
Two previously published articles plus five new chapters, billed as "ground-breaking" work, attempt to provide a nonjournalistic and "reality-congruent" explanation of contemporary Islamic faith and activism. Editors Sutton and Vertigans (both, Robert Gordon Univ., Aberdeen) confront the stereotypes of Muslims as monolithic, violent, and anti-Western--views often reinforced by "the work of academics such as Huntington, Kramer, Lewis and Pipes." They reject Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilization" thesis by showing that there are different interpretations of Islam, and that Muslims are a diverse people with great contributions to world civilization. Chapter 3 discusses terrorism and suicide attacks in light of Emile Durkheim's sociological explanation of suicide and Max Weber's religious salvation theory. Chapters 2, 4, and 6 critically examine the application of secularization and globalization theories for explaining resurgent Islam, and offer the "established-outsiders" framework for multilayering the understanding of these phenomena--an approach necessary for better execution of the ongoing "war on terror." Chapter 7 summarizes the book by discussing the role and contributions of sociological analysis of current political events. Though effective in demonstrating the usefulness of sociological concepts and theories for better understanding of Islam, the Islamic world, and resurgent Islam, the book does not go beyond familiar ground, despite the book jacket's promises. Summing Up: Recommended. All academic levels/libraries.

-- A. Mahdi, Ohio Wesleyan University