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Booze and Women:
Gendering Labor Market Outcomes of Secular
Consumption Patterns in a Muslim Society

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Abstract

Using information in the household consumption data as a signal of secularity, this study explores the effect of religion on women's labor force and educational participation (FLFP) in a Muslim-dominated country, Turkey. A household is categorized as secular if its members report that they consume goods that contradict conservative Islamic practices, such as alcohol. This information is then used in FLFP estimations. The results show that living in a secular household has a positive and highly significant effect on the probability of labor market participation of married women. For single women, most of whom are in the school-age, the estimations also provide weaker evidence regarding the positive effect of secularity on the probability of educational participation and paid work.

Keywords: Consumption, female labor force participation, religion.

JEL classification: J16, Z12