



All American Yemeni Girls: Being Muslim in a Public School

Loukia K. Sarroub

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Based on more than two years of fieldwork conducted in a Yemeni community in southeastern Michigan, this unique study examines Yemeni American girls' attempts to construct and make sense of their identities as Yemenis, Muslims, Americans, daughters of immigrants, teenagers, and high school students. *All American Yemeni Girls* contributes substantially to our understanding of the impact of religion on students attending public schools and the intersecting roles school and religion play in the lives of Yemeni students and their families. Providing a valuable background on the history of Yemen and the migration of Yemeni people to the United States, this is an eye-opening account of a group of people we hear about every day but about whom we know very little.

Through a series of intensive interviews and field observations, Loukia K. Sarroub discovered that the young Muslim women shared moments of optimism and desperation and struggled to reconcile the America they experienced at school with the Yemeni lives they knew at home. Most significant, Sarroub found that they often perceived themselves as failing at being both American and Yemeni. Offering a distinctive analysis of the ways ethnicity, culture, gender, and socioeconomic status complicate lives, Sarroub examines how these students view their roles within American and Yemeni societies, between institutions such as the school and the family, between ethnic and Islamic visions of success in the United States. Sarroub argues that public schools serve as a site of liberation and reservoir of contested hope for students and teachers questioning competing religious and cultural pressures. The final chapter offers a rich and important discussion of how conditions in the United States encourage the rise of extremism and allow it to flourish, raising pressing questions about the role of public education in the post-September 11 world.

All American Yemeni Girls offers a fine-grained and compelling portrait of these young Muslim women and their endeavors to succeed in American society, and it brings us closer to understanding an oft-cited but little researched population.

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