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'Everywhere is Allah's Place': Islam and the Everyday Life of Somali Women in Melbourne, Australia

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Abstract

This article explores the role of Islam in the lives of Somali women in Melbourne, Australia. It is derived from ethnographic research carried out between April 2000 and August 2001 that focused on displacement, resettlement, and the emotional well-being of Somali refugee women. As refugees, these women are dislocated from familiar life-worlds in Somalia. Yet Islam provides an enduring 'home' that is carried throughout displacement and resettlement. Islam is articulated through women's use and construction of space, daily practices, forms of interaction, and modes of thinking about their lives. Further, Islam offers a meaningful framework of practice and ideology that sustains women during the hardships of exile, displacement and resettlement and in times of emotional distress.

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