

capital, and its rural entrepreneurs and dwellers.

Trying to put the essence of the book into one sentence, I might follow Henry and Pollard's concluding chapter of the book, by saying that it makes a concrete attempt to put forward a theoretically informed assessment of the cluster notion. The book provides an assessment across a variety of domains in which this notion has been used while showing and criticizing, at the same time, its added value to the literature of spatial agglomeration and regional development. The book tries to put clusters in their place.

Altogether, scholars and students of economic geography, particularly on issues of local and regional development, will appreciate the appearance of this book. It is a well-knit package of papers dealing with an important spatial tool of the current development process in the capitalist economic space. The editors have done a spectacular job in putting together some of the best-known and widely read scholars into one scholarly basket, thus providing those interested in the subject an in-depth view of the definitions, concepts, phenomena, underlying processes and issues central to the current debates on cluster theory. It enables the readers to identify and reflect on the factors, relations and justifications that together constitute the core of the theory of clusters. My students and I are going to enjoy this book.

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GEOGRAPHIES OF MUSLIM WOMEN, GENDER, RELIGION AND SPACE, Edited by Ghazi-Walid Falah and Nagel, Caroline. New York, London: The Guilford Press, 2005.

In recent years, and mainly following the 9/11 attack and its political consequences, different themes and categories regarding "Muslims" have re-emerged in the Western academic and public discourse, such as "Muslim women", human rights, and democracy in Arab and Muslim countries. Interestingly, the general hypothesis of this discourse is the link between these issues and terror. It appears that the category of "Muslim Women" has received a great deal of attention, stemming from the belief that improving the status of Muslim women in these countries will decrease "terror". This book, *Geographies of Muslim Women, Gender, Religion and Space*, is an example of the flourishing literature on Muslim societies.

The aim of this edited book is "to bring issues of space and place to the forefront of accounts on Muslim Women's lived experience in a variety of regional contexts" (Nagel, p. 5). It examines the ways in which discourses and practices of religion, economics and politics shape the space of Muslim women.

Obviously, "Muslim women" is an epistemologically problematic category since it does not adequately represent the diversity and heterogeneity of Muslim women

in various Muslim communities. Even though the authors of this book argue in the introduction that they are aware of this problematic, it is still a reductionist and essentialist category that treats Muslim women as one static, homogenous entity.

This book presents the spatial experience of women through broad disciplines, such as cultural geography, political geography, development studies and historical geography. The book is composed of three main parts and twelve chapters. The first part, "Gender, Development, and Religion", deals with global and national development and its impacts on the accessibility of different resources to women, principally work and education. Moreover, the authors of the four chapters of the first part examine the intersections between gender relations and development processes as they are mediated by Islamic practices and discourses. The second part, "Geographies of Mobility", includes three chapters, and focuses on the spatial mobility and migration of Muslim women in different regions. This part "complicate[s] the view of migrants as individual, national, economic actors by focusing on the ways in which gender relations, political structures, cultural ideologies, and economic processes intersect to shape migration flows and experiences" (p. 9). The third part, "Discourse, Representation, and the Contestation of Space", analyzes the representation of Islam, gender, and Muslim women in the Western media and by governmental officials and Muslim women themselves.

In what follows I present a more detailed review of some of the book chapters which are closely related in my mind to the main themes of the book.

Naheed Aaftaab challenges the representation of Afghan women in the West as victims, which formed part of the legitimization of the American military intervention in Afghanistan. She examines the changing spaces and lives of women after the fall of the Taliban regime by focusing on the experiences of Afghan women in the educational system, as part of the public sphere. She argues that education can have a dual meaning; it can be alternative space for activity and women's identity, and it can be a place that supports and strengthens the roles of women in the home by training them to be better mothers and wives. In the case of Afghan women, she argues, the school is a "constructed social space" that becomes a site of teaching and transferring social roles for future members of society, and a site where existing power relations are maintained. The changes that took place in the educational system have not brought freedom of mobility to Afghans women, but it does provide them with a relative improvement in their ability to maneuver and navigate their movement in the public space. At the end of her chapter she asks for reconsideration and greater understanding of local contexts rather than the mere representation of women as "victims" and that "local utility and preferences" be taken into account (p. 61).

Susanne Steinmann's article, entitled "Changing Identities and Changing Spaces in Village Landscapes of Settled Pastoralists in Eastern Morocco", focuses on the development of new cultural identities as a result of social, economic and historical changes in Eastern Morocco. Her case study focuses on two settled villages whose

inhabitants shifted from pastoralist to agricultural activities. The changes in their way of life caused the dichotomy of public and private space to become more flexible and the spatial practices of women to change without posing challenges or resistance to cultural and social norms. In one of the villages the women increased their spatial practices by expanding the private sphere and working in the gardens of their homes. In the second case, the absence of men from the home increased the economic independence of women.

In her chapter, "Moral Geographies and Women's Freedom, Rethinking Freedom Discourse in the Moroccan Context", Amy Freeman examines the mobility and freedom of Moroccan women living in Morocco and France. She argues that their mobility is influenced by moral codes of behavior, "moral geographies", which format their mobility and their spatial experiences. Freeman found that the mobility and spatial experiences of these women, as well as their ideas regarding freedom, varied and are dependant on moral geographies, the post-colonial context, family status and the socio-economic context. She argues that, "While there are significant differences between Najia, Halima, and Latifa's experiences of financial situations – they are all equally aware of the different moral geographies regulating their lives and the need to modify their behavior accordingly" (p. 168). The writer criticizes the Western conception of Muslim women as a homogeneous group whose freedom of mobility is restricted more than that of Western women. Moreover, she criticizes the Western view of Arab and Muslim women as oppressed and in need of the liberal west for their liberation. This discourse about the status of women and their bodies thus becomes political issues for colonial, global and local powers. One result of this discourse is a strengthened need to control women and their movement at the national level.

In his chapter, "Contesting Space, Gendered Discourse and Labor among Lebanese Women", Malek Abisaab presents the spatial resistance of Lebanese women to the binary of private and public spaces and their challenge to gendered hierarchies of power. Abisaab presents the case of Shi'ia Muslim women who worked in a tobacco factory, a site of resistance for the women, in southern Lebanon in the 1970, and who struggled for permanent jobs and improved working conditions in this factory. These women challenged the Arab and Muslim cultures, which position women in the private (domestic) space.

In summary, this is an interesting and timely book that covers diverse topics, themes, regional contexts, and research approaches that provide, as Caroline Nagel writes in her introduction, "some indication of the myriad challenges, dilemmas, and opportunities faced by Muslim women today" (p. 12).

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