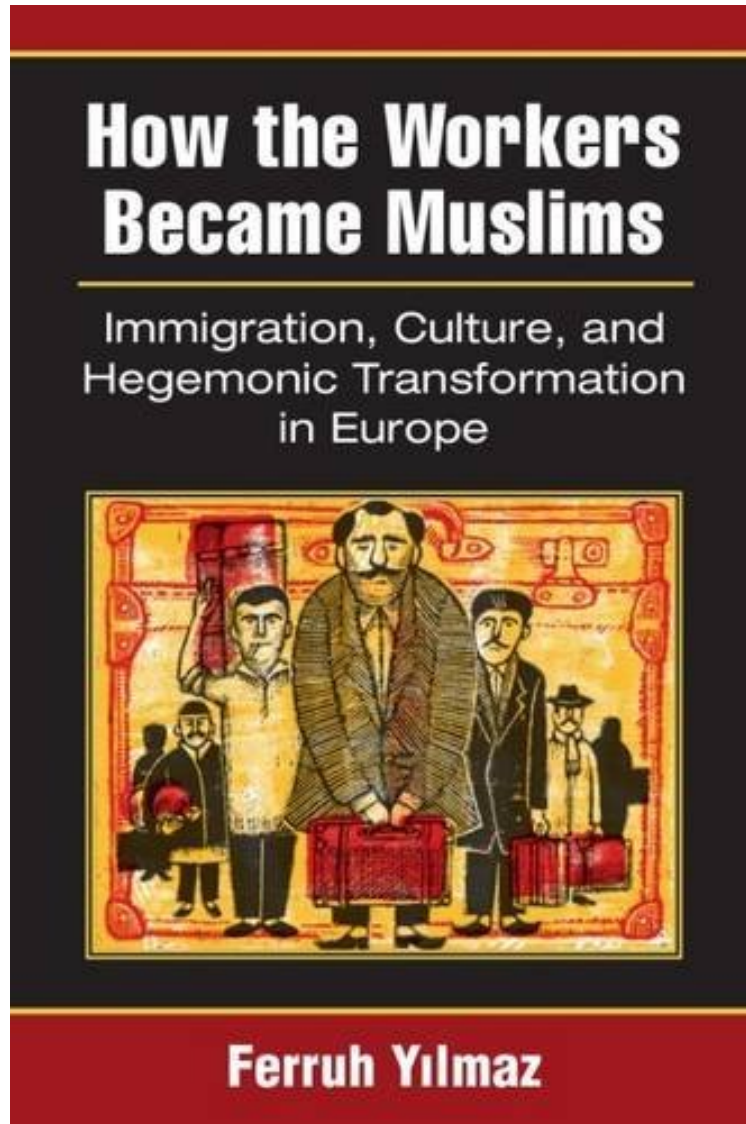


(Free) How the Workers Became Muslims: Immigration, Culture, and Hegemonic Transformation in Europe

# How the Workers Became Muslims: Immigration, Culture, and Hegemonic Transformation in Europe

*Ferruh Yilmaz*

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**Ferruh Yilmaz : How the Workers Became Muslims: Immigration, Culture, and Hegemonic Transformation in Europe** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How the Workers Became Muslims: Immigration, Culture, and Hegemonic Transformation in Europe:

Writing in the beginning of the 1980s, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe explored possibilities for a new socialist strategy to capitalize on the period's fragmented political and social conditions. Two and a half decades later, Ferruh Yilmaz acknowledges that the populist far right-not the socialist movement-has demonstrated greater facility in adopting successful hegemonic strategies along the structural lines Laclau and Mouffe imagined. Right wing hegemonic strategy, Yilmaz argues, has led to the reconfiguration of internal fault lines in European societies. Yilmaz's primary case study is Danish immigration discourse, but his argument contextualizes his study in terms of questions of current concern across Europe, where right wing groups that were long on the fringes of "legitimate" politics have managed to make significant gains with populations typically aligned with the Left. Specifically, Yilmaz argues that socio-political space has been transformed in the last three decades such that group classification has been destabilized to emphasize cultural rather than economic attributes. According to this point-of-view, traditional European social and political cleavages are jettisoned for new "cultural" alliances pulling the political spectrum to the right, against the corrosive presence of Muslim immigrants, whose own social and political variety is flattened into an illusion of alien sameness.

"[A] remarkable study on the ways racism has taken in Western Europe, in particular in relations between Muslim immigrants and Western European states. Yilmaz has made a first-rate intervention on the discussion concerning national, popular, and ethnic identities in the contemporary world. His contribution to contemporary scholarship is outstanding."-Ernesto Laclau, author of *On Populist Reason* "Yilmaz's important book charts the rise of culture as the dominant framework through which we now understand the politics of migration in Europe. He gives a theoretically sophisticated account of the production of the 'Muslim immigrant,' the rise of right-wing populism, and the way 'progressive' values-including those of feminism and gay rights-have come to serve racist and exclusionary ends."-Ben Pitcher, University of Westminster "Guided by an original reformulation of hegemony theory that highlights the transformative effects of media-driven moral panics, this book offers a deep dive into contemporary anti-immigration discourse in Europe. With great insight, Yilmaz unveils the relations of power undergirding the seemingly benign 'common sense' definitions of the immigration 'problem.'"-Rodney Benson, author of *Shaping Immigration News* "In this beautifully written and brilliantly argued book, Ferruh Yilmaz shows how moral panics and political mobilizations against Muslim 'difference' function in western nations to obscure pervasive oppressions of race and class. Drawing deftly on advanced currents in studies of communication and cultural studies, *How the Workers Became Muslims* demonstrates the dynamism of discourse as a social force. Yilmaz reveals how the prevailing categories and classifications that are deployed in political discourse deliberately direct attention toward conflicts over cultural norms and values in order to deflect attention away from material and political conflicts over resources and rights. This book shows how anti-Muslim mobilizations are not merely manifestations of cultural racism and Islamophobia, but rather key tools for the perpetuation of class dominance and the occlusion of class conflicts."-George Lipsitz, author of *How Racism Takes Place* "Dr. Yilmaz's book is a highly original and sophisticated study of public discourse on immigration in Denmark. The argument he puts forward here is significant for its understanding of the social and political changes in Europe in the last two decades. Yilmaz's work sheds important new light on the politics of immigration and is particularly effective in showing how immigration politics has restructured the basic ways in which social and political interests are conceived in Europe. Beyond the issue of immigration, Yilmaz makes important interventions in theoretical and methodological discussions about political discourse and 'ideological hegemony.' This important book will make a real impact and will be widely read, both as a statement about contemporary European politics and as a statement about how to study discourse and political power."-Daniel C. Hallin, University of California-San Diego  
About the Author Ferruh Yilmaz is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Tulane University, USA.