Books:
Psychology of Islam and Muslims: An Edited Book with a Positive Approach to Struggle, Spirituality, and Social Justice

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"Toward a Positive Psychology of Islam and Muslims: Struggle, Spirituality, and Social Justice" is an edited book that seeks to provide an alternative to the predominantly negative coverage of Islam and Muslims in Western media (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017), while critically considering the ways in which psychology looks at Islam and the diversity of its 1.9 billion adherents. In accordance with the second (Wong, 2011) and third (Lomas et al., 2020) waves of positive psychology, the compilation uses an interdisciplinary approach incorporating aspects of several social sciences to balance the positives and negatives of human experience with the goal of amplifying perspectives that are lesser known within the discourse related to Islam and Muslims.

As building blocks of the book, spirituality, struggle, and social justice are woven into an appeal for JIHAD (an acronym for each section: **J**ourneys toward Justice, **I**ntersectional Identities, **H**ealth and Healing, **A**cceptance and Allyship, and **D**isrupting Dogma). Given the vilification of the term in non-Muslim rhetoric, the organization of the book was a conscious attempt to reclaim the narrative of the term by using the acronym JIHAD to showcase the individual and collective struggles that Muslims face within Muslim and non-Muslim spaces (Pasha-Zaidi, 2021).

As positive psychology 2.0 has made evident, struggle is a normal part of human existence and can be a conduit for the development of virtues, meaning, growth, and well-being (Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 1996; Wong, 2011). Within an Islamic psychology framework, struggle or *jihad al nafs* plays an essential role in the journey of the soul as it seeks to return to its natural state of purity or *fitrah.* As such, struggle within an Islamic paradigm can be both a cause of mental distress and a pathway to well-being (Rothman, 2015). To build upon this perspective, the book emphasizes a

psychological discipline that incorporates aspects of both Islamic psychology and Muslim psychology, with theoretical differences between these areas conceptualized in the introductory chapter (Pasha-Zaidi, 2021). Additionally, both scientific and esoteric approaches appear in the collection of chapters, thus building a bridge between these divergent pathways to knowledge and meaning making.

While the book provides insights into several Muslim communities around the world, including the Uyghur community in China, American Muslims, and Afghan refugees, of particular interest to readers in the Middle East may be the discussion of the state of research and higher education across the GCC region (Lambert et al., 2021). The authors provide an overview of publications in the Gulf Arab countries from 2010 to 2019 and identify higher education institutions with psychology programs in the region. They also consider the challenges and opportunities within the research landscape. It is a must-read for psychology researchers in the GCC, as well as those looking to understand the state of science from a regional as well as institutional perspective.

In short, "Toward a Positive Psychology of Islam and Muslims" is a book that is geared towards psychology practitioners and researchers who live in Muslim majority contexts, work with Muslim clients or colleagues, and/or engage with Muslim individuals and communities on either a personal or professional level. For avid readers of the MEJPP, this book will undoubtedly add another nuanced look at Muslims in the Middle East and around the world. The book can be purchased here: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-72606-5.

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