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Abstract ihres Vortrags während der Konferenz "feminist_spaces im Netz. Diskurse, Communities, Visionen", 16./17. November 2001 in Berlin organisiert durch das Feministische Institut in der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

"Creating new cultures in cyberspace"

The new information and communication technologies are encouraging feminists of varying shades around the world to engage in creative new forms of political networking. We are yet to see where that interconnectivity will lead us, what works and what does not, what type of culture we are creating and what type of new politics, even new languages, new structures of feeling (to take up Raymond Williams' definition of culture) we are evolving. And, to answer satisfactorily with whom and what we are colluding?

In my talk I explored how the new ICTs, specifically the Internet and the Web mixed with other medias, give women scope to go far beyond traditional cultural experiences, allow for new types of gender relations and new types of development. Hopefully without buying completely into the hype, I suggest that the Internet provides a new medium for women to work across communities, link up to diasporas and to women from other cultures who share the same concerns about women's struggle for autonomy and self determination.

I argued that the Internet is integral to the formations of both local and global political and personal space or 'glocality' (the politics based on place-based needs and that are then connected up through networks, weaving together different groups in ways that can no longer be placed into 'national', 'regional' or 'international' political categories). Through the cyber networking - making connections among different places - women are linking their place-based defence of communities in ways that are challenging and changing public institutional spaces. They are altering the boundaries between private and public in place-based politics around the body, the community and public arena.

I looked at the examples of different cultures being formed in cyberspace in, for example, the fight against violence against women's bodies either in the street or through sex work or in conflict situations. How women working in the home are linking with others for support in terms of managing children and other domestic pressures. The women in high tech factories in Asia organising across North-South lines with the international support of NGOs on health work conditions. And women's use of the United Nations process women to bring local concerns to the forefront of the international agenda, at times in deviance of fundamentalist and anti-women positions at home and the use of the Internet to provide alternative information and solidarity in moment of crisis such as in the situation we find ourselves post September 11.