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MUSLIM & CANADIAN FAMILY LAWS: A COMPARATIVE PRIMER



L. Clark & P. Cross

In Canada we have had an intense three-year long controversial debate regarding the legally recognized application of religious laws in family matters. Though as of September 2005, Ontario no longer allows the use of any religious laws in legally binding arbitration, it became apparent in the course of those three years that confusion and misconceptions abound about Muslim law, specifically with regard to women and family law.

There are many academic books on both Canadian and Muslim family laws, but none which allows for a comparison of the two legal systems. CCMW is very fortunate to have a respected Canadian Islamic scholar and a renowned Canadian feminist lawyer research and write this groundbreaking book. The book is practical and will be useful in educating Muslim women, helpful for social service providers and lawyers, and can be used as a text for universities.

CCMW has also developed short booklets with comparison tables, based on the information provided in this book.

L. Clarke is Professor of Religion and Islam in the Department of Religion, Concordia University. She previously held positions in Persian literature at the University of Pennsylvania and Religion and Islam at Bard College, New York. She has written on Shiism, Sunnite and Shiite *hadith*, law, and women - including the chapter on "Women and Islam" in *Women and Religions Traditions* (Oxford, 2004). Dr. Clarke lives in Montreal with her two children.

P. Cross is a feminist lawyer who has worked on women's equality issues for many years. She has a long background in family law, both as a practicing lawyer and as a law reform advocate. She recently received the YWCA Toronto's Woman of Distinction Award for her work in this area. Pamela lives in rural eastern Ontario with her partner.

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