



Arab Muslim migrants in Europe between to be save or integrate, a feminist ethnographic study

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Abstract:

Our study belongs to the gender ethnographic type, as it is concerned with Muslim women immigrants from North Africa to Europe, as it describes in the form of an ethnographic report their lifestyle there between saved from their society or integration into a different society.

The non-probability sample using the participant observation, immersion, coexistence, direct and indirect interview observation tool was specific to the time of the epidemic for a period of three years from November 2018 to December 2021, these women varied in their scientific and practical levels, their intellectual orientations, their ages and their social statuses, which necessitated the reliance on the gender approach and feminist ethnography As a theoretical approach that explains the manifestations of the life of Muslim women between the culture of the country of origin and integration into the future society.

Among the results of the study, the gap between the two communities, which reinforces the sexual, racial, and economic inequality that draws the boundaries of affiliation and alienation? Women seek to integrate and assimilate into the new lifestyle while preserving the original culture derived from religion and Arabism, as well as attempting individual, family, and collective advancement. By improving material income and earning financial profit.

Keywords: female immigrants, being saved, integrate, feminist ethnography.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The goal is to investigate the configurations of the imaginaries built around the Arab Muslim women who migrated from "the Arab Muslim world" to Europe. These "other women" are still considered in Europe people who need to be "saved" from their culture, and a key piece for "integration" into the host society. These imaginaries have concrete effects on women's lives.

We worked specifically on:

- imaginaries around what it is to be "good women"
- imaginaries about their bodies and kinship
- imaginaries around the "integration" of women.

In Salamanca for example the dominant Spanish Castilian group stands as a reference of normality, unmarked and deracialized in front of its varied otherness. also, The state and its institutions, as well as the majority society, continue to perceive Muslims as externalized otherness.

Muslim women are considered part of less easily "integrated" collectives and their culture would explain the oppression. In this sense, the problem of their marginality or exclusion is transferred to these other women, leaving aside the material conditions of their existence.

They even appear as a threat to the cultural integrity of the nation and are held responsible for socio-economic problems.

The anthropological and intersectional approach to women's narratives and around them was key to accounting for the conformation of these hegemonic imaginaries, as well as their fissures.

Therefore, the problematic in our study came to identify the fantasies of the life of Arab Muslim women who migrated to Europe through being saved and the call to preserve them on the one hand, and on the other hand what they receive from the policy of integration in European countries.

2. Study's concepts:

2.1 female migrants:

or migrants women non-nationals who have moved (or are endeavouring to move) to a country from another one – often but not necessarily the country of their nationality – and whose presence in the former may or may not be lawful or regular. (Ambrosini, 2008)

2.2 being saved

An inter-governmental initiative directed at non-developed countries in order to improve the scientific and standard of living of its residents, especially in the case of political asylum in European or American countries. (Anthias, 2000).



2.3 integrate:

defined as the process of mutual adaptation between the host society and the migrants themselves, both as individuals and as groups. (Asad, 2002)

2.4 feminist ethnography:

It is a scientific, research approach based on describing women's lives and all feminist and gender phenomena such as practices, behaviors within a group, and perspectives on a phenomenon over a period of time. (Bullen, 2012)

3. Approach to Research

Regarding the methodological procedures of the study, we chose a sample of North African women, especially Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, although the percentage of Moroccan women was large, by virtue of their historical backgrounds and geographical proximity.

However, we noticed the degrees of similarity between the two countries by virtue of Arabism, Islam, and slavery, and thus compatibility in customs and cultures.

Then we chose the feminist ethnographic approach, which monitors the nature of thinking, viewpoints, behaviors and beliefs of the study sample women, and we used the tools of the ethnographic approach represented in: participant observation, direct and indirect interview. (Buxó Rey, 2002)

The sample was also distributed according to women with ages from 18 to 60 years, and a low educational level up to postgraduate studies.

The research took place mainly in Salamanca from November 2018 to December 2021. Ethnography had mainly observant participation and in turn used relevant quantitative information.

Some significant scenes of the participation were be presented in the form of graphic vignettes or comics, sketched by us and made by a cartoonist.

The analysis is theoretically sustained from anthropology and gender studies, feminist anthropology, and anthropology of migration from the gender perspective, feminist economics and praxis theory. (Eugenia, 2002)

And here it is interesting to highlight two central contributions of the methodological theoretical framework, which are the intersectional perspective and the question of agency.

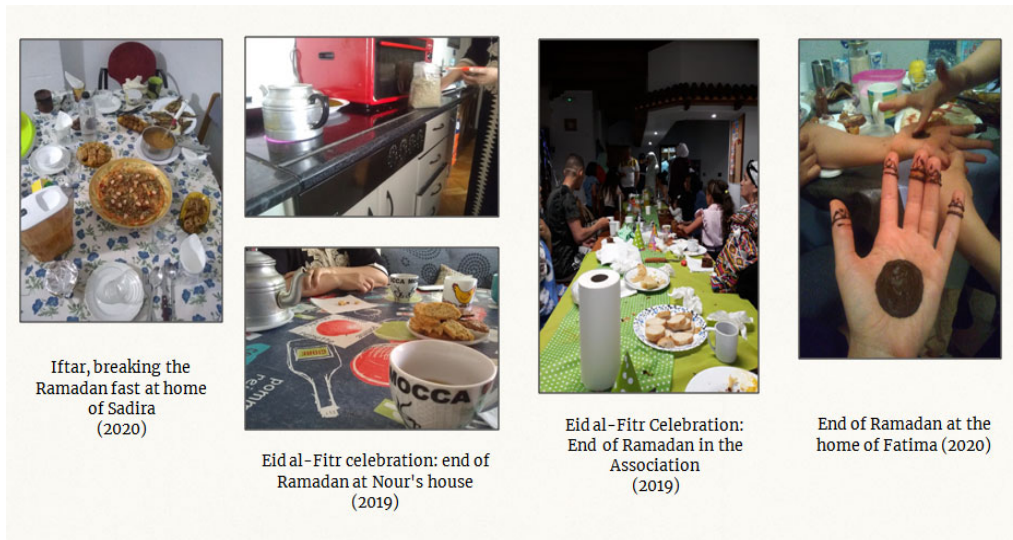
Also, Intersectional analysis allows us to account for the interrelationships between the inequalities that run through the lives of these women. (Carrasco, 2006)

As for agency, in this work we understand it as the capacity for action that is enabled and created in historically specific subordinate relationships.



4. Discussion:

Fig.1. Appropriation of category Muslims different ways of migrate



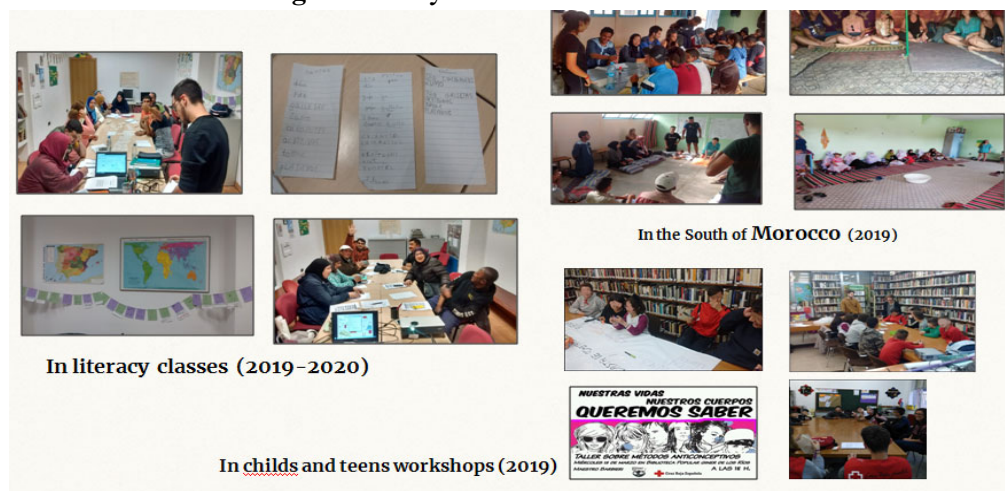
Source: ethnographic study

The pictures show you how a group of Arab Muslim migrants live, especially on some occasions such as Ramadan and Eid, considering adult women who prepare these religious rituals such as the Iftar table, food, taking care of the house, and decorating with henna.

In Ramadan 2012, for the association that carries out the integration of Arab and Muslim migrant women, the workers prepared an iftar meal for them, which strengthens the relationship between the two cultures and gives women a sense of belonging. (Fernández, 2018)

Regardless of the reason for their asylum in the European host country, they practice their Islamic rituals at the expense of the group. (González Vázquez, 2015)

Fig.2. Literacy classes on the association



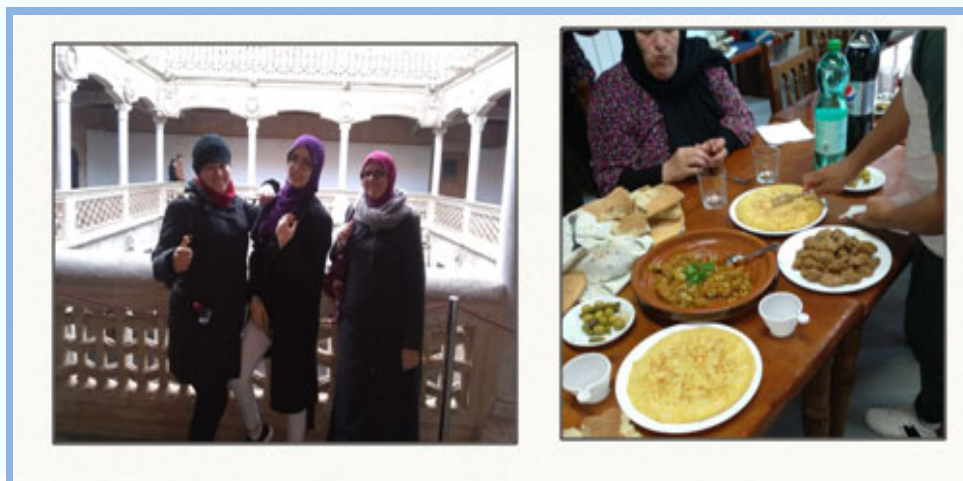


Source: ethnographic study using participant observation

It is evident from the picture on the right, the interest of Arab immigrant women with their children in meeting in groups at the time of occasions, as teamwork is important to them, which contributed to their integration into the association through the picture on the left, which shows how the organization brings them together in the teaching process and improves their skills in Language and debate.

5. Imaginaries about good and bad women

Fig.3. Element of social control and stabilization of the gender system



Source: ethnographic study using direct interview

Women In their groups: cohesion mechanism.

In the majority society: They must be "saved" from the men of "their culture", they are dangerous for them and for the majority society. (Gregorio Gil, 2000)

They continue with the family mandate of safeguarding honor and cultural tradition, or integrate into the unmarked, white, autochthonous European majority society. so, They don't want to stop being Muslims. (Grosfoguel, 2014)

By participating with Arab Muslim women immigrants in Europe, we noticed that they do not have a problem in dealing with the opposite sex, and they are ready to establish a relationship with men, especially in the interests of care, workplace and study.



Fig.4. Muslim and Arab Women's relationship with the other sex



Source: ethnographic study using direct interview

we use the category "Muslim" knowing that, although they arrive from different countries and areas, in Europe they become Muslim, or Moras, from the external point of view. Although this is a homogenizing category created to subordinate, they self-ascribe in this way. Religious belief is what unites and identifies them being in European countries, beyond their countries of origin. (Hochschild, 2002)

Women have ways of perceiving themselves and the world of which they are part, live, face, and/or resist the effects of their own societies of belonging and encounter a majority society that on the one hand stigmatizes, marginalizes and excludes them, while intervening to "integrate" them.

In order not to run the risk of "victimizing" by homogenizing women and turning them into passive beings, it is necessary to look at their concrete experiences. (Lamas, 2000)

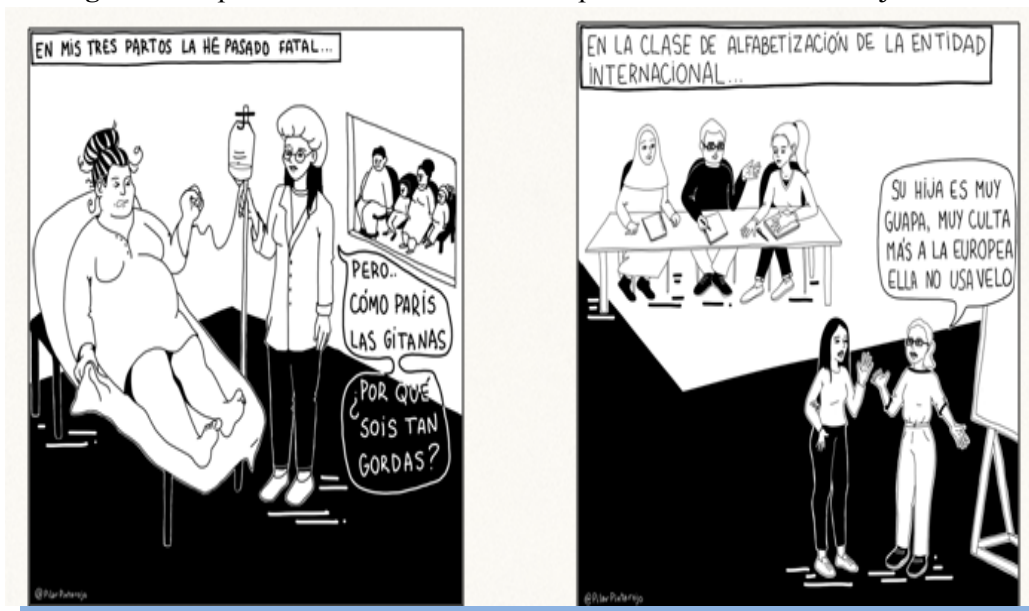
Within the framework of the participant observation, the tools used were female and mixed discussion groups, the teaching of foreign language classes for migrants, the implementation of workshops, and participation in organizational meetings.

These spaces that I was naming were the gateway to a diversity of meetings with the participants in their homes, streets, entertainment, commercial, gastronomy, religious worship spaces, among others.



6. Imaginaries about their bodies and kinship

Fig.5. Kinship: The sexual status of the suspected woman and is subject to control



Source: ethnographic study using indirect interview

Kinship plays an important role in influencing the behaviors and views of Arab Muslim women, especially those related to paternal kinship. Often the father has the authority to make decisions for his daughters and influence them, even in the event of her emigration and distance from him to the host country. (Zonabend, 1986)

While this kinship develops in affecting the intimate relations of immigrant women by exposing her body to a foreign person, the physical relationship of a group of Arab Muslim women is controlled by the Islamic religion or the influence of kinship as matters of Arab customs and traditions in the relationship of a man with a woman.

For those who migrate, Spain, and Salamanca in particular, appears as a country with greater facilities to enter than others, as a good city to get there, but not so much to stay. Work is scarce even for Spanish men and women. In addition, the proliferation of anti-rights, anti-gender, anti-Islam, anti-immigration borders has grown in public discourse, in institutional practices and measures, as well as in common sense. (Aixelà Cabré, 2000)

A part of the "devalued jobs" are executed by the migrant population and by women socially constructed as "racialized".

This group is one of the main target groups of integration programs in Spain. It is common for Muslim migrants to go through different entities and programs throughout a part of their lives.

Throughout the research it has been shown that most women occupy positions of



subordination in relation to their gender, their cultural and religious group, their migratory status and their socio-economic positioning. From a weaker position they find themselves negotiating/haggling, permanently (Kandiyoti, 1988). They cope, say they do not know what to do with certain problems, and use strategies to take advantage of opportunities. This demolishes the image of passivity that is usually attributed in general to people in situations of social vulnerability.

Although interstices also appear in the imaginaries and in compliance with the rules, both those of their groups of belonging, and those of the majority society. (Lombardo, 2010)

They do not represent a homogeneous whole, but present ambiguities and contradictions. Like all women, but with the aggravation of the specific inequalities they experience.

7. Imaginaries around the "integration" of women

Fig 5. Stop being=Get rid to be normal and "integrate"



Source: ethnographic study



Fig.6. Aggravating the specific inequalities that experience women migrants



Source: ethnographic study

A group of immigrant women feels the differences and quality between them and the residents of the host country in terms of culture, economy, education, training, and even the scientific level, in an attempt to integrate into the culture of a new society, especially for the young age group or adolescents. (Moreras, 2001).

The integration program adopted in European countries, especially in Salamanca, aims to achieve “modern citizenship” enables many immigrant women to realize themselves, starting with teaching them the language of the host country, acquiring skills, and taming crafts and internal capabilities. (Briones Gomez, 2007).

Some of the respondents answer about the improvement of their cultural condition after merging into the organization and they benefited from that in searching for the field of work in order to achieve their own capital, with which they support their families and themselves.

In the previous pictures, there is an illustration of women's crafts and professions such as cooking, sewing, sports, marketing, barbering, travel, discussions and meetings with people of other races, religions and countries.



8. CONCLUSION

From the results that we drew from this ethnographic research on a group of women immigrants to Europe, they met with them in separate countries, as an Arabic-speaking Muslim group whose ages vary from 18 to 60, and their social status: single, married, divorced or widows, their educational level: illiterate, even girls with higher degrees.

The imaginaries about being saved or integrated differed from one woman to another, but they were very much in common with regard to common customs and culture.

The imaginaries reinforce the overlapping inequalities and generate greater economic, gender, ethnic, age inequality, crossing borders of belonging and exclusion.

Among these imaginaries opposed but that appear as complementary, as two sides of the same coin, women have carried out strategies, not without conflict, of adaptation and appropriation of different capitals that seek to guarantee individual, family and collective ascent.

They are agents when they try to comply or practice fissures in compliance with the rules and conditions of both their group of belonging and the majority society. Some may take more or less risks, relegating part of their reputation sometimes motivated by the promise that, in some cases they, and if not the next generation, will be able to live a better life.

This will be influenced by each woman's context, ability to weigh risks and resist costs, and the decisions they may make.



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