



# God is a Woman? The Association Between Religiosity and Feminism

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## Introduction

- Organized religions have a strong influence over the identities and belief systems of Americans (Markuly, 2020).
- Muslim women are more likely to report that their religion supports feminist principles and to identify as feminist than Christian women (Ali, Mahmood, Moel, Hudson, & Leathers, 2008).
- Older individuals are more likely to define their stance on feminism in relation to their religious ideology than younger people (Fitzpatrick Bettencourt, Vacha-haase, & Byrne, 2011).
- There is a complex relationship between gender, postmaterialism, and religion which varies across national borders (Hayes, McAllister, Studlar, 2000).
- Studies conducted to date have focused on specific religious identities and likelihood to identify as feminist, and most study women's behaviors toward the interconnection of religiosity and feminism.

## Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between how often people attend religious services and how likely they are to identify as a feminist?
- Does the association between religiosity and feminism differ for individuals based on the usage of the word "feminism" rather than women's rights?
- Does the association differ for men and women?

## Methods

### Sample

- Respondents (n= 2,294 in wave 1, 1,601 in wave 2) were drawn from the Outlook On Life Survey (OOL), a nationally representative sample of English-speaking, non-institutionalized adults in the U.S.

### Measures

- Religiosity was measured with the question "How often do you attend religious services?". Possible responses ranged from 1 (more than once a week) to 6 (never) with additional responses of 7 (not asked) and 8 (missing/refused).
- Support for feminism was first measured with the question "Do you think of yourself as a feminist or not?" The answers to this question were coded dichotomously.
- Support for feminist beliefs was then measured with the question "How concerned are you personally about women's rights?". Possible responses were coded dichotomously.

## Bivariate

- A logistic regression shows that **how often someone attends religious services** is not significantly associated with **identifying as a feminist**. With both levels of religious attendance against no religious attendance,  $p > 0.05$ .
- However, a logistic regression shows that **how often someone attends religious services** is significantly and positively associated with someone's **concern for women's rights**. When placed against no religious attendance, people who **sometimes** attend religious services are on average 1.60 times more likely to be concerned about women's rights (OR=1.60,  $p=0.002$ ). When placed against no religious attendance, people who **often** attend religious services are on average 2.13 times more likely to be concerned about women's rights (OR=2.13,  $p=0.0005$ ).

## Multivariate

- While there appears to be an association on the graph of the link between religious attendance and feminism based on gender, regression analysis shows that there is no statistically significant association between the two (Figure 2).
- Regression analysis shows that religious attendance is statistically significant and positive to concern for women's rights for both genders. For women who often attend services, the association is significant ( $p=0.045$ ) when placed against never. For men, when placed against no religious attendance, the association is statistically significant for those who attend religious services sometimes ( $p=0.014$ ) and often (0.019).

## Results

Figure 1: Proportion of Subjects who identify as feminists based on religious attendance

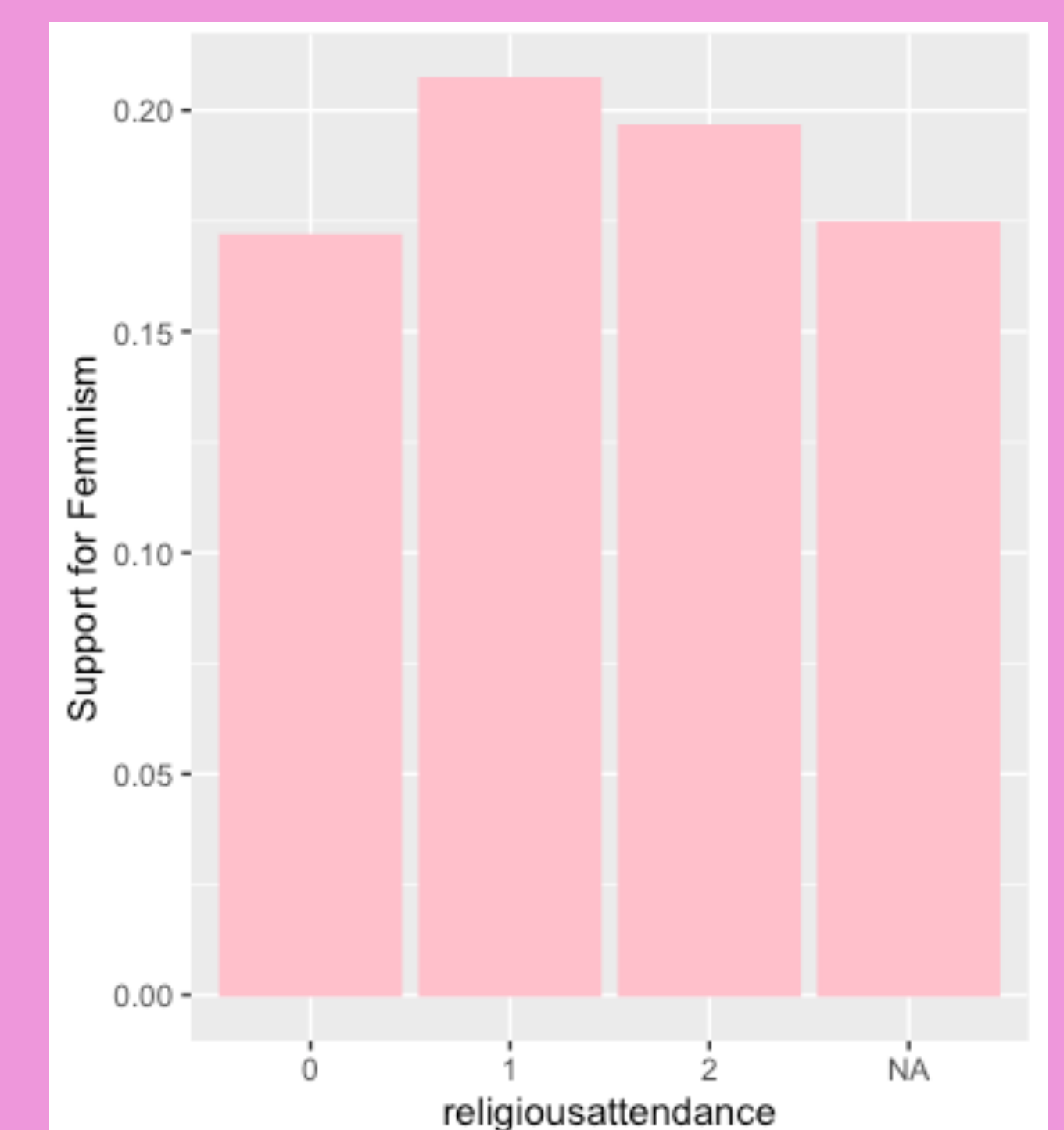


Figure 2: Proportion of Subjects who attend religious services and identify as feminists with gender combination

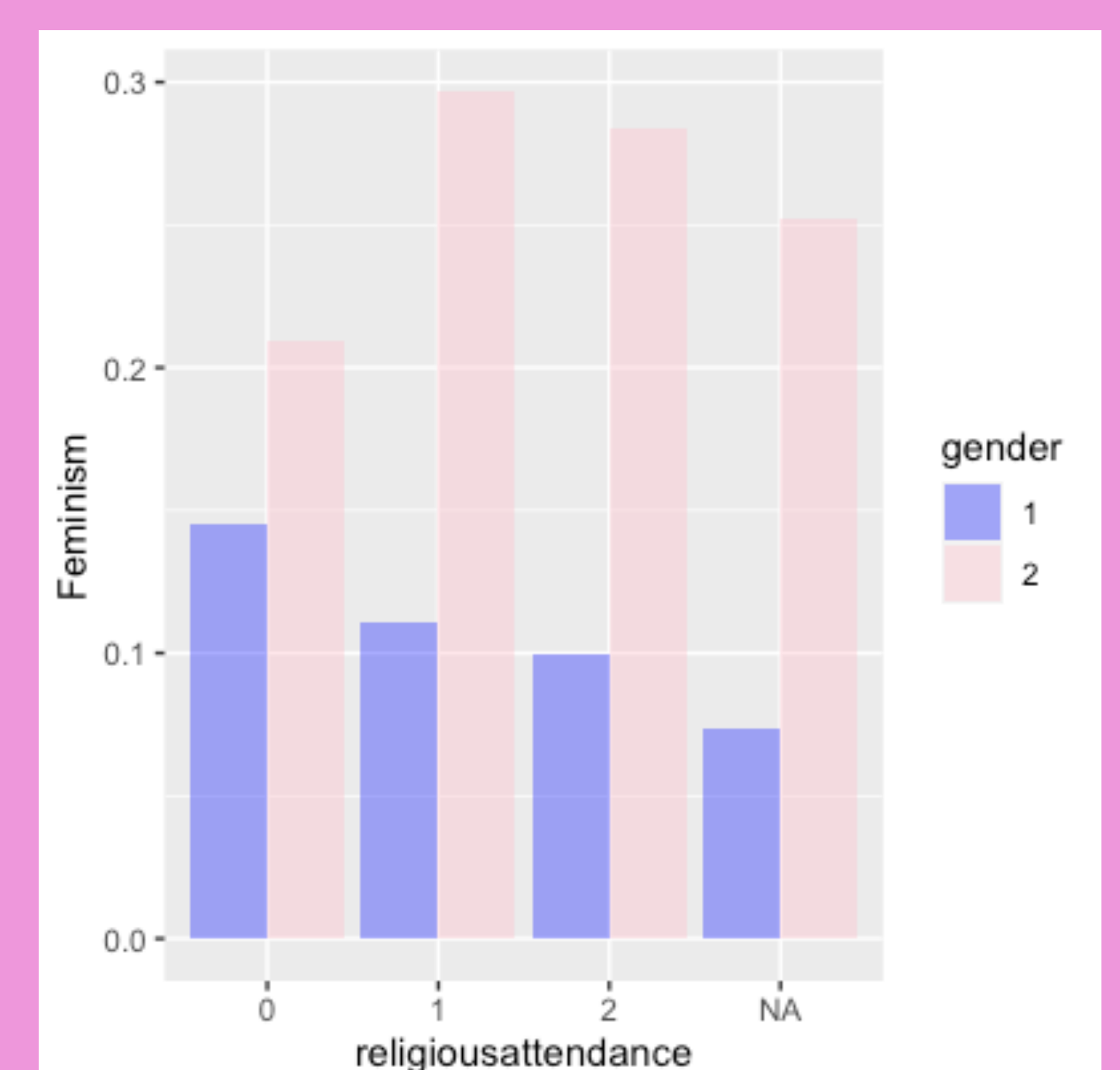
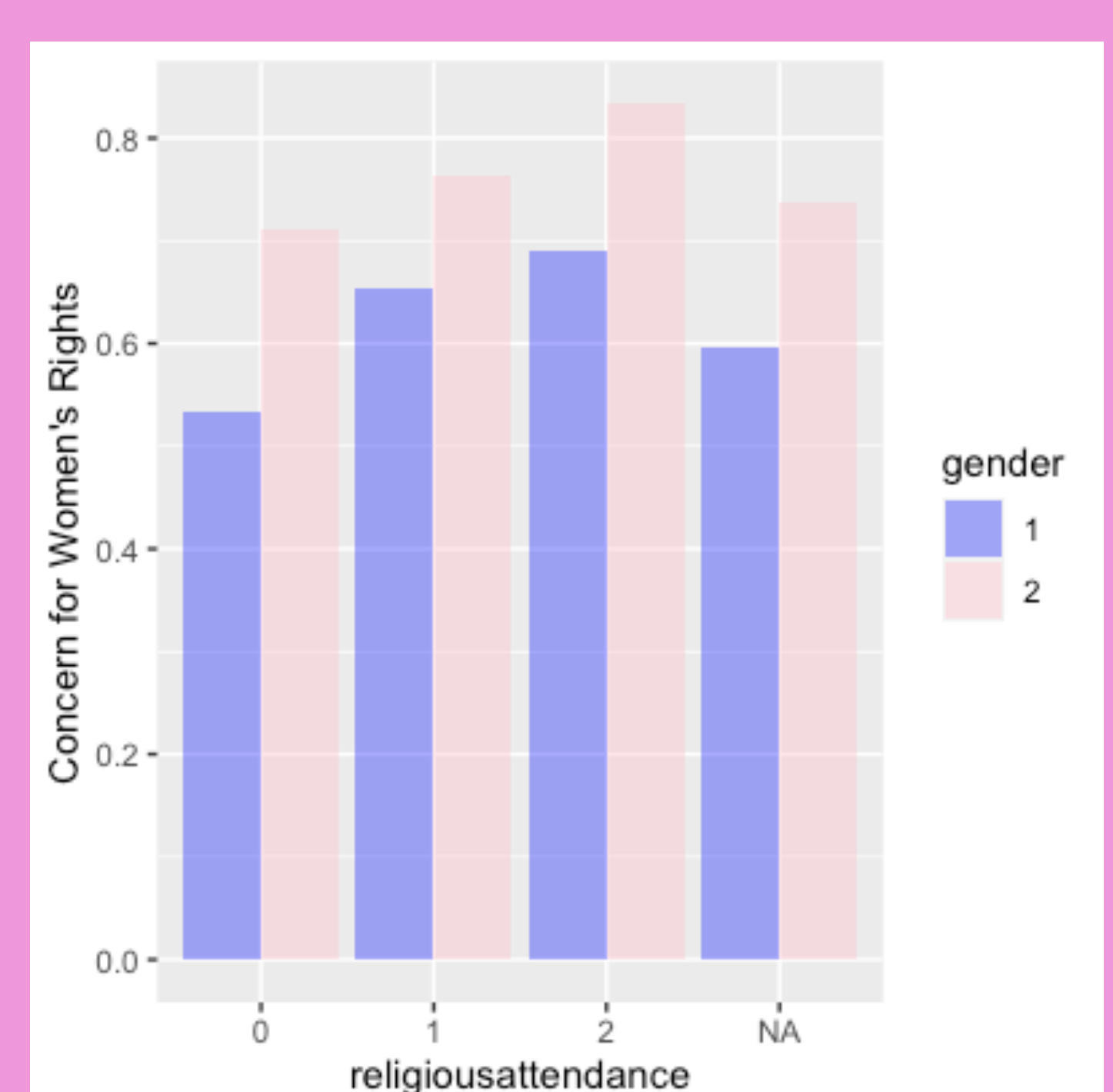


Figure 3: Proportion of Subjects who attend religious services and have a concern for women's rights with gender combination



## Discussion

- How often someone attends religious services may not directly correlate to how likely they are to identify as a feminist.
- However, individuals may be more likely to show concern for women's rights (a facet of feminism) the more frequently they attend religious services. This significance occurs for both men and women.
- Feminist organizations, policymakers and clergy members might use this information to address the stigma surrounding the word "feminist" as well as advocating for women's rights within religious practices.
- Further research is needed to determine how the word "feminism" is stigmatized among religious practitioners and how effective change messaging to promote feminism as an ideology among religious observers.