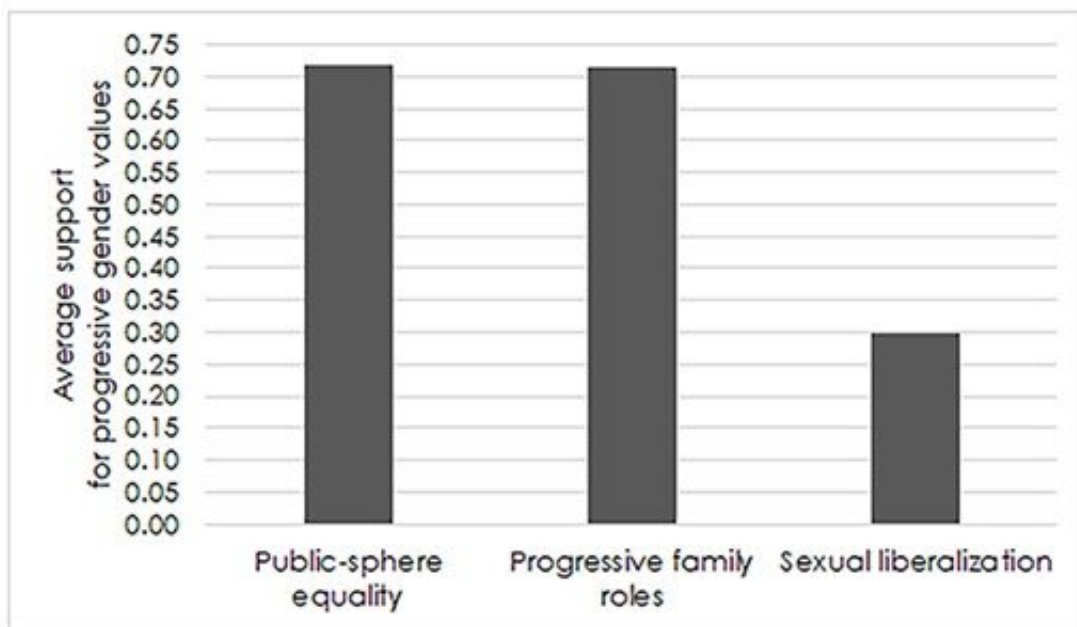


# Muslim gender values are more diverse than often thought

March 10 2022



Mean gender values among Muslim migrants (N = 4,076). Credit: *Social Forces* (2022). DOI: 10.1093/sf/soac004

Muslims' gender values are not nearly as uniform as is often suggested. Islamic religiosity and time spent in Europe shape views on gender, but shape different gendered issues in varying ways, according to a study by Saskia Glas published today in the journal *Social Forces*. Her research suggests that the current integration policy does not always contribute to solutions.

Public debates suggest that some Muslims fail to integrate because they hold outdated views on the role of women in society and the [family](#)—ideas instilled in part by their Islamic faith. According to Glas' research, the reality is much more nuanced. "Gender values as a construct can't be defined as exclusively traditional or progressive; there is a wide range of views that change from issue to issue. There's also a difference in the factors that influence these views."

## **Aspects of gender equality**

As part of her research, Glas analyzed survey data on more than 4,000 Muslim migrants from all over Europe. "We used their responses to identify three aspects of gender equality. The first concerned public gender equality: is a university degree program equally relevant for men and women? And what opportunities do women have in politics and the labor market?"

"We also looked at answers to questions about the division of family roles: who takes care of the household and the children? The final aspect concerned sexual freedom: how does this group feel about homosexuality, abortion and sex before marriage?"

## **Religiosity and time**

"Muslims who have lived in Europe longer tend to have more progressive views on [gender](#) equality and sexual freedom. Younger generations seem more willing to embrace these values," Glas explains. The degree of Islamic religiosity also appears to have an effect on these factors. Those who go to mosque and worship regularly tend to have more [conservative views](#) about family roles and sexual freedom.

"Interestingly, the degree of religiosity hardly impacts the support for

public equality. In fact, this conservative group has a more positive view on the importance of education for women. In some respects, religiosity acts as a catalyst for progressive views."

When it comes to the division of roles in the family, there are more factors at play. Traditional family roles tend to be upheld regardless of how long someone has lived in Europe. According to Glas, this is because family roles are about more than just the freedoms granted to women; they are also about instilling values in children. "If both parents work full-time, the perception is that it's harder to raise your children according to the values of your minority group, while imparting those values can be extremely important to Muslim immigrants."

The study shows that current integration policies may not be sufficient. "Many countries still assume that all steps towards integration are beneficial. They believe that the more highly educated migrants are and the more money they earn, the easier it is to integrate into society and adopt our views. But this study shows that countless other factors help to shape the views of this group. Something can benefit one form of emancipation while simultaneously curtailing another. If you really want to effect change, a more nuanced policy is needed."

**More information:** Saskia Glas, What Gender Values Do Muslims Resist? How Religiosity and Acculturation Over Time Shape Muslims' Public-Sphere Equality, Family Role Divisions, and Sexual Liberalization Values Differently, *Social Forces* (2022). [DOI: 10.1093/sf/soac004](https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soac004)

Provided by Radboud University

Citation: Muslim gender values are more diverse than often thought (2022, March 10) retrieved

24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-03-muslim-gender-values-diverse-thought.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.