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Demographic Perspective on Women's Status and Religion: Multicultural Investigation

Dr Yaghoob Foroutan[1]

ABSTRACT

Giving the central focus to 'religious affiliation' which 'was once at the forefront of demographic research' (McQuillan 2004: 25), this paper examines the association between religion and women's market employment. The context, method and comparison groups of this study provide the opportunity to examine the long-standing debate as to whether religion *per se* or other determinants explain a relatively lower level of gender outcomes including a low rate of market employment for women in the Muslim world. The paper benefits the use of logistic regression analysis and the multicultural context of Australia containing substantially diverse ethnic and religious compositions throughout the world. This analysis also examines the effect of religion relative to other competing determinants on the integration of female immigrants measured by their status and success in the labor market.

[1] The author completed his doctoral degree in 2007 at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute (formerly, Demography & Sociology Program), The Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, Australia. The author is currently Assistant Professor at Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Mazandaran Province, Iran. He has been offered a position as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Population Studies Center, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. E-mail: y_foroutan@yahoo.com or y.foroutan@umz.ac.ir.

Introduction

The association between women's employment and religion lies in the fact that religion is generally considered to be associated with traditional views and values on gender roles in the household. Despite the importance of religion and a growing literature documenting its effects on demographic and economic behaviour (e.g. Lutz 1987; Lehrer 1995, 1996, 1999, 2004; Morgan et al 2002; Dharmalingam and Morgan 2004; McQuillan 2004, Foroutan 2007, 2008b), the influence of religion on women's employment has received very little attention (Lehrer 1995, 2004). This is also the case for Islam, particularly from a comparative perspective. Accordingly, giving the central focus to 'religious affiliation' which 'was once at the forefront of demographic research' (McQuillan 2004: 25), the present study is mainly an empirical investigation for the following key purposes. The study aims to explain Muslim and non-Muslim employment differentials and to examine the competing effect of religion on women's employment. This study benefits from the multiethnic and multicultural setting of Australia in which Muslims are largely immigrants from a wide range of countries throughout the world (see below). Accordingly, this multicultural setting and the methodological considerations (see below) enable this study to provide empirical evidence for the debate about the association between religion and gender characteristics in particular female labour force participation in Islamic setting discussed below.

Background

Generally speaking, issues involving women and women's place in Islam have been described as 'fascinating' and 'attractive' as well as 'complex' (Omar and Allen 1996; Esposito 1998). There is an extensive literature that documents women's status measured by characteristics such as fertility, education, maternal mortality, reproductive health and age at first marriage in Islamic

contexts is relatively low (for literature review, see Rashad 2000; Foroutan 2007, 2008b). Table 1 highlights the selected socio-demographic characteristics amongst a number of Muslim-majority countries. More specifically, it was documented that women in Muslim societies face obstacles for employment and occupations. For instance, women's lower human capital and restriction on their education in particular disciplines such as crafts make them unable to pursue certain occupations in the labour market. The seclusion system and the veiling of women in public, *purdah*, also affect female labour force participation in some Islamic nations: while forbidden sales and factory jobs interacting with unknown men in public and in predominantly male workplace, there are acceptable occupations for women as teachers in primary schools or girls' high schools and as nurses mainly serving female patients (e.g. Boserup 1970; Siraj 1984; Clark, Ramsbey and Adler 1991; Bloom and Brender 1993; Anker 1997; Moghadam 1999; Carr and Chen 2004). In many Muslim countries, such acceptable occupations for women are strongly portrayed in school textbooks and other educational programs (e.g. Azzam, Nasr and Lorfing 1984; Zurayk and Saadeh 1995). Women in many Islamic countries are also employed as family workers in unpaid agricultural occupations resulting in the underestimation of many working women in the censuses or other data sources (e.g. Omran and Roudi 1993; Anker and Anker 1995; Zurayk and Saadeh 1995; Fargues 2005)[1].

There is a wide range of explanations for Muslim women's status in terms of characteristics such as low labour force participation. On the one hand, such gender characteristics are explained as direct consequences and central features of religion (Gallagher and Searle 1983; Lutz 1987; Caldwell 1986; Clark, Ramsbey and Adler 1991; Obermereyer 1992; Anker 1998; Caldwell and Khuda 2000; Casterline el al 2001; Mishra 2004). The underlying notion here is an observed imbalance and inconsistency between a set of encouraged practices mainly dealing with women

in the Islamic context and the vital requirements of participating in outside work. This refers to conditions such as high illiteracy and low education of women and more importantly, an exceptionally high level of fertility that in turn, are crucial obstacles to women's employment participation (see Table 1).

On the other hand, the lower level of gender characteristics in Muslim societies is explained using determinants other than religion *per se*. This includes explanations referring to environmental circumstances and historical understanding (e.g. Ferdows 1983; Ghallab 1984; Ahmed 1992), the separation of religious teaching from local and social customs and traditions (e.g. Carens and Williams 1996; Weeks 1988; Esposito 1998), different interpretations and misunderstanding of true religion by the advocators and their religious authorities (e.g. Shariati 1971; Obermereyer 1992; Fadel 1997; Roy 2002; Saeed 2003) and lower social and economic development (e.g. Lucas 1980; Chamie 1981; Ahmad and Ruzicka 1988; Omran and Roudi 1993; Morgan et al 2002; Jones 2005). In sum, using such explanations, it is believed that 'Islam itself does not impose any particular restrictions on labour force activity by women' (Weeks 1988: 26).

Table 1 about here …….

Theoretical framework

Using human capital theory (e.g. Becker 1985; Evans and Kelley 1986; Borjas 1989; McAllister 1995; Wooden 1994; Anker 1998) and assimilation or integration theory (e.g. Kossudji 1989; Berry 1992; Chiswick 1993; Gilbertson 1995; Friedberg 2000), it is supposed that women's employment participation in this analysis is mainly explained by the contribution in human capital endowments, assimilation and settlement of migrant women in the destination country.

Accordingly, the study considers variables such as educational attainment, English competency and length of stay in the destination country (as facilitators) while simultaneously controlling for other relevant determinants such as age composition and family formation (as obstacles). In particular for Muslim women, it is also assumed that their employment participation can be significantly affected by views and values associated with gender roles in Islamic context as already reviewed.

Data and method

This study uses the special tabulations from the most recently available national database of Australia (that is, the 2001 Population and Housing Census). The tables are matrices of relevant variables cross-classified against each other. The matrix or cell data are converted to individual records in SPSS format. As this study concerns employment participation, the age range is limited to women in the main working ages (that is, 15-54 years[2]).

The study employs logistic regression as a standardisation procedure. It is worthwhile noting that the use of logistic regression analysis provides the opportunity for this study to examine the effect of each factor such as religious affiliation when simultaneously controlling for other determinants included in the analysis. This method is essential when the population under investigation is widely distributed in terms of compositional characteristics in order to avoiding misleading findings. This is particularly the case for Muslim women in this study (see below). The literature shows that determinants associated with migrants' market employment (such as English skill, length of stay in the destination country, educational attainment and birthplace) are noticeably correlated (e.g. Evans 1984; Wooden 1994; McAllister 1995; VandenHeuvel and Wooden 1996;

VandenHeuvel and Wooden 1999; Khoo and McDonald 2001; Foroutan 2008a). Accordingly, the use of logistic regression is also advantageous for the present analysis from this aspect.

It is acknowledged, however, that the present study has faced limitations related to the measurement of selectivity due to the migration process, the possibility of disadvantage through discrimination on the part of employers in the destination country[3] and the matter of religiosity[4]. It is also important to mention that the results of this study in relation to the comparisons between Muslim and non-Muslim women across the regions of origin can be affected by the fact that the compositions of these two groups of women in some regions of origin in terms of individual country of birth are different (see Appendix 1). This lies in the fact that compared with non-Muslim women, the population of Muslim women is very small. Accordingly, for categorizing regions of origin in the database, emphasis was placed on the distribution of Muslim women by individual country of birth in order to maximising the number of cells that could be obtained from the census tabulations.

The term, *employment participation*, as the key dependent variable of this analysis contains two major components: (1) *employment status* refers to a situation in which women are either 'employed' or 'not employed' (see also footnote 5); (2) *occupational levels*, classified into high and middle and low occupations, refers to major groupings of jobs in which women have been employed. The term, *Muslim*, refers to anyone whose religious affiliation was stated as Islam in the census and anyone else is defined as *non-Muslim*. Appendix 2 provides more details about the definition and classification of characteristics included in this analysis.

Demographic profile

This section underlines the demographic composition of Australian Muslim women included in this study. It also compares this group of women with non-Muslim women in terms of the major characteristics affecting market employment. According to the results of this study, it is an evident observation that Muslim women in Australia are vastly diverse in terms of ethnic origin. These women who are predominantly migrants (about 74 per cent) came from a wide range of countries throughout the world to the multicultural and multiethnic context of Australia. Lebanese and Turkish are, however, the two largest groups of Muslim women in Australia that make up about a quarter of Muslim women included in this analysis. The remaining major source countries of Australian Muslim women are Indonesia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Fiji, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Somalia, Cyprus and Egypt (see Table 2 and Appendix 1). Accordingly, this wide variety of ethnic composition provides an opportunity for this study to examine the previously-discussed debate in relation to the gender characteristics such as women's low employment participation in Muslim countries. This context, like a laboratory, enables us to separate the role of various socio-cultural backgrounds reflected in the regions of origin from that of religious affiliation in women's employment participation. This separation is possible through examining the effect of religion among Muslim women across the regions of origin. In this context, the separation can also be investigated by comparing the employment participation of Muslim and non-Muslim women from the same region of origin. Moreover, such a comparison in this analysis provides empirical evidence to examine prior studies asserting the fact that even in intra-country comparisons, gender characteristics such as women's employment level is relatively lower for Muslims than for other religious groups (e.g. Kirk 1965; Knodel et al. 1999; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Morgan et al. 2002; Dharmalingam and Morgan 2004; Mishra 2004, Foroutan forthcoming).

Table 2 about here …….

According to Table 3, it is also evident that the distribution of Muslim women in terms of the most important socio-demographic characteristics influencing employment participation varies markedly across the regions of origin. For instance, while nearly half of South Asian Muslim women are highly educated, the corresponding proportion for the two largest groups of Muslim women (that is, Lebanese and Turkish) is only 10 per cent or less. Another evident example relates to the significant differences amongst Muslim women in terms of English proficiency across the regions of origin: the proportions of highly proficient in English language demonstrate a more than two times difference between Muslim women from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific Islands and Developed Countries at the high end (more than 80 per cent), and Turkish, Eastern European, Lebanese and Central & North East Asian Muslim women at the low end (less than 40 per cent). Substantial differences amongst Muslim women across the regions of origin are also observed in other characteristics influencing employment participation such as age composition, duration of residence in Australia and family formation characteristics (see Table 3). As a result, these observations echo the fact that considering Muslim women in Australia only as a whole group without paying attention to ethnic differentials would be insufficient and could be misleading. Instead, the study of these women must be conducted either by controlling for the compositional characteristics or by country/region of birth.

In addition, as shown in Table 3, the differences between Muslim and non-Muslim women in terms of these characteristics vary considerably across the regions of origin. For example, while the proportion of non-Muslim women from Eastern Europe, North Africa & Middle East and South Asia living in the destination country for more than ten years is approximately twice that of

Muslim women from the same regions, this gap is substantially smaller between Muslim and non-Muslim women from Lebanon and Sub-Saharan Africa & the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. From a demographic perspective, it is also a very evident observation that a significantly greater proportion of Muslim women have young children relative to non-Muslim women, an observation which applies to almost all regions of origin (see Table 3). This echoes a significantly higher fertility level observed in Islamic context and, more specifically, the fact that Muslims have the highest fertility in Australia (Carmichael and McDonald 2003: 61).

Table 3 about here ……..

Description of employment characteristics

Before moving forward to look at the multivariate results, the discussion below highlights the preliminary observations of this study with regard to the employment participation of Muslim and non-Muslim women. As illustrated in Table 4, the proportions of employed for Muslim and non-Muslim women are approximately 31 and 63 per cent respectively. Table 4 also presents the distribution of Muslim and non-Muslim women in terms of occupational levels. The proportions of employed Muslim women working in the high occupations (professionals and managers) and the low occupations (manual and tradespersons) are about 30 and 20 percent respectively. The other half work in the middle occupations (clerical, sales and service workers). The proportions employed in the high, middle and low occupations for non-Muslim women are approximately 39, 49 and 12 per cent respectively (see Table 4).

Table 4 about here ……..

Major employment patterns and determinants: multivariate results

Using the multivariate results of the present analysis, this section underlines the most important observations in relation to the patterns and determinants of Muslim and non-Muslim women's employment participation. It is worthwhile restating that the following discussion highlights the employment differentials while simultaneously controlling for other characteristics included in the analysis such as human capital, age, family and migration characteristics.

First, the most evident pattern in this analysis is that Muslim women are half as likely as non-Muslim women to be employed (see Tables 5 and 6). This general pattern accords with a wide range of prior research reviewed before regarding women's status in Islamic settings where 'the male breadwinner model' versus 'the gender equity model' (McDonald 2000) is predominant and women's employment participation is relatively low. This pattern can also be partly associated with discrimination hypothesis. These two explanations are discussed broadly later in this paper. Second, the results of this study demonstrate that there is not a substantial connection between religion and occupational levels for employed women: Muslims are almost as likely as non-Muslims to work in the high occupations (professionals and managers, see Tables 5 and 6). Meanwhile, this occupational pattern does not vary significantly across the regions of origin (see Table 8). The differing patterns in relation to the effect of religion on employment status and occupational levels are considered for further discussion later in this paper.

Tables 5 and 6 about here ……

Third, a further examination in this study reveals another important aspect of the association between religion and employment status: the employment level of Muslim women varies

significantly by region of origin. This also means that the employment gap between Muslim and non-Muslim women from one region of origin differs considerably from that between Muslim and non-Muslim women from another region of origin. According to the results, the influence of religion on the employment status of women is displayed in a widely-ranged continuum: on the high end, North African & Middle Eastern and Lebanese non-Muslim women are more than twice as likely as Muslim women from the same region/country of origin to be employed. On the low end, there is a very small difference between Muslim and non-Muslim women from Sub-Saharan Africa & the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. The difference is also relatively small between Muslim and non-Muslim women from Eastern Europe. The influence of religion on the employment status of women from elsewhere is placed between these two ends (see Table 7). Accordingly, the pattern highlighted here provides empirical evidence to support the fact that the distinction between religion and diverse socio-cultural contexts represented here in the various regions of origin is an essential matter to be taken into account when the effect of Islamic affiliation is being investigated. In other words, it is essential to determine 'which Muslims and which Islam are we discussing?' (Roy 2002: 6). In particular, the observed pattern highlighted above emphasizes the necessity of such distinction in relation to explaining Muslim women's employment participation.

Table 7 about here ……..

Fourth, on the basis of the results of this study and from a comparative perspective, it is interesting to note that the effects of some other determinants of female labour force participation are substantially stronger than the effect of religion. This includes both human capital endowments (particularly, educational attainment) and family formation characteristics (see

Tables 5, 6 and 7). For instance, the results show that the employment status of women is more significantly affected by the presence of young children at home and the age of the youngest child at home: the younger the child, the smaller the likelihood of employment; meanwhile, women with no young children at home are the most likely to be employed. These observations accord with prior research identifying the age of the youngest child as a factor that has 'possibly the most important single influence on female participation' in the labour market (Brooks and Volker 1985: 74). According to the results of this analysis, although the magnitude of the effects of these family characteristics varies somewhat by religion (whether Muslim or non-Muslim), migration status (whether Australian-born or overseas-born) and across the regions of origin, the magnitude for all groups of women remains still significantly high (see Tables 5, 6 and 7). This also echoes the fact that the strong association between family formation characteristics and women's employment status persists beyond the influence of religious identity and ethnic diversity.

Fifth, the results of this analysis demonstrate two different patterns regarding the economic consequences of human capital for Muslim and non-Muslim women from a comparative perspective. Generally speaking, the employment participation of women, either Muslim or non-Muslim, is significantly associated with human capital endowments (educational attainment and English proficiency): the higher the contribution in human capital, the greater the likelihood of being employed and of working in the high occupations (see Table 5). This sits well with the preceding studies documenting education as 'a significant predictor of women's employment' (Read 2004: 55) and as a fundamental factor to 'explain part of occupational stratification' (Sorensen 1993: 4). But from a comparative perspective, while the employment participation of Muslim women is more significantly associated with English proficiency, educational attainment

has a relatively stronger effect on the employment participation of non-Muslim women (see Table 5). These two different patterns can be partly explained by the fact that Muslim women are mostly migrants from non-English-speaking countries from where the qualifications gained have been documented to be less valued and to have a lesser economic benefit in Australia (e.g. Evans and Kelley 1986; Iredale 1988; McAllister 1995; VandenHeuvel and Wooden 1996; Foroutan 2008a). Instead, English proficiency as a basic indication of cultural assimilation/adaptation (e.g. Desbarats 1986; McAllister 1986; Berry 1992; Baubock 1996) appears to be more important for Muslim women mainly because they are predominantly non-English-speaking-background and also because their cultural distance with the destination country seems to be more substantial. This cultural interpretation can be better understood by considering the fact that non-Muslim women born overseas are largely from countries like the United Kingdom and New Zealand with a relatively similar cultural atmosphere of the Australian cultural context. On the other hand, Muslim women are mostly immigrants from the previously-mentioned countries identified by a noticeable cultural distance relative to the host country (see Table 2 and Appendix 1).

Sixth, this study also benefits from the opportunity to examine the employment pattern of the Australian-born Muslim women considered here as the second generation[6]. According to the results of the present study, this second generation are half as likely as non-Muslim women born in Australia to be employed (see Table 7). Further investigation of this study also shows that the employment level of the second generation of Muslims is even more significantly affected by religion compared with some groups of migrant Muslim women including those from Eastern Europe and Developed Countries (see Table 7). However, Australian-born Muslim women are as equally as non-Muslim women born in Australia to work in the high occupation (professionals and managers, see Table 8). Using the disadvantage and discrimination hypothesis and the

cultural integration approach, the employment pattern of the second generation of Muslims highlighted above is also explained broadly below.

Further discussion and explanations

Disadvantage and discrimination hypothesis

Ascribed characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and race have been documented to account for the main sources of disadvantage and discrimination (e.g. Evans 1984, Wooden 1994; Carr and Chen 2004). Accordingly, migrant groups have been asserted to be 'particularly vulnerable' (Evans and Kelley 1991: 722) and to be 'either through individual or structural discrimination, significantly disadvantaged' (Kelley and McAllister 1984: 400). It has also been documented that the labour market activity of migrant women is more likely 'to be negatively affected by the combination of their statuses as female and foreign-born' (Sorenson 1993: 19). In addition, prejudice resulting in disadvantage and discrimination in the labour market has been observed to be usually 'against persons who are visibly different' (Anker 1998: 18) and to be experienced by 'those ethnic groups which remain culturally distinct' (Evans and Kelley 1986: 189). These may apply to Muslim women of this study who are predominantly immigrants, especially those who could be more easily distinguished due to their religious identity including certain dress codes, *hijab* (such as wearing a headscarf) or Islamic names (such as *Ayesha, Fatima, Rahima* etc.). The possibility of disadvantage and discrimination experienced by this group in Australia was documented in several studies (e.g. Collins 1988; Omar and Allen 1996; Adhikari 2001; Kabir and Evans 2002; Betts and Healy 2006). From this perspective, the results of this study showing the fact that Muslims are half as likely as non-Muslims to be employed, as discussed before, may be partly considered to be empirical evidence for the disadvantage and discrimination hypothesis.

The employment pattern of Australian-born Muslim women (that is, the second generation) discussed earlier may also provide an indication of disadvantage and discrimination: while controlling for other characteristics in the analysis, they are significantly less likely than their non-Muslim counterparts to be employed. According to the literature, if the second generation of migrants 'do worse than native-stock Australians, other things equal, there is a prima facie case for ethnic discrimination' (Evans and Kelley 1991: 725). Moreover, the lower employment level of the second generation of Muslims of this analysis relative to some groups of migrant Muslim women discussed before can be associated with the assumption that the former are more likely to display a religious identity (like certain dress codes or religious names). As a result, this may make them as a more plausible target of discrimination than Muslim female migrants from other places of origin (such as Eastern Europe) for which employment is less affected by religion.

However, the above explanation may not be necessarily the case. Meanwhile, it is acknowledged that all aspects of the complicated issue of discrimination could not be appropriately measured by census data. For instance, on the basis of census data, Kabir and Evans (2002) could not find any evidence of discrimination against Australian Muslims, whereas their qualitative research and interviews explored that 'religion was a cause of discrimination for Muslims' (Kabir and Evans 2002: 82). It is also realized that disadvantage and discrimination hypothesis can be more precisely examined when the focus is on 'unemployment' as a single category for employment status[5]. This lies in the fact that 'unemployment' excludes those persons who are not in labour force for any reason related to their own preference and values rather than to the practice of the labour market. The previously-discussed pattern by which there is almost no significant occupational difference between Muslim and non-Muslim employed women also casts doubt on

the possibility of disadvantage and discrimination. Alternatively, the following discussion provides a socio-cultural reading on the employment patterns of Muslim women.

Selectivity hypothesis and cultural integration

As discussed earlier, the results of this study highlight two different patterns in relation to the effect of religion on women's employment participation. This means that while Muslim women are less likely than non-Muslim women to be employed, there are very small differences between these two groups of women in terms of occupational levels: Muslims are almost as likely as non-Muslims to work in the high occupations (professionals and managers). This may be partly explained using 'the selectivity hypothesis': those Muslim women who have overcome the employment barriers, including household-related difficulties like childcare or the socio-cultural views and values predominant in the family and community limiting women's paid work outside the home, are then likely to be selective of those who obtain employment in the high occupational levels.

The patterns highlighted above are particularly the case for Lebanese and North African & Middle Eastern Muslim women. In fact, the credit for holding a significantly low employment level of Muslim women in this study is mainly associated with those born in the North Africa and Middle East region (that is, the heartland of the Islamic world). The region is the place where female labour force participation has been found to be exceptionally low by world standard (Omran and Roudi 1993; also, see Table 1) and patriarchy is often observed as a predominant part of cultural identity (Yasmeen 2004). This suggests that the significantly low employment level of Muslim migrant women from this region highlighted in the present analysis can be more appropriately understood by taking the following fact into account: although 'new information

and new opportunities produce pressure for change…' (Dharmalingam and Morgan 1996: 201), it should also be considered that 'migration of women does not necessarily initiate a change in their role and status' (Hugo 2000: 300). As a result, from the cultural integration perspective, the maintenance of patriarchal system and other types of traditional roles predominant in the origin country may remain important even after migration to a context with significantly different gender characteristics such as a substantially high rate of women's participation in market employment.

This cultural integration perspective also tends to provide a more plausible explanation for the employment pattern of Australian-born Muslim women (that is, the second generation). This suggests that despite the fact that Muslims in Australia are ethnically diverse as discussed earlier (also, see Table 2 and Appendix 1), Lebanese and Turkish Muslim immigrants have comprised the highest proportion of the Muslim population in Australia since 1971 (Bouma 1994; Cleland 2001). Accordingly, the second generation of Muslims in Australia are more likely to be the children of Lebanese and Turkish Muslim immigrants. It is also worthwhile restating that according to the results of this study, the employment level of these two largest groups of Muslim women is low (see Table 7). In particular, Lebanese have the lowest level of employment amongst Muslim women in Australia as only 14 per cent of them are employed (Foroutan 2007, forthcoming). Hence, despite living and being educated in Australia where female employment participation is substantially high (about 65 per cent; see Table 4), the second generation of Muslims have largely grown up in the families with low employment participation of their mothers and in the communities that have their own social norms and cultural values. This also contains norms and values associated with gender roles including those giving preference to women's responsibility in the home rather than to their work outside the home. As a result, the

second generation of Muslims are mainly those who tend to maintain their own sub-culture identified by characteristics such as low employment participation for women.

Table 8 about here ……..

Concluding remarks

This paper has focused on the association between religion and women's market employment. The present study has been taken place in the multicultural and multiethnic context of Australia which contains a substantial ethnic diversity of Muslims throughout the world. This diversity has partly enabled the present analysis to examine the long-standing debate as to whether religion *per se* or other determinants explain the gender characteristics such as high fertility and low employment level for Muslim women asserted in a large body of literature.

According to the multivariate results of this study, the following major patterns have been observed. The results have indicated that both family characteristics (particularly, the presence of young children at home and the age of the youngest child at home) and human capital endowments (especially, educational attainment) have greater implications for women's employment participation than religion. The results have also shown that Muslim women are half as likely as non-Muslim women to be employed. This general observation sits well with the extensive literature reviewed earlier documenting a relatively lower level of gender characteristics in the Islamic context where 'the male breadwinner model' versus 'the gender equity model' (McDonald 2000) is predominant and women's employment participation is low. From a different perspective, the lower employment level of Muslim women relative to their non-Muslim counterparts can be also explained partly as the consequence of discrimination. If this

were the case, those who 'remain culturally distinct' (Evans and Kelley 1986: 189) and 'are visibly different' (Anker 1998: 18) through displaying a religious identity such as certain dress codes, *hijab*, would be the major target of discrimination. However, an almost equal occupational opportunity as non-Muslim women and various employment levels of Muslim women across the regions of origin cast doubt on the possibility of discrimination.

Further investigation has also shown that the effect of religion on women's employment participation varies significantly across the regions of origin representing various socio-cultural contexts. This pattern provides empirical evidence to emphasize the necessity of distinction between Islamic affiliation and diverse socio-cultural settings in relation to explaining women's employment participation. It also supports the importance of determining the fact that 'which Muslims and which Islam are we discussing?' (Roy 2002: 6). According to the findings, the credit for holding a significantly low employment level of Muslim women in this analysis is mainly resulted from the situation of Muslim women from the North Africa and Middle East region (including Lebanon). The region is evidently identified by patriarchy as a predominant part of cultural identity resulting in an exceptionally low level of women's market employment (Omran and Roudi 1993; also see Table 1). Accordingly, based on the assumption that 'migration of women does not necessarily initiate a change in their role and status' (Hugo 2000: 300), the low employment level of the major groups of Muslim women in this study can be mainly explained in a socio-cultural frame: the maintenance of socio-cultural traits of the origin settings identified by gender characteristics such as traditional roles in the households and low level of paid work outside the home for women tends to remain essential after migration to a different context where women's participation in the market employment is substantially high. It has been investigated that compared with non-Muslim women born in Australia, the significantly lower

employment level of Australian-born Muslim women (that is, the second generation) can also be mainly associated with the fact that they have largely grown up in the families with low employment participation of their mothers and strongly committed to such a cultural maintenance. Future research, particularly qualitative studies, can provide further collaboration on the patterns and explanations highlighted in this quantitative and empirical analysis examining the association between religion and women's market employment participation.

Endnotes

[1] It should be noted that such statistical exclusion of female workers has also been documented to exist in some developed countries such as Sweden, the USA and Britain (Hakim 1996). For instance, she indicated that in Britain 'it is said that women's work is invisible in industrial society because women are family helpers, do home-based work, work in the informal economy, do voluntary work. All of this is true' (Hakim 1996: 203). Also, Riley (1998: 524) pointed out that 'women's work is not always, or even often, well-documented. … much of women's work goes unreported'.

[2] This is important to mention that the reason for this age range commencing from very young ages in the database of this study lies in the fact that the preliminary analysis revealed that a considerable proportion of working Muslim women are in very young ages. Accordingly, they have also been included in the database in order to find out an appropriate explanation for employment pattern of Muslim women.

[3] There are, however, some efforts in this study to investigate the possibility of disadvantage and discrimination (see the section of 'Disadvantage and discrimination hypothesis' Also, see footnote no. 5).

[4] This means how strongly Muslim migrants have kept their religious beliefs and practices in the destination country in comparison with what their religious beliefs and practices were in their home country. This point would be more related to those beliefs and practices which may affect their employment participation. For instance, if they used to use *hijab*, do they still do so? This issue is also related to their parents or husband and that how strongly they have kept their attitudes derived from their religious beliefs with regard to gender roles, in particular, women's work outside the home.

[5] As defined before in the paper, employment status in this analysis contains 'employed' and 'not employed'. It should be noted that in the database, 'not in labour force' and 'unemployed' are combined into a single category (that is, 'not employed'). This classification has been developed in order to maximize the number of cells that could be obtained from the census tabulations in the Super Table, which is particularly the case for very small-size populations such as female Muslim migrants in Australia (see Appendix 2 for more details of definition and classification).

[6] It is realized that some Australian-born Muslim women, identified here as the second generation, may have converted to Islam.

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Table 1 Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of selected Muslim-majority countries, 1980-2000

Country	% Muslim	Total Fertility Rate (TFR)		CPR [1]	Infant mortality per 1000 live birth		Adult illiteracy for ages 15 + 1998		FLFP [2] ages 25-54 Latest years
		1980-85	1995-2000	2000	1980-85	1995-2000	Males	Females	1990s
Afghanistan	99	6.90	6.90	14.4	183	167	na	na	na
Albania	70	3.40	2.43	na	45	28	9	24	78.8
Bangladesh	88.3	6.44	3.95	53.3	128	78	49	71	60.6
Egypt	90	5.06	3.51	58.4	115	49	35	58	24
Indonesia	87.2	4.06	2.60	63	90	50	9	20	58.5
Iran	99.5	6.80	2.53	72.2	78	41	18	33	12.5
Lebanon [3]	55.3	3.79	2.29	66.3	40	20	9	21	25.8
Malaysia [4]	63	4.24	3.26	64.1	28	12	9	18	50.2
Morocco	99.8	5.10	3.00	53.6	96	52	40	66	34.5
Pakistan	95	6.50	5.48	25.1	115	95	42	71	na
Qatar	95	5.45	3.70	na	34	16	20	17	46.5
Saudi Arabia	96.6	7.28	5.09	28.1	58	25	17	36	na
Somalia	99.9	7.25	7.25	8.2	143	133	na	na	na
Syria	86	7.38	3.82	50.2	59	27	13	42	19.5
Tunisia	99.5	4.90	2.32	67.9	71	28	21	42	27
Turkey	99.8	4.10	2.70	66.8	102	47	7	25	32.2
World	na	3.58	2.83	na	78	61	18	32	na

Source: International Labour Organisation (2001); Abbasi-Shavazi and Jones (2005); Hull (2005).

[1] Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (total) among married women in reproductive ages (projected).

[2] Female Labour Force Participation aged 25-54 (%).

[3, 4] Lebanon was included in this table because it accounts for the country of birth of the largest group of Muslim women in this study. Malaysia is also one of the major source country of Australian Muslim women (see Appendix 1).

Table 2 Percentage distribution of women aged 15-54 in Australia by migration status, region of origin and religion, 2001

Characteristics	Muslim women	Non-Muslim women	Total
Migration status			
Native-born	23.0	72.4	71.7
Overseas-born	74.2	23.4	24.2
Not stated	2.8	4.2	4.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	81,879	5,291,416	5,373,295
Country/region of origin (only migrants)			
Central & North East Asia	13.2	8.4	8.7
Developed Countries	2.2	51.1	48.8
Eastern Europe	9.7	6.9	7.0
Lebanon	19.5	1.2	2.0
North Africa & Middle East	9.7	1.4	1.7
South Asia	10.8	4.3	4.6
South East Asia	10.6	17.5	17.2
Sub-Saharan Africa, Caribbean, Pacific Islands	6.6	7.0	7.0
Turkey, Cyprus, Greece	17.8	2.2	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	60,333	1,234,577	1,294,910

Source: Computed from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Also, see the section of 'Data and method' in the text).
Notes: (1) This table excludes those women whose country of birth is 'not stated' or 'inadequately described'. (2) Appendix 1 presents individual country of birth for both Muslim and non-Muslim women born overseas by region of origin. (3) This table is obtained from a file, which is partly affected by the issue of confidentiality caused by a large number of cross tabulations and small numbers in the cells of Super Table.

Table 3 Socio-demographic characteristics of women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion and country/region of origin, 2001 (%) [continued on the next page]

Characteristics	Country or region of origin									
	Australia		Central & North East Asia		Developed Countries		Eastern Europe		Lebanon	
	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Educational attainment										
High education	13.1	23.7	29.6	37.1	28.5	29.4	15.3	30.3	7.2	13.7
Middle education	67.4	67.8	51.2	47.7	62.9	64.4	53.4	56.1	58.2	68.7
Low education	3.8	3.1	12.9	7.4	3.3	4.2	25.3	10.6	32.4	16.1
Still at school	15.7	5.4	6.3	7.8	5.3	2.0	6.0	3.0	2.2	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
English proficiency										
Very well	93.7	99.4	36.5	34.3	83.5	92.3	36.8	56.1	39.7	53.9
Well	4.2	0.5	34.4	39.4	11.5	5.3	36.6	31.4	31.2	33.0
Not well	2.1	0.2	29.1	26.3	5.0	2.4	26.6	12.5	29.1	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Duration of residence in Australia										
More than 10 years			26.0	42.0	63.2	77.8	31.9	67.2	79.8	83.1
10 years or less			74.0	58.0	36.8	22.2	68.1	32.8	20.2	16.9
Total			100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Young children at home										
No young children	27.1	45.6	21.0	38.3	37.2	49.6	26.2	43.4	17.3	29.0
0-2 years	20.1	12.4	21.6	10.7	17.5	9.9	13.8	7.7	24.9	14.3
3-7 years	16.9	13.1	21.6	14.6	17.8	12.7	19.7	11.7	25.3	19.3
8 year or more	35.9	28.9	35.8	36.4	27.5	27.8	40.2	37.2	32.5	37.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age groups										
15-24 years	64.9	25.8	27.7	23.4	31.4	11.0	19.3	12.7	15.4	8.9
25-34 years	24.4	26.7	30.6	21.6	34.4	20.9	26.8	18.8	30.7	24.8
35-44 years	7.2	25.8	27.1	32.7	21.8	32.5	32.7	30.8	32.5	37.0
45-54 years	3.5	21.7	14.6	22.3	12.4	35.6	21.2	37.7	21.4	29.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: See Table 2.

Notes: (1) In the relevant variables, this table excludes those women whose 'education', 'English proficiency' and 'duration of residence in Australia' are 'not stated' or 'inadequately described'. This table also keeps out those women whose 'country of birth' is 'not stated' or 'inadequately described'. (2) See Appendix 2 for the definition and classification of characteristics included in this table. (**Continued on the next page)**

Table 3 Socio-demographic characteristics of women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion and country/region of origin, 2001 (%) [continued from the last page]

Characteristics	Region of origin									
	North Africa & Middle East		South Asia		South East Asia		Sub-Saharan Africa & Caribbean, Pacific Is.		Turkey, Cyprus, Greece	
	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Educational attainment										
High education	24.5	33.1	46.5	48.0	33.8	32.8	23.8	34.8	10.5	14.7
Middle education	52.6	56.3	45.1	47.6	55.2	49.7	64.6	58.2	49.6	49.7
Low education	15.6	6.7	4.8	1.9	7.2	13.3	7.3	3.7	37.4	34.5
Still at school	7.3	3.9	3.6	2.5	3.8	4.2	4.3	3.3	2.5	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
English proficiency										
Very well	41.4	66.3	55.8	82.2	52.4	55.1	85.8	90.9	36.6	56.5
Well	36.3	24.6	33.5	14.1	37.3	25.6	12.1	7.8	29.1	26.8
Not well	22.3	9.1	10.7	3.7	10.3	19.3	2.1	1.3	34.3	16.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Duration of residence in Australia										
More than 10 years	34.6	69.1	28.0	53.6	36.4	61.2	54.4	62.5	78.6	95.6
10 years or less	65.4	30.9	72.0	46.4	63.6	38.8	45.6	37.5	21.4	4.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Young children at home										
No young children	21.7	33.7	21.4	33.3	45.8	39.8	29.8	38.7	25.5	51.5
0-2 years	27.6	12.3	23.8	12.7	15.9	12.5	16.6	13.0	15.6	5.8
3-7 years	21.0	16.1	24.5	17.5	16.1	15.8	18.8	16.1	23.7	9.1
8 year or more	29.7	37.9	30.3	36.5	22.2	31.9	34.8	32.2	35.2	33.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age groups										
15-24 years	26.1	16.1	20.7	14.7	25.7	21.3	24.4	18.2	10.5	3.9
25-34 years	34.2	19.9	37.8	25.5	33.0	25.9	29.1	27.2	33.2	11.6
35-44 years	25.2	29.9	29.7	33.5	25.4	29.3	28.8	31.4	32.6	29.0
45-54 years	14.5	34.1	11.8	26.3	15.9	23.5	17.7	23.2	23.7	55.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Continued from the last page: (3) Appendix 1 presents individual country of birth for both Muslim and non-Muslim women born overseas by region of origin. (4) Note 3 in Table 2 also applies to this table.

Table 4 Employment status and occupational levels of women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion, 2001 (%)

Employment indicators	Muslim women	Non-Muslim women	Total
Employment status			
Employed	30.7	63.2	62.7
Not employed	67.9	33.6	34.1
Not stated	1.5	3.2	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	81,879	5,291,416	5,373,295
Occupational levels			
High occupations	30.1	38.8	38.7
Middle occupations	49.2	48.7	48.7
Low occupations	20.7	12.5	12.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	24,405	3,304,585	3,328,990

Source: See Table 2.
Notes: (1) In 'occupational levels', the numbers include only employed women and the table keeps out those women whose occupation is 'not stated', 'unclassifiable' or 'inadequately described'. (2) See Appendix 2 for the definition and classification of characteristics included in this table. (3) Note 3 in Table 2 also applies to this table.

Table 5 Employment status and occupational levels of women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion and selected characteristics, 2001 (Odds ratios)

Characteristics	Employment status			Occupational levels		
	Muslim women	Non-Muslim women	Total	Muslim women	Non-Muslim women	Total
Age groups						
15-24 years	*	*	*	*	*	*
25-34 years	1.67	1.49	1.49			
35-44 years	1.77	1.45	1.45	2.09	2.46	2.45
45-54 years	1.25	1.06	1.06	2.34	2.65	2.65
Educational attainment						
Low education	*	*	*	*	*	*
Still at school	0.62	0.89	0.88	0.94	0.70	0.70
Middle education	1.91	2.79	2.77	1.27	1.80	1.78
High education	4.03	7.24	7.16	6.81	16.46	16.28
English proficiency						
Not well	*	*	*	*	*	*
Well	2.11	1.38	1.41	1.31	1.05	1.05
Very well	4.22	2.24	2.30	3.07	2.25	2.26
Duration of residence in Australia						
Born in Australia	*	*	*	*	*	*
More than 10 years	0.84	0.95	0.95	1.01	0.93	0.93
10 years or less	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.70	0.71	0.71
Young children at home						
0-2 years	*	*	*	*	*	*
3-7 years	2.08	2.13	2.13	0.80	0.93	0.92
8 years or more	3.88	4.22	4.22	0.84	0.93	0.93
No young children	5.40	6.32	6.31	0.96	1.14	1.14
Partner's annual income & Couple status						
Low income	*	*	*			
Middle income	2.40	2.01	2.02			
High income	2.51	1.93	1.94			
No partner	1.04	0.99	0.99			
Religious affiliation						
Muslim women			*			*
Non-Muslim women			2.11			1.19
Number of valid cases	70,000	4,801,156	4,871,156	22,425	3,179,096	3,201,521

Source: See Table 2. *: Reference group **Notes:** (1) In the models of 'employment status', 'employed' is coded as 1 (one), and 'not employed' is coded as 0 (zero). The numbers (odds ratios) show the likelihood of being 'employed' relative to the reference group in a given variable. (2) In models of 'occupational levels', 'working in high occupations' (professionals and managers) is coded as 1 (one) and 'working not in high occupations' is coded as 0 (zero). The numbers (odds ratios) show the likelihood of being employed in 'high occupations' relative to the reference group in a given variable. (3) The models for 'occupational levels' includes only employed women. Also, the classification of age group in these models includes 15-24 years (as reference group), 25-44 years and 45-54 years. (4) This table excludes those women whose education, English proficiency, partner's income, year of arrival in Australia, birthplace and employment status is 'not stated'. (5) See note 4 in Table 8 for the reason of excluding 'partner's income' in model 2. (6) See Appendix 2 for the classification and definition of characteristics included in this table. (7) Note 3 in Table 2 also applies to this table.

Table 6 Employment status and occupational levels of women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion and selected characteristics, 2001 (Odds ratios)

Characteristics	Employment status	Occupational levels
Age groups		
15-24 years	*	*
25-34 years	1.49	
35-44 years	1.49	2.45
45-54 years	1.13	2.67
Educational attainment		
Low education	*	*
Still at school	0.85	0.68
Middle education	2.67	1.76
High education	6.70	16.08
English proficiency		
Not well	*	*
Well	1.48	1.10
Very well	2.57	2.30
Young children at home		
0-2 years	*	*
3-7 years	2.13	0.93
8 years or more	4.24	0.94
No young children	6.18	1.14
Partner's income &Couple status		
Low income	*	
Middle income	2.01	
High income	1.92	
No partner	0.98	
Country/region of birth		
Australia	*	*
Lebanon	0.43	1.14
North Africa & Middle East	0.53	0.86
South Asia	0.65	0.56
South East Asia	0.73	0.64
Central & North East Asia	0.62	1.03
Developed Countries	0.85	0.96
Turkey, Cyprus, Greece	0.96	1.07
Eastern Europe	0.85	0.68
Sub-Saharan Africa, Caribbean, Pacific Islands	0.82	0.88
Religious affiliation		
Muslim women	*	*
Non-Muslim women	2.00	1.19
Number of valid cases	4,914,714	3,224,492

Source: See Table 2. *: Reference group

Notes: (1) See Table 5 for technical description of odds ratios of this table. (2) The reason for running the models included in this table is the fact that as two variables (region of origin and duration of residence in Australia) share a same subgroup (that is, Australian-born), the effect of each of these two variables could only be examined in the model in which the other is excluded. (3) All other notes in Table 5 also apply to this table.

Table 7 Employment status of women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion, country/region of origin and selected characteristics, 2001 (odds ratios)

Characteristics	Country or region of origin									
	Australia	Central & North East Asia	Developed Countries	Eastern Europe	Lebanon	North Africa & Middle East	South Asia	South East Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa & Caribbean, Pacific Is.	Turkey, Cyprus, Greece
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Age groups										
15-24 years	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
25-34 years	1.40	2.88	1.58	1.85	0.89	2.12	2.51	2.50	1.81	1.85
35-44 years	1.36	3.36	1.49	1.90	0.75	1.88	3.02	2.25	1.86	1.52
45-54 years	1.01	2.59	1.09	1.21	0.52	1.36	2.29	1.67	1.48	1.05
Educational attainment										
Low education	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Still at school	1.15	0.61	0.65	0.51	0.63	0.49	0.52	0.59	0.62	0.51
Middle education	3.66	1.45	2.16	1.42	1.55	1.51	1.67	1.56	2.19	1.61
High education	10.54	2.68	4.58	2.50	5.17	3.09	3.05	3.12	4.71	4.11
English proficiency										
Not well	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Well	1.36	1.51	1.76	2.09	2.96	3.02	2.21	1.92	1.64	1.71
Very well	1.94	2.51	3.91	2.99	6.71	6.39	4.08	2.52	2.68	2.86
Partner's income, couple status										
Low income	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Middle income	1.94	1.85	2.04	3.22	2.14	2.36	1.42	2.32	1.87	2.69
High income	1.92	1.66	1.85	2.80	2.67	2.71	1.33	1.91	1.71	2.37
No partner	0.96	0.84	1.13	1.22	1.19	1.49	1.04	0.91	1.03	1.03
Young children at home										
0-2 years	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3-7 years	2.17	1.69	2.05	2.15	1.70	2.17	1.98	1.78	2.23	2.03
8 years or more	4.33	3.06	4.28	3.91	3.20	3.43	3.44	2.97	4.01	4.14
No children	6.83	3.59	5.71	4.65	4.68	4.86	3.96	4.01	5.67	4.52
Duration of residence in Australia										
10 years or less		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
More than 10 years		1.95	1.44	1.48	1.75	1.74	1.91	2.25	1.69	1.63
Religious affiliation										
Muslim women	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Muslim women	2.01	2.10	1.71	1.45	2.40	2.45	2.01	2.11	1.32	1.81
Number of valid cases	3,693,227	101,529	576,448	81,945	22,644	19,997	55,551	200,625	81,542	33,021

Source: See Table2. *: Reference group

Notes: (1) See Note 1 in Table 5 for technical description of odds ratios of this table. (2) This table excludes those women whose education, English proficiency, partner's income, year of arrival in Australia, birthplace and employment status is 'not stated'. (3) See Appendix 2 for the classification and definition of characteristics included in this table. (4) Appendix 1 presents individual country of birth for both Muslim and non-Muslim women born overseas by region of origin. (5) Note 3 in Table 2 also applies to this table.

Table 8 Occupational levels of employed women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion, country/region of origin and selected characteristics, 2001 (odds ratios)

Characteristics	Country or region of origin									
	Australia	Central & North East Asia	Developed Countries	Eastern Europe	Lebanon	North Africa & Middle East	South Asia	South East Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa & Caribbean, Pacific Is.	Turkey, Cyprus, Greece
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Age groups										
15-24 years	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
25-44 years	2.51	1.88	2.45	1.92	2.11	1.91	1.46	1.49	2.42	2.40
45-54 years	2.79	2.01	2.56	1.95	1.89	1.81	1.26	1.44	2.47	2.68
Educational attainment										
Low education	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Still at school	0.76	0.57	1.18	1.41	0.81	0.65	0.45	0.85	0.94	2.46
Middle education	2.09	0.90	1.71	2.01	1.14	1.61	1.05	1.20	2.60	1.26
High education	21.04	3.63	14.23	12.70	6.06	8.58	5.93	6.46	20.58	9.77
English proficiency										
Not well	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Well	0.84	1.64	1.14	2.57	0.95	1.83	1.56	1.21	0.91	1.48
Very well	1.21	3.17	2.73	6.67	1.28	3.94	3.33	2.28	2.28	2.33
Young children at home										
0-2 years	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
3-7 years	0.95	0.91	0.89	0.83	0.96	0.61	0.74	0.80	0.91	0.80
8 years or more	0.95	0.92	0.88	0.87	1.09	0.61	0.71	0.87	0.91	0.91
No young children	1.17	0.96	1.05	0.97	1.06	0.69	0.95	1.03	1.07	0.99
Duration of residence in Australia										
10 years or less		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
More than 10 years		1.29	1.06	1.15	1.21	1.42	1.64	1.91	1.15	0.73
Religious affiliation										
Muslim women	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Muslim women	1.09	1.42	1.42	1.51	0.91	0.92	1.16	1.14	1.23	1.18
Number of valid cases	2,493,607	46,734	388,281	47,655	6,206	8,652	33,666	105,677	52,544	15,937

Source: See Table 2. *: Reference group

Notes: (1) See Note 2 in Table 5 for technical description of odds ratios of this table. (2) This table excludes those women whose education, English proficiency, partner's income, year of arrival in Australia, birthplace, employment and occupation is 'not stated', 'unclassifiable' or 'inadequately described'. (3) See Appendix 2 for the classification and definition of characteristics included in this table. (4) In order to maximize the number of cells that could be obtained from many cross-tabulations for multivariate analyses (particularly, due to the small number of employed Muslim women), 'partner's income & couple status' as a relatively less important variable was excluded in the analysis of 'occupational levels'. (5) Note 3 in Table 2 also applies to this table.

Appendix 1 Percentage distribution of overseas-born women aged 15-54 in Australia by religion and country of birth in each region of origin, 2001 (%)

Country of birth	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Country of birth	Muslim	Non-Muslim	Country of birth	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Eastern Europe	100.0	100.0	**Sub-Saharan,**			**Turkey, Cyprus, Greece**	100.0	100.0
Albania	4.2	0.2	**Caribbean, Pac. Is.**	100.0	100.0	Cyprus	11.5	16.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	60.6	5.8	Caribbean	0.3	1.4	Greece	1.2	76.6
Bulgaria	2.0	0.8	Central&WestAfrica (nfd)	0.3	0.1	Turkey	87.3	7.1
Croatia	1.6	15.5	Djibouti	0.4	0.01	**Central &North**		
Eastern Europe	1.3	37.1	Ghana	1.3	0.8	**East Asia**	100.0	100.0
FYR. of Macedonia	16.8	15.9	Kenya	2.6	2.8	Afghanistan	40.2	0.2
Romania	0.4	4.9	Mauritius	2.2	7.0	Azerbaijan	0.1	0.1
S.Eastern Europe (nfd)	1.2	1.9	Melanesia	0.4	14.1	Central Asia (nfd)	0.4	0.01
Yugoslavia F. Republic	11.8	17.8	Mozambique	0.4	0.2	Chinese Asia	3.3	90.1
North Africa &Middle East	100.0	100.0	Nigeria	0.9	0.6	Iran	28.3	4.0
Algeria	1.6	0.9	Polynesia (Fiji)	65.6	32.0	Iraq	27.4	5.5
Bahrain	0.4	1.4	Senegal	0.4	0.01	Kyrgyz Republic	0.1	0.01
Egypt	16.2	44.7	Sierra Leone	1.1	0.1	Uzbekistan	0.2	0.1
Eritrea	7.2	1.4	South Africa	19.6	32.0	**South East Asia**	100.0	100.0
Ethiopia	6.5	5.7	S. &East Africa (nfd)	0.4	0.4	Brunei Darussalam	1.3	0.4
Gaza Strip &West Bank	3.0	1.7	Tanzania	1.4	0.6	Burma (Myanmar)	2.0	1.6
Israel	0.4	12.2	Uganda	0.6	0.5	Cambodia	0.3	4.6
Jordan	6.1	4.5	Zambia	0.5	1.6	East Timor	0.2	1.7
Kuwait	9.3	2.2	Zimbabwe	1.7	5.6	Indonesia	54.7	7.7
Libya	1.4	2.0	**Developed Countries**	100.0	100.0	Malaysia	20.8	15.3
Morocco	2.2	1.2	Central America	1.4	0.8	Philippines	1.9	25.6
Oman	0.3	0.2	Ireland	1.7	2.3	Singapore	14.8	6.3
Qatar	0.3	0.3	Japan and the Koreas	4.4	4.6	Thailand	2.4	5.9
Saudi Arabia	2.8	1.2	New Zealand	17.6	20.5	Viet Nam	1.5	31.0
Somalia	22.1	0.3	Northern America	8.9	4.7	**South Asia**	100.0	100.0
Sudan	2.4	7.6	Northern Europe	1.7	1.5	Bangladesh	37.7	1.1
Syria	14.5	10.2	South America	6.2	3.9	India	11.8	59.4
Tunisia	0.4	0.3	Southern Europe	6.9	8.6	Maldives	1.4	0.01
United Arab Emirates	2.2	1.3	United Kingdom	32.9	44.2	Pakistan	42.4	1.8
Yemen	0.5	0.6	Western Europe	18.4	9.0	Sri Lanka	6.7	37.7

Source: See Table 2.

Note: This table excludes those countries of birth in which the population of Muslim women is less than 10. This includes Kazakhstan, Comoros, Nepal, Seychelles, Southern Asia (nfd), Laos, Maritime South East Asia (nfd), Middle East (nfd), Slovenia, Angola, Botswana, Guinea, Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, Micronesia, Rwanda and Togo.

Appendix 2 Definition and classification of socio-demographic characteristics included in this study [1]

Characteristics	Classification	Definition & categories included
Religious affiliation	Muslim	Anyone whose religious affiliation was stated as Islam in the census.
	Non-Muslim	Anyone else who is not a Muslim as defined above.
Employment status	Employed	Employee, employer, own account worker, and contributing family worker.
	Not employed	Unemployed looking for full-time/ part-time work, not in labour force.
Occupational levels	High occupations	Professionals, and Associate Professionals, Managers and Administrators.
	Middle occupations	Advanced clerical and service workers, intermediate clerical, sales and service workers, and elementary clerical, sales and service workers.
	Low occupations	Labourers and related workers tradespersons and related workers, intermediate production and transport workers.
Migration status	Native-born	Anyone whose country of birth was stated as Australia in the census (that is, Australian-born).
	Overseas-born	Anyone whose birthplace was a country other that Australia in the census.
Level of education	High education	Postgraduate degree, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate, Bachelor Degree, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level.
	Middle education	Year 9-12 or equivalent, Certificate level.
	Low education	Did not go to school, Year 8 or below.
	Still at school	Still at school
English proficiency	Very well	Only speak English, Speak English very well.
	Well	Speak English well.
	Not well	Speak English not well.
Couple status	Living with partner (Partnered)	Here, living with a partner (partnered) includes husband, wife in a registered marriage,
	Not living with partner (Not partnered)	and partner in a de-facto marriage (opposite sex).
Partner's annual income [2]	High income	$ 36,400 or more
	Middle income	$ 20,800 - $ 36,399
	Low income	Less than $ 20,800

[1], [2] It should be noted that the classification of variables in this table, has been developed in the database based on the situation of Muslim women due to their very small population size and in order to maximize the number of cells that could be obtained in the Super Table. The classification for 'partner's income' is also appropriate for Muslim women because about half of them place in the 'low income' category as defined here (Foroutan 2007).