

SPECIAL ISSUE

# VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1

2024

**DR JAN A. ALI**  
*Special Issue Editor*

**ZULEYHA KESKIN**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**SULEYMAN SERTKAYA**  
*Managing Editor*

**DAVID DRENNAN**  
*Assistant Editor*



Published online: April 2024



[Submit](#) your article to this journal



[View](#) related and/or other articles in this issue

## Evaluating Ayaan Hirsi Ali's Views on Adherence to Islam in Heretic

Sahib, Rizwan

To cite this article:

Sahib, Rizwan. "Evaluating Ayaan Hirsi Ali's Views on Adherence to Islam in Heretic." *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2024): 1-26.

## EVALUATING AYAAN HIRSI ALI'S VIEWS ON ADHERENCE TO ISLAM IN *HERETIC*

Rizwan Sahib\*

**Abstract:** This study investigates Ayaan Hirsi Ali's view that adherence to Islam is not viable in secular liberal societies of the West, owing to a so-called clash of norms and values. For Hirsi Ali, this clash causes cognitive dissonance in Muslims and makes them withdraw to Muslim enclaves or become radicalised. This study evaluates these claims by comparing them to findings from ethnographic research with Muslims in the West. The data on Muslim religious life shows, for the most part, Muslims in the West can practice Islamic rituals and behaviours owing to social, individual and religion factors, such that what emerges is a fluid way of life that fits into a secular liberal society. Hirsi Ali's views are thus a misrepresentation of adherence to Islam. The study takes this to be the outcome of her lack of empirical research with Muslims.

**Keywords:** *Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Islam, Muslims, religious life, Western society*

### INTRODUCTION

Anti-Islamic sentiment in the West has risen sharply over the past few decades. A particularly vocal proponent of such sentiment is writer and activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Hirsi Ali's life and public persona have captured people's imagination, especially those for whom Muslim individuals, beliefs and practices are alien. In her fourth book, *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now*,<sup>1</sup> Hirsi Ali criticises adherence to Islam, which for her is not viable in the West due to Islam's supposed clash with secular liberal norms and values. The outcome of this situation for pious Muslims is that they eventually leave Islam, retreat to Muslim enclaves or become radicalised.

Hirsi Ali does not present empirical data to support these ideas; therefore, we are left wondering about their veracity. The present study addresses this uncertainty by comparing Hirsi Ali's ideas with findings from research on Muslim religious life in the West. This study reviews some of the literature that documents the religious rituals and practices Muslims perform in daily life. The review reveals that three main factors – social, individual and religion – impact whether Muslims live religiously and how they do so.

---

\* Rizwan Sahib is a PhD candidate in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University. His main research interest is Islam and Muslims in the West.

<sup>1</sup> Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now* (New York: Harper, 2015).

The study first gives a brief history of Hirsi Ali's life. It then introduces her book *Heretic*, presenting its statements about adherence to Islam that the study critiques. Following this is a discussion of how best to critique these statements, in light of existing studies on Hirsi Ali. The study then reviews literature on Muslim religious life in the West, identifying social, societal, individual and religion factors that impact Islamic living. These findings inform the evaluation of Hirsi Ali's ideas, which are found to be problematic considering empirical data on Muslim religious life. The study discusses where Hirsi Ali goes wrong in her assertions about Islam, which leads to a discussion about concepts of lived Islam, lived space and the importance of undertaking research in relation to Islam and Muslims. The study ends with concluding remarks.

## WHO IS AYAAN HIRSI ALI?

Hirsi Ali was born in Somalia to a political activist father and housewife mother. Her mother moved her and her two siblings from country to country at the behest of her exiled husband, who, from outside Somalia, was planning the overthrow of Somali president Siad Barre's military regime. The family lived in Saudi Arabia when Hirsi Ali was eight years old, a year later in Ethiopia for a short period, then the remainder of her childhood and adolescence in Kenya. During this time, Hirsi Ali was exposed to cultural and orthodox Islamic beliefs and practices of her mother, grandmother, and local Muslim teachers.

At the age of 22, Hirsi Ali left Kenya by plane to Germany enroute to Canada to live with her husband, whom she had married a few months earlier through an arrangement organised by her father. Instead of going to Canada, however, Hirsi Ali caught a train from Germany to Holland where she sought asylum, citing civil war and her life being in danger because of the clan to which she belonged.

Moving to Holland was perhaps the most important event in Hirsi Ali's life, as this is where her views on religion and society transformed from an Islamic grounding to what might be called secular humanism. During her time in the Netherlands, she worked odd jobs, gained university degrees, left Islam after 9/11, entered Dutch politics and became a media sensation for anti-Islamic statements and the film *Submission*, which she screen-wrote and was directed by Theo van Gogh, who was murdered by a Dutch Muslim for making the film. After being found to have lied on her asylum application and the controversy this caused in Holland, in 2006, Hirsi Ali left for the United States, where she now lives and is employed by think tank the Hoover Institute and the University of Texas.

Since 2006, Hirsi Ali has published six books, a few of which were best sellers. In 2008, she founded the Ayaan Hirsi Ali Foundation, which campaigns for legislation against female genital cutting, child-marriage and domestic violence against women, and lobbies for freedom of speech, particularly in relation to criticising Islam.

***HERETIC: WHY ISLAM NEEDS A REFORMATION NOW***

In 2015, Hirsi Ali published *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now*. *Heretic* addresses devout moderate Muslims and their Western left-leaning apologists. For Hirsi Ali, both groups must recognise the need to reform Islam to counter the inroads made by hard-line Salafist type Muslim organisations and preachers. Nestled in among *Heretic*'s suggestions for how to reform Islam is criticism of normative Islam: the peaceful, everyday practice of pious Muslims. This criticism, shown in the statements below, are the catalyst for this study.

*Heretic* says about practicing Islam in the West:

In the West...where Islam is a minority religion, devout Muslims live in what is best described as a state of cognitive dissonance. Trapped between two worlds of belief and experience, these Muslims are engaged in a daily struggle to adhere to Islam in the context of a secular and pluralistic society that challenges their values and beliefs at every turn.<sup>2</sup>

This statement seems to say that normative Islam or Islam proper cannot co-exist with modernity and Western secular, pluralistic norms. Hirsi Ali goes on to explain the outcome of this disharmony and clash situation for Muslims:

Many are able to resolve this tension only by withdrawing into self-enclosed (and increasingly self-governing) enclaves. This is called cocooning, a practice whereby Muslim immigrants attempt to wall off outside influences, permitting only an Islamic education for their children and disengaging from the wider non-Muslim community.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, Islamic practice is so uncomfortable to attain in daily life in secular, liberal spaces that Muslims must create parallel spaces that are symbolically and physically separate from the society in which they reside. Hirsi Ali goes on to say that

To many such Muslims, after years of dissonance, there appear to be only two alternatives: either leave Islam altogether, as I did, or abandon the dull routine of daily observance for the uncompromising Islamist creed offered by those—the Medina Muslims—who explicitly reject the West's modernity.<sup>4</sup>

Also, she says that “embracing violent jihad has become an all-too-common means for young Muslims to resolve the cognitive pressures of trying to lead an ‘authentic’ Muslim life within a permissive and pluralistic Western society.”<sup>5</sup>

There are two main implications of *Heretic*'s statements. The first is that practicing Islam in the West damages Muslim wellbeing by causing psychological discomfort. The second is that practicing Islam damages a society's social cohesion because Muslims retreat to enclaves to practice Islam comfortably or opt for radicalisation and extremism if not able to practice Islam comfortably.

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 57.

Both implications make *Heretic* an important text to critique. First, aside from their sensational claims about otherwise peaceful, devout Islam, they are unsupported by empirical data or even secondary data; thus, they require some verification. Second, Hirsi Ali has a powerful voice, having won acclaim and awards, and her writings are a first point of contact for many people with Islam and Muslims.<sup>6</sup> Third, Hirsi Ali's ideas about Islam are particularly hostile and she has a history of sensationalising issues around Islam and Muslims. Adam Yaghi opines that “[if] recurrent misinterpretations of secular Muslims such as Ali demonstrate anything, they point to how necessary is analytical scholarly engagement with their works.”<sup>7</sup> This study follows Yaghi in identifying Hirsi Ali's views on Islam as worth investigating because, if unchecked, these may generate anti-Muslim prejudice, as attested to for example by Somali Muslims in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

## HOW TO CRITIQUE *HERETIC*

Research on Hirsi Ali usually takes a textual criticism approach via close readings of her writings and film *Submission*.<sup>9</sup> The results of these studies are useful in suggesting that Hirsi Ali applies an ideological lens when speaking about Islam, namely that of Orientalism. The study sees some value in these works, especially the need to read Hirsi Ali with caution, but a limitation of them is seeing Muslims as only victims of hateful rhetoric, which tell the reader little about what it means to live Islamically.

Another way of critiquing Hirsi Ali is to focus attention on Muslim views and experiences and comparing them with Hirsi Ali's rhetoric. Dave Belden takes this path in his study on Hirsi Ali, for example, by discussing Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, a 25-year-old university student, social worker and town councillor from Denmark, who wears a headscarf, does not shake hands with men, has homosexual friends and seeks to enter Danish parliament.<sup>10</sup> Although Abdol-Hamid

<sup>6</sup> Daniel O’Gorman, “Speaking for the Muslim World: Popular Memoir and the ‘War on Terror,’” *European Journal of English Studies* 22, no. 2 (2018): 143, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2018.1478257>.

<sup>7</sup> Adam Yaghi, “Popular Testimonial Literature by American Cultural Conservatives of Arab or Muslim Descent: Narrating the Self, Translating (an)Other,” *Middle East Critique* 25, no. 1 (2016): 84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2015.1107996>.

<sup>8</sup> Richelle Schrock, “Fictions of An All-Encompassing Precarity in the Works of Ayaan Hirsi Ali,” *Frontiers* 37, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.5250/fronjwomestud.37.1.0066>.

<sup>9</sup> Pearl Abraham, “The Winged Life of Ayaan Hirsi Ali,” *Michigan Quarterly Review* 50, no. 2 (2011); Mineke Bosch, “Telling Stories, Creating (and Saving) Her Life: An Analysis of the Autobiography of Ayaan Hirsi Ali,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 21 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2008.03.006>; Michiele Bot, “The Right to Offend? Contested Speech Acts and Critical Democratic Practice,” *Law & Literature* 24, no. 2 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1525/lal.2012.24.2.232>; Mark de Leeuw and Sonja van Wichelen, “‘Please, Go Wake Up!’,” *Feminist Media Studies* 5, no. 3 (2005), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680770500271487>; Kiran Grewal, “Reclaiming the Voice of the ‘Third World Woman,’” *Interventions* 14, no. 4 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2012.730861>; Iveta Jusova, “Hirsi Ali and Van Gogh’s Submission: Reinforcing the Islam vs. Women Binary,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 31 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2008.03.007>; Aysel Morin, “Victimization of Muslim Women in *Submission*,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 32, no. 3 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2009.10162395>; Merjin Oudenampsen, “Deconstructing Ayaan Hirsi Ali: On Islamism, Neoconservatism, and the Clash of Civilizations,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 17, no. 2-3 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2016.1232195>; Yaghi, “Popular Testimonial Literature.”

<sup>10</sup> Dave Belden, “Ayaan Hirsi Ali: An Islamic Feminist Leaves Islam,” *Tikkun* 22, no. 4 (2007).

is Palestinian in origin, Belden describes her as “in short, a tolerant Scandinavian and European.”<sup>11</sup> Belden’s description of Abdol-Hamid is important because it shows a strictly practicing Muslim can be seen as a European or Westerner, but also that they might see themselves as such. Linda Briskman and Susie Latham are even more convincing than Belden by comparing Hirsi Ali’s views with observations during fieldwork each has undertaken with Muslims in Iran.<sup>12</sup> The Muslim women they have met in Iran are independent and active members of their local community: “Whether it is highly educated Persian women in Tehran or rural Arab minority women in the south of Iran, we see women doing it for themselves. We observe that the best forms of change come from within the society.”<sup>13</sup> Through this observation, the authors problematise Hirsi Ali’s depiction of Muslim women as passive and lacking agency, and we may surmise that Hirsi Ali’s strand of feminism is not in touch with the reality of Muslim women.

The above discussion suggests a useful way to critique Hirsi Ali’s views on adherence to Islam in *Heretic* is to compare them with actual experiences of Muslims as documented in empirical research. Such an approach is hinted at by Merjin Oudenampsen, who finds that Hirsi Ali’s writings “are not empirical observations about Muslim life, they are statements that primarily serve a political purpose;”<sup>14</sup> and Morin, who finds that *Submission* in relation to Muslim women “obscured understanding of their real experiences.”<sup>15</sup>

Given these observations, in critiquing Hirsi Ali’s views on adherence to Islam it is important to find out empirically what Muslim religious life is like for Muslims. The present study thus proceeds with a research question:

*How do Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s views on adherence to Islam in Heretic align with findings from empirical research on Western Muslims’ religious lives?*

To answer this question, the study reviews research on Muslim religious life in the West. It sources material from studies published over the past two decades up to today. This timeline is chosen because it corresponds to the publication of *Heretic* in 2015: the studies published prior to 2015 show the material Hirsi Ali could have accessed while writing *Heretic* and the studies published after 2015 show current trends of Muslim religious life, which could have been used by Hirsi Ali to correct her statements in *Heretic*.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>12</sup> Linda Briskman and Susie Latham, “Refugees, Islamophobia, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Challenging Social Work Co-option,” *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 32, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109916685801>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>14</sup> Oudenampsen, “Deconstructing,” 241.

<sup>15</sup> Morin, “Victimization,” 390.

## FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH ON MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE WEST

Literature on Muslim religious life in the West points to the complexity of Islamic practice in secular, liberal societies. One way to explain this complexity is to categorise it into four main factors: social, societal, individual and religion.

### *Social Factors*

Allah, the personal name for the Divine or God in the Islamic tradition, is shown in numerous studies to be an important part of Muslim religious life. This is the case, for example, in marriage relations and homemaking,<sup>16</sup> prayer<sup>17</sup> and hijab (head covering).<sup>18</sup> A woman in Copenhagen says about hijab: “Wearing the hijab is important to me because I want to do what Allah asks me to do. It’s an act of devotion that brings me closer to God.”<sup>19</sup> Such is Allah’s importance for one young British Bengali Muslim that he said, “my main goal in life is my relationship with God.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, Allah can be the orientation towards which or for whom Muslims practice Islam, and developing a relationship with Allah may be a catalyst for desiring to live religiously. These points suggest Allah is a social actor for Muslims, who impacts their decision-making and behavioural orientation towards practicing Islam.<sup>21</sup>

A second important social facet of Muslim religious life is socialisation into Islam, especially when young. Westfall and colleagues find, from a survey of 1,849 American Muslim women, that 60% are more likely to cover in terms of wearing hijab if they have an Islamic upbringing.<sup>22</sup> The authors also found that social ties with Muslims positively correlate with hijab and general religiosity.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, studies find that, for first- and second-generation Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands and Belgium, religiosity is strongly connected to transmission of religion from parents.<sup>24</sup> Even converts to Islam, who were not brought up

<sup>16</sup> Géraldine Mossière, “Religious Orthodoxy, Empowerment, and Virtuous Femininity Amongst Pious Women: A Cross-Religious Reading between Muslim and Pentecostal Youth,” in *Young People and the Diversity of (Non)Religious Identities in International Perspective*, ed. Elisabeth Arweck and Heather Shipley (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Sealy, “British Converts to Islam, Habitus and Social Positioning,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2021): 260, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2021>; Paul Williamson, “The Experience of Muslim Prayer: A Phenomenological Investigation,” *Pastoral Psychology* 67 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1007/211089-018-0831-3>.

<sup>18</sup> Anna Mansson McGinty, “Emotional Geographies of Veiling: The Meanings of the Hijab for Five Palestinian American Muslim Women,” *Gender, Place, and Culture* 21, no. 6 (2014): 691, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.810601>; Nilüfer Göle, *The Daily Lives of Muslims* (London: Zed Books, 2017), 155.

<sup>19</sup> Göle, *The Daily Lives*, 155.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel DeHanas, “Elastic Orthodoxy: The Tactics of Young Muslim Identity in the East End of London,” in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Nathal Dessing et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 76.

<sup>21</sup> Bryan Turner, “Allah and Man,” *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* (London: Routledge, 1984).

<sup>22</sup> Aubrey Westfall et al., “The Complexity of Covering: The Religious, Social, and Political Dynamics of Islamic Practice in the United States,” *Social Science Quarterly* 97, no. 3 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12278>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Derya Güngör et al., “Religious Identification, Beliefs, and Practices Among Turkish Belgian and Moroccan Belgian Muslims: Intergenerational Continuity and Acculturative Change,” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 42, no. 8 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200221111412342>; Mieke Malliepard and

Islamically, are impacted by ties with Muslims. Leon Moosavi, for instance, finds in his study that converts to Islam in Britain are strongly affected by a need to be accepted by other Muslims; therefore, they perform authenticity to fit in.<sup>25</sup> As Thomas Sealy notes, this is a “re-socialisation” process where converts try to develop an Islamic habitus.<sup>26</sup>

Moosavi’s findings point to the importance of Muslim communities in relation to Islamic practice. A component of Muslim communities, Muslim organisations are an important factor in Muslims living Islam. For example, in Spain, Muslim organisations lobby for women to wear the *niqab* (face-veil) in certain public spaces and their activism has resulted in positive outcomes for Muslim women.<sup>27</sup> The Muslim community is also the locus for transmission of a scholarly tradition stretching back over a millennium. Muslims in the West use scholarly texts in the form of commentaries on Islamic scripture to learn about how to perform certain rituals like prayer and how to negotiate circumstances like illness. One such text is *Bihishti Zewar*, authored by Indian scholar Ashraf Ali Thanawi in 1902. Raana Bokhari finds in her observation of a women’s study circle in Leicester that the text grounds much of the women’s Islamic knowledge and living.<sup>28</sup> The use of the book in modern day Britain shows how Muslim religious life in the West is a transnational, intergenerational and intercultural affair.

However, sometimes the Muslim community or communal aspect of practicing Islam can hinder Islamic practice. Anna Mansson McGinty found that one American Muslim woman refuses to wear hijab because of the social pressure associated with doing so.<sup>29</sup> Her findings are supported by a Canadian study of hijab practices, which reveals that many women wear the hijab out of pressure.<sup>30</sup> In addition to hijab practices, the Muslim community impacts mosque attendance. In Australia, Nafiseh Gharfournia finds that some Muslim women refuse to attend the local mosque citing unreasonable facilities for women, the lack of expertise of imams (prayer leaders) to help with personal matters and sermons disparaging to women.<sup>31</sup> Nilüfer Göle reports one Muslim woman in Belgium complaining: “Where is the women’s space in prayer rooms? It bothers me that women in mosques are confined to a small separate room where they can barely find a space!”<sup>32</sup> In terms of halal (permissible) meat, a study of Moroccan Muslims in Italy found that some refuse to buy meat from halal butchers because those shops

---

Marcel Lubbers, “Parental Religious Transmission after Migration: The Case of Dutch Muslims,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39, no. 3 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.733862>; Jasper van de Pol and Frank Van Tubergen, “Inheritance of Religiosity Among Muslim Immigrants in a Secular Society,” *Review of Religious Research* 56, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-013-1028-z>.

<sup>25</sup> Leon Moosavi, “British Muslim Converts Performing ‘Authentic Muslimness,’” *Performing Islam* 1, no. 1 (2012), [https://doi.org/10.1386/pi.1.1.103\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/pi.1.1.103_1).

<sup>26</sup> Sealy, “British Converts to Islam.”

<sup>27</sup> Yeste et al., “Muslim Women Wearing the Niqab in Spain: Dialogues Around Discrimination, Identity and Freedom,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 75 (2020): 103, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.02.003>.

<sup>28</sup> Raana Bokhari, “Bihishti Zewar: Islam, Text, and the Daily Lives of Gujurati Women in Leicester,” in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Nathal Dessing et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Mansson McGinty, “Emotional Geographies,” 692.

<sup>30</sup> Rashelle Litchmore and Saba Safdar, “Meanings of the Hijab: Views of Canadian Muslim Women,” *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 19, no. 3 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12141>.

<sup>31</sup> Nafiseh Ghafournia, “Negotiating Gendered Religious Space: Australian Muslim Women and the Mosque,” *Religions* 11 (2020): 6, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120686>.

<sup>32</sup> Göle, *The Daily Lives*, 147-48.



are dirty.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, even where freedom to practice Islam is present, the Muslim communal infrastructure struggles to cater for Muslims' desire to live Islamically.

### ***Societal Factors***

Societal factors, or the socio-political environment, also impact Muslim religious practice. Especially important is the fact that post 9/11 Muslims are suspect citizens and a risk community.<sup>34</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that prejudice and discrimination against Muslim women post 9/11 in America has led American Muslim women to hesitate in wearing hijab.<sup>35</sup> In Spain, some Muslim women who normally wear *niqab* (face-veil) stopped doing so in certain circumstances like picking their children up from school due to disparaging comments made by others.<sup>36</sup> Sometimes Muslim attempts to practice Islam are recipients of hostile sanctioning, especially in European cities, where hijab, circumcision, prayer in school or on the street, halal ritual slaughter, and mosque- and minaret-construction has been subject to specific laws or at least anger and protest from local residents and politicians.<sup>37</sup>

However, Muslims have also had positive experiences with non-Muslims in relation to their religious practice. Shaima Hassan reports that Muslim women desiring to practice modesty and covering during maternity and labour were met with respect by hospital staff who covered their legs or took them to a private room for breastfeeding.<sup>38</sup> Even in Europe, sometimes there is more support for Muslims in civil society than against them, as in the Cologne Central Mosque affair, where Germans resisted far-right groups' intervention.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Individual Factors***

In addition to being constrained or enabled by social relationships, Muslim community and societal factors, Muslims may hinder or facilitate their own religious practice. One way in which Muslims aid themselves in performing Islam are adopting tactics.<sup>40</sup> Tactics include: British women reparticularising a 100-year-old religious text for women;<sup>41</sup> American Muslims

---

<sup>33</sup> Elsa Mescoli, "Islamic Food Practices in a Migration Context: An Ethnography Among Moroccan Women in Milan (Italy)," in *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, ed. Erkan Toguslu (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015), 25.

<sup>34</sup> Jan Ali, "Australian Muslims as Radicalised 'Other' and their Experiences of Social Exclusion," in *Islam in the West: Perceptions and Reactions*, ed. Abe Ata and Jan Ali (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Farida Jalalzai, "Anxious and Active: Muslim Perception of Discrimination and Treatment and its Political Consequences in the Post-September 11, 2001 United States," *Politics and Religion* 4, no. 1 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048310000519>; Jamillah Karim, *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Yeste et al., "Muslim Women," 101.

<sup>37</sup> Göle, *The Daily Lives*.

<sup>38</sup> Shaima Hassan, "Religious Practices of Muslim Women in the UK During Maternity: Evidence-Based Professional Practice Recommendations," *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 22 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-04664-5>.

<sup>39</sup> Göle, *The Daily Lives*, 113-17.

<sup>40</sup> Nathal Dessing et al., eds., *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>41</sup> Bokhara, "Bihishti Zewar."

generating emotions in themselves to inspire religious practice;<sup>42</sup> Somali women in Finland wearing large veils (*jilbabs*) to reinforce Islamic values;<sup>43</sup> use of matchmaking services for ‘self-arranged’ marriages in the Netherlands;<sup>44</sup> attendance at a halal speed-dating event in London;<sup>45</sup> Spanish Muslims leaving social gatherings early, bringing a gift for the host and murmuring the words of prayer without performing the actions in public spaces;<sup>46</sup> and British Muslim couples waiting for hospital staff to leave the labour room, then performing the Islamic practice of reciting the *adhan* (call to prayer) in the baby’s right ear and the *iqamah* (secondary call to prayer) in its left ear.<sup>47</sup> For Mohammed el-Bachouti, these practices are examples of “bounded creativity,” which is respect for Islam and local socio-cultural circumstances (bounded) in novel ways (creativity).<sup>48</sup> Bounded creativity is seen in a study of the Gulen movement in France and Germany, whose young female members occupy women-only leisure spaces for entertainment (for example, zumba, ice-skating, cinema nights, camping, hat-making) that is scripturally sound.<sup>49</sup> Sumeyye Sametoğlu describes such spaces as “halalscapes,” places where Muslim women can escape the critical gaze they receive at public leisure spaces like swimming pools or beaches, because they don the hijab.

The use of tactics suggests another individual factor in Muslim religious life: personal traits. Tactics show the traits of creativity, resourcefulness and commitment to Islam. The trait of commitment to Islam is particularly evident in studies on Western Muslims. Mansson McGinty reports one female hijab-wearing individual saying:

[W]hen I decided to wear the hijab, I think it was a very, what can I tell you, it really needed a strength of character and a real strong commitment to the faith. Because at the time there were really very few Muslims from the Arab world that would wear the hijab.<sup>50</sup>

Muslim women are so committed to Islamic norms for modesty that they practice covering even during labour in the hospital, as one woman said in Hassan’s study: “For me I think modesty definitely ties in with my religion, you are not just going to let it go because you are having a baby, so you have to hold on to your belief.”<sup>51</sup> Carrying on the theme of religiosity of Muslim women, in Denmark, there is huge popularity of Muslim female influencers doing

<sup>42</sup> Nadia Jeldtoft, “Spirituality and Emotions: Making a Room of One’s Own,” in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Nathal Dessing et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Marja Tiilikainen, “Illness, Healing, and Everyday Islam: Transnational Lives of Somali Migrant Women,” in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Nathal Dessing et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Leen Sterckx, “The Self-Arranged Marriage: Modern Muslim Courtship Practices in the Netherlands,” in *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, ed. Erkan Toguslu (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015).

<sup>45</sup> Julie Billaud, “Marriage ‘Sharia Style’: Everyday Practices of Islamic Morality in England,” *Contemporary Islam* 13 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-018-0430-1>.

<sup>46</sup> Mohammed El-Bachouti, “Individualization of Muslim Religious Practices: Contextual Creativity of Second-Generation Moroccans in Spain,” in *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, ed. Erkan Toguslu (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Hassan, “Religious Practices,” 6.

<sup>48</sup> El-Bachouti, “Individualization.”

<sup>49</sup> Sumeyye Sametoğlu, “Halalscapes: Leisure, Fun and Aesthetic Spaces Created by Young Muslim Women of the Gulen Movement in France and Germany,” in *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, ed. Erkan Toguslu (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> Mansson McGinty, “Emotional Geographies,” 692.

<sup>51</sup> Hassan, “Religious Practices,” 4.

hijab tutorials and hijab fashion and Danish shops aimed at modest and Islamic fashion.<sup>52</sup> This popularity indicates the demand of Muslim women for pursuing Islamic norms.

Muslim commitment to practicing Islam in the West is seen also in the emergence of *fiqh al-aqalliyat* (jurisprudence for the minority). This discourse, developed by Muslim scholars over the past half-century,<sup>53</sup> answers the demands of Muslims for answers to how to live Islam in ad-hoc circumstances and dispels the view of Sharia (Islamic law) as inherently anti-liberal.<sup>54</sup> As Andrew March notes, two important facets of this discourse are that it signals the permanence of Muslims in the West and indicates the attachment of Muslims to Sharia.<sup>55</sup> David Coolidge makes the point that such attachment signifies an affirmation of Muslims that Islam is the right way to live, as Islamic practice in the United States, for example, is not sanctioned by American law; therefore, it is up to Muslims whether they want to pray, fast and so on.<sup>56</sup> Islamic practice is therefore the outcome of a subjectivity that makes Muslims want to act in line with their beliefs. Even where Muslims in the West re-interpret Islamic texts, as Oliver Roy<sup>57</sup> and Jocelyn Cesari<sup>58</sup> report, the fact is that they are reading *Islamic* texts and not texts from another religious or ethical framework.

Commitment to Islamic norms develops out of a religious habitus or produces such a habitus (dispositions in how to act) and this becomes an individual factor that underpins Islamic living. A Muslim teenager in London says, “the person I am is a Muslim person, that’s how I live my life.”<sup>59</sup> Sealy finds that, for Muslim converts in Britain, Islam is a “*way of being*.”<sup>60</sup> These findings are supported by Aubrey Westfall and colleagues, who report that American women’s hijab practice is embedded in a religious lifestyle, where head-covering becomes part of a way of life alongside other practices like mosque attendance and prayer.<sup>61</sup> Mansson McGinty reports one American Muslim woman saying, of wearing hijab, that “now if I would walk out of the house and I don’t have it I feel naked. It has become so much part of my identity now; it is a part of me.”<sup>62</sup> This woman’s comment shows that hijab may become entwined with the self

<sup>52</sup> Gülzar Demir, Marie-Louise Nosch and Else Skjold “‘How I Wear My Headscarf’: Narratives About Dress and Styling from Young Muslim Women in Copenhagen,” in *Re-Claiming Bodies Through Fashion and Style: Gendered Configurations in Muslim Contexts*, ed. Viola Thimm (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2021).

<sup>53</sup> For a brief history of *fiqh al-aqalliyat*’s development, see Adis Duderija and Halim Rane, *Islam and Muslims in the West: Major Issues and Debates* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 212-13.

<sup>54</sup> Said Hassan, *Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat: History, Development, Progress* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 13.

<sup>55</sup> Andrew March, “Sources of Moral Obligation to Non-Muslims in the ‘Jurisprudence of Muslim Minorities’ (Minority *fiqh*) Discourse,” *Islamic Law and Society* 16 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851908X413757>.

<sup>56</sup> David Coolidge, “One Out of Many: The Civic and Religious in American Muslim Life,” *Religions* 14 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/re114020170>.

<sup>57</sup> Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> Jocelyn Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> DeHanas, “Elastic Orthodoxy,” 76.

<sup>60</sup> Sealy, “British Converts to Islam,” 254; italics in original.

<sup>61</sup> Westfall et al., “The Complexity of Covering.”

<sup>62</sup> Mansson McGinty, “Emotional Geographies,” 690.

to such an extent that it is wholly natural and habitual. Thus, a Muslim or Islamic habitus makes Islam second nature.

### ***Religion Factors***

In addition to social, societal and individual factors, Muslim religious life is enmeshed with the religion – what I call religion factors. A feature of Muslim religious life is the variety of religious practices Muslims engage in throughout their daily lives. These practices include finding a match for marriage; gender relations, for example, not shaking hands or hugging a person of the opposite sex; chastity; painting and art, including Arabic script graffiti; social activism; interfaith work; Islamic life-coaching; street *da'wah* (inviting people to Islam); Islamic finance; charity; religious music, including hip-hop and rap; *muraqaba*, a Sufi meditation technique that translates as watchfulness over the self; courtship practices; religious debates, conferences, seminars, and study circles; social activism; stand-up comedy; common rituals like mosque attendance, reciting the Qur'ān, reciting bed-time prayers of protection for one's children, *salah* (ritual prayer), *du'aa* (supplication), fasting, Prophetic medicine, Eid celebrations, Ashura (mourning martyrdom of Imam Hussein) processions and rituals for Shi'i Muslims, *mawlid* (celebrating birth of Prophet Muḥammad) marches, Ramadan *iftars* (breaking the fast meal), *aqiqah* (sacrificing an animal seven days after the birth of a child and distributing the meat to others); halal food consumption; entering a toilet with the left foot; saying “bismillah” before eating; Qur'ān school; hijab and *niqab* (face-veil); and more broad behaviours like not being mean or making others sad, not doing anything illegal, relationships at work, school and family, enduring trials, donating blood, seeking guidance from Allah, helping, caring, respecting and having love for others, and leisure. These are not all the rituals and practices Muslims engage in, but they show the variety of Islamic practices that has been covered in academia, a variety that is missing in Hirsi Ali's discussion on adherence to Islam.

To show how plural Islamic practice can be, Hassan's study of British Muslim women during maternity revealed that the times during pregnancy, labour and post-labour contain 15 religiously intended practices, such as breastfeeding and circumcision of the baby (if male).<sup>63</sup> The variety of Islamic practices performed by Muslims is complemented by the variety of experiences one may have of performing a particular ritual. To take the example of *salah* (ritual prayer), Williamson's interviews with American Muslims revealed that sometimes they feel a spiritual connection during *salah* and at other times they do not.<sup>64</sup> Also interesting is Muslim women's mosque attendance where some women prefer gender segregation in mosques while others do not, and some attend despite a lack of reasonable facilities for women and others refuse to attend until facilities are improved.<sup>65</sup> In terms of hijab, Demir and colleagues report that, in modest fashion shops, Danish Muslim women have a variety of fabrics and colours to choose from, making hijab practice anything but dull.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Hassan, “Religious Practices.”

<sup>64</sup> Williamson, “The Experience.”

<sup>65</sup> Ghafournia, “Negotiating.”

<sup>66</sup> Demir et al., “How I Wear.”

Another feature of Islam that relates to Muslim religious life is flexibility of Sharia (Islamic law). Islamic doctrine contains several juristic principles that Muslim scholars and judges may draw on when issuing a *fatwa* (religious edict) or advising Muslims. These principles include *maqasid ash-shari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), *maslaha* (public interest), *tafiiq* (using opinions from multiple schools of jurisprudence), *ijtihad* (juristic reasoning), *taysir* (ease or facilitation) and *rukhsa* (dispensation).<sup>67</sup> March notes these principles show an adaptivity and flexibility that allows Islam to be actualised in contemporary secular societies.<sup>68</sup>

Islamic doctrine also aids Muslims in allowing for ebbs and flows in practice, such that their religious lives evolve over time. Jonas Otterbeck's Danish Muslim participants, ranging in age from 17-19, spoke about dips in faith.<sup>69</sup> For example, one young man said he used to perform rituals and there was not much effect on him but later as he matured "it's so much more."<sup>70</sup> This statement shows that Islam may evolve and this is significant because it means many Muslims who are at times "not feeling it" do not have to leave Islam but may try to increase their faith and connection to Islam over time, and in the meantime practice what they can. A component of this evolving religiosity is the practice of repentance, as mentioned in the Qur'an, which tells Muslims that one may return to God after some missteps or lack of practice.<sup>71</sup> One may perform *salatul tauba* (prayer of repentance) to mark a transitioning period in one's relationship with Allah and this is an in-built component of Islamic doctrine that may lend itself to encouraging faith and practice.

Another trend in the research on Muslim religiosity is findings on psychological, social, and spiritual benefits of Islamic practice. *Salah* (ritual prayer) especially is shown to have many benefits. For example, for Muslim women in Finland, *salah* and reciting the Qur'an may heal the sick.<sup>72</sup> For a Muslim woman in Germany, *salah* alleviates anxiety and makes her feel calm.<sup>73</sup> In another study, a woman in Germany reports feeling "safe" and a man reports humility and a humane attitude towards others as outcomes of performing *salah*.<sup>74</sup> In Norway, Muslim women, when feeling troubled, turn to *salah* in the mosque.<sup>75</sup> Another study reports that, for Muslim women in Britain, Norway and Australia, mosque attendance facilitates gaining religious knowledge and increasing faith, spiritual connection and belongingness.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Duderija and Rane, *Islam and Muslims*, 216-17.

<sup>68</sup> March, "Sources."

<sup>69</sup> Jonas Otterbeck, "Daily Life, Ethnicity and Conflict in the Albayzin Neighbourhood in Spain," in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Nathal Dessing et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>71</sup> For example, chapter 24 verse 31 says, "Rally to Allah in repentance, O faithful, so that you may be felicitous."

<sup>72</sup> Tiilikainen, "Illness, Healing," 153-54.

<sup>73</sup> Franz Erhard and Kornelia Sammet, "Everyday Lived Islam and Young People from Muslim Migrant Families in Germany," in *Young People and Diversity of (Non)Religious Identities*, ed. Heather Shipley and Elisabeth Arweck (Switzerland: Springer, 2019), 230.

<sup>74</sup> Jeldtoft, "Spirituality and Emotions," 93.

<sup>75</sup> Inger-Lise Lien, "Religion, Health, and Life Satisfaction Among Somali and Gambian Women in Norway," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61 (2022): 2984, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01561-1>.

<sup>76</sup> Ghafournia, "Negotiating"; Line Nyhagen, "Mosques as Gendered Spaces: The Complexity of Women's Compliance with, and Resistance to, Dominant Gender Norms, and the Importance of Male Allies," *Religions* 10, no. 5 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10050321>; Halim Rane et al., "Islam in Australia: A National Survey of Muslim Citizens and Permanent Residents," *Religions* 11 (2020), <https://doi.org/>

Celia McMichael's study of Muslim women refugees in Australia found that *salah* and reciting the Qur'ān gives a sense of home in an otherwise dislocated circumstance filled with homesickness.<sup>77</sup> For these refugees, Allah is everywhere and Islamic practice reinforces for them a consoling feeling. In another study, a young Muslim man in Australia says about *salah* (ritual prayer):

By doing it five times a day, it constantly reminds you, and keeps the flow of your daily routine... You disconnect yourself from that daily work, social, money, figures, everything, and say 'Hey, I need a break.' Your body needs a break. It's like a car going all day and running and running and running. It needs to have a break eventually or it's going to go [makes a breaking down noise].<sup>78</sup>

Thus, *salah* provides a grounding and connectedness at different parts of one's busy day to recharge and maintain the day's flow. In America, one young Muslim reported "community bonding" as a benefit of Friday prayers, and in the same study, other participants mentioned relief, calmness, peace, satisfaction, happiness, pleasure, humility and a feeling of a loving presence as outcomes of praying.<sup>79</sup> These findings echo Nadia Jeldtoft's study that finds the outcome of Islamic practices for Muslims in Denmark, Germany and the United States are hot (e.g., happiness) and cool (e.g., calmness) emotions.<sup>80</sup> Fasting is another commonly mentioned Islamic ritual in ethnographic research and for one young Muslim man in Australia, it provides discipline that one may use to overcome challenges.<sup>81</sup> Another food-related practice is Prophetic medicine, which Muslim women in Finland use to cure physical illness.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to *salah* and fasting, another practice often positively commented on by Muslims is hijab. A survey of 194 American Muslim women in the United States reported that the hijab is associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms.<sup>83</sup> For one Muslim woman in Quebec, hijab removes gender differences, such that men are more respectful of women.<sup>84</sup> In another study, a female convert to Islam in America found that the hijab allows for elements other than the physical appearance of a person to become the focus, something that resonates with her personal challenges of anorexia and focus on image.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, Mansson McGinty found, for

---

10.3390/rel11080419; Dervla Shannahan, "Gender, Inclusivity, and UK Mosque Experiences," *Contemporary Islam* 8, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1007/a11562-013-0286-3>.

<sup>77</sup> Celia McMichael, "'Everywhere is Allah's Place': Islam and the Everyday Life of Somali Women in Melbourne, Australia," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 15, no. 2 (2002): 179, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/15.2.171>.

<sup>78</sup> Kim Lam and Fethi Mansouri, "Beyond (Mis)Recognition: Muslim Youth and Religiosity in Australia," *Journal of Youth Studies* 24, no. 6 (2021): 772, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2020.1766667>.

<sup>79</sup> Williamson, "The Experience," 553-58.

<sup>80</sup> Jeldtoft, "Spirituality and Emotions."

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Tiilikainen, "Illness, Healing."

<sup>83</sup> David Hodge, Altaf Husain and Tarek Zidan, "Hijab and Depression: Does the Islamic Practice of Veiling Predict Higher Levels of Depressive Symptoms?" *Social Work* 62, no. 3 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swx027>.

<sup>84</sup> Mossière, "Religious Orthodoxy," 214.

<sup>85</sup> Anna Mansson McGinty, "Lived Islam: Embodied Identities and Everyday Practices among American Muslim Youth," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 113, no. 3 (2022): 766, <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2022.2134086>.

an American woman, wearing hijab provides an identity in public life and allows her to show solidarity against Islamophobia, thus it becomes a means to social activism.<sup>86</sup>

Islam not only aids Muslims in mainstream society, but those in prisons, too. For male Muslims in French jails, Islam provides hope, dignity, purpose and meaning that allows them to reshape their lives as moral agents.<sup>87</sup> Given this, it is not surprising that Islam plays an important role in the rehabilitation of Muslim prisoners.<sup>88</sup> Interestingly, these studies show that, for Muslim inmates, Islam's strictness is a favourable aspect as it gives them discipline in everyday life. Geraldine Mossiere finds that, for Muslim inmates in Canada, "beyond the instrumental advantage it may carry for coping with life in prison, Islam is associated with stability and a frame of reference that leads the inmate towards better self-control."<sup>89</sup> For one female Muslim inmate, Islamic rules and norms, albeit restrictive, allowed her to clean up her life and become "saner" such that by fasting in Ramadan she was able to quit smoking.<sup>90</sup> This self-control makes Muslims better inmates than other social groups in prison and makes the transition to mainstream society easier once they leave prison.

Speaking about Muslim religious practices, Sara Ghannam and Kevin Gorey's meta-analytic review of 21 surveys of Muslims in the West that found two-thirds out of 7,145 practicing Muslims scored higher on measures of wellbeing than non-practicing Muslims.<sup>91</sup> Also, Heidi Ellis and colleagues found that young Muslim refugees in the United States with higher religiosity are more resilient in the face of discrimination.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, Nana-Fatima Ozeto and Thérèse Allan found from questionnaires to 41 migrant Muslim women in the UK

<sup>86</sup> Mansson McGinty, "Emotional Geographies," 693.

<sup>87</sup> Joby Gardner, "Keeping Faith: Faith Talk by and for Incarcerated Youth," *The Urban Review* 43, no. 1 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-009-0149-7>; Hamid Kusha, *Islam in American Prisons: Black Muslims' Challenge to American Penology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Géraldine Mossière, "Embracing Islam to Improve and Restore the Vulnerable Subject: Religious Conversion as Hermeneutics of the Self. A Case in Prison," in *Lived Religion, Conversion and Recovery*, ed. Srdjan Sremac and Ines Jindra (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020); Basia Spalek and Salah El-Hassan, "Muslim Converts in Prison," *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 46, no. 2 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2311.2007.00459.x>; SpearIt, "Prisons, Muslim Memory and the Making of a Terrorist," *The Conversation*, January 10, 2015, <https://theconversation.com/prisons-muslim-memory-and-the-making-of-a-terrorist-36091>.

<sup>88</sup> Anna Bowers, "The Search for Justice: Islamic Pedagogy and Inmate Rehabilitation," in *Educating the Muslims of America*, ed. Yvonne Haddad, Farid Senzai and Jane Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Imran Awan, "Muslim Prisoners, Radicalization and Rehabilitation in British Prisons," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 33, no. 3 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2013.853979>; Rachel Sarg and Anne-Sophie Lamine, "Religion in Prison: Standard Structuring, Self-Rehabilitation, Resistance Strategies," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 56, no. 153 (2011), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41336077>.

<sup>89</sup> Mossière, "Embracing Islam," 162.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>91</sup> Sara Ghannam and Kevin Gorey, "Islamic Religiosity and Subjective Well-Being in the West: Meta-Analytic Evidence of Protections Across Diverse Muslim Diasporas," *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 42, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2022.2111395>.

<sup>92</sup> Heidi Ellis et al., "Discrimination and Mental Health Among Somali Refugee Adolescents: The Role of Acculturation and Gender," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80, no. 4 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01061.x>.

that the more practicing they are the more likely they are to adopt religious coping to deal with perceived stress and this kind of coping leads to lower levels of stress.<sup>93</sup>

## EVALUATING AYAAN HIRSI ALI'S CRITICISM OF ADHERENCE TO ISLAM

### *Data on Muslim Religious Life in the West Falsifies Ayaan Hirsi Ali's Views on Islam*

The data on Muslim religious life in the West highlighted above shows that Islamic practice is facilitated or constrained by social, societal, individual and religion factors. Each of these factors is complex, and when combined with the others, makes Islamic adherence a multi-dimensional and multifaceted phenomenon. Such complexity is lacking in Hirsi Ali's treatment of adherence to Islam in *Heretic*, in which she reduces it to negative consequences, namely cognitive dissonance and dullness, and she finds these experiences push Muslims to either leave Islam, retreat to a Muslim enclave or become radicalised. Some Muslims find practicing Islam challenging; however, no study cited in the previous section reported any of the consequences Hirsi Ali suggests. Rather, they show that Muslims remain within the fold of Islam and do so by adapting to local circumstances via tactics, which demonstrates commitment to being Muslim, albeit sometimes in an unorthodox way. By using tactics, Muslims may inhabit secular spaces while practicing Islam.

Such results oppose the binary thinking of Hirsi Ali, which depicts Islam as an either/or category, in that one can either practice Islam and be isolated from mainstream society or one can forego Islam and be a full participating Westerner. The data in the literature cited in this study tells a different story, such as the finding that Muslim children in Britain practice "School Islam."<sup>94</sup> Kim Lam and Fethi Mansouri's following observation may apply to Muslims in the West generally speaking: "It is possible to forge productive inter-connections and hybrid identities whereby there is no conflict between engaging with majoritarian Western culture on one hand and upholding one's religious beliefs as a practising Muslim on the other."<sup>95</sup> Even so-called hard-line Muslims, or Medina Muslims, as Hirsi Ali calls them, choose to venture out of more ethnic areas to occupy mainstream spaces in city centres to engage in *da'wah* (inviting people to Islam), which involves peaceful discussion, thus evokes a kind of citizenship practice.<sup>96</sup> Salafi Muslims' interest in claiming rights and belonging shows they have concern about their positionality in society and desire not to be excluded from it completely.

<sup>93</sup> Nana-Fatima Ozeto and Thérèse Allan, "Investigating a Relationship between Perceived Stress, Religious Coping, and Religiosity in Migrant Muslim Women," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 15, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.265>.

<sup>94</sup> Sidsel Jensen and Lene Kuhle, "'School Islam': Lived Religion in the Context of a Public Secular Institution," in *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, ed. Nathal Dessing et al. (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013).

<sup>95</sup> Lam and Mansouri, "Beyond (Mis)Recognition," 776-77.

<sup>96</sup> Ajmal Hussain, "Street Salafism: Contingency and Urbanity as Religious Creed," *EPD: Society and Space* 40, no. 3 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211069989>.



Another idea of Hirsi Ali's that gains traction in light of data on Muslim religious life is that Islam is "the dull routine of daily observance."<sup>97</sup> The complexity of Islamic practice in the sense of the number of practices Muslims may perform and the ways in which one might perform them, the variety of places in which such practices may be performed, the challenging or easy circumstances surrounding the practices, performing practices for Allah and out of a religious subjectivity, and the several potential benefits of the practices, makes Muslim religious life anything but dull. Hirsi Ali fails to acknowledge any of these facets of Islamic adherence in her assessment of it in *Heretic*. Unfortunately, her reductionism not only misrepresents Islam but shows Muslims as passive dupes who do the same thing every day and in the same way all the time, such that they live dull lives. The fact of the matter is that Islam is not a single ritual or phenomenon, but a multitude of phenomena that speak to people in different ways, such that one Muslim's religious life may be different to another Muslim's religious life. For example, one Muslim may invest a lot of time in charity work while another Muslim may choose to spend time studying religious texts and reciting the Qur'ān.

### ***Where Ayaan Hirsi Ali Goes Wrong: Essentialism***

Where Hirsi Ali goes wrong is taking what Kevin Reinhart identifies as an "*Islam and...*" approach to understanding Islam, Muslims and the West. This approach reifies Islam as a single entity across time and place regardless of differing socio-cultural circumstances and individual traits.<sup>98</sup> Hirsi Ali reduces the phenomena of Muslim religious life in Western societies to the formula *Islam and the West*, which leads her to view such a life as problematic because, for her, so-called seventh century rituals and norms surely cannot co-exist with the norms of contemporary Western societies. The problem with the lens of *Islam and* means that at most Islam can co-exist with a socio-political or cultural entity like the West (which is multifaceted and diverging from society to society; for example, France compared with New Zealand). The data cited in this study shows that Western societal elements mesh with Islamic and Muslim elements such that what emerges is not a seventh century code of conduct opposing or being opposed by secular liberal society, but a living practice emerging from the interweaving of strands of social, societal, individual and religion factors.

### ***Countering Essentialism: Lived Islam***

The solution to essentialism is the sociological lens of "lived Islam." Lived Islam is an emerging field of study within the sociology of Islam, which sees ethnographers focus on the embodied aspect of Islamic beliefs and values. Reinhart describes lived Islam as a colloquial phenomenon that contains strands of normativity and situationality.<sup>99</sup> Lived Islam is what Muslims do in local situations. What they do may be different to each other, but this does not discount there being an Islamic tradition, and lived Islam is the outcome of different

---

<sup>97</sup> Hirsi Ali, *Heretic*, 19.

<sup>98</sup> Kevin Reinhart, *Lived Islam: Colloquial Religion in a Cosmopolitan Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

understandings and appropriations of this tradition. Reinhart notes that “lived Islam exists not just now but describes the actual or lived situation of Muslims at any time, in any place.”<sup>100</sup> If we take up this point, the religious life of Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions was lived Islam and the religious lives of contemporary Muslims in London, Perth, and Toronto are also lived Islam. The point is that in all places Muslims reside and have resided, Islam has been lived and this shows that Islamic tradition lends itself to being appropriated across time and place. The present study points to societal, social, individual and religion factors as making Islam liveable across the West, such that Islamic norms emerge differently according to the combination of these four factors, yet in the end Islam is lived.

While lived Islam accepts there is a universal Islamic scripture of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* (reports about Prophet Muḥammad’s words, actions and tacit approvals and disapprovals) and universal Islamic practices such as *ṣalah* (ritual prayer) and fasting, it recognises that “Muslims have always been creators and also consumers of their religion, not blank slates on which their religious lives have been written by others.”<sup>101</sup> Consuming religion refers to the individualisation of Islam as noted by Roy where Muslims in minority contexts often resort to their own efforts to find out what Islam is and means for them, owing to the deterritorialisation of Islam such that, in the West, Islam is not the basis of society’s institutions and socio-cultural norms.<sup>102</sup> Lived Islam recognises the work of Muslims to manifest Islam in their lives, especially in secular liberal contexts. It is this element of Muslims that Hirsi Ali misses in her understanding of adherence to Islam. Adherence is to consider, mesh, negotiate, balance, be faithful to, be respectful of – in other words, the elements of living life as a human being and Muslims in performing these tasks in relation to their religious life humanises adherence to Islam or Islamic practice.

The concept of lived Islam ties in with the concept of lived space, as articulated by social geographer Tim Cresswell.<sup>103</sup> In his study of place, Cresswell differentiates between space – a physical location – and place, which is a space that has been given meaning and to which people become attached, making it “a meaningful location.”<sup>104</sup> Cresswell says that “All over the world people are engaged in place-making activities.”<sup>105</sup> This study shows that Muslims are engaged in place-making in the West in terms of performing Islamic rituals and religious behaviours such that they carve out a space for Islam. Muslims are not intending to make the West an Islamic caliphate or space governed by Islam. Instead, they are content with making Western societies a place where Islam is at home, even if it is not the force behind Western political, social and economic institutions. To the extent that Islam is lived in the West, the West becomes a place or meaningful home for Muslims.

This last point contests Hirsi Ali’s place-making in *Heretic*, which makes Muslims “other” in relation to the West. For Hirsi Ali, devout Muslims and pious Islam are not at home in the

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>102</sup> Roy, *Globalised Islam*.

<sup>103</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 5.

West because it is a place that means secularism, liberalism, modernity and progress. Hirsi Ali attaches these meanings to the West because she is defined by them in her life trajectory from pious Muslim to enlightened secular Westerner. Cresswell observes that “sometimes seeing the world through the lens of place leads to reactionary and exclusionary xenophobia, racism and bigotry. ‘Our place’ is threatened and others have to be excluded.”<sup>106</sup> This describes Hirsi Ali’s rhetoric in *Heretic vis-à-vis the West* – it is a place for her and people like her. The findings from this study contest Hirsi Ali’s place-making by asserting that it is also to “think of an area of the world as a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment.”<sup>107</sup> This study shows that the West is host to interplay between societal, social, individual and religion factors, which generates Islamic practice, and this practice or doing Islam is to *do the West*.

### ***Importance of Research***

The terms lived space and lived Islam come from ethnographic research in the academy, showing the value of research. The term lived Islam in particular illustrates the advantage of sociologists and anthropologists interviewing, observing and surveying Muslims about how they practice Islam. The data emerging from such research enables scholars to conceive of the lived Islam concept. Research may generate concepts and theories like lived Islam that align better with the real world because they are based on empirical data. The concept of lived Islam may not be perfect, yet it better illuminates Muslim religious life than Hirsi Ali’s concepts Mecca Muslim, Medina Muslim and Dissident Muslim, which conflate complex realities and tell us nothing of how, when, where, with whom and for what Islamic rituals and religious behaviours are performed. The criticism I would aim at Hirsi Ali is that once she had come to the idea that Muslims face challenges and difficulties in living Islam in the West, the next step was to ask Muslims about the details and outcome of this situation for them.

Because academics ask Muslims such questions, they are credible and responsible in their conclusions about Islam. Researchers note this point. Valentina Fedele speaks to the value of “qualitative methods of inquiry that leave freedom of expression to subjects [which] helps the reworking of religious experiences.”<sup>108</sup> Mansson McGinty notes in her study of lived Islam in America that, as an analytic approach and subject of study, lived Islam can “offer a detailed picture of subjective everyday life, with a focus on emotionally charged and embodied memories, identities, and practices.”<sup>109</sup> Mansson McGinty arrives at these conclusions by drawing on psychiatrist Douglas Hollan’s<sup>110</sup> person-centred ethnography. Through this approach in her fieldwork, Mansson McGinty directs Muslims to reflect on their understandings, feelings and experiences.<sup>111</sup> Surely, this is a more humane and ethical way of

---

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Valentina Fedele, “Dietary Practices and the Bargaining of an Islamic Lifestyle Among Unorganized European Muslims: Some Reflections from French Diasporic Muslims,” in *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, ed. Erkan Toguslu (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015), 66.

<sup>109</sup> Mansson McGinty, “Lived Islam,” 2.

<sup>110</sup> Douglas Hollan, “The Relevance of Person-Centered Ethnography to Cross-Cultural Psychiatry,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 34, no. 2 (1997), <https://doi.org/10.1177/136346159703400203>.

<sup>111</sup> Mansson McGinty, “Emotional Geographies,” 689.

representing Muslims in contrast with the sweeping statements about Muslims in *Heretic* that are not backed by empirical data. Mansson McGinty notes that “surely, to represent Islam as lived one would do best in attending to the voices and words of those living it.”<sup>112</sup> Sadly, Hirsi Ali fails to attend to Muslim voices in her writings and this lends her views to being hyperbole rather than rational analysis.

Perhaps Hirsi Ali is aware of the implications of her “*Islam and...*” binary, knowing that these serve to silence and distort the voices of Muslims. This is a point worth considering, as Hirsi Ali has shown an agenda in her writings to speak on behalf of Muslims, which enables her to create a rift between Muslims and non-Muslims. The more this rift seems real, the more Hirsi Ali benefits in that her writings become sources of evidence for such a rift, thereby enhancing her standing in public discourse on Islam and Muslims.

## CONCLUSION

This study evaluated Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s views on adherence to Islam as posed in her book *Heretic*. It did so by comparing these views with data on Muslim religious life in the West as collected by scholars undertaking academic research. That data shows that Muslims invest an immense amount of energy into living Islamically in Western societies and they are impacted in doing so by four main factors: (1) *social factors*: Islamic upbringing and socialisation, relationships with Allah, Muslims and the Muslim community; (2) *societal factors*: the socio-political environment that gives freedom to practice Islam and material resources like prayer facilities in which to do so; (3) *individual factors*: tactics, personal traits and Islamic habitus; (4) *religion factors*: Sharia (Islamic law) flexibility, evolving practice and psychological, social and spiritual benefits of practicing Islam. Islam is thus not a solely individual affair, social affair or religious affair, or solely hindered or enabled by societal elements – it involves all four dimensions and emerges from their interactions.

The study identified the concept of lived Islam as best representing the four factors and their interrelations. Lived Islam contests Hirsi Ali’s perception of the liveability of Islam, namely that it is damaging to social cohesion and individuals. Lived Islam points to pluralism and variety, complexity and multidimensionality, and social, psychological and spiritual benefits of Islamic rituals, as found in ethnographic research with Muslims in the West – none of which is apparent in Hirsi Ali’s description of adherence to Islam in *Heretic*. Thus, sociological and anthropological lenses seem to uncover more about Muslim religious life than the Orientalist lens used by Hirsi Ali. These points indicate the importance of ethnographic research and empirical data with which to understand the place of Islam in Muslim lives in the West. Fieldwork with Muslims may help generate a bottom-up approach to understanding Muslim religious life, which counters Hirsi Ali’s top-down ideological approach.

A limitation of this study is that the studies cited are not direct critiques of Hirsi Ali’s views. Future research may develop research questions more in line with her views, which would

---

<sup>112</sup> Mansson McGinty, “Lived Islam,” 7.

include more focused interview questions around Muslim religious life. Nonetheless, this study shows the value of research with Muslims in uncovering their innermost feelings and thoughts about Islamic practice, which tell us something about how Islam is lived and liveable.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Abraham, Pearl. "The Winged Life of Ayaan Hirsi Ali." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 50, no. 2 (2011): 299-306.
- Ali, Jan. "Australian Muslims as Radicalised 'Other' and their Experiences of Social Exclusion." In *Islam in the West: Perceptions and Reactions*, edited by Abe Ata and Jan Ali, 108-28. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Awan, Imran. "Muslim Prisoners, Radicalization and Rehabilitation in British Prisons." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 33, no. 3 (2013): 371-84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2013.853979>.
- Belden, Dave. "Ayaan Hirsi Ali: An Islamic Feminist Leaves Islam." *Tikkun* 22, no. 4 (2007): 28-31.
- Billaud, Julie. "Marriage 'Sharia Style': Everyday Practices of Islamic Morality in England." *Contemporary Islam* 13 (2019): 217-32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-018-0430-1>.
- Bokhari, Raana. "Bihishti Zewar: Islam, Text, and the Daily Lives of Gujurati Women in Leicester." In *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Nielsen and Linda Woodhead, 55-67. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Bosch, Mineke. "Telling Stories, Creating (and Saving) Her Life: An Analysis of the Autobiography of Ayaan Hirsi Ali." *Women's Studies International Forum* 21 (2008): 138-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2008.03.006>.
- Bot, Michiele. "The Right to Offend? Contested Speech Acts and Critical Democratic Practice." *Law & Literature* 24, no. 2 (2012): 232-64. <https://doi.org/10.1525/lal.2012.24.2.232>.
- Bowers, Anna. "The Search for Justice: Islamic Pedagogy and Inmate Rehabilitation." In *Educating the Muslims of America*, edited by Yvonne Haddad, Farid Senzai and Jane Smith, 179-208. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Briskman, Linda, and Susie Latham. "Refugees, Islamophobia, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali: Challenging Social Work Co-option." *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 32, no. 1 (2017): 108-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109916685801>.
- Cesari, Jocelyn. *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Coolidge, David. "One Out of Many: The Civic and Religious in American Muslim Life." *Religions* 14 (2023): 170. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020170>.
- Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- De Leeuw, Mark, and Sonja van Wichelen. "'Please, Go Wake Up!'" *Feminist Media Studies* 5, no. 3 (2005): 325-40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680770500271487>.

- DeHanas, Daniel. "Elastic Orthodoxy: The Tactics of Young Muslim Identity in the East End of London." In *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Neilsen and Linda Woodhead, 81-95. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Demir, Gülzar, Marie-Louise Nosch and Else Skjold. "'How I Wear My Headscarf': Narratives About Dress and Styling from Young Muslim Women in Copenhagen." In *Re-Claiming Bodies Through Fashion and Style: Gendered Configurations in Muslim Contexts*, edited by Viola Thimm, 65-87. Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2021.
- Dessing, Nathal, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Nielsen and Linda Woodhead, eds., *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Duderija, Adis, and Halim Rane. *Islam and Muslims in the West: Major Issues and Debates*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- El-Bachouti, Mohammed. "Individualization of Muslim Religious Practices: Contextual Creativity of Second-Generation Moroccans in Spain." In *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, edited by Erkan Toguslu, 97-112. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015.
- Ellis, Heidi, Helen MacDonald, Julie Klunk-Gillis, Alisa Lincoln, Lee Strunin and Howard Cabral. "Discrimination and Mental Health Among Somali Refugee Adolescents: The Role of Acculturation and Gender." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 80, no. 4 (2010): 564-75. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01061.x>.
- Erhard, Franz, and Kornelia Sammet. "Everyday Lived Islam and Young People from Muslim Migrant Families in Germany." In *Young People and Diversity of (Non)Religious Identities*, edited by Heather Shipley and Elisabeth Arweck, 221-39. Switzerland: Springer, 2019.
- Fedele, Valentina. "Dietary Practices and the Bargaining of an Islamic Lifestyle Among Unorganized European Muslims: Some Reflections from French Diasporic Muslims." In *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, edited by Erkan Toguslu, 57-74. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015.
- Gardner, Joby. "Keeping Faith: Faith Talk by and for Incarcerated Youth." *The Urban Review* 43, no. 1 (2011): 22-42, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-009-0149-7>.
- Ghafournia, Nafiseh. "Negotiating Gendered Religious Space: Australian Muslim Women and the Mosque." *Religions* 11 (2020): 686. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120686>.
- Ghannam, Sara, and Kevin Gorey. "Islamic Religiosity and Subjective Well-Being in the West: Meta-Analytic Evidence of Protections Across Diverse Muslim Diasporas." *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 42, no. 1 (2023): 36-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2022.2111395>.
- Göle, Nilüfer. *The Daily Lives of Muslims*. London: Zed Books, 2017.
- Grewal, Kiran. "Reclaiming the Voice of the 'Third World Woman.'" *Interventions* 14, no. 4 (2012): 569-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2012.730861>.

- Güngör, Derya, Fenella Fleischmann, Karen Phalet, Vassilis Saroglou and Adam Cohen. "Religious Identification, Beliefs, and Practices Among Turkish Belgian and Moroccan Belgian Muslims: Intergeneration Continuity and Acculturative Change." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 42, no. 8 (2011): 1356-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220022111412342>.
- Hassan, Said. *Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat: History, Development, Progress*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Hassan, Shaima. "Religious Practices of Muslim Women in the UK During Maternity: Evidence-Based Professional Practice Recommendations." *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 22 (2022): 355. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-022-04664-5>.
- Hirsi Ali, Ayaan. *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now*. New York: Harper, 2015.
- Hodge, David, Altaf Husain and Tarek Zidan. "Hijab and Depression: Does the Islamic Practice of Veiling Predict Higher Levels of Depressive Symptoms?" *Social Work* 62, no. 3 (2017): 243-50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swx027>.
- Hollan, Douglas. "The Relevance of Person-Centered Ethnography to Cross-Cultural Psychiatry." *Transcultural Psychiatry* 34, no. 2 (1997): 219-34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/136346159703400203>.
- Hussain, Ajmal. "Street Salafism: Contingency and Urbanity as Religious Creed." *EPD: Society and Space* 40, no. 3 (2020): 469-85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758211069989>.
- Jalalzai, Farida. "Anxious and Active: Muslim Perception of Discrimination and Treatment and its Political Consequences in the Post-September 11, 2001 United States." *Politics and Religion* 4, no. 1 (2011): 71-107. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048310000519>.
- Jeldtoft, Nadia. "Spirituality and Emotions: Making a Room of One's Own." In *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Nielsen and Linda Woodhead, 85-100. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Jensen, Sidsel, and Lene Kuhle. "'School Islam': Lived Religion in the Context of a Public Secular Institution." In *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Nielsen and Linda Woodhead, 101-13. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Jusova, Iveta. "Hirsi Ali and Van Gogh's Submission: Reinforcing the Islam vs. Women Binary." *Women's Studies International Forum*, 31 (2008): 148-55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2008.03.007>.
- Karim, Jamillah. *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender Within the Ummah*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- Kusha, Hamid. *Islam in American Prisons: Black Muslims' Challenge to American Penology*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.



- Lam, Kim, and Fethi Mansouri. "Beyond (Mis)Recognition: Muslim Youth and Religiosity in Australia." *Journal of Youth Studies* 24, no. 6 (2021): 765-80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2020.1766667>.
- Lien, Inger-Lise. "Religion, Health, and Life Satisfaction Among Somali and Gambian Women in Norway." *Journal of Religion and Health* 61 (2022): 2975-91. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-022-01561-1>.
- Litchmore, Rashelle, and Saba Safdar. "Meanings of the Hijab: Views of Canadian Muslim Women." *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 19, no. 3 (2016): 198-208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12141>.
- Malliepard, Mieke, and Marcel Lubbers. "Parental Religious Transmission after Migration: The Case of Dutch Muslims." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39, no. 3 (2013): 425-42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.733862>.
- Mansson McGinty, Anna. "Emotional Geographies of Veiling: The Meanings of the Hijab for Five Palestinian American Muslim Women." *Gender, Place, and Culture* 21, no. 6 (2014): 683-700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.810601>.
- Mansson McGinty, Anna. "Lived Islam: Embodied Identities and Everyday Practices Among American Muslim Youth." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 113, no. 3 (2022): 756-770. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2022.2134086>.
- March, Andrew. "Sources of Moral Obligation to Non-Muslims in the 'Jurisprudence of Muslim Minorities' (Minority *Fiqh*) Discourse." *Islamic Law and Society* 16 (2009): 34-94. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851908X413757>.
- McMichael, Celia. "'Everywhere is Allah's Place': Islam and the Everyday Life of Somali Women in Melbourne, Australia." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 15, no. 2 (2002): 171-88. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/15.2.171>.
- Mescoli, Else. "Islamic Food Practices in a Migration Context: An Ethnography Among Moroccan Women in Milan (Italy)." In *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, edited by Erkan Toguslu, 19-39. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015.
- Moosavi, Leon. "British Muslim Converts Performing 'Authentic Muslimness.'" *Performing Islam* 1, no. 1 (2012): 103-28. [https://doi.org/10.1386/pi.1.1.103\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/pi.1.1.103_1).
- Morin, Aysel. "Victimization of Muslim Women in *Submission*." *Women's Studies in Communication* 32, no. 3 (2009): 308-408. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2009.10162395>.
- Mossière, Géraldine. "Embracing Islam to Improve and Restore the Vulnerable Subject: Religious Conversion as Hermeneutics of the Self. A Case in Prison." In *Lived Religion, Conversion and Recovery*, edited by Srdjan Sremac and Ines Jindra, 147-69. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020.

- Mossière, Géraldine. "Religious Orthodoxy, Empowerment, and Virtuous Femininity Amongst Pious Women: A Cross-Religious Reading between Muslim and Pentecostal Youth." In *Young People and the Diversity of (Non)Religious Identities in International Perspective*, edited by Elisabeth Arweck and Heather Shipley, 203-20. Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019.
- Nyhagen, Line. "Mosques as Gendered Spaces: The Complexity of Women's Compliance with, and Resistance to, Dominant Gender Norms, and the Importance of Male Allies." *Religions* 10, no. 5 (2019): 321. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10050321>.
- O'Gorman, Daniel. "Speaking for the Muslim World: Popular Memoir and the 'War on Terror.'" *European Journal of English Studies* 22, no. 2 (2018): 142-53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2018.1478257>.
- Otterbeck, Jonas. "Daily Life, Ethnicity and Conflict in the Albayzin Neighbourhood in Spain." In *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Nielsen and Linda Woodhead, 147-58. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Oudenampsen, Merjin. "Deconstructing Ayaan Hirsi Ali: On Islamism, Neoconservatism, and the Clash of Civilizations." *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 17, no. 2-3 (2016): 227-48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2016.1232195>.
- Ozeto, Nana-Fatima, and Thérèse Allan. "Investigating a Relationship Between Perceived Stress, Religious Coping, and Religiosity in Migrant Muslim Women." *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 15, no. 1 (2021): 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3998/jmmh.265>.
- Rane, Halim, Adis Duderija, Riyad Rahimullah, Paul Mitchell, Jessica Mamone and Shane Satterley. "Islam in Australia: A National Survey of Muslim Citizens and Permanent Residents." *Religions* 11 (2020): 419. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11080419>.
- Reinhart, Kevin. *Lived Islam: Colloquial Religion in a Cosmopolitan Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Roy, Olivier. *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Sametoğlu, Sumeyye. "Halalscapes: Leisure, Fun and Aesthetic Spaces Created by Young Muslim Women of the Gulen Movement in France and Germany." In *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, edited by Erkan Toguslu, 143-61. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015.
- Sarg, Rachel, and Anne-Sophie Lamine. "Religion in Prison: Standard Structuring, Self-Rehabilitation, Resistance Strategies." *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 56, no. 153 (2011): 85-104. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41336077>.
- Schrock, Richelle. "Fictions of an All-Encompassing Precarity in the Works of Ayaan Hirsi Ali." *Frontiers* 37, no. 1 (2016): 66-89. <https://doi.org/10.5250/fronjwomestud.37.1.0066>.

- Sealy, Thomas. "British Converts to Islam, Habitus and Social Positioning." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2021): 250-262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2021>.
- Shannahan, Dervla. "Gender, Inclusivity and UK Mosque Experiences." *Contemporary Islam* 8 (2014): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-013-0286-3>.
- Spalek, Basia, and Salah El-Hassan, "Muslim Converts in Prison." *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 46, no. 2 (2007): 99-104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2311.2007.00459.x>.
- SpearIt. "Prisons, Muslim Memory and the Making of a Terrorist." *The Conversation*, January 10, 2015, <https://theconversation.com/prisons-muslim-memory-and-the-making-of-a-terrorist-36091>.
- Sterckx, Leen. "The Self-Arranged Marriage: Modern Muslim Courtship Practices in the Netherlands." In *Everyday Life Practices of Muslims in Europe*, edited by Erkan Toguslu, 113-25. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015.
- Tiilikainen, Marja. "Illness, Healing, and Everyday Islam: Transnational Lives of Somali Migrant Women." In *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen Nielsen and Linda Woodhead, 147-62. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Turner, Bryan. "Allah and Man." In *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*, 39-55. London: Routledge, 1984.
- Van de Pol, Jasper, and Frank van Tubergen. "Inheritance of Religiosity Among Muslim Immigrants in a Secular Society." *Review of Religious Research* 56, no. 1 (2014): 87-106, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-013-1028-z>.
- Westfall, Aubrey, Bozena Welbourne, Sarah Tobin and Özge Russell. "The Complexity of Covering: The Religious, Social, and Political Dynamics of Islamic Practice in the United States." *Social Science Quarterly* 97, no. 3 (2016): 771-90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12278>.
- Williamson, Paul. "The Experience of Muslim Prayer: A Phenomenological Investigation." *Pastoral Psychology* 67 (2018): 547-62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/211089-018-0831-3>.
- Yaghi, Adam. "Popular Testimonial Literature by American Cultural Conservatives of Arab or Muslim Descent: Narrating the Self, Translating (an)Other." *Middle East Critique* 25, no. 1 (2016): 83-98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2015.1107996>.
- Yeste, Carme, Garcia Ouarda, El Miri Zeguaria, Pilar Álvarez and Teresa Folch. "Muslim Women Wearing the Niqab in Spain: Dialogues Around Discrimination, Identity and Freedom." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 75 (2020): 95-105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.02.003>.