



Sexuality in Muslim Contexts: Restrictions and Resistance

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The book explores women's resistance against the policing of sexuality in Muslim societies. Many Muslim majority countries still use religious discourse to enforce stigmatization and repression of those who do not conform to sexual norms. In this context, Islam is often stigmatized in Western discourse for being intrinsically restrictive with respect to women's rights and sexuality. This insightful collection shows that conservative Muslim discourse does not necessarily match practices and that women's empowerment is facilitated where indigenous and culturally appropriate strategies are developed. Using case studies from Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, China, Bangladesh, Israel, and India, it argues that Muslim religious traditions do not necessarily lead to conservative agendas but can promote emancipatory standpoints.

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Editorial Review

Review

'The authors are to be congratulated for this excellent volume on sexualities and "Muslimness" in all its diversities. The book captures the challenges of bodily rights, religion and culture for Muslim women's lives in a wide range of nuanced studies that illustrate exactly why sexuality is key to gender equality and human rights.' Wendy Harcourt, Erasmus University, winner of the FWSA 2010 Book Prize 'This riveting book sheds new light on women's strategies for resisting sexual repression in a variety of majority Muslim societies in Asia and the Middle East. Complicating contemporary understandings of "Muslimness" , it demonstrates that women in these societies are highly diverse in their attitudes towards and experiences of sexuality. Clear, cogent and compelling, the book will be of interest to activists and academics alike and is certain to become a key text for years to come.' Marc Lafrance, professor of sociology, Concordia University 'This is one of the most exciting collection of essays to emerge in a long time. Too many popular writings on Islam reinforce stereotypes about Muslim women, and few discuss sexuality at all, let alone with such diversity. This collection challenges the tired stream of books that equate Islam with terrorism and women with claustrophobic veils. A must read for any serious scholar of sexuality, Islam, and women's rights.' Chitra Raghavan, professor of psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice 'This exciting collection provides an important contribution to understandings of sexualities and gender, focusing our attention on processes of negotiation, subversion and resistance and challenging assumptions about "Muslimness". With its diversely located studies and rich ethnographic insights, this fascinating book deserves to be widely read.' Andrea Cornwall, professor of anthropology and international development, University of Sussex 'The authors of this pathbreaking book provide a new and much-needed angle to the study of sexual identities, rights, and claims in Muslim-majority societies. Going beyond the vexed "western vs authentic" dichotomy, this excellent volume should be praised for its ability to widen our understanding of how hegemonic norms of sexuality and sexual behaviour are challenged and contested by diverse actors across religious, secular and sexual orientations. A crucial book for scholars of gender, Islam, rights and sexuality.' Ruba Salih, chair of the Centre for Gender Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

About the Author

Anissa Helie is a historian and a feminist activist- she is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York. Raised in Algiers, she has advanced degrees from France and the Netherlands. Her doctoral research focused on European women and gender politics in Algeria during French colonization. She has been involved with various women's organizations and transnational networks - serving as Director of the Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) International Coordination Office for 5 years. She has held research and teaching positions at the Five College Women's Studies Research Center, MA, at Amherst College and surrounding colleges. Her publications include: *Holy Hatred* (2000), and *Documenting Women's Rights Violations by Non-State Actors* (2006). Board memberships include: the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights, and *Reproductive Health Matters Journal*.

Homa Hoodfar is a Professor of Anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal. She has extensively studied survival and empowerment strategies amongst those marginalized by legal constraints particular in the area of family law and citizenship, economic penury, and women's movements. She has also researched women in local and national politics, with a particular focus on women and younger people in Egypt, Iran,

Afghanistan, Pakistan, and amongst Canada's Muslim community. She has published extensively on these topics. Her publications include: *Between Marriage and the Market* (2005); *Development, Change, and Gender in Cairo* (1996); and *The Muslim Veil in North America* (2003).

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