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Introduction

Muslim pilgrimage through the lens of women's new mobilities

Marjo Buitelaar, Manja Stephan-Emmrich* and
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Muslim pilgrimage, gender, mobility

Travel to Arab countries is increasing more rapidly than travel to any other region of the world; the annual average growth is 10%. A significant part of this growth is due to the rising popularity of pilgrimage to Mecca. Every year, 300–330 million Muslims visit Mecca to perform hajj or *umra*. Hajj is the compulsory pilgrimage that every able Muslim should perform once in a lifetime, and *umra* is the 'minor' or voluntary pilgrimage (Vukonić 2010, 33). Through hajj and *umra* performance, pilgrims connect to a shared Islamic past and an imagined spiritual homeland, thus locating themselves ritually, symbolically and emotionally in and across 'cartographies of belief, practice, and identity' (Mc Loughlin 2015, 43). By promoting feelings of belonging to the *umma*, the community of believers, pilgrimage to Mecca thus plays an important role in Muslim homemaking and crossing boundaries on different levels, from the local to trans-local and global (Tweed 2006).

Although in practice hajj and *umra* pilgrims engage in numerous unscripted activities, both the compulsory and the voluntary pilgrimage to Mecca are strongly scripted ritual events. Hajj can only be performed between the 8th and the 12th day of Dhu al-ḥijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar. Before commencing the hajj rites in and outside Mecca, pilgrims take off their everyday clothes to enter the state of *iḥrām* or consecration. Whilst in *iḥrām*, they are not allowed to shave, cut their nails or hair, or use perfumed toiletries. Sexual intercourse is also prohibited, as is the killing of animals. The rites in Mecca begin with the *tawāf*, the sevenfold circumambulation of the Ka'ba, the cubic building that represents God's house on earth in the centre of the court of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. After having performed the *tawāf*, pilgrims drink water from the well Zamzam and then walk (briskly in case of being male) back and forth seven times between the two hillocks of Safa and Marwa. This rite is called *sa'y*. It commemorates the plight of Hajar as she ran through the desert to find water for her son Ishmael after having been abandoned by her husband

* Reflecting equal contribution and responsibility, the order of author names in the introduction and that of editor names for the volume as a whole is purely alphabetical.

the prophet Ibrahim, known as Abraham in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Pilgrims then head to the hill of Arafat, which is located 25 kilometres outside Mecca. Arafat is where the prophet Muhammed is believed to have delivered his last sermon. At Arafat they meditate and pray for forgiveness of their sins from noon to sunset, the so-called rite of *wuqūf*. From Arafat, they go to the plain of Muzdalifa, where they collect pebbles for the *ramy al-jamarāt*, the ‘pelting of the pillars’, which takes place during the following days when they throw the pebbles at the three pillars in Mina, a rite that symbolizes the stoning of Satan. The first round of stoning marks the end of the hajj proper, marked by cutting a lock of hair (for women) or completely shaving off one’s hair (for men). This is followed by sacrificing an animal, usually a sheep. Once the sacrificial rite is completed the pilgrims return to Mecca. They can choose to travel back to the *jamarāt* for further stoning or to stay in Mecca. Before leaving the city to go home or travel onwards to Medina to visit the grave of the prophet Muhammad, they perform a ‘farewell’ umra. The umra ritual consists of doing the *tawāf* and the *sa’y*. The umra ritual is thus an intrinsic part of hajj, but it can also be performed on its own at any time of the year outside the hajj season. While the hajj lasts five days, an umra can be completed within two hours, as only the rites in Mecca are performed.

Usually much less scripted than hajj and umra is a third type of Muslim pilgrimage, which is known as *ziyāra*, an Arabic term meaning ‘visit’ or ‘visitation’ (cf. e.g. Arjana 2017). *Ziyāra* refers to visits to the shrines of local saints or generally recognized important figures in Islamic historiography. Muslim understandings of *ziyāra* differ from region to region. While most Muslims would recognize visiting the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem or the tomb of the prophet Muhammad in Medina as recommendable, for Shi’i Muslims *ziyāra* to the tombs of family members and companions of the prophet Muhammad, as well as visits to the shrines of *Imāmzādah*, descendants of Shi’i Imams, are considered nearly if not equally valuable as visiting Medina or Jerusalem. In a different vein, and even more closely related to the pilgrimage to Mecca, in some parts of the world *ziyāra* practices at certain local saint shrines occur specifically during the hajj season, functioning as ‘hajj of the poor’, a substitute pilgrimage for those who cannot afford to perform hajj (cf. Al-Ajarma 2020; Delage 2018, 70). In some cases, having performed a substitute pilgrimage a number of times is considered equal to having performed hajj.

The existing research on all three forms of Muslim pilgrimage provides valuable case studies for theorization in the fields of anthropology, religion studies, global history and area studies; in various studies a wide range of topics is addressed such as the intertwining of pilgrimage and other forms of Muslim travel with politics and economy (Rahimi and Eshaghi 2019; Bianchi 2004; Eickelman and Piscatori 1990), the spatial dimension of saint-hood (Stauth and Schielke 2008) and the globality of Muslim networks (Freitag and von Oppen 2010; Cooke and Lawrence 2005).

While there is a considerable body of historical studies on hajj (cf. e.g. Can, forthcoming; Riyad 2017; Green 2015; Kane 2015; Slight 2015; Faroqi 2014; Tagliacozzo 2013; McMillan 2011; Wheeler 2006; Peters 1994) pilgrimage to Mecca has only recently become the subject of in-depth ethnographic research (cf. Al-Ajarma 2020; McLoughlin 2015, 2013, 2010, 2009a, 2009b; Saghi 2010). An obvious reason for this is that for non-Muslims Mecca is forbidden territory. Non-Muslim anthropologists tend to face less restrictions in getting access to local saint shrines. *Ziyāra* practices have therefore received much more attention than hajj and umra performances (cf. Rahimi and Eshaghi 2019; Laksana 2014; Stauth and Schielke 2008; Werbner 2003; Reysoo 1991; Eickelman 1976). As a result of this imbalance, insights in the local embeddedness of present-day hajj and umra practices have, as yet, not gained much prominence in the anthropology of pilgrimage. A first aim of this book is to provide the anthropological approach to hajj studies a stronger anchorage in pilgrimage studies. Therefore, most contributions focus on scripted and unscripted hajj and umra practices.

More specifically, the focus in this volume is on the views and practices of female pilgrims. Research on Muslim pilgrimage, particularly that on Meccan pilgrimage, lacks a systematic gender perspective. In the existing body of literature, only a few book chapters or articles offer an anthropological, sociological or religious studies perspective on gendered dimensions of Muslim pilgrimage (Sayeed 2016; Werbner 2015; Jaschok and Jingjun 2014; Honarpisheh 2013; Cooper 2012; Tapper 1990; Young 1990; Mernissi 1977). Although these works provide relevant insights into the gendered dimensions of pilgrimage and how these are embedded in broader socio-religious contexts, in-depth investigation of Muslim pilgrimage practices with a systematic gender optic is, as yet, lacking.

This is not the case for pilgrimage studies in more general terms. A number of studies have dealt with pilgrimage from a gender studies perspective. These studies predominantly deal with the Christian tradition, however (see e.g., Jansen and Notermans 2012; Samson 2012; Baker 2010; Derks 2009). The pilgrimage experiences of Muslim women are therefore largely missing in these studies. To remedy this lacuna, the contributions in this book investigate various gendered dimensions of Muslim pilgrimage by putting the perspective of women centre stage. All contributors address the issue of how female Muslim pilgrims are positioned and position themselves in multiple intersecting cultural and social discourses and contexts. Gratefully building on and aiming to contribute to the gendered study of pilgrimage in the wider field of pilgrimage studies (see e.g., Fedele 2013; Jansen and Notermans 2012; Samson 2012; Baker 2010; Derks 2009; Hermkens et al. 2009; Dubisch 1995), our volume explores how the religious imagination, experiences and identity of female Muslim pilgrims are informed by, and, in turn, inform, their agency, their socio-economic and political position, and their various senses of belonging.

To shed light on the interface between the religious and secular worlds that the women inhabit whose pilgrimage practices we study, we combine a gender perspective with a mobilities approach (cf. Coleman and Eade 2004). Approaching hajj, umra and *ziyāra* as meaningful and potentially transformative movements, the focus is on the agency of women as mobile actors who appropriate, re-negotiate and re-create authoritative ways of performing and interpreting pilgrimage traditions. To this end, we study the interplay between women's physical and social mobility to ask what opportunities female pilgrims see for themselves and where they experience social, cultural, political and other restraints in the various goals they pursue by performing pilgrimage. Thus we address connections between pilgrimage and embodied spirituality, economic and consumption patterns, politics, the nexus between the sacred and the mundane, and the relationship between extra-ordinary space and time and everyday life-worlds.

The case studies in this volume address these connections in different ways. Most chapters concern women's hajj practices (Al-Ajarma, Buitelaar, Fewkes, Karić, Kenny, Kadrouch-Outmany & Buitelaar and Van Leeuwen). Two chapters complement this key area by investigating umra (Lücking, Thimm). The comparative perspective of female participation in all three modalities of Muslim pilgrimage is enriched by the focus on *ziyāra* in yet another contribution (Rahbari). The various chapters that make up the volume are linked and speak to each other by making Muslim women and girls visible in Muslim pilgrimage and studying their experiences of being mobile through a gender lens.

This is not only a descriptive or empirical task but ties in with epistemological questions of knowledge production on Muslim pilgrimage. The contributions of Jacqueline Fewkes and Dženita Karić draw attention to the fact that historical source texts are mostly written and interpreted by men. As a result, female voices have predominantly been absent in Muslim pilgrimage accounts. The under-representation of women's experiences in written hajj narratives does not necessarily imply, however, that women have not participated in hajj performances. This calls for reflection on how to retrieve voices that seem to be absent in textual sources. Who is absent and why? Gender here intersects with other social categories of Muslims who similarly occupy marginalized positions in historical analyses and writings. For example, although a few historical testimonies exist concerning elite or aristocratic women's hajj journeys (e.g. Brack 2011; Mahallati 2011; Allen 2010; Lambert-Hurley 2008; Johnson 2000), these accounts do not capture the perspective of hajj performances by women of lower strata in society.

Tracing and studying the voices of female pilgrims appear all the more relevant today, as the rapid pace of globalization of hajj is accompanied by a feminization of transnational mobility that brings Mecca increasingly within reach of women from various social positions. Taking the empirical research void and the epistemological reflection as a starting point, the

main objective of this book is to reconfigure our understanding of Muslim pilgrimage through the lens of women's new mobilities. Thus, in the remainder of this introductory chapter we reflect on how combining a gender perspective and a mobilities approach can generate new findings and insights in the field of Muslim pilgrimage studies in particular and contribute to pilgrimage research and Muslim travel and mobility studies in general.

Globalization and women's new mobilities

The explosive growth of the pilgrimage to Mecca is a distinctively Muslim contribution to globalization with far-reaching political, economic and social ramifications (Bianchi 2013). Integrated into local and global tourism industries, both Meccan and local forms of pilgrimage are absorbed by market-driven economies and Islamic consumerism (Thimm 2017; Stephan-Emmrich and Mirzoev 2016; McLoughlin 2015). As Simon Coleman and John Eade write in their introduction to *Pilgrimage and Political Economy: Translating the Sacred*, this raises questions concerning what constitutes religion, what economic activity and what their interrelationship is in the wider landscape of networks, mobility, infrastructure and governance that shapes the practices at pilgrim sites (Coleman and Eade 2018, 3–4). Or, in the words of Ian Reader (2014, 8), it calls for studying how pilgrimages 'operate not only in the marketplace but through it'.

In this volume, Mirjam Lücking investigates the nexus between the marketplace and religious tourism in the activities of Muslim and Christian Indonesian pilgrims as they make a stop-over in Jerusalem on their way to Mecca to perform umra. Lücking demonstrates that religious consumerism in the form of buying souvenirs is typically an activity that women engage in. One reason for this is that in Javanese patterns of gender relations women play an important role in financial transactions. Money is considered to be impure, and, according to Javanese conceptions of femininity, so are women. For Indonesian Muslim women, shopping whilst on pilgrimage also carries religious connotations – the goods they purchase acquire extra value because buying them supposedly supports Palestinians, whom they conceive of as their 'Muslim brothers and sisters'.

In many parts of the Muslim world, Islamic consumerism has been made possible by the emergence of new Muslim urban middle classes (McLoughlin 2015; Werbner 2015). Members of these new Muslim middle classes are the main actors in the commodification and marketization of Meccan pilgrimage and particular local pilgrimage sites (Mols and Buiteelaar 2015; Reader 2014). Notably, in some countries, most strikingly in parts of Asia, transnational labour migration, mobile entrepreneurship and new urban middle-class religiosities are highly feminized (Frisk 2009; Stivens 1998). By shifting the regional focus to Africa, in this volume Erin Kenny discusses the potential of what Mario Katić (2018) coined as 'pilgrimage capital' for female entrepreneurs in Guinea, West Africa. These

women's status as pilgrims enhances how others come to respect and patronize their business. Kenny sketches how upon return from Mecca female Guinean pilgrims become important brokers of knowledge about Islamic fashion styles. She demonstrates how this enables these women to acquire the necessary resources to open up Islamic fashion businesses. In turn, the profits made allow the female entrepreneurs to engage in repetitive pilgrimage, thus expanding both their economic and religious capital.

To contextualize the interlinkages between Muslim pilgrimage and the feminization of the marketplace and globalization, social and infrastructural developments on both local and global scales must be taken into account. Within the broader field of mobility studies, mobility is understood as representing the generally shared notion that today's world is in constant flux, due to, for instance, technical development, wide arrays of infrastructure and digital communication (Fábos and Isotalo 2014). This current mobile world is characterized by increasingly dense and rapid movements of people, objects, narratives, symbols and representations. Since people have always been mobile, on the descriptive level mobility is obviously not a new phenomenon. Scholarly attention and an analytical approach to mobility, however, have developed only relatively recently. Across disciplines such as anthropology, geography, history, sociology or transportation research, approaching social phenomena through the lens of movement – either theoretically or empirically framed – has emerged as the 'new mobilities paradigm' or 'mobility turn' (see Hannam et al. 2006). Rather than the additive classification of different forms of movement under one umbrella term, what characterizes the approach in current mobilities studies is that it grasps the relations between human mobility, technology and transportation, bringing together technical development, infrastructure, objects and human movement (Endres et al. 2016, 1).

The importance of the mobility turn for developing new understandings of pilgrimage finds increasing resonance in research (Scriven 2014). In line with the emphasis in mobilities studies on the dialectic relationship between movement and place-making, in this volume we trace the spatial and temporal dimensions of Muslim women's pilgrimage as a multifaceted socio-cultural practice. Our focus is therefore not restricted to the geography of pilgrimage. We understand mobility as a relation: an orientation to one's self, to others and to the world (Adey 2017, XV). Our emphasis on the embodied, social aspects of Muslim women's mobility resonates with Bajc, Coleman and Eade (2007, 321), who state that pilgrimage may inspire us to rethink the 'complex interplay of forces involved in its emplacement within, and flows through, numerous social and cultural contexts'. While concepts like 'flow' and 'fluidity' invite thinking about Muslim pilgrimage in terms of global mobility, the specifics of the sacred, spiritual and moral geographies in which women's pilgrimage practices and experiences are embedded underline the meaningful or 'momentous' nature of this kind of journey (Salazar 2018). Just as mobility is hardly ever an end in itself (Salazar 2018,

6), in pilgrimage performance the outer physical and inner spiritual or emotional journey intertwine in a dynamic process that defines and shapes the people involved, reworks their subjectivities and transforms the meanings of place (Salazar 2018, 6; Scriven 2014).

‘Mobility’ is not merely a descriptive term, but also has a prescriptive dimension that either explicitly or implicitly conveys normative views on who is expected to be mobile in what ways and to which purposes. The rapidly increasing scope and density of flows of people, ideas and goods in today’s globalized world not only influence the desires of people for and actual practices of moving, but also inform their conceptions and ideologies about the purposes and effects of mobility. As a result of people’s new mobilities, social representations of time and space are modified, and new conceptions of im/mobility emerge (e.g. Salazar 2018; Adey 2017).

For instance, a so-called ‘limit-form’ representation of space and time, which became dominant with modernity in terms of bounded entities that one leaves behind as one moves from one place or phase to the next, is currently shifting towards a more ‘flow-form’ conception of movement, in which temporal and spatial boundaries are viewed as fluid and porous. Mobility no longer necessarily entails a clear-cut rupture or transition from one stage or territory to another but is often represented as a continual and gradual change, a moving back and forth between here and there, and between past, present and future (Mincke 2016, 16). In terms of life course expectations, rather than conceiving of one’s life as going through a limited number of transitions between fairly stable time-space constellations, particularly among younger generations, ‘being on the move’ seems to have become a mode of living. Such lifestyle developments have significant implications on people’s travel practices.

Modern technology has had enduring consequences on Muslim communities and their forms of travelling during the era of colonial empires such as the introduction of the steamship (Tagliacozzo 2016; Green 2015) or long-distance railways (Kane 2015). The contribution by Richard van Leeuwen in this volume zooms in on the impact on women’s pilgrimage practices of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernization processes. Van Leeuwen discusses the writings on hajj by Bint al-Shāṭi’ (1913–1998), who profited from the *nahḍa* or ‘Awakening Movement’ to become one of the first Egyptian female scholars. Central to the chapter’s argument is how this reformist movement that arose in response to new technology and new forms of knowledge has influenced the interpretations of hajj by intellectuals like Bint al-Shāṭi’. Van Leeuwen illustrates the connection between new modes of transportation and the social conditions of feminized mobility by presenting translated quotations from the original Arabic text in which Bint al-Shāṭi’ reflects, for instance, on the historical development from camel riding to airplanes as a means to reach Mecca.

The inclusive approach inherent to the category of mobility invites one to study processes of religious becoming and belonging in the context of

individual experiences of physical movement. In this volume, the contribution by Khadija Kadrouch-Outmany and Marjo Buitelaar demonstrates how a seemingly mundane matter as sanitary arrangements during hajj can come to stand for the much larger issue of religious underpinning of gender equality. The authors discuss contestations of Saudi regulations concerning gender-segregation in certain places in Mecca by a group of young female pilgrims from the Netherlands. The women object to Saudi spatial arrangements not only as hindrances to their spiritual journey, but also because they contradict the women's views on gender equality. The authors argue that feelings of being denied equal access to spiritual reward in comparison to male pilgrims played a crucial role in women's responses to the restrictions they faced. They point out that the significance of women's objections to restrictions on their freedom of movement reaches beyond religious interests. Joint hajj performance with their husbands was also motivated by the desire to establish the women's marriage on an equal footing. This link to the specific quotidian life-worlds of the women, like those of many other female pilgrims sketched in this volume, shows that mobility is an integral part of religious self-formation and informs how religious experiences are interpreted in relation to changing notions and assessments of places that people currently dwell in, inhabited in the past or long to be in in future (Stephan-Emmrich 2018).

Women's involvement in processes of religious place-making in the context of Meccan pilgrimage reminds us that mobility intertwines with political processes both at home and abroad. As the case study by Kadrouch-Outmany and Buitelaar illustrates, mobilities are both productive of social relations and produced by them. The gendered politics of mobility during hajj performance thus provide insights into how, from the micro-movement of bodies to the politics of global travel, mobilities are implicated in the production and distribution of power (Cresswell 2010). Moreover, the spatiality of these politics forces us to study how social, cultural, political, economic and other contexts intersect in shaping Muslim women's mobilities and their related experiences as well as the ways in which these experiences are meaningful to them (Adey 2017, 63).

While a 'being on the move' lifestyle is a rather new phenomenon in most parts of the world, the flow-form conception of mobility it implies can also be recognized in the tradition of *ziyāra* to local Muslim saint shrines. One does not have to travel great distances to get to a local shrine, and visits are often frequent and part of everyday life rather than marking a transition from one season or life-stage to another. Until a few decades ago, for example, for many urban women in countries like Morocco, Turkey or Iran, visiting the tomb of a saint in the local cemetery was a regular Friday outing. Alternatively, women would visit the saint shrine during other days of the week to obtain the saint's *baraka*, divine power, or to request the saint's intercession for issues that troubled them. Visiting saint shrines, then, was very much a part of women's daily life-world and did not alter their status

or position (see Honarpisheh 2013; Tapper 1990; Mernissi 1977). By investigating Shi'i women's rituals of pilgrimage to Lady Masoumeh's shrine in Qom, Ladan Rahbari demonstrates in her contribution how her interlocutors subvert limitations they would face in mixed-gender spaces by practicing their pilgrimage in mobile single-sex spaces, that is, in a private car. The mode of transportation, then, opens up the possibility to gain autonomy and agency.

As a result of the global wave of orthodoxy aimed at 'purifying' Islam from local customs and beliefs that has swept through the Muslim world since the 1990s onwards, visiting local saint shrines has become an increasingly contested practice, particularly among Sunni Muslims. In contrast, mosque attendance has grown tremendously, most spectacularly in terms of the percentage of female participants. It is often in mosques that women learn that visiting Mecca is the only legitimate form of Muslim pilgrimage. Contrary to local pilgrimage, pilgrimage to Mecca has until recently been very much part of a 'limit-form' conception of mobility that poses clear spatial and temporal boundaries. Until a few decades ago, most Muslims tended to conceive of hajj performance as a once-in-a-life-time event and a major rite of passage that marks a radical change in one status and lifestyle. It was also associated with the more affluent in society. Since women in general tended to be less mobile and had less access to capital, except for in South-East Asia, where the number of female pilgrims has always been higher (Bianchi 2004, 119), in former days significantly more men than women performed hajj. They did so mostly at an advanced age, postponing the 'ultimate' religious duty until preparing to meet their Creator. In addition, it was generally felt that in terms of piety one should be 'ready' to go on hajj and that one would be 'called' to Mecca when God thought it appropriate.

While investigating how pilgrimage and cultural conceptions of mobility connect offers a productive approach to understand shifts in practices and meanings, the contribution in this volume by Fewkes reminds us that our inferences about the restraints that certain categories of women may face in their pilgrimage movements are not necessarily based on empirical facts (only) but also on where and how we look. The focus in Fewkes's chapter is on women's pilgrimage activities between the 14th and 19th centuries on the Indian Ocean, which she conceptualizes as an integrated, highly regionally connected space of movement. By contextualizing historical women's hajj journeys as part of broader movements based on trade and diplomacy, female involvement that would otherwise remain obscured becomes visible. Thus analyzing women's mobility within a wider configuration of movements, Fewkes demonstrates that pilgrimage, commerce and migration are overlapping social realms in which social actors can best be grasped as navigating all of them at the same time.

Air travel and the rise of new middle classes have brought hajj within reach of a much larger group of people in recent decades. In particular, we

see many more young and female Muslims perform pilgrimage. Moreover, an increasing number of pilgrims do not expect to visit Mecca just once but anticipate making multiple hajj performances. A related phenomenon is that among younger Muslims it has become less common to be addressed as *Hajji* (for males) or *Hajja* (for females), the honorific title for people who have performed hajj. One reason for this is that the title of *Hajji* or *Hajja* carries connotations with old age (Buitelaar 2018a, 35). Another reason is that many pilgrims no longer consider it possible or necessary to radically break with one's past after having been cleansed of all sins through hajj performance. They hold the view that not only should one strive to lead an ethically sound lifestyle both before and after hajj performance, but also that nobody is perfect; lapses are likely to occur and can be repaired by going on hajj once more.

The chapter by Karić in this volume demonstrates that shifts in etiquette may not only be indicative of changes in hajj practices due to the affordances of new transportation and the rise of Muslim middle classes, but equally of changing political circumstances and shifts in gender relations. Karić discusses recent developments in the views and practices of Bosnian Muslims with regards to hajj. In the past, addressing a woman as *hadžinica*, the local form of *Hajja*, was a reference to her being married to a man who had performed hajj. Today, a *hadžinica* is a woman who has performed pilgrimage herself. The shift in use of the term of address illustrates two things: first, nowadays women tend to be defined less in terms of the religious reputation of their husband, and second, more women than before perform hajj themselves. Karić explains the shift in etiquette against the background of the local Bosnian political context where Muslim identity has been rediscovered in a post-socialist era.

While Karić's contribution discusses a particular regional case, the overall picture that comes to the fore when comparing different case studies of present-day hajj performance is that a conception of space-time mobility in which a person goes through clearly defined life-stages continues to inform such performances only to a certain extent. Besides being influenced by the trend of repetitive hajj journeys, conceptions of mobility that underlie the experience and meanings of modern practices of the hajj are informed by the fact that the boundaries between one's quotidian life-world and the sacred city of Mecca are not absolute; numerous instances of 'context collapse' occur (see Davis and Jurgenson 2018). Thanks to Wi-Fi access in the courtyard of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, for example, pilgrims can stay in touch with the family and friends they left behind as they circumambulate the Ka'ba. Vice versa, those who stay at home can virtually join the pilgrims on their hajj journey (see Caidi, Beazley and Marquez 2018).

Integrating pilgrimage into one's daily life-world by making repetitive spiritual journeys to Mecca and Medina is directly related to shifts in conceptions of religiosity. Piety is no longer considered to come predominantly

with old age or to progress according to clear-cut stages such as having performed hajj (cf. Buitelaar 2015, 17). Rather, for many Muslims becoming pious is an actively pursued project of self-development (cf. Mahmood 2006). The contribution by Kenny in this volume demonstrates how the repetitive hajj journeys of Guinean female entrepreneurs in the fashion branch not only enhance their personal insights about what customers might desire in the marketplace, but also allows them to create a pious persona for themselves.

The ‘routinization’ of hajj performance (Saghi 2010) can thus be conceived of as a technique of the self to incorporate pious dispositions (cf. Buitelaar 2018a, 37). This trend is very much in line with the notions of individualism and self-identity as a ‘reflexive project’ (Giddens 1991) that characterize conceptions of the self in the flow-discourse that is part of postmodernity. Since religious selves intertwine closely with other identifications and pursuits, piety may come with ups and downs, and may suddenly gain in urgency, particularly in moments of ambivalence and personal crisis (Beekers and Kloos 2018). In such circumstances, rather than being motivated by a repetitive pursuit of piety, a spontaneous decision to perform hajj or umra can be prompted by a desire for a ‘time-out’ or a ‘spiritual boost’ to help one to deal with one’s predicament (Buitelaar 2018b, 81). In terms of Schielke’s argument about the appeal of Islam as a ‘grand scheme’ (cf. Schielke 2010, 14), one could say that precisely because Mecca is where Islam originated and since the Ka’ba there represents God’s presence and the ideal of the Muslim community, most Muslims posit the city above and outside the imperfections of everyday life. From this elevated position, its ‘magic’ can be evoked to seek guidance and strength when dealing with ambiguities, fears and struggles in everyday life.

In line with an approach to religion as an appealing ‘grand scheme’ to make sense of everyday life, the authors in this volume examine how the pilgrimage practices of female Muslims and the meanings they attach to them emerge from a lived engagement with various cultural discourses and practices that inform the ways in which the women try to make sense of the complexities of daily life. Although the pilgrimage to Mecca is compulsory for every able Muslim, as all contributions in this volume attest, individual Muslims have their own motives to wish to perform the pilgrimage at a specific moment in their lives. In this sense Mecca can be seen as a ‘palimpsest’ (Smith 2008, 5), in which individual pilgrims inscribe their own meanings on the existing normative hajj and umra ‘scripts’. Rather than creating different layers, this results in entangled meanings in which the past impinges on present meanings (cf. Kinnard 2014, 30). Applying Dialogical Self Theory (cf. Hermans and Gieser 2012) to study how pilgrims make sense of their experiences in their personal hajj narratives in her single-authored contribution, Buitelaar analyzes the ‘voices’ that represent intersecting identifications in the hajj memoir of Asra Nomani (2005). She traces how in

her narrations Nomani is engaged in dialogues with various personal and collective voices as she moves back and forth between different ‘I-positions’ such as ‘I the emancipated American woman’ and ‘I the Muslim daughter’.

Kholoud Al-Ajarma and Viola Thimm also explicitly adopt an intersectionality approach (cf. Shields 2008; Brah and Phoenix 2004; Crenshaw 1989) in their contributions by scrutinizing how religious and other social identifications co-constitute each other and shape the ways female pilgrims negotiate their locations in society. In her chapter on women’s umra practices, Thimm discusses how within the context of Saudi governance over Mecca, the ways that citizenship and gender intersect can have different implications for the possibilities women have to realize their wish to perform pilgrimage. The citizenship of Southeast Asian women under 45 restricts their opportunities to go on pilgrimage, for example, while that of nationals from the Gulf states can facilitate umra performance. A woman’s particular religious affiliation can likewise influence the feasibility of performing umra without a *mahram*, a male guardian. Thimm’s contribution thus draws our attention to how women’s spiritual and moral agency in pilgrimage activities and their wider capacity to be mobile or lack thereof is informed by their intersecting identifications.

Likewise, Al-Ajarma asks how age, gender and class intersect in facilitating or restricting the physical and social mobility of Moroccan women as they (aspire to) go on hajj. She demonstrates that the kinds of ‘capital’ one needs and can acquire through hajj performance tends to vary with the different social positions that women occupy on the basis of their intersecting identifications. While, for instance, the Saudi regulation that female pilgrims under the age of 45 must be accompanied by a *mahram* is a hurdle that all younger women wishing to undertake the journey to Mecca face, more affluent women may more easily find male relatives in their networks who can afford to join them than women from lower strata in society. As the story of one of the women discussed by Al-Ajarma illustrates, however, once a poor woman does accomplish to perform hajj, the new social bonds with fellow pilgrims may provide her with social capital that she can mobilize upon return home.

What all contributions in the volume share is that, similar to the intersectionally driven argumentation in Buitelaar’s, Thimm’s and Al-Ajarma’s contributions, each of them addresses how various axes of differentiation such as class, gender, ethnicity and nationality intertwine in pilgrimage practices in particular ways and shape the form and degree to which women can be mobile, and the ways in which their mobility is formed, framed, regulated, restricted or promoted.

In conclusion: pilgrimage, ‘grand schemes’ and Muslim women’s mobilities in everyday life

Approaching female Muslims’ pilgrimage performance from the perspective of the specific mobility cultures that shape women’s life-worlds, implies

a focus on how such cultures inform the normative, social and practical dimensions of their pilgrimage practices, and, in turn, how women's practices inform specific discourses on their mobility. With reference to the 'Muslim' in Muslim women's pilgrimage, the authors in this volume trace how Islam operates as one of the compelling grand schemes that inform women's meaning-making processes in everyday life, alongside other grand schemes such as ideals about marriage, consumerism and so on (cf. Schielke and Debevec 2012). The dialectic between 'grand schemes' and 'ordinary lives' allows us to understand Muslim women's pilgrimage as journeys whose momentous and transformative nature reveals itself in how women negotiate greater powers, religious ideals and compelling promises that different grand schemes offer (Schielke 2015, 90).

Analyzing female pilgrimage practices by applying a lens that includes power and hierarchy means looking at the myriad ways in which specific intersections of identifications shape women's desires and opportunities for mobility as well as the restrictions they face. The main aim of this book is to contribute to Islam studies, pilgrimage studies and mobilities studies by investigating how the mobilities of female Muslim pilgrims are based on the interplay of the different social relations, identifications and power structures that shape their life-worlds, and how these mobilities inform their pilgrimage practices and the meanings they attach to them.

Insofar as addressing Muslim pilgrimage 'foregrounds' Islam, the analysis through the lens of women's new mobilities thus contributes to 'de-exceptionalizing' Islam (cf. Coleman 2013). We understand the book as a step in establishing a new, cross-cutting research theme that brings together scholars from different disciplines and regional expertise who are interested in an involvement into the connectedness between gender theory, religious principles, lived social practices and new approaches to mobility.

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