Islam & Feminism Today:

A Study on the Effect of Religion on Women's Welfare & Political Opinions in the Arab Republic of Egypt

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Abstract

After 9/11, many Americans developed a fear of the Muslim community, leading to misinterpretation and misinformation about the religion, including the idea that women are oppressed or less than men. This research examines how religion in Egypt impacts women's welfare and political opinions by measuring several outcomes such as healthcare, employment, education level, and trust in government among Muslim men and women, and Christian men and

women. The study determines if Muslim women are oppressed at a similar level as Christian women. This study uses a difference-in-differences design with fixed effects in order to better understand if the gap between Muslim women and Muslim men is greater or less than the gap between Christian men and Christian women as Islamic law applies to each group at various degrees. I find the gap between Muslim men and women is similar than that observed between Christian men and women for most outcomes. There is an exception for employment in which women and Muslims are less likely to be employed compared to men and Christians. These findings indicate that Muslim women do not lag behind to Muslim men compared to Christian women and Christian men. The goal of this paper is to add to existing Islamic-feminist literature.

Introduction

Islamophobia in the United States has been on the rise since the tragic events of 9/11. More and more Americans fear the general Muslim community due to misinformation and misrepresentation in the media. In 2019, about 56% of Americans believed that Muslims were subjected to "a lot" of discrimination, compared to 24% of Americans believing the same about Jews, and 18% about Christians (Masci, 2019). Discrimination against Muslims in the U.S. is just one act of Islamophobia. Misinformation about Sharia law and the purpose of jihad is often twisted to fit the Islamophobic agenda. Another survey from 2016 indicated that about half of Americans believe that Islamic beliefs are more likely to induce violence in the nation; Besheer Mohamed, a senior researcher at the Pew Research Center, presumes that Americans who have a basic understanding of the teachings of Islam tend to have more positive attitudes towards the Muslim community (Machulak, 2016). Hopefully, this research can add to existing literature of

discrediting misconceptions about Islam by examining gender inequalities in the Arab Republic of Egypt, a nation whose population is majority Muslim.

What is the effect of religion on women's welfare and political opinions in Egypt? This study examines the extent of Islam's impact on the lives of Muslims and Christians in Egypt.

Those in the Western world often believe that Islam encourages sex inequality and holds men at a higher status than women. However, it is believed that Allah (S.W.T)[1] does not discriminate against one's sex, as the Holy Quran states that "the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you." (49:13), implying that Allah (S.W.T) is more interested in one's pious actions than his or her sex. The Quran states that "I [Allah] do not allow the labour of any worker from among you, male or female, to go to waste. You are similar to one another", indicating the sentiment that Allah (S.W.T) is holding both sexes at an equal status (3:195).

A potential source of bias that can prevent scholars from estimating the causal effect of Islam on women's welfare and political opinion is omitted variable bias. It can be difficult to compare outcomes between Muslim and non-Muslim countries, as there are numerous confounders that can affect the outcomes, such as GDP, type of government, standard of living, and more. To limit omitted variable bias, in this study I perform a within-country analysis and compare Muslim to Christian women in Egypt. To further account for differences in socio-economic status between Muslims and Christians in Egypt, I compare how the gap in outcomes between Muslim and Christian women compares to that observed between Muslim and Christian men.

Thus, the main treatment of interest in this study is the interaction between sex and religion of the respondents. The outcome variables of interest include access to healthcare,

[1]Abbreviation for "Glory to Him, the Exalted" in classical Arabic

education, employment status, and political attitude and opinions on a broad set of issues. I use data from the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and Afrobarometer. The DHS provides data on outcome variables with relation to access to healthcare, such as whether the respondent has been hospitalized or has received any injections. Afrobarometer provides data on education level, employment status, and opinions about the government and women's rights in Egypt.

The two essential sources of variation in this study are the sex and religion of the respondents. The unit of analysis is the individual level for the data from the DHS, and the individual wave level for the data from the Afrobarometer.

My empirical analysis relies on a difference-in-differences regression. The first difference is between Muslim and Christian women, and the second difference is between Christian and Muslim men. This last difference is meant to eliminate other confounding differences between Muslims and Christians in Egypt. With this approach, we can estimate the causal effect of the potential exposure of Islam on Muslim women's welfare and opinions.

I find that there is no significant difference between Muslim and Christian women beyond those observed between Muslim and Christian men. This is the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a larger significant gap in each of the outcome variables between men and women among Muslims compared to Christian men and Christian women. Employment status is the exception in regard to the null hypothesis, as previously stated where Christians and men are more likely to be employed than Muslims and women.

This study is different from other studies that have been conducted regarding sex inequality in Egypt because this study looks at not only Muslim women, but also Christian women as a control group. Comparing not just genders, but also religions will provide a better understanding of the extent of Islam's impact on the lives of Egyptian women.

Literature Review

The academic discussion around Islam and feminism gained attention around the 1980's, although there has been debate about the role of women in Islamic societies before then. With the emergence of feminist discourse, more research and literature have been written about Muslim women and their rights within the realm of the Quran and hadiths (Ahmed, 2021). It can be quite tedious to study feminism in Islam since many Muslim scholars rely on the words written of the Quran and hundreds of hadiths, practices and sayings of Prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H).[2] Studying and interpreting these archaic texts in relation to Islamic feminism can lead to partisanship on the topic at hand because some Muslim scholars follow the Quran verbatim, while others see open interpretation in the text. In addition to text analysis, scholars have also conducted quantitative studies that measure how women are affected by the teachings of Islam, similar to this study.

Bursztyn, Gonzalez, and Yanagizawa-Drott (2018) conducted a study in which they measured both the private and public male support of women labor force participation (FLFP) in Saudi Arabia. The primary group of interest in this survey study was randomly selected young married men living in Saudi Arabia. They participated in two rounds of surveys and found that 63% of session participants were pro-FLFP, while 72% of participants underestimated the impact of FLFP. The short-term results from the study were consistent with their hypothesis in that Saudi men will base their opinions on the FLFP on other Saudi men in their neighborhoods. The long-term results indicated an increase in female labor participation within the allotted time frame of three to five months; the percentage of wives who applied to jobs within those months increased from 5.8% to 16.2%. Understanding this particular study led me to employ the outcome variable related to political opinions among Egyptians. This study measured the opinion

[2] Abbreviation for "Peace be upon him" in classical Arabic

of men of whether women should be allowed to work outside the home, while in my study, I will be measuring the opinions of both men and women regarding whether women should have equal employment opportunities in Egypt.

Michelitch and Weghorst (2017) directed a study in which they address the question of what factors can lead to higher gender inequality. The factors in question are following Islam, contextual factors, such as the political climate, economic conditions, and social views, or a combination of both. This study is comparable to my own — Michelitch and Weghorst (2017) compare Muslims to Christians to see if the gaps between men and women are similar or different. It can be said that various world religions often subjugate women to men, not just Islam and Christianity. With my study, I demonstrate that Muslim women are not oppressed to a higher degree than Christian women. One difference between both studies is that my study will be focusing on a single state, while the former study focuses on results from the sub-Saharan African regions. As previously mentioned, there are numerous confounders I would need to take account if I chose to do a cross-sectional study; therefore, I chose to focus on one nation. Mitchelitch and Weghorst (2017) were able to take account political, economic, and social factors.

Mitchelitch and Weghorst's (2017) results found that in terms of women's rights and women leadership, Muslim respondents were slightly more conservative than Christian respondents in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Benin. They also found that there was no gap in Ghana or Mozambique in terms of approval of women political leadership. They also found that the effect is not fixed across nations or within nations, even after controlling possible confounders. This finding corresponds to the factor that both religion and political, economic, and social context impacts the views on women's rights and women leadership.

Instead of measuring only the approval of women's rights and women leadership, I measure other political opinions as outcome variables such as trust in government, trust in courts, and whether women should have equal rights or should be subject to traditional laws. Additionally, instead of regarding sex and religion of the respondent separately as the independent variables, I study the interaction between the two variables as my key independent variable. By doing this, I can compare four different groups between Muslims and Christians, and men and women.

Gipson and Hindin (2008) study decision-making among couples in rural Bangladesh about terminating a pregnancy. With Bangladesh being a Muslim majority nation, Islamic beliefs and teachings are heavily enforced within the community. Additionally, terminating a pregnancy in this study is considered a decision between both men and women, not just the latter. Terminating a pregnancy in Islam is forbidden unless the pregnancy puts the mother's health at risk. The results from the study found that 11% of pregnancies in the Jessore district of southwestern Bangladesh were terminated. 6% of the terminated pregnancies were due to the husband not wanting more children, while 7% was due to the wife not wanting more children. 29% of the terminated pregnancies were a result of neither the husband nor wife wanting more children.

This study is particularly interesting because many Muslims frown upon abortions unless it is due to a medical concern. Although Muslims couples were interviewed, the study did not examine the extent Islam affects the decision; however, I want to highlight this specific study because in my own study I examine the extent to which religion affects women's access to healthcare, as it is a common practice for abusive husbands to deny their wives the ability to seek medical attention, especially if the husband is attacking and assaulting his wife. This is often done for the husband to assert his dominance over his wife.

Theoretical Argument and Hypotheses

The core argument in this thesis is the extent to which Islam limit Muslim women's welfare and how it affects political opinions in Egypt compared to Christian women.

Contrary to popular belief, Islam actually protects women in several ways. Before marriage, women are allowed to draw up a contract for their future husbands to read and sign. This contract can include anything from how much her dowry will be to how their children will be disciplined. Women also are not obligated to spend their earnings on their husbands or children. They can keep all of their income that they earned. Islam also permits women to get a divorce if their husbands are not meeting their basic needs or sexually pleasing them. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) even said that mothers hold a higher status than fathers in his eyes because of their nurturing nature.

There are certain practices that are common in Middle Eastern nations, including Egypt, that can severely hurt women and their status, one being female circumcision (FGM). Female circumcision is nowhere mentioned in the Quran or in any valid hadiths, yet it only became banned in 2008 in Egypt. Although the said purpose of FGM is to promote chastity in young girls, it is more so for men to be sexually pleasured from their virgin wives.

The second practice to speak about is the infamous "virginity test". These tests are used to see if young women are virgins before they get married. The way these tests operate is that a doctor determines if a girl's hymen is "broken." Anyone who understands the female anatomy knows that the hymen cannot be "broken" from having sexual intercourse. It simply tears with external force that can come from biking or riding a horse. Therefore, these tests can never be

accurate enough to determine if a woman is a virgin or not. There is no mention of these tests in the Quran or hadiths.

The null hypothesis for this study is that the gap between Muslim women and Muslim men is not statistically significantly larger than then gap between Christian women and Christian men. As said before, women lag behind in most religions, so the intention of this study is to demonstrate that Muslim women are not at much of a disadvantage compared to Christian women. The alternative hypothesis is that the gap between Muslim women and Muslim men is statistically significantly larger than the gap between Christian women and Christian men. If the null hypothesis is true, then this study can add to the argument that Islam does not hold the sole responsibility to why women lag behind in Egypt. If the alternative hypothesis is true, then it can be implied that Islam does play a role as to why women lack behind in the nation.

Other alternative explanations for the outcome of interest can be a number of factors. One factor that can explain education level is whether one could afford to attend college or university. For example, one could have graduated from high school, but did not have the means to pay for a higher degree and decided to work instead. This factor is not gender-related as much as it is economic-status related.

Another factor that can affect the outcome of political opinion is consumption of the news and media. If someone consumes more media and news than the average Egyptian, he or she is more likely to have a stronger opinion towards his or her trust in the government, courts of law, and the police than someone who does not consume as much news and media. It is also possible for someone to not have a political opinion. Consumption of news and media is also dependent on literacy level and access. A person without a television or radio, or someone who

cannot read as well would not be able to easily access the news as someone who does have a television or radio or can read well.

Data, Variables, and Empirical Design

The unit of analysis is at the individual level for the data from the DHS, and individual wave for the data from the Afrobarometer.

The DHS collects raw survey data on population and health factors, such as HIV and nutrition. The dataset I use for this thesis was conducted in 2015 and includes both the religion and sex of the respondent. Additionally, it has several outcome variables I am interested in related to access to health care. These outcome variables are whether the respondent has received the following: dental care, hospitalization, surgery, injections, and health care in general. It is assumed that when the respondent is asked about receiving surgery and being hospitalized, that the respondent needed those certain procedures. Therefore, when the respondent answers "no" to those survey questions, it is not because he or she did not need the procedure, but rather he or she did not have access to it.

The Afrobarometer collects raw survey data on public opinions about politics, current policies, the economy, democracy, and governance. The datasets I use in this thesis are from the 2013 and 2016 waves. The two surveys were conducted during the fifth and sixth rounds of surveying. The Afrobarometer has other outcome variables that were not included in the DHS, such as level of education, employment status, trust in government, trust in the courts, and access to public schools. Outcome variables that relate to political opinions that I will be using from the Afrobarometer datasets include whether women should have equal rights or be subject to traditional rights, if the government is empowering women, and if women deserve equal work

opportunities. Two variables that I want to pull from this dataset that are related to healthcare are whether the respondent has received medical treatment of any kind (granted that he or she needed the treatment), and medical care access.

The two main important sources of variation I am interested in are the gender and religion of the respondents. I compare the gap between Christian and Muslim women, relative to that observed between Christian and Muslim men. The reasoning for including Christian men and Muslim men in the study is to combat possible confounders. The exposure to Islamic teachings in Egypt affects each of the four groups to different extents. Christian men are less likely to be affect by Islam compared to Muslim men. Islam also affects Muslim men and Muslim women in several manners, such as how to spend their income. Additionally, Christian women are less affected by Islam than Muslim women. Both the Christian groups and the male groups are serving as points of comparison to Muslim women in Egypt.

I measure the independent variables as dummy variables. The *Muslim* dummy takes a value equal to 1 for Muslims and 0 for Christians. The *Female* dummy takes a value equal to 1 for women and 0 for men. The key interaction term is between the *Muslim* and *Female* dummies.

Access to healthcare will be measured with all the outcome variables I stated previously from the DHS datasets: access to dental care, whether the respondent received any injections and surgery, has been hospitalized, and received medical treatment. All of these outcome variables are dummy variables, with the answers “no” or “sometimes” taking the value of 0, while the answers “yes” or “a lot” take the value of 1. Additionally, the same values apply to the two outcome variables I will use from the Afrobarometer datasets: whether the respondent is currently receiving medical treatment and if he or she has access to medical care.

Table 1: Summary Descriptive Table for DHS

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Year	16,671	2015	0	2015	2015
Female	16,671	0.5523964	0.497262	0	1
Muslim	16,663	0.9491688	0.2196594	0	1
Interaction (Female * Muslim)	16,663	0.5239153	0.4994427	0	1
Has had Surgery	16,671	0.4603803	0.4984428	0	1
Receiving Medical Care	377	0.5596817	0.497085	0	1
Received Injection	16,669	0.9962805	0.0608758	0	1
Has been Hospitalized	16,670	0.4904619	0.499924	0	1
Received Dental Care	16,669	0.7039414	0.4565308	0	1

Education level will be measured with the outcome variable of what education level the respondent has completed from the Afrobarometer dataset. As another dummy variable, if the answer is below receiving a secondary education, it will take the value of 0. Otherwise, if the answer is receiving a secondary education or college education, it will take the value of 1. Employment status will be measured from the Afrobarometer dataset as another dummy variable. If the respondent answers “no”, the variable will take the value of 0. If the respondent answers either “part-time” or “full-time”, the variable will take the value of 1.

The dependent variable of political opinions will incorporate several outcome variables from the Afrobarometer. The outcome variables I will be measuring are how much trust the respondent has in the government and courts, whether women should have equal rights or be subject to traditional rights, if the government is empowering women, and if women deserve equal work opportunities. All of these variables will again be dummy variables. If the respondent has no to little trust in the government and the courts, the variable will take the value of 0. If the respondent has some to a lot of trust in the government and the courts, then the variable will take the value of 1. If the respondent answers that women should be subject to traditional laws, the variable will take the value 0, and if the respondent answers that women should have equal rights, then the variable will take the value of 1. The same method applies to the outcome

variable of whether women should have equal work opportunities. If the respondent answers “no" the variable will take the value of 0, and if the respondent answers “yes”, the variable will take the value of 1. Finally, if the respondent believes that the government is not empowering women, the dummy variable will take the value of 0. If the respondent believes the government is empowering women, then the variable will take the value of 1.

Table 2: Summary Descriptive Table for Afrobarometer

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Wave	2388	1.498325	0.5001019	1	2
Female	2388	0.5012563	0.5001031	0	1
Muslim	2385	0.9102725	0.2858508	0	1
Interaction (Female * Muslim)	2385	0.4612159	0.4985981	0	1
Employment Status	1189	0.5357443	0.4989306	0	1
Receiving Medical Treatment	859	0.443539	0.4970914	0	1
Education Level	2388	0.4995812	0.5001045	0	1
Access to Medical Care	2379	0.2374947	0.4256373	0	1
Level of Trust in Government	704	0.4644886	0.4990919	0	1
Should Women have Equal Work Opportunities	1113	0.7520216	0.4320334	0	1
If the Government Empowers Women	972	0.2109053	0.4081613	0	1
Level of Trust in Courts	1135	0.6907489	0.4623886	0	1
Access to Public Schools	578	0.6038062	0.4895292	0	1
If Women Should have Equal Rights vs. Subject to Traditional Laws	1091	0.2905591	0.4542286	0	1

The identification problem this study suffers from are potential confounders. Potential sources of bias that prevent us from estimating the causal effect of X on Y are omitted variable bias. Possible confounders can be where the respondent resides, age, and his or her wealth. This is a difficult topic to study because it is difficult to really know if it is Islam that is inhibiting women's welfare or if it is having a male dominant federal government interpreting Islam in their favor.

$$Y_i = a + \beta(Female)_i + \lambda(Muslim)_i + \delta(Female\ X\ Gender)_i + X_i \boldsymbol{\phi} + \epsilon_i$$

The equation above essentially compares two differences. The first difference is between Christian men and women, and the second difference is between Muslim men and women. Y_i represents education level, access to health care, unemployment levels, and political opinions. Δ is the key difference-in-difference coefficient of interest which indicate the extent to which the gap of Muslim Women relative to Muslim men is statistically different from that observed between Christian men and women. ϵ_i represents the error term.

Results

Table 3 shows the results after running regressions on the Afrobarometer datasets. Overall, the findings suggest that Muslim women do not have systematically different opinions than Christian women (at least when compared to the corresponding men). The interaction term is statistically insignificant for most outcome variables. For example, starting with the outcome variable measuring level of trust in government in column (1), Christian women are 13.7 percentage points more likely than men to report trust in government than men. Muslim men are slightly less likely (2.7 percentage points) than Christian men to trust the government. Critically for this study however, the interaction term is negative though not statistically significant which suggests the gap between Muslim men and women is similar (or if anything smaller) than that observed between Christian men and women.

One important exception, however, are the findings in column (7) regarding beliefs on whether women should have equal work opportunities as men. The findings here suggest that while Christian women have similar views as Christian men on this variable, Muslim women are close to 30 percentage points *more* likely than Muslim men to believe in equal work

opportunities. Thus, contrary to beliefs, Muslim women in Egypt are the group most likely to believe in equality of opportunities for men and women.

One more outcome variable to highlight is the findings in column (9) with the employment status of the respondents. While Christian women are more likely to be unemployed compared to Christian men by about 58 percentage points, Muslim women are more likely to be employed by 8 percentage points (important to note that the interaction coefficient for this outcome is statistically insignificant). This finding insinuates that Christian women are more likely to be unemployed compared to Muslim women.

Table 3: Results of Running Regression for Afrobarometer

Independent Variables	**Outcome Variables**									
	Level of Trust in Government	Level of Trust in Courts	Access to Public Schools	Received Medical Treatment	Access to Medical Care	Women Should Have Equal Rights vs. Subject to Traditional Laws	Women Should Have Equal Work Opportunities	Government Empowers Women	Employment Status	Education Level
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Female	0.137	0.050	0.010	0.053	0.007	-0.058	-0.051	0.009	-0.577***	-0.151**
	(0.121)	(0.073)	(0.124)	(0.108)	(0.053)	(0.092)	(0.066)	(0.079)	(0.076)	(0.068)
Muslim	-0.027	-0.124**	-0.102	-0.121*	-0.013	0.173**	-0.301***	0.100*	-0.085*	-0.068
	(0.089)	(0.053)	(0.085)	(0.071)	(0.036)	(0.074)	(0.049)	(0.060)	(0.044)	(0.048)
Interaction (Female * Muslim)	-0.078	0.013	0.011	-0.020	0.028	-0.150	0.289***	-0.075	0.081	0.047
	(0.128)	(0.079)	(0.132)	(0.114)	(0.056)	(0.096)	(0.071)	(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.072)
Constant	0.457***	0.770***	0.686***	0.536***	0.133***	0.229***	0.921***	0.150***	0.863***	0.582***
	(0.084)	(0.049)	(0.079)	(0.067)	(0.033)	(0.071)	(0.044)	(0.057)	(0.040)	(0.046)
Observations	701	1132	575	856	2376	1091	1113	972	1187	2385
R-squared	0.006	0.010	0.004	0.007	0.057	0.052	0.079	0.008	0.259	0.017
Controls	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Waive FEs	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
beta(female) + beta(Muslim) + beta(interaction)	0.0316	-0.0605	-0.0819	-0.0890	0.0229	-0.0345	-0.0642	-0.0336	-0.5810	-0.1722
p-value	0.7229	0.2538	0.3316	0.2135	0.5273	0.6382	0.1671	0.5717	0.0000	0.0003

Table 4 shows the results after running regressions on the DHS dataset. Again, the coefficients confirm the same pattern: Muslim women are no different than Christian women when compared to their respective male counterparts in terms of access to health. For example, both Muslim and Christian women are about 14 percentage points more likely than men to have had surgery. If anything, the interaction coefficient for this variable suggests that Muslim women are slightly *more* likely to have had surgery (though the difference is not statistically significant).

The interaction coefficient in column (2) points in a similar pattern: Muslim women appear more likely to received medical care than Christian women, though the point estimate is noisy and not statistically significant.

In regard to the outcome variable in column (4), Christian women and Muslim women similarly are more likely to have been hospitalized, with Christian women leading by about 2 percentage points (even though the interaction coefficient for this outcome is not statistically significant). This further demonstrates that the gap between Christian women and Christian men and Muslim women and Muslim men are quite close together.

Finally, the interaction coefficient in column (5) shows that Muslim women are about 5 percentage points more likely than Christian women (and Muslim and Christian men) to receive dental care. This difference is statistically significant at the 10% level. This evidence is again inconsistent with the notion of Muslim women being particularly disadvantaged relative to other groups in society.

Table 4: Results of Running Regression for DHS

Independent Variables	**Dependent Variables**				
	(01)	(02)	(03)	(04)	(05)
	Had Surgery	Receiving Medical Care	Received Injection	Has Been Hospitalized	Received Dental Care
Female	0.136***	-0.167	0.00538	0.0643*	-0.0295
	(4.00)	(-0.53)	(1.42)	(1.87)	(-0.92)
Muslim	-0.00238	-0.0110	0.00142	0.00838	-0.0112
	(-0.09)	(-0.07)	(0.37)	(0.32)	(-0.46)
Interaction (Female * Muslim)	0.0106	0.364	-0.00509	0.0474	0.0606*
	(0.30)	(1.13)	(-1.30)	(1.34)	(1.84)
Constant	0.382***	0.500***	0.995***	0.422***	0.699***
	(15.15)	(3.15)	(262.30)	(16.48)	(29.38)
Observations	16663	377	16661	16662	16661
R-squared	0.021	0.038	0.000	0.012	0.001
Controls	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Waive FEs	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
beta(female) + beta(Muslim) + beta(interaction)	0.1444	0.1861	0.0017	0.1201	0.0200
p-value	0.0000	0.2568	0.6566	0.0000	0.4105

t statistics in parentheses
* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Conclusion

What is the effect of Islam on women's welfare and political opinions in Egypt? It seems that based on the tables above and the difference-in-difference design, there is no significant impact of Islam on the status of Muslim women except for in the case of believing that women should have equal work opportunities and of receiving dental care where Muslim women seem to be, if anything, better off. This study rejects the alternative hypothesis earlier stated, and is in favor of the null hypothesis, meaning that Muslim women are not as deprived of their rights compared to Christian women.

Although the alternative hypothesis was denied by the findings of this research, this could also imply that Muslim women in Egypt are not as oppressed as initially believed and that they

do enjoy certain societal benefits such as equal work opportunities, access to an education, and medical care treatment.

Possible faults that this paper can have are that it does not include enough years' worth of data to remove potential time trends, not a large enough sample size, and not accounting for other control variables such as the governorates the respondents live in or who they voted for president.

This paper can be further extended with these faults in mind. It would be interesting to see how the results come out with different years, such as during the previous presidencies of both Hosni Mubarak and Mohamed Morsi.

This study can be used to support the feminist movement and women's rights in the Middle East and North African regions, where Islam is the dominant religion in those nations.

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