

Muslims in Ireland: Past and Present, Oliver Scharbrodt, Tuula Sakaranaho, Adil Hussain Khan, Yafa Shanneik & Vivian Ibrahim, 2015, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 272 pp., £70.00 (hb), ISBN 978-0-7486-9688-8 (hb), ISBN 978-0-7486-9689-5 (eb)

Muslims in Ireland is a landmark study of its topic. With the Republic of Ireland's transition from a country of emigration to one of immigration from the mid-1990s onwards, it is also one of the first scholarly book-length studies of any new religion in Ireland. Such studies face particular challenges, including the need to establish baseline facts, the responsibilities arising from the fact that they are likely to remain the main point of reference for years, and the multiple publics interested in such works, leading to choices about what kind of book to write. Based on two substantial funded research projects, *Muslims in Ireland* is a co-written book which situates Ireland within international research in the field and sets a high standard for future research.

The book's four sections explore the history of Muslim migration to Ireland, the organizational background to Muslim institutions in Ireland, the relationship with the state, particularly around schooling, and the life worlds of Muslim women. The different chapters are mostly written by different researchers using suitable methodologies, but the book's background in the two research projects combines some of the scholarly strengths of an edited collection with the overall flow of a monograph.

Individuals of Muslim origin have stayed or settled in Ireland since the late eighteenth century; in the postwar period, more organised migration included South African Muslims, Libyans, and Malaysians, often medical students. This tradition of professional migration continues and has accelerated in recent years, now joined by various flows of asylum seekers from war zones. Muslims now constitute just over 1% of the population. The Republic's early exit from the British empire and the late start of mass immigration mean that Ireland lacks the large single-country migrant populations common in core West-European countries and instead hosts a great variety of migrant groups from across the Muslim world.

This diversity is less marked at the level of organisational élites: while there are many different mosques operating on a small scale for different forms of Islam, the most visible mosques and public organisations, as well as Ireland's two Muslim schools, exist within a single loose network, primarily funded by Gulf monarchs. ~~//<Q> there seems to be a break in the sentence here Tand where~~ the Muslim Brotherhood has had a particular impact within this context. Ireland also hosts the European Council for Fatwa and Research, intended as a pan-European religious authority. The Irish state's confessional organisation allows for an easy integration of those who identify as Muslim and accept religious categorisation within, for example, education; the chapters on state and religion explore what this means in institutional terms, both for Muslim schools and for Muslim children in Catholic schools.

The final chapter, on the lifeworlds of Muslim women in Ireland, represents a valuable counterpart to the official and predominantly male worlds of religious organisations and the Irish state. The sheer variety of experiences—from Irish Salafi converts to Sudanese women underlining their African-ness—makes this a fascinating read.

Among the book's most valuable emphases overall is its insistence on triangulating perspectives (13–14): in particular the various transnational Muslim communities, ethnic and/or ideological, the wider, particularly nation-state, context, and the lives of individuals who may not identify with, or be represented by, either the organisational leaderships or the state's definition of 'Islam'. Dominant Irish discourses on religion presume the existence of 'the' Muslim community, a position which not only homogenises the many varieties of Islam but also subsumes actual individuals identifying as Muslims under the normative discourses of religious élites.

There are occasional problems with spelling and factual details: for example, Cabra not 'Capra' (166, 168); blasphemy legislation was introduced in 2009 (153); one reason why the *hijab* is not such an issue is that older Irish Catholic women, and nuns, still sometimes wear headscarves; something has been lost in translation in the story of Salafi converts celebrating Thanksgiving as an *Irish* family festival (196-7). But these are very minor quibbles. If the team have captured migrant Muslim realities as well as they have caught Irish ones, Muslims in Ireland have every reason to appreciate

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this book.

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