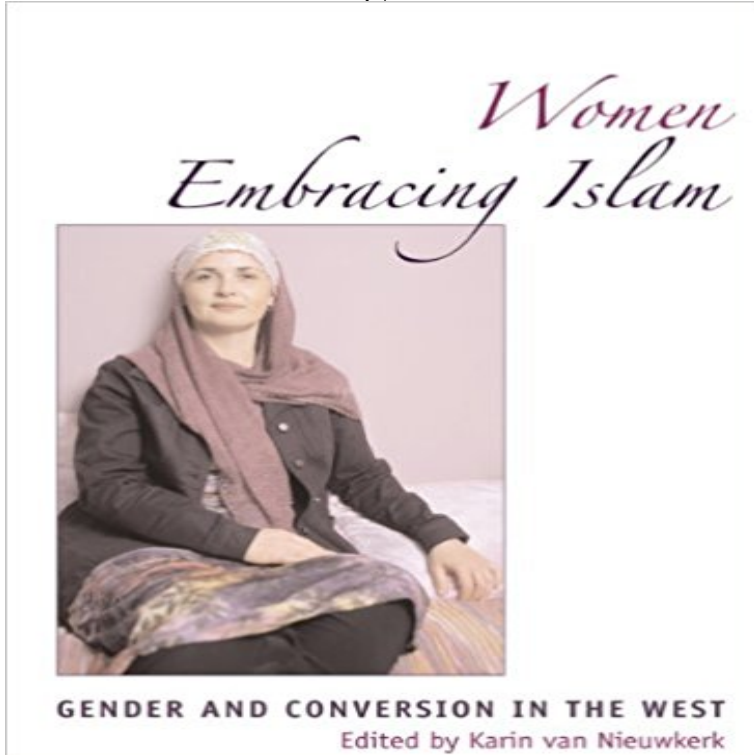


Women Embracing Islam: Gender and Conversion in the West



Many Westerners view Islam as a religion that restricts and subordinates women in both private and public life. Yet a surprising number of women in Western Europe and America are converting to Islam. What attracts these women to a belief system that is markedly different from both Western Christianity and Western secularism? What benefits do they gain by converting, and what are the costs? How do Western women converts live their new Islamic faith, and how does their conversion affect their families and communities? How do women converts transmit Islamic values to their children? These are some of the questions that *Women Embracing Islam* seeks to answer. In this vanguard study of gender and conversion to Islam, leading historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and theologians investigate why non-Muslim women in the United States, several European countries, and South Africa are converting to Islam. Drawing on extensive interviews with female converts, the authors explore the life experiences that lead Western women to adopt Islam, as well as the appeal that various forms of Islam, as well as the Nation of Islam, have for women. The authors find that while no single set of factors can explain why Western women are embracing Islamic faith traditions, some common motivations emerge. These include an attraction to Islam's high regard for family and community, its strict moral and ethical standards, and the rationality and spirituality of its

theology, as well as a disillusionment with Christianity and with the unrestrained sexuality of so much of Western culture.

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