
After the fall of communism, some experts identified Islam as the new enemy. Notwithstanding the validity of such claims, Western countries now have to contend with large, permanent Muslim populations that wish to institutionalize their religious beliefs based on the ideology of equality advocated by these countries. This comparative study of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Great Britain identifies the conditions that facilitated or blocked the institutionalization of Islam by looking for Muslim institutions in seven different spheres. Neither support for Muslim demands nor rejection of them has been unconditional or categorical. Recognition and institutionalization of Islam have been subject to negotiation and compromise, during which both the country and Muslims have changed and accommodated each other's expectations and concerns. Where Muslims have succeeded, it is due to the legal and political frameworks of the country, rather than to their own initiatives. This institutionalization often takes place selectively, receives support from national and international organizations, is more successful when appealing to equality laws rather than minority laws, and involves varied and complex debates, processes, and forces. Though more detailed on the Netherlands than Great Britain and Belgium, the research in this excellent work sets the agenda for further studies of European countries with large Muslim populations. Lower-division undergraduates and above. -- A. Mahdi, Ohio Wesleyan University