

Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politics  
in the Global South and North  
(Religion and Global Politics Series)

*Linda Herrera and Asef Baya, eds.*

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*Being Young and Muslim* is a compilation of narratives that address the cultural politics of Muslim youth from multiple perspectives—youthful lifestyles, rebellion, and accommodations signify the “intricate relationship between the young, youth identities and Islam” (19). The volume is divided into five parts. Each part contains several chapters and contextualizes an aspect associated with being young and Muslim. Most of the chapters in this volume were produced for two international workshops on the “Making of the Muslim Youth” that were presented in Leiden in February 2005 and in The Hague in October 2006 (v). In the first chapter “Introduction: Being Young and Muslim in Neoliberal Times,” Linda Herrera and Asef Bayat present the focal points to be addressed throughout the volume: the approaches and directions Muslim youth will undertake in an era with “multiple constraints and opportunities of being young, Muslim, marginalized, and subjects of social control” (11).

In the first part, all six chapters represent the politics of dissent associated with Muslim youth in different regions. In the second chapter “Muslim Youth and the Claim of Youthfulness,” Asef Bayat analyzes both the political and transformative potentials associated with youth movements in different regions in the Middle East. Whether in Egypt, Iran, or Saudi Arabia, the resistance to “reclaim youthfulness” (32) is manifested at different levels of religiosity and moral authority.

The third chapter by Noorhaidi Hasan, “The Drama of Jihad: The Emergence of Salafi Youth in Indonesia,” demonstrated how Muslim youth in Indonesia resorted to “Laskar’s Jihad mission in the Moluccas” (61). Both *cyber jihad* and *fighting jihad* signified the opportunity to resist subjection and frustration and establish identity and social status. In the fourth chapter, “Moroccan Youth and Political Islam,” Mounia Bennani-Chraïbi drew upon multiple qualitative surveys in Morocco to find the relationship between young Moroccans and Islamist socialization in terms of religious ideals and religious practices. The fifth chapter, “Rebels without a Cause?: A Politics of Deviance in Saudi Arabia” by Abdulla al-Otaibi and Pascal Ménoret, explores the dynamics of *tafhit* and *sahwa* groups in terms of

the socioeconomic and political challenges in Saudi Arabia. In the sixth chapter, "The Battle of the Ages: Contests for Religious Authority in The Gambia" by Maroles Janson, the *Tablighi* ideology, adopted by Gambian youth, manifests how this generation opts to follow Prophet Muhammad's traditions versus the "upholding traditions" (110) Muslim elders follow. The seventh chapter, "Cyber Resistance: Palestinian Youth and Emerging Internet Culture" by Makram Houry-Machool, describes how the technologically skilled Palestinian student body is empowered through the use of online resistance to the Israeli occupation.

In the three chapters of the second part of the volume, contributors depict the lifestyles Muslim youth adopt in order to display their beliefs and dispositions. In the eighth chapter, "Young Egyptians' Quest for Jobs and Justice," Linda Herrera presents the life stories of a young man and woman in Egypt and draws upon their aspirations for justice. In the ninth chapter, "Reaching a Larger World: Muslim Youth and Expanding Circuits of Operation" by AbdouMaliq Simone, participants in Muslim youth meetings in Cameroon and in Bangkok share the misfortunes of poverty, lack of education, and work opportunities. Nevertheless, these groups look at Islam as the *right way* where faith can be the support needed to "change the circumstances within a person finds him- or herself" (157). The tenth chapter, "Being Young, Muslim, and American in Brooklyn" by Moustafa Bayoumi, draws upon how Muslim youth use *dawah* to present Islam positively to the non-Muslim world. Their role as the "vanguard of Islam in the United States" (173) exceeds the responsibility of inviting non-Muslims to Islam.

The aspect of striving for citizenship is represented in the three chapters of the volume's third part. In the eleventh chapter, "Also the School Is a Temple: Republicanism, Imagined Transnational Spaces, and the Schooling of Muslim Youth in France," André Elias Mazawi presents how Muslim youth schools in France impose multiple debates within the republic's political and social realms. In chapter 12, "Avoiding 'Youthfulness?': Young Muslims Negotiating Gender and Citizenship in France and Germany," Schirin Amir-Moazami addresses the challenges of practicing Islam in Europe, especially by young female Muslims. In chapter 13, "Struggles over Defining the Moral City: The Problem Called 'Youth' in Urban Iran," Azam Khatam evaluates the Islamization policies of the Iranian state and the failure associated with its implementation, especially with the urban youth.

The four chapters in the fourth part explore Muslim youth identities. In chapter 14, "Securing Futures: Youth, Generation, and Muslim Identities in Niger," Adeline Masquelier explains how Muslim youth in Niger see themselves as part of a global Muslim community, "inspired by the same Quranic message" (230). It is the transformation from religiosity to religious identity that marks the generational changes. In chapter 15, "'Rasta' Sufis and Muslim Youth in Mali," Benjamin F. Soares also explores the new trends followed by young Muslims in Mali, the self-styled Sufis. For them, it is the ethical behavior that counts, not just merely secular attitudes and directions. In chapter 16, "Performance, Politics, and Visceral Transformation: Post Islamist Youth in Turkey," Ayşe Saktanber explores how Muslim youth in Turkey face cultural dilemmas within Turkey's changing political and social context. This has led to the shift of identity of Islamist youth due to "the complex relationships between the specific modalities of youth" and "the changing interpretations of both religion and secularism" (260). In chapter 17, "Negotiating with Modernity: Young Women and Sexuality in Iran," Fatmeh Sadeghi presents multiple interpretations for the social and political changes in the younger generation's identity in Iran, especially the identities of young women.

The authors of the four chapters of the last part, expand on how the musical politics contribute to forms of communication and expression that Muslim youth apply in their everyday life. In chapter 18, "Fun^Da^Mental's 'Jihad Rap,'" Ted Sedenburg not only presents the historical, political, and social facets behind the origin of the Fun^Da^Mental's Jihad Rap in Britain, but also connects the messages and concerns expressed to the Muslim youth identity in Britain in particular, and also youth elsewhere. In chapter 19, "Maroc-Hop: Music and Youth Identities in the Netherlands," Miriam Gazzah portrays the Maroc-Hop and Shaabi music as a means for the Dutch Moroccan youth to voice their disappointment with the Dutch society and express their identities in local contexts. In chapter 20, "Heavy Metal in the Middle East: New Urban Spaces in a Translocal Underground," Pierre Hecker's overview of the emergence of Heavy Metal among Muslim youth focuses on the social relationships that connects different religions as well as different cultures. In chapter 21, "Music VCDs and the New Generation: Negotiating Youth, Femininity, and Islam in Indonesia," Suzanne Naafs analyzes the impact music video compact disks (VCDs) have on Muslim youth in terms of immoral behavior and religious values, especially for young women.

The concluding chapter recaptures the overall theme of the volume. The use of empirical studies with Muslim youth from both the global North and global South gave the book a comprehensive and significant coverage. The editors are successful in their presentation and in the selection of well-articulated case studies.

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