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Muslim Mothering

Muslim mothers experience triple-quadruple jeopardy. Their intersecting identities include several prevalently oppressed groups. As women they remain marginalized, as Muslims they are religious minority group members in the west, and the majority are members of ethnic (Arab) and or racialized minority groups of color (African American). They earn less than non-visible minority/mothers, they are tied to various cultural, religious norms that can be both oppressive and empowering. However, Muslim Mothers as they are oppressed, they also enact autonomy and resistance. In this paper I will explore the triple-quadruple jeopardy of Muslim Mothers specifically in the context of normative motherhood what O'Reilly (2021) termed as ten dictates of normative motherhood: essentialization, privatization, individualization, naturalization, normalization, depoliticalization, biologicalization, expertization, intensification, and idealization. Mothers who can fill 'all' the requirements, they are perfect/good mothers' and who cannot simply because they are young, queer, single, racialized, trans, nonbinary and/or religious mothers they are 'de facto bad mothers. I will explore how Muslim Mothers are regulated and oppressed by normative motherhood and how they resist it to enact empowered mothering by resisting the ideas of Muslim mothering which culturally constructed on Normative motherhood standards. They do that by wearing the mask of 'nurturing, altruistic, patient, devoted, loving, and selfless' mothers while they challenge the status quo established by racism, misogyny, and patriarchy. They embrace the imperfect moments in their lives by trusting their style of mothering, not because they have much of 'choice'. In this paper I will highlight that the religion Islam and cultural expectations of Muslim mothering are two separate entities and how knowing the difference between two can avoid perpetuating prejudice and biased information about Islam and Muslim communities.

My name is Sofia and I am a PhD (2nd year) student at York University. I am a Muslim mother from racial background who is raising three empowered children. I always worked hard, not only while mothering but academically as well and received recognition of my hard work. For example, I received awards such as, Mitacs Research Training Award (RTA), Master's Entrance Scholarship, Stewart Moore Scholarship, Mary Fuller Scholarships, Freed-Orman Scholarship, LEAD Medallion Scholar Recipient, Ethel Armstrong Doctorate Award and The Karen Hadley Memorial Award.