0.35	0.32	0.37	0.73
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Black	0.18	0.25	0.14	0.18
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Asian	0.29	0.27	0.31	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.00)
Other	0.17	0.16	0.18	0.07
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Ethnicity				
Middle East or North African	0.25	0.38	0.17	NA
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	
South Asian	0.26	0.22	0.29	
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	
Black	0.18	0.24	0.14	
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	
Other	0.31	0.16	0.40	
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	
Immigrant History				
3rd Generation+	0.20	0.23	0.18	0.82
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Second Generation	0.09	0.08	0.09	0.08
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
First Generation	0.71	0.69	0.73	0.10
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Education				
High School or Less	0.32	0.42	0.25	0.61
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Some or Junior College	0.18	0.14	0.20	0.10
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Bachelor's Degree	0.29	0.27	0.30	0.19
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Graduate Degree	0.21	0.17	0.24	0.10
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Citizenship	0.81	0.79	0.83	0.94
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Interview in English	0.84	0.73	0.92	0.95
	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Marital Status				
Married	0.72	0.75	0.70	0.48
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Previously Married	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.26
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Never Married	0.14	0.11	0.16	0.26
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Children in Household				
0	0.33	0.22	0.40	0.53
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.01)
1	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.18
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)
2	0.25	0.22	0.27	0.18
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
3 or More	0.24	0.37	0.15	0.12
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)
Observations	629	251	378	1711

Standard errors in parentheses.
Women under 65 years old. Excludes students, retirees and all respondents with missing observations on included variables.

[a] Race is included as a control in the comparative analysis, whereas ethnicity is included in the intra-Muslim analysis.

compared to nonMuslim women (71%), who do not differ significantly by religious group (Protestant, Catholic, or None). This is true without controls (Model 1) and with controls (Model 2).

Interestingly, the addition of controls in Model 2 does not change

Table 2
Predicted Probabilities from Logistic Regressions Estimating Women's Employment from Religion with and without Controls.

	(1) Bivariate	(2) With Controls	(3) Bivariate	(4) With Controls
Protestant	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.70
	[0.68,0.74]	[0.68,0.74]	[0.68,0.74]	[0.68,0.73]
Catholic	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.73
	[0.66,0.75]	[0.69,0.77]	[0.66,0.75]	[0.69,0.77]
Muslim	0.56	0.56		
	[0.52,0.60]	[0.51,0.61]		
Wears Hijab			0.36	0.42
			[0.30,0.42]	[0.35,0.49]
Does Not Wear Hijab			0.69	0.66
			[0.64,0.74]	[0.61,0.72]
None	0.77	0.74	0.77	0.74
	[0.72,0.82]	[0.69,0.79]	[0.72,0.82]	[0.69,0.79]
Observations	2340	2340	2340	2340

95% confidence intervals in brackets.
Women under 65 years old. Excludes students, retirees and all respondents with missing observations on included variables.
Models 2 and 4 include controls for race, age, immigration history, citizenship, language of interview, education, marital status, and number of children in household. Calculated from corresponding models in Table A1 of the Appendix A.

Table 3
Average Marginal Effects from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Muslim Women's Employment.

	(1) Bivariate	(2) Demographic	(3) Migration	(4) Human Capital	(5) Household
Hijab	−0.31	−0.27	−0.27	−0.22	−0.20
	[−0.36, −0.25]	[−0.33, −0.20]	[−0.33, −0.20]	[−0.28, −0.15]	[−0.27, −0.14]
Observations	642	642	642	642	642

95% confidence intervals in brackets.
Women under 65 years old. Excludes students, retirees and all respondents with missing observations on included variables.
Calculated from corresponding models in Table B1 of the Appendix B.

the difference between Muslims and Protestants (the reference category in the logistic regression models).[17] As a reminder, the controls introduced in Models 2 and 4 are race, age, immigration history, citizenship, language of interview, education, marital status, and number of children in the household. It is perhaps surprising that adding all of these variables to the model does nothing, in net, to account for the Muslim-Protestant difference. (I do not include the full models here since the subject of interest is the difference between Muslim and nonMuslim women, but they are located in Table A1 of the Appendix A) It is worth noting that human capital measures like education and whether the interview was in English were predictive of employment

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[17] Because I use logistic regression, I cannot simply compare coefficients across models as I add controls to see if their addition changes the coefficients on religion and/or hijab. In logistic regression, unlike in linear models, the effect of one variable varies by the levels of the other variables, because levels of other variables affect the part of the nonlinear curve in which the effect operates. Thus, adding a variable may change the coefficient on a previously included variable even if the new and old variables are uncorrelated and they do not interact (Mood, 2010). Fortunately, I can meaningfully compare predicted probabilities computed from these models using average marginal effects (Mood, 2010, pp. 74–78). Thus, the discussion of whether various controls mediate the effect of religion (and/or hijab) on employment will be based on comparing predicted probabilities across models. The full logistic regression tables are in the Appendix.

(more educated women and women who gave English interviews were more employed). Previously married women were the most employed, while the never married did not differ from those who were presently married, and finally the presence of more than one child in the home deterred employment. Other variables showed no significant relationships with employment. These effects can be interpreted as effects for all women, since robustness checks revealed there were no significant interactions between religion (or religion divided out by hijab) and any of these variables. The failure of the variables to explain any of the Muslim/nonMuslim employment difference may be, in some cases, because the groups do not differ nontrivially on the controls, and in other cases because the control variables do not affect employment.

Models 3 and 4 divide Muslim women by whether or not they wear the hijab, with stark results. First, Muslim women who do not wear the hijab do not differ significantly from Protestant, Catholic or None women; their predicted probabilities of employment are 69% and 66% in Models 3 and 4, respectively. By contrast, Muslim women who do wear the hijab have extremely low probabilities of employment, estimated to be 36% and 42% in Models 3 and 4 respectively. Lastly, there seems to be a non-trivial difference between models with and without controls. The difference in predicted probability of employment between Muslim women who wear the hijab and those who do not wear the hijab decreases by about 9 percentage points (i.e. 27% of the effect) once controls are added to the model.[18]

Since nonHijabi Muslim women's employment is indistinguishable from nonMuslim women's employment, the remaining analysis focuses on intra-Muslim differences and attempts to ascertain explanations for Hijabis' low employment.

4.3. Intra-Muslim analysis

To what degree do differences in demographic characteristics, migration history, human capital, and household composition explain the hijab gap in employment?[19] Table 3 gives average marginal effects calculated from nested logistic regression models wherein employment is the outcome and hijab is the primary independent variable. Thus, Model 1 shows that the hijab is associated with a 31 percentage point decrease in predicted probability of Muslim women's employment before any control variables are added to the model. In Model 2, when age and ethnicity are added, the negative average marginal effect of the hijab goes down to 27 percentage points, about a ten percent reduction. The full logistic regression results are in Table B1 of the Appendix B.

Model 3 includes migration variables, namely the generation of the respondent and whether or not she is a citizen. These variables do not mediate the hijab effect at all, which is not surprising since Table B1 shows they are not significant predictors of employment. In Model 4, the human capital measures education and language of interview are added. These cut the remaining hijab effect by about 19% (from average marginal effect of negative 27 percentage points to negative 22 percentage points). Table B1 shows that education has strong monotonic effects on employment, where more educated women are more employed. Language of interview and education are highly correlated, so it is not surprising that language of interview has no effect net of education. In a model not shown but available upon request, where language of interview is added to the model without the education indicators, it does have a significant effect on employment and mediates some of the effect of hijab. The education effect, net of language of

interview, persists in similar magnitude across models in Table B1 and is not explained by household composition.

Next, in Model 5, I add variables for marital status and number of children in the household. The hijab effect decreases again in this model (from an average marginal effect of negative 22 percentage points in Model 4 to negative 20 percentage points in Model 5). The full regression results in Table B1 indicate that previously married Muslim women are more employed than those who are married, whereas number of children in the household does not have a significant effect on employment, net of controls.

5. Discussion

To summarize, the first part of the analysis showed that the overall difference in employment between Muslim and nonMuslim women is misleading. A significant difference only exists for women who wear the hijab. The second part of the analysis explored reasons for this difference among Muslim women. One third of the zero order hijab effect (a 31 percentage point drop in the predicted probability of employment) is mediated by the addition of controls in sequential models, with the strongest mediators being demographic (age and ethnicity), human capital (education) and household composition (marriage and childbearing) variables. Two thirds of the hijab effect, a reduction of the predicted probability of Muslim women's employment by 20 percentage points, remains unexplained.

Some may wonder whether the difference in Hijabi employment reflects gender traditionalism. It is possible that Muslim women with more conservative gender ideologies refrain from entering the labor market and are also more likely to wear the hijab. If this were the case, we would see a significant reduction in the hijab marginal effects if gender ideology were added to the model. However, as Table D1 in the Appendix D shows, this is not the case.[20] For Muslim women, conservative gender ideology does not have a correlation with employment, and introducing it to the models does not mitigate the hijab effect. A separate sensitivity test introduces this variable to the comparative analysis, and it has no explanatory value there either. This is consistent with recent findings regarding Muslim women worldwide (Abdelhadi & England, 2018).

The remaining hijab effect could also be a labor market manifestation of anti-Muslim attitudes in the United States, which could work in one of two ways. One possibility is that Hijabis face outright employer discrimination on the labor market, as some scholars have found (Aziz, 2014; Ghumman & Ryan, 2013; Moore, 2007). Another possibility is that women more committed to public employment may select out of wearing the hijab to signal their careerism and avoid discrimination, while less career or job-driven women may feel freer to cover. Either way, such an effect would be crucial to understand, since sociologists have established the growth in anti-Muslim attitudes in the United States (Love, 2017) but have not examined their potential economic implications.

Though using the best available data on American Muslims and providing a comparative analysis, this study cannot establish direct evidence of employment discrimination. The Pew Research Survey is a repeated cross section with only basic information on labor market experiences, making causal claims impossible. We also cannot establish stratification in occupational status, personal earnings or other economic outcomes. Conceptually, we are also limited by the lack of research on selection into the hijab. However, the large unexplained gap between Hijabis and nonHijabis opens an avenue for future investigation. Further research needs to establish what the hijab signifies for

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[18] To further explore which intervening variables seem to account for this change in the hijab effect, I added the controls sequentially. The most powerful mediator appears to be the presence of children in the home.

[19] As a sensitivity check, I tested whether hijab had a significant interaction with any of the controls added in models 2 through 5. There were no significant interactions, so the effect of each coefficient is interpreted as being for both Hijabis and nonHijabis.

[20] The Pew Survey only asked about gender ideology in 2011. The only question with an analogue in the GSS was regarding the respondent's belief in women's aptitude for political leadership. I used this variable for the sensitivity checks.

women as well as the specific mechanisms by which it impacts their participation in the public sphere.

6. Conclusion

Theorists of both race and gender suggest that disadvantage can happen structurally, institutionally or interpersonally (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Martin, 2004). Interpersonal disadvantage happens on the interactional level but can translate into economic penalties (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004), which can be reproduced and intensified across generations (Sharkey, 2008). In the European context, there is overwhelming evidence of structural disadvantage for Muslims that is likely reproduced—much like inequality faced by African Americans and Latinos in the U.S.—through forces such as differential policing and neighborhood segregation. Policies such as the hijab ban in France have further isolated Muslims from broader society.

In the American case, the hijab has not been targeted by public policy. We have seen rising Islamophobia (Ogan, Willnat, Pennington, & Bashir, 2014) and increasing evidence of discrimination against Muslims on the job market (Wallace et al., 2014; Widner & Chicoine, 2011; Wright et al., 2013), but no empirical work has assessed the degree to which these developments may be affecting Muslim economic outcomes in the aggregate. I find no significant difference in employment between non-veiling Muslim women and nonMuslim women, which suggests there may not be a structural disadvantage facing all Muslims comparable to the European ethno-religious penalty. However, I do find a large gap in employment between Hijab-wearers and others, both Muslim and nonMuslim, a difference that persists even after adjustments for age, ethnicity, education, English proficiency, marriage and fertility. This could be preliminary evidence of an interpersonal disadvantage facing visible Muslims in the United States.

Funding

Appendix A

Table A1

Coefficients from Logistic Regressions Predicting Women's Employment by Denomination with and without Controls.

	(1) Bivariate	(2) With Controls	(3) Bivariate	(4) With Controls
Religion (Ref: Protestant)				
Catholic	−0.03	0.12	−0.03	0.13
Muslim	−0.67***	−0.72***		
Wears Hijab			−1.49***	−1.34***
Does Not Wear Hijab			−0.10	−0.22
None	0.30	0.19	0.30	0.19
Age		−0.01		−0.01*
Race (Ref: White)				
Black		−0.18		−0.11
Asian		−0.69***		−0.72***
Other		−0.29		−0.31
Immigration History (Ref: 3rd Generation+)				
2nd Generation		0.09		0.07
Foreign Born		0.31		0.23
Citizen		0.17		0.23
Education (Ref: High School or Less)				
Some or Junior College		0.79***		0.73***
Bachelor's Degree		0.84***		0.85***
Graduate Degree		1.49***		1.51***
Interview in English		0.85***		0.62**
Marital Status (Ref: Married)				
Previously Married		0.26*		0.26*
Never Married		0.17		0.12
Children in Household (Ref: 0)				
1		−0.20		−0.18
2		−0.51***		−0.53***
3 or More		−0.93***		−0.85***
Constant	0.90***	0.14	0.90***	0.39
Observations	2340	2340	2340	2340

Women under 65 years old. Excludes students, retirees and all respondents with missing observations on included variables.

* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$.

Appendix B

Table B1
Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Muslim Women's Employment.

	(1) Bivariate	(2) Demographic	(3) Migration	(4) Human Capital	(5) Household
Hijab	−1.38***	−1.25***	−1.26***	−1.13***	−1.08***
Age		0.00	0.00	−0.01	−0.02
Ethnicity (Ref: Arab)					
South Asian		0.15	0.13	−0.22	−0.19
Black		0.72**	0.66*	0.68*	0.63
Other		0.94***	0.90***	0.86**	0.83**
Immigration History (Ref: 3rd Generation +)					
Second Generation			−0.27	−0.45	−0.50
First Generation			−0.01	0.06	0.10
Citizen			0.39	0.21	0.26
Education (Ref: High School or Less)					
Some or Junior College				0.88**	0.97***
Bachelor's Degree				1.25***	1.29***
Graduate Degree				1.64***	1.73***
Interview in English				0.61*	0.48
Marital Status (Ref: Married)					
Previously Married					0.65*
Never Married					0.12
Children in Household					
1					−0.17
2					−0.14
3 or More					−0.55
Constant	0.78***	0.09	0.03	−0.86	−0.31
Observations	642	642	642	642	642

Women under 65 years old, who are neither retired nor students.
* $p < 0.05$.
** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$.

Appendix C

Table C1
Predicted Probabilities from Logistic Regressions Estimating Women's Employment from Religion with and without Controls.

	(1) Bivariate	(2) With Controls	(3) Bivariate	(4) With Controls
Protestant	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71
	[0.68,0.74]	[0.68,0.74]	[0.68,0.74]	[0.68,0.73]
Catholic	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.73
	[0.66,0.75]	[0.69,0.77]	[0.66,0.75]	[0.69,0.77]
Muslim	0.56	0.56		
	[0.52,0.60]	[0.51,0.61]		
Wears Hijab All or Most of the Time			0.36	0.42
			[0.30,0.42]	[0.35,0.48]
Wears Hijab Some of the Time			0.68	0.69
			[0.58,0.77]	[0.59,0.78]
Never Wears Hijab			0.69	0.65
			[0.64,0.75]	[0.59,0.72]
None	0.77	0.74	0.77	0.74
	[0.72,0.82]	[0.69,0.79]	[0.72,0.82]	[0.69,0.79]
Observations	2340	2340	2340	2340

95% confidence intervals in brackets.
Women under 65 years old. Excludes students, retirees and all respondents with missing observations on included variables.
Models 2 and 4 include controls for race, age, immigration history, citizenship, language of interview, education, marital status, and number of children in household.

Appendix D

Table D1

Coefficients from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Muslim Women's Employment.

	(1) Bivariate	(2) Demographic	(3) Migration	(4) Human Capital	(5) Household	(6) Gender Ideology
Hijab	−1.31***	−1.19***	−1.18***	−1.11***	−0.99***	−0.98***
Age		−0.01	−0.02	−0.03*	−0.03	−0.03
Ethnicity (Ref: Arab)						
South Asian		0.18	0.06	−0.14	−0.15	−0.15
Black		0.78*	0.94*	1.08*	1.04*	1.03*
Other		0.85*	0.92**	0.95*	0.98*	0.98*
Immigration History (Ref: 3rd Generation+)						
Second Generation			−0.65	−0.92	−0.82	−0.83
First Generation			0.40	0.31	0.56	0.56
Citizen			0.49	0.43	0.59	0.59
Education (Ref: High School or Less)						
Some or Junior College				0.54	0.52	0.52
Bachelor's Degree				0.90**	0.96**	0.96**
Graduate Degree				1.61***	1.76***	1.76***
Interview in English				0.20	0.12	0.11
Marital Status (Ref: Married)						
Previously Married					1.03*	1.03*
Never Married					0.68	0.68
Children in Household						
1					−0.15	−0.15
2					0.15	0.15
3 or More					−0.36	−0.36
Believes women equally suited for political leadership						0.04
Constant	0.57***	0.35	0.13	−0.19	−0.63	−0.65
Observations	312	312	312	312	312	312

Women under 65 years old, who are neither retired nor students.

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$.

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