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Sommario/riassunto

"For centuries, the Islamic world has been represented as the 'other' within European identity constructions -- an 'other' perceived to be increasingly at odds with European forms of modernity and culture. With the perceived gap between Islam and Europe widening, leading scholars come together in this book to explore the ways in which Europeans have come to rethink who they are, their historical origins and their future destinations by way of rethinking their experiences with Muslims and Islam (in the plural) -- both inside and outside Europe. In a ground breaking social-scientific study of Islam in Europe, this book goes beyond a descriptive account of the 'problems' of Muslim communities to provide genuine and realistic analyses about perceptions of Islam in the West. Looking at encounters between the two 'worlds' in both historical and contemporary contexts, it bridges these analyses with in-depth case studies from Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and other parts of the European Union. The themes explored in this book are not limited to either the modernist 'integration' or post-modernist 'multiculturalism' models of the study of Islam in the West. Instead, the authors critique and challenge such widely used concepts in examining Europe-Islam encounters as secularism, laicism, gender, integration, assimilation, multiculturalism, colonialism and globalization. They examine how, in the practice of European daily life, Muslim and European understandings of the sacred and the profane, sensitivities, rituals, cuisines, musical traditions, dances, superstitions, patterns of solidarity, work habits, political attitudes, sexual tendencies and the like interact and give birth to hybrid cultural identities. 'Perceptions of Islam in Europe' goes beyond the usual dichotomies of 'clashes of civilizations' and 'cultural conflict' to try to understand the numerous, diverse and multifaceted ways -- some conflictual, some peaceful -- in which cultural exchanges have taken place historically, and which continue to take place, between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds."-- Publisher's description, p. [2] of dust jacket.
