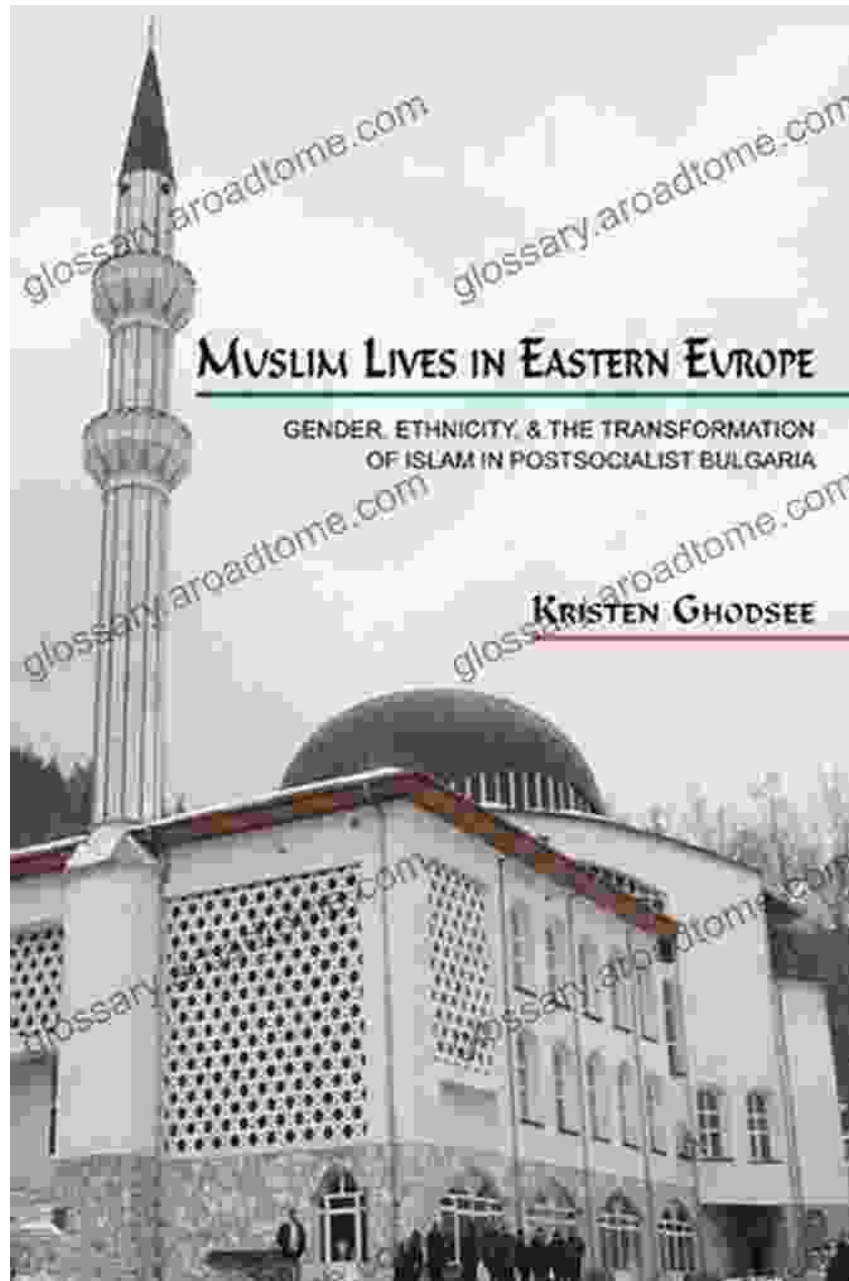
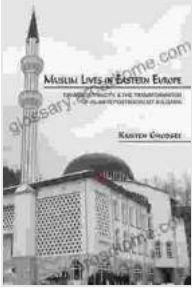


# Gender, Ethnicity, and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria: A Journey of Identity and Faith



Muslim Lives in Eastern Europe: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Transformation of Islam in Postsocialist Bulgaria



## (Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics Book 29)

by Kristen Ghodsee

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 5426 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 280 pages



In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite states, Eastern Europe has undergone a profound transformation. This has included a revival of religious identity and the re-emergence of Islam in countries where it had been suppressed during the communist era.

Bulgaria is one such country. During the socialist period, Islam was largely marginalized and restricted to the ethnic Turkish minority. However, in the post-socialist era, Islam has experienced a resurgence, becoming increasingly visible and integrated into Bulgarian society.

This book examines the transformation of Islam in postsocialist Bulgaria, focusing on the interplay of gender, ethnicity, and faith. It draws on ethnographic research conducted over a period of several years in Bulgaria, including interviews with Muslim women and men from diverse backgrounds.

### **Gender and Islam**

Gender plays a significant role in the transformation of Islam in postsocialist Bulgaria. Muslim women have been at the forefront of this process,

challenging traditional gender roles and asserting their agency within the Muslim community.

In the socialist period, Muslim women were largely confined to the domestic sphere. However, in the post-socialist era, they have gained access to education and employment, and have become increasingly active in public life. This has led to a redefinition of gender roles within the Muslim community.

Muslim women in Bulgaria are also playing a key role in the transmission of Islamic knowledge and values. They are teaching Islamic classes, leading prayers, and organizing community events. This is helping to create a more vibrant and diverse Muslim community in Bulgaria.

## **Ethnicity and Islam**

Ethnicity is another important factor in the transformation of Islam in postsocialist Bulgaria. The majority of Muslims in Bulgaria are of Turkish ethnicity. However, there is also a growing number of Muslim converts from other ethnic groups, such as Bulgarians, Roma, and Albanians.

The relationship between ethnicity and Islam in Bulgaria is complex and fluid. On the one hand, there is a strong sense of ethnic identity among Turkish Muslims. This is due to the fact that they have been historically marginalized and discriminated against. On the other hand, there is also a growing sense of Bulgarian Muslim identity, as more and more Muslims from other ethnic groups convert to Islam.

The interplay of ethnicity and Islam in Bulgaria is creating new challenges and opportunities for the Muslim community. On the one hand, it is leading

to a more diverse and inclusive Muslim community. On the other hand, it is also raising questions about the relationship between ethnicity and religion.

## **Faith and Transformation**

Faith is the central pillar of Islam, and it is also a key factor in the transformation of Islam in postsocialist Bulgaria. Muslims in Bulgaria are rediscovering their faith and finding new ways to express it.

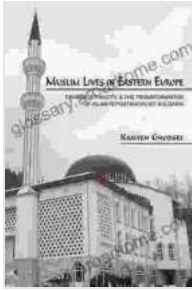
This is due in part to the collapse of communism, which had suppressed religious expression. It is also due to the growing influence of transnational Islamic movements, which are providing new ideas and resources.

The rediscovery of faith is leading to a transformation of Muslim identity in Bulgaria. Muslims are becoming more confident in their faith and are more willing to express it in public. This is leading to a more visible and vibrant Muslim community in Bulgaria.

The transformation of Islam in postsocialist Bulgaria is a complex and ongoing process. It is shaped by the interplay of gender, ethnicity, and faith. This book provides a unique insight into this process, drawing on ethnographic research to explore the challenges and opportunities facing the Muslim community in Bulgaria.

This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the transformation of Islam in Eastern Europe, the role of gender and ethnicity in religious identity, or the relationship between religion and society.

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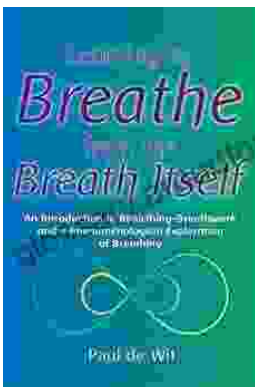
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