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Gender in the Midst of Change: Examining the Rights of Muslim Women in Predominately Muslim Countries

By Saidat Ilo¹ and Richard Seltzer²

Abstract

This study aims at contributing to the debate on whether countries with large Muslim populations will embrace gender equality. The role of women in Islamic societies remains a highly charged political and cultural issue. Women's issues are vital in the shaping of modern debates on democracy in predominantly Muslim countries.

This study utilized the 2012 Pew Global Attitudes Survey. The seven Islamic countries polled by the Pew Global Attitudes Project were Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. In the survey, nine questions were asked of a sample size of roughly 7,000 respondents. We examined attitudes towards women's equality by analyzing Muslims' responses, looking at the effects of country, education, socio-economic status, age, income, religiosity and other variables.

Some of the preliminary findings suggest that across the seven nations surveyed, broad majorities support gender equality but women are generally more likely to endorse equality than men.

Key Words: Muslim, Women, Equality

Introduction

The role of women in Islamic societies remains a highly charged political and cultural issue. Women's issues are vital in the shaping of modern debates on democracy in predominantly Muslim countries. Often times the "Muslim World" is seen as a homogeneous block. The so-called "Muslim World" consists of a diverse group of individuals, spanning the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, south of the Sahara, and Southeast Asia. Over one billion individuals practice Islam and are of different races, cultures, languages, traditions, and levels of modernity. After the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 generalizations and stereotypes about Muslims became standard. It is widely believed that Islam is a misogynistic religion and that Muslims do not support gender equality. What this study illustrates is the vast difference between seven nations with large Muslim populations and how those differences affect views on the rights of women. This paper will examine whether the respondents support gender equality and to what degree.

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Literature Review

We begin this literature review by discussing the effects of country and how the differences between the nations can have an effect on gender roles. The state is generally viewed as an agent of modernization which gives rise to democracy, individualism and a push for gender equality. Max Weber argued that religion was one of the primary reasons for the different ways cultures have developed; states that are extremely religious were less likely to embrace modernization. Furthermore Weber contended that modernization gives rise to secularism and modernized states are more supportive of women's rights. Daniel Lerner (1958) predicted that changes in a nation's attitudes, communication systems, and social roles would contribute to the development of modern states in place of traditional Islamic ones. Due to the diversity of states within our study, discussions on attitudes about Muslim women's rights must be understood under the context of country effect. The countries in this study have many differences ranging from levels of modernity to cultural and racial variations. The attitudes towards gender equality in predominately Muslim countries cannot simply be explained or predicted because these nations share the same religion. The countries differ dramatically in history, population, tradition, language, norms and the nature of Islam being practiced. Rizzo et al. (2007) add, "Although much of the research on gender equality and religious identification and democratic outcomes utilizes demographic and structural data, it passes over the importance of public opinion to the process of democratization" (2007:1155). Local traditions, customs and national identity shape how citizens view gender issues and treat women in their societies. Because the countries in the study are so different we expect the findings of the survey to yield varying results. While these countries are considered Muslim countries, their national stories prevent them from having similar attitudes towards women's rights.

In Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris' seminal text (2003), the authors attempt to provide a world view of the "rising tide" of gender equality by examining both the causes and consequences of the changes in the culture, religiosity, political, industrialization, and generational shifts taking place in nations around the globe. The authors expected that the systematic differences in cultural indicators of gender equality would be found between societies based on their level of economic development; within societies based on generational cohorts; between women and men; and within societies based on structural and cultural factors such as education and class. The authors also hypothesized that the process of secularization which is gradually accompanied by societal modernization weakens the strength of religious values and fuelling the rising tide of gender equality. Inglehart and Norris stress the importance of culture and religiosity and gauge to what degree do each affect gender parity. What the authors discovered were perceptions of the appropriate division of roles in the home and family, paid employment, and the political sphere are shaped by the predominant culture in more traditional societies.

Gender also has an affect on whether individuals will support equality between the sexes. As Davis and Robinson (1991) note, "We assume that movements that support feminist principles have had a greater impact on women's attitudes than men's. Although feminism is often directed at men and women, the movement has had greater following among women than among men" (1991:75). The authors explain that, "The underdog thesis predicts that individuals who are disadvantaged by the distribution of opportunities, treatment and conditions will be more conscious of inequality than individuals who are advantaged" (1991:73). Therefore, we suspect that women will be more supportive of gender parity than men because they are the victims of inequality.

Inglehart and Norris found that support for gender equality were strongest among the youth, women, those with higher levels of education, and who were more secular. However, the authors discovered that there was little to no change in attitude among young people in agrarian societies who still retain traditional values and ideals regarding gender roles. Moreover, the authors concluded that postindustrial societies have a higher rate of gender equality, meaning they have experienced cultural shifts, economic growth, access to education, are generally secular, maintain a healthier political environment which are open to female leaders. All of these factors are necessary in order to foster equal rights between men and women. With regard to Muslim countries, the authors note that these nations, with the exception of a few oil producing countries, are still in the early stages of modernization therefore gender equity has not materialized.

The role of religion has also been viewed by many as a hurdle to women gaining the same rights as men. In many religions including Islam, women have maintained a subservient role. In Catholicism women are still unable to serve as priests and recently Pope Francis reiterated the ban; and in Orthodox Judaism women cannot be rabbis. Niels Spierings et al. (2008) contend that “there are reasons to expect that positions taken within Islam can have negative effects on the position of women” (2008:5). Due to Islam’s strong patriarchal views on society, the role of women is therefore limited. In Donna Sullivan’s article (1991), she speaks to the challenges faced by women which are grounded in religious practices. The author argues that, “The most comprehensive challenges mounted by states to the international norms guaranteeing women's rights, and their application, have been couched as defenses of religious liberty” (1991:795). According to Sullivan those who have challenged the use of religion as a tool to oppress women denying them their civil liberties do so under the guise of freedom of religion which is protected under international law. “Some international human rights advocates have cited these claims to explain their reluctance to examine the status of women under religious law and the impact of religious and customary practices on women's human rights” (1991:796). Sullivan also notes that a woman’s ability to exercise her individual rights is also constrained by the society in which she lives; and factors in addition to religion such as class, race, and ethnicity all have an impact on gender equity.

Education is typically an indicator used to measure levels of modernity. Ertürk writes, in her book chapter entitled *Turkey’s Modern Paradoxes: Identity Politics, Women’s Agency, and Universal Rights*, “Education is often attributed a transformative capacity” (2006:86). Many people contend the more educated a person is the more open they are to being tolerant of others regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation and other location. Education is seen as a powerful mechanism that teaches individuals to be more accepting of others by giving them the experience of learning and interacting with people different than themselves. Also, according to Nancy Davis and Robert Robinson (1991) there are two contending theories that can explain education as an effect, the enlightenment thesis and reproductive thesis. The authors explain, “According to the enlightenment thesis, education produces a greater awareness of inequality in society by familiarizing individuals with experiences different from their own (including those of the other sex) and inculcates Enlightenment ideals that promote equal treatment for all. Thus, highly educated individuals will be more likely to perceive inequality than individuals with less education and to favor efforts to reduce inequality” (1991:73). The reproductive thesis on the other hand contends that, “Education increases awareness of inequality while encouraging its acceptance” (1991:73). The authors argue due to the competitive nature of education, rewarding individualistic endeavors, highly educated people may perceive inequality more than individuals

with less education, but will be less favorable to reduce the inequality. Reducing inequality may lead to increase competition for limited resources and jobs which highly educated people benefit from as a result of the hierarchical structure.

Similar to education, one's income can dictate interactions individuals have with people who are of different races, religions and walks of life thus making them more tolerant. Rizzo et al. (2007) add, "Sociologists and political scientists have repeatedly demonstrated that demographic and social status characteristics are important predictors of political attitudes and behavior. In particular, socioeconomic status (education, social class and income), age and sex consistently appear as either major explanatory variables or necessary controls in research on political activity and attitudes..." (2007:1157). The authors in their work, as well as this research, expect the better educated, younger respondents and higher SES would yield positive results in our findings. According to Davis and Robinson (1991) the underdog thesis also applies to income; those earning less perceive gender inequality more than others. The authors explain that the threat hypothesis whereby men with limited income may see women as a threat to their jobs and as a result men may refuse to admit gender inequality exists. The threat hypothesis may help to explain men who oppose efforts for gender equality they see as elevating women at their expense.

Age has been traditionally used as an indicator expressing how the generation gap between the young and old shape how individuals see issues of their time. Inglehart (1977) notes, "Postmodernization theory suggests that in advanced industrial societies the growth of postmaterialist values among younger generations has led to a gradual but steady decline in the class politics of economic and physical security, opening the way for greater priority being given to the values of freedom, self-expression and gender equality." It is argued with every generation, barriers are broken and individuals learn to be more tolerant and accepting of others. In the modern era, the youth have been affected by technology and with the popularity of social media younger people are more open. Generational gaps allows for the youth to embrace cultural shifts and changes in lifestyle which are often met with resistance by older individuals. We expect young people to be more conscious of gender inequality than older people and thus have a desire to support equal rights.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to evaluate how people in seven predominantly Muslim countries feel about women's rights. We examine the extent to which citizens of the seven countries have different attitudes toward women's issues and whether various demographic attributes help to predict these attitudes. The survey utilized in this paper derives from the 2010 PEW Global Attitudes Project which conducts periodic public opinion surveys to gauge how individuals feel about a variety of issues around the globe.

PEW surveyed respondents in 22 nations; however, we were only interested in Muslims living in the seven predominately "Muslim" countries: Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Jordan, Nigeria,³ Pakistan and Turkey. In our analysis we excluded all non-Muslim respondents. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the native languages of those being interviewed.

³ The results for Nigeria often appear at odds with those of other countries. Given this issue, we contacted PEW to determine whether any irregularities occurred during data collection. PEW replied that no such irregularities occurred.

The interviews were conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associate (PSRA) International. All surveys are based on national samples except in Pakistan, where the sample were disproportionately urban. Cluster sampling was used by PSRA in all seven countries. With the exception of Pakistan (N=2,000), the approximate sample size in each countries was about 1,000. A fuller discussion of the countries is found In the Appendix.

Although ten questions were asked in reference to views on gender equality, for the purposes of this study, we only focused on five of those. The questions were: “Do you think women should have equal rights with men, or shouldn’t they”? “When all things are considered who has a better life in this county—men or women”? “Do you think women should be able to work outside the home”? “When jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women”; “Men get more opportunity than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the job”. These particular questions were selected because they examine different dimensions of women’s rights. The questions examine women’s rights in the abstract, what should happen in the nations surveyed and what is the reality in these countries. The question on whether women should have equal rights with men examines gender equality in the abstract. The questions about women and the employment factor, being able to work outside of the home and whether men should have more rights to a jobs over women when jobs are scarce and well-paying jobs gauges what should happen in these countries. Lastly, the question asking who has a better life between the two sexes and whether women are treated fairly in the job market during poor economic conditions probe the realities of life in the respective nations.

For each question, we first determine whether there are differences between the seven countries. Furthermore, within each country we examine whether there are differences based upon the following nine variables: gender, income, education, age, number of children, how often they prayed, how many days they fasted for Ramadan, how important they said religion is in their life and whether the respondent is Sunni, Shia or simply consider themselves Muslim⁴. In order to conclude that a variable had an effect, it had to be statistically significant ($p < .05$, using Chi Square) and substantively significant (a difference greater than ten percentage points).

Furthermore, we were interested in whether these nine variables impacted the seven countries differently. For example, we found that gender had a greater role in predicting attitudes toward women in Egypt compared to the other six countries. In order to make this determination, we ran a series of logistic regressions that included interaction terms for each country and each of the other nine predictor variables.

Results

In the analysis below we examine each of the five questions sequentially.

⁴ We did not analyze sect in each country as most countries are almost exclusively one sect.

Women's Rights in the Abstract

Do you think women should have equal rights with men, or shouldn't?

Table 1

		Overall	Egypt	Jordan	Lebanon	Nigeria	Pakistan	Indonesia	Turkey
Total Yes		72	65	66	97	39	82	65	92
Gender	Male	65*	48*@	58*@		27*	72*	56*	89@
	Female	84	83	75		52	92	74	95
Income	Lowest 3 rd	74				53@	80@	60*	
	Middle 3 rd	71				29	80	59	
	Highest 3 rd	79				35	87	75	
Education	Primary	73	59@	63*@	94@	26@			
	HS/HSGrad	75	67	73	100	50			
	College	79	74	67	95	41			
Age	18-29							73*@	
	30-49							62	
	50+							59	
PrayDaily	Rare	88*@	84*@			7*	90*		92@
	Weekly	79	47			80	79		87
	Daily	72	66			38	82		96
FastRamadan	Rarely	78				48*			
	Most Days	78				50			
	All	70				34			
RelImp	Very Import	74				36*			
	Else	82				67			
Children	Zero	79*				41*		61*@	
	1-3	77				47		67	
	4+	67				28		47	
Muslim Sect	Sunni	76*	64*			26*			
	Shia	86				22			
	Muslim	69	74			60			

In order to make the table more readable, results are only displayed if they are both statistically significant ($p < .05$) and substantively significant (difference between groups exceeds 10 percentage points). Statistical significance for country x demographic variable effects is determined by the addition of an interaction term in a logistic regression.

* statistically significant and difference greater than 10 points

@ significant 3 way interaction with country and variable using Logistic Regression

Note: We do not display the results from the logistic regression for Muslim Sect. This is because for many countries Muslims are predominately of one sect. However, we do display significant results from the crosstabs.

Almost three-quarters of respondents believed that men and women should have equal rights.

Country The greatest support for women's rights occurred in Lebanon (97%) and Turkey (92%). The least support occurred in Nigeria (39%).

Income Overall, income did not serve as a strong indicator as to whether respondents would support gender equality.⁵ However, in Nigeria those with the lowest income had the greatest support for women's rights (53% v. 35%), while in Indonesia those with the highest income had the greatest support (75% v 60%).

Education did not play a vital role in determining how respondents would answer this question. However, in some countries (Jordan, Lebanon and Nigeria) those with a high school degree had greater support for women's rights than those with less education or more education. In Egypt, those with more education were more likely to support women's rights.

Age overall was not statistically significant. Although, in Indonesia those between the ages of 18-29 are most likely to support gender equality compared to those between the ages of 30-49 and 50+.

Gender Women are more likely to support equal rights than men (84% v 65%). This gender difference was particularly strong in Egypt (83% v 48%).

Children Overall, respondents with more than 4 children were less supportive of equal rights for women. This was particularly true in Indonesia and Nigeria.

Pray Daily The less one prayed the more likely they were to support gender equality.

Fast Ramadan played a significant role in only one nation. Nigerians (50%) who fasted most days during Ramadan had a greater support for women's rights than those who rarely fasted or fasted throughout the month.

Religious Importance was only substantially significant in Nigeria. Respondents who believe religion is not very important are more supportive of gender equality than those who do not (67% v. 36%).

Muslim Sect Overall, those who identified themselves as Shia were the most supportive of equal rights. In Nigeria however, those who consider themselves Muslim were more likely to be supportive of equal rights.

⁵ Income is not seen as an overall strong indicator because the percentage difference was less than ten points. However, in order to allow comparisons, we display the overall differences in the table that are statistically significant. For country x other variable effect, we only display results in which there is a difference greater than ten points or there was significant three-way interaction in the logistic regression. We do not discuss all significant three-way interactions. Some of the effects are small and others are difficult to make sense of.

Q69B Women Work Outside of Home

Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: women should be able to work outside of the home.

Table 2

		Overall	Egypt	Indonesia	Jordan	Lebanon	Nigeria	Pakistan	Turkey
Completely Agree			23	20	22	70	43	50	70
Gender	Male	31*	10*@	15*@	10*@	65*@	35*	32*@	66@
	Female	50	36	25	34	75	51	67	73
Income	Lowest 3 rd					67*		43*	69@
	Middle 3 rd					58		51	64
	Highest 3 rd					82		53	68
Education	Primary	40*	21*	20@		61*	35*@	47*@	
	HS/HSGrad	41	20	21		77	48	46	
	College	50	32	7		70	47	63	
Age	18-29	43				73*@		51*@	
	30-49	43				71		52	
	50+	38				62		42	
PrayDaily	Rare	60*	53*		14*@		15*	51@	81*
	Weekly	48	50		4		68	44	71
	Daily	38	22		27		42	52	64
FastRamadan	Rarely	49*		25@	47*@	67*@	59*		74*
	Most Days	46		19	25	60	45		71
	All	35		20	17	81	38		57
RelImp	Very Import	40	20*		20*@		41*	50@	70@
	Else	52	33		32		60	45	69
Children	Zero	49*	35*@	16*@		65*@	48@	50@	
	1-3	42	21	21		72	45	51	
	4+	37	18	31		86	41	50	
Muslim Sect	Sunni	43*	19*	12*		77*	45*		68*
	Shia	57		29		63	19		100
	Muslim	36	40	22			48		82

See the key in Table 1 for an explanation.

Country The greatest support for women being able to work outside of the home was in Lebanon (70%) and Turkey (70%). The least support occurred in Indonesia (20%), Jordan (22%) and Egypt (23%).

Income did not serve as a strong indicator as to whether women should be able to work outside of the home. In Lebanon a “U shape” relationship occurred where those in the lowest and highest income bracket were more supportive of women working outside of the home. In Pakistan (43%) those in the lowest income bracket were least supportive of women working outside of the home.

Education Overall, those who attended college were more in support of women working outside of the home. However, in Lebanon and Nigeria, those with less education were more supportive.

Age There was a tendency, particularly in Lebanon and Pakistan for older respondents not to support women working outside of the home.

Gender Women are more likely to support being able to work outside of the home than men (50% v 31%). This gender difference was particularly strong in Pakistan (67% v 32%) and Egypt (36% v 10%).

Children Overall those with fewer children are more supportive of women being able to work outside of the home.

Pray Daily Overall, the less one prayed the more likely one would support women working outside of the home. This was particularly strong in Egypt. In Nigeria, however, a “U shape” relationship occurred where those who prayed weekly were more supportive of women working outside of the home.

Fast Ramadan The frequency of how often one fasts during Ramadan has an impact on 5 of the 7 countries surveyed. Those who rarely fasted supported women working outside of the home in Turkey (74%), Nigeria (59%) and Jordan (47%). The contrary holds true for Lebanon (81%) those who fasted every day during the month of Ramadan were supportive of women’s right to work outside of the home.

Religious Importance Overall, those who stated religion was not very important were more likely to be in support of women working outside of the home.

Muslim Sect served as a mixed bag and had interesting effects in Egypt, Lebanon Nigeria and Turkey. In Egypt 40% of Muslims (no Shia population), 77% of Lebanese Sunnis, 48% of Nigerian Muslims and 100% of Turkish Shias are more in favor of women working outside of the home.

Q69C Equal Employment When Times Are Tough

Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.

Table 3

		Overall	Egypt	Indonesia	Jordan	Lebanon	Nigeria	Pakistan	Turkey
Completely Agree		41	46	23	34	23	59	60	40
Gender	Male	48*	59*@		48*@		63*	58@	40@
	Female	38	30		19		50	63	41
Income	Lowest 3 rd	40		23@	27	23@			35*@
	Middle 3 rd	43		26	31	23			45
	Highest 3 rd	39		20	45	19			41
Education	Primary	45					47*@		41@
	HS/HSGrad	38					62		41
	College	44					73		36
Age	18-29								
	30-49								
	50+								
PrayDaily	Rare	42	36*		24*@		39*		43
	Weekly	46	40		31		92		46
	Daily	42	46		34		58		35
FastRamadan	Rarely	50*	40@	25@	75*	23*@			50*
	Most Days	45	47	17	36	30			40
	All	38	45	26	28	15			30
RelImp	Very Import	45*	47@			26@		61*	42@
	Else	33	38			18		50	35
Children	Zero	40*	43@			26*@		61@	
	1-3	41	46			21		61	
	4+	51	47			36		60	
Muslim Sect	Sunni	45*	45			19	62*	61	
	Shia	34				26	38	57	
	Muslim	38	47				63	54	

See the key in Table 1 for an explanation.

On average, 72% (41% completely) of respondents agreed that when times are tough men should have more rights to a job than women.

Country Those living in Pakistan (60%) and Nigeria (59%) were most likely to completely agree. Respondents living in Indonesia (23%) and Lebanon (23%) were least likely to completely agree.

Income Only in Jordan did the income effect exceed 10 points. Jordanians (45%) earning in the highest income bracket were more likely to agree that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.

Education Overall, education was not a strong indicator. However in Nigeria respondents with more education supported the notion.

Age failed to produce any statistically significant findings.

Gender Men are most likely to support men having more rights than women when jobs are scarce (48% v 38%). Interestingly, in Pakistan women were less supportive of having a right to a job over men when jobs are scarce.

Children Overall, respondents with more children are more likely to agree that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.

Pray Daily In only four countries the effects were greater than 10 points. In Egypt (46%) and Jordan (34%) those who prayed daily agreed with the statement. However, a “U shape” relationship occurred in Nigeria (92%) and Turkey (46%); respondents who prayed weekly agreed that men should have more rights to a job when jobs are scarce than those who rarely prayed or prayed daily.

Fast Ramadan Overall, those who rarely fasted were more supportive of men having more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce. Particularly in Jordan (75%) those who rarely fasted supported men having more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce.

Religious Importance Overall, those who believe religion is very important are more supportive of men having more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce.

Muslim Sect Overall, Sunnis gave more support of men having more rights to a job than women when jobs are scarce.

Q47 Men Get Better Paying Jobs Even When Women Are As Qualified

Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Men get more opportunities than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the job.

Table 4

		Overall	Egypt	Indonesia	Jordan	Lebanon	Nigeria	Pakistan	Turkey
Totally Agree			44	47	44	23	72	69	58
Gender	Male			51@					54*@
	Female			43					64
Income	Lowest 3 rd		47*@	56*	40*@				
	Middle 3 rd		43	44	38				
	Highest 3 rd		33	40	48				
Education	Primary	59*		54*	45@		88*@		
	HS/HSGrad	49		44	41		69		
	College	48		36	47		60		
Age	18-29		38*@						
	30-49		47						
	50+		49						
PrayDaily	Rare	47	24*		36*@		85*	60*	58*
	Weekly	50	34		19		40	65	54
	Daily	55	46		48		74	72	65
FastRamadan	Rarely	55		39*@			52*		
	Most Days	55		41			72		
	All	51		56			77		
RelImp	Very Import	56*	50*@	46*@	46*	20@	75*@	70*	61*
	Else	39	18	68	34	27	46	59	51
Children	Zero	54	62*@			30@	61*		56@
	1-3	51	40			20	68		61
	4+	60	46			29	80		58
Muslim Sect	Sunni	55*	46*	33*		32*	82*		
	Shia	31		71		14	70		
	Muslim	52	26	47			62		

See the key in Table 1 for an explanation.

Country The country with the most supporters of the statement that men get more opportunity than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the job is Nigeria (72%), followed by Pakistan (69%) and Turkey (58%). The least support came from Lebanon (23%).

Income Overall, income was not a statistically significant indicator. Although in Egypt (47%) and Indonesia (56%) those who earn the least are more likely to agree that men get more opportunity than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the jobs.

Education Overall, those with less education agree that men get more opportunity than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the jobs. The effect of education was particularly strong in Nigeria, where those with a primary education are more likely to agree.

Age had an extremely limited effect.

Gender, surprisingly, was not statistically significant overall. However in Turkey women are more likely to agree with this statement (64% v. 54%).

Children In Egypt (62%), those without children were more likely to agree, and the reverse occurred in Nigeria (80%) where those with four or more children were most likely to agree with the statement.

Pray Daily People who prayed daily in Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan were more likely to agree that men get more opportunity than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the job. However, in Nigeria (85%) the reverse is true; respondents who rarely prayed were more likely to agree with the statement.

Fast Ramadan In Nigeria (77%) and Indonesia (56%) those who fasted every day during Ramadan agreed with the statement.

Religious Importance In most countries, those who deem religion as very important were more likely to support the statement. However, in Indonesia, those who state religion is not very important were also more likely to agree.

Muslim Sect Overall, Shias are least likely to agree that men get more opportunity than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the job. Indonesian Shias (71%) are more likely to agree.

Q6 Better Life Men or Women?

Please tell me when all things are considered who has a better life in this country—men or women?

Table 5

		Overall	Egypt	Indonesia	Jordan	Lebanon	Nigeria	Pakistan	Turkey
Men have better lives			35	29	28	18	54	40	36
Gender	Male	31			21* [@]			42 [@]	21* [@]
	Female	38			36			38	49
Income	Lowest 3 rd				27* [@]	23* [@]	43* [@]		
	Middle 3 rd				24	17	63		
	Highest 3 rd				35	13	68		
Education	Primary	37	39*						
	HS/HSGrad	32	33						
	College	33	28						
Age	18-29	36						44 [@]	40*
	30-49	35						39	36
	50+	32						35	29
PrayDaily	Rare	33	16*		19* [@]		62*	46 [@]	36*
	Weekly	29	30		12		28	37	30
	Daily	36	36		32		56	41	41
FastRamadan	Rarely					11* [@]	29* [@]		30* [@]
	Most Days					14	47		39
	All					23	62		25
RelImp	Very Import	36	37*			17 [@]	56*	40 [@]	
	Else	28	24			18	36	44	
Children	Zero	32			46* [@]				29*
	1-3	34			29				40
	4+	37			24				36
Muslim Sect	Sunni	36	37*	31*	29	20	60*	40*	37*
	Shia	28		57		15	60	50	100
	Muslim	29	14	27	21		41	38	29

See the key in Table 1 for an explanation.

Country Nigerians (54%) were most likely to believe that men have a better life in Nigeria compared to women. However, in Lebanon the majority do not believe men have better lives.

Income, overall, did not have a significant effect. In Nigeria, those in the highest income bracket agreed that men have better lives.

Education Only in Egypt (39%) was there some education effect where those with a primary education were more likely to believe men have better lives.

Age Only in Turkey was there a difference of greater than 10 points where the younger people believed men have a better life.

Gender Overall, women agreed more that men have a better life, however in Pakistan (42%) men agreed more that they did in fact have better lives than women.

Children In Jordan (46%) respondents without any children were more likely to believe men have a better life.

Pray Daily In Egypt and Jordan the more one prayed the more likely there were to agree that men have a better life. In addition the most pronounced “U-shape” relationship occurred in Nigeria (62%) those who rarely prayed and those who prayed daily (56%)

believed men have a better life in their country parallel “U-shape” relationships also occurred in Pakistan and Turkey.

Fast Ramadan, overall, is not statistically significant. However, in Nigeria (62%) respondents who fasted throughout the month of Ramadan believed men have a better life. Only 23% of Lebanese who fasted the entire month believed men have a better life.

Religious Importance Those in Egypt (37%) and Nigeria (56%) who believed religion is very important stated men have better lives in their respective countries.

Muslim Sect Overall, Turkish (100%), Indonesian (57%) and Pakistani (50%) Shias along with Nigerian Shias and Sunnis (60%) all believe their men have better lives in their respective countries. People who consider themselves Muslim were less likely to believe men have better lives.

Conclusion

Contrary to expectations, the indicators that we believed would yield a positive view of gender equity failed to consistently have an effect. Youth, education, socioeconomic status and gender did not always equate to one’s support of women’s rights. As noted by Inglehart and Norris (2003b) in their article, “Younger generations in Muslim societies have remained almost as traditional as their parents and grandparents” (2003:68). We assumed that religiosity and class would give way to a causal relationship for support of women’s rights. As Sullivan argued in her article, such factors would have an effect on one’s view of gender equality, which we found was not always the case. This paper served as an illustration of how diverse nations with large Muslim populations view gender parity. Although there are broad majorities that support gender equality, there are still reservations when it comes to specifics and how these specifics will affect men.

Country

Overall, the nation that is most supportive of women’s rights in the abstract is Lebanon, followed by Turkey and Pakistan. The least supportive nation was Nigeria, where 39% of respondents agreed that women should have equal rights with men.

Examining the questions on what should occur in these nations with respect to gender parity the Lebanese (70%) and the Turkish (70%) were most supportive of gender equality. The majority of respondents in those two nations believe women should be able to work outside of the home.

Lastly, looking at the realities in these countries, those in Pakistan (60%) and Nigeria (59%) are least supportive of gender equality. The majority of Pakistanis and Nigerians agree that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women. Respondents in Nigeria (72%), Pakistan (69%) and Turkey (58%) perceive gender inequality in the realities of their respective countries. These respondents agreed that men get more opportunities than women for jobs that pay well, even when women are as qualified as men for the job. Finally, when asked who has a better life in their country—men or women, only 54% in Nigeria agree that men have better lives.

Gender

We expected that women would support gender equality more than men. The literature also suggested that women would be more supportive of women's rights than men. What we discovered was that, overall, women in Turkey (95%) and Pakistan (92%) are more likely to support gender equality in the abstract. Double-digit gender gaps are evident in Egypt, Jordan and Indonesia. Majorities among both men and women (except in the case of Nigeria where it is only women) in these countries agree that women should have the same rights as men. In Nigeria only (27%) of men believe in gender equality and 52% of Nigerian women (barely half) endorse equality. The data supports the research of Iglehart and Norris and Davis and Robinson who contended that women were more likely to support women's rights than men. However, Nigeria appears to be an anomaly. Nigerian women were the least supportive of having equal rights with their male compatriots.

Male and female respondents in Lebanon and Turkey agree that women should be allowed to work outside of the home; although Lebanese women (75%) were more supportive than their men. As with gender parity in the abstract, double-digit gender gaps are evident in Pakistan (67% vs. 32%) and Nigeria (51% vs. 35%) where the women are more supportive of what should occur in their nations with respect to women's right to be able to work outside of the home.

Overall, men reinforced the reality of gender inequality in Nigeria (63%), Egypt (59%) and Jordan (48%); however, in Pakistan, women (63%) support gender inequality in their country. The majority of these respondents agreed that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women. In Turkey 64% of women and 54% of men agree that men get more opportunities for good paying jobs even when women are as qualified for the positions. Gender had a limited effect when asked who between the sexes has a better life. Only in Turkey were the effects of gender strong. Almost half of Turkish women (49%) believe men have better lives in their country.

Income

Our expectations were that respondents in the higher income brackets would be more supportive of gender parity. The literature also supported our notion that those who earn more money would be more accepting. The data revealed that the effects of income were particularly strong in Nigeria and Indonesia. When asked if women should have equal rights as men, 53% of Nigerians in the lowest income bracket are more likely to support equality in the abstract, whereas in Indonesia, 75% of the respondents in the highest income bracket support gender parity in the abstract.

In observing what should occur with gender equality, Lebanese (82%) and Pakistani (53%) respondents in the highest income bracket support women's right to work outside of the home. In Turkey, broad majorities in all three income brackets support women working outside of the home. These findings support and contest the literature; Rizzo et al. found that those with a higher income are more tolerant and accepting.

Income had a limited effect on the realities of women's rights, when asked whether men get more opportunities at good paying jobs even when women are as qualified, 56% of Indonesians in the lowest income bracket agreed. Income also had a limited effect when asked whether men or women had a better life. Income was a strong indicator in Nigeria; 68% of those in the highest income bracket agreed that men have better lives.

Education

We expected respondents with higher levels of education to be more supportive of women's rights. Research indicates that individuals with more education tend to be more tolerant. We discovered that in Egypt, those with college degrees were more in favor of women's rights in the abstract affirming what the literature stated. The literature according to Ertürk suggested that those with a college education should be more tolerant of others.

Education was particularly strong in Lebanon and Pakistan in terms of what should occur in gender equality. In Lebanon broad majorities at all education levels support the notion of women being able to work outside of the home. The highest support came from Lebanese high school graduates where 77% agree. In Pakistan, 63% of college graduate respondents support women's right to work outside of the home. The findings were supported by what Davis and Robinson (1991) called the enlightenment thesis; however, Nigeria contradicted the literature. Nigerians without a college education were more supportive of gender parity in the abstract and barely less than half (48%) of high school graduates support women working outside of the home, which may be explained by Davis and Robinson's (1991) discussion of the reproductive thesis.

Education had a limited effect on the realities of women's rights when asked whether men get more opportunities at good paying jobs even when women are as qualified. Education as an indicator was only strong in Nigeria (88%) and Indonesia (54%) where those with a primary education agreed.

Age

In our hypothesis we state that younger respondents would be more supportive of gender equity. All of the literature suggested that generation shifts occur and the gap between young and old helps foster in change. The results of the effects of age proved to be the most surprising. Age had an extremely limited overall effect.

Children

Our expectation was that the respondents without children would be more supportive of women's rights. As the literature suggested, Rizzo et al. argued the more children a family has indicated the low status of women. The effects of children were strong in Indonesia. Indonesians with fewer children were most supportive of gender equality in the abstract.

The effects of children were also strong in Lebanon on what should occur in the gender equality debate. Lebanese (86%) respondents with four or more children supported the idea that women should be allowed to work outside of the home.

When examining the realities of life, in Pakistan, when asked when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women broad majorities with (60%) and without (61%) children agreed. In Jordan and Egypt, when asked about the realities in their nation, the question considering who has a better life—men or women, 46% of Jordanians without children agreed that men have better lives, and in Egypt 62% of Egyptians without children agreed that men get more opportunities for well-paying jobs even when women are as qualified for those positions. However, in Nigeria 80% of Nigerians with four or more children agreed. When asked whether men get more opportunities at well-paying jobs even when women are as qualified, 62% of Egyptian respondents without children agreed with the statement. In Nigeria, 80% of those with four or more children and 61% of Turkish respondents with 1-3 children agreed.

Religiosity

There are three different indicators that examined the level of religiosity, and each had different effects. The indicators are how often one prayed, how often they fasted during the month of Ramadan and whether they deemed religion as very important in their lives. We expected that high levels of religiosity would equate to lower support of gender equity. As Niels Spierings et al. noted, because Islam is a patriarchal religion, respondents would be unsupportive of women's rights. The data indicated that religiosity had a limited effect on support for gender equality in the abstract. Respondents who rarely prayed in Egypt (84%) and Pakistan (90%) believe women should have equal rights with men. In Nigeria, 80% of those who prayed weekly believe in gender equity. Also in Nigeria, 67% of those who do not deem religion as very important support equal rights. In Egypt, 74% of those who consider themselves Muslim believe women should have equal rights with men.

In Egypt, those prayed less agreed that women should be able to work outside of the home. Nigerians (68%) who prayed weekly also agreed that women should be able to work outside of the home. Turkish (81%) respondents who rarely prayed agreed as well. Lebanese (81%) respondents who fasted throughout the month of Ramadan supported gender equity. In Nigeria (59%) and Turkey (74%) those who rarely fasted during Ramadan supported women working outside of the home. Lebanese (77%) Sunnis and 100% of Turkish Shias agree that women should be able to work outside of the home.

72% of those in Pakistan and 65% of those in Turkey who pray every day agreed that men get more opportunity for good paying jobs even when women are as qualified. In Nigeria, 85% of the respondents who rarely prayed agreed with the statement. 77% of those in Nigeria and 56% of those in Indonesia who fasted throughout the month of Ramadan also agreed that men get more opportunities for well-paying jobs even when women are as qualified. Lastly, those in Egypt (50%), Nigeria (75%), Pakistan (70%) and Turkey (61%) who deem religion to be very important in their lives agreed; however, in Indonesia, 68% of respondents who do not believe religion to be very important agreed. Indonesian Shias (71%) and Nigerian Sunnis (82%) believe that men get more opportunities for well-paying jobs even when women are as qualified.

Also, when gauging the level of religiosity Nigerians (92%) who prayed weekly agreed that men should have more rights to a job than women. In Jordan (75%) and Turkey (50%) respondents who rarely fasted were also in agreement with this statement. Nigerians (62%) who consider themselves Sunni also agreed that men should have more right to a job than women.

Religiosity had a particularly strong effect in Nigeria when asking whether men or women had a better life. Nigerians (62%) who rarely prayed agreed that men have better lives in Nigeria; however, those who fasted throughout the month of Ramadan (62%) also agreed that men have better lives. Nigerians (56%) who say religion is very important agreed that men have better lives in Nigeria. In Turkey (100%), Nigeria (60%), Indonesia (57%), and Pakistan (50%), respondents who are Shia agree that men have better lives.

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Appendix

Egypt

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by all four regions (excluding Frontier governorates for security reasons—less than 2% of the population) proportional to population size and urban/rural population

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: Arabic

Fieldwork dates: April 12–May 3, 2010

Sample size: 1,000

Margin of Error: ± 4.0 percentage points

Representative: Adult population

Indonesia

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample representative of roughly 88% of the population (excluding Papua and remote areas or provinces with small populations) proportional to population size and urban/rural population

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: Bahasa Indonesia

Fieldwork dates: April 16–April 29, 2010

Sample size: 1,000

Margin of Error: ± 4.0 percentage points

Representative: Adult population (excludes 12% of population)

Lebanon

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by Lebanon's six major regions (excluding a small area in Beirut controlled by a militia group and a few villages in the south Lebanon, which border Israel and are inaccessible to outsiders) and proportional to population size and urban/rural population

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: Arabic

Fieldwork dates: April 12–May 3, 2010

Sample size: 1,000

Margin of Error: ± 4.0 percentage points

Representative: Adult population

Jordan

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by region and Jordan's 12 governorates and proportional to population size and urban/rural population

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: Arabic

Fieldwork dates: April 12–May 3, 2010

Sample size: 1,000

Margin of Error: ± 4.0 percentage points

Representative: Adult population

Nigeria

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by all six geo-political regions and Lagos and the urban/rural population and proportional to population size

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Pidgin, Igbo

Fieldwork dates: April 18–May 7, 2010

Sample size: 1,000

Margin of Error: ± 4.0 percentage points

Representative: Adult population

Pakistan

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample of all four provinces stratified by province (the FATA/FANA areas, Azad Jammu and Kashmir were excluded for security reasons as were areas of instability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa [formerly the North-West Frontier Province] and Baluchistan—roughly 16% of the population) with disproportional sampling of the urban population

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, Balochi, Hindko

Fieldwork dates: April 13–April 28, 2010

Sample size: 2,000

Margin of Error: ± 3.0 percentage points

Representative: Disproportionately urban, (the sample is 55% urban, Pakistan's population is 33% urban). Sample covers roughly 84% of the adult population.

Turkey

Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample in all 26 regions (based on geographical location and level of development (NUTS 2) and proportional to population size and urban/rural population

Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus

Languages: Turkish

Fieldwork dates: April 12–April 30, 2010

Sample size: 1,003

Margin of Error: ± 4.0 percentage points

Representative: Adult population