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# Agency, Accommodation, and Acculturation in the Space of American Muslim Women

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**Abstract**
This article aims to examine how immigrant Muslim women strive to create a space of recognition in American mosques. Based on selected books and articles that provide data on the agency, accommodation, and acculturation of American Muslim women in the context of the mosque as a religious center, this research reveals that immigrant Muslim women in America often show higher levels of participation in mosque services and activities compared to their counterparts in their countries of origin. Even in a progressive mosque in Cape Town, a woman was invited to deliver the Friday sermon, which is typically conducted by a male imam. While accommodation is clearly evident in the initiatives of agents, architects, and mosque designers in America who strive to meet the needs of women in future mosque constructions, mosques are also believed to play a crucial role in facilitating the acculturation process of immigrant Muslim women into the host society. In practice, immigrant community leaders and religious authorities interpret Islam in a futuristic and integrative manner, viewing the mosque as an evolving entity that grows and adapts to changing environments, thus effectively bridging its congregants with the broader society.

**Keywords:** Acculturation; Agency; Accommodation; American Muslim Women.

**Abstrak**
*Artikel ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana perempuan Muslim imigran berupaya menciptakan ruang pengakuan di masjid-masjid Amerika. Berdasarkan buku-buku dan artikel-artikel terpilih yang memberikan data tentang agensi, akomodasi, dan akulturasi perempuan Muslim Amerika dalam konteks masjid sebagai pusat keagamaan, penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa perempuan Muslim imigran di Amerika seringkali menunjukkan tingkat partisipasi yang lebih tinggi dalam layanan dan kegiatan masjid dibandingkan dengan rekan-rekan mereka di negara asal. Bahkan di sebuah masjid progresif di Cape Town, seorang perempuan diundang untuk menyampaikan khotbah Jumat, yang biasanya dilakukan oleh imam laki-laki. Sementara akomodasi terlihat jelas dalam inisiatif para agen, arsitek, dan perancang masjid di Amerika yang berupaya mengakomodasi kebutuhan perempuan dalam pembangunan masjid di masa depan. Selain itu, masjid diyakini memainkan peran penting dalam memfasilitasi proses akulturasi perempuan Muslim imigran ke dalam masyarakat tuan rumah. Dalam praktiknya, para pemimpin komunitas imigran dan otoritas agama menafsirkan Islam secara futuristik dan integratif, memandang masjid sebagai*



*Correspondence

*entitas yang berevolusi, tumbuh, dan beradaptasi terhadap perubahan lingkungan, sehingga secara efektif menjembatani jamaahnya dengan masyarakat yang lebih luas.*

**Kata Kunci**: *Agensi; Akomodasi; Akulturasi; Perempuan Muslim Amerika*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Muslims believe that a mosque is a waqf (endowment) that cannot be sold, reclaimed (by the one who endowed it), moved, or inherited, meaning that a mosque is inclusive for all Muslims. Therefore, unlike churches which have memberships, mosques do not require any membership. In an ideal situation, strictly adhering to Islamic law, congregants do not have to negotiate race, class, or gender to have access to this eternal fund (Qureshi, 2015). In the Western world, mosques are the primary embodiment of the institutionalization of Islam and have become physical, spiritual, and social spaces where the Muslim community can publicly practice Islam in their destination countries. Mosques serve as gathering places for prayer and socialization. They not only meet the religious and spiritual needs of devout Muslims but can also provide social and material resources for the survival and growth of Muslim immigrants in non-Muslim societies (Ozyurt, 2010).

In reality, the demands for mosque inclusivity on one hand and its multifunctionality on the other do not always align symmetrically. In America, mosque designs are quite complex and often predominantly enjoyed by male congregants. Building features, such as side entrances, partitions, spatial depth, visual and auditory access, room typology, size, and density, building conditions, religious ornaments and symbolism, as well as maintenance, tend to limit and fail to present a positive impression as a safe place for women. As a result, women are forced to occupy areas that are inaccessible, unsuitable, unattractive, and contribute to negative feelings towards the mosque space (Mohammed, 2022).

However, mosques are also believed to play an important role in facilitating the acculturation process of Muslim immigrant women into the host society. In practice, immigrants whose religious leaders and administrators have a futuristic, integrationist interpretation of Islam and who see the mosque as evolving, developing, and adapting to environmental changes, are more successful in building bridges between their congregants and the wider society in general. They are also more effective in empowering female congregants, facilitating their cultural and psychological adaptation within the host society (Ozyurt, 2010).

This paper explains the dynamic relationship between immigrant Muslim women (agency) from various countries, including converts, and the social structure of the mosque, which challenges them to adopt a paradoxical stance. On one hand, the mosque is an inclusive asset for Muslims, including women. On the other hand, aspects ranging from design to various regulations rooted in understanding and sects have limited their freedom to participate in various mosque activities. The paper explores how these women strive to maintain the

inclusiveness of the mosque while minimizing conflict and adapting to the diverse dynamics and demands of the mosque.

This descriptive qualitative paper is based on a literature review. Books and articles were selected from various reputable journals that present the development of mosques, particularly in America, and the involvement of Muslim women in them. Following Creswell's suggestions (Creswell, 2016), the relevant books and articles were first sorted and systematized into several categories according to sub-topics. Then, they were holistically reviewed to construct a general understanding of the obtained data and to reflect the overall meaning. Finally, the data were interpreted by asking, "What lessons can be learned from this entire phenomenon," to reveal the essence of an idea using the conceptual framework of agency, accommodation, and acculturation.

## 2. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1. The Dynamics of Mosques in America

The history of mosques in the United States reflects the long and diverse journey of the Muslim community in the country. Islam has been present in the United States since the early arrival of African slaves in the 16th century, with estimates suggesting that around 10% of the slaves brought to America were Muslims. However, they were not able to freely practice their religion. A significant milestone in the history of mosques in America is the construction of the Mother Mosque of America in 1934 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa (Aossey, 1984). This mosque, which is one of the oldest still standing and functioning today, was founded by immigrants from Lebanon and Syria who arrived in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Aossey, 1984).

After World War I, there was a significant wave of Muslim immigration, especially from the Middle East, which was still under the Ottoman Empire at the time. This immigration process continued into the 20th century, including after the immigration law changes in 1965 that made it easier for immigrants from various countries to enter. As of 2020, there were approximately 2,796 mosques in the United States, showing a 31% increase from 2010 (Bagby, 2009). The states with the most mosques are New York, California, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey. The Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan, is one of the largest mosques in the country, demonstrating the growth and development of the Muslim community in America. These mosques, including the Mother Mosque of America in Cedar Rapids and others established in the early 20th century, have become important symbols of the existence and resilience of the Muslim community in America. They also contribute to the cultural and religious diversity of the country (Aossey, 1984).

Mosques within the Muslim community have a strong physical and psychological role as spaces for belonging, educational exploration, activism, and religious expression (Joosub, 2023). During significant moments such as the month of Ramadan, mosques transform into communal celebration spaces.

However, mosques can also exhibit gendered characteristics where issues of female embodiment, patriarchy, sexuality, and gender differences are evident (Woodlock, 2010). In contrast to the present, women had full access to the Prophet's Mosque, the first mosque in Islam, where they actively participated in political, military, professional, and personal spheres (Joosub, 2023).

In America, the approximately 1,500 mosques and Islamic centers vary greatly in both size and construction. Less affluent groups might worship in houses or converted storefronts, or even in churches that they rent or have bought and renovated. Communities with more resources might decide to build large, comprehensive mosques, often as part of larger Islamic centers. During the 1970s and 1980s, such constructions were often funded or supplemented by oil-rich Islamic countries, although this support largely ceased after 1991. Many purpose-built places of worship constructed after the 1960s have separate entrances and facilities for women. In Dearborn, Michigan, a mosque built by Lebanese immigrants, where women were very active, has been overtaken by the growing population of the Yemeni immigrant community; women now worship in the basement (M.Moore, 2006).

Mosques are the primary embodiment of the establishment and institutionalization of Islam and have become physical, spiritual, and social spaces where the Muslim community can publicly practice Islam in their destination countries. Mosques serve as spaces for gathering, praying, and socializing, as well as important socialization institutions in transmitting cultural and religious values and traditions to new generations. Mosques not only meet the religious and spiritual needs of devout Muslims but also provide social and material resources that may be crucial for the survival and growth of Muslim immigrants in non-Muslim societies (Ozyurt, 2010).

In immigrant and culturally diverse ethnic communities, gender inclusivity in mosques is often influenced by conservative and patriarchal ideologies (Ghafournia, 2020). These ideologies make women feel excluded and unwelcome, often through the discourse of fitnah literally translated as social chaos and sexual temptation, which is used to justify their exclusion. Hoel (Hoel, 2013) argues that the gender-based power differences within mosque spaces need to be reformed, shifting from a dominant focus on women's sexuality towards recognizing women's humanity. For example, Muslim immigrant women in America often participate more frequently and extensively in mosque services and activities compared to their counterparts in their countries of origin, indicating a marked difference in their level of involvement.

The American Muslim community has witnessed remarkable growth since 1965. Between 1994 and 2000 alone, the number of mosques in America increased by 25%, reaching a total of about 1,500. In 2001, it was estimated that two million Muslims in the United States, out of approximately seven million, were affiliated with mosques. According to the American Mosque Study Project, the majority of Muslim religious leaders in the United States encourage and

actively shape the social lives and political views of their congregations through sermons. The study also shows a high correlation between the views of imams on American engagement and the attitudes of their communities and congregations towards social and political life in America (Ozyurt, 2010).

The social and political nature of mosques in the United States distinguishes them from mosques in Muslim-majority countries, which tend to be used solely as places of worship rather than as centers for community or political mobilization. Nabeel Abraham vividly illustrates this transformation through his description of the Dix Mosque in Dearborn, Michigan, one of the earliest mosques established by Lebanese-Syrian immigrants in the 1930s. Unlike mosques in the Middle East, mosques in America have become venues for a variety of activities, ranging from Muslim weddings and social gatherings to civic education classes and voter registration (Ozyurt, 2010).

### 2.2. Mosque Acculturation in America

Mosques in America are a relatively new phenomenon in the country's social landscape, with 87 percent of existing mosques established after 1970, according to Bagby and colleagues. This phenomenon coincided with two significant yet independent events that began in the 1960s. First, the liberalization of immigration laws in 1965 sparked a large wave of Muslim immigrant arrivals. Second, during the same period, there was an increase in conversions to Islam among African Americans, inspired by the black consciousness and power movement (Bagby, 2009). With a strong commitment to their faith, both groups first-generation Muslim immigrants and first-generation African American converts began establishing mosques. Both groups were on the fringes of American society, where Islam's position as a 'foreign' religion added to the marginalization of its adherents. Additionally, being non-European immigrants or victims of longstanding racism, they were often seen as outsiders in American society (Bagby, 2009)

The 9/11 tragedy added to the burden felt by the American Muslim community and its mosques, which subsequently suffered from increased suspicion and scrutiny. In this context, recent research on mosques in America explores the relationship between mosques and the broader American society, focusing on mosque congregants' attitudes towards issues of assimilation and engagement in American social and political life. This research reflects the complex dynamics between identity, belief, and social interaction in America's multicultural context (M.Moore, 2006). After 9/11, the relationship between mosques in America and the wider society became a serious concern, no longer just a topic of academic discussion. It is often said that many mosques in America are influenced by Wahhabi/Salafi groups, known for their conservative views on Islam (Bagby, 2009).

This view suggests that these mosques do not attempt to adapt to American society and even reject the values upheld by America, creating an image of

isolationist and hostile groups. However, the important question that needs to be answered is to what extent mosques and their congregants are engaged in American society, how much conflict mosque congregants feel between Islam and American society, and to what extent American mosques and their Muslim congregants have adapted to American society. Research shows that mosques and their congregants, much like Asian American communities, have shown signs of adaptation and integration into mainstream American society, with little evidence of extremist tendencies. However, they still reject full assimilation (Bagby, 2009).

On one hand, mosques and their attendees strive to reduce conflict and minimize perceived differences between Muslims and mainstream society, making great efforts to avoid marginalization. On the other hand, they feel tension related to the prospect of becoming closer to a society and culture that is very different and sometimes reluctant to accept Islam and Muslims into the mainstream (Prickett, 2015).

### 2.3. Mosques and Women in America

Various studies analyze how African-American Muslim women use mosques as physical spaces to demonstrate public performances of their religious identity. By occupying, protecting, and allocating space in mosques for gender-meaningful activities engaging with Islam, these women continue a project of religious self-development that binds them together as African-American Muslim women (Bagby, 2021). Through their maneuvering in various forms of physical spaces as sisterhood, these women empower themselves to resist gender, economic, and racial oppression. The results of this study reveal that despite being within male-dominated religious organizations, and with symbolic and material space limitations for women, the female participants managed to create their own religious experiences. This shows that the participation of African-American women in male-dominated religious organizations seems to represent a classic paradox in contemporary religious life (Prickett, 2015).

In the popular institution of the Black Church, women often fill the pews but rarely stand in the pulpit; they serve as "foot soldiers" for pastors who often prioritize male interests (Harris, 1999), and seem hesitant to accept women as religious authorities (Putnam, Robert D., 2012). The enthusiastic commitment of African-American women to the Black Church undoubtedly benefits the broader African American community, but this participation may come at the expense of the gender interests of Black women. Even the most sensitive portrayals of the church acknowledge that women's presence and commitment to the church reflect an "acceptance of a male-centered theology of female subordination" (Prickett, 2015).

For African-American Muslim women participating in mosques, the obstacles may be more complex. They face institutionalized forms of patriarchy and are fewer in number compared to their male counterparts (Prickett, 2015). Apart from Orthodox Judaism, Islam is the only global religious tradition where

men regularly attend worship in much greater numbers than women. For this reason, Sullins argues, Muslim men are more religious compared to Muslim women. Muslim women worldwide report higher levels of religiosity (Sullins, 2006). Institutionalized gender segregation and the exclusion of women from leadership roles contribute to the public perception of Islam as a patriarchal religion that oppresses women.

The interests of Muslim women are often analyzed in the context of how they can advance their desired interests, despite various assumptions brought by the label "Muslim women" in the Western imagination about the patriarchal and misogynistic qualities of Islam (Prickett, 2015). Feminist research on Islam has revealed various creative and surprising ways that enable women to leverage their participation in male-dominated religious traditions, building ways of religious life that benefit them (Rinaldo, 2013). Avishai argues that the 'paradox' approach often mistakenly assumes a dichotomy between institutional and compliance, whereas in reality, women build their religious identities through obedience and behavior (Avishai, 2008). In the US, where Islam is often marginalized and seen as misogynistic, African-American Muslim women may face intersecting racial, class, and gender oppression, but they also adopt Islam as a means of resistance against racism and economic exploitation, showing that their negotiation of Islamic identity has 'agency' that goes beyond conventional frameworks about Islam and gender (Prickett, 2015).

Many American women who newly embrace Islam tend to avoid mosques, except during Eid, and prefer to gather in halaqas or study circles often held daily. After saying the shahada, I explored several nearby mosques with a female friend. We faced various challenges, from poor audio systems to sermons delivered in Arabic that we did not understand. At the third mosque, we were in an uncomfortable balcony, and at the fourth mosque, we were the only women present. The experience was not welcoming, making us feel unwelcome and less contributive to the community, a sentiment about the importance of having a place considered home (Bagby, 2021).

In a broader context, discussions about women's rights in Islam also receive attention. Amina Wadud, in her book "Quran and Woman," delves into the fundamental teachings of the Quran to affirm women's rights within the framework of Islamic tradition. Um Salama and A'isha, the Prophet's wives, for instance, were spiritual teachers responsible for much of the Islamic jurisprudence at that time (Wadud, 1999). This argument is reinforced by quotes from the Quran stating that men and women were created from a single soul, with Islamic scholars. The Quran shows equality and the same spiritual capacity between men and women. This indicates a shift from traditional understandings that often limit women, towards a more inclusive recognition of their contributions and capacities in religious life.

### 2.4. Muslim Women's Resistance to Mosque Spaces.

The exclusion of women from mosques is often justified by the potential distraction posed by female sexuality (Woodlock, 2010). This exclusion tends to be implemented for and by men, prioritizing their perspectives. The term "fitnah" is frequently used by male religious leaders to describe how women can create sexual temptation (Davids, 2018). However, female Muslim scholars argue that God views men and women as equals, thus egalitarian access to religious institutions such as mosques and religious leadership is essential (Hoel, 2013). In practice, existing regimes subtly and pervasively privilege men, limiting women's expression of power in public.

Gender segregation in some mosques makes women feel sexualized, discriminated against, and considered inferior (Ghafournia, 2020), manifesting both ideologically and physically in mosque spaces. Women are often placed in peripheral areas with inferior facilities in terms of quality, cleanliness, physical space, and access to the place where the imam delivers sermons and leads prayers (Woodlock, 2010). In Australia, Muslim women have stated that they will not feel welcome in mosques until these institutions become inclusive and provide spiritually inspiring spaces for women. A similar situation occurs in the UK, where facilities for men are often equipped with plush carpets, underfloor heating, and expensive chandeliers, while women are given a small area resembling a basement (Javed, 2022).

Male institutional structures in religious centers often support conservative interpretations of the Quran by male scholars with little historical contextualization (Duivenbode et al., 2020). Although Islam confers a certain status on women and there is a decentralization of religious knowledge, mosque structures are often used to maintain male authority. Internationally, changes are beginning to be seen as women lead prayers in mosques, replacing male hegemony. In 1994, a progressive mosque in Cape Town invited a woman to deliver the Friday sermon, traditionally the domain of male imams (Hoel, 2013).

In South Africa, despite strict gender segregation in most mosques, the presence of women standing before mixed-gender audiences challenges the hierarchy within these institutions, provoking resistance from male-dominated Islamic institutions that view female religious authority as a threat to their privileges. A similar situation occurred in 1996 when gender activists distributed pamphlets encouraging women to attend Eid prayers in Johannesburg mosques, which was heavily criticized by male-dominated religious organizations (Joosub, 2023). Despite male opposition to equality, as illustrated in the above examples, female-led prayers are becoming more common internationally (Mohammed, 2022).

A study involving 20 Muslim women in Europe found that their activities in mosques provided opportunities to reflect and question the religious information they received. Although they often did not fully agree with the interpretations provided by male mosque leaders, many of these women held leadership roles in

European mosques. Their presence as leaders is supported by the fact that in Islamic history, there have been many female Muslim leaders (Mateo, 2019). This indicates that the view often seen in the West, portraying Muslim women only as compliant individuals without religious power, is not entirely accurate. The importance of women in religious aspects is often overlooked in feminist discussions, but this is actually an important part of how religious women shape their identities (Joosub, 2023).

### 2.5. Agency of Muslim Women in America

On a night in Ramadan 2003, an event in Morgantown, West Virginia, drew much attention when a young Muslim woman walked through the main entrance of the mosque and sat down to join the Friday prayers. For many Americans, this action might not seem surprising, but for some young Muslim girls, it was an inspiring moment. The mosque door was traditionally reserved for men, and the main prayer area on the ground floor was where the men gathered (M.Moore, 2006). Asra Nomani's courage to challenge this tradition and remain in the room despite being asked to leave marked a change. Although her action might be considered confrontational and not accepted by most Muslim women, it drew attention and sparked discussion about the role of women in mosques (M.Moore, 2006).

Someone once compared the action of a young journalist rejecting tradition by sitting in the area usually reserved for men in the mosque to Rosa Parks' bold statement of refusing to sit at the back of the bus. Although her action did not win popularity among mosque leaders, the journalist was supported by her father from the beginning. She and her colleagues sought to push for equality for women in places of worship and fair representation on mosque boards. They argued that if Islam is truly democratic and its community genuinely Islamic, as many Muslim leaders claim in response to Western criticism, then women should be treated as full and equal participants. She even sought support from the Islamic Society of North America for the struggle for women's rights. Although religious leaders insisted that this issue should be addressed at the local level, they expressed support for this struggle and attempted to mediate the issue (M.Moore, 2006).

Both ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) and CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) have established that enhancing mosque leadership preparation including female leadership is a key agenda. Both organizations strive to provide educational programs to help achieve this goal. In June 2005, ISNA published a pamphlet titled "Toward Women-Friendly Mosques". At ISNA's 2004 national convention, Asra Nomani (Nomani, 2005) delivered a speech about women's rights in mosques. Since her initial protest, more women have joined the efforts to empower Muslim women in mosques. Nomani herself has written a book titled "Standing Alone in Mecca: An American Woman’s Struggle for the Soul of Islam" (2005), which details her experiences performing the hajj

pilgrimage to Mecca before 9/11 and her efforts to advocate for Muslim women's rights (M.Moore, 2006).

Many immigrant women in America come from cultures where women rarely, if ever, attend mosques. Although few scholars disagree that Prophet Muhammad not only allowed but even encouraged the participation of women and men in joint worship, this has not become common practice in Islamic societies. Muslim women in the United States, for several generations, have been able to attend mosques if they wished. This was also true in mosques founded by the Lebanese community in the early twentieth century, where women played a crucial role in the establishment and activities of the institutions (Ozyurt, 2010). They have supported institutional activities by participating in various fundraising efforts, such as selling baked goods, organizing rummage sales, and soliciting funds door-to-door. Except in places of worship established by South Asians and some Salafi groups adhering to certain customs, women have played and continue to play key roles in the social activities of mosques and various forms of education. They often help mosques become points of community cohesion. Amany Jamal of Princeton University, working with Columbia University's study on Muslims in New York City, emphasized the civic role played by many mosques, which differs from their exclusive function as prayer spaces abroad (M.Moore, 2006).

### 2.6. The Struggle for Gender Equality in American Mosques

There is no doubt that many immigrants, both men and women, find it difficult to break the traditional habits of gender role separation in mosques, even though they support equal participation of men and women in most other public arenas. More and more American women who identify with Islam attend mosques for various prayers, including Friday afternoon congregational prayers, which are traditionally a time for communal worship. For some immigrants, this attendance was previously required only for men, but now more women are insisting that the Prophet’s wives also attended prayers. Sunday morning prayers, an American innovation adapted to the reality of the workweek and providing time for children's education, are held in most mosques. National surveys report that about 15 percent of mosque attendees on Fridays are women, with more women preferring Sunday prayers over Friday prayers, seeing them as more family-oriented (M.Moore, 2006).

Affordability often becomes a barrier for women in participating more actively in community building, education, and governance. Many women's experiences show that even though they have a strong desire to engage in their religious community, existing structures often do not support their involvement. This leads to a lack of female representation in various aspects of communal and public life. Feminist geographers have used private and public spaces to address this issue. They seek to move away from a nostalgic view that places have fixed meanings and identities. Instead, they promote a more dynamic and progressive

view of place (Mohammed, 2022). This approach not only paves the way for recognizing the active role of women in shaping and defining spaces but also helps in reducing structural barriers that hinder their involvement.

Raymond, Kyttä, and Stedman (2017) introduced the concept of place affordability as a key factor contributing to the formation of a 'sense of place'. They reveal that often women are forced to occupy parts of a place that are inaccessible, inadequate, and unappealing, contributing to their negative feelings towards the place. This is particularly evident in the context of mosques, where physical and social structures often do not support active female engagement. Integrating the concept of 'sense of place' within the framework of environmental psychology can be a beneficial practical approach for future feminist studies in geography. This approach offers a way to understand and address the barriers preventing women from accessing and feeling connected to certain places (Mohammed, 2022).

These findings support the framework proposed by Zine (2004), which focuses on religious and ideological perspectives in feminism to understand faith-based experiences. In this study, the women involved identify themselves as devout Muslim women committed to attending mosques. They choose to remain within their religious community rather than leave it, emphasizing the importance of making mosques inclusive for all worshippers. The significance of these findings lies in their potential to guide change agents, architects, and mosque designers in America in making detailed analyses of architectural elements to consider when designing women-friendly mosques. Factors such as entrances, pathways, dividers, and the use of integrated spaces should be primary considerations during the design phase to ensure that women's needs are deliberately accommodated and that they are given options during the construction or modification of mosques. Given the increasing number of purpose-built mosques in the last decade, these findings are highly relevant and will be crucial in helping to meet the needs of women in future mosques (Mohammed, 2022).

## 3. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that African-American Muslim women assert their right to play an active role in the mosque, even though they often receive smaller spaces and fewer resources. Although the most sacred spaces in the mosque are often the most segregated, this arrangement provides women with a devoted area that they actively protect. Even with limited access outside of working hours, women still manage to access the mosque by relying on their solidarity networks with selected men. Therefore, we hesitate to label Islam as a "patriarchal religion" outright. Our analysis shows that the manifestation of patriarchy in this context occurs in tangible and observable ways. We are also reluctant to state that the mosque is "undoubtedly male-dominated," as described by some scholars in the context of male-led conservative religious organizations (Prickett, 2015). Instead,

we find that the efforts of these sisters to resist male domination are their way of making the mosque a personal space for them as immigrant Muslim women in America.

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