The Religious Integration in Spain of the Moroccan Muslim Second and 1.5 Generation

Joaquín Eguren

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explain current processes of immigrant Moroccan children born in Spain, or those that arrived during the first socialization period (until the age of 10). We will describe, using a transnational lens, how this young people follow Islam in a different country from their parent’s homeland. At the same time, we will compare and contrast this youth with those from Latin America and observe the most significant differences and similarities.

Based on a previous quantitative survey, the study is developed by an ethnographic work analyzing their religious behaviour as Muslims in Madrid. Two most important conclusions are: the youth that arrived very early in life or were born in Spain look to build a reconciled position for Muslims, with Spanish values. Second, this group in the religious field is playing a double role; first inside the Islamic community and second in the entire society.

Key words: Islam, Second Generation, Integration, Transnationalism, Youth.

Resumen

El propósito de este trabajo es explicar los procesos actuales de los niños inmigrantes marroquíes nacidos en España, o que llegaron durante el primer período de socialización (hasta los 10 años). Adoptaremos una óptica transnacional para describir el modo en el que estos jóvenes siguen el Islam en un país diferente al país de origen de sus padres. Al mismo tiempo, realizaremos una comparación y contraste entre estos jóvenes y otros procedentes de América Latina para ver las diferencias y semejanzas más significativas.

Basándonos en una encuesta cuantitativa anterior, este estudio se ha llevado a cabo mediante un trabajo etnográfico que analiza su comportamiento religioso como musulmanes en Madrid. Dos de las conclusiones más importantes son: los jóvenes que llegaron a una edad muy temprana o que han nacido en España intentan establecer una posición reconciliada para los musulmanes, con los valores españoles. Por otra parte, este grupo dentro del ámbito religioso desempeña una doble función: en primer lugar, dentro de la comunidad islámica y en segundo lugar, en toda la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Islam, segunda generación, integración, transnacionalismo, juventud.
Introduction

Two years ago, in 2009, Spain remembered the fourth centenary expulsion of the Moorish people. Philip III announced la pragmática (a decree) of this expulsion on April 4th, 1609. With this pragmática (decree), 300,000 Spanish people were forced to leave the peninsula and prohibited from returning. That decision was the final moment for Christians and Muslims to experience conviviality, which sometimes was good, and at other times difficult.

Four centuries later, Spanish children of Maghribian origins—specifically, children born in Spain and raised as Muslims, are presently living according to these religious prescriptions. Current historical, social, and cultural conditions are very different for these Maghribian children. Today's Spanish laws permit religious freedom for minorities. Followers of Islam have rights and legal protection to pursue their religion with peace and freedom. Recently though, difficulties have emerged that demonstrate similarities to the problems from four centuries before. Specifically, the problems are fear and ignorance between native inhabitants and the Maghribian population. This creates situations of discrimination and distrust. Some young Muslims are growing up under disapproving looks and mistrust from their neighbors.

With the approval of the 1978 Spanish Constitution, Spain effectively granted freedoms to all religious minorities. The founding of the system created a relationship between religions and the State based on the two primary principles of liberty and equality. Following those principals, the relationship also focuses on secularization and cooperation.

The establishment of the new regime initiated cooperation between the Spanish government and all religions. This new regime responded to the people's desires for political and social changes during the political transition. The new state was built on the principle of neutrality, not indifference, in relation to the expression of religious diversity.2

The purpose of this paper is to explain current processes of immigrant Moroccan children born in Spain, or those that arrived during the first socialization period (until the age of 10). We will describe how these young people follow Islam in a different country from their parent's homeland. At the same time, we will compare and contrast these youth with those from Latin America and observe the most significant differences and similarities.

We analyze their religious behaviour as Muslims in a secularized society with a Catholic majority that is learning how to cope with an increasing Islamic population. Simultaneously, they are incorporating into a heterogeneous Islamic community, with different national origins such as Maghribian, Pakistani, Syrian, and others...

This research is based on two methodological pillars. First, we take account of the results from a quantitative survey about the Second Generation in 2001. The second pillar refers to an ethnographic work from 2007 in Madrid, specifically about the Muslim Maghribian Second Generation.

The previous stage of my ethnographic research showed the results of the 2001-2002 quantitative survey regarding the Moroccan, Peruvian, and Dominican second generations born in Spain, or those that arrived before the age of 10 years-old. In this case, the methodology utilized a questionnaire given to 539 second generation youth that lived in Barcelona and Madrid.

For the present study, our ethnographic work has been focused in the Comunidad Autónoma region of Madrid. To gather information, we have formally interviewed twenty second generation youth, conducted three focus groups, and held participant observations during informal meetings at their homes and other locations. We then analyzed the results.

Before the results are presented, it is necessary to discuss the definition to understand the complexity of the second generation.

1. About Second Generation notion

Like Portes (1996)3 indicated there are three distinct categories related to the second generation. “The first category refers to children born abroad that came to the United States...
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after their infancy. The second includes native born children of immigrant parents and children born abroad who came at a very early age, also called the 1.5 generation. The final group is families consisting of both parents and children born in the United States. This third group represents the majority of the American population."

According to Halloway-Friesen (2008) the term 1.5 generation refers specifically to the Latino immigrants that arrived in the United States as children or as adolescents. There is a distinction between the first generation that arrived in the US as adults and the second generation Latinos that were born there.

In the Spanish case it is necessary to approach the study of youth that are in an intermediate situation. As indicated previously, this can be referred to as the 1.5 generation. Specifically, the Moroccan Muslims, the oldest ethnic and religious group, was created by immigration. In this community there are two groups of young people. Most of the young Muslims belong to the 1.5 generation. The others, comprised by those that were born in Spain are considered part of the second generation. In some aspects, we compare this group with Moroccan origins to Latin American Christians.

The late appearance of the Moroccan second generation in Spain is based on the characteristics of the parent’s migration patterns. At the beginning of this migration, during the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the goal of many Moroccan men was to travel to France or other European countries, however, many of them ended up staying in Spain. Often, this group of men initially brought their older sons to live with them. Then, after an extended period of time, they also brought their wives and daughters.

The primary hypothesis developed and used in this study are as follows:

First, the supposition is that the majority of young people in Morocco and the Moroccan second generation born in Spain follow Islam. Because of this, we must consider if the political and religious conditions exerts an influence on this belief…

Secondly, there is a group of young people that have a feeling of belonging that is linked to a secular cultural concept of being Muslim. This is a result of the ethnographic work on the Berber Rifains. (Eguren, 2007)

In these cases, the internal religious experiences depend on the environment of where the individual lives. In Morocco, there is social pressure among families to give a religious sense to celebrations while also respecting local customs.

The third hypothesis supposes that young people of Moroccan immigrant children born in Spain or arrived in a very early infancy —during the first socialization— preferred to follow the Muslim religion and incorporate Spanish secular values. These are compatible in the religious and secular areas as tolerance, respect to religious diversity…

Between these young people are found two directions or senses: one group that host their beliefs and “practice religion” and other group of youth who takes distance from the religion, every religion. This last group shows the same attitudes in front of the religion as the many of Spanish young people, maybe the majority.

To analyze young people’s social and religious integration, we take a transnational perspective (Levitt, 2007). In this sense, we observe how transnational connections influence religious practices. This perspective has demonstrated the links between young people with Mediterranean origins on both sides; by kinship or when they chat or talk on the Internet.

2. Feelings of religious belonging

The limited facts that are available, mostly through this study, show that it is essential to confront this theme. The 2001 University Institute for Migration Studies (IEM) research about

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the second generation immigrants raised questions regarding the role of religion. Discussions with Moroccans, Peruvians, and Dominicans were held regarding their opinions on religious confessions and other practices.

Some results of the 2001 Second Generation Survey highlighted that some changes were taking place regarding the religious beliefs and practices of young adults. In particular, there were differences between the young people born in Spain and those that arrived after early infancy. The first group declared themselves more non-believers (22%) than the second group (10%), more than double.

3. Some religious practices

It is described in the following section the comparison of some religious practices between Muslims and Catholics from Latin America. Young people of Moroccan origins showed a significant level of Muslim belief (95%) while youth of Dominican and Peruvians origins reached less level of Catholic belief (77% and 76% respectively). However, when both groups were asked about attendance to the worship their answers were similar: one third never attended worship and half admitted to going sometimes; and the regular attendees had a minor acceptance (Catholics 12% and Muslims 16%).

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<th>Frequency of worship attendance</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Never</td>
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Source: Second Generation Survey 2001. IUEM. UPCOMILLAS.

The most important difference between both religious groups is the frequency of religious service attendance, which is gender based. Young Latin-American Catholic women were more interested in attending Mass than the young men. Young women go to the Mass more than twice as often as men.

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<td>Frequency of worship attendance by gender and religion</td>
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Source: Second Generation Survey 2001. IUEM. UPCOMILLAS.

However, in relation to Catholic Latin-American women, the Muslim young women attitudes were different. They went with lesser frequency to the mosque than Catholic women attend church. The survey showed that Muslim young men went more regularly to the mosque than women. There is a Muslim tradition in Morocco that explains this situation, because men regularly attended the mosque (three times more) and the feminine religious experience is characterized by privacy. If women go to the mosque, it is often at different times and normally they have separate places of worship than the men.

In the Morocco tradition, women don’t usually go to the mosque until they get older —generally after 40 years old. A 2005 survey applied to young people in Morocco, published by L’Economiste, reveals the differences between males and females that attend the mosque. Effectively, 54% of males state that they attend every Friday, compared to 31% of those in Spain. 46% say that they never attend the mosque: twice as many as the young Muslim men of Moroccan origins in Spain.

There is a gender based difference in religious attendance. 94% of young women never go to the mosque on Friday; exactly double the 47% of young Muslim women that never attend in Spain. The most significant result is that in Spain, the youth, (boys and girls) show relatively more interest in the religious experience.

4. What is Religion for? A search for an explanation behind religious beliefs

What is the social function behind religion and what purpose does it serve? Obviously, there are differences between children that were born in Spain and those that arrived during their school age years. To this effect, we have seen that the so-called 1.5 generation maintains certain religious practices. Among those youth, specifically in the males, a sense of guilt exists for not following their religion as closely as their parents. It is interesting that this guilt does not seem to appear in the second generation. It appears as if religion provides security and confidence. When questioned, the 1.5 generation frequently mentions the idea of “returning to religion.” As one boy states: “The truth is, I’m not the same as my mother. I’m really different. My mom has more faith, she’s more religious and stuff. I’ve said lots of times, if things are good, God isn’t important. But, if you’re between a rock and a hard place, you’ll say ‘Oh my God!’ This is why I said that one day I hope to get back to my roots.” —Mohamed, 21 years old.

Most young Muslims learn about the religion from their parents. Muslim parental model is very representative of religious patterns in this young people. In contrary directions, because their Muslim believes are recreated in front of this model or in its acceptance. For this reason, when many of them (they) state that they would like to return to their religion, they often practice Islam in a similar method as their parents. As most of their parents has a rural provenance and consequently traditional Muslim insight this religious model is very conservative. This means they follow the rules they were used to, the five pillars of Islam. Because of this, the religious education received while growing up is vital. Much of the religion is also learned from friends, acquaintances, known people from the community, or textbooks. Of course, imams and the religious teachers, the fqi, also give spiritual guidance.

The explanation given for the feeling of respecting the rules and Islam are that through the religious experience people are provided access to a transcendental life, better than the one in which they currently live. “For all of that, what do you feel? Why do you pray? Why do you do Ramadan? Said: Because when we die we are able to go to another world—Paradise.”

Also, there are positive outcomes faced in their daily lives: “If while doing that too, I think when you pray and respect the religion, your life will be much better.

Amin: You get married and that’s it. When you follow the rules you see all the good and the bad. It’s obvious that God is good. The bad is obvious too. We have all done some bad things.

Aziz: But we ask for forgiveness.” (Focus Group 2)

It is interesting that this guilt does not seem to appear in the second generation, those who were born in Spain.

5. Practicing Islam: perceptions depend on gender

There are different perceptions about Islamic customs for young women and young men. Young women highlight that normally their mothers are more tolerant and receptive than their fathers, mainly to the feminine role inside of the family. Mothers are more sensible and open to the current changes about egalitarian relationships between men and women. Fathers normally represent and defend Islamic and cultural traditions. Young men often aren’t so sensible to the egalitarian relationships. They prefer to maintain cultural and Islamic rural traditional patterns referring to the social status of women. This is because they want to preserve their pre-eminent role in social institutions, religion and family.

For these reasons, young women have more interest and necessity to change some of the ancestral traditions in Islam as the second place of the women inside the family, and seek more freedom outside privacy sphere... They are taking positions in the Spanish society creating women associations at social levels and Islamic feminine associations and groups to defend their ideas, examples are AJJM, Bidaia, UMME, … It is particularly relevant that the youth of the women participants of these associations.

¿Do you think that your religious belief is similar to your parents or has it changed some?

R. Islam is always the same. What occurs, maybe, I see my father’s mentality as more old fashioned than that of my mother. My mother is more modern. We practice the religion, but my father less flexible. Maybe that is why I say it’s not a religious issue. My mother thinks that it is better if I have more freedom. My dad doesn’t think that way. (Miriam, 21 years old)
Differences reveal themselves between young Catholics and young Muslims about themes related to the cultural customs and religion. For example in 2001, the Second Generation Survey questions asked: Is it acceptable that a women and a man live together before they get married? Or, is it important that you and your wife have the same religion? Each group had different answers. The great majority of Muslims (65%) disapproved the idea of marrying a person with a different religion. So, they defended the Islamic concept of marrying a person of the same religion. While the Peruvians and Dominicans responded that is was acceptable. There appears to be a distance growing between the young Spanish speaking population and catholic teachings.

These practices must be understood according to Quran teachings: In Islam it is forbidden that a woman marries a non-Muslim man. As Vernet (2003)\(^8\) says “…Quran permits marriage with a monotheistic women. But the contrary is not allowed. In Islam a tradition that is probably false exists which said that the Prophet married one of his daughters with ‘Adelal-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, a Christian.

During the interviews with young women a similar discourse appears: “To tell you the truth, I must marry a Muslim man. Really, I don’t agree, because, what if you fall in love with a non-Muslim? Love …” (Fatih, 19 years old). This isn’t a teaching that is exclusive to the girls; it also applies to the boys.

However, with respect to the question about cohabitation of the couple before marriage, both groups of youth held a similar attitude of approval —in fact, almost 50% of Muslim youth had a positive attitude. In this sense, both groups have a similar approach to this conduct as Spanish young. Maybe the change is more significant in the young Muslims than Latin-American youth because in Morocco cohabitation before marriage is not approved of. While in Peru and Dominican Republican, this social pattern is more accepted.

Consequently, we observe that young immigrants change their minds in relation to religion, and surely with respect to the religious traditions of their country of origin. There are some signals of the second generation assimilating religious and non-religious beliefs and practices of the native Spanish youth.

6. Transnational connections between the Muslim Second Generation in Spain and young Moroccans

Our Studies about migration in Spain reveal that immigrants maintain strong relations with their country of origin, families, parents and friends (Eguren, 2005)\(^9\).

The study, previously mentioned, about the second generation asked Peruvians, Dominicans, and Moroccans about their knowledge of their families living in their country of origin, and the following results were obtained:

96% of young people with Moroccan origins stated that they knew their families in Morocco, while this declined to 90% of Peruvians and 86% of Dominicans. We believe that this high level of knowledge regarding their families, especially in the case of Peruvians and Dominicans, is because a significant number of them arrived between the ages of 6 to 10 years old. It is probable that they knew their families before the emigration.

When asked about the frequency of visits to their families, Moroccans presented with the highest percentage, surely because of the geographical proximity between Morocco and Spain. Declining in frequency were the Dominicans (29%) and Peruvians (12%). Notice, that the further the countries of origin, the less frequent the visits become.

Both issues, knowledge of and the frequency of visits to their families living in their country of origin, sustain the hypothesis that these transnational links influence religious practices and beliefs in both countries.

Ethnographic work on Muslim young people with Moroccan origins confirms this hypothesis. The transnational religious knowledge allows them to compare how Islamic beliefs are practiced in both locations. And, to choose and apply social and religious strategies, according to their personal interests. They recognize the religious freedom available to them in Spain. This situation permits them to practice Islam in a plurality of manners greater than in Morocco, where religious freedom is more restricted.

At the same time, they consider it is easier to practice Islam in Morocco because “Islam it is present everyday in everything”:

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to respect prayers and the Holy Month of Ramadan, for example, are less difficult there than in Spain. The most important social and political institutions help apply religious precepts.

As in 1.5 and half Generation focus Group, which stated: The Religion of Islam in Morocco and the Islamic religion here in Spain is different. “There is a difference: here (Spain), the country is free and there (Morocco) it isn’t. For example: you arrive here, you see your friends, you meet Spaniards, Spanish girls, and you go out with these girls and so on… But you arrive in Morocco, and immediately you forget all that. Of course, you arrive and start over in the religion.” (Focus group 1)

7. The Transnational links and their influence on religion and familiar conviviality

As said previously, young girls often reject familiar traditional customs regarding gender relations that are practiced by their fathers and brothers. From their mothers, these daughters often see more sensitivity to the gender issues. The knowledge of current changes of the Mudawana Code in Morocco—about family and feminine personal status—helps them to maintain this attitude of rejection. Because of this, they compare gender equality within Morocco, specifically the equality available in the big cities of the south and some of the north (Tangier and Tetouan) against the smaller towns within the country.

This feeling of rejection brought about by the situation of unequal gender relations are shared by young Moroccan women in Spain and those still living in Morocco. But the expressions of this rejection take different forms and degrees, depending on the society. For example, this discourse is more expressive and clear in Spain than in Morocco.

“No, but I have good feelings with my Moroccan aunts and they are more sensitive than my father, you know? Because they don’t follow some traditional practices, you know? I say that my father is not close-minded, but he is stuck in his ways.” Focus group 3.

However, visiting their families and friends in Morocco creates distinct feelings. Some young people, especially those that were born in Morocco, and that have grown up there during their primary socialization, enjoy visits and vacations. But those that were born and were socialized in Spain frequently suffer a cultural shock.

“Because life, there, is very different than here. I’m not adapted to this form of life. And, there, you can’t go alone. You can’t visit a friend with the clothes I used to wear in Madrid. So, I can’t take it anymore because if you go with your family- it doesn’t matter. But, if you want to go alone, is not looked down on. Your family criticizes you.” Hafifa, 23 years old.

These young women try to balance Moroccan cultural patterns with Spanish ones. It is possible to observe the difference between young women born in Spain and those born in Morocco. The first group has assimilated gender equality patterns and it is easy to see their interactions with boys. But the second group maintains a certain distance from them. Looking at the situation logically, the girls that were born in Spain have more confidence around boys, but they do not have an explanation why for the parents. The other group is more reserved because of routine family patterns and the separation of gender roles that are more present.

“Here I have freedom. I can’t do everything that I want, but more or less. For example, until a certain time, I have to be home before midnight. My parents are a little old-fashioned. Even though I’m 19 years old”. Jadiya, 19 years old.

The conversations in Morocco with family and friends, regarding religion and other themes, reveal that there is interconnectedness. Currently in Spain, a similar kind of conversation is occurring. This interconnectedness creates a “transnational atmosphere.” Families and friends discuss how Islamic practices—and cultural patterns—are developing. Sometimes in Morocco, parents express admiration about their family and friends’ children that are inhabitants of Europe, how well they regard and follow Islamic precepts. But they disapprove of indifferent attitudes towards Islam by the Second generation. While this occurs, these young people of the Second Generation talk and discuss these issues with their families and friends in Morocco, creating a common understanding. For example, related to traditional religious patterns that fathers and families impose on young women, the women of both sides try to help and support each other.

“With the cousin in Tetouan we do talk about Religion. He tells me that he doesn’t like what I say. But I’m allowed to say what I think. You know? I understand that he doesn’t like it.
but he was raised in Tetouan. It’s a different way of living there. And besides, his point of view is not like mine…Because he is a believer. Often he explains it to me, not to convince me; just that he feels a certain way. We have a mutual discussion and we always get tangled up. Ha ha!”. Malika, 22 years old.

8. Conclusions

The first conclusion is related to the transnational analysis that resulted in the connections and links that exist between young Moroccans and those from different countries. These transnational connections are providing religious authenticity in Spain and Morocco for the people living in both places. Understanding this reality, the majority of times that people experienced religion in a different location than their original country, such as those born in Morocco but currently in Spain; know the difficulties and possibilities of being Muslim in both locations. They are also know the value and can compare their lives with those that are non-believers or do not practice the Islamic faith.

Secondly, it is possible to confirm that the majority of young Moroccans that live in Morocco, and also the second generation Moroccan descendants consider themselves Muslim by an overwhelming majority. This makes us reflect why they consider themselves Muslim regardless of the political or religious conditions, even religious freedoms…

Third, it is worth identifying that the Muslim secular culture shows some type of respect towards the sacred world. This stands out, not just because they are confessed Muslims but because, in this sense, these young people coincide with the group in the 1970s and 1980s of leftist, atheist, and agnostic Moroccan college students that desired the university experience and immigrated to Spain.

Fourth, a model has emerged that can be defined as weak socialization (González Blasco, 2004, 120-163)10. The males, especially those born in Spain, maintain a series of cultural and religious guides, identical to the major part of the young Spanish population. In particular they show an interest in spirituality, but don’t necessarily identify themselves as Muslim.

We also find that the majority of the youth born in Spain has a clear Islamic religious identification. They return to Islam to proselytize and to update themselves. Some of those are the organizers of associations or groups that are clearly Muslim and demand Islam in Spanish society with equal conditions as other religions.

Fifth, we conclude with the hypothesis that was previously used that the youth that arrived very early in life or were born in Spain look to build a reconciled position for Muslims, with Islamic values. They also seek, from Spaniards, tolerance and respect.

Finally, the present emergency of Spain’s Second Generation in the religious field probably will play a role in the two segments of society: first inside the Islamic community and second in the entire society. In this first segment, the 1.5 and Second Generation of Maghribian roots are in a winning position to participate in the religious debate. Many of them are looking to combine Islamic traditional concepts and prescriptions with new theological points of views, discussed in the transnational Umma.

The second segment is a hinge group they desire respect and tolerance from society about their religious beliefs and to be recognized as a serious social agent. A representative number of them are creating specific Islamic associations —where frequent social and religious issues are present— with the idea to appear in the social game.

There is another “assimilated” group that, at the same time, shares a secularized attitude towards religion, similar to their young Spanish colleagues. They empathize with those that have similar religious and ethnic roots.

Still, regarding the Islamic proselytizers in the Second Generation, it is too early to develop a systematic understanding. There is a sensible perception and preoccupation, among the native society, because of the ancient prejudices and conflicts that are present as ghosts in their social imagery.

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