



## Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today

By Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, Kathleen M. Moore

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The treatment and role of women are among the most discussed and controversial aspects of Islam. The rights of Muslim women have become part of the Western political agenda, often perpetuating a stereotype of universal oppression. Muslim women living in America continue to be marginalized and misunderstood since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Yet their contributions are changing the face of Islam as it is seen both within Muslim communities in the West and by non-Muslims. In their public and private lives, Muslim women are actively negotiating what it means to be a woman and a Muslim in an American context.

Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and Kathleen M. Moore offer a much-needed survey of the situation of Muslim American women, focusing on how Muslim views about and experiences of gender are changing in the Western diaspora. Centering on Muslims in America, the book investigates Muslim attempts to form a new "American" Islam. Such specific issues as dress, marriage, childrearing, conversion, and workplace discrimination are addressed. The authors also look at the ways in which American Muslim women have tried to create new paradigms of Islamic womanhood and are reinterpreting the traditions apart from the males who control the mosque institutions. A final chapter asks whether 9/11 will prove to have been a watershed moment for Muslim women in America.

This groundbreaking work presents the diversity of Muslim American women and demonstrates the complexity of the issues. Impeccably researched and accessible, it broadens our understanding of Islam in the West and encourages further exploration into how Muslim women are shaping the future of American Islam.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"These well-respected scholars of Islam present the lives of observant Muslim women in all their diversity and complexity. Haddad, Smith and Moore pack an enormous amount of information into a relatively slim book --and for the most part they do so in a lively, compelling way." --*Christian Century*

"Highly recommended." --*Choice*

"This rich, well-researched and well-written book offers important new information on the lives of American Muslim women at home, work, and play. The authors, three prominent specialists on Islam in America, provide spectacular insights into both traditional and new ways in which Muslim women are participating in religious and political, academic and public life in America. A pioneering study that adds new dimensions to our knowledge about Islam and gender, and Islam in the West."--Barbara Freyer Stowasser, Professor of Arabic, Georgetown University, and author of *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*

"*Muslim Women In America* is a unique contribution to the growing body of literature on women in Islam, by three of the world's experts in the field. The authors challenge static views of the marginalized or oppressed Muslim woman, and demonstrate that Muslim women in America are diverse, dynamic, and changing the face of Islam." --Tamara Sonn, author of *A Brief History of Islam*

"A timely and insightful look into the lives of an American population that remains marginalized and misunderstood, four years after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Beautifully written, accessible, and well-researched by three leading scholars on American Muslims today, this book challenges stereotypes of American Muslim women by showing that they are more similar than they are different to other groups of U.S. women. They are full and active participants in society trying to balance family, education, and work demands. Filled with historical and contemporary evidence that demystifies the experiences of Muslim American women, this book will help bring this group to the fore of mainstream scholarship." --Jen'nan Ghazal Read, author of *Culture, Class, and Work among Arab-American Women*

### About the Author

**Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad** is Professor of the History of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Georgetown University. **Jane I. Smith** is Professor of Islamic Studies and Co-Director of the Duncan Black Macdonald Center for Christian-Muslim Relations at the Hartford Theological Seminary. **Kathleen M.**

**Moore** is Associate Professor of Law and Society at the University of California - Santa Barbara.

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