"MAY GOD BLESS YOUTUBE": THE SPIRITUALITY OF HOPING IN THE ACTIVITIES OF TURKISH MUSLIM WOMEN SELF-BRANDING ON YOUTUBE

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Setting out the discussion between public and private divide on domestic labour by feminist scholarship, the online performances of domestic activities are discussed within the concept of "new domesticity" (Matchar, 2013). For digital media platforms give space for women to have a creative identity-making process through their social networking practices online (Song, 2021). In particular, information exchanged about homemaking activities like cooking is a manifestation of digital domesticity, which is created through the interactions centered on subjects that make people feel "at home." (Gajjala, 2019: p.121). Indeed, food preparation and cooking are essential to the creation and affirmation of identity, as Fürst points out in Cooking and Femininity (1997), where she focuses on the connection between cooking and the experience of being a woman. Regarding that, in this paper, I will delve into the motivations of Turkish Muslim women cooking on YouTube. For that, conducting digital ethnography, I carried out in-depth interviews with twelve women and observed their channels over six months between December 2020 and July 2021. Taking account that Wedel (2013, cited in Bektas Ata, 2020) found in her fieldwork in shantytowns of Istanbul that women do not consider doing [informal] home-based work as work and that their production is seen as worthless, how they approach their new domestic activities thereby comes into prominence.

According to Mehta (1999), Indo-Trinidadian women transform the kitchen from a domesticated area into a creative hub while achieving culinary agency, which serves as a foundation for cultural authority. Concordantly, Bratich and Brush (2011) explain new domesticity as the transfer of private into the public rather than bringing up the burdensome nature of domestic labour by saying that "the new domesticity does not change old into new; it reweaves the old itself" (p.238). For this research, Turkish Muslim women cooking on YouTube whom I interviewed do not have a precise self-definition for their YouTube activities beyond articulating them as an extension of their

housewifery roles. On the one hand, in addition to seeing cooking as their contribution to their family (White, 1994), they consider business and entrepreneurship as masculine –which is consistent with the results of the research of Duffy and Hund (2015). But, on the other hand, regardless of supporting financially their family at present, they have future-oriented wishes either through trademarking their YouTube channels or opening a cookshop. Therefore, I explore their hopes upon their new domestic activities with the concept of self-branding that Marwick (2013) explains as "a strategy of success in which one thinks of oneself as a brand" (p.16).

As a social phenomenon, religion affects how people relate to God spiritually and how they behave in society (Gümüsay, 2015). The women I interviewed predominantly restrain from showing their bodies in the foreground whereas employing some techniques to increase their channels´ visibility with channel names, video headlines, and subtitles. Aligned with their Islamic values of piety and modesty that they exercise through the culinary process online plus refusing commodification and sexualization (Zempi, 2016), they reflect on their doings, go about accordingly, and reconstruct their digital publicity perpetually through impression management (Pearce and Vitak, 2015). It is significant to note that I consider "the self" as an incarnation of the sociocultural entity since they utilize their embodied cultural capital through their culinary prowess. The function that their social positionality plays in their self-branding throughout their digital domesticity thus assumes importance. Further to that, since they predominantly emphasized their hopes, I particularly concentrate on their Islamic spirituality while hoping to boost their digital self-brands in this paper. To be precise, the research question I ask in this paper is:

"How do Islamic values have impact on the hopes of Turkish Muslim women to construct their self-branding activities of digital domesticity?"

Online labour-driven activities that serve commercial interests are classified as part of creative industries since the creative sector is now synonymous with innovation (Wright, 2018). However, except for very little published research, the point made by Hesmondhalgh and Saha (2013) in their earlier article—that voices from people with backgrounds other than Western culture and ethnicity are underrepresented in the cultural sectors—remains pertinent today (Alacovska and Gill, 2019; Jamal and Lavie, 2022). Therefore, my research on the spirituality of hopes Turkish Muslim women will contribute to the scarce literature. Regarding the conceptual background, I will elaborate on the recent discussions by the scholarship researching creative industries on hope along with their anthropological aspects. After that, I will explicate the understanding of "hope" in Islam to investigate the topic holistically. Embracing the digital methodology of the everyday Internet, as a result, I will introduce an exploration of hope from an intersectional perspective with the empirical cases of Turkish Muslim women cooking on YouTube.

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