

**“Still Dreaming”: Exploring the Experiences of Employment and Discrimination in
Female, Muslim Migrant Communities Globally**

by

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Bachelor of Philosophy in International and Area Studies and Sociology,
University of Pittsburgh, 2023

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2023

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
DAVID C. FREDERICK HONORS COLLEGE

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2023

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Female, Muslim migrants globally face unique experiences because of their intersectional identities in gender and religious identity. This intersectionality is largely unstudied in migration literature, which still lags other fields of studies in representation of women. The study employs a case study in Pittsburgh consisting of qualitative interviews with different migrants in the city to determine the effects of identity on employment experiences in the city. These findings are discussed in tandem with research conducted in France and Germany to examine how these experiences compare globally. The study finds that religious discrimination is highly prevalent and impacts participants who wear the *hijab* most. The study suggests the improvement of social resources to the community to diversify fields of employment occupied by the group and more childcare services accessibility.

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Preface

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support from my family, friends, and Pitt faculty in supporting my efforts while writing this thesis. I would have never been able to conduct research and achieve my academic goals without their support.

Thank you Mutti, Papa, Sophie, and Raffi for always supporting me and believing in me when I needed it most. Thank you for travelling with me and teaching me.

Thank you to all my Pitt friends who acted as my cheerleaders for the past four years and always had fun with me, even after late nights at the library.

Thank you to my Pitt faculty for assisting me in this hefty process, especially to my thesis advisor Dr. Cynthia Salter. Without your help and guidance, I would have never been able to pursue a project like this. Thank you to Dr. Horia Dijmarescu and Elaine Linn for pushing me to achieve the best I could and keeping me on track. Thank you to the committee as well.

Thank you to all the women who participated in this study and shared their stories with me. I will continue to advocate for our community and representation.

I am beyond grateful for the support I have received over the past few years, and after writing over 50 pages for this thesis, it is surprisingly hard to gather my thoughts in the preface. Thank you, Danke, ευχαριστώ, شكرًا.

1.0 Introduction

Since the late 20th century, Muslim representation in migration patterns towards Western countries has increased dramatically. This representation, however, has been met with political discourse of Islamophobia and Orientalism, causing discrimination towards the religious group across race and ethnic identities. As one of the largest growing populations in the United States, Muslims account for approximately 3.45 million Americans and are expected to double in demographic representation by 2050 (Lipka 2017). New immigrant waves cause cultural and social changes in different social environments. Although these interactions result in positive social changes, the introduction of immigrant and social “other” groups into new environments also causes tension, which can result in discrimination and social isolation of the newly introduced immigrant group. Discrimination and social isolation can take both intercultural and intracultural forms, with those identifying with intersectional identities at the highest risk. For instance, an immigrant woman may experience intercultural discrimination when called names by a host country citizen and experience intracultural discrimination when denied higher education opportunities by her own community. Muslims are significantly overrepresented as immigrants, with over three quarters of all Muslim Americans either identifying as first or second generation Americans (Pew Research Center 2017).

As one of the newest demographic representations in the United States, Muslim Americans face discrimination because of foreign attributes and Islamophobia. Their disproportionate representation in immigrant populations make them susceptible to negative political discourse on migration. Muslims face societal isolation from American culture because of their immigrant roots from non-European countries, which enhances a “foreign” perception of the community within a

predominantly white identifying country. Identifying as both non-European and non-Christian subjects Muslim Americans to being more likely to be perceived as “foreign”. These perceptions are reproduced within Muslim American communities who feel unwelcome or different, leading to hesitancy to integrate into American society and potential social isolation because they feel unwelcome. As such, Muslim American communities have faced discrimination during integration into American society, especially in the workforce. Muslim women are particularly vulnerable to social isolation when immigrating to other countries because of the culmination of intercultural and intracultural discriminations aforementioned. This paper aims to analyze and draw attention to the experiences of Muslim women integrating into American workforces within Pittsburgh, a small-size American city.

Migration literature lacks intersectionality in studying the experiences of women or Muslims. Both subjects have recently increased their representation in migration literature, since the feminist international relations movements in the late 1970s to early 1980s and the uptick in Muslim migration since the early 2000s. However, few studies examine the intersectionality of these identities and how this intersectionality may create a different experience. Literature depicting religious identity is usually written in conjunction with other identities, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status. These other identities confound the experiences of religious discrimination with other variables. Muslim women are particularly vulnerable to this confounding because their experiences in employment and discrimination are not considered separately from the male Muslim migrant experience. Research on the hijab tends to distinguish these gender identities in studies on religious discrimination, but studies on the hijab solely do not engage with the migrant element. Therefore, this study will consider the experiences of Muslim female

migrants to closely examine their experiences with employment and discuss how these experiences may diverge from their male counterparts or non-immigrant counterparts.

Women continue to be underrepresented in migration literature, but their representation has increased since feminist IR movements in the late 1970s. This underrepresentation stems from assumptions that female migrants do not contribute to destination country economies, because they are assumed to participate solely in the informal economic sphere. Gendered discourse, however, is vital to effectively evaluating the experiences of women in relation to global processes (Acker 2004). Although gender is not confined to a simplistic binary, this study utilizes “male” and “female” to distinguish the inequalities and divisions socially constructed around these terms. When female migrants participate in formal employment, they are more likely to occupy positions considered women’s work or female friendly. These are occupations that are devalued compared to masculinized professions, share high proportions of female employment, and have historically reinforced gendered divisions between production and reproduction (Acker 2004). To clarify, occupations within “women’s work” are not defined solely by gender composition, but also in the devaluation and underpayment of these professional occupations. For this reason, the gender revolution has shown women moving into previously male-dominated fields, whereas few men have chosen to enter traditionally female ones (England 2010). Migration literature has ignored notions of intersectionality and its potential influences on migration experiences for those identifying with multiple socially marginalized identities. By ignoring the experiences of intersectionality between identity as a woman and identity as a migrant, literature on migrant work fails to account for unseen labor expected domestically. This means that the impacts on migration integration for migrants entering societies while facing gender discrimination and racial discrimination have not been previously evaluated effectively.

The study of employment experiences in communities helps in understanding socioeconomic status and contributes to well-being. Host countries, like the United States, which contain hierarchical social systems based on wealth can cause social anxiety and shame, eventually leading to health risks for those in marginalized or poor communities. (Fort, Mercer, and Gish 2004). This means that compromised economic status can lead to detrimental effects in social and mental well-being. Migrants in the United States and globally typically represent marginalized communities within destination countries due to factors of ethnocentrism, racism, and Islamophobia. These factors cause migrants to be vulnerable to discrimination and shifts in social balance, because they are seen as external to the society in which they reside. By studying the experiences of Muslim female immigrants integrating into American job markets, this research will consider the subsequent effects of socioeconomic status on their health and well-being. Although this research is not specific to health research, discrimination acts as a stressor for health issues. Experiences of discrimination are associated with negative mental and physical health outcomes for both men and women. These stressors are more detrimental to the health of ethnic women in the United States (Hahm, Ozonoff, Gaumond, and Sue 2010). According to their study on Asian Americans, Hahm and his colleagues found that women had more negative mental and physical health outcomes than men even when exposed to lower thresholds of discrimination. This research suggests that more gendered research should occur in the study of discrimination and health. Because socioeconomic status and discriminations negatively impact health outcomes, these effects will be considered in the analysis of employment experiences of Muslim female migrants.

Wealth inequality also contributes to poor health outcomes, especially in the United States which utilizes a privatized healthcare system (Wilkinson 1996). This system causes health

disparities in low income communities in the United States. A system of healthcare based on wealth is dangerous to migrant communities because migrant communities typically do not have generational wealth and they have lower household incomes. In 2019, the median immigrant household income was lower than the median US-born household, with the median immigrant household earning \$64,000 compared to the American born \$66,000. This difference widens when considering specific ethnic origins of the immigrant household. For instance, the median household income of ethnically identifying Middle Eastern households of \$54,000 was far lower than the income of ethnically identifying Asian households at \$88,000 (NCRC n.d.), with both groups overrepresented by immigrants. These income disparities between migrant households and US-born households may contribute to health disparities between the groups. Additionally, the difference in income levels between ethnicities will be considered while interviewing participants as a potential factor of variance within the sample. Both discrimination and income constitute nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes, or in public health terms, they are considered social determinants of health (CDC 2022). Though this study focuses on participants' experiences in employment and with discrimination, the effects of participant responses have larger implications on other aspects, such as health and well-being. Therefore, examining female, Muslim migrant experiences in employment and global labor markets fills gaps within the research literature on migration and feminist literature while allowing for analysis in other fields, like public health.

In addition to the Pittsburgh case study described in this paper, this study draws comparisons with other cities and nations globally. By examining studies conducted on migrant labor participation internationally, this study aims to explore broader conclusions on the effects of intersectional identities in the experiences of working in global labor markets. The study focuses

on two other countries with similar experiences in migration waves to Pittsburgh: France and Germany. The study will consider the historical contexts of each place of migration, including France's colonial history in predominantly Muslim countries and Germany's dual migration waves. Although each country's history with immigration differs slightly, both countries share similar rates of Muslim migration and reports of discrimination as the United States in the previous few decades. In the United States, over half of all U.S. Muslim adults are first generation Americans (58%) in the estimated 2.15 million adults (PEW Research 2017), and approximately 30% of these Muslim immigrants arrived between 2010-2017. Across Europe, there have been similar trends of increased immigration of Muslim communities following the onslaught of the Arab Spring in 2010. Since 2011, the European Union has filed almost 1.5 million asylum applications, mostly originating from countries in the Middle East and North Africa (BBC 2015). While there is no precise figure on the religious composition of these asylum cases, the radical increase of asylum seekers and migrants from the Middle East and North Africa indicates a change in the religious composition of EU countries, with an increase in Muslim immigrants from these regions. Lastly, this study considers the political response to the influx of asylum seekers and migrants in tandem with discourse on Islamophobia. In each country chosen as a unit of comparison to the Pittsburgh case study demonstrated strong political reactions to the increase of Muslim immigrant populations in their countries. To further understand the experiences of Muslim, female migrants entering global labor markets, this study will compare and contrast the results of a case study in Pittsburgh with findings from EU countries.

To accommodate for the lack of literature examining the employment experiences of intersectional migrant communities, this study explores the experiences of Muslim, female migrants to create generalizations on the community's employment globally. The study analyzes

the findings of the case study with other countries for globalized conclusions on the experiences of female, Muslim migrants. Additionally, the model aims to bridge gaps in current migration literature which ignore intersectionality of identities in migrant communities, specifically religious and gender identity. By utilizing employment as the unit of analysis, this study can draw broader conclusions on the well-being and social status of the female, Muslim migrant community. The study uses gendered lens to understand the effects of social gender constructions on the interviewees' experiences, meaning that the study examined the implications of its findings in terms of gender. Key findings of the case study include: the influence of gender on career choice, career prioritization, high rates of discrimination, and the role of community support systems. After discussing the findings of the case study, the findings are discussed in tandem with similar research conducted on female, Muslim migrants in the European Union.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Migration Theory

The definition of an international migrant, according to the United Nations, describes someone who “changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status” for a duration of one year or more (United Nations n.d.). This study examines the experiences of female, Muslim migrants working in different destination countries of the EU and North America. The study utilizes terminology such as “international migrant” and “destination country” to avoid confusion with these terms. The term “immigrant” may also be used interchangeably with “international migrant”. Migration is not a singular move, but rather, should be reconceptualized as a complex process (Castles and Miller 2007:25). Furthermore, “destination country” refers to the country of emigration by the migrant. So, if one migrated from the United States to Germany, the country of destination would be Germany and the country of origin would be the United States. This terminology avoids some of the confusion from the term “host country” and is more politically neutral than terminology like “traditional” and “modern” societies.

International migrants have impacted societies globally. There were an estimated 272 million international migrants in 2019, with 48% identifying as women (UN n.d.). The number of migrants internationally has increased annually, and this growth shows no sign of slowing in the near future. Because of this global increase in migration, literature studying international migration is even more relevant now. International migrants can catalyze social changes within their destination communities beyond migrant niches within these countries. To summarize their impact, “there can be few people in either industrialized or less developed countries today who do

not have personal experience of migration and its effects; this universal experience has become the hallmark of the age of migration” (Castles and Miller 2009). Scholars have also taken steps to distinguish the causes of migration, especially between “voluntary” versus “forced” migration. Russel King in his article “Towards a new map of European migration” creates four categories of migration: migration of free will to satisfy non-economic life ambitions (i.e. retiring to Florida), migrants encouraged by life circumstances (i.e. “economic migrants”), migrants who are compelled to migrate by extreme circumstances (i.e. poverty, crisis, war), and migrants forced to migrate by others (i.e. children, enslaved peoples, human trafficking) (King 2002). The former two categories describe migrants who migrate voluntarily, while the latter two describe involuntary migration. These distinctions will allow for critical analysis of circumstance and experiences of international migrants, because international migrants constitute a diverse and varied group.

International migration cannot be discussed without addressing the process of globalization. Globalization can be defined as a “process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions... generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power” (David Held as cited in Koser 2007). Globalization emerged in the 1970s amidst movements towards neoliberalism in global politics. Alongside the implementation of neoliberal policies, globalization impacted international migration by segmenting labor markets in wealthier nations and creating increased demands for migrant workers there (Koser 2007:28). The organized recruitment of manual workers amidst globalization during the 1970s increased a differentiation of labor forces, causing social divides and increased disparities (Castles and Miller 2009:107). These disparities can cause detrimental impacts to vulnerable populations in societies, like women. As mentioned in the definition of globalization, globalization generates flows of the “exercise of

power”, and these exercises of power enforced misogyny onto female international migrants. Globalization called for a differential valuation of migrants’ contributions to an economy or society, and therefore whether they deserve to reside and become permanent residents of a country (Kofman 2013). In calculating the social or economic worth of female migrants, the globalized world system often either completely ignores female contributions or devalues their contributions, specifically those in the informal and low-income sectors. Until the 1980s, there was a trend to consider female migrants as dependents of their male guardians, which completely ignored the family, social, and economic contributions of female migrants (King 2002). Migrant women providing paid labor were devalued in globalized economies because they were pushed into the least desirable occupations, such as repetitive factory work and lower skilled positions in the personal and community services sectors (Castles and Miller 2007). In short, globalization devalued female migrant contributions both economically and socially by enforcing patriarchal power relations that assumed male migrants provided more social value and economic development than their female counterparts.

2.2 Gendered Discourse in Migration Literature and the Feminist Movement

Gendered discourse is vital to understanding the differences in migrant experiences participating in economic activities. Gender can be understood as the social meanings and identities that are based in reproductive and power relationships (Naere and Akhtar 2014). Gender is a meaningful tool of analysis when examining migrants in destination economies because both their status as a migrant and their gender identity can cause negative outcomes for female migrants. In her work, “Birds of Passage are also Women...”, Mirjana Morokvasic argues against the

previous ignorance and assumptions against including women within migration literature. Her work confronts the “feminization of migration”, a transition which refers to the increased participation of female migrants beyond the private spheres into destination economic labor markets (Morokvasic 1984, De Haas, Castles, and Miller 2020). Because women’s work does not always fit into the reigning definitions of economic activity, there has been a lack of adequate data collection of their activity, according to Morokvasic. Scholars, like Morokvasic, were pioneers in feminist international relations (IR) and sociology, and their works demonstrated a need to reevaluate economic theories across subjects through a gendered lens. Female migrants, as described in Morokvasic’s essay, have been largely ignored in migration literature, despite their contributions throughout history. Although women have represented an equal share of migrant populations since the early 20th century, the term “feminization of migration” represents a transition from women as followers of male migrants to individuals migrating for their own personal economic and educational reasons (Haas et al 2020). Modern scholars still follow patriarchal claims when describing female migrant contributions. For instance, Russel King in his highly acclaimed and cited essay, claims that there are only three important categories of female migrants: the migration of sex workers, the international bride trade, and migration of domestic and care workers (King 2002). These claims ignore the vast numbers and contributions of female migrants, devalue the role of domestic care, and perpetuate power inequities. The three categories of work described by King are significant to studying economic labor of female international migrants, but this limited categorization largely ignores the presence of female migrants within the knowledge occupational sectors and educational institutions. King goes as far to emphasize the “libidinal factor in migration”, a claim that carries heavy undertones of misogyny. King’s claims provide an ample example of the ways in which traditional migration literature and scholarship

has sought to undermine and ignore the contributions of female international migrants. Since the late 21st century, migrant scholarship has opened towards gendered discourse, but the field still lacks adequate representation of female migrants across fields.

Since Morokvasic's essay, several feminist scholars have moved towards integrating gendered lenses into studies on migrant economic activities. One such study by Tienda and Booth counters the traditional assumption of migration literature that migrant women experience an elevation in social status through immigration. Migration policies seem to assume that destination countries offer better social and economic opportunities for migrants, especially destination countries in Europe and North America. These assumptions, however, are not fair or valid evaluations for migrant sub-groups, like women (Tienda and Booth 1991). In their study,

Tienda and Booth provide evidence of differences in economic and social benefits experienced by migrant women in comparison to their male counterparts. According to their study, a woman's social position depends on factors beyond the simple transition of "traditional" to "modern" society. These factors include familial and marital obligations, economic roles in home countries versus the destination country, reason for migrating, nature of the move (temporary or permanent), and cultural affiliation (Tienda and Booth 1991). By mapping out these factors, Tienda and Booth demonstrate how complicated the measurement of social status mobility is for female migrants. While these factors can apply to their male counterparts, female migrants are subject to gendered expectations in addition to the shifts in responsibility and economic liability that come with migration. These shifts in responsibility and economic liability include expectations to earn an income while managing domestic activities, like homecare and childcare.

The types of occupation filled by migrant women in destination workforces also deserves attention. Migrant women often occupy positions deemed as "undesirable" in destination countries

(Castles and Miller 2007:39). The connotation of migrant women and undesirable occupational positions occurs due to a combination of their intersecting and marginalized migrant and gender identities. Since the implementation of neoliberalist policies and expansion of globalization, migrants have been systematically recruited to higher income nations to fulfill jobs unwanted by the majority population. Gender identity intersects with the migrant status by enforcing social pressures to fulfill occupations in “women’s work”, which constitute devalued, gendered occupations. As female members of the destination countries break the “glass ceiling” and pursue better financial outcomes in male-dominated fields, the devalued feminized occupations of society, like nannies or maids, are filled by migrant women.

However, this concept does not apply universally to all migrant women in destination workforces. Migrant workers, although commonly recruited to fulfill less desirable occupations, also are called to fulfill occupations in the “knowledge” sector. A prime example of the fulfillment of the “knowledge” sector is the stereotype of the migrant male in the Information Technology (IT) sector (Kofman 2013). The “knowledge” sector is male denominated, but certain occupations, like medicine, are slowly achieving gender equity. The medicine sector in this study includes a variety of health-related professions, like nurses, physicians, dentists, and pharmacists. Still, the field of medicine constitutes one attributed to “care”, which is deemed “feminized” and women continue to occupy fields devalued within medicine (i.e. nursing).

In her essay on gendered labor migration, Eleonore Kofman questions the categorization of knowledge and construction of skills. She explores the classification of different types of knowledge that leads to the evaluation of migrants’ potential contributions to a destination economy and concludes that the “male migrant guarantees the reproduction of the global system through his technical and scientific prowess” (Kofman 2013). Here Kofman implies that migration

policies reproduce gendered ideologies of who should occupy certain fields when evaluating migrant potentials. This implication also symbolizes the male migrant as a reproducer of the global system. The dichotomy between desirable and undesirable occupations is clear here in regards to gender. American television even perpetuates these gendered stereotypes. The stereotype of the wealthy, male Asian doctor in *Dr. Kim* contrasts that of the overworked, female Caribbean nurse in *Bob Hearts Abishola* (CBS 2023 and Scott 2017). Migrant female workers come from educated backgrounds, but neoliberalist immigration policies value certain types of knowledge within a gendered framework while discounting others, leading to inequalities from the types of occupations fulfilled.

Furthermore, the assumption of an absolute increase in social status because of migration ignores discrimination and exclusionary practices acted upon female migrants. Female migrants have faced exclusion from vital networking and economic growth opportunities offered to their male counterparts, like access to migrant networks and niching. The benefits of migrant networks and niching are not extended to female migrants (Schrover, van der Leun, and Quispel 2007). Migrant networks refer to the systems of social capital exchanges within certain migrant ethnic communities (Raghuram, Henry, and Bornat 2010). Migrant networks provide immeasurable value to the integration of migrants in new societies because they allow access to social and economic opportunities in destination countries. The benefits of these networks are not equal among migrant communities, however, because they may limit economic opportunities for women in communities where traditional gender roles are valued (Schrover et al 2007). Schrover's evaluation of the subject of migrant niching and networking demonstrates that the exclusion of women from these networks occurs across ethnic and national backgrounds. By excluding female migrants from these economic opportunities, female migrants can become trapped in their new

host countries, unable to acquire independence without a livable income. Common practices excluding female migrants from networking opportunities counters the arguments positing that women experience an increase in social status when migrating, a theory similarly refuted by feminist scholars Morakvasic and Tienda and Booth. The assumption of female social progression through migration from traditional to modern societies is ill supported and is used to justify the exclusion of women in migration policy writing (Morokvasic 1984). Migrant women do not automatically experience social gains by migrating from traditional to modern societies.

2.3 Intersectionality

While Tienda and Booth provide arguments for the importance of reviewing female migrant experiences beyond assumptions of social progression through migration, their use of terminology like “traditional” and “modern” societies is questionable. These designations oversimplify migration transitions from home to destination countries. In a field where terminology is already debated, these oversimplified terms can be counterproductive towards the evaluation of the female migrant experience. These terms also mask the potential negative effects of other identities when immigrating, like racial or ethnic identity, which may cause further discrimination in countries attributed as “modern”.

Studies on the intersectionality of religious identity, gender, and immigration status in relation to economic integration are necessary to understanding the experiences of social subgroups and addressing gaps in feminist migration literature. These studies are important because they focus on subgroups which may otherwise be ignored. In her essay “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist

Theory and Antiracist Politics”, Kimberle Crenshaw argues for the importance of intersectionality in antiracism and feminism. She demonstrates through different case studies how an exclusion of Black women in both antiracism and feminist movements created a theoretical erasure for this population. Furthermore, the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive identities is harmful to those facing discrimination resulting from both entities, causing a “double jeopardy” (Crenshaw 1989). In response to her findings, the current study places focus on the ways in which gender interacts with religious identity and immigration status, specifically in the context of economic integration. Although, as described earlier, immigrant women are assumed to experience social status gains through migration from traditional to modern societies. Gender produces asymmetries in access to resources for new immigrants which can induce economic female subordination (Tienda and Booth 1991). It is difficult to assume an absolute increase in status due to migration from traditional to modern societies because gender defined responsibilities may be compounded rather than reduced. For instance, the addition of economic responsibilities by joining a “modern” society as a woman could further restrict immigrant women by adding to expected gender roles of housekeeping and childbearing. Within these “modern” societies, the role of childrearing and informal work may not provide the same status as they did in the country of origin, as well. The study of female migrants has been largely ignored in economic significance because of their involvement in informal sectors, like personal care and cleaning (de Haas et al 2020). Though involved economically, female migrants have been excluded from migration studies because of the type of work they fulfill. These exclusions may be more apparent in different ethnic, racial, or religious identifications of the migrant. With many pieces of migrant literature ignoring aspects of intersectionality, this study utilizes Crenshaw’s findings to justify the examination of female, Muslim migrants as an intersectionality identified sub-group worthy of their own study.

Migration studies lack effective representation of Muslim women because they are often grouped in studies with men or other female migrant groups, a consequence of some feminist migration scholars, like Morokvasic. Some of these feminist migration scholars have ignored factors of intersectionality within their investigations of the female migrant experience. The lack of intersectionality within the research causes potential gaps in their understanding. Because Muslim women face consequences based on migration status, religious identity, and gender, analysis of this intersectional group's migration experience should be individualized.

Morokvasic's article was influential for introducing female migrants into the limelight of migrant research and debate, however, her work and others of the time ignored factors of intersectionality, which is detrimental to the examination of migrant sub-groups. Although her revolutionary article pushes for the integration of female migrants in literature, her examination of non-Western migrants pushes the dangerous ideology that female migrants experience an increase in social status, if they come from "non-traditional" societies. Her feminist literature reflects Eurocentric ideologies on the welfare of female migrants from other parts of the world. In her work, Morokvasic uses the example of Turkish women in German societies and labels them as "victims of their tradition" (Morokvasic 1984). By working in Germany, Turkish migrants escape these "supposedly cultural prescriptions of acceptable work" and experience an increase in social status. The assumption of social progression and supposed freedom from working in modern societies ignores the potential risks migrant women face integrating into destination workforces. Migrant women face internal discrimination from communities who value traditional gender roles, losing the benefits of migrant networks offered to their male counterparts. By participating in labor markets, migrant women are assumed to be "liberalized" from oppressive societies, as shown by the German example of Turkish migrant women. However, these assumptions are dangerous

because they ignore the risks migrant women face in poorly paid, unstable work settings that are common for migrant women in destination countries. These assumptions also ignore the potential social risks of isolation from discrimination. Discourse on “liberalization” from oppressive societies frequents discussions about Muslim women globally because of Islamophobic rhetoric. Religious affiliation appears to affect the social perception of the group, especially in discussions of female oppression and the hijab.

2.4 Sociology of Islam: Colonial Feminism, Orientalism, and Double Consciousness

The sociology of Islam can constitute a paper of its own, but a general review of some social theories regarding Islam and the Middle East is useful before approaching the research question. Although migration literature has since expanded to include more female centered literature, assumptions of social and economic progression from migration for women persist, especially for the Muslim community. Muslims face judgment from Islamophobic perceptions of oppression and tradition. In a 2015 U.S. poll, 39% of respondents felt that Islamic and Western religious and social traditions were incompatible with each other (Telhami 2015). These judgements “other” Muslim people from American society by assuming that Muslims are culturally incompatible. Discrimination against Muslim and Islamic communities is rooted in Orientalism, an 18th and 19th century ideology which supported colonization of Middle Eastern territories by European powers.

The Middle East and West have long shared histories with each other, exchanging in trade, culture, and territories. However, the dynamic of Middle Eastern and Western relations shifted as colonial entities took control of Middle Eastern territories and industries in the 18th century.

Exchanges between the regions had lasted centuries before this dynamic shift, but the onset of French and British colonization of modern Middle Eastern territories inspired ethnocentric ideologies which justified colonialism, like “orientalism”. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said describes the term as the means in which Western civilizations conquered and ruled territories of the “Orient” culturally and ideologically. The term “Orient” refers to territories of North Africa, Middle East, Levant, and sometimes India, instead of the American connotation of the “Orient” located in the Far East. These methods of ideological colonization and rule redefined social class structures and customs in the region for decades, leading to discourse on the onset of “westernization” in their societies (Said 1978). In addition to reforms of social structure, colonial entities criticized local cultures and blamed Islam for the “backwardness” of the people. Among these discussions were conversations about the veil, or hijab, and gendered segregation. Colonialists, such as Lord Cromer of Egypt, frequently condemned Islam as a means of restricting the progression of those living in the Orient and praised Christianity for providing unity and raising moral standards (Tignor 1962). These accounts from colonial leaders are important to note because they shaped historical Western perceptions on colonies. Cromer’s account of Islam as an oppressive religion emulates the orientalist ideology of his time. Orientalism served to justify the mass conquest and degradation of Middle Eastern peoples throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Negative assumptions against Muslims curated in Western societies and influenced by the racist beliefs of Orientalism created the image of the oppressed Muslim woman. These assumptions visualize an oppressed Muslim woman hailing from a traditional Islamic society, forced to wear a burka and bearing children to one husband who has multiple wives. This picture of the Muslim woman is deeply rooted in the ideology of colonial feminism, where colonial

sentiments, specifically Islamophobia, are disguised as feminism (Ahmed 1992). Colonial feminism perpetuates ideas from Orientalism and colonialism within modern feminist discourse. Western ideology, especially in the United States, supports beliefs of colonial feminism because “just as Americans ‘know’ that Arabs are backward, they know with the same flawless certainty that Muslim women are terribly oppressed and degraded” (Ahmed 1982). The assumption that Muslim women are oppressed by their religion may endanger and socially isolate the same population this assumption seeks to liberate, because this assumption socially isolates Islam in Western societies and silences the needs of Muslim women. Muslim women face oppression and discrimination, like other social groups globally, but the unacknowledged but enduring assumptions by orientalism and colonial feminism can make Muslim women avoid discussing issues of discrimination to save their cultures from falling victim to inaccurate and prejudicial historical assumptions.

In his book “The Souls of Black Folk”, WEB Dubois defines “double consciousness” under two conditions: wanting to be both black and American, and acknowledging one’s social perception. Although the histories of Muslim women and black Americans differ, their marginalization has evoked similar experiences. Muslim women struggle to find placement in western societies, like France, that have continued rhetoric of orientalism and islamophobia. In order to feel accepted in these societies, Muslim women must sacrifice sharing their experiences of oppression by modern Islamic governments, misogyny, and other institutions in order to avoid feeding into these historical ideologies. When describing the common consciousness of black Americans, Dubois points to “... common hardship in poverty, poor land, and low wages; and, above all, from the sight of the Veil that hung between us and Opportunity” (Dubois 2007:33). For Muslim women, this veil is not only a metaphor, but can quite literally serve as a restriction to opportunities. The struggles of Muslim women living in the West can be understood through the

concept of double consciousness, as described by WEB Dubois, because this group balances two identities while acknowledging their social perception with the *hijab*.

The colonial feminist assumption that Muslim women are liberated when escaping Islamic societies silences consideration and discussion of gender-specific issues faced by the community within destination countries of the West. In these situations, Muslim female migrants are at a crossroads. As female migrants, they are subject to lower wages and employment. As Muslims, they are subject to higher rates of discrimination and colonial feminism. This intersection is important to examine because understanding how religious affiliation and gender interact in the integration of Muslim female migrants into Western societies can provide valuable insight for potential improvements in policies and resources for this growing population. As mentioned above, Tienda and Boothe contested arguments assuming a positive social progression as women migrate from home to destination countries, or “traditional” to “modern” societies. But in the context of Muslim women, particularly in Europe and North America, this progression is complicated by the “backwards” perceptions of Muslims in the West. Disregard for intersectionality also ignores social stressors experienced by minority groups, like the “double consciousness” social theory, where minority social groups must change and adapt interactions according to the appropriate social group. The stress and discrimination experienced as a Muslim female migrant counters the arguments enforced by older feminist migration scholars, like Tienda and Boothe, who ignored notions of intersectionality and race theory in their research.

2.5 The Global Perception of Muslims

Colonial feminist beliefs about the social status of Muslim women began with colonial settlements in the Middle East and North Africa during the mid-19th to 20th centuries, specifically with the colonial powers France and England. France's history with Muslim populations can be traced to its own colonial roots in these regions. The country experienced its first major increase in Muslim citizens during the 1960s when the French government granted asylum to Algerians on the French side of Algeria's War for Independence (Viorst 1996). France accepted these Algerians into French society, however many of these migrants faced expectations to assimilate to French culture, with Islam seeming incompatible with French culture. Trends of assimilation for Muslim citizens continue to be a point of political controversy for the state, because the state attempts to regulate religious symbols associated with Islam. Though France has long connections with the religion, Islam's association with colonies has ostracized the religion and its cultural links from French society. The ongoing hijab debate manifests the ostracization of Islam in modern French society and continues to remain a point of controversy in France's daily life for Muslims. During the colonial period, the hijab was a symbol connected to anti-colonialists because of French bans on the veil (Lang 2021). When France enforced bans on the hijab or veil in the colonial period, the hijab transformed from a religious symbol to a political one, symbolizing resistance. The next political actions against hijabs would occur throughout the 90s and 2000s, until headscarves became banned from public schools in 2004 and face veils completely banned in public spaces in 2010 (Lang 2021). These bans reflect France's struggle with the hijab and assimilating its formerly colonized populations into French society.

The hijab debate is important to note because of its impact on the female Muslim experience. Muslim women in France headline a plethora of debates in the political, religious and

social realms. Hijabs continue to headline political discussions, especially in the previous election. During her campaign, the presidential candidate Marine Le Pen proposed issuing fines to all Muslims who wear headscarves in public (France24 2022). This initiative would penalize the open religious expression of Muslim women in France and carry detrimental effects on discrimination for the community. The hijab in France carries more than a religious identity; it connotes to some political affiliation with anti-France sentiments and decolonization along with deviations from French society. France's history with Muslim populations as subjects of its colonial past is vital to understanding the placement of Muslim migrants as ostracized members of modern French society, which is especially evident in the hijab debate.

Similarly, the United States and other countries within the European Union have experienced controversies with the hijab. France has superseded these other nations by restricting the wearing of face veils and the hijab in public legally. The hijab controversy has extended to other countries in the EU as well since a controversial ruling in 2017 by the European Court of Justice allowing employment discrimination of religious symbols. In 2017, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) set a ruling allowing employers to adopt "neutrality policies" banning religious garb in the workplace (Niebergall 2017). This ruling led to mixed reactions across the EU, including questioning if the ruling was discriminatory. Although the ECJ rejected accusations of discrimination, the ruling targeted religious minorities in Europe, like Muslim women and Sikh men disproportionately. Since the ruling, the court has added that policies enforced by employers should meet a genuine need. Germany's prior constitutional law aims to protect workers from outright religion-based discrimination, but these protections have become complicated since the 2017 ruling. In May 2021, the German government passed a law regulating the appearance of civil servants in response to a case of a police officer with Nazi tattoos. The law, however, went beyond

banning symbols of hate to also allowing bans on “religious and ideological connotations if they are objectively capable of impairing trust in the civil servant’s neutral conduct of office”. Given this connotation, the laws could include hijabs or Jewish kippas (Roth 2021). These rulings do not mean that Muslim women in the EU will be unable to work, but the rulings negatively impact the potential employment experiences of hijab wearing women in the EU. The rulings reinforce ideas of colonial feminism and orientalism by ostracizing the hijab and its religious connotations.

Religious discrimination against Muslims in the European Union remains an issue for those working in labor markets. France struggles with Islamophobia towards its Muslim population, which subsequently affects labor market outcomes for the population. A study conducted by the Institute of Labor Economics examined the effect of religion on the hiring process in France. This study compared the callback rates of immigrants from Muslim and Christian affiliations for different occupations in France. After analyzing thousands of applications, the study found that inclusion of Muslim affiliation (in name or relevant experience) decreased the callback rates of applicants by 6.7 % (Valfort 2018:3). These findings demonstrate a clear bias and discrimination towards Muslim communities in the labor market of France. A report on the integration of new immigrants into the French labor market by the Migration Policy Institute supports these findings. This second report, focusing on country of origin, found that immigrants of North African and Middle Eastern origin were prone to unemployment at higher rates than immigrants from other European countries (Simon and Steichen 2014). This finding separates the issue of employment discrimination from migrant identity to ethnic identity or national background. Both publications highlight the issue of discrimination in the French labor market for Muslim migrants.

Germany’s history with Muslim migration began in the late 21st century with the onslaught of the “Gastarbeiter” or guestworker program. Both West Germany (the BRD) and East Germany

(the DDR) were in need of migrant labor to fulfill demand in the post-war economy, leading to the systematic recruitment of guest workers from Turkey, Vietnam, and Mozambique (Rabenschlag 2016). Guest worker employment implied a temporary migration to Germany, with the expectation that these migrants would return home after two years. Although they were expected to leave Germany, Turkish and other migrant workers were allowed to stay longer than the recruited two years and later, bring their families as well, following a 1964 recruitment treaty (DW 2011). The guest worker program transformed the labor forces across both East and West Germany, because it intensely diversified and redefined the German workforces. The rapid diversification of German workforces from the guest worker program also led to negative reactions to the new migrants, which continue to cause employment discrimination today. In their research “A job interview for Mo, but none for Mohammad”, Forstenlechner and Al-Waqfi found that religious discrimination seriously impacted employment experiences of Muslims in Germany and Austria. Sixty percent of their respondents across these two countries reported religious discrimination as a theme when seeking employment, with one respondent explaining “I understood soon enough that I won’t find a job with a headscarf on” (Forstenlechner and Al-Waqfi 2010). The hijab is specifically labeled as a reason of discrimination when seeking employment in Austria and Germany, signaling the difficulty in seeking employment as Muslim in these countries. Germany’s history with Muslim migrants began with labor demands in the post-war period, but the country struggled with the changes in demographics and diversity that resulted. Although these migrants helped both East and West German economies recover, policies allowing guest workers to gain citizenship and bring families with them were slow to emerge. Today, the hesitance of policies allowing guestworker citizenship in the negative attitudes towards Muslim employees of Germany today, despite their presence in the country lasting decades.

2.6 Female Migrants Globally

With the feminization of migration, more female migrants are joining destination labor markets. Female migrants account for more than half of all admissions for residence in France under non-family reasons, like education or employment (Beauchemin, Borrel, and Regnard 2013). This means that female migrants are participating in French labor markets unlike in earlier cases of migration to the country . However, Muslim, female migrants fall at an intersection of traditional and changing social values. One of the consequences of this intersection is the downgrade of position and qualification. Female migrants in France are over-represented in “women’s work”, like care positions. In a 2013 study, 14% of home helpers were migrants, though migrants only comprise 8% of the active labor market in France (Lemiere, 2013). With women already subject to gender discriminations in occupational trajectory and availability, the overrepresentation of migrant women in home care demonstrates how vulnerable this population is in the French labor market. Female migrants may already find themselves at a disadvantage in the French labor market depending on the equality in education of their home country. Furthermore, 9% of migrants report working in a position below their qualification, compared to 7% of French people (Domergue 2015). These different statistics showcase the disadvantages female migrants face in the French labor market. Already at a disposition because of their foreign status in French society, migrants are more likely to work in unqualified position. This is highlighted in the overrepresentation of female migrants in homecare. Though male migrants may benefit from social networks by ethnic enclaves, female migrants in France struggle to access the same professional integration schemes. This struggle can be attributed to the traditional social values held in migrant communities, especially those of Muslim affiliation. Muslim, female

migrants are subject to traditional values of the household while navigating a prejudiced labor market.

The feminization of migration is also impacting Germany's migrant labor forces, but this feminization is highly influenced by shifting policies in family reunification and the dispersal of asylum seekers and refugees. In 2016, almost three quarters of the 550,000 Syrian asylum seekers who arrived in Germany were male (Damir-Geilsdorf and Sabra 2018). Syrian women and other family members have and are still actively reunifying since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War with these male family members who found asylum in countries like Germany. This process of reunification is one source of Germany's increase in female migrants participating in the labor forces. Following reunification in 1990, Germany's reform policies included the flexibilization of the labor market, which meant the liberalization of legal framework for minor employment and fixed-term contracts (Kontos, Haferburg, and Sacaliuc 2006). The flexibilization of the labor market meant that occupations of "women's work", which were considered female majority and low commitment, were expanded, especially in the domestic sector. Migrants largely fulfilled the occupations created in the flexibilization of Germany's economy, with female migrants working mostly in the domestic, hotel and restaurant, and sex industries (Krieger, Ludwig, Schupp, and Will 2006). This finding follows that of other migration literature on female migrants, demonstrating that female migrants occupy positions devalued by society, like those considered in the domestic or sex industries. These occupations are also considered flexible, implying that women occupying these positions are expected to complete domestic duties after work. Flexible occupations can be detrimental for women because they are highly unstable. The occupations are generally paid hourly, rather than as a salary, and women occupying these positions may not be able to work full-time. Germany's reunification policies impacted employment for female

migrants by enforcing a “flexibilization” of the labor market. These occupations are less desirable because they are unstable and usually not full-time positions, but they comprise the labor of occupations female migrants in Germany participate in. Germany’s female migrant population is growing because of reunification policies and the dispersal of asylum seekers and refugees, and these female migrants are more likely to work in flexible labor market sectors.

In recognition of these labor market struggles of female migrants, NGOs and grassroots organizations have created initiatives to assist in education and networking for this community in order to improve their occupational trajectory. These organizations are external to the community. Some of these initiatives include cultural significance, like Azmari, a migrant led initiative in France. This association formed under the general premise of “fighting against the social exclusion of migrant women and their children ” (Azmari, n.d.). This distinction between “fighting” and “integrating” is significant because it demonstrates the expectation of migrants to lose their cultural values in migration. The organization primarily offers education services to female migrants from Africa and the Middle East. These services range from language courses to skills training. Many of the migrant women Azmari works with are Muslim and face social ostracization from this identity. Organizations, like Azmari, have formed to protect migrant women in French society by valuing cultural heritage and offering education courses.

The French government also created initiatives to offer language courses to migrant women seeking work. One report by the UNHCR interviewed female asylum seekers and refugees in France to report that many of their respondents did not seek employment because of problems with education and childcare issues (Freedman 2009:51). Issues in language proficiency limit labor market integration. The lack of childcare services for migrant women means that language classes and job hunting is more constrained. Additionally, some female migrants rely on these education

courses because of education inequalities in home countries. The French government has taken initiatives to bridge this gap in education between female and male migrants and to offer increased language services since the report was released. In 2018, the Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced that all legal migrants in the country will receive 400 hours of free French language lessons. Parents who attended these lessons would also receive free childcare during lessons (Mohdin 2018). This initiative began addressing issues in education, but the lack of childcare services for female migrants continues to limit their labor market integration in France. Issues in childcare services are not limited to France, however, because this barrier for female migrants surfaces throughout the EU. Germany offers similar language and occupational services to refugees and migrants, but the lack of childcare services for migrant women has created a language fluency gap between male and female migrants. A survey conducted among refugees in 2017 found that only 26% of female refugee respondents felt that they cultivated strong German language skills compared to 44% of their male counterparts (Bruecker, Jaschke, and Kosyakova 2019:24). The language disparity among migrants in Germany may cause power imbalances within families and reduces the possibilities of economic independence for female migrants. Following these issues, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) began offering childcare assistance in March of 2017 for migrant women seeking employment or taking German language classes (Esposito 2022). Still, women's rights organizations in Germany say there is a lack of safe accommodation and integration services for female migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Though the country is known for its family friendly policies, Germany's lack of assistance programs to female migrants in language and childcare programs is creating inequalities in migrant communities and can lead to power imbalances in familial relationships. Research and activism in

both countries demonstrate a widespread need in European Union countries for female-centered migration policies to assist in language and occupational gaps.

3.0 Argument and Methodology

This study utilizes a hybrid approach to evaluating the occupational experiences of Muslim, female migrants within Pittsburgh by acquiring a reflexivist approach to literature discussion while applying a case study to a broader issue. As the study comes from the perspective of a female, Muslim researcher, the study inherently holds a reflexivist stance. Reflexivism as an approach to research refers to the evaluation of social contexts within research approaches, specifically between the researcher and subject (Jackson 2016:173). As a researcher with connections to the community surveyed in this study, the study called for constant reevaluations of the role of social contexts in altering the creation of research questions and their subsequent investigations. Reflexivism calls for the scientific community to critically evaluate social contexts of the researcher and the observed to produce societal transformations. The ontological approach is useful because it “brings to light the actually existing conditions under which knowledge is produced... so that a clearer view of things can be achieved” (Jackson 2016:185). By acknowledging the social mechanisms affecting research subjects, reflexivist research captures knowledge on the social environment and processes that may affect the study. Literature on female migrants and gendered work were utilized to contextualize the research and case study, thus incorporating a reflexivist research procedure suggested by the academic group. As other researchers challenge epistemologies, it is a collective responsibility to researchers that we are self-reflexive, attentive to the power of epistemology, and evaluate the relationships of power within the practice of our research (Ackerly and True 2008). Here, reflexivity acts as an enforcement of ethics within the practice of research because it forces the researcher to evaluate the social circumstances of research and power dynamics. This method of research advocates for

the inclusion of multidisciplinary scholarship in research, like feminist theory and eurocentrism (Ackerly and True 2008, Hobson 2012). Reflexivism addresses the issue of positionality in this study.

The study employs reflexivism to address positionality in the study and to conceptually frame the researcher's relationship with the subjects.. The exploration of social issues and subsequent literature review inherently derives influence from the researcher's social context, thus utilizing a reflexivist approach. The literature review addresses social mechanisms beyond the scope of the case study, like feminist migration theories and orientalism, both of which cement a reflexivist approach. The study also suggests policy and other institutional changes to support female, Muslim migrants, calling for societal transformation in the acquisition of knowledge. The case study is discussed in tandem with other locations of displacement. This discussion also offers suggestions to policy and organizational efforts to help in the integration of this social group into different workforces.

4.0 Case Study and Findings

4.1.1 Sampling Method

To explore the impact of displacement on female, Muslim migrants, this study conducted a series of descriptive, qualitative interviews with migrants in the city of Pittsburgh. As mentioned earlier, participants were recruited utilizing both a snowball sampling strategy and convenience sampling strategy. The sample was a non-probability sample, meaning that the sample size does not reflect statistical significance to the population of Muslim, female migrants and that study findings cannot be generalized to the entire population of female immigrants in Pittsburgh. The actual population of female, Muslim migrants can only be vaguely approximated in Pittsburgh, therefore completing in-depth interviews with a smaller sample was preferred over a possibly inaccurate probability sample. Study inclusion criteria required all participants to be currently or previously employed migrants who identified as both female and Muslim.

I recruited interviewees via flyers posted in Pittsburgh Muslim community centers, organizations, and Masjids. In addition to flyers, the study directly reached out to these community centers, organizations, and Masjids via email to discuss the study. Participants were offered 25\$ Amazon gift cards upon completing interviews regarding questions on history of migration, experiences in gender or religious discrimination, and employment history within both Pittsburgh and other locations of migration. The study utilized an interview guide for questions which could evoke in-depth conversations on issues of discrimination both internal and external to the community. This guide was designed in conjunction with community members and my faculty

advisor. The interviews should be considered semi-structured, because the interview guide was created to foster discussions with participants, rather than rigidly stick to a script.

4.1.2 The Interviews

I conducted a total of eight interviews over the course of July and August of 2022. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 59, with most participants (62.5%) identifying as students from the ages of 18-22. High recruitment around the universities in Pittsburgh could account for the study's attraction to younger populations. Additionally, Muslims in the United States tend to show younger age demographics than other Americans, with the median age for Muslim adults at 35 compared to the median age of the U.S. population at 47 (Pew Research Center, 2017). Interviewees came from a diverse array of regions and nationalities, including: Saudi Arabia, Morocco, India, Brazil, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This diversity is surprising considering the small sample size of the study and the domination of South Asians in the Muslim community of Pittsburgh. Predominant immigrant groups of Muslims in Pittsburgh come from India, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan; however, the numeric representation of these immigrant groups and their religious identity is not known (Allegheny DHS 2017). From working with the Muslim community with this study, I observed the prevalence of South Asian and Arab immigrant communities within the different Islamic centers.

All interviewees described their nature of migration as voluntary, rather than forced, to pursue either education or family reunification. This means that when asked to identify the reason for their migration, participants felt that their reasons for migration were not involuntary, viewing involuntary migrants as those who are refugees, victims of war, or other victims of political violence. Though none of the participants self-described their nature of migration as forced or

involuntary, four of the participants migrated before the age of 5, so their migration is technically involuntary (King 2002). Half of the participants immigrated below five years of age, whereas the other half immigrated as adults above the age of 20. This gap created a difference in responses among the participants, because the participants shared vastly different experiences in their origin countries. For most participants, Pittsburgh was not their first place of emigration, and most participants noted that they had not known of the city before moving to it. Among the student participants, gendered work expectations carried a tremendous influence on the occupational status of female, Muslim migrants in Pittsburgh. Furthermore, older participants were less likely to describe instances of discrimination using the term “discrimination”, but preferred terms like “uncomfortable” situations. All participants reported some form of religious discrimination, especially those who wore hijabs. Migrants who departed from their origin countries later in life depended on community and social support systems with other Muslims more than those who migrated at younger ages.

4.1.3 Gendered Work + Career Findings

Participants stated that gender played a significant influence on career choice and employment within the formal economic sphere. All participants occupy positions in education, medical services, or childcare. Common employment among the interviewees consisted of occupations like: patient care technicians, certified nursing assistant, daycare teacher, and higher income positions like surgeons. The occupations present vary in salary and education needed, but they generally fall into traditionally female occupational categories. Just two of the interviewees believed that their gender identity influenced their career decision. Though the study found gender to pay a significant influence on career choice, most interviewees did not outwardly acknowledge

this influence when talking about employment. The prevalence of predominantly female occupied occupations among interview answers is significant. As seen in prior migration literature, female migrants tend to work in positions deemed as “women’s work”. Whether the influence of gender was conscious or not, gender significantly impacted the occupational status of these respondents, considering the categories of occupation. That is not to say that occupations fulfilled were of low status, however, the finding simply indicates that identity as a woman could have created a subconscious or cultural push towards certain career options. The factor of religious and cultural influences could also play a role in the prevalence of women’s work occupations among the sample. None of the respondents cited cultural or religious influences to their occupational choice, but the separation of women and men in Islam and Islamic societies could influence Muslim women to pursue occupations with significant female compositions. When speaking to one of the younger participants about her choices to pursue work as a daycare and early childhood educator, the participant touched upon cultural influences to pursue her career.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you have faced any workplace discrimination in the US because of your gender?

Respondent: Because of my gender, yeah, so far no. I mean teaching is a very women dominated job... When I wanted to be a lawyer, though, yes. People don’t think that girls can be like, strong enough.

Interviewer: And do you feel that was a general assumption about lawyers, or was it specific to those in your surroundings?

Respondent: It wasn’t my family, like my parents, but some of my uncles.

Here, the respondent indicated that her surroundings and some of those in the community shared assumptions about professions which may have been deemed inappropriate for a woman.

Gender also made some impact on the expected work duties of interviewees, specifically for those working within the education sector. Respondents within this field all admitted to different work expectations compared to male counterparts at their occupations. The categories of occupational status within the formal economic sphere and expected work duties both demonstrate a significant influence of gender identity on female, Muslim migrant careers. Gender caused

anxiety for some participants, especially those working in healthcare because of political action during the time of interviews.

Interviewer: Do you have any worries because of being a woman or because of being a Muslim in the workforce, that you won't be able to achieve your career goals?

Respondent: I feel sort of uncertain about the future, especially right now being a woman and being a Muslim in healthcare. I feel that the country is going towards unpredictable circumstances right now, and a lot of different groups are being discriminated against. So I worry that in the upcoming years, Muslims could be next. And foreigners could be next, and immigrants could be next. And it could be there, my fear that there might be additional obstacles that aren't really clear right now that might make the future more difficult for me to pursue. Especially since, I mean, I work at <a hospital> and outlawing abortions has been really unpredictable, and it's difficult to know what will happen because I'm transferring to the labor and delivery unit where they do abortions as procedures. And my career there, I don't know what's going to happen with it. If we're unable to perform those procedures. And I don't know what will happen in my future career when I want to pursue women's health. And I want to be a gynecologist, or someone, a doctor who works in women's health. So I fear that, you know, something will happen to either not make me want to pursue that career or will make it more difficult for me to pursue that career. Because I don't really want to practice a career that is unjust to other people. So those are my main worries about it.

The respondent exhibited an intersectionality of concerns when asked about her future career goals, because of anxiety as a Muslim and a woman in the political climate of the time. Muslim female workers carry the burden of a double anxiety at times, with these two identities.

As mentioned in the literature review, migration literature ignored and overlooked the economic contributions of female migrants until feminist movements in migrant literature during the 1980s. The justification of this ignorance rested upon the assumption that women did not contribute to the formal economic sphere. Women were expected to contribute to other societal duties, namely within the private and informal spheres. This assumption continues to impact low-income and female migrant communities, because societal norms have shifted to expecting these women to contribute both within formal and informal economic spheres. Early feminist migration literature also ignored notions of intersectionality that may have impacted the experiences of migrants in destination workforces, like race or religious identity. While the intention of these interviews was to evaluate impacts of discrimination and displacement within the formal economic

sphere, interviewees cited informal economic contributions, as well. The interviews revealed that most participants occupied multiple positions beyond the formal economic sphere, like running the local Masjid's Sunday school program, voluntarily translating for refugees in hospitals, and nannying. As one of the interviewees reflected:

“you're always doing double, always working for you and everyone relying on you”.

This pressure to almost work “double” by contributing to a variety of societal outlets and the cultural expectations to support families exerts a pressure on female migrant communities. The expectation for female, Muslim migrants to participate in both informal and formal economic spheres demonstrates a hybridization of migration literature assumptions, indicating a “new” norm for female migrant communities. I hesitate to say “new” because female migrants have long contributed to a variety of economic outlets, but their contributions continue to be largely understudied, especially in the informal sector. Women from both migrant and non-migrant communities share expectations to work in both informal and formal sectors to support their families, but migrant women specifically share the burden of carrying the cultural torch. This means that female migrants are expected to teach cultural traditions to their children in destination societies, while integrating into these societies themselves. The culmination of expected responsibilities for migrant women in both the informal and formal sectors can be overwhelming, leading to the feeling of working double with everyone relying on you.

Another key finding of the interviews was the prioritization of a career in conjunction with the identity of a migrant. Half of the interviewees cited migration as a highly influential condition on both career choice and prioritization of a career. This prioritization emerged from two groups within the sample: young adults who migrated at early ages and older adults who migrated in adulthood. Participants who migrated at early ages and are currently young adult cited the

colloquial “immigrant pressure” they felt growing from their elders. The pressure describes a want to help others within the social group, usually by familial connection. It also relates to the necessity to show gratitude towards the “privilege” of migration and potentially to achieving a degree in higher education.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you were influenced into your occupation or career pursuit because of your immigrant identity?

Respondent: Yeah, so I definitely think being the child of immigrants who were unable to pursue professional careers, being the first person to pursue medicine and a professional career and my family was important to me. So that was why I wanted to get a job in healthcare early to sort of get that experience needed for my future career and be motivated to pursue higher education and a professional career that my parents didn't get to pursue because they emigrated.

Older participants who cited migration as an influential marker on their career prioritization followed similar narratives of a want to “help”. This societal “need” to help others and elevate others in the prioritization of one's career portrays the intersectionality of both gender and migration within the interview responses. As the expected caretakers of the family, women should contribute to the family's well-being and support other peers within their social group. Immigrants demonstrate a similar expectation to support their social group and ethnic enclave to show gratitude for their privilege.

Interviewer: What is your current job?

Respondent: Well, my current job, it's CNA and I do Sunday School at <musjid>. I do some translation with a company in Ohio for people who want to go to a hospital or doctors, I accompany them and translate into . And that's it. I love it.

After listing three different jobs and social obligations, the participant ended her answer with “that's it”. Her answer showcases the dedication older immigrants have to their communities, while seeming unphased by the plethora of commitments.

4.1.4 Reporting Discrimination

The hot button issue of the interviews appeared within discussions on “discrimination”. The interpretation and attitude towards discrimination varied among participants, depending on the discrimination described. All participants reported a type of “uncomfortable situation” or form of “religious harassment” both within and outside the workplace. The role of the hijab distorted the type of discrimination described. Self reported gender discrimination in the workplace remained low to none among participants. Younger migrants were more likely to report instances of internal discrimination, discrimination that occurs within one’s social group, which was the Muslim community for this interview question. I discussed discrimination based on migrant identity in conjunction with religious discrimination with the participants.

Religious discrimination presented as the most common form of discrimination experienced among the interviewees. Religious discrimination ranged from instances described as “uncomfortable” to outright alienation in the workplace. Though some participants did not report experiencing religious discrimination, all participants told stories about being asked about their religion, background, or what Islam is.

Interviewer: Would you say that in your profession, you have felt comfortable with your identity as a Muslim woman?

Respondent: Yes, but there are instances of microaggressions. So, I worked in the <hospital> and the veterans are a unique population. So it’s not surprising sometimes, given their military history, they might not feel comfortable with a Muslim woman in a hijab.

While these experiences may not constitute outright discrimination, the commonality of these instances depicts the experience of Muslim women within Pittsburgh employment as others. This means that while Muslim, female migrants may not all report discrimination based on religion, identity as a Muslim woman within the workplace is not a common norm. Half of all participants

reported discrimination or alienation within the workplace because of their religious identity. Older participants were more likely to brush off these instances as merely the “way it is”. The hijab played a vital role in these instances of discrimination. Unfortunately, stories like this one were not uncommon among the participants.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you can be open about your religious identity in Pittsburgh?

Respondent: I wear it on my head, so yeah, it is kind of difficult not to be recognized.

These answers revealed a type of dismissal towards religious discrimination and alienation, because these instances were a norm for participants, even in everyday tasks.

Respondent: I haven't really experienced anything too crazy. There was one time where my mom was like parking. She took somebody's parking spot by accident, I guess, and they were saying a bunch of curse words and 'go back to your country'. But, I mean, it really wasn't a big deal as a parking spot.

Another Respondent: I think I haven't experienced too much of like, feeling like the other but I think there's definitely been a couple of times where people have been like 'go back to your country' type of thing... It's just like little things here and there.

Self-reported gender discrimination remained almost non-existent among participants. The relative invisibility of gender discrimination could be attributed to an intersectional experience of discrimination as Muslim women, because participants who wore hijabs were more likely to report instances of alienation due to religion in the workplace. Because hijabs are an indication of both one's gender and religious identity, discriminations resulting from the hijab could be categorized under both gender and religious discrimination, but participants generally spoke about the hijab while relaying instances of religious discrimination.

Respondent: Yeah, I think because I wear the scarf it is very visible that I'm different. I don't think that if I didn't wear the scarf people would be as racist, basically.

Furthermore, participants all worked in fields generally attributed as female or female friendly occupations. A female or female-friendly occupation in this case refers to occupations traditionally regarded as women's work, such as nursing or teaching, or occupations with substantial female

employees (approximately half to the majority), like surgeons or respiratory therapists. Because the participants of this study occupied employment positions in Pittsburgh generally accepting or exclusive to women, gender discrimination may have been avoided. Still, 37.5% of interviewees reported differences in work duties because of gender. These differences did not alter the overall workload or employment experiences of participants. One example of a difference in gendered duties occurred for a research assistant at a university who was told to wait for male assistants to carry lab equipment instead of doing the work herself.

Respondents: When I worked in the computer labs, you would have to move paper shipments, or whenever we were moving labs, it would be moving chairs, and like, desks and stuff. And sometimes they wouldn't assign me to that, because it'd be like, too heavy or whatever, too physically demanding. And then I would just have to sit in the lab, sometimes. So kind of the basic, 'this is a man thing'.

Participants who experienced gendered work duty changes did not report feeling alienated because of these changes, however, these changes imply the enforcement of hegemonic masculinity within modern workplaces. Overall, gender discrimination remained low among female, Muslim migrants, but this could be attributed to the role of the hijab as an intersectional status signaling both gender and religious identity, and significant levels of employment in female-friendly occupations.

Younger migrants were more likely to report instances of internal discrimination within the Muslim community of Pittsburgh. Half of all participants experienced some form of internal discrimination. Those who had experienced internal discrimination described the Muslim community as judgmental towards career and lifestyle choices and felt a "pressure" to succeed. One participant described the Muslim community as "toxic" to those who pursue an unaccepted career or lifestyle path, like a career in the arts or marrying outside the religion.

Interviewer: Have you felt supported by the Muslim community?

Respondent: No, it's pretty toxic... They're very gossipy, very judgemental people. Any type of different person is like, going to be talked about, going to be stared at.

Internal discrimination towards female members is not exclusive to the Muslim immigrant community of Pittsburgh. These forms of discrimination can be detrimental to female migrants, because they exclude women from the networking and social opportunities provided to other members. Instances of internal discrimination can also culminate with external discriminations from the non-Muslim community to make female, Muslim migrants feel alienated from society, othered both by their own community and the general public.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you can openly display and talk about your religious identity in Pittsburgh?

Respondent: I think it depends on the person you're talking to, because some people are just not very understanding, whether that be people from my own religion or people who are not from my religion, because I don't necessarily follow every single little thing. So even people from my own religion sometimes will be like, 'Well, why are you doing this? You shouldn't be doing this'. Because there are always people who kind of question what you're doing and why you're doing it.

With high rates of internal discrimination reported among younger participants, it is important to consider the implications of different discriminations on occupational and social trajectory. A potential reason that younger participants recorded instances of internal discrimination at higher rates could be "third culture" syndrome. This syndrome refers to individuals who lose a singular cultural identity of their own amidst building relationships between other cultures. Participants at younger ages, especially those still attending school, may struggle to balance different cultural influences from "home" and Pittsburgh, whereas older participants may feel more comfortable with their cultural identities by migrating at later points in life or establishing successful support systems. Regardless, younger migrants were more likely to report types of internal discrimination, indicating a potential lack in community support for occupational and personal decisions.

Younger Respondent: It was different whenever we moved to Pittsburgh, I think because I was a little bit older. So I was able to kind of perceive how people viewed who I was... Moving to Pittsburgh, it was like the first kind of culture shock and your teachers ask where you are really from.

Older Respondent: Yes, I love Pittsburgh. I feel it more than Pittsburgher themselves. I love this Pittsburgh, it might be my native city, it's in the mountains. I love Oakland. It reminds me of Marrakesh when I was at

university with the red, red building and the young people in the crowd all the time and it's in life and up all the time, even nighttime...you know I love Oakland, and I love this university. Because my dream to get there somehow I'm still dreaming

4.1.5 Community Support

These interviews revealed that various demographics of participants engaged with community organizations differently. Migrants who moved at later ages were more likely to participate in ethnic or religious based community organizations. For these migrants, participation in community organizations was vital to social life. Some of the interviewees reported volunteering weekly at the local Masjid's Sunday school or food drives to connect with those who "understand their culture". Therefore, for migrants who leave their home countries during later stages of life, like young adulthood, forming social relationships with those who share similar beliefs was prioritized. Among these social organizations discussed, religious-based organizations, like a Masjid or Muslim Student Association, were most common. This may imply that female, Muslim migrants identify more strongly with religious affiliation, rather than ethnic origin. Because Muslim populations have high rates of immigrants in the United States, a migrant identity is a common feature among these communities.

Respondent: It's crazy, it was very nice and welcoming. Everybody felt welcome, there it's not like only Pakistani, Egyptian, or Afro-American, It's all diverse and more inclusion there.

Migrants who relocated at younger ages, however, utilized these community organizations less. For these migrants, constructing a social support system around cultural identity may have been prioritized less as this group balanced a blend of influences from both home and destination countries. Reduced participation could also be attributed to reports of internal discrimination by the younger participants, thus discouraging involvement with ethnic or religious based community

organizations. Students were more likely to participate in university based religious or ethnic organizations rather than seeking out a local Masjid. The findings of these interviews suggest that community organizations play an important role in the social lives of migrants who departed at older ages but become less influential among participants who migrated at childhood.

4.1.6 Community Support Versus Career Services

Career services were overall uncommonly used among the participants interviewed. Less than half of all interviewees utilized any type of career services, either from university services, non-profits, or governmental services. The participants who utilized a form of career services sought these services from a university or educational setting. Most participants learned about their current jobs through self research or their social networks, indicating that social networks were more important to seeking employment than outside services.

Respondent: I think the Muslim community is one of the most supportive ones that I have. And that, really, they make me feel like anything is possible with pursuing whatever career I want or whatever degree I want. I find that they're not only very supportive, but they also pray for me and they also wish for the best for me and that's probably one of the most supportive communities I have.

The lack of usage of career services by the interviewees could indicate that these services are inaccessible in Pittsburgh to the female, Muslim community. With the variety of job opportunities available online, an outside career services agency may be less appealing than applying with a seemingly foreign agency. Furthermore, the lack of participation in formal career services may be attributed to the type of migration most participants described themselves with. None of the interviewees identified themselves as asylum seekers or refugees, but rather as voluntary migrants. Most of their stories include migrating with families and connecting with Muslim communities in the United States. Therefore, the role of community support and social

networks proved to be more important to the career services and employment opportunities for female, Muslim migrants in Pittsburgh.

Interviewer: Would you describe the services in Pittsburgh as useful to new migrants?

Respondent: I think they still need improvement. And they need to have people that work, there be people who have gone through these experiences. So like, I had more help from students who are older than me, who already went through the experiences rather than going to the Career Center, which just had people working there that never went through these experiences, especially for people who were migrating.

4.2 Summary of Findings

The interviews revealed important themes for Muslim, female migrants in gendered work, reporting discrimination, and participation in community organizations. All of the interviewees work in occupations considered female-friendly, indicating that the occupation is traditionally seen as “women’s work” or contains a significant portion of female workers. Career remained a top priority for most participants in conjunction with a feeling of gratefulness for their migration. Younger participants used the term “discrimination” more outwardly than older participants to describe instances of discrimination within the workplace. All participants reported some type of religious discrimination or discomfort in the workplace, specifically citing the role of the hijab. Though gender discrimination was not commonly reported, some participants mentioned changes in work duties based on gender identity and the hijab has a role of intersectionality regarding gender and religious identity. Younger participants were more likely to experience some form of internal discrimination from the Muslim community, which may connect to “third culture syndrome”. Those who migrated at later stages in life relied on religious or ethnic community organizations for social life more than participants who migrated in early childhood. Career services were only utilized in university or education settings, as participants sought social

networks or self-research for employment opportunities. The study applies these findings to comparisons with migration theories and studies to evaluate the role of intersectional identities of female, Muslim migrants on experiences of employment within Pittsburgh.

4.2.1 Strengths and Limitations

Before moving into the discussion of the Pittsburgh case study's findings, strengths and limitations of the study and participant sample should be addressed. The study utilized a non-probability, convenience sampling method, so the sample size of the interviews does not accurately reflect the population of female, Muslim migrants in Pittsburgh, and findings are not generalizable to the larger population. However, because of the intersectionality of these identities, there is no accurate census data on the actual population of female, Muslim migrants in Pittsburgh, and this study represents an initial attempt to explore the experiences of this understudied population. The small sample size also contributed to a limited representation of the ethnic Muslim populations in Pittsburgh. Study participants represented just five countries in the sample, whereas Pittsburgh includes Muslim populations from more regions. Therefore experiences of Muslims from other regions not represented in the sample may not be accurately reflected in the study findings. This lack in nationality diversity also changes the racial demographics of those represented, and none of the participants' identified as Black or East Asian. Age representations also were a shortcoming in the study sample's diversity because the study mostly appealed to students. The responses from younger participants tended to be similar to each other and their responses differed from those of the older participants, however, because of the small sample size and limited age representations, no additional exploration of the findings by age could be undertaken. Furthermore, all participants work in occupations considered female-friendly, therefore these occupational experiences may not

accurately depict the experiences of those working in other fields, especially fields that are male dominated. The occupational fields pursued may have also altered experiences in internal discrimination, because these participants occupied fields socially accepted to female employment. Additionally, none of the participants identified their migration as “involuntary” or described themselves as refugees or asylum seekers. Therefore, the experiences of these interviewees may not reflect the employment experiences of female, Muslim migrants from different migration backgrounds or legal statuses. These limitations should be considered as the interviews are evaluated in conjunction with other migration literature, because the interviews were not fully representative of the female, Muslim population of Pittsburgh.

Future research could use a stratified sample to examine experiences of discrimination, using age as the stratifying factor. The responses in this study showed low variation among migrants in similar age groups and higher variation between age groups, suggesting that stratified sampling could yield more precise results in a future sample on female, Muslim migrants.

4.2.2 Discussion with Global Findings

The results of the study indicate that female, Muslim migrants may require more outside support systems to integrate into destination formal employment spheres. The participants occupied positions in women’s work, so additional support systems from destination countries in career services may help diversify the occupations in which female, Muslim migrants seek positions. Occupational trajectory is shaped by social gender expectations, so without proper support systems intact, female working communities may struggle to overcome social boundaries. Similar to the findings in this small U.S. study, the majority of female, Muslim workers in France occupy positions in “women’s work” like home care. Female migrants globally face issues in

breaking away from traditional women's work, but Muslim women are especially vulnerable to seeking positions only in these fields because of their gender and religious marker, the *hijab*. In the U.S. study, interview questions about the hijab caused immediate reactions in interviews when discussing issues on discrimination. The hijab lead to increased rates of discrimination in employment and represents a sign of gender identity in conjunction to religion, therefore leading to gendered assumptions. Though allowed to participate in political affairs, Muslim women in France face political scrutiny, especially with the hijab debate. This debate unfairly discounts Muslim political participation and can hinder their activism. The object of the hijab acts as an intersectional identifier, visualizing one's religious and gender identities. Germany's recent law allowing the ban of religious clothing in certain occupations also negatively impacts the employment experiences of Muslim, female migrants there. As a symbol of Islam, the hijab also morphed into a symbol of colonial feminism, or to be more precise, what colonial feminism targets. As Muslim, female migrants learn the traditions and culture of their new destination countries, they are faced with other's assumptions about the role of gender and religion. These migrants are more likely to occupy positions in women's work, which is potentially reproduced as an expectation in the destination country's society and perspective of Muslim women. Rulings controlling the hijab's presence in public in Germany and France support the ideology of colonial feminism and reinforce the ostracization of those considered outside their cultures. Without adequate and accessible career services, Muslim, female migrants cannot break out of these social norms.

Muslim female migrants face a unique set of discriminations when integrating into the labor market of France because of religious and gender prejudice. These prejudices have resulted in different initiatives both by the French government and grassroots organizations. The current

labor participation of Muslim female migrants remains decreased because of differences in education, discrimination, and lack of childcare services. Compared to migrants from other European countries, female migrants from North Africa and the Middle East experience higher rates of unemployment. Religious affiliation with Islam also serves as a point of discrimination in the workforce integration of migrants. Muslims are less likely to be hired than their Christian counterparts. This culmination of gender and religious discriminations puts female, Muslim migrants at a precarious position in the labor market. Although organizations have taken initiatives to reduce these inequalities, France lacks adequate childcare services and political representation for the population. Until these conditions improve, female Muslim migrants will face discriminations of gender and religion when integrating into the French labor market.

Germany's female Muslim population shares similar concerns on the issue of childcare. Since the uptick of these complaints, however, BAMF began offering childcare assistance for free to those seeking employment or learning German (Esposito 2022). The issue of childcare was not addressed during the interviews in Pittsburgh, but expectations towards social support systems in different countries could contribute to the invisibility of this topic. In many EU countries, childcare support is expected, but childcare appears as a privilege in the United States.

Because the United States and Pittsburgh also lack childcare services and political representation, female, Muslim migrants will continue to face discrimination based on gender and religion in the United States as well. Services, like childcare, are vital to female, Muslim migrants' employment. If childcare services are not guaranteed, members of the social group will seek employment in women's work, because these professions usually accommodate flexible schedules in a trade off for lower wages. An alternative to this scenario is seeking childcare through an informal means, which then implies the requirement of female, Muslim migrants occupying

positions in informal work to fulfill societal needs, like childcare services. Therefore, by not providing or advocating for affordable childcare and other social services, the United States creates a need for informal employment and pressures female, Muslim migrants to occupy positions in women's work.

The above research from France and Germany did not detail experiences of internal discrimination among female, Muslim migrants, however, based upon the information from the Pittsburgh case study, it can be inferred that young members of the social group would experience internal discrimination in France, as well. Therefore, the lack of external support systems would negatively impact those facing internal discrimination and may lead to those members entering solely occupations socially or culturally acceptable for their gender. More research is needed in these two countries to further explore the impacts of internal discrimination on occupational trajectory in the marginalized group of female, Muslim migrants

5.0 Concluding Thoughts

This study examined the employment experiences of female, Muslim migrants in Pittsburgh to explore issues impacting societal integration and drew comparisons to the experiences of similar migrants in countries within the EU. As a group facing politicization, Muslim women globally experience higher rates of religious discrimination. Discrimination regarding the hijab can be interpreted in tandem with gender discrimination because the hijab symbolizes both one's religious and gender identities. Furthermore, the hijab plays a special role in discrimination against Muslim migrants because it specifically targets Muslim women in the guise of colonial feminism. Female migrants face exclusion in some cases even from migrant communities, resulting in internal discrimination. Although sources in France and Germany did not document experiences of internal discrimination, the Pittsburgh case study demonstrated that young female, Muslim migrants report higher levels of internal discrimination. With community support providing vital social networking to the social group, internal discrimination could negatively impact the formation of these social networks and thus employment acquisition or advancement. Therefore, states should implement social programming for immigrant communities that allow social networking opportunities among women, offer childcare services, and educational opportunities to directly support female migrant communities, who face different societal expectations than their male counterparts. Although these programs will not directly combat discrimination, the programs would further the integration of female, Muslim migrants into diverse employment opportunities in different fields and reduce the need for informal employment.

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