



# The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses

*Larbi Sadiki*

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How to be a "democrat" and a "Muslim" at the same time is the subject of ongoing contests. This book maps out the variety of voices contesting "Islam" and "democracy" in the Arab world, insisting that neither category can be taken as unitary or fixed.

In the Arab Middle East, the contest is over "which", "whose", and "how much" democracy takes place within an existing contest over "which", "whose", and "how much" Islam must be given pre-eminence in the political and cultural sphere. There is a "Democracy" and there are "democracies." There is an "Islam" and there are "islams."

Larbi Sadiki deploys the conceptual tools of contemporary Western political philosophy and theory to articulate and defend some provocative theses. The book challenges Eurocentric conceptions of democracy that all-too-frequently display a lack of concern for specificity and context; analyzes and interrogates Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses on democracy; and considers some of the justifications for democracy in the global arena, giving space for self-representation by women and Islamists, among others. Using interviews with Muslims from every social and economic stratum, the book shows how Arabs themselves understand, imagine, and view democracy.

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