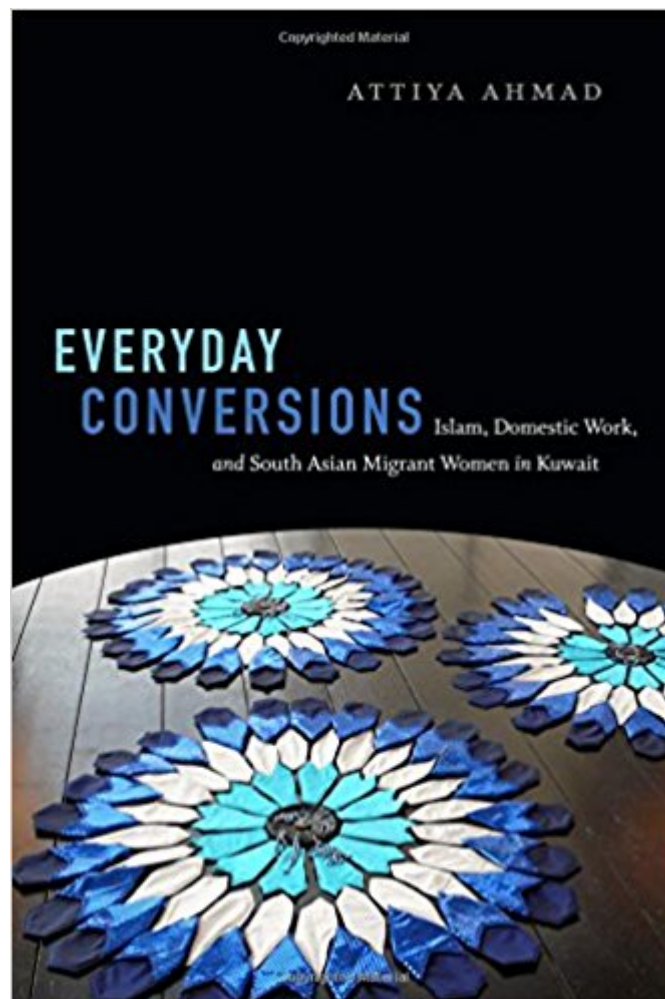




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Everyday Conversions: Islam, Domestic Work, And South Asian Migrant Women In Kuwait (Next Wave: New Directions In Women's Studies)





Synopsis

Why are domestic workers converting to Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf region? In *Everyday Conversions* Attiya Ahmad presents us with an original analysis of this phenomenon. Using extensive fieldwork conducted among South Asian migrant women in Kuwait, Ahmad argues domestic workers' Muslim belonging emerges from their work in Kuwaiti households as they develop Islamic piety in relation to but not opposition to their existing religious practices, family ties, and ethnic and national belonging. Their conversion is less a clean break from their preexisting lives than it is a refashioning in response to their everyday experiences. In examining the connections between migration, labor, gender, and Islam, Ahmad complicates conventional understandings of the dynamics of religious conversion and the feminization of transnational labor migration while proposing the concept of everyday conversion as a way to think more broadly about emergent forms of subjectivity, affinity, and belonging.

Book Information

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"In this brilliant book Attiya Ahmad captures the stories of her informants with great subtlety and sympathy while rendering the complexities of domestic work, showing the domestic space as riven with power, hierarchy, and precarity. Beautifully written and argued, with persistent focus on the dynamics of conversion as everyday practice, Ahmad's work illuminates this important contemporary phenomenon, outlining the ways in which power operates to make these migrant

women domestic workers into subjects of new Islamic pieties." (Inderpal Grewal, author of Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms)"Everyday Conversions is an excellent and nuanced portrayal of conversion to Islam among migrant domestic workers in Kuwait. Interweaving multiple theoretical strands, Attiya Ahmad analyzes these conversions in the context of gendered domestic and reproductive labor, discourses about South Asian female malleability, and social relationships in spaces of transnational migrant labor." (Lara Deeb, coauthor of Anthropology's Politics: Disciplining the Middle East)

Attiya Ahmad is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at The George Washington University.

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