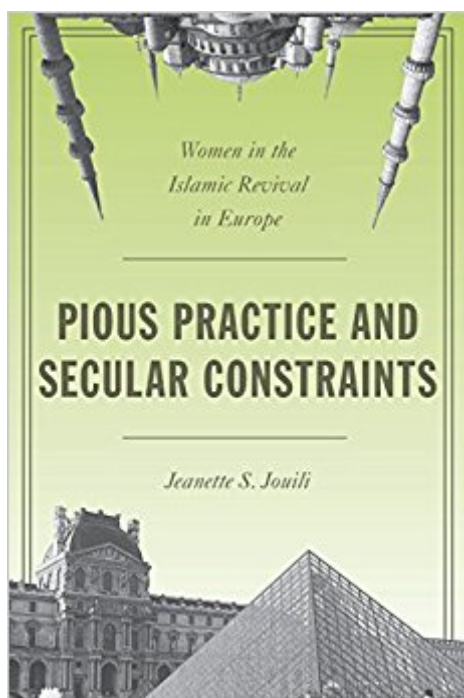


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# Pious Practice And Secular Constraints: Women In The Islamic Revival In Europe



## Synopsis

The visible increase in religious practice among young European-born Muslims has provoked public anxiety. New government regulations seek not only to restrict Islamic practices within the public sphere, but also to shape Muslims', and especially women's, personal conduct. *Pious Practice and Secular Constraints* chronicles the everyday ethical struggles of women active in orthodox and socially conservative Islamic revival circles as they are torn between their quest for a pious lifestyle and their aspirations to counter negative representations of Muslims within the mainstream society. Jeanette S. Jouili conducted fieldwork in France and Germany to investigate how pious Muslim women grapple with religious expression: for example, when to wear a headscarf, where to pray throughout the day, and how to maintain modest interactions between men and women. Her analysis stresses the various ethical dilemmas the women confronted in negotiating these religious duties within a secular public sphere. In conversation with Islamic and Western thinkers, Jouili teases out the important ethical-political implications of these struggles, ultimately arguing that Muslim moral agency, surprisingly reinvigorated rather than hampered by the increasingly hostile climate in Europe, encourages us to think about the contribution of non-secular civic virtues for shaping a pluralist Europe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is an impressive, engaging, and well-written study of ethical practice in a contradictory world. Focusing on pious Muslim women in Europe, Jouili expertly weaves together the voices of these women with a sophisticated theoretical approach that takes the study of ethical practice in a

significant new direction. *Pious Practice and Secular Constraints* is an important contribution to the anthropological study of Islam in the modern world and to anthropology more broadly." (Katherine Pratt Ewing Columbia University, author of *Stolen Honor: Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin*) "This book is a welcome contribution to the anthropology of ethics, diasporic Islam, and feminist studies. Jouili takes her place alongside the likes of Saba Mahmood, Nadia Fadil, and Mayanthi Fernando. As a fascinating source of ethnographic and theoretical material, *Pious Practices and Secular Constraints* can be useful in many disciplines." (Kathleen M. Moore *Journal of Church and State*) "Without doubt, *Pious Practice and Secular Constraints* is the best ethnographic examination of gender and Islamic practice in Western Europe. Jeanette Jouili offers a thought-provoking, nuanced exploration of Muslim piety and ethics, tackling issues of broad interest to those engaged with debates surrounding Muslims in Europe today." (John Bowen Washington University in St. Louis, author of *Can Islam Be French?*) "[The author] offers an erudite contribution to the project of breaking down the problematic dichotomies between faith and rationality and between East and West that persistently vex both scholarship and popular thinking about Islam... This is feminist ethnography at its best, showing how decisions made at the most personal level necessarily involve and implicate the political at the level of community and society. Jeanette Jouili's book will be of great interest to scholars working on theories of modernity, orthodoxy, citizenship, gender, space, and ethics. It will be a superlative teaching aid for classes in anthropology, sociology, women's and gender studies, urban studies, philosophy, comparative religion, and more." (Alisa Perkins *American Ethnologist*) "[T]his is an important resource on Muslim women." Rating: Highly Recommended

—A. B. Al-Deen, *Choice* "Pious Practice and Secular Constraints is a well-written analysis that deserves to be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in contemporary Islam in Europe. It is a well-written, timely addition to the scholarly debate on Islamic piety that offers an abundance of theoretical insights, and it is a must-read for graduate students as well as senior researchers in the field of gender and Islam." (Margaretha A. van Es *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*)

Jeanette S. Jouili is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

This is an excellent and original study that will be of great interest to anyone thinking about Islam in the west, orthodoxy, feminism, or citizenship. As a comparative religion professor at a public university, I recently used this book in a graduate seminar and the students loved it. I would definitely use it again for graduate classes. I am also planning to use this book in upper-level

undergraduate classes. The book uses ethnographic method to advance our understanding of Muslim women in France and Germany, rooting all of its insights and claims in the words of these women, and in their vividly described experiences. The book is one of the very few grounded and trustworthy studies of "orthodox Islam," a religious tradition that is misunderstood in Europe and America. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in this topic, as well as those who wish to understand intersections between Islamic and ancient Greek moral and philosophical traditions.

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