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# The Muslim Struggle for Civil Rights in Spain

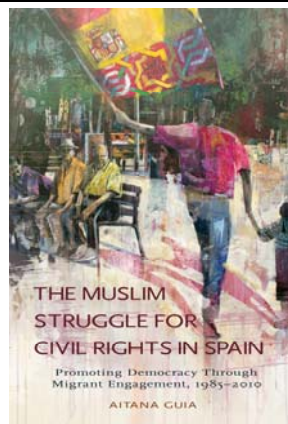
*Promoting Democracy through Migrant Engagement,  
1985-2010*

**AITANA GUIA**

In this history of Spain since 1975, with the collapse of dictatorship and transition to democracy, Aitana Guia demonstrates that a key factor left out of studies on the period—namely immigration and specifically Muslim immigration—has helped reinvigorate and strengthen the democratic process. Despite broad diversity and conflicting agendas, Muslim immigrants—often linking up with native converts to Islam—have mobilized as an effective force. They have challenged the long tradition of Maurophobia exemplified in such mainstream festivities as the Festivals of Moors and Christians; they have taken to task residents and officials who have stood in the way of efforts to construct mosques; and they have defied the members of their own community who have refused to accommodate the rights of women.

Beginning in Melilla, in Spanish-held North Africa, and expanding across Spain, the effect of this civil rights movement has been to fill gaps in legislation on immigration and religious pluralism and to set in motion a revision of prevailing interpretations of Spanish history and identity, ultimately forcing Spanish society to open up a space for all immigrants.

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