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Theatre Tools for Islamophobia Prevention



Three thoughts on Islamophobia

Desk Research
Forn de teatre Pa'tothom

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This article addresses the increasingly worrying problem of Islamophobia in Catalonia, also analyzing some points in common with the rest of Spain and Europe.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Catalonia, Spain, Racism, SOS Racismo, CIEs, Centro de intermamiento de extranjeros, Generalitat de Catalunya, Consell Islàmic de Catalunya (FCIC), Plan Municipal contra la islamofobia, Ajuntament de Barcelona, PRODERAI – Prevenció, Detecció i Intervenció de Processos de Radicalització Islamista, Ainhoa Nadia Douhaibi, Salma Amzian





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Theatre Tools for Islamophobia Prevention



Desk Research

Forn de teatre Pa'tothom (Barcelona, SPAIN)

1. Introduction

In recent years, between the rise of the extreme right world-wide (USA, Great Britain, Brazil), the defeat of the left and the threat of terrorism, Islam in Europe has become a central topic of debate. At the same time, almost all European countries have registered an increase in the practice of the Muslim religion. But the most serious problem is the perception that people have of this increase, since, believing that Muslims, even if they are European, have customs that are far from those of the European majority (which in our opinion, if any, are not important), such as the use of the veil and Ramadan, a discourse has been created that identifies this visibility as a problem to what is supposed to be the modern values of the West, and the reason why they have become the focus of numerous attacks and Islam is often seen as a threat.

This desk research is aimed at addressing the problem of islamophobia and not Islam. We believe it's the duty of Muslims, if they want to, to explain Islam, not us. Furthermore, explaining Islam to oppose islamophobia seems counterproductive to us, since it's equivalent to being defensive, as if the practice of a religion had to be explained beyond the right to religious freedom itself. Islamophobia is racist and classist, and identifies racial construction by conceiving that a difference in a body is inseparable from the construction of a collective body. Among those who believe that the Muslim religion is incompatible with Spanish society, the Islamic veil becomes a symbolic reference for this misunderstanding, with women being the most affected.





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In general, Muslims coming from large cities in countries with a long-standing secular tradition, such as Iran, Turkey and Tunisia, do not usually have many problems being positively perceived by European society. That also applies to the majority of Alevi Muslims (a branch of Shiism to which 20% of Turkey's population belongs), who have a more liberal interpretation of the religion. On the other hand, Muslim families coming from rural areas or countries like Bangladesh, usually have more problems, because islamophobia is racist since it's assimilated to physical traits (racialization) and the use of the veil is rejected, which in this case, many times is a Chador.

However, in general, the European has more difficulty accepting other minority customs in its territory, such as the wearing of headscarves, the roles of each sex, or strong religious convictions, which have confirmed their prejudices with a lack of information and have turned the entire Muslim community into a scapegoat used by populist politicians. This is what Bichara Khader¹ warned in 2015 that Europe was "building" a problem and later (2017), it became worse thanks to the rise of Trump in the US.

In 1978, Edward Wadie Said, one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century, publishes "Orientalism" and analyses the false conception that has been generated of the East from the western perspective. The East is everything that Europe and the USA are not, and here, begins the construction of the great abyss that separates the two, where -he warns-, there are some called "us" who are against everything different, achieving the imposition of a unique worldview and perpetuating colonialism.

¹ Bichara Khader. Lovaina University, Belgium.





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2. Islamophoby and migratory flows in Spain

For the analysis of migration in Spain, we will refer to the work carried out in this same publication by Red Íncola, partner of Pa'tothom in this project.

However, it seems important to us to point out that most Europeans are wrong to continue to perceive Islam as a foreign religion and to believe that all Muslims are, by default, "foreigners" who have "come" to Europe². Thus, in August 2018, it exploded in all the media in Spain that Islam reached the 2 million faithful in the country. Naturally, the contents depended heavily on the medium, but the headlines were similar. As an example, the following: "Islam continues to grow among the Spanish"³, "Map of Islam in Spain: 300,000 more Muslims in the last five years and 1,400 worship centres"⁴ or "The silent conquest of Islam in Spain"⁵. Although these media belong to different political tendencies, the headlines are in an alarming tone, but when the article is read, the evidence falls under its own weight and all of them mention that according to the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain (UCIDE), Muslims are 4.2% of the Spanish population and almost half are Spanish. Naturally, the media expect that most readers will keep the headline in their mind. To talk about 300,000 Muslims with so many "zeros" or in terms of "silent conquest" or "invasion" is biased. People will not make a conversion to the percentage that 300 thousand is really little and more in five years, but they will stay with the concept of "conquest" or "invasion", which again refers to the false idea that Islam is something alien to Spanish society.

2 Extracted from: <https://elimperiodedes.wordpress.com/2015/01/24/el-islam-en-europa/> 2015. Consulted 1st June 2020.

3 SUÁREZ, Cristina. *El Confidencial*. 21/08/2018

4 ABC. Right-wing Spanish newspaper. 16/04/2016. The same headline will be repeated in 2017 and 2018.

5 El Debate. Media of the extreme right.





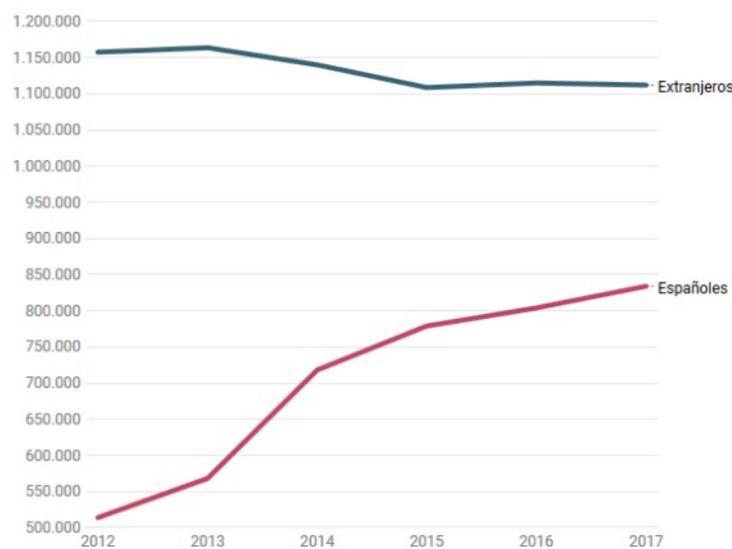
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According to a summary of this report, the number of Muslims in Spain is growing (we repeat, very little), but the number of Muslims from outside Spain remains the same, while the number of Spanish faithful is increasing. So it can be concluded that the immigration-Islamism relationship is a constructed relationship, in order to make an issue of both immigration and Muslim people. In reality there is no direct relationship between the number of faithful to Islam, the number of foreigners entering Spain or their nationality.

Origen de los musulmanes (España)



Fuente: Estudio demográfico de la población musulmana 2017 · Get the data · Created with Datawrapper





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3. Approach to islamophobia and reality in Catalonia

Catalonia, and especially Barcelona, has been watching the evolution of islamophobia and has been working on the subject for years. Barcelona has undertaken innovative initiatives such as the Anti-Rumours Network –set up in 2010- that has become an international benchmark, which works on rumours against cultural and religious diversity, racism and discrimination, and in 2016 the Municipal Plan against Islamophobia. At a broader level, in 2002 a collaboration agreement was signed between the Generalitat de Catalunya and the Consell Islàmic de Catalunya (FCIC), an entity created in 2000. The need to work against islamophobia was also recognised early and initiatives can be seen that were set up in 2008 like Stop als Fenòmens Islamòfobs (SAFI), but with a very slow growth and little institutional support. Spanish Muslim youth organizations have also emerged, such as the Multicultural Muslim Youth Association. Fortunately, the initiatives and struggles have multiplied, in parallel with the rise of Islamophobia.

The Municipal Plan against Islamophobia launched by the Barcelona City Council is part of the fight against hate speech and discrimination which is provided for in the “Barcelona City of Rights” Program. Although the initiative is very good, in 2019, no legislative initiative had yet come out that defines islamophobia and how to fight against it, neither in Catalonia nor in Europe. 28 measures were included in this plan to prevent discrimination against the Muslim population and provide guarantees to those who suffer it. Its objectives in general are:

- To make Islamophobia visible as a form of discrimination;
- To counter the generalization of negative images about Islam and about Muslim people;





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- To normalize religious diversity in the city and reinforce guaranteed mechanisms against Islamophobic discrimination.

However, numerous entities and professionals trembled in August 2017, when 2 terrorist attacks were carried out in Barcelona and Cambrils. The Catalan institutional reaction was exemplary. The then, Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and the Mossos d'Esquadra (the Catalan police) were quick to declare the importance of the Arab community to the country's economy. Of the thousands of articles that were written in those days about this event in Catalonia (in Madrid there had already been a terrorist attack), little would be said about Islamophobic acts. The day after the attack, the ultra-right wing, organized a fascist demonstration on the Ramblas, which was not without response. Hundreds of anti-fascist people showed up at the same time and confrontations took place between the two groups in such a way that they ended up expelling the fascists from the Ramblas. The quick reaction of the citizens did not allow political advantage to be gained from the tragedy, at least immediately.

The attacks were carried out by 10 people, of whom one was the imam in Ripoll, called Abdelbaki Es Satty, 41 years old, and the others were nine youths from 17 to 28 years old. All nine were born or raised from a young age in Spain. As Spanish and legal residents in Spain, they all had access to the same public services -health and education- as any other citizen. Seven of the nine had completed secondary education and six of them, had attended or were pursuing professional training.





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Teachers, fellow students, social workers and others from their town (Ripoll) considered them “good guys” and expressed surprise and sadness at their involvement in the terrorist attack. Their environment of friends was not limited to Moroccans and they “were completely integrated”, but the reality was different, as we can see by the insistence on remarking that “they spoke Catalan well”. How could they not speak it if they were young Catalans? These comments imply that, in fact, although they felt integrated, they were not considered part of Catalan society. This suggests that they felt socially excluded in some way and succumbed to the influence of their local imam, Es Satty, who acted on them as an agent of radicalization⁶. When the attacks occurred, however, no one doubted to classify them as “second generation immigrants”. In other words, despite the total coherence and ethics with which the state acted at an institutional level with the attacks, this was not the case when conceiving that a young Catalan could be the victim of manipulation by a leader like Es Satty, the imam of Ripoll and immediately, the stereotype of “immigrants” was used. However, no criticism has been leaked of the role played by the judiciary or state forces, which were unable to detect that Es Satty was dangerous, when he had been detained previously. What we might ask ourselves is what happened to these youths? Why did they feel excluded?

From that moment, the Catalan and Spanish governments would take this event to mark a new political and security agenda. After the attack, Level 4 of Antiterrorist Alert was declared.

6 You can consult the document «[Un análisis de los atentados terroristas en Barcelona y Cambrils](#)» by Fernando Reinares (Director of the Global Terrorism Program of the Elcano Royal Institute) and Carola García-Calvo (Principal Investigator of International Terrorism and member of the Global Terrorism Program of the Royal Elcano Institute)





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Until then, the Spanish strategy to address the surveillance of the processes of radicalization of Muslim people in Spain, was implemented following the *Estrategia Integral Contra el Terrorismo Internacional y la Radicalización*⁷ that was approved by the Socialist Government and ratified in 2012 by the Government of the Popular Party, and subsequently, the *Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha contra la Radicalización Violenta*⁸.

These plans have several lines, one of them is "prevention", and the main objective is to act at the origin and on the causes that generate the so-called *jihadist terrorism*. Measures are also taken to promote work in favour of "identity recognition" and "integration" of the Muslim community in Spain, and against the radicalization processes, using a series of actions in key areas such as local administration, relations with Islam, or establishing adequate communication⁹. In 2016, Maina Kiai, *UN Special Reporter on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association*, stated that the anti-radicalization strategy implemented in the United Kingdom, called the PREVENT program, was "dividing, stigmatizing and alienating segments of the population. "The program that was implemented four years later in Spain was similar to this one.

The attack was also a turning point in Catalonia, since from that moment on state security has been used to take actions to "prevent radicalization" of the Muslim population and

7 *Integral Strategy Against International Terrorism and Radicalization (EICTIR, 2010)*

8 *National Strategic Plan to Combat Violent Radicalization (2016)*. Information taked of: CAÑO PAÑOS, Miguel Angel. «[La lucha contra la amenaza yihadista más allá del Derecho penal: Análisis de los programas de prevención de la radicalización y des-radicalización a nivel europeo](#)» *RESI – Revista de Estudios en Seguridad Internacional. Universidad de Granada, España*, 16th May 2018.

9 *Ibid 7*. It should be noted that Spain is not the only one to do this type of program. In Great Britain they had the PREVENT strategy that studied radicalization (2006) and the CHANNEL program (2009). Germany had the HATIF (an acronym for "Heraus aus Terrorismus und Islamistischem Fanatismus", which means "Exit from terrorism and Islamist fanaticism" (2010). In France, "Le plan de lutte contre la radicalisation violente et les filières terroristes" is published (2014)





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monitor their behaviour. This reinforces programs that are the implementation of institutional and structural racism¹⁰. As early as 2015, after the Paris attacks, Catalonia was the first autonomous community to develop a protocol to detect possible cases of radicalization in schools that involved the formation of management teams. After the attack, the Generalitat announced the extension of this protocol, including training for teachers (*PRODERAI - Prevenció, Detecció i Intervenció de Processos de Radicalització Islamista*), and the same in prisons (MARCO Program). In schools, attitudes such as stopping drinking Coca-Cola, not putting on makeup, are highly suspicious¹¹ and must be reported to the police (Mossos d'Esquadra).

In parallel, those from groups of the extreme right-wing identity and supremacist act violently against mosques and people, under the logic of fear. In the treatment of information from the media inappropriate use of terms is made and is always linked to Islam, associating it with violent and terrorist content, achieving feelings of reaction from the population, such as anger and fear, to bring together sympathies and increase followers towards -extreme- positions from the ultra-right. Thanks to this, the Catalan population gradually "accepts" or "understands that there are aggressive reactions against Muslims", strengthening the message that the ultra-right promulgates, despite the fact that it remains calm with respect to the attacks.

Moving forward in 2018, speeches and hate crimes grow, helped by the entrance of the extreme right to Congress with 52 members of parliament, who through social networks

10 We recommend reading the book : «[La radicalización del racismo - Islamofobia de Estado y prevención antiterrorista](#)». Write by Ainhoa Nadia Douhaibi Salma Amazian, Ed. Cambalache. Barcelona, 2019.

11 *Protocol de Prevenció, Detecció i Intervenció de Processos de Radicalització Islamista (PRODERAI)*. We recommend reading the article from *La Directa* in Catalan: «[No beure Coca-Cola, no celebrar Sant Jordi o esborrar-se els tatuatges són indicadors de "radicalització islamista", segons els Mossos](#)».





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take the opportunity to campaign¹² to discredit immigration, the left, Muslims, refugees, women and homosexuals, with hate speech and lies. Furthermore, they are supported by right-wing parties, even in times of great social upheaval such as the health crisis caused by the pandemic. *The far-right party launches several "alert" messages to a possible "invasion" promoted by the [left] government through the Minimum Vital Income. Its leaders believe that there is a "Machiavellian ideological agenda" to "favour the creation of multicultural societies"*¹³.

On the left, the counter-narrative is discouraging, and they even fall into the devastating exclusionary logic, that is, for example, they do not oppose each other by saying that there is no "them", but saying "they are good" or "they are not all the same". Based on this, all extremist discourse is dealt with from the moral standpoint and this does not help. Muslims continue to be "foreignized", the division between "foreigner" and "immigrant" is made in parallel to the dynamite image of the latter. All this is a logic that prolongs the differences, maintaining, of course, a class system. That's the same as saying that, for the blacks, the Arabs and the Gypsies, it will mean living in poverty for a long time. At the level of the European Parliament, racist and islamophobic measures are also taken, such as turning back refugees; or supposing the presumption of guilt of Muslims when they have relatives or businesses in countries or regions where armed groups operate; or presupposing the guilt of a Muslim who offers funding for mosques or places of worship.

12 In April 2018, it emerged that the Spanish far-right party hired Steve Bannon, who was head of the Donald Trump campaign and who was the creator of the 'America first' message. Thus establishing strategies to *combat separatist* propaganda and the elections in Andalusia revolve around the Catalans.

13 ALBIN, Danilo. "De la 'paguita' al 'efecto llamada'". Diario Público. Bilbao 08/06/2020.





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Thus, Muslims are victims of all three types of discrimination: Direct discrimination when they are not rented an apartment or are rejected for a job because of their veil, their origin or their name. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently “neutral” provision, criteria or norm represents a disadvantage for a certain group compared to others, such as asking that the veil not be worn in certain public spaces (in Spain it has not yet been prohibited), for example, not being able to wear a veil if you are a nurse or a teacher because they are "neutral" spaces. And finally, the structural discrimination that is the basis of organization of our society. The system itself creates disadvantages for certain groups of people over others. Structural discrimination works through laws that constantly operate in favour of one group and discriminate against others, and create obstacles that hinder true equality of opportunities. Structural discrimination, naturally, is the most serious because it endorses inequality from the institution and crystallizes power relations, as José Soeiro (Theater of the Oppressed) would say. And as an example, penalizing not having papers (not having the documentation) at the same time as the difficulty of obtaining them, the raids, the street identifications¹⁴, or the radicalization detection programs, mentioned above.

According to the latest 'Attitudes towards Immigration' survey by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (CIS)¹⁵ in 2018, 16.2% of those interviewed would refuse to rent to immigrants and 19.6%, almost one in 5, would try to avoid it. The percentage rises to 35% in the case of who it is they would refuse to rent a house to (people from the gypsy community). According to CIS data, 22.6% of respondents would try to avoid residing in a block where immigrants live, and almost 8% would refuse to do so. One in four, in addition,

14 SOS Racisme: «[Por cada identificación a una persona española, se para a más de 7 con nacionalidad extranjera](#)». Barcelona, 20 de febrero de 2019.

15 Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) means Center for Sociological Research (CIS).





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would avoid living in a neighbourhood where foreigners live. "In some cases we can speak of ignorance, but in others we must speak of openly racist attitudes of people and companies, which not only deny the right to housing, but also the right to equality and non-discrimination," the organizations clarify¹⁶.

There are many aspects that are not known or mistakenly assumed about Islam than from Western society. Catalonia has a wide range of entities that fight against islamophobia and many struggles start from thinking that racist people are not ignorant but have a mistaken or severed knowledge of the "other religious person". Islamophobia explains Islam with cliches and denying its diversity. The most recurrent are those that associate Islam with something barbaric, irrational, inferior, and impervious in time, to geography or to cultures.

In the PRODERAI Program, the trainers, one of them a police officer, said such serious things as: *"We have laws, we have a culture, we have models to live in... which is the one that clashes with the models they have, because they want Islam to reign in all aspects. That it rules their lives. So they do not take into account that Islam, which is a religion that comes from the 7th century, wanting to establish Islam in all aspects of life is, at this point, in our society, a rather high point of confrontation"*¹⁷. This affirmation confirms everything that characterizes Islamophobia: A vision of Islam as a monolithic, static block that does not respond to changes. A vision of Islam as a separate something, as "the other", which has no values in common with our culture; Islam as a threat, which collides with civilizations; a barbaric Islam, from the 7th century, etc. They are very misrepresented comments.

16 UNIÓN DE COMUNIDADES ISLÁMICAS DE ESPAÑA. Observatorio Andalusí. [Informe especial 2018](#). Pàg. 79
17 *Ibid* 11.





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As we already know, after the attacks in the US and Madrid, Islam is automatically linked to violence or terrorism. There is a tendency to equate Arabs with Muslims, Muslims with Islamists, and Islamists with terrorists. The mental map is simple.

For example, *jihadism* is a western neologism, an invention to describe the most violent branches within political Islam. It is a corruption of the word jihad that simply means "effort". It is true that, in the name of an alleged jihad, some followers call a "holy war" in the name of Allah. But, jihad as the basic concept of Islam is a matter to be debated. The use of this term by the media, scholars and politicians, the term jihadist terrorism to the detriment of other denominations, are considered counterproductive and reinforce the point of view of those who argue that Western societies are hostile to Islam by nature. Muslims are disgusted that jihadism is associated with Islam, and they vehemently reject the expression "Islamist terrorism" or "jihadist terrorism". They are right, so it should be avoided. They also resist that the appropriation of jihad be naturalized and that it be reduced to violence. Possible alternatives would be 'Daesh terrorism' or Al Al Qaeda terrorism'. Also, they find it exhausting to always be on the defensive, explaining themselves.

One would also have to question the concept of "radicalization", which in fact comes from "getting to the root" of something. However, it must be considered that someone who opts for radical positions, does not necessarily end up carrying out violent actions. To put it bluntly, a subject's extremist position does not necessarily link him to a terrorist organization. What is more, someone can become a radical extremist, rejecting, for example, a certain political system in force in the West, but he will not, for that reason, use violent means to achieve certain ideological or political objectives. So we conclude that what is wanted of the Muslim population is moderation, its annulment or assimilation to the





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majority society. After this step, unfortunately, your skin will not be white enough, your name will not be European enough, and Ramadan will not coincide with Christmas.

Of all the structural initiatives and policies that affect migrants, as is the case with many Muslims, the most serious consequence is the CIEs (Center for Internment of Foreigners). These are prisons for undocumented people, which changed from being an administrative crime to being a criminal crime with the Aznar government in 1996. The home secretary that time, Mayor Oreja, made a radical change in approach to illegal immigration and, from that moment the Home Office assumes the powers over foreigners, which previously were carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Immigration began to be treated as a matter for the police. They were also the first to speak of the "call effect", hitherto unused. The Immigration Law was written and rewritten on three occasions; without reducing the number of immigrants and only helped the mass of people "without papers" to increase, consolidating a mass that balances between labour exploitation and the temptation to crime, as a way to survive. On a social level, the change is palpable, and it begins to be interesting to ask a person if they have papers or not. Before asking a person's name, they are asked about their origin and later, if they are or not legal.

In order to fight against this, in Pa'tothom we avoid, as a rule, asking about nationality and we consider that having or not having papers is bureaucratic discrimination (structural, of course), that it does not matter because it does not define a person. The fact of not having papers, currently, does not allow access to Healthcare in Spain and can lead you to become a prisoner in a CIE. In addition, we help to generate strategies to answer certain questions that only serve to confirm stereotypes.





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The CIEs are racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic prisons where people enter who have not committed crimes, but who lack the necessary residency permit. The vast majority who are there are North African and black. In a 2015 report, it was said that Ramadan was respected in the CIEs, taking into account that almost "all the inmates have Algerian nationality and profess, mostly the Muslim religion." The report doesn't inform about exact numbers, but it also says that they have no worship space. The CIEs are characterized by a total lack of transparency, but the possibility that a Swiss (non-EU) could enter these facilities is excluded. If we take into account that non-whites are asked for identification on the streets seven times more than white Spaniards, the probability of entering a CIEs increases, however there is enormous difficulty in leaving. So, many human rights associations call for the closure of this type of facility. In 2017, there were 23 in France and 131 in Italy. In Spain there are seven CIEs with 1500 inmates, but these extend throughout Europe. Luckily, until now the entry of minors is prohibited, which is not the case in the US.

4. Islamophobia and gender

In October 2018, Muslim women and men from different parts of Spain came together to break the stereotypes that exist about them. They launched the campaign *#IslamEsDiversidad* (Islam is diversity) in which they showed the diversity that exists in Spain¹⁸. At the beginning of the video they show the stereotypes about Muslim women and the first one is "immigrant" that demonstrates us how often Muslim women are considered as foreign. After comes "married", "illiterate", etc. Another video in the same vein is

18 [#IslamEsDiversidad - Jóvenes musulmanxs en España](#) Youtube 31th Oct.2018.





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“Muslim and Spanish”¹⁹. The *#IslamEsDiversidad* campaign emerges again in 2020 due to police action during the pandemic, the death of George Floyd and the lies of the extreme right. Obviously, it is not useful to say that women are diverse, but unfortunately such a campaign makes sense in the West because it is one of the main clichés of Islamophobia.

In the whole construction of the Muslim "problem", an important role is played by the rejection of women, because for islamophobes, they embody the stereotypes of what is "visibly Muslim", as well as certain physical aspects, regardless of whether it carries a form of modern-western life. Muslim women have different problems from Muslim men, but they do not wait to give their response. Not in a homogeneous way, of course, but they are forceful, overcoming numerous drawbacks that have to be heard²⁰. Within what the state has called a "moderate Islam" there is no place for a veiled woman. Forgetting that Europe also suffers from patriarchy and androcentrism, the West gives lessons to the “other” on how a woman should be, from the media, advertising, marketing, or even, as Sirin Adlbi Sibai²¹ points out, from science and the arts. Muslim women are constantly justifying themselves and there is little questioning of Spanish and European society that has followed the same colonial structures for centuries to justify inequality.

In reality, Islamophobes prevent a real dialogue with them, infantilizing them and labeling them ignorant and excluding them from any possibility of recognizing that they have discretion or free will, for example, to wear a veil or not.

19 “[Musulmanas y españolas](#)”. 30.Oct.2015.

20 It is interesting to know the concept of *intersectionality*, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw.

21 Sirin Adlbi Sibai, She has a PhD in Mediterranean International Studies from the Autonomous University of Madrid. She is the author of the essay: “The prison of feminism. Towards decolonial Islamic thought” and co-author of “Islamic Feminisms”.





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And to quote another example, that is a point of controversy for the West and, therefore, a problem for Muslim women, is feminism, of that we find many opinions and that they are either not allowed to be feminists or required to be so. Natalia Andújar talks about Muslim feminism, where women, without having to abandon their beliefs, are proposing strategies, rereading the Koran, creating tools and trying to deconstruct the patriarchal structure, which is what makes them vulnerable and not religious issues²². In addition, she says that if a woman does not have access to a job because of the veil, feminists should be the first to defend her for this discrimination, if not, they condemn them to the domestic sphere and that favors patriarchy. Muslim feminism -which has been successful because it relies on the Koran for the pursuit of gender equality- simply takes into account local realities, such as feminism in Russia, Peru or India.

In this chapter, we have little to add to the magnificent memory that SOS Racism made in 2017, called “Islamophobia and gender” and that we recommend reading, to agree or disagree, to debate them and to build together a fight against Islamophobia²³. This document is very interesting, but it should be noted, on page 10, where the most relevant elements that affect women with Islamophobia are listed, and one is the devastating attitude of people who do not consider themselves Islamophobic, which falls into "helping" them “Integrate” or initiatives are encouraged “for” them but not “with” them.

22 Natalia Andújar Chevrollier (Barcelona, 1972) feminist and Muslim. Linguist and teacher, directs the training center Educaislam.

23 [“Islamofobia y género”](#) SOS Racismo, December 2017.





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Before closing, it is important to mention that the women who are generating more counter-discourse, from our point of view that are -as it could not be otherwise in this millennial era-, the influencers, artists and celebrities, as they set trends in public opinion. They are usually young women, who have become great references, not only for Muslims, but for Spanish civil society. For example (and it's only one), we have a civil society leader named Ramia, who in her videos talks to us about many topics including Islam and Islamophobia. Ramiachannel²⁴ tackles feminism, how to work in the search for solutions against islamophobia, what happens in legislation, taking into account intersectionality, removing restrictions on women's clothing (at the legislative level in Europe) and the disproportionality of surveillance and counter-terrorism measures for Muslims. Ramia always combines the information with the struggle and uses YouTube, a medium that is followed, above all, by young people. She has also been to European meetings and they have sent their requests to the European Commission. In Spain there are influencers with the freshness of Juni²⁵ or the rapper Miss Raisa²⁶.

5. In conclusion

24 Ramiachannel - FEMINISMO ISLÁMICO | [¿Una respuesta necesaria o incompatible?](#) Video Youtube. 5.mar.2020. En este vídeo vemos una periodista española que se autodenomina feminista negándose a escuchar a Nora Baños porque lleva velo.

25 Juni is una youtuber. We recommend: [¿Conversa o musulmana de nacimiento? | Cómo empecé a crear.](#) 7th Oct 18.

26 We recommend: [«Miss Raisa - No lo soy pero»](#) / and globally mention rapper Mona Haydar,





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The theater, cinema and television cannot be disconnected from reality and is full of clichés. There have been multiple complaints about series (such as *Elite* or *El Príncipe*) where they present Arabs as terrorists or Muslim women as submissive, among other things. This was recently reported by Ayoub El Hilali, an actor and influencer²⁷. Black women only play the role of cleaning women or prostitutes; there was also a scandal that broke out in Barcelona in October 2018 when a black character was played by a white actor²⁸. It is the case that the roles offered to them in movies or series are the same, generally secondary, that means, if they want to earn a living from acting they have to play roles according to this unique vision (and extension) of the prejudices. In general, the most famous series never include anyone who does not have a marked professional career and come to the perversion of putting a Spanish person to act the role of a South American or an Arab.

In general Islamophobia has been consolidating the discourse and is increasing in Spain and has all the characteristics of the fascists in the 1930's, when, they present themselves as the saviors of the homeland and have messianic and victimist speeches that appeal to the emotions and they confront "us" against "them". They are xenophobic and racist. Faced with the impoverishment and loss of rights due to the 2008 crisis, when aggressive austerity plans were applied in Spain to "save the banks" (the financial sector in general), the population became a breeding ground for simplistic and easy explanations, to alleviate their confusion. And the most dangerous: an enemy is identified. Half a century ago they were the Jews, today they are the immigrants.

27 [El Hilali: La ficción española está suspensa a nivel de representación racial](#). La Vanguardia. 7th June 2020.

28 TRAVIESO, Jesús. [«Los actores negros de Barcelona, contra el Teatre Lliure por una obra en la que un blanco interpreta a un personaje negro»](#) El Diario. 30th Oct 2018.





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It is the duty of people who are not racist, islamophobic, or xenophobic to question our ways of seeing the world, to be able to accompany side by side those who are fighting to change the conception of our society, of our world and stop using the idea of "them" and "us" because it helps the speeches of exclusion that make the ultra-right grow throughout Europe.





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