

“Female Preachers on the Radio in Ouagadougou and Dakar: A New Version of “The Good Muslim?”

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In the last few years, literature on religion documents that women are participating very actively in local associations, and in public and national debates about secularism, family codes, and women’s rights in Islam. This article examines how female preachers have asserted a new role for women in Islam that grows out of their refined knowledge and understanding of Islamic texts. Some of these women echo the speeches of male Islamic modernists, skilfully use the media, and are part of a larger international agenda that projects a new social identity for their sisters in Islam. This identity asserts the religious equality of men and women, and, more particularly, proposes a specific path for a woman to become a good wife and mother while at the same time enjoying an independent social position. In the end, these female preachers are pushing a quiet social revolution in religion through their critical modernist views of local cultural traditions and Islamic belonging.