



Transforming 'everyday Islam' through feminism and higher education: second-generation Muslim women in Spain

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Feminism, Islam and higher education: towards new roles and family relationships for young Spanish-Moroccan Muslim women in Spain

Blanca Mendoza , Marta Bertran & Jordi Pàmies

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Feminism, Islam and higher education: towards new roles and family relationships for young Spanish-Moroccan Muslim women in Spain

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the lives and family relationships of young women of Moroccan descent in Catalonia, Spain. Based on ethnographic research and life stories, we have found that access to Higher Education has led these young women to a feminist interpretation of the *Qur'an*. This interpretation allows them to identify as Muslim women while refuting traditional gender roles. The young women surveyed argue that the bases of gender equity can be found in the *Qur'an*, but are hidden behind misinterpretations that put the role of women in a disadvantaged position with regard to men. Our evidences that through this reformulation of Islam, in conjunction with a successful academic pathway, they have started to gain a position of authority and recognition within their families, leading to changes in their family roles and relationships.

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Islamic feminism; Moroccan women; higher education; family relationships

Introduction

International research has shown how migration processes create resignifications in the ideological, political and social structures of Muslim communities. These resignifications can be observed in the roles of women transforming within the family context (Khan 2010; Hamzeh 2011; Oso and Ribas 2012; Utomo 2016; Bertran, Ponferrada, and Pàmies 2016).

In Spain, Moroccan Muslim women's participation in the labour market, their establishing of new personal networks outside kinship, and the relaxation of social control towards women are some factors that have increased their capacity to negotiate in the social and domestic sphere (Zontini 2010). Furthermore, a new generation of pioneering young women of Moroccan descent is currently emerging in Catalonia, they being the first in their families to enter higher education (henceforth HE)¹.

The aim of this article is to explore the relationship between HE and the strategies that have allowed these young women to transform traditional gender roles² and relationships within their families. This paper thus offers different insights on the experiences of young

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