

Ayudas a musulmanas con velo!!!!

Una MORA, musulman@, va a recoger comida al Banco de Alimentos de Lugo (Galicia) con un Mercedes Benz. Para disimular aparca lejos y envía a los hijos con los carritos ¡Hala! Seguid dando dinero a #Cáritas o a cualquier otra ONG ¡Ingenuos! Feijoo: te estás

🗣️ Explícanos las ayudas que recibís?



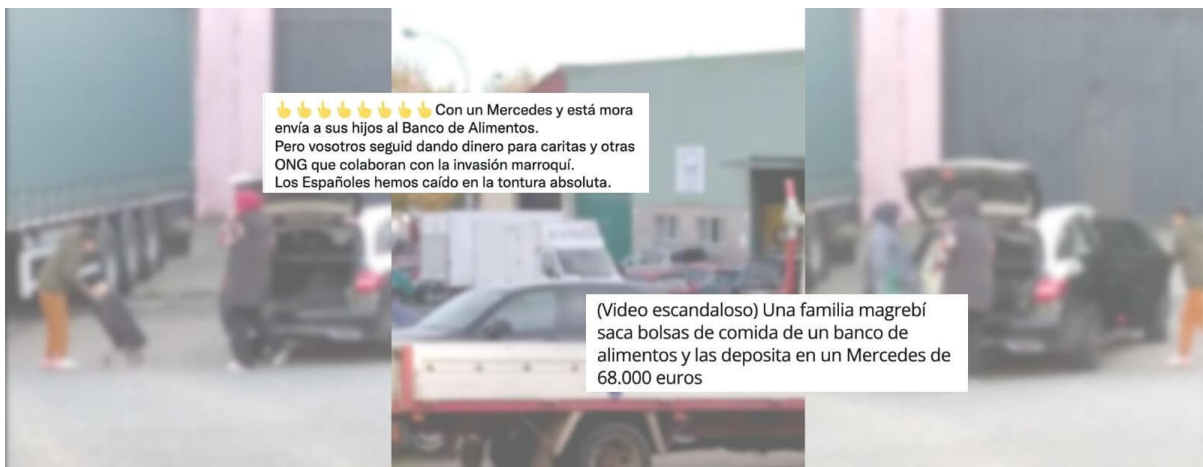
FOREIGN AND SUBSIDIZED: THE STEREOTYPE OF VEILED MUSLIM WOMEN PERPETUATED BY HOAXES

“This Arab woman drives a Mercedes but sends her kids to the food bank. But you keep giving money to charities and other NGOs that collaborate with the Moroccan invasion.” These are some of the words that accompanied a video of just over two minutes and another, the original, of more than four minutes making its way around on social media, in which a woman wearing a veil gets out of a black Mercedes car, opens the boot and puts in a shopping cart brought over by a child. Later, the video shows a ship in the distance with the logo of the food bank and another woman wearing a veil carries more bags towards the car

Luisa (not her real name) is not a migrant, but for those who [spread misinformation through the video](#), that did not matter; the fact that she was

wearing a veil was enough to make her foreign. Nor was she collecting help for her or her family, according to *Maldita.es* or the food bank in Lugo, Spain, a few days after the images went viral. What the video actually shows is her helping other families who were not her relatives who did need help. According to Luisa from *Maldita.es*, these images were filmed on November 16, 2021, in the industrial zone where the Lugo food bank is located. She remembers the date, because: “It ruined my life.”

“Hoaxes turn good deeds, where you’re trying to help others, into something bad. They put the focus on us,” says Hajar Samedi, director of the [Muslim women’s organization Bidaya](#). Samedi explains that the way Muslim women are viewed in society is conditioned by





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Hajar Samedi, director of the Muslim women's organization Bidaya

the veil, and that those who choose to wear it are marginalized: "Women who do not wear the veil are considered more integrated and empowered, but that has nothing to do with it." Hoaxes, she says, promote "a totally distorted image" of Muslim women, which is encouraged by "Islamophobic groups."

[After the spread of images](#) showing Luisa helping take food to another family, everyday tasks such as driving her children to school became very difficult because people recognized her car on the video, where you could see the licence plate. But not only was she accosted in the real world and when doing daily tasks, she also saw comments on social media saying she went back to her country, even though she is not foreign – she is Spanish and was born in Lugo. Since these images went viral, her life was turned upside down, and as she explained to *Maldita*.

es, caused her a lot of anxiety: "The doctor had to give me sleeping pills."

"If a Muslim woman decides to show that she is Muslim in some way, she will always be perceived differently by the majority of society," explains [Cristina Rodriguez Reche](#), a post-doctoral researcher at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She notes that this perception often comes from the view that Muslim women can only be foreign. She adds that they are especially stigmatized when they wear the veil: "There are many stereotypes about it – it has a very strong symbolic burden. There is also a gender component to it." The aim, according to Rodriguez, is "to create a very marked Spanish identity, very white, very Catholic, with certain traits that are perceived to be incompatible with this diversity or with the fact that there are new generations of Muslims who are Spanish".

The hoaxes that accuse Muslim women of receiving social welfare for simply being Muslim

Using misinformation to perpetuate the “foreignness” of Muslim women supports the idea that migrants will always be poor, according to Rodriguez. With regard to the hoaxes that accuse Muslim women of receiving social support simply because they are Muslim, Rodriguez explains that “If you put foreignness, fear of the poor, a little xenophobia and misinformation all together, you have all the ingredients to create a backlash with regard to the issue of social welfare, which is one of the main anti-immigration arguments used by Spanish people.” “Social welfare is a popular topic,” says Hajar Samedi, from Bidaya.

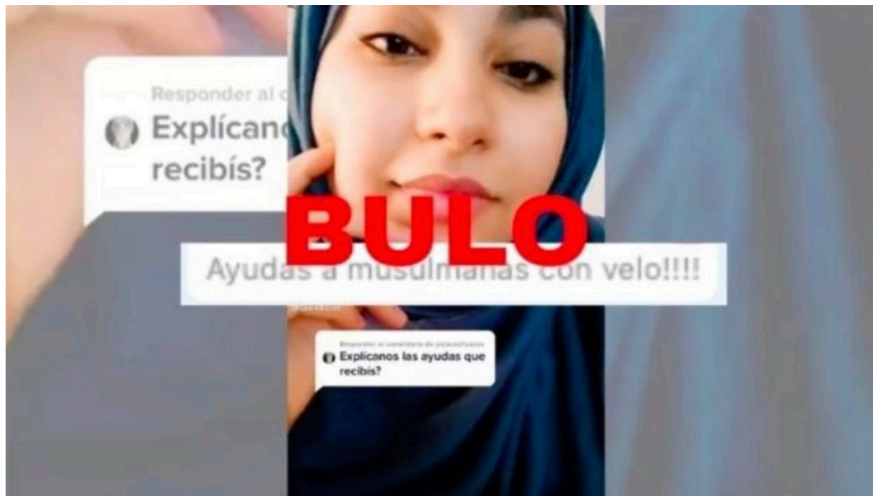
Linking social welfare to being Muslim is something [Paradisian](#) is quite familiar with as a Spanish and Muslim woman who shows herself as such on social media. When she began making TikTok videos wearing a hijab, she began to receive comments like “tell us about the aid you receive.” “They accuse you

of receiving social welfare,” she says and explains that this type of response to her content was common. One day, in one of her videos where she was responding to an attack, she received a comment accusing her of receiving aid. “I was tired of answering with kindness and proof, so I opted for sarcasm, which I typically use a lot, so that people can see how ridiculous they sound,” she says about a [video](#) she published in May 2021 in which she claimed that she received a series of social aid payments from the Spanish administrations just because she wore a hijab.



They accuse you of receiving social welfare

Paradisian, Spanish, Muslim woman with hijab and influencer on TikTok



At the time, she explained to *Maldita.es* that the [figures](#) were made up, but the video went viral the day before the Madrid elections on other platforms such as WhatsApp. Her comments about “sarcasm” that she made in the TikTok post were edited out and messages were added in saying that the social welfare figures were real. The Ministry of Equality denied that social aid should be provided on the basis of religion. In addition, Paradisian says that she does not receive any social welfare and clarifies that she does not live in Spain, but in Brussels. “No one is going to be given help for wearing a veil!” she says.

Following the viral spread of this video with messages such as “Veiled Muslim women receive special aid” or “Aid for veiled Muslims,” many users went to her

TikTok account to attack her. “I stopped making videos because it affected me,” she says and notes that she did not plan to leave social media, but she says that she did delete many of the videos she had posted. “I was fed up talking about the same thing all the time.”

But these are not the only attacks she has received on her social media accounts. In addition to comments accusing her of collecting or living on social welfare and being a foreign national in Spain, she says that she also receives other types of attacks: “I am told that I am an embarrassment to feminism.” She explains that she receives many comments accusing her of being “a puppet” because she wears a veil and that she is wearing it because it has been imposed. “No one forces me to wear it – I wear it because I want to.”

Paradisian uses social media to combat the Islamophobia that spreads on the platforms and to promote religious freedom. Social media “plays an increasingly important role, and it is largely responsible for information that gets shared,” explains researcher Cristina Rodríguez. More and more examples are being identified.”

“Although I don’t think it’s impossible to combat all these hoaxes, all this misinformation is very difficult, because a firm educational base is lacking,” says Rodríguez, who points to “education” as a “fundamental” strategy for combating hoaxes about Muslim women. Hajar Samedi also agrees that education is one way to fight misinformation, adding that it is also important to disprove and take a pedagogical approach to hoaxes. Moreover, Samedi says that it is important to combat the stereotypes Muslim women face “so they are present in all spheres of society”.

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Cristina Rodríguez Reche a post-doctoral researcher at the Autonomous University of Barcelona



Paradisian, during a video call with Maldita.es

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