

How Islam Influences Women's Paid Non-farm Employment: Evidence from 26 Indonesian and 37 Nigerian Provinces

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Abstract Studies on women's employment in Muslim countries often mention Islam, but its influence is undertheorized and tests simply compare 'Muslim' women and areas to 'non-Muslim' women and areas. Here, multilevel analyses of Indonesia and Nigeria show this focus is not tenable: non-farm employment of Muslim women is not consistently lower than that of non-Muslim women, nor is it lower in Muslim-dominated provinces than in other provinces. A new theoretical frame conceptualizes religion's influence in terms message and messenger. It is shown how different manifestations of Islam influence women's non-farm employment, inside and outside the home. Empirically, the ideological strand of Islam is more important than differences between Islam and Christianity. In addition, when a conservative Islam is codified through Shari'a-based law women's employment outside the home seems to be lower, but the presence of Islamic political parties seems to foster women's access to the labor market through their focus on support for the poor.

Keywords Women's employment · Islam · Indonesia · Nigeria · Shari'a · Multilevel analysis

Introduction

Low women's employment in 'the Muslim world' is often attributed to the influence of Islam. The argument is that Islam is more traditional than any other major religion, and this prevents women from entering the labor market. Broad cross-national comparative studies in particular advance this explanation (e.g. Clark et al. 1991; Lincove 2005; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay 2007). For instance, Clark

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et al. (1991: 59–60) conclude that “Islam, with its strong emphasis on separate spheres for men and women [has] blocked women from acknowledged entry into the paid work force.” In response to this, others have claimed that the effect of religion is overestimated or spurious, because other characteristics shared by these countries are ignored (e.g. Droeber 2003; Khattab 2002; Spierings 2007). This paper engages both of these lines of thinking and tests them at the local and individual levels. In addition, it presents the notions of ‘messages’ and ‘messengers’ to help understand *how* Islam—or religion in general—can influence women’s employment. This helps to address three issues that have not been systematically investigated in the literature.

The first of these issues is addressed by the notion of ‘messages’, which here refers to the different normative ideologies that exist within Islam. Similar to research concerning Protestantism’s influence on employment in Western countries, I will not only focus on affiliation (e.g. Feldmann 2007; Lehrer 1995, 1996), but also on differences in terms of conservatism (Ammons and Edgell 2007; Chadwick and Garrett 1995; Civettini and Glass 2008; Civettini and Glass Sherkat 2000). I will translate this to the dominance of different strands of Islam. Secondly, the idea of messages draws attention to the fact that different messages have different impacts on different aspects of employment. I distinguish between paid employment in—and outside the home. If gender roles are at the core of a religious ideology’s objection to employment, both are problematic. If the ideology focuses on sex segregation, working at home is less problematic. Thirdly, I theorize that there are different ‘messengers’—religious ideas are transmitted in different ways. Consequently, I test the impact of religion in three forms: institutionalized in politics and policies, translated into societal norms, and internalized at the household level.

The Demographic and Health Surveys of Indonesia (2003) and Nigeria (2003) provide a unique opportunity to compare women’s employment levels by religious denomination. Moreover, it is clear in which province the women live. Religious denomination can be aggregated and external information at the province-level allows for testing hypotheses on the institutionalization of Islam. Multilevel multinomial logit models are applied to these data.

Theoretical Background: Women’s Employment and Islam

Women’s Employment

Before going into the impact of Islam, we need to look at how ‘women’s employment’ is understood here. The quantitative literature on women’s employment often uses a simple dichotomy between being employed or not (e.g. Clark et al. 1991; Fish 2002; Lehrer 1995; Read 2004; Spierings et al. 2009). However, this obscures the fact that different forms of labor are impacted differently by societal and personal developments, and that they lead to different degrees of empowerment (e.g. Adely 2009; Afshar 1998; Bullock 1994; Donahoe 1999).

Based on the existing discussions, women’s employment position in developing countries can be captured in four broad categories. The first group, the women with

the greatest empowerment potential, consists of those who have paid (non-agricultural) jobs outside their homes. This fosters economic independence and bargaining power within their household (see Adely 2009: 114; Afshar 1998; Anderson and Eswaran 2009; Gray et al. 2006: 297; Kibria 1990; Olmsted 2005; Wolf 1990), and in addition working outside of the home helps to build a social network and develop skills (Adely 2009: 114; Moghadam 1998: 3; Schlozman et al. 1999). The second group shares an increased economic independence with the first, but because they work at home they have a lower level of autonomy. Nevertheless, it is empowering compared to having no paid employment.

The third group of women is also active in productive labor, but then in agriculture—most often on the family farm—or in an unpaid position. These jobs lack both aspects of empowerment described above. Agricultural participation is often the default option for women living in the countryside and in that sense it is a rather similar position as staying a housewife (the fourth group here) for women living in urban areas. The difference between being active in agriculture and being a housewife is to a large extent determined by the economic context and the degree of modernization and urbanization (see Inglehart 1997; Pampel and Tanaka 1986; Spierings et al. 2009). While the empowerment potential of agricultural labor might be higher, these two types of employment seem to be communicating vessels. Agricultural work is often considered an extension of a woman's domestic tasks—especially in horticultural societies, such as Nigeria (Lenski and Nolan 1984)—and it does not go against traditional norms in rural areas (Azzam et al. 1985: 18; Jansen 2004). For urban housewives and for rural women who are active in agriculture, the step to being non-agriculturally employed is rather similar with respect to the dominant norms on women's role in society (Azzam et al. 1985: 30–1; Spierings et al. 2010).

The theoretical and empirical focus of this study will be on the two most empowering forms of employment: paid non-agricultural employment outside the home and paid non-agricultural employment at home. It is expected that the effect of religion is rather different when it comes to working out—or inside of the home. These two forms of employment will be contrasted with the two 'default' employment positions: unpaid agricultural employment and being a housewife. This approach was chosen because the mechanisms to get from those positions to paid employment are similar, and because of methodological reasons discussed further below. In the descriptive analysis, however, I will distinguish between all four groups.

The Literature: To Be or Not To Be?

In explaining women's employment in developing countries, the dominant approach has long focused on economic explanatory factors (see Inglehart 1997; Rathgeber 1990; WorldBank 2005). More recently, attention has been drawn to cultural factors (Rathgeber 1990; Chua et al. 2000), which help understand differences between countries with similar economic circumstances (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Spierings et al. 2009). The attention to Islam as a determinant of the position of

women can be placed in this tradition. However, the treatment of Islam has so far been rather crude and needs refinement to really understand the impact of Islam.

Somewhat simplistically, one can state that the core question asked in the literature on women's position and Islam (in Muslim countries) is centered on the issue of *whether* Islam has an influence. Not all research can be neatly placed within either the 'yes' camp or the 'no' camp. However, as soon as Islam is included as an explanatory factor, the matter seems to become central.

The 'yes' school includes many scholars who tend to think in terms of civilizations, particularly contrasting 'the West' and 'the Islamic civilization' (e.g. Clark et al. 1991; Fish 2002; Norris and Inglehart 2002, 2004; Lincove 2005; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay 2007). According to these Civilizationalists' rather Orientalist approach, it is the absolute as well as relative backwardness in terms of gender equality that restricts women in 'the Islamic culture' from entering the labor market. In absolute terms, Islam is assigned certain qualities: separate living spheres for women and men that confine women to the household, and strict (re)productive roles that see the woman as a care provider (Clark et al. 1991; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay 2007). Relatively speaking, the characteristics mentioned above are not said to be unique to Islam, but it is argued that they are more strongly present in Islam than in any other religion (see Droeber 2003).

Other contributions to this debate—the 'no' school—tend to oppose this view by stressing that the impact of Islam is overestimated. Although these studies do not form a coherent school of thought, they all argue that part of the relationship found between Islam and women's position is spurious and actually caused by other factors, such as economic development, colonial history, regional conflicts, oil, educational attainment, and socio-economic class (e.g. Droeber 2003; Fish 2011; Khattab 2002; Moghadam 2003; Ross 2008; Spierings 2007).

While this possible spuriousness of the effect of Islam is clearly important, these critiques are prone to the same weaknesses found in the studies they criticize. In this debate between the two schools three important issues tend to be overlooked. For both schools, it is firstly unclear at what level the influence of Islam manifests itself. Does it only explain the difference between countries (which empirically leads to a high likelihood of spuriousness, because Muslim countries are geographically clustered) or is it expected that Muslim women differ from non-Muslim women within the same country as well? Secondly, it is not made explicit *how* Islam influences women's behavior. The assumption seems to be that Islam exerts influence through culture, which remains a very vague process. Thirdly, the approach neither seems to leave room for differences between different strands of Islamic thought, nor does it consider the possibility that some aspects of other religions are just as disadvantageous to women as aspects of Islam, or even more unfavorable. *How* Islam influences women's employment and *which* aspects of Islam are causally important both deserve much more analytical attention.

I will thus have to go beyond the existing debate and will present a framework for understanding Islam's influences below. However, two hypotheses can already be derived from the current debate, one at the community and one at the household level.

H1 Women living in a Muslim context have lower employment likelihoods than women living in a non-Muslim context.

h1 Muslim women are less likely to be employed than non-Muslim women.

(Capital 'H' indicates a hypothesis at the macro level, a lower-case 'h' is used for micro-level hypotheses.)

Since the argument in the literature not only stresses the segregation aspect but also the strict and gendered division of household roles, these hypotheses should hold for both forms of paid employment.

How Religion Manifests Itself: The Message and Messenger

In this study, I argue that thinking in terms of the 'message' and the 'messenger' helps solve the problems mentioned above and conceptualize Islam's influence (see also Badran 2001; Spierings 2007). The core idea of this framework is rather simple: each religion harbors ideological ideas (messages) and each of these can influence people when they are manifested through norms, institutions, or internalized values (messengers). With regard to the messages, it is important to realize that different worldviews can be part of one religion. Within Islam there are different schools and movements, each with their own message; it is no unitary whole, and studies should make clear which message they refer to. Regarding the messenger, the approach stresses that an ideological idea cannot influence the actual lives of people, unless it has a way to exert influence, some sort of medium or mechanism, of which there are multiple ones (norms, policies, internalization) that can exist alongside each other.

Some elements of this approach reflect the rich literature on the influence of Protestantism on (wo)men's employment in Western countries (particularly the US), which demonstrates the differences between strands of Protestantism (e.g. Ammons and Edgell 2007; Chadwick and Garrett 1995; Civettini and Glass 2008; Sherkat 2000). In line with this literature, I argue that the strand of Islam is also important in understanding the impact of Islam (see also Fish 2011; for Muslim women in the West, see Read 2003). This is the first important distinction to be made with regard to the message.

A second distinction relates especially to this study: the form of employment. Religious objections to women's employment are often framed in terms of gendered household roles and segregation. However, for work at home, gender segregation can be expected to be less important because women working at home do not come into contact with men more often than housewives do. As argued, it is exactly that characteristic that makes this type of employment less empowering: it does not foster the creation of social networks to the same extent as outhouse employment does (Adely 2009; Larsen et al. 2013). If the core religious objection revolves around a division of tasks or gendered household roles, then women's paid employment at home will be problematic as well. On average, gender segregation seems to be relatively more present in Islam than in other religions, whereas the gender role difference is present in most religions (see Moghadam 2003; Tzannatos and Kaur 2003). If this is the case, the overall level of paid employment might not

be that different, but compared to other religions, Islam can be expected to disproportionately lead to working from the home.

The degree to which these different possible religious objections to women's employment are present may vary across the strands of Islam. In some, such as Muslim and Islamic feminist interpretations of Islam they are largely absent. Based on scripture and history, they argue that true Islam is an emancipatory religion (Doumato and Posusney 2003; Ghorashi 1996; Moghadam 2003; Selim 2003). Their efforts of changing the dominant views on women's position on the one hand show the diversity of messages within the religion and on the other hand reinforce the idea that the dominant messages are less emancipatory.

Next, the different Islamic ideological messages—or ones legitimized by references to Islam—can manifest themselves through different mechanisms: messengers. First, we have societal norms. The expected negative reactions from the community or society deter women from seeking employment because of perceived informal repercussions, possibly despite their own desires to do seek employment (e.g. Miles 2002). A second societal manifestation of traditional views concerning women's role are formal rules. In this respect, the literature draws most attention to the institutionalization of patriarchal interpretations of Islam propagated by political actors or translated to policies (Kandiyoti 1991; Lewis 2002; Spierings et al. 2009; Syed 2008). Policies imply formal rewards or punishments for following or breaking a rule, shaping women's considerations on whether to enter into employment. These incentives might even make it practically impossible for women to be employed at all. For example, if (Islamic) laws forbid traveling without a *mahram* (a male family member), employment that requires traveling is hardly an option.

With respect to these societal influences, the following hypotheses are formulated.

H2 Women living in a Muslim region dominated by more traditional forms of Islam have lower employment likelihoods than women living in Muslim regions with less traditional forms of Islam.

H3 Women living in a Muslim context have lower likelihoods to be employed outside the home than women living in a non-Muslim context, but this difference is not found for work at home.

H4 Women living in a Muslim region where traditional forms of Islam are institutionalized have lower employment likelihoods than women living in Muslim regions where traditional forms of Islam are not institutionalized.

Societal factors tend to influence all women within a geographical area, but internalized worldviews influence women within a geographical area differently. According to Sherkat's study of Protestant women (2000), gendered roles are more important at the individual than at the community level. If a woman and her household strongly favor traditional family roles, the woman will prioritize reproductive labor over being employed. Indeed, conservative protestant women are less active on the labor market than less conservative protestant women (Sherkat 2000; Feldmann 2007). Read (2002) develops this argument for Arab-American

women by arguing that traditionalism is important for them as well. However, she claims that traditionalism is hardly specifically linked to any one of the major denominations, but rather has more to do with the many different strands of religion and religious thought within the major religions.

Moreover, looking at the level of traditionalism in the household, it is important which specific dimension of employment is addressed. The distinction between traditional gender roles and gender segregation suggests that traditionalism has far less impact on being gainfully employed at home than outside the home. Working at home is less problematic with regard to strict gender segregation, and it interferes less with women's care role because time allocation is easier to manage—though it does lead to a 'double burden'.

Overall, the micro-level reasoning can be translated to three hypotheses:

h2 Women living in more traditional households are less likely to be employed than women living in less traditional households.

h3 Islam and living in a traditional household impact employment more significantly in employment outside the home than in employment at home.

h4 Muslim women are on average not less traditional (and thus not less likely to be employed) than non-Muslim women.

The Setting of Two Religiously Diverse Countries

The hypotheses formulated above will be tested on (micro and province-level) data for both Indonesia and Nigeria (separately), but before that, I will briefly sketch the general background in both countries.

Indonesia

12 % of the worldwide Muslim population lives in Indonesia (195 million of about 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide), making it the most populous Muslim country. However, they make up for roughly 80 % of the population, thus leaving about 45 million Indonesians who are not Muslims. Considerable numbers of these are Christians or Hindus and there are also adherents to other religions (Emmerson 2001; CIA, Central Intelligence Agency 2009). Within Indonesia, Islam is diverse, and one can, for instance, distinguish between the 'Modernist' form of Islam, which is based on orthodox theology and is in fact rather conservative, and 'Traditional' Islam, in which (less traditional) local religious practices and interpretations are incorporated. The latter is mostly found on Java (Bahramitash 2002; Emmerson 2001; Patung 2006c; UNDP Indonesia 2009b).

Islam is also a significant societal force. Indonesian family law is partly based on *Adat*, a set of principles in line with traditional Islamic law (Bahramitash 2002; Lindsey 1999), and since 2003 some regions have promulgated laws based on the *Shari'a* (Patung 2006a, b). In the political sphere, Islamic oppositional movements have existed since the Sukarno regime, and at the end of the last century the Islamic

National Awakening Party (PKB) became part of the government coalition (Emmerson 2001; Bahramitash 2002).

Despite violent conflicts along religious lines in Aceh and on the Moluccas, religious differences do not threaten the unity of Indonesia. This is partly because of crosscutting ethnic, religious, and economic cleavages (Emmerson 2001: 391), and people with different religious beliefs do not live completely segregated either (i.e. many Christians live in Muslim-majority areas).

Economically speaking, Indonesia went through a process of industrialization quite early, at least when compared to other Muslim countries (Moghadam 2003), which is cited as a reason why the labor market participation of women is relatively high compared to that of many other (?) Muslim countries. About a quarter of Indonesian women are employed in non-agricultural paid labor (Spierings et al. 2009).

Nigeria

With more than 130 million inhabitants, Nigeria is the largest country on the African continent. About half of the population is Muslim, 40–50 % is Christian, and most of the remaining people adhere to indigenous beliefs. While the Muslim population is concentrated in the north and the Christians are in the south, many Christians live in the northern states and vice versa.

Ethnically speaking, Nigeria is extremely heterogeneous. However, ethnicity and religion broadly coincide, and most conflicts run along ethno-religious cleavages. Thousands of people have died in these conflicts in the past decades (Globalsecurity 2009; Olukoshi 2001). This does not mean that Nigeria consists of two monolithic religious blocs, however. Nigerian Christianity encompasses Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, as well as many smaller Protestant groups. Moreover, there are many different Islamic groups, and only part of the Muslim population (mainly Hausa and Fulani people) falls under the Sokoto Caliphate (IslamToday 2011; Globalsecurity 2009). In the Caliphate areas the Sultan is still an important leader and this strand of Islam is generally said to be more conservative than Nigeria's other Islams (Callaway and Creevey 1994:99; Hunwick 1992; Kritz and Makinwa-Adebusoye 1999).

Politically, the ethno-religious conflicts threaten the unity of the Nigerian federal state. President Obasanjo's first government (1999–2003) sought to find compromises with the Islamic opposition and his policies have reduced some tensions (Isaacs 2003): as of 1999, states are allowed to incorporate *Shari'a* law into the criminal law code (instead of only in civil law). At this point, twelve states in northern Nigeria have done so (Globalsecurity 2009; Isaacs 2003; Olukoshi 2001). One main political party, the All (Nigerian) People's Party (ANPP), is associated with Islam (Cahoon 2009), and in the 2003 presidential elections this party's candidate won about one-third of the votes, with the ANPP providing governors in 6 out of 37 states (losing three governorships).

Nigeria's economy is largely dependent on petrol exports, which seems to have had a positive effect on women's employment rates. Studies point at a third to half

of the women being active in a non-agricultural job, which is much higher than in other Sub-Saharan African countries. Just as many other Sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria has a horticultural history in which large-scale farming was rather absent and production focused on home consumption (Lenski and Nolan 1984). Even taking into account these economic factors, the women's employment rate is somewhat higher in Nigeria than in other comparable Muslim countries (Spierings et al. 2009).

Case Selection

At the core of this paper are statistical intra-country comparisons: differences among the districts and women are studied separately for each country. In this way, many country-level differences are controlled for. Instead of one country, this study looks at two in order to increase the external validity of this study, and the country analyses should be regarded as separate case studies.

Three considerations underpin the selection of Indonesia and Nigeria. Firstly, the objectives of this study—comparing religious groups and understanding the impact of Islam—require data at both the individual and societal level, with religious variation at those levels. Indonesia and Nigeria meet these demands.

Secondly, whereas the 'average' Muslim country does not exist, statistical case studies of Indonesia and Nigeria do make it possible to draw somewhat more general conclusions. The fact that Indonesia and Nigeria, given their socio-economic characteristics, have relatively high levels of employment compared to other Muslim countries (Spierings et al. 2009) fits the extreme case approach (Gerring 2007). An extreme case shows a high score on the dependent variable (employment), which suggests relatively extreme scores on an important explanatory factor. Civilizationists might argue that the explanatory factor for these two countries is the presence of substantial Christian populations in both countries. If this is indeed the case, we should find that the Muslim regions/women have lower employment levels/likelihoods than their Christian counterparts. If this is not the case, the analyses in this study are a strong refutation of the first school of thought presented above. The respective positions of Indonesia and Nigeria in the larger population of countries make them important for understanding the causal mechanisms related to Islam's impact.

Thirdly, Indonesia and Nigeria are societally significant countries. They are two of the largest Muslim countries in the world, with about 195 million female inhabitants (roughly 140 million Muslim women), and they also play important political roles in their respective regions.

It would clearly be interesting to include other countries, but given the limited availability of district-level data for religiously diverse Muslim countries, these two seem both theoretically important and the most suitable. Kazakhstan and Lebanon would have been interesting cases as well, but, in addition to the lack of data, the number of administrative units in those countries is too limited.

Methods

Data

This study used the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) for Indonesia (2003) and Nigeria (2003). The DHS data are conducted as part of the MEASURE DHS project, which is funded by USAID as well as the participating countries. There are more than 260 surveys from 90 countries available that are used in a wide array of studies on health and social issues (see MeasureDHS; DDW). The surveys have stratified two-stage designs that use nationally representative clustered samples of households and women.

The Indonesian survey contains information on 29,458 married or previously married women aged 15–49, living in 26 provinces;¹ the Nigerian survey 7,630 women (15–49; including never-married women) from 37 states.² The response rates of the surveys are about 98 %. After processing the data, 28,709 Indonesian (97.5 %) and 7,310 Nigerian (95.8 %) women were included in the analyses. The weights provided by DHS were used to generate representative samples. The surveys include large subnational district samples, which allows me to create indicators at the province-level by aggregating data from the individual level. To test hypotheses H2 and H4, data from external sources was added (see below).

Method and Dependent Variable

The hypotheses will be tested using multilevel multinomial logit models with explanatory variables at the district and micro-levels (e.g. Hox 2002; Jones and Duncan 1998). A three-category dependent variable was used. The base category is being a housewife or being in unpaid/non-agricultural employment (1), the two other categories are paid employment in—(2) or outside (3) the household. Being a housewife and being agriculturally active are considered communicating vessels; if only one is used as base in the multinomial models, the coefficients for the explanatory variables cannot be sensibly interpreted. Taking the two together will show to what extent a variable influences the step from the default employment position (housewife or working a family farm) to entering one of the two forms of paid employment. Paid employment in general includes all jobs from unskilled manufacturing to higher managerial functions; if we look at home-based work specifically this is almost exclusively ‘skilled manufacturing’ and ‘sales & services’ in both surveys. The more detailed coding in the Nigerian data file shows that most home-based work involves clothes manufacturing, helping in a home-based enterprise, or selling products made at home. For Indonesia no detailed coding was available but it is very likely that home-based work is rather similar there. Models were run separately for Indonesia and Nigeria; both include at least 25

¹ At the time of the survey Indonesia had 31 provinces or ‘special’ areas. The survey includes 26: the conflict areas were not included (Aceh, the Maluku Islands—Maluku Ambon and North Maluku—and Papua—West Papua, Papua).

² Since this study is not a strict comparison between the countries, but consists of two separate case studies, these differences are not regarded as problematic.

provinces (cf. Paterson and Goldstein 1991). MLwiN does not give a significance statistic of the models, but the district-level variance can be used to assess the model fit.

Variables

This section discusses the religion variables. Details on the control variables (education, age, children, living in a city, partner, economic development, unemployment, labor market structures)³ are found in “Appendix 1” section. Overall, these cover the standard explanations from the literature (see Spierings et al. 2010).

To measure religious affiliation or societal dominant religion (H1, H3, h1, h3, h4), Muslims are contrasted with different groups of ‘non-Muslims’. At the individual level there are dummies for *religious denomination*: Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, and other religions; for Indonesia ‘Hindu’ is also included and for Nigeria ‘Other Christian’. All groups, with the exception of ‘other religions’, have at least 800 respondents each. At the province/state level, dummies indicate the *predominant religion* (see Clark et al. 1991; Fish 2002; Norris and Inglehart 2004). In Indonesia, 23 districts were coded as being Islamic, and one each Hindu, Protestant, and Catholic. In Nigeria, 16 states are labeled Islamic, 18 Protestant, and three Catholic. This way of measuring religion is chosen here because it replicates the dominant practice in the civilizationist literature.

Using dummies, I differentiate within Islam at the contextual level (H2). In Indonesia, ‘Traditional’ and ‘Modernist’ Islam are distinguished (see country background section). In Nigeria, I differentiate between the areas that are part of the Sokoto Caliphate (10 districts) and the other Muslim areas (6) (e.g. Hunwick 1992).

The institutionalization of Islam (H4) was measured in two ways. For Nigeria, I constructed a dummy variable indicating which provinces use the *Shari’a* as part of criminal law (Isaacs 2003; globalsecurity 2009; Olukoshi 2001). In more centralist Indonesia, provinces and regions were fairly similar in their policies towards Islam; however, since 2003 some regions (subdivisions of provinces) implemented *Shari’a* law, following the special Autonomy Law for Aceh. A dummy indicating the five provinces that included regions that adopted *Shari’a*-based law (Patung 2006a, b) was the best available measurement for Indonesia, notwithstanding both the fact that the survey dates are from just before this wave of changes and the difference in levels (regions and not provinces). The second institutionalization variable was the dominance of Islamic political parties. In Indonesia, the percentage of votes for one of the three major Islam-based parties

³ At the district-level not all control variables are included because of multicollinearity and the limited number of subnational units. The presented models include the variables that had the most impact across the board (see “Appendix 1” section). The models have been run with different economic control variables at that level, but this does not influence the results substantially.

(PKB, PPP, PAN) was available (UNDP Indonesia 2009a).⁴ For Nigeria, a dummy was created that indicates whether or not the governor of the state came from the APP/ANPP in the years before 2003 (Cahoon 2009).

At the micro-level, the surveys do not include attitudes as direct measurements of the household level of traditionalism (h2, h3, h4).⁵ However, traditional attitudes are closely related to traditional practices and behavior, on which data are present in the DHS files. The data on this behavior allow me to test whether levels of traditionalism explain differences between religious denominations. In order to do this, I included four indicators that—according to previous studies—tap into women’s and households’ levels of traditionalism. Early marriage is linked to traditionalism (Civettini and Glass 2008; Varea 1993), as is early parenthood (Civettini and Glass 2008; Spierings et al. 2010; Varea 1993), and both are included by taking the marriage age and delivery age. In addition, the household being polygynous (Spierings et al. 2010) and a considerable age difference between a husband and his wife (Spierings et al. 2010; Wheeler and Gunter 1987) also indicate traditionalism. The first is included as a dummy (1 = polygynous), the second by a variable subtracting the age of the woman from that of her husband.⁶ As it might rightfully be argued that aside from traditionalism these indicators also tap into socio-economic circumstances, the models include socio-economic circumstances as well (e.g. education, the presence of children, it being an extended household, having a partner). Moreover, Spierings (2014) shows that even after including a wide variety of household-structure variables, age difference and early parenthood remain important indicators of traditionalism.

Complex Patterns: Islam and Women’s Employment

Women’s Employment in Indonesia and Nigeria

Table 1 shows that on average 23.5 % of women are gainfully (non-agriculturally) employed in Indonesia and on average 43.6 % in Nigeria. While the focus here remains on paid employment categories, it is interesting to note that in both countries the percentage of housewives is substantially higher among Muslim women than among women from other religions; however, this is not reflected in lower paid employment levels—the difference is absorbed by lower employment in agriculture and unpaid employment. The figures indeed suggest that working on a family farm in a rural household is largely equivalent to being a housewife in an urban one.

⁴ Based on an election results map including pie charts with the five largest parties, I was able to estimate the percentage of votes for PKB, PPP, and PAN in five percent groups. For Bangka-Belitung, Banten, and Gorontalo the percentage was taken of the province they belonged to before splitting up (South Sumatra, West Java, and North Saluwesi).

⁵ It was not possible to distinguish different strands of Islam at the individual level.

⁶ Women without children were given the mean score on this variable, and a dummy for having children is included (Allison 2001: 87).

Table 1 Women's employment in Indonesia and Nigeria (%)

	Indonesia				Nigeria					
	Housewife	Agricultural or unpaid	Non-agr., paid at home	Non-agr., paid outside home	N	Housewife	Agricultural or unpaid	Non-agr., paid at home	Non-agr., paid outside home	N
Total	47.4	29.1	7.4	16.1	28,767	41.8	14.6	23.3	20.3	7,310
Religious affiliation woman										
Islam	48.6	28.1	7.5	15.8	26,056	46.1	6.3	34.4	13.2	3,737
Protestantism	37.4	40.8	5.0	16.7	1,507	37.6	26.4	8.9	27.1	1,103
Catholicism	26.2	53.0	5.8	15.0	553	37.7	30.1	8.6	23.6	956
Other Christian	- ^a	- ^a	- ^a	- ^a	- ^a	38.3	14.6	15.4	31.7	1,417
Hinduism	31.4	24.9	13.7	30.0	437	- ^a	- ^a	- ^a	- ^a	- ^a
Other	60.8	21.2	6.6	11.3	212	14.6	50.0	20.8	14.6	96
Dominant religion district										
Islam	48.0	28.7	7.4	16.0	27,567	46.8	7.1	33.1	12.9	3,820
Protestantism	63.1	18.9	4.0	14.0	301	38.7	19.2	14.2	27.9	2,830
Catholicism	17.0	73.2	3.1	6.7	448	26.3	38.2	5.7	29.8	668
Hinduism	31.5	18.6	17.1	32.8	451	- _b	- _b	- _b	- _b	- _b

Source DHS Indonesia 2003; Nigeria 2003

N_I = 28,741; N_N = 7,339

^a For this country, the category is included in the group 'Other'

^b In this country no district exist with this religion being dominant

At the individual level in Indonesia, Hindu women have the highest likelihood of paid non-agricultural employment, both with regard to working at home (13.7 %) and outside the home (30.0 %). These figures are around double that of women from other religions. Muslim women have a likelihood of 15.8 % to be employed outside the home, which is roughly similar to that of Protestant (16.7 %) and Catholic (15.0 %) women. However, the likelihood of Muslim women earning money working at home seems slightly higher than that of these two Christian groups (7.5 vs. 5.0 and 5.8 %).⁷ Consequently, the total proportion of women in a paid job is slightly higher among Muslim women (23.3 vs. 21.7 and 20.8 %), but these differences are not statistically significant.⁸

Shifting to the provinces, in Indonesia, women living in the Hindu-majority province more often have a paid job (49.9 %) than women in any other province. Compared to the individual level results, especially the Catholic province stands out, with only 9.8 % of the women living there—regardless of their own religion—in a paid non-agricultural job. In the Muslim provinces, 23.4 % of the women have such a job, and this is 18.0 % in the Protestant areas.⁹

In Nigeria, the differences between individual women are larger than in Indonesia. Muslim women are significantly (statistically and substantially) less active in paid jobs outside the home compared to Christian women (13.2 vs. 23.6 through 31.7 %), but far more often employed at home (34.4 vs. 8.6 through 15.4 %). Adding up these figures shows that 47.6 % of Muslim women has paid non-agricultural employment, which is 36.0 % among Protestants, 32.2 % among Catholics and 47.1 % among the other Christian women. In Nigeria, Muslim women more often work from home; in total they are not less likely to have paid work than Christian women.

When comparing Nigerian states, similar patterns are found: women in the Muslim states are less often in a paid job outside home, but more often earn money from their home. Overall this leads to a higher proportion of women having a paid non-agricultural job in Muslim states (46.0 %) than in the Protestant and Catholic ones (42.1 and 35.5 %).

Overall, these basic employment descriptives of Indonesian and Nigerian women show that paid employment rates are not lower for Muslim women and provinces than for their Christian counterparts. An important difference between Christian (both Catholic and Protestant) and Muslim women, though, is that the latter more often work from their home. In Indonesia this leads to higher employment rates overall and in Nigeria it makes up for the lower rate of being in paid employment outside the home. However, the figures here do not take into account economic and social circumstances. Nor is it clear whether the differences between provinces are due to societal factors or simply the number of Muslims and Christian living in the area. Multivariate analyses will shed more light on the influence of Islam on women's employment.

⁷ The difference between Muslim and Christian women is significant (A Mann–Whitney U test: $p = 0.001$).

⁸ The p value of the Mann–Whitney U test was 0.163.

⁹ The difference between Muslim and Christian provinces is significant (Mann–Whitney U test: $p = 0.000$).

Denomination, Traditionalism and Institutionalization

To test the different hypotheses, several models are run for each country. Table 2 presents the four core models for Indonesia, Table 3 for Nigeria. Model 1 only includes denomination variables and helps to see whether the province-level differences are compositional or not (H1, H3, h1). Model 2 controls for socio-economic and demographic circumstances, and provides us with clues to the possible origins of religious differences (H1, H3, h1). In Model 3, different strands of Islam (H2) and the impact of the institutionalization of Islam (H4) are assessed. Finally, Model 4 checks the role of (intervening) traditionalist values in the household (h2–h4). Below, the models are interpreted in combination. Models 2 through 4 are controlled for socio-economic characteristics (see Table 5 in “Appendix 2” section) and show the additional explanatory power of religious factors.

Household Level Differences

At the household level, the largest differences are found for women’s paid employment at home (the columns in gray). All models indicate that compared to the base category (housewife, unpaid/agriculturally employed) the probability of working at home is substantially larger ($p < 0.001$) for Muslim women, than for women from other religions. Only Catholic women in Indonesia have a higher probability. Controlling for socio-economic circumstances and traditionalism slightly decreases the differences. This indicates that Muslim women live in somewhat more traditional households, but this does not inhibit their entry into paid employment; it more often leads to the decision to work at home.

The difference between not being in paid employment and having a paid job outside the home seems less unambiguous. For both Indonesia and Nigeria, Model 1 shows that Muslim women have lower employment ratios ($p < 0.001$). For Catholic women in Nigeria the results are not statistically significant, and the ‘Other’ (religious minority) groups in both countries show an adverse effect. However, the patterns for having paid jobs outside the home completely change after controlling for socio-economic factors (Models 2). In Indonesia, Protestant women appear to have lower employment rates than Catholic women in both countries (all $p < 0.001$). Additional modeling shows that the changes mainly result from including the women’s education levels,¹⁰ which might imply that Islam restricts girls’ entry in the educational system, disadvantaging them on the labor market later on or leading them to seek work that can be done at home. Nonetheless, differences between women from different religions remain, so some other factor links religion to women’s employment as well.

Lastly, Model 4 shows that a larger age difference between partners, marrying early, and living in a polygynous household indeed have a highly negative significant impact on women’s employment outside the home,¹¹ but this does not

¹⁰ Not presented here for reasons of comprehensibility, but results can be acquired from the author.

¹¹ The effect for early parenthood points in different directions. An explanation for this might be found in Amin and Alam (2008), who, with respect to Egypt, mention that more capital is needed before people get married, and thus women, especially traditional women, have a more extensive labor history before marriage.

Table 2 Religion and women's non-farm employment in Indonesia

	Model 1: religious denomination				Model 2: (1) + socio-economic controls			
	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
<i>Nigeria</i>								
Intercept	-1.707***	0.090	-2.340***	0.077	-3.879***	0.188	-5.141***	0.216
District-level variance	0.187***	0.052	0.135***	0.037	0.069***	0.019	0.091***	0.025
<i>District-level</i>								
Dominant religion								
Islam	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Traditionalist (more lib.)								
Modernist (more cons.)								
Protestantism	-0.204	0.442	-0.650	0.376	-0.119	0.268	-0.623*	0.309
Catholicism	-1.101**	0.442	-0.969**	0.376	-0.035	0.287	-0.501	0.330
Hinduism	1.136**	0.443	1.607***	0.376	0.824**	0.271	1.339***	0.312
Islamic political parties								
Shari'a								
Controls included ^a	No		No		Yes		Yes	
<i>Individual level</i>								
Religion								
Islamic	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Protestant	0.119***	0.002	-0.199***	0.003	-0.332***	0.002	-0.302***	0.002
Catholic	0.350***	0.004	0.245***	0.006	-0.291***	0.004	0.202***	0.005
Hindu	0.042***	0.006	-0.622***	0.008	0.155***	0.007	-0.539***	0.008
Other	-0.233***	0.006	-0.129***	0.008	-0.699***	0.006	-0.483***	0.007

Table 2 continued

	Model 3: (2) + district-level religion variables				Model 4: (3) + household traditionalism variables			
	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
Hinduism	1.189***	0.224	1.648***	0.320	1.175***	0.220	1.622***	0.328
Islamic political parties	0.010*	0.004	0.012*	0.006	0.011**	0.004	0.013*	0.006
Shari'a	-0.181	0.106	-0.111	0.151	-0.178	0.104	-0.110	0.155
Controls included ^a	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
<i>Individual level</i>								
<i>Religion</i>								
Islamic	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Protestant	-0.334***	0.002	-0.305***	0.003	-0.357***	0.002	-0.260***	0.003
Catholic	-0.286***	0.004	0.209***	0.005	-0.299***	0.004	0.221***	0.005
Hindu	0.157***	0.007	-0.534***	0.008	0.172***	0.007	-0.490***	0.008
Other	-0.705***	0.006	-0.488***	0.007	-0.751***	0.006	-0.397***	0.007
<i>Trad.: age difference</i>								
Trad.: age giving first birth					-0.025***	0.000	-0.022***	0.000
Trad.: age at (first) marriage					0.017***	0.000	0.007***	0.000
Trad.: polygynous household					0.001***	0.000	-0.034***	0.000
Controls included ^a	Yes		Yes		-0.725***	0.000	-0.094***	0.016

Source DHS Indonesia 2003

N = 28,741; Employed: n = 8,017

^a The coefficients of the control variables are given in "Appendix 2" section. Those coefficients refer to Model 4* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$ (two tailed)

Table 3 Religion and women's non-farm employment in Nigeria

	Model 1: Religious denomination				Model 2: (1) + socio-economic controls			
	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
<i>Nigeria</i>								
Intercept	-1.335***	0.171	-0.503***	0.132	-8.698***	0.437	-5.228***	0.380
District-level variance	0.470***	0.109	0.277***	0.065	0.307***	0.072	0.232***	0.054
<i>District-level</i>								
Dominant religion								
Islam	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Sokoto								
Other								
Protestantism	0.150	0.236	-0.478**	0.181	0.150	0.197	-0.358*	0.171
Catholicism	0.326	0.431	-1.849***	0.331	0.320	0.357	-1.787***	0.310
Islamic political parties								
Shari'a								
Controls included ^a	No		No		Yes		Yes	
<i>Individual level</i>								
Religion								
Islamic	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Protestant	0.312***	0.007	-0.859***	0.008	0.128***	0.008	-0.678***	0.009
Catholic	0.006	0.009	-0.473***	0.009	-0.108***	0.009	-0.270***	0.010
Other Christian	0.404***	0.007	-0.312***	0.008	0.326***	0.007	-0.082***	0.008
Other	-0.469***	0.021	-0.346***	0.020	-0.513***	0.022	-0.527***	0.021

Table 3 continued

	Model 1: Religious denomination		Model 2: (1) + socio-economic controls	
	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
Trad.: age difference				
Trad.: age giving first birth				
Trad.: age at (first) marriage				
Trad.: polygynous household				
Controls included ^a	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Model 3: (2) + district-level religion variables		Model 4: (3) + household traditionalism variables	
	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
<i>Nigeria</i>				
Intercept	-8.377***	0.457	-8.605***	0.468
District-level variance	0.245***	0.057	0.256***	0.060
<i>District-level</i>				
Dominant religion				
Islam	0.371	0.410	0.350	0.377
Sokoto	Ref.		Ref.	
Other	-0.313	0.281	-0.240	0.259
Protestantism	-0.101	0.389	-1.641***	0.358
Catholicism			-0.069	0.398
			0.334	0.370
			Ref.	Ref.
			-0.291	-0.258
			-1.637***	0.352

Table 3 continued

	Model 3: (2) + district-level religion variables				Model 4: (3) + household traditionalism variables			
	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
Islamic political parties	0.525*	0.242	0.198	0.223	0.547*	0.248	0.190	0.219
Shari'a	-1.273**	0.472	-0.284	0.434	-1.146*	0.483	-0.337	0.426
Controls included ^a	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
<i>Individual level</i>								
Religion								
Islamic	Ref.		Ref.		Ref.		Ref.	
Protestant	0.137***	0.008	-0.676***	0.009	0.062***	0.008	-0.632***	0.009
Catholic	-0.110***	0.009	-0.278***	0.010	-0.156***	0.009	-0.240***	0.010
Other Christian	0.337***	0.007	-0.080***	0.008	0.280***	0.008	-0.044***	0.008
Other	-0.529***	0.022	-0.553***	0.021	-0.559***	0.022	-0.555***	0.021
Trad.: age difference					-0.010***	0.000	-0.007***	0.000
Trad.: age giving first birth					-0.006***	0.001	-0.002*	0.001
Trad.: age at (first) marriage					0.049***	0.001	-0.019***	0.001
Trad.: polygynous household					-0.275***	0.006	0.157***	0.005
Controls included ^a	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	

Source DHS Nigeria 2003

N = 7,339; Employed: n = 3,238

^a The coefficients of the control variables are given in "Appendix 2" section. Those coefficients refer to Model 4

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$ (two tailed)

explain all the differences found in Models 2 and 3. For the Indonesian data, including indicators of the level of traditionalism in a household hardly changes the coefficients of the denomination variables, which suggests that the level of traditionalism varies more within religious groups than among them. In Nigeria, the changes in the religion-denomination coefficients indicate that Muslim women are generally more traditional than women with other beliefs, and this leads to lower employment rates outside the home. Still, some other differences (e.g. the lower employment ratios of Catholic and non-Muslim/non-Christian women) cannot yet be explained (and need more research).

In sum, Muslim women are more often gainfully employed from the home than Christian women or women with other religions, but Muslim women are not less often found in paid employment overall, on the contrary. Islam as a religious denomination thus seems a bad explanation for women's employment chances, one which harbors a multitude of negative (through education and traditionalism) and positive (yet undefined mechanisms) effects on employment outside the home. In addition, it was found that the differences in traditionalism *within* these Muslim and Christian populations seem more important than the differences *between* them in explaining women's employment levels.

Province-Level Differences

In both countries, the dominant province-level religion is not a good predictor of women's employment. Regarding women's home employment, only a few differences exist after including individual level religious affiliation (Model 1). For instance, the strong differences found for Nigeria in Table 1 are not related to the dominant religion in a province, but to the fact that more women from a certain religion live there. For Indonesia, the difference between Muslim and Catholic provinces disappears after controlling for socio-economic factors (Model 2). The only robust difference is found when comparing the Hindu province—tourist-economy Bali (more on this in the conclusion)—with all of Indonesia's other provinces. While, in Indonesia, Hindu *women* are less active than Muslim women in paid home employment, the overall employment in—and outside of the home is much higher in the Hindu province than in the other provinces. No other differences between the main denominations are statistically significant for employment outside the home (Models 1 and 2).

Focusing on the dominance of different types of Islam seems more insightful than distinguishing between Islam and Christianity. For Nigeria, Sokoto-Muslim provinces and other Muslim provinces differ more from each other than other Muslim provinces from most non-Muslim provinces (Models 3 and 4). However, none of these differences are significant. In Indonesia, the only significant difference is found between the Modernist and the Traditionalist Muslim provinces. Where liberal/moderate Traditionalist Islam is dominant (Java and Lampung), women's paid employment outside of the home is higher. The ranking (Models 3 and 4) from low to high is: Modernist Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, Traditionalist Islam.

The results for the two variables measuring the institutionalization are also rather straightforward. *Shari'a* has little effect on in-home employment, indicating that the laws mostly affect women's movement in the public sphere. And indeed, a statistically significant and large negative effect is found on women's paid outhouse employment in Nigeria. In Indonesia, the effect is much smaller and not significant. The second variable that measured the institutionalization of Islam shows a rather surprising but similar result in both countries. Where Islamic parties are more powerful, women's employment is higher. This holds for both forms of paid employment in Indonesia and for work outside of the home in Nigeria. These results will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion.

Summarizing, whether Christianity or Islam is dominant in an area is not a good predictor of women's employment. One of the reasons for this, as shown above, is that Islam is not a monolithic religion. Differences within Islam seem larger than those within Christianity. Regarding societal norms, the results suggest that different Muslim ideologies mainly make a difference for employment outside the home. In addition, religion manifests its influence through the political institutionalization of Islam. A strong presence of political Islam does not, however, automatically lead to lower employment levels for women, whereas the presence of *Shari'a*-based law does.

Conclusions and Discussion

The goal of this paper has been to analyze the ways in which religion is related to women's employment, particularly *how* Islam shapes women's step into the paid non-agricultural labor market. The latter is seen as an important aspect of women's empowerment, because it generally increases women's bargaining power, their economic independence, and their social network. The prevalent view in society seems to be that Islam equals traditionalism and that this has a substantial negative impact on women's employment. In the academic literature, this view is reflected in the 'civilizationist' school that stresses the difference between Islamic culture/Islam/the Islamic world and 'the West' (e.g. Clark et al. 1991; Norris and Inglehart 2002; Yuchtman-Yaar and Alkalay 2007).

That simplistic view has here been tested here at the province and household levels using data on two important, religiously diverse, Muslim countries (Indonesia and Nigeria) and applying multilevel multinomial models. Data on about 35,000 women did show some differences between religions, but by no means can one conclude that Muslim regions or women consistently show the lowest paid non-agricultural employment in—or outside the home, refuting hypotheses H1 and h1. This supports Fish's (2011) claim that on many fronts Muslims are not distinctive from Christians at all, or at least not in the expected stereotypical direction. In addition, I found that while more traditional women are employed less often, this is not strictly related to their religious denomination (which supports hypotheses h2 and h4). Differences found in country-comparative studies (e.g. Clark et al. 1991; Lincove 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2002) thus do not translate easily to the meso and micro-levels. Differences between 'the West' and 'the Islamic region' might be

more related to the role of oil (Ross 2008), colonial history (Spierings 2007), or the economic world system (Moghadam 2003).

This obviously does not mean that religion plays no role whatsoever; this study offers a more refined view of Islam's impact. This influence is conceptualized in terms of messages (ideological views) that inform views regarding women's employment and consequently influence employment, but only through messengers (manifestations of those views). Applying this perspective showed Islam to have multiple influences because different messages and messengers exist simultaneously. The message/messenger approach also makes it clear that different forms of employment are affected differently, because different ideological views object to (or encourage) different aspects of women's employment. The distinction between employment in—and outside the home turned out to be highly relevant: Muslim women are for instance much more involved in work at home than Catholic women, and Islamic legislature mainly affects women's entrance to the public sphere (employment outside the home), not their role as income provider (through home-based labor). However, these differences do not neatly line up along the 'Islamic-Christian divide' (refuting h3).

With regard to different messages we can also conclude that 'Islam' is not a unitary worldview. In Indonesia, Traditionalist and Modernist Islamic provinces show significantly different levels of employment outside the home. This result to some extent supports hypotheses H2 and H3. That no clear difference was found between Sokoto and non-Sokoto Islam in Nigeria indicates that that cleavage is less important, and it draws attention to the issue of data availability. Studies on Western countries use similar and more refined distinctions between, for instance, moderate and more traditional Protestantisms (e.g. Ammons and Edgell 2007; Chadwick and Garrett 1995; Civettini and Glass 2008; Sherkat 2000), but this study is one of the first to distinguish between different strands of Islam within Muslim countries. The results strongly suggest that it is worthwhile to collect better data on the prevalence of different strands of Islam and people's actual beliefs about religion and women's position, particularly at the subnational and individual levels. If linked to other data, this will help understand how and which Islam influences women's position. The cases studied here have shown that Islam cannot be understood without an eye for its embeddedness in local traditions and ethnic cleavages.

Lastly, this study has shown that institutions are important for channeling ideological messages and influencing women's employment. *Shari'a*-based law institutionalizes a pro-seclusion message (hypothesis H4): in the northern Nigerian states with *Shari'a*-law, women's paid employment outside the home was clearly lower than in the other Nigerian states. For Indonesia, such a difference was not found, but there *Shari'a*-based law is implemented at the local, not the province, level. Analyses at that level might show results equivalent to those found for Nigeria. In addition, it should be considered that *Shari'a* is not monolithic either (see Nmehielle 2004). Moreover, a general fear of political Islam does not seem to be completely justified, because the presence of political parties with an Islamic signature had a positive effect on women's employment overall. It seems that Islamic political parties do not simply propagate very conservative ideas, they harbor other messages as well. In the case of Indonesia, Pepinsky (2009), for

example, observes these parties “empowering the poor, ... fighting for civil rights and gender equality... For many of these causes, PKS and other Islamic parties can be allies rather than competitors.” For Nigeria, there are also examples of ANPP leaders who mention the improvement of women’s lives as a distinguishing agenda of the ANPP (Muhammad 2009). More generally, in many countries political Islam is fueled by economic inequalities, arguing for egalitarianism in socio-economic policies (see Esposito and Voll 1996; Owen 2007) with a focus on the poor (see Jimoh 2009; Kotarumalos 2009; Sklar 2004: xxix–xxx).

This study has been one of the first to statistically disentangle the multiple influences of Islam at the province and household levels, and many questions remain. For instance, the focus on Islam here leaves aside the question about the relative importance of religion compared to economic factors. I have controlled for those, but no comparative claims are made or studied. Broader studies are also needed, as some of the results in this paper might be idiosyncrasies. Most importantly, the results found for Hindu-dominated areas are based on only one Indonesian province: Bali. Tourism is one of the most important service export product in Indonesia (CIA, Central Intelligence Agency 2009) and Bali accounts for about a quarter of all incoming tourists in Indonesia (BTB 2014; WDI 2014). Moreover, tourism is generally a major sector for women’s employment. For instance, declines in women’s (not men’s) employment in Egypt have been traced back to the Luxor massacre (1997) and internal violence or terrorist attacks (2004, 2005) in the country. These events harmed the tourist sector—and thus women’s employment—very strongly (Spierings 2013). In Bali, government policies aimed at making the province an example of modern tourism (Hitchcock et al. 1993) and the cultural sights (temples and dances) might have led to higher employment rates, not the Hinduism-inspired societal norms.

However, an indication that Hindu messages do have a particular impact can be derived from the individual level: Hindu women are somewhat more often employed outhouse than other religious groups of women, also after control for other factors.¹² This aligns with the general perception one gets from the literature on women’s position and religion. On the one hand, Hinduism is no exception in being a world religion in which the dominant doctrine includes different roles for men and women—for instance it promotes *pativrata*, which can be translated as ‘husband worship’—and conceptualizes women mostly as wives and mothers (e.g. Amin and Alam 2008; Clark et al. 1991; Dhruvarajan 1996). On the other hand and in a comparative perspective, Hinduism is generally found to be somewhat less tied to gender inequality than Islam (Amin and Alam 2008; Inglehart and Norris 2003). This might be due to either slightly more progressive messages on women’s empowerment or weaker adherence to similarly conservative messages. The literature does not provide much insight into why this difference exists and future studies might focus on the particular messages and messengers in Hinduism.

¹² In addition, Hindu women are less often housewives than non-Hindu women on Bali, and more often employed in agriculture (rice cultivation is important on the Island). The percentages are: Hindu/agriculture: 22 %; non-Hindu/agriculture: 5 %; Hindu/housewife: 29 %; non-Hindu/housewife: 41 % (n = 451).

Overall, a focus on messages and messengers sheds new light on the question of how Islam influences women's employment in Muslim countries. The results of this study can, however, also be applied to debates about the influence of religion in the field of sociology of religion or to questions about the influence of Islam on democratization (Huntington 1996; Fish 2002; Norris and Inglehart 2002, 2004). In this respect the two important questions related to understanding the influences of Islam are: (1) What is the ideology of the particular strand of Islam (or any other religion) of interest? and (2) how does that ideology take shape?

Appendix 1

See Table 4.

Table 4 Variable description

Variable	Description	Categories or range
Province-level variables		
Dominant religion	The dominant (>50 %) religion in the provinces or states	IND: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism NGA: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism
Dominant religion II	The dominant religion in the provinces, Islam differentiated	IND: Islam Traditionalist, Islam Modernist, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism NGA: Islam Sokoto, Islam not Sokoto, Protestantism, Catholicism
Shari'a	Provinces in which one or more districts implemented <i>shari'a</i> -based law	(0) No <i>shari'a</i> -based law, (1) <i>shari'a</i> -based law exist in this state or province
Political Islam	Support for Islamic political party	IND: percentage of votes on PKB, PPP, PAN in 5 % groups NGA: Governor from APP/ANPP (1) or not (0)
Unemployment	The proportion of men not having a job	IND: minimum 0.01; maximum 0.07 NGA: minimum 0.00; maximum 0.06
Economic development: assets	Economic development based on z-scores of having television, telephone, car, fridge, electricity, and running water	IND: minimum -1.25; maximum 2.09 NGA: minimum -1.59; maximum 2.28
Economic development: GDP/c	GDP per capita	IND: minimum 756; maximum 9,242 NGA: minimum 0.7; maximum 4.1
LMS: blue collar	The proportion of people involved in a blue collar job of all employed people	IND: minimum 0.06; maximum 0.30 NGA: minimum 0.07; maximum 0.41
LMS: white collar	The proportion of people involved in a white collar job of all employed people	IND: minimum 0.17; maximum 0.77 NGA: minimum 0.16; maximum 0.72

Table 4 continued

Variable	Description	Categories or range
Individual level variables		
Religion	Religious denomination (self-reported)	IND: 24,054 Muslim, 2,159 Protestant, 876 Catholic, 1,316 Hindu, <800 other NGA: 3,501 Muslim, 1,242 Protestant, 1,116 Catholic, 1,356 Other Christian, <800 other
Trad: age difference	Traditionalism measured in years the partner is older than the woman	IND: minimum -26; maximum 55; mean 5.0 NGA: minimum -13; maximum 57; mean 11.3
Trad: age first birth	Traditionalism measured as the age of the woman when she gave birth to her first born	IND: minimum 11; maximum 45; mean 20.2 NGA: minimum 11; maximum 39; mean 18.6
Trad: age first marriage	Traditionalism measured as the age of the woman when she first got married	IND: minimum 10; maximum 47; mean 18.7 NGA: minimum 9; maximum 46; mean 16.6
Trad: polygyny	Traditionalism measured by distinguishing household in which people have a polygynous relation from other households	(0) No, (1) yes
Education	Educational attainment: highest level	(1) No education, (2) primary education not completed, (3) primary education completed, (4) secondary education not completed, (5) secondary education completed, (6) at least some tertiary education
Partner	Marital status	(0) Has partner, (1) no partner (divorced or widow)
Children	Number and age of children	(1) None, (2) 1–2 children, including children under 6, (3) 1–2 children, only over 5, (4) 3–4 children, including under 6, (5) 3–4 children, only over 5, (6) 5 or more children, including under 6, (7) 5 or more children, only over 5
City	Whether the woman is living in a city	(0) Urban, (1) rural
Extended family	Traditionalism measured in by distinguishing between extended and nuclear households	(0) Nuclear, (1) extended
Age	Age	IND: minimum 15; maximum 49; mean 33.8 NGA: minimum 15; maximum 49; mean 28.1
Age (quadratic)	Age's quadratic term	Squared years

Appendix 2

See Table 5.

Table 5 Control variables' effects on women's non-farm employment in Indonesia and Nigeria belonging to Tables 2 and 3, Models 4

	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
<i>Indonesia</i>				
District-level control variables				
LMS: white collar	-0.123	0.390	0.576	0.580
<i>Individual level control variables</i>				
Education				
No education	Ref.		Ref.	
Primary education not completed	0.268***	0.002	0.067***	0.003
Primary education completed	0.338***	0.002	0.364***	0.002
Secondary education not completed	0.355***	0.002	0.286***	0.003
Secondary education completed	1.004***	0.002	0.344***	0.003
At least some tertiary education	2.114***	0.003	0.033***	0.004
Marital status (1 = no partner)	0.923***	0.002	1.136***	0.002
Presence of children				
None	Ref.		Ref.	
1–2 children, including age <6	-0.927***	0.002	-0.779***	0.003
3–4 children, including age <6	-1.138***	0.002	-0.813***	0.003
5 or more children, including <6	-1.112***	0.004	-0.809***	0.004
1–2 children, only over 5	-0.638***	0.002	-0.761***	0.002
3–4 children, only over 5	-0.670***	0.002	-0.842***	0.003
5 or more children, only over 5	-0.609***	0.004	-0.848***	0.005
Living in city (1 = rural)	-1.030***	0.001	-0.855***	0.001
Extended family (1 = yes)	0.117***	0.001	-0.011***	0.001
Age	0.150***	0.001	0.203***	0.001
Age ²	-0.002***	0.000	-0.002***	0.000
<i>Nigeria</i>				
District-level control variables				
LMS: white collar	2.184**	0.691	2.207***	0.610
<i>Individual level control variables</i>				
Education				
No education	Ref.		Ref.	
Primary education not completed	0.235***	0.009	-0.015	0.008
Primary education completed	0.716***	0.008	0.424***	0.006
Secondary education not completed	0.591***	0.008	0.105***	0.007
Secondary education completed	1.137***	0.008	0.209***	0.008

Table 5 continued

	Paid outside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.		Paid inside home versus housewife/unpaid/agr.	
	B-coeff.	SE	B-coeff.	SE
At least some tertiary education	1.525***	0.009	-0.433***	0.013
Marital status (1 = partnered)	-0.438***	0.012	-1.320***	0.013
Presence of children				
None	Ref.		Ref.	
1–2 children, including age < 6	-0.311***	0.010	-0.017	0.009
3–4 children, including age < 6	-0.178***	0.010	0.119***	0.009
5 or more children, including < 6	-0.120***	0.011	0.219***	0.010
1–2 children, only over 5	-0.048***	0.012	0.269***	0.011
3–4 children, only over 5	0.230***	0.013	0.360***	0.012
5 or more children, only over 5	0.369***	0.016	0.192***	0.017
Living in city (1 = yes)	0.513***	0.005	0.402***	0.005
Extended family (1 = yes)	0.183***	0.005	0.211***	0.004
Age	0.325***	0.002	0.207***	0.002
Age ²	-0.004***	0.000	-0.003***	0.000

Source DHS Indonesia 2003; Nigeria 2003

$N_I = 28,741$; Employed: $N_I = 8,017$

$N_N = 7,339$; Employed: $N_N = 3,238$

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$ (two tailed)

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