

## ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study of young, educated, professional and urban women in Morocco and women of Moroccan origin in France. It is a qualitative study examining attitudinal changes and discerning cultural trends based on in-depth interviews with samples in Morocco and in France. The purpose of the comparison is to determine the extent of similarities and differences in attitudes among the samples. The interview schedule focused on three themes: Conceptions of Islam, Legal Changes in Morocco and in France that impact in Muslim women, i.e the Personal Status Code (*moudawana*) reform in Morocco and the ban on wearing “overt” religious insignia in public schools in France, and Personal and Professional Goals and Challenges. The Data Analysis showed that the greatest similarities occurred among samples and the greatest differences appear within each sample. This indicates that young, educated, professional and urban women in Morocco and women of Moroccan origin in France share significant values. Their conceptions of Islam are marked by a desire for personal interpretation, individual application and a reading of the Qu’ran that emphasize equality between men and women. Religion and spirituality was described as an important aspect of their sense of self. Attitudes towards legal changes were marked by support for changes that lead to greater empowerment while being critical of laws that restrict personal freedoms. Questions about personal and professional goals and challenges revealed that both samples experienced great difficulty in striking a balance between professional ambition and personal aspirations for marriage and family. The large proportion of unmarried women in their late twenties and early thirties in both samples indicates a strong desire for self-realization and determination at the cost of early marriage or marriage altogether. The similarities in attitudes can be attributed in large parts to high levels of education in both samples and exposure to global trends.