The Representation of Syrian Refugee Women in the Spanish Media

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015 **Syrian refugees** began to arrive en masse to European territory (García-Martínez, 2016). They were fleeing from **Syrian civil war,** that since 2011 has already claimed the lives of more than **half a million people** and forced six and a half million to leave the country (CEAR, 2019).

The imaginary offered by the Western media of refugees is totally distorted and stereotype, especially for refugee women **who must** face double discrimination due to structural racism and male chauvinism in host societies (CICAM, 2010).

> The identity of female Syrian refugees is obscured by the stereotypes portrayed in Spanish digital media so they are largely misunderstood by Spanish society, which has a negative impact on their integration.
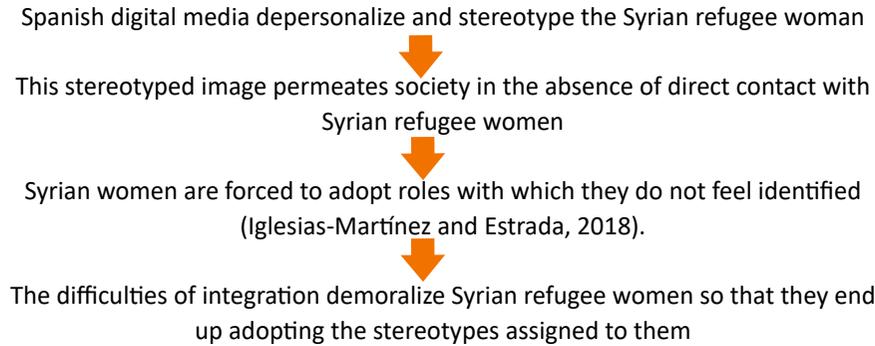
Arwa, dentistry student

Source: Eldiario.es

STEREOTYPE THREAT

Spanish digital media depersonalize and stereotype the Syrian refugee woman

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This stereotyped image permeates society in the absence of direct contact with Syrian refugee women

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Syrian women are forced to adopt roles with which they do not feel identified (Iglesias-Martínez and Estrada, 2018).

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The difficulties of integration demoralize Syrian refugee women so that they end up adopting the stereotypes assigned to them

> This process is what Steele (1997) calls stereotype threat

Wisal, clinical analyst in Syria and evicted in Spain

Source: Eldiario.es

PROFILE COMPARISON

Syrian refugees identity	Spanish media profile	Spanish society image
Survey with 18 Syrian refugee women in Spain and in-depth preparatory interviews.	Content analysis of the three main Spanish digital media.	Survey of a proportional sample of 400 Spaniards
Muslim identity (hijab or headscarf)	Presented in Arab clothing in the pictures	Muslims and submissive women
• Considered themselves as victims • Not defined by their marital status • Not defined by their motherhood	• Condition of victim • Role of mother • Impoverished person	• Predominantly victims • Basic levels of education • Unskilled jobs elated to domestic work • Remain at home and provide childcare
Superior studies and qualified work in Siria	Young Syrian women seen as fighters	Empowered

CONCLUSION

✓ The image of Syrian refugee women projected by the media has similarities with the one acquired by society but does not correspond to the real identity of this group

✓ This profile discordance negatively affects the successful integration of Syrian refugee women in Spanish society

The investigation shows the need to replace stereotypes with a more accurate profile of these Syrian women as highly educated, empowered, profesional women.

This study reflects a need to improve the procedures for the validation of diplomas, as well as other measures to enhance the employability of Syrian refugee women in the host societies.

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