

RESEARCH

Support for feminism among highly religious Muslim citizens in the Arab region

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Public opinion studies argue that in Middle Eastern and North African countries, Muslims support gender equality less than non-Muslims. This overlooks the diversity in religion–feminism relations. Highly religious Muslims who support feminism are disregarded, even though in–depth studies have repeatedly pointed to their existence. Grounded in a structured anthology of qualitative studies on Muslim feminism, we provide the first ever large–scale analysis of support for Muslim feminism. Conducting latent class analyses on 64,000 Muslims in 51 Middle Eastern and North African contexts, we find that a substantial one in five Arab Muslims combines high attachment to Islam with support for feminism.

Key words Muslim feminism • secular feminism • gender equality • Islam • public opinion • Arab Middle East and North Africa

Key messages

- Over 20 per cent of Arab Muslims are strongly religious *and* support gender equality and empowerment.
- Muslim feminists are about as feminist as secular feminists; on some issues, even more strongly.
- Muslim feminists can be divided into ‘religious feminists’ and ‘Islamic feminists’.
- Supporters of Islamic feminism combine scriptural literalism with support for feminism.

To cite this article: Glas, S., and Spierings, N. (2019) Support for feminism among highly religious Muslim citizens in the Arab region, *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, vol 2, no 2, 283–310, DOI: 10.1332/251510819X15538590890492

Introduction

Western public debates portray Arab Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) citizens as categorically opposed to gender equality and female empowerment due to Islam (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Moghadam, 2013). Such views inadvertently reap credibility from large–scale public opinion studies which argue that Muslims support

gender equality less than non-Muslims due to Islamic socialisation with patriarchal norms (eg Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Alexander and Welzel, 2011; Lussier and Fish, 2016; Price, 2015).

However, because public opinion scholars deal in averages, these studies have a tendency to overlook the vast diversity within the group of Muslim MENA citizens and ignore the many exceptions to the rule (Spierings, 2015). On average, Muslim citizens may, indeed, support feminism less than non-Muslims, but there may still be substantial groups of highly religious Muslims who do support gender equality and empowerment. These ‘supporters of Muslim feminism’ are generally disregarded by quantitative researchers. Still, this group might be far from negligible as relations between religion and support for feminism vary tremendously (Alexander and Parhizkari, forthcoming; Meyer et al, 1998; Glas et al, 2018).

The present study aims to identify those citizens who are highly religious Muslims and also support gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Arab region. Although public opinion scholars have studied feminism in Muslim contexts, to our knowledge, no large-scale study has focused on Muslim citizens who are simultaneously highly religious and support feminism. Accordingly, we build on the wealth of information from in-depth studies on ‘Muslim feminisms’ to provide new insights into the different ways that movements and activists in MENA countries have combined religiosity and feminism throughout the region’s history. Ultimately, this structured discussion provides us with conceptual insights into when citizens can be considered to be highly religious and support feminism, as well as what distinctions might exist within this group.

These insights guide our interpretations of the quantitative analyses that we conduct next. We analyse public opinion data on almost 65,000 Muslims in 51 Arab MENA contexts (15 countries between 2001 and 2014) using latent class analyses (LCA). LCA identifies underlying groups in the attitudinal data; using insights from the literature review, we deduce which of these groups supports Muslim feminism. As LCA shows which specific dimensions of religious and gender attitudes distinguish this group from other societal groups, our analyses also feed back into the insights on Muslim feminism from in-depth studies. Moreover, once we have defined the group of Muslim feminists, we conduct additional analyses on their whereabouts and religiosity to further add to existing in-depth understandings. Altogether, we provide the first ever grounded analysis of ordinary Arab citizens who are highly religious and support gender equality and women’s empowerment – and our analyses show that a considerably larger share of MENA citizens combines strong Islamic religiosity with support for feminism than is generally expected.

Overall, this approach adds important insights to debates on gender and Islam, and furthers conversations between disciplines by applying quantitative techniques to subgroups that diverge from norms and intersectional work in gender and politics (Avishai et al, 2015; Tripp and Hughes, 2018). As such, it also has implications for studies on other unlikely allies of feminism, such as religiously orthodox feminists in Western countries (Gallagher and Smith, 1999) and politically conservative feminists (Deckman, 2016; Schreiber, 2018), on which we elaborate in our conclusion.

Before turning to the rest of our study, we need to provide three semantic notes. First, for ease of reading, we use ‘supporters of Muslim feminism’ to refer to ‘Muslims who are highly religious and support gender equality and women’s empowerment’. Accordingly, when this article mentions ‘supporters of Muslim feminism’, it refers

not to feminist activists or even necessarily citizens with a feminist consciousness, but rather to ‘ordinary’ Arab citizens who support gender equality and women’s empowerment. Relatedly, as our conceptualisation section discusses in-depth, we view ‘support for feminism’ as *supporting the advance of gender equality or women’s empowerment*. This means that feminism is relative to levels of gender equality and women’s empowerment in context. This view stems from our presupposition that feminism is a multifaceted process that, for instance, includes many strands of feminist theory, waves of feminist activism and, accordingly perhaps, even multiple types of support for Muslim feminism (see Celis et al, 2008; Walby, 2011; Medie and Kang, 2018). As a consequence, however, not all examples of feminism provided may jibe with readers’ intuitions. To be clear, opposing gender equality less than others is, evidently, not considered support for feminism. Finally, in the MENA context, the comparison group, ‘secularists’, does not necessarily refer to atheists, but rather refers to being relatively less religious compared to other citizens.

Conceptualising support for Muslim feminism

As mentioned, to our knowledge, no large-scale comparative studies on Muslim feminism exist. Although in-depth scholars have conducted necessary and interesting studies into particular manifestations, the following questions remain unanswered: (1) ‘What do Muslim feminists citizens have in common?’; and (2) ‘What differentiates them from other feminists citizens, that is, secularist feminists?’. Moreover, it could be expected that Muslim feminism takes diverse forms, following gender scholars’ assertion that (Western) feminism is also multifaceted, comprising diverse actors, goals and processes (eg Celis et al, 2008; Walby, 2011; Medie and Kang, 2018), but in what ways?

This subsection answers these questions using in-depth literatures on historical accounts of empowered female Muslim leaders, Muslim feminist social movements and feminist reinterpretations of religious texts. Together, these paint a pointillist picture of how feminism and religion have been combined in MENA countries, providing a grounded conceptual-theoretical base by outlining the common threads in Muslim feminisms and demarcations between Muslim feminists and others, and perhaps within Muslim feminism. Notably, we focus on influential feminist actors here instead of ‘ordinary’ support for Muslim feminism because no large-scale public opinion studies on Muslim feminism exist. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that we cannot translate these examples to public support for Muslim feminism directly or expect all MENA citizens who are highly religious and support feminist ideas to be aware of all these examples and have a feminist consciousness. Rather, these examples are used to build our conceptualisation of what support for Muslim feminism may encompass and which issues are likely to lead to differentiation among supporters of Muslim feminism, which we address empirically later on.

Patterns in Muslim feminism

How did the religion–feminism nexus in MENA countries take shape and what does it look like today? This subsection presents commonalities throughout studies and writings on Muslim feminism by outlining how Islam and feminism became thoroughly connected and how that connection is presently shaped.

Religion and feminism became salient intertwined topics among larger MENA publics particularly during the turn of the 20th century (Badran, 2005; Mahmood, 2005: 69). Male Muslim intellectuals such as Qasim Amin and Muhammad ‘Abduh publically called for women’s education, arguing that women were raising the nation’s next generation of (male) citizens and their education was key to MENA nations’ independence (Ahmed, 1992: 127–65; Abu-Lughod, 1998: 5–22; Moghadam, 2013: 37–60). This narrative tying motherhood to national progress was voiced by both Arab nationalists and colonisers, but their visions of the ‘ideal Arab woman’ diverged around her religiosity, whereby Arab nationalists saw her religiosity as a sign of cultural authenticity contrasting to the West (Charrad, 2011). Divisions between secularist and Muslim feminism thus directly accompanied the spread of feminism in MENA countries, with the former being portrayed as Westernised and the latter as culturally authentic.

Accordingly, Muslim feminist movements have since aimed to rally support for feminism among larger publics by arguing that feminism is not a cultural other to Arab MENA countries. It has been argued that especially following the 2011 uprisings, such movements have increased in influence as grass-roots bottom-up politics became more prominent (Moghadam, 2013; El Haitami, 2016). For instance, in Tunisia, feminists organised protests and demanded gender equality next to democratic change, also from religiously inspired viewpoints, and since the uprisings, they mobilised mass support to ensure that ‘equality’ was not replaced by ‘complementarity’ in the constitution (Charrad and Zarrugh, 2014; Salem, 2015). To understand how these movements mobilise support by arguing the Arabness of feminism, we discuss two examples: women’s political empowerment and women’s religious empowerment in the region’s history.

First, as we learn from Mernissi’s (2012) classical work *The forgotten queens of Islam*, at least 12 Muslim women have been empowered as political rulers of regions in today’s Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. Moreover, these Arab queens, like kings, generally used religious claims in support of their reign. For instance, the reportedly influential 11th-century Yemeni queens Asma and ‘Arwa were explicitly legitimised through Islam (Mernissi, 2012: 14–6, 137–47). Their titles encompassed the illustrious and religious ‘young queen of Sheba’, after the Quranic figure (Mernissi, 2012: 140–1). Although Asma’s rule was short, she took a singularly public role, attending councils of the state – without a veil – and ruling the country solo after her son fell chronically ill. Her successor, ‘Arwa, ruled for half a century even though she had two sons. ‘Arwa reportedly built more mosques than generations had done before her, among which the famous mosque of Sana’a. Asma and ‘Arwa thus provide historical examples of how female political leadership has existed in MENA countries’ history for Muslim feminist movements to build on.

Second, Muslim feminist activists point to women’s instrumental roles in Islam’s dissemination (Abu-Lughod, 1998). In fact, the first Muslim convert already exemplifies women’s religious roles; Khadijah (555–619 CE) was an upper-class widow who had her own successful business when she decided to propose marriage to her lower-class contractor Muhammad, the later prophet (Spierings, 2015). They were (monogamously) married for 25 years. In that period, she continued her business, which provided her with the means to finance Muhammad’s *da’wah* (preaching) movement that spread the faith. The prophet’s first wife thus provides a first illustration of the key roles that women played in Islam.

After Khadijah, multiple Arab women have followed in her footsteps and have been particularly active in transmitting the *hadith*, stories on the life and sayings of the prophet. In fact, ‘one of the most credible’ and ‘most productive’ *hadith* transmitters is Aisha, who married Muhammad after Khadijah’s death; she narrated over 2,000 *hadith* and was reportedly widely revered for her intellect (Muttaqin, 2008: 39). The heyday of *muhaddithat* (women *hadith* transmitters) was between the 14th and 17th centuries (Sayeed, 2002). One of these *muhaddithat* was Zaynab bint al-Kamal, who never married, instead travelling long distances to narrate *hadith* and obtain *ijazas* (certifications to teach *hadith*). She was widely renowned by both the intellectual elite of her time and her male and female students, who crowded her for most of the day. She had reportedly accumulated a camel load of *ijazas* when she died at 94, and many prominent *hadith* scholars of the generations after Zaynab had been taught and granted their *ijazas* by her (Sayeed, 2002: 75–82). Zaynab’s life thus further illustrates women’s spiritual leadership in historical Islam, exemplifying that Islam and feminism can go hand in hand.

In sum, Muslim feminism was carved out in the setting of colonial struggles to stipulate the non-imperialism and Arabness of feminism. Among others, Muslim feminist activists have retold the histories of Muslim women in political and religious leadership roles. These examples serve to legitimise their contemporary feminist claims and rally support among larger publics, whereby the core is formed by amalgamating religious identification with a support for gender equality or women’s empowerment.

Diversity in feminism

Simultaneously, across the globe, feminists’ stances are diverse, and feminism in the Arab region is probably no exception (eg Celis et al, 2008; Walby, 2011; Medie and Kang, 2018). What types of feminists exist in the Arab region? Do differences between Muslim and secularist feminists capture their diversity or do further divisions exist? Do varying feminists underscore different feminist issues? This subsection gives insights into the answers of these questions to illustrate the diversity in (Muslim) feminisms in the Arab region.

As seen, cleavages between Muslim and secularist feminism already occurred during the turn of the 20th century, and these divisions deepened with the fights for independence, to which women contributed greatly from explicitly Islamic frames (Abu-Lughod, 1998; Badran, 2005; Charrad, 2011; Moghadam, 2013: 41–60). For instance, Algerian Muslim feminist women started to veil more to demonstrate their national loyalty and Muslim feminist movements fought side by side with Arab nationalists to claim independence (UNDP, 2006: 124–33). Stressing cultural authenticity and national allegiance during independence fights thus emphasised borders between Muslim and secularist feminists and homogenised Muslim feminists.

However, since the Islamic revival, schisms within Muslim feminism became more apparent, also as Islamists did not vilify each feminist issue equally; Islamist frames, for instance, viewed women’s (religious) education more favourably than women’s political and economic empowerment (Abu-Lughod, 1998: 252–5; Halverson and Way, 2011; Moghadam, 2013: 66–73). From the 1970s onwards, Muslim feminist movements thus had to arm themselves against Islamists’ varying attacks, which led to varying interpretations of feminism and religion among Muslim feminists. Roughly, we can delineate three subcategories of self-defined Muslim feminism:

religious feminism, Islamic feminism and Islamist feminism (see Figure 1; see also Badran, 2005; Mir-Hosseini, 2011; Moghadam, 2013: 66–73, 244–50). Among *religious feminists*, religion and support for feminism are ‘merely’ coexisting, while *Islamic feminists* more expressly intertwine these two identities by employing their religion to achieve feminist goals. In that sense, religion and feminism are coexisting identities among religious feminists and interwoven ones among Islamic feminists.

The third group that scholars delineate is *Islamist feminists*, who focus specifically on women’s roles in political Islam, although debates continue over whether this group should be considered feminist as they also condone misogynist laws while fighting for women’s position in Islam (Moghadam, 2002; Badran, 2008; Moghissi, 2011). For instance, such Islamist feminist organisations as Zaynab al-Ghazali’s Society of Muslim Ladies stress that men and women are equally called upon to serve Allah and women are legitimate sources of religious (re)interpretation (Mahmood, 2005: 67–72; Halverson and Way, 2011) but also emphasise gender complementarity and ban women from decision-making positions on divine grounds related to women’s supposed unsuitable natures (El Haitami, 2016). Although we discuss Islamist feminists as part of the larger group of Muslim feminists (see Figure 1), we only consider them as Muslim feminists if they clearly support important forms of gender equality (hence, the faded box in Figure 1; more on this later).

Overall, from the colonial era until today, Muslim feminist activists have fought for change, and did so by interweaving calls for equality with religion in different ways. All seem to have called for women’s education, but such togetherness is not shared on other issues. In line with this, not all supporters of Muslim feminism among larger publics should be expected to demand gender equality and empowerment on all issues. We might find citizens among general MENA publics who hold attitudes more akin to the views of religious, Islamic and even Islamist feminists. Furthermore, not surprisingly, the earlier examples indicate that women are more likely to support Muslim feminism than men, which we also take into consideration in the empirical part of this study (see the ‘LCA results’ section).

Conceptualising feminism

Before studying Muslim feminists’ religion more in-depth, we first build on the previous insights to conceptualise their ‘support for feminism’. Generally, it seems that a diverse and broad lens is warranted in conceptualising support for feminism in order to not *a priori* exclude Islamist feminists (feminists who support political Islam), Islamic feminists (who intertwine religious identities and feminist claims) or religious feminists (who are ‘merely’ simultaneously religious and support feminism) (see

Figure 1: Feminisms

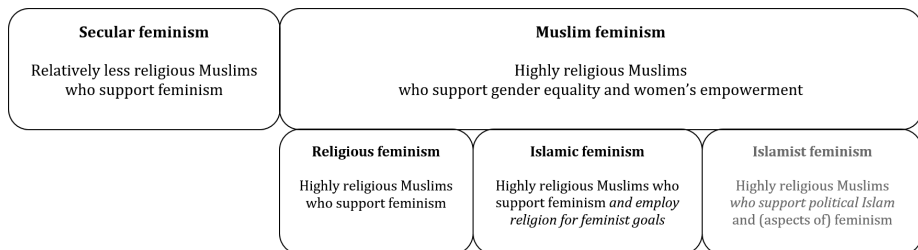


Figure 1). Based on our review, we thus conceptualise feminism dynamically, allowing the *extent* of feminists' support for gender equality and women's empowerment to differ across issues and contexts; within this broad conceptualisation, our analyses will then show to what extent different feminist issues are supported. Conceptually, though, feminism concerns *pushes towards aspects of greater* women's empowerment or gender equality within a context in which women's empowerment and gender equality are at a relatively low level (cf Medie and Kang, 2018). Put simply, feminism in 1917 is not the same as feminism in 2017. Although we, of course, do not consider MENA citizens to support feminism if they are unsupportive of gender equality and women's empowerment (eg certain Islamist feminists), we do view feminism as a process with a wide variety of actors and goals: a dynamic range, not a fixed point (Celis et al, 2008; Walby, 2011).

Consequently, we recognise the possibility of *multiple* groups of Muslim feminists existing simultaneously, for instance, those who support expanding women's education but are not fighting existing political inequalities. Moreover, this conceptualisation does not open Pandora's Box on who 'the real' Muslim feminists are. Also, by stressing context dependency, this perspective firmly situates feminism within MENA countries, which means sidestepping the pitfall of implicitly generalising a 'Western' notion of feminism (Moghissi, 2011; Walby, 2011).

Diversity in religion

This leaves us with the question of how *Muslim* feminists connect Islam to feminist goals. To provide insights into (the diversity in) religious interpretations – which are used to further guide what aspects of religion are core to *a priori* definitions of Muslim feminism versus further investigations of religiosity once they are defined – this subsection briefly outlines two ways in which especially Islamic feminists reinterpret religious texts.

First, *textualist reinterpretations* involve showing how mainstream patriarchal interpretations are based on wrong translations or diverge from the letter of religious texts. In veiling debates, for instance, Muslim feminists have pointed out that the Quranic texts are not strict commandments and they do not clearly stipulate *which* women ought to be covering *what* and *how* (Selim, 2005: 28–46). Reinterpretations note that the verses primarily pertain to the wives of the Prophet and veiling is meant for women's own protection in certain situations rather than to categorically broadcast their piety (Mahmood, 2005: 101–5).

Second, *contextual reinterpretations* stress that texts should be understood in light of the time they were written. For instance, while the Quran clearly stipulates that (usually) women's inheritance shares should be smaller than men's, contextualists argue that this should be viewed within the context of the 7th century as women obtained no inheritance at all before Islam (eg Selim, 2005). They say that these texts favour women's economic empowerment, not oppose it. This example shows that even seemingly clearly oppressive Quranic texts are reinterpreted emancipatorily, illustrating that religion and feminism can go hand in hand.

Feminists have thus found support for feminism in Quranic verses in different ways. They have taken to more scripturalist, and, in that sense, orthodox doctrinal, interpretations as well as more context-stressing, dynamic doctrinal interpretations. This diversity may also be reflected among larger populations.

Conceptualising religion

Not unlike feminism, religion also has to be conceptualised broadly to do justice to the varying ways in which Muslim feminists interpret their religion. To not exclude certain Muslim feminists *a priori*, we use feelings of religious devotion to judge religiosity ('affective beliefs') (Glas et al, 2018). One is more religious if s/he feels more attached to her/his religion.

Other dimensions of religion, such as religious practices or doctrinal beliefs, are less suited as a cut-off point because they are too exclusionary. For instance, viewing MENA citizens as non-religious because they do not pray five times a day overlooks that religious practices can be obstructed by practical difficulties, are gendered and are reflections of changeable norms (cf Read and Bartkowski, 2000; Mahmood, 2005). As seen, some Muslim feminists veil (eg Algerian women in the fights for independence) and others do not (eg the Yemeni queen Asma). Likewise, our literature review showed that religious reinterpretations by Muslim feminists can be both textualist and contextualist, implying that Muslim feminists hold a variety of positions on doctrinal literalism, making it useless as a demarcation criterion. Thus, *a priori* attributions of religious practices or doctrinal beliefs to Muslim feminists are problematic, while affective beliefs provide a suitable criterion to judge religiousness. We thus consider citizens who are at least more than averagely religiously devoted to be highly religious.

At the same time, assessing how the diversity in religious practices and doctrinal beliefs among Muslim feminist activists is reflected among 'ordinary' supporters of Muslim feminism will shed more light on the issue at hand. Although we do not use these dimensions of religiosity as a cut-off point for Muslim feminism, we will thus return to the question of practices and doctrines after we identify Muslim feminism supporters.

Altogether, support for Muslim feminism in this study entails citizens 'identifying as highly religious and being relatively supportive of several forms of political, economic and social equality between the sexes and women's empowerment'. We use this conceptualisation to assess which models validly distinguish groups of Muslim feminism supporters.

Methods

LCA

LCA classifies individuals into groups ('classes') based on how they answered a set of questions – in this case, on both gender equality and religion (Blaydes and Linzer, 2008). As such, it is the best way to empirically distinguish highly affectively religious MENA citizens who are relatively supportive of feminism from other groups of citizens without presetting cut-off points (Linzer and Lewis, 2011).

Although the researcher thus does not set decide how religious or feminist Muslim feminists are *a priori*, LCA shows the typical answers to the items included. This likelihood that a certain group answers a certain feminism or religiosity item with a certain response thus does tell us something about the 'feministness' and religiousness of each class, which helps interpret the groups conceptually. As these likelihoods change with the number of groups added, by varying the number of groups and looking at the typical answers per group, it can be decided if and when a clearly

demarcated group of Muslim feminists is found, thus a group that is both highly religious and takes feminist stances.

The conceptual insights presented earlier are thus pivotal in deciding which LCA model clearly distinguishes a group of Muslim feminism supporters as they provide conceptual insights that define when we should ‘stop adding classes’ to our LCA model and help to give meaning to the statistical results and classes found. Moreover, abductively, these results feed back into the in-depth insights as they show how feminist and religious Muslim feminists are, how they differ from secularist feminists, whether there are perhaps multiple groups of Muslim feminism supporters (see Figure 1), and how ‘ordinary’ supporters of Muslim feminism differ from the feminist activists discussed in our literature review.

Data

We combine the three Arab Barometer (AB) rounds and all MENA World Values Surveys (WVSs).¹ The surveys represent the publics of 15 MENA countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen) between 2001 and 2014. The surveys do not cover the period prior to 2000. Consequently, we do not (cl)aim to ascertain how support for Muslim feminism has developed in the previous millennium, for instance, due to trans-regional norm diffusion following international feminist activist networks.

Given our focus on contemporary support for *Muslim* feminism, we selected the 95.3 per cent Muslim respondents – religiosity has different meanings among Christians in MENA countries, not least as they are a suppressed minority (Spierings, 2018). The least religious group included is thus not a group of strict atheists. Evidently, we take the deleted 4.7 per cent of the population into account when we calculate the overall share of the MENA population that is Muslim feminist.²

As LCAs allow for the inclusion of respondents with missing scores on variables (Linzer and Lewis, 2011), we include all respondents who answered at least one question per sub-dimension of feminism and affective religious beliefs (see Table 1). After recoding, higher scores indicate greater support for feminism or attachment to religion on all items. It should be noted that asking whether respondents agree that ‘being a housewife is just as fulfilling to women as working for a pay’ (item 5 in Table 1) is ambiguous technically. Respondents who strongly disagree are expected to believe jobs to be more fulfilling, but they might also mean that motherhood is (which was not what the developers of the item had in mind). Practically, however, the item correlates positively with every other feminism item, strongly suggesting that respondents generally interpreted the item as intended. As the item provides us with additional information on what distinguishes the different classes, we included it. The final sample covers 15 countries, 51 surveys and 64,490 Muslim respondents.

Model selection

As said, in LCA, the researcher sets the number of classes before estimating a model (but does not preset cut-off values for items). We added classes until the models clearly distinguished Muslim feminism supporters from other groups. Concretely, we chose a model that distinguished between: (1) supporters of Muslim feminism; (2) a class highly likely to support feminism and to be not highly religious (‘secularist

Table 1: Included items

	N	Minimum		Maximum		Mean	SD
Political gender equality							
Men are better political leaders than women	62,525	1	Strongly agree	4	Strongly disagree	1.85	0.94
Women can become presidents or prime ministers of Muslim states	18,106	1	Strongly disagree	4	Strongly agree	2.54	1.06
Educational gender equality							
University education is more important for boys than for girls	62,973	1	Strongly agree	4	Strongly disagree	2.86	1.04
Women's economic empowerment							
Married women can work outside the home	32,464	1	Strongly disagree	4	Strongly agree	3.1	0.84
Being a housewife is just as fulfilling for women as working for a pay	29,962	1	Strongly agree	4	Strongly disagree	1.9	0.92
Gender equality in the labour force							
Men and women should have equal work opportunities	18,200	1	Strongly disagree	4	Strongly agree	2.91	0.89
When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women	31,281	1	Strongly agree	3	Strongly disagree	1.41	0.74
Affective religious beliefs							
Importance of God in life	30,541	1	Not at all important	10	Very important	9.72	1.09
Importance of religion in life	31,534	1	Not at all important	4	Very important	3.89	0.39
Religious self-identification (I)	29,186	1	Atheist	3	Religious	2.8	0.45
Religious self-identification (II)	31,013	1	Non-religious	3	Very religious	2.34	0.64

Source: AB; WVS.

feminists'); (3) a class that is neither highly religious nor supportive of feminism (so we could contrast Muslim feminists to secularist feminist, not secularists in general); and (4) highly religious non-feminists.

Our model with seven classes was the first to distinguish between these groups. It is important to note that the class of supporters of Muslim feminism was pretty robust across models with at least five classes, so these models would provide similar results on Muslim feminists. Moreover, the Muslim feminist categorisation and findings were substantially similar in models with eight and nine classes (90 per cent < overlap Muslim feminism classification < 99 per cent) and in seven-class models on subsamples of only men, only women, only AB surveys and only WVS surveys (82 per cent < overlap Muslim feminism classification < 99 per cent)³ – the results per sex will be discussed in more detail later.

LCA results

Table 2 summarises our LCA's seven classes. The likelihoods that a respondent in a certain class answers items feministically or religiously are presented in Figures 2a and b. Sticking with our main interest in feminism, we do not discuss the non-feminist classes here (see for the full model, Appendix 1 online).

Together, the three feminist classes (see Table 2) represent 27 per cent of the sample: over one in four of the Muslim MENA respondents supports feminism (ie greater gender equality and women's empowerment). Moreover, women are significantly more likely than men to be classified as feminists⁴; however, the female overrepresentation is not as big as some may expect and many of the feminists are men (about four in ten). Echoing that we find largely similar results when analysing the data per sex, feminism does not seem to be an all-female endeavour, 'not even' in Arab MENA countries.

The largest two of the three feminist classes are both highly religious, that is, Muslim feminist. We call these 'Islamic feminists' and 'religious feminists' for reasons that will become clear later. Combined, more than one in five Muslim MENA respondents can be considered to be highly religious Muslims and support feminism.⁵ The third feminist class is weakly religious, particularly in the context of MENA countries (see Figure 2b), so we consider this class to be secularist feminists.

Muslim feminism supporters

Before turning to comparisons, let us first describe supporters of Muslim feminism more in-depth. There are two classes of respondents that are highly religious and support feminism, each about 11 per cent of the sample. The two classes clearly have a coherent common core.⁶

Muslim feminists (ie Islamic and religious feminists) support the following items with predicted probabilities of at least 88 per cent (see Figure 2a): (a) allowing married women to work; (b) equal work opportunities for men and women; (c) equality in university education; and (d) the possibility of Muslim states to have female presidents. Less widely supported are: (i) women's capability of political leadership; (ii) women's right to jobs in times of job scarcity; and (iii) women finding fulfilment in paid jobs instead of being housewives. So, among Muslim feminism supporters, not all issues are supported to the same extent, although Muslim feminists back all feminist issues more than non-feminist groups.

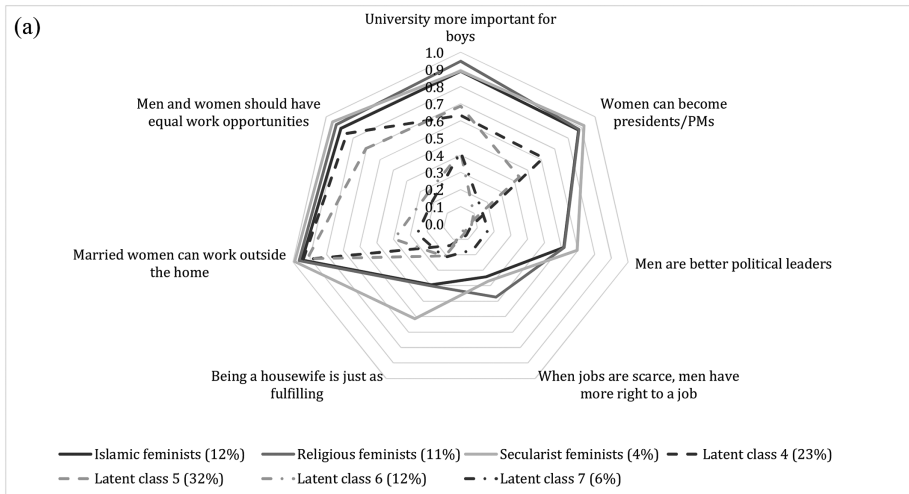
More generally, all groups in our analyses support issues such as, 'in principle, men and women should have equal opportunities' ('principle of equal opportunities')

Table 2: Summary of the seven-class latent class model

	Support feminism		Oppose feminism
Highly religious	Islamic feminists (12%) 40% men; 60% women	Latent class 4 (23%)	
	Religious feminists (11%) 33% men; 67% women	Latent class 5 (32%)	Latent class 6 (12%)
Less religious	Secularist feminists (4%) 39% men; 61% women		Latent class 7 (6%)

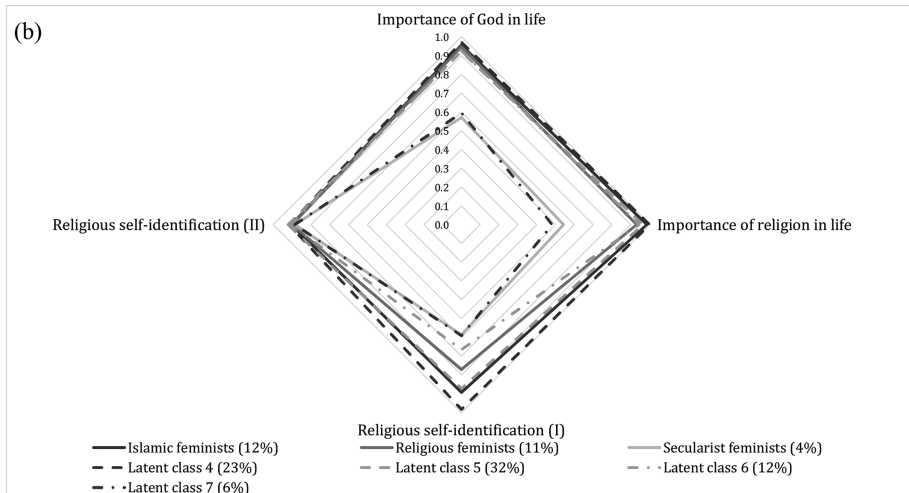
Note. Muslim feminism supporters are shaded.

Figure 2a: Predicted probabilities to support feminism per class



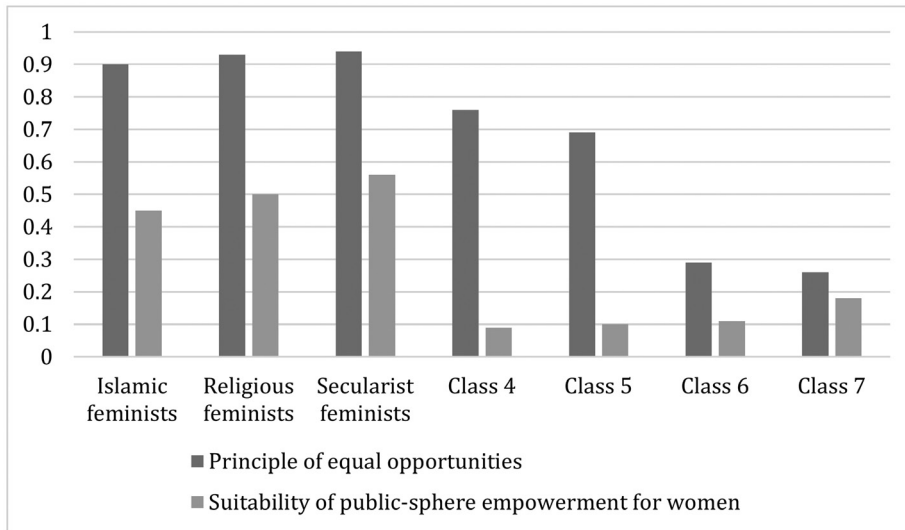
Notes: $N = 64,490$. Probabilities concern the sum of ‘support’ and ‘strongly support’ answer categories.

Figure 2b: Predicted probabilities to be highly religious per class



Note: $N = 64,490$.

(a through d) statistically significantly more than the suitability of public-sphere empowerment for women (i through iii).⁷ This pattern is clearly present among supporters of Muslim feminism as well (see Figure 3), who are surer that women should have equal access to (non-competitive) positions than that they will be fulfilled by them or that they will be as good at them as men are. To illustrate, Muslim feminists are highly likely to support a woman’s equal opportunity to become a political leader (average probability = 0.9), but far less likely to believe that she will be as suited to political leadership as a man (average probability = 0.6).⁸ These results reflect the divisions between advocates’ univocal support for the ‘principle of equal opportunities’ and their disputes on ‘women’s empowerment that overrides their supposed natures’, as surfaced in our literature review.

Figure 3: Probability to support equality and empowerment per class

Note: $N = 64,490$.

Muslim feminists versus secularist feminists

The feminist beliefs of supporters of Muslim feminism can be further illustrated by comparing them with ‘secularist feminists’. Generally, Muslim feminists are virtually as likely as secularist feminists to support the ‘principle of equal opportunities’ (average difference = 0.02), but they are slightly – albeit statistically significantly – less likely to support the ‘suitability of empowerment’ for women (average difference = 0.09).⁹ Moreover, Muslim feminists are relatively wary of the possibility that women can be fulfilled by having paid jobs (average difference = 0.20).¹⁰ The belief system of supporters of Muslim feminism thus seems to show traces of the religiously inspired narrative that women are different from men ‘by their God-given natures’, which revolve around reproduction and motherhood, as seen in the literature overview.¹¹

The eye-catching exception to this pattern concerns educational gender equality. Muslim feminists are more likely than secularist feminists to support the importance of women’s university education (0.9) due to religious feminists’ high support (0.97).¹² This finding reflects the modernisation narrative illustrated earlier: women’s education has historically been encouraged particularly from explicitly religious frames as highly educated women would make better mothers.

Islamic feminists and religious feminists

Although we are mainly interested in Muslim feminists compared to other groups, Arab publics who support Muslim feminism do seem to be diverse, with our LCA separating two classes of Muslim feminist respondents based on their responses. Indeed, we observe small but consistent differences in religiousness and support for feminism between these two groups of Muslim feminism supporters, which is part of why we consider one group to be closer to the theoretical notion of coexisting religious and feminist identities (‘religious feminists’) and the other closer to that of intertwining identities (‘Islamic feminists’) (see Figure 1).

First, religious feminists are more likely to answer feminism items in the *most* supportive category than Islamic feminists (and even than secularist feminists). Although differences are small, it could thus be argued that religious feminists are the most ardent supporters of feminism, which further nuances the general notion that religion and feminism oppose each other in Arab MENA countries. Second, the Islamic feminists are slightly more religious than the religious feminists; the likelihood that religious feminists are highly attached to religion is never higher than that of Islamic feminists.

Overall, the results of our LCA illustrate that religion and support for feminism are not necessarily at odds among the larger public, an argument that in-depth studies have implied for decades but large-scale studies have not addressed. In fact, there is a surprisingly substantial group of MENA citizens who combine religion with positive stances towards feminist goals. Nevertheless, even these Muslim feminism supporters still seem somewhat wary of the suitability of public roles for women – although their support is leaps ahead of other constituents’.

A further exploration and research agenda

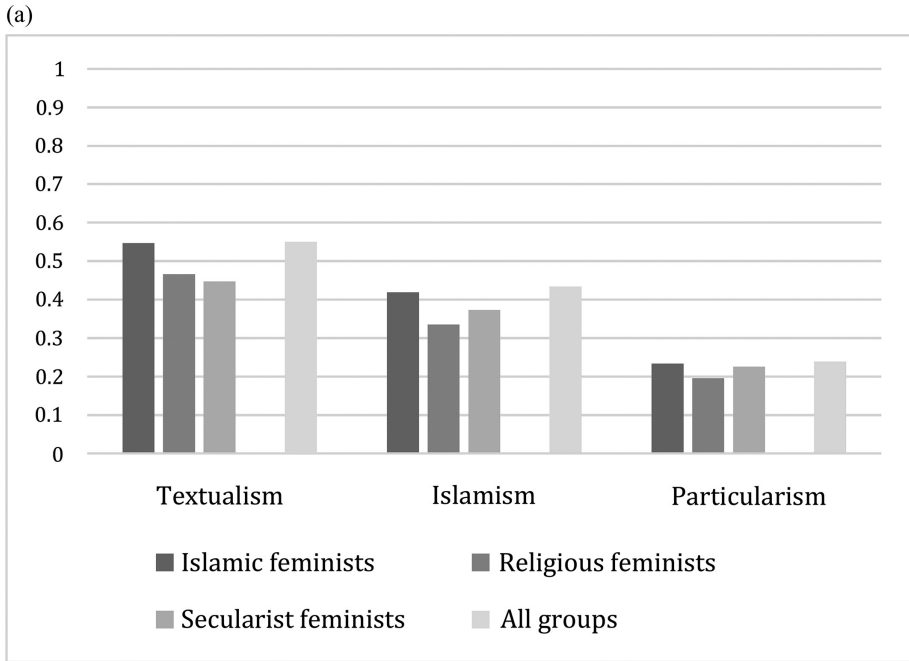
Although the previous sections have answered our core questions, additional questions remain from our literature review. Exploring their answers may guide future work on support for Muslim feminism. The literature overview showed that Muslim feminist advocates reinterpret religious texts textually and contextually, which raises the question as to whether ordinary Muslim feminism supporters are orthodox or not. Also, in-depth studies on Muslim feminism advocates tend to focus on certain countries (eg Tunisia) and times (eg the Arab uprisings), but is Muslim feminism restricted to these MENA contexts? Based on our LCA, we provide the first answers here to jump-start future work on Muslim feminism. Additionally, as we observed that women are more central to Muslim feminist movements, we explore differences between women and men.

Are Muslim feminists orthodox?

The LCAs grouped respondents according to how attached they felt to religion. Shifting the focus to how they interpret their religion helps assess whether our two groups of Muslim feminists do, indeed, overlap with the concepts of religious and Islamic feminists (see Figure 1). Figures 4a and 4b show the average textualism (ie literal interpretations of religious scriptures), Islamism (ie supporting Islamic political structures) and particularism (ie disavowing other religions) per class (for a more elaborate discussion on this religiosity dimension, see Glas et al, 2018).¹³

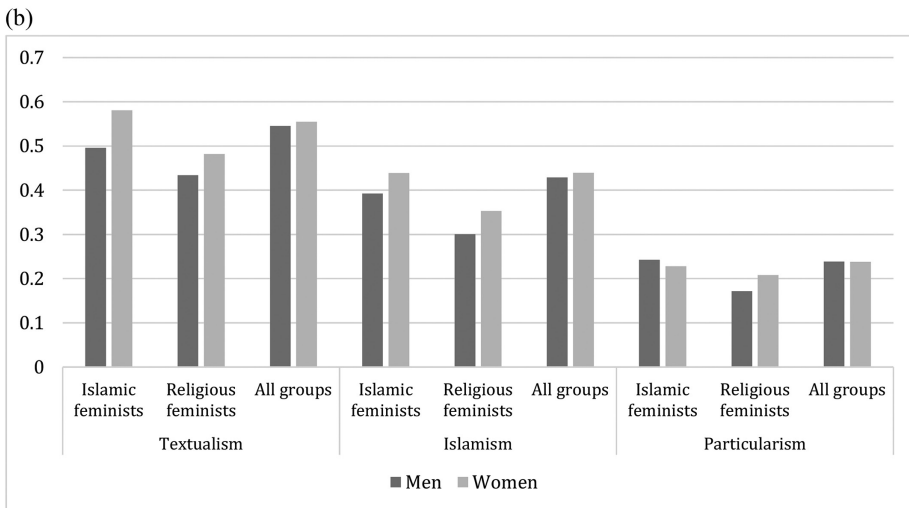
First and foremost, Figure 4a shows that Islamic feminists are more religiously orthodox – textualist, Islamist and particularist – than religious or secularist feminists, while religious feminists are consistently among the least orthodox classes. Recalling the literature overview’s discussion concerning religious reinterpretations, it thus seems that both textualism and contextualism are also featured among ordinary Muslim feminist supporters, but different groups are more disposed to particular strategies. Islamic feminists seem to stick more to the letter of religious texts and combine feminist views with moderately Islamist stances, while religious feminists seem more disconnected from such religious interpretations.

Figure 4a: Average doctrinal beliefs among feminists



Note: $N = 64,490$.

Figure 4b: Average doctrinal beliefs among Muslim feminists per gender



Note: $N = 64,490$.

Interestingly, religious feminists are even less Islamist and particularist than secularist feminists – although we should remember here that secularist feminists are *relatively* less (but still quite) religious and that citizens can be less religious but prefer theocracies (cf Moaddel, 2017; Spierings, 2018).¹⁴ Still, this striking finding does stress the

importance of empirical study into general Arab publics' support for feminism, and especially the relevance of separating Islamic from religious feminists as religious feminists seem to be the most flexible in their religious views.

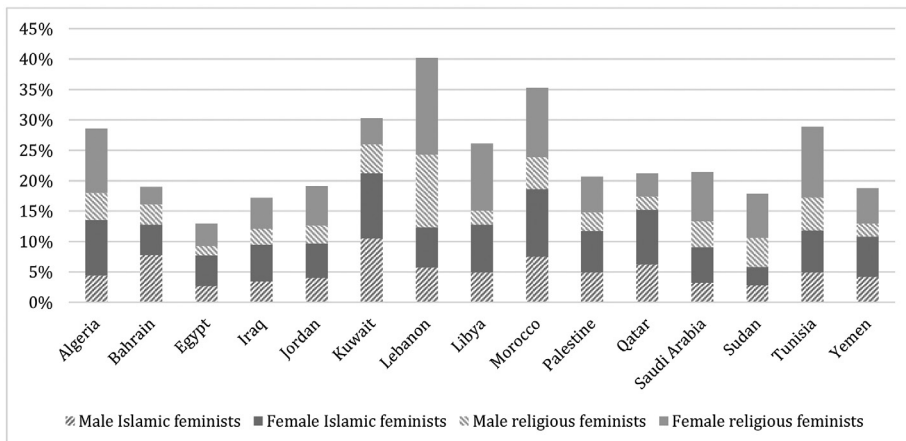
Concerning the gender-specific results in Figure 4b, female supporters of Muslim feminism are more religiously orthodox than their male counterparts. In our whole sample, on average, women are slightly (but significantly) more textualist and Islamist than men, but these gender gaps widen considerably among Islamic and religious feminists. This may imply that women are more inclined or better equipped than men to rhyme religious orthodoxy with support for (Muslim) feminism.

Where are the Muslim feminists?

The largest shares of Muslim feminism supporters are found in Algeria, Tunisia, Kuwait, Morocco and Lebanon, and the lowest are found in Egypt, Iraq and Sudan (see Figure 5).¹⁵ It thus seems that relatively peaceful, secular and democratic countries score better than currently unstable and Islamist countries, as one may expect. Simultaneously, these results imply that, in and of itself, a stronger women's rights movement is not decisive as Egypt, which has strong movements – although not as strong as Morocco and Tunisia (UNDP, 2006; Moghadam, 2013) – is not among the countries with the most Muslim feminists. Also, oil money does not necessarily stifle Muslim feminism support, as Kuwait shows (cf Ross, 2008).

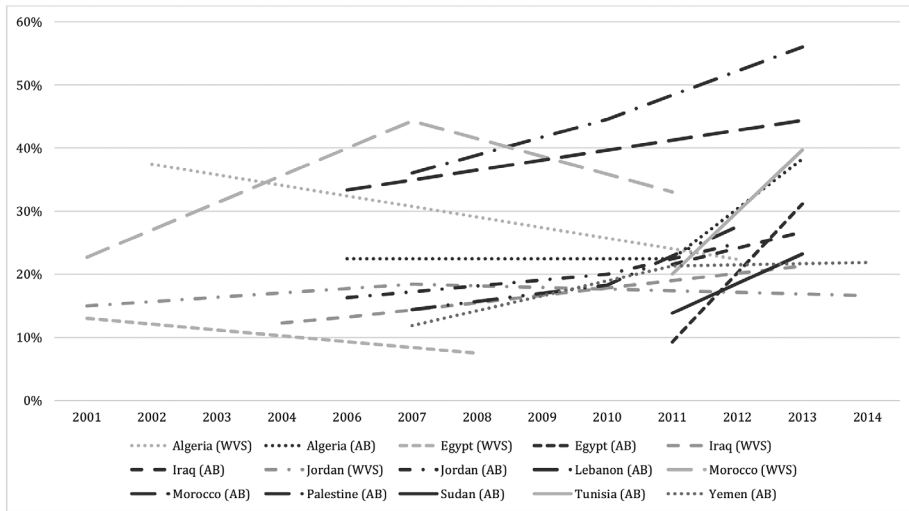
Disentangling these results, countries with large shares of Muslim feminists have activated different support bases among their publics. Algeria's, Morocco's and Tunisia's high shares of Muslim feminists seem mostly due to their considerable numbers of *female* supporters. However, Kuwait's (and Bahrain's) support base seems to be mostly made up of Islamic feminists, and thus a marked share of male allies. In Lebanon, the massive share of male religious feminists especially stands out. While future studies are needed to assess what exactly fuels these patterns, these results imply that varying conditions trigger different segments of the population to support Muslim feminism, and to do so in differing ways.

Figure 5: Muslim feminists per gender per country



Note: N = 64,490.

Figure 6: Shares of Muslim feminism supporters over time



Longitudinally speaking, shares of Muslim feminism supporters have generally increased between 2001 and 2014 (see Figure 6). Of the 15 countries that were surveyed at least twice, 13 show increases. The growth in the shares of Muslim feminism supporters is especially prevalent since 2011, which makes a connection with the Arab uprisings obvious, although it is too soon to assert whether this change is persistent. At any rate, these results imply that even though the Arab Spring has not led to regime change or progressive policy shifts in many MENA countries, it did seem to alter public perceptions (Spierings, 2017).

Altogether, these analyses highlight that both individual and contextual forces may fuel MENA citizens to support Muslim feminism; future studies should lay bare which drivers matter most.

Conclusion

Previous large-scale public opinion studies have argued that Muslims support feminism less than non-Muslims in Arab MENA countries, but they have turned a blind eye to the deviations from this pattern (eg Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Alexander and Welzel, 2011; Lussier and Fish, 2016; Price, 2015). Muslims who are highly religious and simultaneously support feminism have been disregarded, even though studying this group can help thwart simplistic Orientalist depictions of the region, as described by Said (1979). The present study has carried out a grounded analysis of these supporters of Muslim feminism by connecting insights from in-depth studies on Muslim feminist activism with LCAs on almost 65,000 Muslims in Arab MENA countries.

As the collection of examples of Muslim feminism from in-depth studies implied, we found that supporting Muslim feminism is far from uncommon, also among larger publics. No less than one in five Muslims in Arab MENA countries were found to both be highly attached to religion *and* support gender equality and women's empowerment. Rather than scattered anomalies to be overlooked, supporters of Muslim feminism are thus a substantial and seemingly growing group in Arab MENA countries, pressing the need for further quantitative studies to place them centre stage.

Simultaneously, Muslim feminists' support for feminism was found to differ distinctly between issues. Mirroring our review of in-depth studies, the principle of equal opportunities was supported more than the suitability of public-sphere empowerment for women, also among Muslim feminists (cf Badran, 2008; Moghadam, 2013). For instance, Muslim feminists were far more likely to support women's equal access to political leadership positions than to believe that women would be as good as men at political leadership.

Besides this common core of Muslim feminism supporters, our analyses revealed small but distinct differences among them, which lead to a further split into two roughly equal-sized factions. The first group were more likely to *strongly* support feminist issues – even more so than 'secularist feminists' – while the second were slightly more attached to Islam and more (scripturally) orthodox. These results echo in-depth studies' distinctions between *religious* feminist activists and *Islamic* feminist activists, with the former 'merely' being both highly religious and feminist while the latter actively employ religion for feminist ends (cf Badran, 2005; Selim, 2005; Mir-Hosseini, 2011; El Haitami, 2016).

As large-scale data on religious knowledge and feminist consciousness in MENA countries are unavailable, we cannot empirically unpack how the two groups of Muslim feminism supporters in our data connect religion and feminism, and whether they are aware of activists. Our interpretation of the two factions is thus based on theory. If such data do become available, future studies could delve into whether Muslim feminist supporters are more aware of historically empowered Muslim women or feminist reinterpretations of religious texts given that feminist movements highlight these to garner support.

Future work should also empirically address additional contexts; although our data included the largest sample of Arab MENA contexts currently available, they only included 15 MENA countries between 2001 and 2014. In line with our framework's stress on context dependency, it is possible that support for Muslim feminism differs in Arab countries and times not studied, which remains an open question.

The insights of this article also have implications beyond MENA countries, of which we will highlight two. First, globally, most public opinion research focuses on public-sphere gender equality, but our findings imply that public opinion on other feminist issues may diverge (eg Alexander and Welzel, 2011). Arab publics' support for equal opportunities far outweighs their support for women's public-sphere empowerment, which implies that feminists may have won publics' hearts concerning equal rights; the next battleground may be the decoupling of femininity and homemaking/caregiving tasks. While debates are currently ongoing (also among Western feminists) on whether feminism encompasses women's public-sphere empowerment or rather women's rights to choose private-sphere roles (Walby, 2011), viewing women as *sui generis* to occupying public roles is a feminist aim. Future large-scale studies should thus empirically address whether support for women's suitability of public-sphere empowerment is also lagging in other contexts, and not simply assume that it will follow the same trajectory as support for equal rights; this may provide insights into feminism's new front lines.

Second, this study provides a blueprint for future quantitative studies to focus on groups that diverge from the norm or average relations, especially studies that share our goal to pinpoint the often-overlooked unlikely allies of feminism. For instance, while Christian conservatives are generally at the core of opposition to feminism (Verloo, 2018), in-depth scholars have argued that certain orthodox evangelicals in the

US support equal opportunities (Gallagher and Smith, 1999). Similar unlikely allies may be found among Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, Catholics in South America and politically conservative female politicians globally (Schreiber, 2018). Quantitative work on these groups not only would further conversations between disciplines, but could also explain where opposition to feminism takes root and where (religious) arguments are successfully employed by political actors to pull opposition-aligned forces on board for equality (Avishai et al, 2015; Kantola and Verloo, 2018; Tripp and Hughes, 2018). Although quantitative work on these average-defying groups is currently scarce, quantitative methods, in and of themselves, do not disqualify studies from addressing these groups (Spierings, 2012). As this study on highly religious Arab Muslims who support feminism has illustrated, insights from in-depth studies on unlikely allies of feminism can be translated to quantitative studies as well, and therein lies a largely untrodden path for quantitative scholars.

Table A1: Seven-class latent class model

Being a housewife is just as fulfilling for women as working for a pay					
	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	[Disagree or disagree strongly]
Islamic feminists	0.23	0.38	0.35	0.04	0.39
Religious feminists	0.38	0.22	0.14	0.26	0.40
Secularist feminists	0.12	0.26	0.54	0.07	0.61
Latent class 4	0.71	0.15	0.09	0.05	0.14
Latent class 5	0.21	0.58	0.19	0.02	0.21
Latent class 6	0.6	0.19	0.14	0.07	0.21
Latent class 7	0.26	0.53	0.18	0.04	0.22
Men and women should have equal work opportunities					
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	[Agree or agree strongly]
Islamic feminists	0.01	0.1	0.73	0.16	0.89
Religious feminists	0.03	0.04	0.11	0.81	0.93
Secularist feminists	0	0.04	0.31	0.65	0.95
Latent class 4	0.04	0.11	0.19	0.66	0.85
Latent class 5	0.01	0.29	0.64	0.07	0.70
Latent class 6	0.37	0.37	0.16	0.1	0.26
Latent class 7	0.04	0.75	0.2	0.01	0.21
When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women					
	Agree	Neither	Disagree		
Islamic feminists	0.45	0.21	0.34		
Religious feminists	0.4	0.12	0.47		
Secularist feminists	0.27	0.36	0.37		
Latent class 4	0.88	0.04	0.07		
Latent class 5	0.87	0.07	0.06		
Latent class 6	0.93	0.03	0.04		
Latent class 7	0.55	0.28	0.17		

Table A1: Continued

Men are better political leaders than women					
	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	[Disagree or disagree strongly]
Islamic feminists	0.11	0.28	0.57	0.04	0.62
Religious feminists	0.17	0.21	0.17	0.45	0.62
Secularist feminists	0.02	0.28	0.62	0.07	0.70
Latent class 4	0.85	0.09	0.06	0.00	0.06
Latent class 5	0.38	0.58	0.04	0.00	0.04
Latent class 6	0.86	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.06
Latent class 7	0.30	0.53	0.15	0.02	0.16
Women can become presidents/prime ministers of Muslim states					
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	[Agree or agree strongly]
Islamic feminists	0.03	0.09	0.80	0.08	0.88
Religious feminists	0.08	0.04	0.21	0.67	0.88
Secularist feminists	0.01	0.07	0.11	0.81	0.92
Latent class 4	0.22	0.16	0.15	0.46	0.62
Latent class 5	0.17	0.40	0.40	0.03	0.44
Latent class 6	0.74	0.16	0.08	0.02	0.10
Latent class 7	0.11	0.74	0.13	0.02	0.15
University education is more important for boys than girls					
	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	[Disagree or disagree strongly]
Islamic feminists	0.03	0.09	0.64	0.25	0.89
Religious feminists	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.94	0.95
Secularist feminists	0.04	0.07	0.60	0.29	0.89
Latent class 4	0.31	0.05	0.22	0.42	0.63
Latent class 5	0.03	0.29	0.50	0.19	0.69
Latent class 6	0.42	0.16	0.19	0.23	0.42
Latent class 7	0.12	0.46	0.37	0.05	0.42
Married women can work outside the home					
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly	[Agree or agree strongly]
Islamic feminists	0.01	0.05	0.86	0.08	0.95
Religious feminists	0.03	0.01	0.11	0.85	0.96
Secularist feminists	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.94	0.99
Latent class 4	0.02	0.04	0.18	0.76	0.94
Latent class 5	0.00	0.08	0.80	0.11	0.92
Latent class 6	0.39	0.22	0.34	0.06	0.40
Latent class 7	0.05	0.69	0.26	0.00	0.26

Importance of God in life										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Islamic feminists	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.02	0.95
Religious feminists	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0	0	0.01	0.02	0.95
Secularist feminists	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.08	0.12	0.13	0.57
Latent class 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.97
Latent class 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.92
Latent class 6	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.93
Latent class 7	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.09	0.09	0.59
Importance of religion in life										
	Not important	Not very important	Important	Very important						
Islamic feminists	0	0	0.02	0.98						
Religious feminists	0	0.01	0.06	0.93						
Secularist feminists	0.03	0.07	0.36	0.54						
Latent class 4	0	0	0	1						
Latent class 5	0	0	0.04	0.96						
Latent class 6	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.94						
Latent class 7	0.03	0.1	0.39	0.48						

(Continued)

Religious self-identification I									
	Atheist	Non-religious	Religious						
Islamic feminists	0.03	0.08	0.89						
Religious feminists	0.06	0.17	0.77						
Secularist feminists	0.03	0.39	0.59						
Latent class 4	0	0.02	0.98						
Latent class 5	0.01	0.12	0.87						
Latent class 6	0.03	0.31	0.67						
Latent class 7	0.04	0.37	0.59						
Religious self-identification II									
	Non-religious	Religious	Very religious	[Religious or very religious]					
Islamic feminists	0.1	0.47	0.43	0.9					
Religious feminists	0.1	0.51	0.39	0.9					
Secularist feminists	0.11	0.49	0.4	0.89					
Latent class 4	0.08	0.48	0.44	0.92					
Latent class 5	0.08	0.52	0.4	0.92					
Latent class 6	0.09	0.41	0.49	0.91					
Latent class 7	0.12	0.38	0.51	0.88					

(Continued)

Importance of God in life										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Islamic feminists	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.02	0.95
Religious feminists	0.01	0	0	0	0.01	0	0	0.01	0.02	0.95
Secular feminists	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.08	0.12	0.13	0.57
Latent class 4	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.09	0.09	0.59
Latent class 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.97
Latent class 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.92
Latent class 7	0	0	0	0	0	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.93
Importance of religion in life										
	Not important	Not very important	Important	Very important						
Islamic feminists	0	0	0.02	0.98						
Religious feminists	0	0.01	0.06	0.93						
Secular feminists	0.03	0.07	0.36	0.54						
Latent class 4	0.03	0.1	0.39	0.48						
Latent class 5	0	0	0	1						
Latent class 6	0	0	0.04	0.96						
Latent class 7	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.94						

(Continued)

Religious self-identification (I)									
	Atheist	Non-religious	Religious						
Islamic feminists	0.03	0.08	0.89						
Religious feminists	0.06	0.17	0.77						
Secular feminists	0.03	0.39	0.59						
Latent class 4	0.04	0.37	0.59						
Latent class 5	0	0.02	0.98						
Latent class 6	0.01	0.12	0.87						
Latent class 7	0.03	0.31	0.67						
Religious self-identification (II)									
	Non-religious	Religious	Very religious	[Religious or very religious]					
Islamic feminists	0.1	0.47	0.43	0.9					
Religious feminists	0.1	0.51	0.39	0.9					
Secular feminists	0.11	0.49	0.4	0.89					
Latent class 4	0.12	0.38	0.51	0.88					
Latent class 5	0.08	0.48	0.44	0.92					
Latent class 6	0.08	0.52	0.4	0.92					
Latent class 7	0.09	0.41	0.49	0.91					

Note: N = 64,490.

Funding details

This work was supported by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) under Grant 406-16-517.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and the participants of the Radboud sociology seminar.

Author biographies

Saskia Glas is a PhD candidate in sociology at Radboud University, Netherlands; the PhD project is funded by the NWO. Currently, her main research interests include (attitudes regarding) women's equality, (attitudes regarding) politics and religiosity, in particular, in the Arab Middle East and North Africa.

Niels Spierings is Assistant Professor in sociology at Radboud University, Netherlands. Among his research interests are women's societal and economic position, religion, migration, and political behaviour and socio-political attitudes. Two of his current projects are funded by NWO (451-15-006) and focus on Islam and social attitudes in the Arab region.

Notes

1. See: www.arabbarometer.org/; www.worldvaluessurvey.org/
2. Seven surveys omitted denomination. In Algeria (AB1), Morocco (AB1) and Yemen (AB2), over 99 per cent of respondents in other waves were Muslims, so we included them. For Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar (WVS6), we only included those born and able to vote in those countries. We excluded the Egypt WVS6 as Egypt has a substantive Christian population.
3. Results are available from the authors.
4. *T*-tests: $p < 0.01$.
5. One in five remains accurate if we consider the 95 per cent sample.
6. Also, they are only separated in models with more than five classes.
7. The average support for 'equality' items is higher than 'empowerment' for each class (*t*-tests: $p < 0.01$).
8. *T*-tests on observed scores: $p < 0.01$.
9. Muslim feminists' and secularist feminists' 'equality' does not differ (*t*-tests: $p = 0.9$), but secularist feminists support 'empowerment' more (*t*-tests: $p < 0.01$).
10. Muslim feminists remain significantly less likely than secularist feminists to support empowerment if we exclude the item on fulfilment by jobs.
11. The exception of the 'equal work opportunities during job scarcity' item is probably methodological as this is the only three-point item and religious feminists often choose the highest answer category (discussed later).
12. *T*-tests show that religious feminists' support for educational equality is significantly higher than Islamic feminists' and secularist feminists' ($p < 0.05$).
13. Details can also be obtained from the authors. *Textualism*: the average belief that euthanasia and suicide are not justifiable; buying lottery tickets contradicts Islam; and

banks should not charge interest. *Islamism*: religious leaders should influence how people vote and government decisions; more politicians should hold religious beliefs; and only sharia laws should be enacted. *Particularism*: believing that non-Muslims should have fewer rights and not wanting non-Muslims as neighbours.

14. T-tests show that each doctrinal belief differs significantly between secularist, religious and Islamic feminists ($p < 0.05$).
15. Although this pattern holds regardless of survey type, shares of Muslim feminism supporters in Bahrain, Kuwait and Lebanon are larger in the AB data.

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