Local Muslim populations in Europe have attracted a lot of public interest in recent decades. One of the crucial questions behind this interest was whether and how Muslims can be European. Mark Sedgwick’s edited book *Making European Muslims* provides one of many possible answers to this question. It offers insights into the religious education and socialisation of young Muslims at home and at school. In other words, it seeks to explain how a Muslim child in Europe learns to become a Muslim. The book is structured into four parts. The first refers to Islamic religious socialisation presented in different contexts—in the family, in the family vis-à-vis school, and in mosque schools. The second part is devoted to government policies and mostly covers issues such as the place of Islam in public schools. The third part provides case studies of Muslim pupils in a variety of Danish public schools in terms of their identity management and performance of religiosity inside and outside school. The last part covers two alternative spaces of Islamic religious socialisation—private Islamic schooling and the rise of neo-orthodox Muslims in Denmark.

The bulk of the research recorded in the book is qualitative and anthropological. It is worth stressing that the book is easy to read. The contributors do not strive to make it sophisticatedly academic and do not hide behind elaborate theories. They focus on what is taking place on the ground, i.e. the daily lives, routines and practices of Muslim children and their parents in differentiated local settings. The contributors spent months in schools, observing classrooms, talking with teachers, pupils and parents. Their thoughts, opinions and experiences make this book unique by providing individual case studies. What is more, the contributing authors have managed to break with the “too normative” approach of perceiving Muslims only as Muslims. It is only through this in-depth and insider view that the contributors were able to dig...
deeper and explain some of their observations, which may seem contradictory or paradoxical to an outsider. For example, the Swedish drive for freedom and independence can be perceived as an actual lack of freedom, as Somali parents feel that they cannot bring up their children as they would like. This paradox has been analysed and explained by R. Haga in her chapter on the injustice perceived by Somali parents and its influence on the raising of their children in Sweden.

The three main actors—pupils, parents and teachers—understand and use Islamic socialisation differently. Muslim pupils play out their Muslimness in a variety of ways—it may be in a “pious” practice of Islam, or a “relaxed” one, and both can occur within or against the mainstream. It is all the matter of the narrative and rationale behind the approach, as L. Gilliam indicates in her study of two Danish classrooms. Muslim pupils developed their Islamic identity in different ways, depending on peer dynamics and the school environment: it was either cool to be a pious Muslim, or, in another case, it was better to be more “street-wise” and so less Muslim. What is more, the borders between what is European and what is Islamic are constantly negotiated and even more often they are blurred and overlap. And parents too perceive the religious socialisation of their children differently. Sometimes it is a way to become good citizens, with Islam being a safe way to avoid all the temptations of modern Western society, or even as a tool of social mobility—as M. Pedersen shows in her case study of Muslim family in the Danish town of Slagelse. Some parents go further, claiming that Islamic socialisation must take place against the mainstream culture or even at the expense of the educational quality of the school. Teachers play the role of providers of norms and knowledge, but they also have to struggle between traditional and modern teaching methods, available curricula, and the needs and wishes of their pupils and parents, as well as the state’s legal and educational framework. They often have to choose between teaching “general” Islam and the Islam practised by their pupils, and they may try to persuade their pupils that Islam is compatible with European values, or encourage them to maintain their Muslim identity in opposition to mainstream culture. This is especially visible in the case of mosque schools, which theoretically have more freedom to design their curricula independently, but at the same time have to accommodate the needs of Muslim pupils and parents. As T. Pels in her study of Dutch mosque schools indicates, there is one additional challenge, i.e. that these schools may differ significantly from mainstream schools not only in terms of curriculum, but also pedagogical style, and might be culturally too distant not only from regular Dutch schools, but also from schools in the countries of the pupils’ parents’ origin.