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Religiosity and Muslim Women's Employment in the United States

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Abstract

Does Muslim women's religiosity deter them from paid work outside the home? I extend this question to Muslims in the United States, where the Muslim community is both ethnically and socioeconomically diverse and where this question has not yet been answered. I pool data from the 2007 and 2011 Pew Research Center surveys of American Muslims, the only large, nationally representative samples of Muslims in the United States, and use logistic regression models to analyze the relationship between religiosity and Muslim women's employment. I find that mosque attendance is positively associated with employment, whereas other measures of religiosity have no significant effect. Education, ethnicity, and childbearing, on the other hand, are strong, consistent predictors of Muslim women's employment. These findings suggest that practicing Islam, in itself, does not deter American Muslim women's engagement in paid work.

Keywords

gender, religiosity, American Muslims, Muslim women, women's employment

Context and Framing

Whether Muslim religiosity deters women's paid work is part of a broader question about the relationship between Islam and gender inequality. Muslim women's outcomes continue to be a subject of both scholarly and public debates, with the role of Islam hotly contested. Surveying the status of Muslim women around the world, several social scientists claim that Islam is inherently prone to curbing women's engagement in the public sphere, including but not limited to employment (Clark, Ramsbey, and Adler 1991; Fish 2011; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Tzannatos 1999). Most famously, Inglehart and Norris claim that "an Islamic religious heritage is one of the most powerful barriers to the rising tide of gender equality" (2003:49). Others say the relationship between the prevalence of Islam and diminished women's outcomes is spurious, better explained by other social conditions common to Muslim societies such as underdevelopment, the prevalence of oil in the economy or the dominance of Arab culture, whose patriarchy preceded Islam (Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester 2013; Read 2004b; Ross 2008). Many qualitative scholars also point to the complex and often agentic ways in which women use religion in their communities (Ahmed 2014; Haddad, Smith, and Moore 2006; Hammer 2012; Howe 2012; Mahmood 2011).

Muslim women's employment has played a large role in these debates because a large body of empirical evidence suggests that employment benefits women (Bittman et al. 2003; Friedland and Robertson 1990; Repetti, Matthews, and Waldron 1989; Sayer et al. 2011; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999; Schoen et al. 2002), and because another large body of empirical evidence has found that Muslim women consistently work for pay less than other women (Abdelhadi and England 2016; Alesina and Giuliano 2010; Amin and Alam 2008; Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester 2013; Clark et al. 1991; Fish 2011; Foroutan 2008; Hayo and Caris 2013; Heath and Martin 2013; H'madoun 2010; Klasen and Pieters 2012; Pastore and Tenaglia 2013; Reitz, Phan, and Banerjee 2015; Tzannatos 1999; Vella 1994; Youssef 1971).[1] The scholarship establishing an employment gap between

[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

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Muslim and non-Muslim women largely takes three forms. One set of studies looks at cross-national intergroup variation, primarily comparing majority-Muslim nations with majority-non-Muslim nations (see Abdelhadi and England 2016; Alesina and Giuliano 2010; Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester 2013; Clark et al. 1991; Fish 2011; H'madoun 2010; Tzannatos 1999). Another looks at differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in societies where Muslims are the plurality (Amin and Alam 2008; Hayo and Caris 2013; Youssef 1971). In Muslim-majority contexts such as the Middle East and parts of South Asia, it is difficult to disentangle Islam from the state, the family, or the labor market. We do not know if the patterns that emerge are attributable to Islam or these other institutions in which it is embedded.

Another set of studies compares Muslims living in Europe with natives. Here, again, scholars find that Muslim women work less than non-Muslim women (Foroutan 2008; Heath and Martin 2013; Klasen and Pieters 2012; Pastore and Tenaglia 2013). Unfortunately, this scholarship also does not succeed in disaggregating the effects of Islam from other factors that may hinder women's employment but are also associated with Muslims. Muslims in Europe are socioeconomically marginalized and typically live in ethnically homogeneous enclaves (Foner and Alba 2008). Thus, Muslim women might be less likely to be employed because of their economic and geographic isolation rather than their religion. Indeed, Connor and Koenig (2015), among others, find evidence that both Muslim men and Muslim women have lower employment than other groups in Western Europe (Bisin et al. 2011; Cheung 2014; Connor 2014; Khattab and Modood 2015).

Given that most evidence of the Muslim gap in women's employment comes from studies where Islam may be confounded with other institutional factors, it is not clear whether we should take this gap as evidence of Inglehart and Norris's (2003) point—that something integral to Islam bars women from the public sphere. On the other hand, if the employment gap does indicate that Islam itself is holding women back, then we would expect a negative relationship between religiosity and employment for Muslim women. Lehrer (2004:20) puts this point more generally, arguing that if any religion, as practiced, deters women's employment, the effect should be stronger for those who are more religious in belief or practice. Moreover, to isolate the effects of personal religiosity on women's employment we would need a socioeconomically and ethnically varied sample from a context in which Islam has little institutional or cultural influence on the labor market or the state.

The United States provides such a context. Though not representative of the world's Muslims, the American Muslim community is unique in ways that make it an interesting case for this question. 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 and Bozorgmehr 2011; Curtis 2002, 2009; Read 2008; Smith 2010). This diversity can help disentangle the effect of religiosity from other elements of culture in which Muslims are embedded since the analysis can control for ethnic origin, something not possible with a sample in which Muslims are ethnically homogeneous. If whether Muslim women are employed or not, in an American context, differs by their levels of religiosity, even after adjustments for differences in their age, education, ethnicity, immigration status, and family form, then this would be evidence that Islam as an actual practiced religion is the explanation. Absent this type of evidence, we cannot be sure that the "Muslim effect" on women's employment does not stem from particularities of Arab culture or state institutions in the countries from which Muslim immigrants came.

To sum, this study contributes in two important ways. First, it delves deeper into the question of Islam's effects on Muslim women's outcomes by focusing on religiosity itself. Second, it uses a sample that provides an ideal context and plenty of internal variation from which to answer this question. I turn now to literature that, like the present study, focuses on the relationship between religiosity and employment for Muslim women.

Religiosity and Muslim Women's Employment

Around the world, there is evidence that religiosity may lower women's employment (Abdelhadi and England 2016; Dilmaghani, Dean, and Tyler 2016; Fischer and Aydıner-Avşar 2015; Heineck 2004; Maneschiold and Haraldsonn 2007; Seguino 2011), but for Muslim women results have been mixed, even when scholars have focused on the same region or nation. In Connor and Koenig's (2015) analysis of the European Social Survey, years 2002 to 2011, attending religious services has a small positive effect on employment, but prayer and importance of religion have no effect on employment. Their study only indirectly offers evidence regarding Muslim women, however, since religiosity is tested additively for all religious groups, not just those who adhere to Islam, and their analysis includes both men and women. On the other hand, Pastore and Tengalia (2013) use European Values Survey data from 47 countries and find that Muslim religious women, defined as those who believe in God and attend religious services regularly, are slightly less likely to be employed than nonreligious Muslim women. While Pastore and Tengalia's (2013) analysis offers more direct evidence for the effect of religiosity on Muslim women's employment, their measures are dubious. Belief in God is the sine qua non of being Muslim, so a comparison between those who believe and those who do not cannot be read as an intrafaith analysis. Additionally, as I will discuss in more detail below, mosque attendance could be evidence of community embeddedness as well as religiosity; therefore, it is important to combine it with other reliable measures of practice.

Within-country European analyses have also found a negative relationship between religiosity and employment. In Germany, Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel (2009) find that religiosity impedes women's employment for Turkish immigrants—who are almost entirely Muslim—whereas it does not do the same for German natives, most of whom are Christian. These authors make the peculiar choice of using whether one believes that "religious ceremonies related to life cycle events such as weddings and funerals are important" and whether one lists religion as one of the three most important socialization goals for children, along with religious service attendance, as indicators of religiosity (Diehl et al. 2009:285). The regression analysis uses an indicator "religious" for anyone who achieves two out of three of these outcomes. While religious service attendance appears frequently in the literature, the other two variables are not well studied as measures of overall religiosity. More importantly, it is not clear whether the relationship found here is particular to Turkish culture; though O'Neil and Bilgin (2013) find no relationship between religiosity and women's employment in their 500-person survey of Istanbul, there is strong evidence for this relationship overall in Turkey. Atasoy (2016) uses an instrumental variable—number of mosques in the neighborhood—to see whether religiosity decreases women's labor force participation; he finds a significant negative effect for religiosity operating both directly and through gender ideology. Dildar (2015) uses an earlier (2008) version of the same study, the Demographic and Health Survey, and instruments religiosity through gender ideology, also finding a significant negative effect on women's labor force participation in Turkey. Neither the studies within Turkey nor the study comparing Turkish immigrants to German natives makes clear whether the relationship between religiosity and employment is unique to Turkish culture, since the samples are, necessarily, ethnically homogeneous in all three articles.

Few assess this relationship in other contexts. In Canada, Reitz et al. (2015:692) find no significant correlation between religiosity and employment for Canadian Muslim women. Globally, H'madoun's (2010) analysis of pooled World Value Survey data shows that, after country fixed effects are included in the analysis, religiosity coefficients fail to predict employment. This adds further evidence to the notion that within-country institutional conditions solidify this relationship where it appears.

Again, the discrepant and sparse findings discussed above suggest the need for extending this analysis to a context where Muslim women's religiosity is individual, familial, and communal rather than implicated in projects of the state and broader social and economic institutions. It also suggests the need for socioeconomically and ethnically varied samples. The American Muslim community is diverse and lives in such a context, so what might we expect for Muslim women in the United States?

Religiosity and Muslim Women's Employment in the United States[2]

Since the United States census does not gather information about religion and Muslims are too small a minority (approximately 1 percent) to appear in substantial numbers on major surveys like the General Social Survey, there has been no systematic analysis of how religiosity affects women's employment among a representative sample of American Muslims.[3] Still, ethnographic studies have given us rich details about how women in certain ethnic subsets make decisions about work and family given their relationship to Islam. Cainkar (1996) on Palestinian Americans, Dallalfar (1996) on Iranian Americans, and Haddad et al. (2006) on Arab Americans provide excellent examples. They suggest that religiosity and cultural values from countries of origin mix to deter women's full participation in paid work.

Jen'nan Ghazal Read conducted extensive research on the determinants and patterns of Arab American women's labor force participation, using data from a survey she administered to 1,500 Muslim and Christian Arab American women. Read (2004a) finds that religiosity, as measured by an index including measures of intensity of belief over the life cycle, as well as belief in scriptural inerrancy, deters Arab women from entering the labor force, a relationship mediated by gender ideology. She also finds that immigrant women are more likely than their native-born counterparts to stay out of the labor force (Read 2003). In another study on the same sample, Read (2004b) finds a significant interaction between religiosity and the presence of children, suggesting that

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 et al. 2003; England and Kilbourne 1990; Sayer et al. 2011; Schoen et al. 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 and Damaske 2012; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Repetti, Matthews, and Waldron 1989). Employed women are also more likely to participate in politics (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999), and women's employment may help transform gender relations on a national level (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Cherlin 2010; Goldin 2006; Moghadam 1998, 1999).

[2]Several scholars look at the relationship between religiosity and employment among Christian and Jewish women in the United States (Chadwick and Garrett 1995; Fitzgerald and Glass 2008, 2014; Glass and Jacobs 2005; Glass and Nath 2006; Hartman and Hartman 1996; Heaton and Cornwall 1989; Lehrer 1995, 2004, 2008; Lehrer and Chen 2013; Sherkat 2000; Wilder and Walters 1998). Since this study is focused on Islam, I do not survey that work here. See Lehrer (2004) for an excellent review.

[3]The 2014 wave of the General Social Survey had 12 Muslim respondents. To my knowledge, the Pew Research Center's 2007 and 2011 surveys of American Muslims are the only large *N*, nationally representative surveys of Muslims in the United States.

religiosity deters Arab women's labor force participation only when there are children in the home.

Read and Cohen (2007) look at census data and find that higher education only weakly predicts higher employment for Arab women, contrary to the strong relationship between education and employment for most other ethnic groups. 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, since Arab women have higher education and lower labor force participation than their counterparts of other ethnicities (Read and Cohen 2007); this is paradoxical because, on average, education tends to promote employment for American and European women (England, Garcia-Beaulieu, and Ross 2004; England, Gornick, and Shafer 2012; Evertsson et al. 2009; Fagan, Rubery, and Smith 2003; Juhn and Murphy 1997). Finding similar patterns among Muslim and Christian Arabs, Read (2003, 2004a) argues that the Arab culture these immigrant women grew up in, as opposed to either Christian or Muslim religiosity, is the actual mechanism suppressing women's labor force participation.

The analysis offered here builds heavily on Read's work and is designed to test the theses offered by her findings, using a data set that extends beyond Arabs to Muslim Americans of all ethnicities. I use the precedents set by both her and other scholars cited above to identify measures of religiosity that capture both practice and women's subjective commitment to the faith. The measures also conform to the best practices of sociologists of religion; I turn now to this tradition before introducing my own measures.

Measuring and Defining Religiosity

Sociologists have debated how to measure religiosity. Glock's (1962) classic and oft-used study lists belief, knowledge, experience, practice, and consequences as the five dimensions of religiosity. Others disagree with Glock's definition, arguing that religiosity is an ideological commitment and factors like church attendance or prayer frequency simply measure the strength or weakness of that commitment (Clayton and Gladden 1974; Davidson and Knudsen 1977; Mueller 1980; Voas 2007). Consensus has yet to arrive, but the convention in sociology of religion has been to focus on affiliation, behavior, and commitment, using one or two measures to capture each dimension (Voas 2007). Indeed, much of the literature cited above does just that.

Scholars like El-Menouar (2014) and Hassan (2007) have adapted Glock's (1962) model to Islam, creating measures that capture Muslims' beliefs, knowledge, experience, practice, and consequences. Although the Pew Research Surveys used in this study do not contain all of these questions, they do include several items about religiosity that have been used repeatedly in the literature and whose importance has been confirmed for Muslims. I examine effects of women's mosque attendance, the frequency of their prayer, and whether they place importance on religion. Each of these variables represents different ways in which Islam could influence a woman's life.

Mosque Attendance

Religious service attendance could reflect piety, embeddedness in a religious community, or both. While, among Christians, women attend church at higher rates than do men on average, mosque attendance worldwide is gendered in the opposite direction (Fish 2011:45; Pew Research Center 2016; Roth and Kroll 2007). This may be because both Sunni and Shia orthodoxies dictate that men are required to attend the mosque every Friday for congregational prayer, whereas women do not have the same requirement (Pew Research Center 2016). Nonetheless, there is reason to believe Muslim women attend the mosque at higher rates in the United States than they do in Muslim-majority countries (Bagby 2012; Bagby et al. 2001; Sayeed, Al-Adawiya, and Bagby 2013).

Given this background, what does women's mosque attendance in the United States signify, and how might we expect it to relate to employment? If mosque attendance is a sign of piety, then, if it were to be found to deter women's employment, this would support the notion that Islam is unfavorable to this aspect of gender equality. If mosque attendance is a sign of embeddedness in a Muslim community, then the question would be, does embeddedness in a Muslim community promote or deter employment? One possibility is that Muslim communities encourage women to emphasize homemaking over paid work outside the home and that religious institutions further engrain this trend. Thus, we would expect mosques to help enforce those standards, conservatizing women's behavior. Given these considerations, my first hypothesis is that mosque attendance will be negatively associated with women's employment (hypothesis 1a).

Prayer

Salah is a ritual prayer with both verbal and physical components; there are five prescribed daily prayers, each with a window of time in which it is to be performed.[4] One of the pillars of Muslim practice in both Sunni and Shia traditions, *salah* can be communal or individual, and it can occur at a mosque or in a private setting. Both men and women are required to pray,

[4]Schools of thought and sects differ about how stringent the time intervals for prayer should be, but all agree that making up prayers at the end of the day is preferable to not performing them. That is, missing a prayer interval does not excuse one from the obligation to complete the prayer at a later time (Turner 2011). This is important to note because even if a respondent does not actually pray five times a day, giving this answer signals that she views this practice as ideal and perhaps completes the prayers eventually.

and prayer is emphasized equally for both, unlike mosque attendance. Because it is so stressed and because it occurs daily, the *salah* is a good indicator of religiosity in an individual's life—Guhin (2016) has called it a "key practice" in Islam.

If we find a negative relationship between it and employment, this could confirm the general hypothesis that religiosity deters employment. If we find a positive relationship or no relationship, this casts serious doubt on the notion that Muslim piety or worship are key elements in curbing Muslim women's work.[5] Based on the view that religious Muslim women are encouraged to be homebound, I hypothesize that prayer is indeed negatively related to employment for American Muslim women (hypothesis 1b).

Importance of Religion

Along with the behavioral measures of practice listed above, I include a subjective measure—how important the respondent says religion is in her life. Including this measure can capture the importance of Islam in the lives of women who may not pray or attend the mosque. This variable has been used—along with other measures—by multiple scholars predicting the employment of women from various religions (Connor and Koenig 2015; Dilmaghani et al. 2016; Maneschiold and Haraldsonn 2007; Seguino 2011).[6] I hypothesize that importance of religion, like other measures of religiosity, will negatively predict women's employment (hypothesis 1c).

Data and Methods

I pool data from the Pew Research Center's 2011 and 2007 surveys of American Muslims.[7] The 2007 survey is believed to be the first-ever national survey of a probability sample of American Muslims. This sample was constructed using three sources: a random-digit dial (RDD) sample of the general public, a commercial database of American households, and a recontact 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 recontact sample, led to the remaining 696 interviews. The resulting 2007 sample included 1,050 Muslim adults ages 18 and older.

The 2011 sample was similarly constructed using three sampling 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 and language. Another stratum was a commercial list of more than 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 (Pew Research Center 2011). These resulted in a combined 174 interviews. The total 2011 sample includes 1,033 Muslim adults ages 18 and older.

Both the 2007 and 2011 samples were weighted to adjust for the differing probabilities of selection given the sampling frames and noncoverage of geographic areas with low density of Muslims. Interviews were conducted by phone in English, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi. The questionnaires gathered information about demographic characteristics, household composition, political opinions, and religiosity (Pew Research Center 2007, 2011). Initially, the pooled sample included 2,083 observations, 956 women and 1,127 men. After listwise deletion of cases with missing responses on variables in my models (68) as well as restricting the data to those 65 and younger, my analytic sample contained 845 women, with 7 percent of cases lost to missing values on variables in the models.[8] Below, I discuss the variables used in the model as well as the sample distribution of each variable.

Variables and Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable. In all models, the dependent variable is women's employment. *Employment status* is a binary indicator wherein the outcome category includes *employed*

[5]Employment could also curtail prayer. *Salah* involves coordinating physical movements like bowing and prostrating with reading particular supplications and segments of the Qur'an (Turner 2011), so it requires some physical space and cannot be done at one's desk or under one's breath. Women who work could have less time to pray regularly throughout the day. However, prayers usually take five minutes each and can be made up at the end of the day after work. It's plausible that someone who aspires to pray five times a day but has her practice curtailed by work would say that she prays five times if she makes up prayers at the end of the day.

[6]This measure has also been used by scholars studying Muslim religiosity and how to capture it using survey data; see González (2011) and Moaddel (2007) for examples.

[7]These data are publicly available on the Pew Research Center's website: www.pewresearch.org. Analysis was conducted using Stata 14, and all files associated with the project are available upon request.

[8]In a sensitivity test discussed in the online appendix, I imputed missing data. The results were substantively unchanged as Table D shows.

full-time and *employed part-time.*[9] The respondent received a 0 if she was *not employed.* I do not distinguish between nonemployed women who are and are not looking for work, because nonemployed respondents were not asked whether they sought employment on both years of the survey.[10] As Table 1 shows, slightly more than half of the women in this sample are employed (55 percent).

Mosque attendance. Respondents answered the following question about mosque attendance: How often do you attend the mosque or Islamic Center for *salah* and *jum'ah* [Friday] prayer? I created one dichotomous variable such that those who reported attending the mosque *more than once a week, once a week for Friday prayer, once or twice a month*, or *a few times a year especially for Eid* were coded as 1 in the variable *Attends Mosque.*[11] Those who reported attending *seldom* or *never* were coded as 0. This grouping captures whether or not the respondent has an ongoing relationship with her mosque, and 70 percent of the sample does.[12]

Prayer. I also examine the relationship between the frequency of the respondent's prayer and her likelihood of employment. The survey included this question: Concerning the daily *salah* or prayer, do you, in general, pray all five *salah* daily, make some of the five *salah* daily, occasionally make *salah*, only make *Eid* prayers, or do you never pray? I recoded the responses into one indicator variable for whether the respondent prays at least once every day. The following responses were coded as 1: *pray all five* salah *daily* and *make some of the five* salah *daily.* The remaining responses (*occasionally make* salah, *only make* Eid *prayers*, and *never pray*) are coded as 0. More than two thirds of women in this sample say they pray at least daily (69 percent).

Importance of religion. Respondents were asked, How important is religion in your life? Responses of *very important* or *somewhat important* were coded as 1, and responses of *not too important* or *not at all important* were coded as 0. An overwhelming majority of the sample indicated that religion is very or somewhat important in their lives (93 percent).

Table 1. Means of Key Variables—Pooled Sample of American Muslim Women from 2007 and 2011 Pew Surveys.

Variable	Mean
Employed	0.55
Attends mosque	0.70
Prays daily at least	0.69
Religion very or somewhat important	0.93
Wears hijab	0.41
Education	
High school or less	0.30
Some college	0.22
College degree	0.29
Postgraduate training	0.19
Current student	0.22
Marital status	
Single	0.20
Previously married	0.13
Married	0.67
Children younger than 18 in home	0.67
Ethnicity	
Arab or North African	0.26
South Asian	0.26
Black	0.17
Other	0.32
Immigrant status	
Third generation or more	0.18
Second generation (parents are immigrants)	0.12
First generation (respondent is an immigrant)	0.70
Age categories	
18–24	0.14
25–29	0.13
30–39	0.27
40–49	0.24
50–59	0.16
60–65	0.05
Convert	0.19
Region	
Northeast	0.30
Midwest	0.22
South	0.30
West	0.19
Survey year	
2011	0.48
2007	0.52
Observations	845

Note: Sample does not include men or those older than 65 years old.

Exogenous Controls. All models include indicators for education: *some college, college graduate*, and *received postgraduate training after college;* the reference category is *high school graduate or less.* This is a highly educated group relative to the U.S. population; more than two thirds of the sample have

[9]I use logistic regression models in the main analysis for ease of interpretation, but results from multinomial models where full-time and part-time employed are treated as different outcomes are shown in Table B and discussed in the online appendix.

[10]As a robustness check, I test the same model on one year of data for which we have full labor force participation information. The results were substantively the same; I show them and discuss them in the online appendix (see Table A).

[11]*Eid* means holiday in Arabic. The question references one of the two annual Muslim holidays. One, *Eid-ul-Fitr*, follows Ramadan, and the other, *Eid-ul-Adha*, is three months later. Each *Eid* begins with a morning congregational prayer (Turner 2011).

[12]In the online appendix, I discuss results from an alternative coding of this variable along with an alternative coding of prayer and importance of religion.

attended at least some college (70 percent), and nearly half of the sample has a college degree or higher (48 percent).[13] I do not separate those with less than a high school diploma from those who graduated high school, because the former is a very small group whose inclusion would compromise statistical power.

The Pew surveys included a question about race for which responses were limited to the census categories: *non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, Hispanic*, and *other non-Hispanic.* These categories are not ideal to describe this population. Many Muslims are Arab, and while Arabs were classified as white by the Supreme Court, we do not know how they would self-classify; thus combining them with those of European ancestry is analytically inappropriate (Gualtieri 2001, 2009). The *non-Hispanic white* group would combine Arabs with Muslims of European descent, some of whom may be immigrants from Eastern Europe while others may be converts. South Asians with ancestry from India or Pakistan also have contested racial identities (Morning 2001). Fortunately, respondents who were born in the United States were asked about their parents' places of birth. I use birthplace of respondents for those born outside the United States and parents' birthplaces for respondents born in the United States 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 without parents from the countries in the categories above; and (4) Other. The residual category, Other, includes everyone who is neither Arab nor South Asian and who does not identify as *non-Hispanic Black.* (This includes Asian Americans who are not from and do not have parents from South Asia, Hispanics, and some ethnically "white" Muslims.) In sum, I use four mutually exclusive and exhaustive ethnicity categories that, for brevity, I will call Arab (26 percent), South Asian (26 percent), Black (17 percent), and Other (32 percent).[14]

As a control separate from this four-category ethnicity variable, I use a three-level immigration variable for whether the respondent is first, second, or third generation or more. Those born outside the United States are first-generation immigrants (70 percent), those who are American born with foreign-born parents are second generation (12 percent), and those who are American born with American-born parents are third generation or more (18 percent). Since neither ancestry nor grandparents' birthplace appears in the survey, we do not know respondents' generation beyond second.

I restrict analysis to those 65 years old or younger since that is the common retirement age in the United States. I create categorical indicators for age with ranges 18 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, and 60 to 65. The reference category is 18 to 24 years old. Table 1 shows the age distribution of the sample. Convert status is also used as an indicator. Interviewers asked, Have you always been a Muslim, or not? I create an indicator variable for converts such that 1 includes those who answered *yes* to this question, and those who answered *no* are in the reference category. Of the sample, 19 percent identified themselves as converts to Islam. Since the data pools 2007 and 2011, there is also an indicator for whether the survey was from 2011, making 2007 the reference category. Last, models also include indicators for census region of respondent's residence, with *Northeast* as the reference category.

Potential Intervening Variables: Hijab and Household Composition. Starting with model 2, I also test the influence of wearing the hijab on employment. 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 1 and those who answered *only some of the time* or *never* were coded as 0. A large minority of Muslim women (41 percent) said they wear the hijab all or most of the time.

I combine *divorced, separated*, and *widowed* into one indicator variable for *previously married* and create a separate indicator variable for *married. Single* is the reference category, and it includes cohabitors (a very small number). About two thirds of the women in this sample are married (67 percent) and the majority of those who are not married have never been married. I also include an indicator for whether there are children younger than 18 years old in the

[13]In 2015, 36 percent of American adults had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 46 percent had completed an associate's degree or higher (National Center for Education Statistics 2016).

[14]This approach is not perfect. By definition, the Arabs and South Asians are composed of only second- and first-generation respondents, since grandparents' birthplaces 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, which removed 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 centuries 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 and Bozorgmehr 2011; Curtis 2009; Gualtieri 2009). Further evidence of this is the fact that 70 percent of this sample is foreign born. An earlier iteration of this study combined generation and ethnicity into five indicators—Arab first or second generation, South Asian first or second generation, Other first or second generation, Black third generation or more, and Other third 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.

household. This is the most detailed measure we have for the pooled data, as respondents were not asked how many children they had on both years of the survey. About two thirds of the households surveyed had at least one member younger than 18 years old (67 percent).

Analytic Strategy

To predict employment, I use logistic regression models, which estimate how the log likelihood of achieving an outcome represented by a binary variable is affected by covariates (Hosmer and Lemeshow 2004). In this case, the outcome is employment (whether full-time or part-time) versus nonemployment. In the first model, the aforementioned measures of religiosity are included along with controls that are likely to be exogenous to religiosity, namely, education, age, ethnicity and family migration, immigrant status, convert status, region, and survey year. I include all the religiosity variables at once because the variables have no clear causal order and are not very highly correlated with one another and therefore do not pose a multicollinearity issue.[15] Then, in the following models, I include variables that may intervene between religiosity and employment—namely, wearing the hijab and family structure. That is, if Islam encourages conservative gender enactments, then for Muslim women, being more religious may mean being encouraged to wear the hijab, marry early, and have children, all of which would discourage employment.

I now turn to the variables I include in the first model as exogenous controls. I control for observed variables that could be correlated to both the dependent variable—employment—and the independent variables of interest—religiosity measures. The first control is education, which has been shown to affect women's employment, with more highly educated women more likely to be employed (England et al. 2004; Evertsson et al. 2009; Fagan et al. 2003; Juhn and Murphy 1997). Education could also be related to religiosity (Amin and Sherkat 2014; Darnell and Sherkat 1997; Fitzgerald and Glass 2008; Lehrer 2008). Whether education is endogenous or exogenous to religiosity is up for debate, and there is mixed evidence on the matter. Studies comparing conservative Protestants to other groups find that both men and women from conservative groups have lower educational attainment, in part because they curtail education to marry earlier (Fitzgerald and Glass 2008, 2012, 2014; Glass and Jacobs 2005). Other studies have found that education lowers religiosity, encouraging secularism (Hout and Fischer 2002; Hungerman 2014). I treat education as exogenous in these models after having conducted sensitivity analyses that show that if treated as endogenous, education does not mediate the relationship between religiosity and employment.[16] Both religiosity and employment shift across the life course, so controlling for age is also appropriate. In the United States, levels of religiosity differ across ethnic and racial groups (Hirschman 2004), and there is some evidence to suggest this is true among American Muslims as well (Foner and Alba 2008). Given this, together with the fact that ethnic groups fare differently in the labor market (Darity and Mason 2004; England et al. 2004; Heath, Rothon, and Kilpi 2008), it is important to control for ethnicity. Immigration history is another important control, as there has been a debate among scholars about how levels of religiosity shift across generations of immigrants (Connor 2008; Hagan and Ebaugh 2003; Massey and Higgins 2011) and there is substantial evidence that employment increases with time in the United States (England et al. 2004; Read 2003).[17] Converts to Islam could have different levels of religiosity and face different employment opportunities and constraints given that they may have different social networks than those born as Muslims (Karim 2009; Rouse 2004). Survey year and region could also both be associated with different political, social, and economic conditions, which could influence both religiosity and employment.

Models 2 and 3 sequentially add potential intervening variables between religiosity and employment. Model 2 adds a variable for whether the respondent wears the hijab. Three important caveats complicate the hijab measure. First, we cannot be sure whether to treat it as a proxy for religiosity or not. Some argue that the hijab is a straightforward measure of religiosity, while others argue that it's a measure of identity, political engagement, and/or cultural values, although it may also be affected by religiosity (Ahmed 2014; Brünig and Fleischmann 2015; González 2011; Read and Bartkowski 2000; Williams and Vashi 2007). In an American context, hijab is worn by only a minority of Muslim women (about 40 percent), but here too, it is hard to tell whether it's a symbol of piety, a cultural tradition, or a political statement. Given this ambiguity, I treat hijab as endogenous to religiosity in order to examine its influence both on employment and on the behavior of other religiosity measures—that is, whether it mediates the relationship between any of these measures of religiosity and employment.[18] Second, Muslims face significant discrimination in employment (Wallace, Wright, and Hyde 2014; Widner and Chicoine 2011; Wright et al. 2013), and we would expect that women wearing the hijab would

[15]In a sensitivity analysis, I tested model 1 with each religiosity variable independently. They behave in much the same way as they do in model 1 with all religiosity variables: importance of religion is not significant, mosque attendance is positive and significant, and prayer is negative and significant. Results are available upon request.

[16]Results are available upon request.

[17]In a sensitivity analysis, I test for whether immigrant status and ethnicity interact significantly. This would suggest that ethnicity has a different effect for each generation or vice versa. The interactions were not significant. Results are available upon request.

[18]I also tested for interactions between hijab and other measures of religiosity. An interaction would suggest that religiosity affects employment differently for those who wear the hijab compared to those who do not. I do not find a significant interaction and therefore treat hijab as an additive variable. Results are available upon request.

bear the brunt of that. A negative effect between hijab and employment could be the result of discrimination. Alternatively, 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. This would also appear as a negative association between hijab and employment in the models. Unfortunately, without panel data, I cannot test for this reverse causality. Given all these possibilities of what a negative association between wearing hijab and employment could mean, I do not take findings about hijab to adjudicate the main research question about effects of religiosity on Muslim women's employment.

Model 3 adds marital status and whether there are children in the household. While household composition might affect religiosity, it may also be a mediator—religiosity might affect whether or when one marries and has children, which could in turn affect employment. The literature on conservative Protestants finds the mediation pattern (Fitzgerald and Glass 2008, 2014; Glass and Jacobs 2005; Sherkat 2000). Read (2004b) and Lehrer (1995) find interactions between religiosity and presence of children; in their analyses, religiosity only decreased employment for women with children. In a sensitivity analysis, I find no significant interaction between presence of children in the house and religiosity, so those variables are treated as additive.[19] If hijab and family composition were mediators, we would expect to see religiosity coefficients decrease in size and/or significance after their inclusion in models 2 and 3. All in all, then, the models test for both direct and indirect effects of religiosity on employment, assuming hijab and marital status are both endogenous to religiosity.

Results

The Impact of Religiosity on Employment

The logistic regression models in Table 2 predict the likelihood of being employed versus not employed. Table 2 presents odds ratios, which are exponentiated coefficients from the logistic regression models. These tell us how much the odds of being employed (the probability of employment divided by 1 minus this probability) differ as the given independent variable increases by one unit, with all other variables in the model held constant. Odds ratios that fall between 0 and 1 indicate a negative relationship, those at 1 indicate no relationship, and those greater than 1 indicate a positive relationship. Below, I will reference results in terms of both odds ratios from various models and predicted probabilities that are not shown in tables but are derived from model 3, with all controls.[20]

Outright, we can reject two of our three hypotheses, which predict that all of the religiosity variables will negatively effect employment. Importance of religion is not significant in any of the models, and its odds ratio is close to 1 (meaning no effect); hypothesis 1c is not supported. Hypothesis 1a can also be rejected; whereas the hypothesis predicts a negative relationship between regular mosque attendance and employment, in model 3 (see Table 2), we see a significant positive relationship between regular mosque attendance and employment (odds ratio of 1.87). Calculations from model 3 with all controls show that on average after controlling for other factors, the predicted probability of employment for mosque-attending women is 59 percent, whereas the predicted probability of employment for non-mosque-attending women is 47 percent—a 12 percentage point difference. Looking across the models, the significant positive relationship between mosque attendance and employment appears in model 1 (see Table 2) and persists in all subsequent models. However, the odds ratio increases after the addition of the hijab variable (from odds ratio of 1.72 in model 1 to odds ratio of 1.89 in model 2), then very slightly decreases again after the addition of household composition controls (to odds ratio 1.87 in model 3). Choosing between these models is unnecessary, however, given how small the change between the odds ratios in model 1 and model 2 is; model 1 shows an 11 percentage point difference in predicted probability of employment between those who attend the mosque and those who do not, and model 2 shows a similar 12 percentage point difference.

Why might it be that mosque attendance, far from deterring employment as hypothesized, might actually encourage it? Given the low rates of women's mosque attendance in Muslim-majority societies (Fish 2011:45; Pew Research Center 2016; Roth and Kroll 2007), for Muslim women, the very act of attending the mosque could be a sign of commitment to women's engagement with the public sphere. In that case, the women who are attending the mosque regularly might already be prone to working outside the home and engaging in civic life more generally. Furthermore, there is evidence that houses of worship could play a role in facilitating economic opportunity for immigrants (Ebaugh and Curry 2000; Hagan and Ebaugh 2003; Kwon, Ebaugh, and Hagan 1997).[21] Since the majority of mosques in the United States are gender segregated (Sayeed et al. 2013:7), it could be that women bond and organize with other women there, helping connect them to employment or providing them with gender-specific social capital. In other words, the mosque could be a space that specifically empowers women. Indeed, several ethnographic studies of American Muslim communities find that women can use the mosque to build networks of solidarity

[19]Results are available upon request.

[20]Odds ratios discussed as "significant" are statistically significant at least at the $p < .05$ level unless otherwise indicated. See Table 2 for more details about levels of significance for each odds ratio.

[21]In a sensitivity analysis, I test whether mosque attendance promotes employment for men. It does not. Therefore, any explanation for the link between attending the mosque and higher employment needs to be specific to women.

Table 2. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Women's Employment Status from Religiosity and Controls.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Attends mosque	1.72**	1.89**	1.87**
	(0.34)	(0.38)	(0.38)
Prays daily at least	0.45***	0.69	0.74
	(0.09)	(0.15)	(0.16)
Religion very or somewhat important	0.92	0.88	0.89
	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.32)
Wears hijab		0.39***	0.41***
		(0.08)	(0.08)
Marital status (reference: never married)			
Previously married			1.21
			(0.43)
Married			0.69
			(0.19)
Children younger than 18 in home			0.61*
			(0.13)
Education (reference: high school graduation or less)			
Some college	3.05***	2.80***	2.78***
	(0.68)	(0.64)	(0.64)
College degree	3.26***	3.17***	3.12***
	(0.69)	(0.69)	(0.69)
Postgraduate training	5.79***	5.66***	5.87***
	(1.45)	(1.44)	(1.52)
Current student	1.00	1.07	1.00
	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.21)
Ethnicity (reference: Arab or North African)			
South Asian	1.37	1.12	1.13
	(0.30)	(0.25)	(0.26)
Black	2.87***	2.97***	2.72**
	(0.84)	(0.89)	(0.84)
Other	3.22***	2.78***	2.71***
	(0.74)	(0.66)	(0.65)
Immigrant status (reference: third generation +)			
Second generation (parents are immigrants)	1.58	1.60	1.73
	(0.60)	(0.62)	(0.68)
First generation (respondent is an immigrant)	1.80	1.79	2.09*
	(0.59)	(0.60)	(0.73)
Age categories (reference: 18–24)			
25–29	0.95	0.95	1.04
	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.35)
30–39	1.09	1.12	1.37
	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.45)
40–49	1.36	1.28	1.55
	(0.39)	(0.38)	(0.54)
50–59	1.41	1.33	1.14
	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.47)
60–65	0.57	0.55	0.42
	(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.21)
Convert	1.99*	2.01*	2.32**
	(0.60)	(0.62)	(0.74)
Region (reference: Northeast)			
Midwest	1.19	1.25	1.29
	(0.27)	(0.29)	(0.30)
South	1.06	0.98	0.97
	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.20)

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
West	0.89	0.87	0.84
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)
Survey year—2011	0.66**	0.62**	0.63**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Observations	845	845	845

Note: Values are exponentiated coefficients; standard errors are in parentheses.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

and empowerment among each other (Hammer 2012; Karim 2009; Prickett 2014; Rouse 2004). Another possibility is that some other unmeasured aspect of women's situations affects both religious attendance and employment. In any case, the evidence does not sit well with the notion that mosques are a conservatizing space for Muslim American women.

Hypothesis 1b proposed that prayer would have a negative relationship with employment, and the results in Table 2 do not issue a clear verdict. Prayer does not have a significant relationship with employment in either model 2, adding hijab, or model 3, adding household composition. However, in model 1 there is a significant negative effect (an odds ratio of 0.45), suggesting that prayer, or what it represents, does deter women's employment. After adding the hijab variable in model 2, that effect becomes much smaller but remains significant (odds ratio of 0.69; recall that odds ratios less than 1 indicate a negative relationship, so an odds ratio of 0.69 represents a smaller negative effect than an odds ratio of 0.44). The change between model 1 and model 2 suggests that either hijab is a confounder, which increases prayer and decreases employment, or hijab is a mediator, in which case part of the prayer effect is through hijab, meaning that prayer increases women's propensity to wear the hijab, which then decreases their employment. Regardless of the model one prefers for interpreting the links between prayer, hijab, and employment, using these findings to conclude that there is a negative link between religiosity and lower employment among Muslim women seems inadvisable because it would entail making a conclusion about how religiosity affects employment based on a significant negative effect of only one of the three religiosity indicators, prayer, which is significant in only one model and not others, while effects of two other religiosity measures, mosque attendance and importance of religion, contradict the hypothesis. Thus, on balance, there is not clear support for the notion that religiosity deters employment.

Hijab, Education, and Household Composition

Hijab has a strong negative association with employment (odds ratio of 0.39 in model 1 and 0.41 in model 2); the predicted probability of being employed is considerably lower for those wearing the hijab (63 percent versus 45 percent, based on model 3). The negative relationship between wearing the hijab and employment persists after the addition of family structure controls; with a trivial increase in the odds ratio when these controls are added, we cannot assume that household composition confounds, mediates, or suppresses the relationship between wearing the hijab and being employed.

If we take wearing the hijab to be a measure of religiosity, the hijab association could indicate that women religious enough to wear the hijab are more likely to think it inappropriate to be employed or are more likely to be deterred by their religious families. That is possible, but the interpretation seems at odds with the findings that women who attend mosque more often are more likely to be employed, that the importance of religion does not have a significant influence on employment, and that prayer shows no negative effect on employment net of hijab wearing. One possibility, mentioned above, is that the hijab-employment relationship is a result of discrimination. Recent résumé audit studies found that Muslim applicants were about 32 percent less likely to receive an email and 48 percent less likely than those with no identifiable religious affiliation to receive a phone call from a prospective employer after a job application (Wallace et al. 2014; Wright et al. 2013). Women wearing the hijab are likely to receive the brunt of this discrimination as the most visible Muslims and the objects of considerable stigma (Everett et al. 2015). Another plausible explanation is that women whose career or employment paths discourage the hijab may choose not to wear it. Unfortunately, cross-sectional data can do little to evaluate this possibility.

Education has strong positive effects on American Muslim women's employment throughout the models. A Muslim woman with a postgraduate degree has nearly double the predicted probability of employment of her counterpart with a high school diploma or less (72 percent compared to 37 percent). Attending any college is associated with a 21 percentage point jump in predicted probability of employment (from 37 percent to 58 percent for those who do not graduate and 60 percent for those who earn a college degree). These findings establish an important departure from the literature, which suggests that contrary to the positive relationship between education and employment for other American women,

Muslim women's high education does not usually translate to higher employment (Read and Oselin 2008). My finding is that Muslim women are similar to other American women, immigrant and otherwise, among whom education is strongly and positively associated with employment (England et al. 2004; Evertsson et al. 2009; Fagan et al. 2003; Juhn and Murphy 1997).

Interestingly, family structure does not seem to mediate the relationship between education and employment. One might think that educated women would be less likely to get married and/or have children and therefore have lower employment, but if this were true, we would observe a nontrivial decrease in the effect of education on employment between model 2 and model 3 of Table 2. This is not the case; there are only trivial changes in the education coefficients after the inclusion of marital status and children in the household. Thus, education is increasing Muslim women's employment through mechanisms other than reducing marriage or fertility. The most likely explanation is that education makes it possible for women to get better-paying and more interesting, meaningful jobs; this makes it more likely that a more educated woman earns enough to have a decent income after paying for child care and finds employment meaningful enough to compete with any pull to stay at home (Damaske 2011; Gerson 2009).

Family structure variables also do not mediate the relationship between religious practice and employment; none of the odds ratios for effects of religiosity measures differ notably after the inclusion of marital status and children in the home. Having children in the household did deter Muslim women's employment net of other covariates, as is found for all U.S. women (England et al. 2012); the presence of children in the home is associated with a 10 percent reduction in the predicted probability of employment (from 62 percent to 52 percent). Being married does not deter employment, as has been found for all U.S. women recently (England et al. 2004). The fact that odds ratios for religiosity measures do not change appreciably as family controls are added to the model reveals that the negative effects of prayer and/or hijab are not because they promote marriage and larger families.

There were also considerable differences across ethnic groups. Arabs and South Asians do not differ significantly from each other but are significantly less likely to be employed than are Black women or women of other ethnicities.[22] This conforms with Read's (2003) findings that adherence to Arab culture was more likely to deter women's employment than religiosity, either Christian or Muslim. Surprisingly and contrary to the findings of previous literature (England et al. 2004; Read 2003), women from families that have been in the United States more generations do not have higher levels of employment. Second-generation immigrants are never significantly different from those who are third-generation or more. Only in model 3 (see Table 2), where children and marriage are controlled, do first-generation immigrants differ from third-generation or more respondents. Here the relationship is contrary to what one might expect. First-generation immigrants actually work more than those who are American born and have American-born parents (predicted probability of 58 percent compared to 44 percent), after adjustments are made for children and marriage. This positive relationship was suppressed when children and marriage were left out of the model (model 2). This suggests that first-generation immigrants are more likely to have children than those who are third generation or more, which then deters them from employment—making the initial nonsignificant effect before controlling for marriage misleadingly negative.

Limitations

An important limitation of this analysis is that it seeks to isolate causal effects of religiosity but uses cross-sectional data with fairly rich but necessarily limited controls. Thus, unobserved exogenous characteristics could be confounding (inflating or suppressing) the relationships I found between religious practices and employment. For example, good health could explain both increased mosque attendance and increased employment, in which case my estimate of the positive effect of attending the mosque on employment might be partly or entirely spurious; unfortunately, the Pew survey did not ask respondents about their physical well-being. Additionally, the geographic markers in the survey are very scant. It is possible that living in a remote area makes it more difficult to attend the mosque or get a job; in this case as well, my estimate of the positive effect of mosque attendance could be partly or entirely spurious. My main conclusion is that there is little evidence of a negative effect of Muslim women's religiosity on their employment. If the positive relationship I found between going to the mosque and employment is not causal, this in no way threatens my negative conclusion. Similarly, since my conclusion is that religious importance does not deter employment, I am not falsely claiming a causal effect, because I claim no effect. The only "effect" of an indicator of religiosity I found was that of prayer, although it disappeared when hijab was controlled. Thus, given that my conclusions are about noneffects, the only case in which spuriousness challenges my conclusions would be if there were an unobserved factor that is exogenous to both religiosity and employment, that affects both, and is a suppressor such that it pushes both employment and religiosity the same way, thus creating a positive association between them that masks a negative causal effect of religiosity on employment. I cannot be certain that this is not the case, and I acknowledge this limitation. These challenges point to the need for more extensive representative

[22]When South Asian is the reference category, Black and Other are still significant and positive whereas Black and Other do not differ significantly from each other.

surveys targeting Muslim Americans and including a rich array of survey questions.

Discussion

I do not find consistent evidence that religiosity itself deters employment for Muslim women. Prayer does not have a significant relationship with employment after adjustment for covariates. Far from discouraging women's employment, mosque attendance promotes—or at least is positively associated with—employment for both Muslims and non-Muslims net of covariates. The importance of religion in the respondent's life has no significant association in any of the models. Wearing the hijab—which is not necessarily a measure of religiosity—is associated with less employment. We cannot be sure whether this means piety is leading women out of the work force, the work force is leading women not to wear the hijab, or hijab-wearers are experiencing the worst of anti-Muslim discrimination. The second and third seem more likely than the first interpretation given that prayer, importance of religion, and mosque attendance did not have net negative associations with Muslim women's employment. The results clearly show that other factors in Muslim American women's lives such as childbearing, education, and ethnicity are important predictors of employment.

My findings also depart from some relationships found in the literature on American Muslim women. For example, I find no evidence for Read and Oselin's (2008) education-employment paradox thesis. As mentioned above, they find that Arab women's education, for both Muslims and Christians, failed to promote employment. In my findings, education has a large monotonic effect on women's employment, with higher levels of education leading to higher levels of employment. The predicted probability of employment for women at the highest point in the education scale was double the predicted probability of employment for women with a high school education or less (37 percent compared to 72 percent). It could be that Read and Oselin's findings were unique to Arabs but not generalizable to Muslims. The Muslim sample used here is only about 26 percent Arab, and Read and Oselin's sample was limited to Arabs, including Christians as well.

I find that the presence of children neither interacts significantly with religiosity measures nor mediates their relationship with employment, a departure from the patterns found by Read (2004b). The mosque attendance, prayer, importance of religiosity and even hijab coefficients in my models retain the same significance and roughly the same magnitude after adjusting for marriage and the presence of children. Further, the relationship between education and employment is mostly unchanged with the addition of the family structure controls.

Rather than finding practicing Islam to be the primary deterrent to women's employment, I find that Muslim women's employment is furthered and deterred in ways that are similar to what research shows for other American women, with notable interethnic differences and effects of education and children. Further research is needed to shed more light on the relationship between Muslim women's religiosity and engagement with the public sphere, including but not limited to paid employment. With better survey data, we could distinguish between different forms of women's employment and their place in the occupational structure. With better qualitative data, we could learn more about the processes by which religiosity influences American Muslim women's decisions across the life course.

My results point to the conclusion that at least in the case of American Muslims, religiosity has little to do with women's decisions to enter or exit paid work. If we believe that the American context represents one where Muslims are less economically and socially ghettoized and less ethnically and culturally homogeneous than they are in much of the world, then religiosity among this population represents individuals' and families' commitments to Islam on a personal and spiritual level absent the pressures of state intervention (in majority-Muslim contexts) or economic marginalization (in European contexts). If in such an environment, more engagement with Islam does little to deter women from engaging in public life, perhaps there is nothing inherently conservatizing about Muslim religiosity.

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