



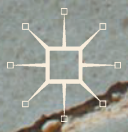
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TROUBLING MUSLIM YOUTH IDENTITIES

Nation, Religion, Gender

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Máiréad Dunne, Naureen Durrani,
Kathleen Fincham and Barbara Crossouard



Troubling Muslim Youth Identities: Nation, Religion, Gender

“A richly detailed cross-national study of the diversity of Muslim youth, which sheds light on the complexity of their attitudes towards national and gender, as well as religious, identities. An extremely valuable resource for anyone seeking to go beyond well-worn clichés about global Islam.”

—**Cécile Laborde**, *Nuffield Professor of Political Theory, University of Oxford*

“A timely work that needs to be read and discussed widely.”

—**Shahnaz Rouse**, *Professor of Sociology, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N.Y. 10708, USA*

“By exploring the pluralities of Muslim youth identity formations in three different regions - South Asia, Middle East and West Africa, and in four contrasting national contexts – Pakistan, Lebanon, Senegal and Nigeria, the authors of this book expose the deep fault lines in collective histories, challenge reified identities, and reflect on what accounts for the “untroubling” of representations of gender in its intersections with other axes of belonging. This book is a must-read for scholars, students and practitioners committed to understanding agency in a dynamic and nuanced manner, from the ground up.”

—**Professor Mariz Tadros**, *Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK*

“In the context of ever escalating stereotypes in public discourse that depict Muslim youths one dimensionally as posing a security problem, this book makes a powerful case for the relevance of more nuanced and grounded assessments of the of the issues faced by young Muslims in particular settings. Its carefully chosen range of case studies and clear style assure that the book holds critical relevance for students, scholars and policy makers seeking to better understand the pressing concerns faced by young men and women across the Muslim world.”

—**Magnus Marsden**, *Professor of Social Anthropology, Director of Sussex Asia Centre, School of Global Studies, University of Sussex*

“Amid widespread increases in extreme violence globally, we are witnessing an uncritical acceptance of dominant narratives about young Muslims and their identity, which homogenise Muslim youth and presents them all as active or potential agents of terror rather than as agents of change.

“Troubling Muslim Youth Identities: Nation, Religion, Gender” by Máiréad Dunne, Naureen Durrani, Kathleen Fincham and Barbara Crossouard comes as a welcome antidote to a narrative that continues to fuel popular misconceptions about Muslim youth. Based on 4 diverse country contexts - Pakistan, Lebanon, Nigeria and Senegal, they illustrate the localness of Muslim youth identity formation but that it also involves “a complex interweaving of the local and the global, as well as the historical and the contemporaneous”.

The authors “multi-layered analysis of the heterogeneous ways that national and local cultures, societies and their education systems represent and produce social identities” is particularly relevant as various actors in the education community grapple with the issue of global citizenship education that is a core element not only of SDG4-Education 2030 and its target 4.7 but of the Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as whole. The book and its focus on “nation, religion and gender and the intersections in their constructions of ‘us’ and ‘others’” is most opportune as it will help challenge the current discourse around global citizenship education that has a tendency towards simplistic prescriptions linked to curriculum, measurement and indicators.”

—Dr Jordan Naidoo, Director, *Division of Education 2030*
Support and Coordination, UNESCO, Paris, France

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Kathleen Fincham · Barbara Crossouard

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For Understanding

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About This Book

Provoked by contemporary concerns about youth alienation and radicalisation, particularly in the Global South, the central interest of this book is the production of Muslim youth identities. In particular, it explores the construction of youth narratives of identity with respect to nation, religion and gender in the four different national contexts of Pakistan, Senegal, Nigeria and Lebanon. As Muslim-majority, post-colonial states with significant youth populations, these offered critical case studies for the exploration of the different grammars of youth identities. The uniqueness of this book lies in its rigorous and detailed attention to the local, situated and contingent ways in which youth articulate their identities and sense of belonging. This provides a counter to the pervasive homogenisation and decontextualisation that typifies many representations of 'youth' within global discourses.

Based on empirical investigations with youth, we trace how youth narratives use difference and the notion of the 'other' in framing their identities. Informed by post-structural and post-colonial theories of discourse and identity production, we explore how youth articulations of difference involve both external and internal 'others'. In each country case we highlight the complex ways that the history of the nation-state and its imagined community continue to inform social formations and remain significant within youth identity narratives. Importantly, we

consider the relationships between national and religious belongings. We highlight how religion, in this case Islam, is used as a significant marker of identity and an axis of difference. However, in our explorations of the intersection of nation and religion, we also show how religious belongings can be recruited to consolidate national and ethnic affiliations in ways that challenge many Western understandings of 'secular' modernity. In each country case, we return to the ways these narratives of identity are persistently inflected by gender. Although largely rendered invisible in hegemonic representations of citizenship, we trace how symbolic representations of the nation and of religious ideals are bound up with particular forms of subordinated, docile femininities. Our analysis traces gender as a key axis of difference in the active production and contestation of female and male youth citizenship identities.

We conclude by reflecting on the importance of affect, belonging and affiliation in the construction of youth narratives of identity as well as highlighting their political and contested nature. In the face of globalising discourses of cosmopolitan citizenship and religious identifications, we illustrate the significance of the local and how this makes particular discourses available for the production of youth identities. Through our four case studies, we demonstrate the continued relevance of the nation to youth as a key structuring influence on their discourses of identity. We further show the ways in which youth's national affiliations are articulated with their religious affiliations, and finally how youth's discourses of nation and religion are consistently and pervasively gendered.

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