CALL FOR CHAPTERS: MUSLIM WOMEN’S DIGITAL GEOGRAPHIES (edited collection)

I would like to announce a call for chapters for an edited collection "Muslim Women’s Digital Geographies". The collection aims to bring together research on Muslim women’s diverse activity on the Internet that may span personal writing, debates in discussion groups, political activism, networking and other forms of interaction with other people and audiences. The collection is interdisciplinary, and welcomes perspectives from all disciplines, be they Islamic studies, social sciences, technology studies, gender studies, fashion studies, linguistics, art, politics and many others.

Scholarship on Muslim women in the recent years has extensively focused on the Islamic dress-code as the main signifier of faith. However, there are many other, under-researched aspects of Muslim women’s lives, including their use of new technologies for religious purposes. Most notably, Muslim women use the Internet as a platform for creation of gender-specific understanding of Islamic scriptures. These alternative readings question the validity of patriarchal, mainstream interpretations that have shaped lives of generations of Muslim women who have long challenged them from within academia (see Wadud, 2001; Barlas, 2006) and locally, in ‘face-to-face’ grassroots contexts such as women’s organisations and mosque study circles (see Afshar, 1998; Mahmood, 2005; Badran, 2006; Bhimji, 2009).

The Internet is increasingly seen as a facilitator of such interpretive practices that can now be conducted through collaboration of Muslim women from different geographic and cultural locations. This geographic and cultural diversity is likely to have an impact in terms of originality of the scriptural readings, as such Internet-based interpretations have the potential to be much more inclusive than previous, localised understandings of Islam. This is particularly important for grassroots women who have been largely excluded from decision-making in Islamic religious structures in spite of the rise of Islamic feminism. As a result, the Internet is perceived by some Muslim women as a platform enabling them to create and publish their interpretations of the Qur’an and the Hadith to many audiences.

The collection *Muslim Women’s Digital Geographies* retains a focus on intersections of the Islamic faith and technology. Exploration of different ways in which Muslim women employ new technologies, in particular the Internet, to develop and emphasise their identity and agency as Muslim women (especially in the context of stereotypical media representations of Islam in the West) will contribute to more complex and sophisticated understanding of their lives and experiences.

The book is expected to be published by Brill in the Women and Gender series. Please contact me if you have any queries regarding publication of a chapter in the book.

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