

The Religious Identity of Young Muslim
Women in Berlin

Muslim Minorities

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The Religious Identity of Young Muslim Women in Berlin

An Ethnographic Study

By

Synnøve K.N. Bendixsen



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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND SOURCES

Transliteration of Islamic vocabulary in an English publication on Muslims in Germany is a matter of discussion as there are no fixed standards for an “Islamic-American English” or an “Islamic German” yet.

I have chosen to not make use of computer-generated Arabic script. This is because the women in this book mostly made use of the German or English spelling of the Arabic words. Islamic-American English – or rather Islamic-German – is part of how Islam is practiced and lived in Germany. In addition, I use both Arabic terms and English translations of Arabic terms. Translations (such as sometimes using God instead of Allah) is about making the text more accessible and avoiding constructing a radical difference.

Through this practice I also seek to avoid an unnecessary and unhealthy Orientalizing of the youth and the Islamic world. Further, there is a wide range of Arabic words that are by now a familiar presence in English publications.¹

As there continues to be a divergence in how Arabic words are spelled in the English and German, I follow the standards suggested by Metcalf (*Making Muslim Space in North America*, 1996) in her work on transliteration, though with some exceptions where I have preferred a more colloquial form. The main difference, however, is that I have opted to italicize the Arabic (as well as the German and Turkish) terms with the exception of some frequently used terms, such as Allah and imam. I also italicize German words and expressions. These terms have a bracketed translation the first time they occur in the text and some words will be translated more than once in the text to facilitate comprehension.

German organizations are referred to by their German acronyms in the text.

When I quote the writings of other authors, I follow their style of spelling and italics. I present the plural forms of Arabic terms either in American colloquial forms or standard Arabic.

There is a short overview of Muslim organizations and mosques in Germany and Berlin in appendix I. The main purpose is to situate the movements in this book within the larger Islamic field in Germany.

¹ For a longer discussion on the use of English versus Arabic terms, see Metcalf (1996:1–3).