"Faith, fashion, family and society"

Negotiating moralities in the transition towards religious dress.

Master Thesis

Cultural Anthropology: Sustainable Citizenship

Student: Laura Juurlink (5973457)

Supervisor: Annemiek Prins

Date: 10 - 09 – 2018

Wordcount: 19768

Abstract

This thesis is built upon ethnographic fieldwork among Muslim women in the Netherlands who wear religious dress. Religious dress is in this thesis conceptualized as a spatial practice, in which women perform their gender (through dress) in two different ways. To my informants, wearing religious dress is as an act of worship, in which they long for the satisfaction of God. I conceptualize this as an embodiment of moral autonomy. In this thesis I focus on the moment of transition towards religious dress. I argue that besides this should be understood as a personal change, it should be understood as a social change as well. I focus on this social change within the family and public sphere. As socially embedded beings, women negotiate various responses (and sometimes resistances) in their transition. I show how the same act of religious dress evokes various (conflicting) responses, and argue that this can be understood through the different moral codes that co-exist (at the hand of the concept of moral assemblage). I illustrate that for some women, this leads to conflicting senses of (non-) belonging.

Keywords: religious dress, conflicting senses of belonging, moral assemblage, embodiment, rupture, visibility

Table of contents

Acknowledgements

Lexicon

Abaya   Long loose dress that cover all the body parts, except for the face, hands and feet.

Hadith   The second major religious book for Muslims. It contains sayings and accounts of the daily practice of the prophet Muhammad.

Hijab   This word often is used to describe the practice of 'wearing a headscarf'. In the Quran the term hijab refers to a partition or curtain in the literal sense.

Iman   (The sweetness of) Faith.

Khimar   A long head scarf, available in various lengths (from the head to the hips, knees or feet).

Mahram   A men a woman cannot marry, such as an uncle, a father or a brother.

Niqab   A face veil (that leaves the eyes visible)

Quran   The central religious book for Muslims, which Muslims belief to be a revelation from God.

Shahada   Islamic creed

Introduction

One day I was again walking past Islamic clothing stores in the Kanaalstraat, Utrecht. I remember thinking to myself, 'their response will not change, whether I start wearing it now or in a couple of years, they will never like it'. So I decided to enter the store and found myself a black Khimar and a black Abaya. I decided to wear them right away. [1]

This is a part of Jasmijn's story towards religious dress. She is twenty-nine years old, married and has a one-year-old son. In her daily life, Jasmijn works as an accountant. She converted to Islam at the age of twenty-one. One month after she spoke the *Shahada* she found the courage to start wearing religious dress. She wanted to do this from this start, but was afraid of the way her family would respond. I can only imagine what it must have felt like to be walking out of that store, suddenly wearing a different 'social skin', finally giving in to the desire you have had for a long time; to worship God[2] with your clothing. What a double sentiments Jasmijn must have had, knowing she had to face her parents that day who would not be too pleased seeing her in her new garments. Her story shows how enacting upon religious moral commands can be in conflict with social morality. This ambivalence is one of the core arguments of this thesis, I will show how women negotiate different (social and religious) relations (and moralities) in various ways in their transition towards religious dress. I will elaborate on this in the theoretical section below. This will be followed by a discussion of the research questions and scientific relevance. Thereafter I will discuss the research group and research methods (including ethical considerations). I conclude with the structure of this thesis.

The debate on (Islamic) religious dress

Islamic religious dress, and in specific 'the headscarf', has become a topic of anthropological inquiry in the past two decades. It has been analyzed from perspectives such as fashion (Tarlo 2007, 2010; Moors 2010, 2013; Tarlo and Moors 2013; Gökarıksel and Mclarney 2010; Gökarıksel and Secor 2012; Lewis, 2013, 2015 et. al.), in relation to secularism and modernity (Asad 2006; Mahmood 2011; Deeb 2006; Gökarıksel 2009; Jouili 2009, 2015; Al Saji 2010), in relation to a broader experience of (lived) religion (Deeb 2006; Mahmood 2011; Otterbeck 2016) and from the perspective of ethical un-veiling (Fadil 2011). In order to understand the debate on religious dress, one should take a little step back and take a look at the (feminist) anthropology of Islam. Deeb (2015) and Fadil (2015) critically note how an anthropological divide has emerged on this topic, in which two poles arise. One concerns "the Islam of everyday life", the other "(the politics) of piety". Deeb (2015) challenges us to rethink this divide, for

---

[1] Interview Jasmijn, 04-24-2018.
[2] In this thesis I (in general) use the word God instead of Allah. I hold on to this formulation for my informants talked about it in this manner.

everyday Islam and piety can coexist and can be simultaneously present in one's being-in-the-world. I follow her argumentation, by examining the transition towards the pious practice of religious dress within the everyday (social) world.

Mahmood (2011, 28-31) and Winchester (2008, 1775-9) examine religious dress as an embodied moral practice. Although I agree with them, I argue that we should not only examine this embodied moral practice in perspective of the self, we should as well look at the social context in which it takes place. In order to understand the practice of religious dress we should examine the various moralities that co-exist and respond to this embodied practice, that coincide and/or conflict. Scholars of relational autonomy have shown how, *"Persons are socially embedded within the context of social relationships"* (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, 4). In this thesis I show that women negotiate relations and their coexisting moralities in their transition towards religious dress. Jackson (2012, 230) offers a relevant definition to understand the different moralities that exist simultaneously *"Autonomy may thus refer to self-governance, in which a person is true to his or her own moral code, and to collective autonomy, in which a group seeks to determine its destiny according to its own laws, customs and values"*. He explains how we should understand autonomy as both individual and relational, and shows that morality is something in which autonomy becomes visible. Where Jackson (2013, 230) seems to sketch an individual and collective autonomy, there are of course various social actors that impact moral life. In perspective of agency and autonomy, I elaborate on the concept of autonomy. This concept refers in a more concrete way to the (multiple) social actors and its (different) moral codes. In perspective of religious moral practice, I do adopt Mahmood's (2005, 28-31) concept, for it allows us to understand the practice of dress in relation to the bigger experience of faith within the self. Zigon (2014) argues that we can best understand moral life, in we conceptualize it as an 'assemblage'. *"The value of assemblage theory to anthropological analyses of moralities is that it does not assume the existence of moral totalities in the world and thus provides a more nuanced perspective for understanding the fuzzy, fragmentary and oftentimes contradictory moral milieu most often characteristic of any singular social location, situation or experience."* (Zigon 2014, 17). To offer an account of moral anthropology is beyond the scope of this research. I however employ Zigon's (2014, 17) definition in order to address the multifaceted reality of the transition towards religious dress. In my analysis of the interviews I found that often within the moment of transition towards religious dress, different moralities coincide and/or conflict. Tarlo (2007, 140-8) is one of the anthropologists who focuses on the moment of transition towards religious dress, which she conceptualized as a 'metamorphosis'. She illuminates how the metamorphosis has a certain resonance, by examining the different experiences of public space that are evoked by it, as experienced by Muslim women in London. I then follow her line

of argumentation, but focus on the resonance within the sphere of fashion, family and society, as evolved from my empirical data.

The last concept that needs to be addressed is the concept of belonging. In this thesis I will show how in the transition towards religious dress senses of belonging and non-belonging may derive simultaneously. Belonging will be defined by means of Miller's (2003, 216-8) conceptualization. She discusses belonging in reference to three "senses", social connections to a community or certain people, historical connections as in past or particular traditions, and the third sense of belonging she considers the geographical connection to a certain locality. This definition allows to address belonging from different perspectives, and leaves room for the way, different and sometimes conflicting senses of belonging may exist simultaneously. The one thing that 'lacks' this definition of belonging is the perspective of the extra-human world. I will argue that belonging may derive from the human-supernatural relation by employing Tweed's (2006, 80-122) theory of religion as dwelling.

Research Questions

This central question that is addressed in this research is formulated as the following:

What are recurring themes in the lived experiences of the change towards religious dress, that become visible in the individual life stories of women who wear this garment?

I address this question by answering the following sub questions:

1) In what ways are religious experience and religious dress connected and, how do women describe the role of their religious dress regarding to their faith?

2) How is (religious) dress practiced, from the perspective of fashion and spatiality?

3) What are families' responses to the transition towards religious dress, and how do women negotiate these?

4) How does the transition towards religious dress lead to a different experience of public space?

Scientific relevance

As discussed above, in this thesis I will applicate an approach in which every day lived religion and piety coexist. Within the different perspectives of faith, fashion, family and society, I show

how women, in their transition towards religious dress, relate to all these aspects of their lives and find a way in which they negotiate these different relations and accompanied moralities. Examining these different aspects, I show that the transition towards religious dress can evoke a sense of belonging in one relation or moral perspective but may lead to the contrary in another. Instead of focusing on one aspect, I show that by inquiring the lived experience at different facets, one is able to understand the (complex) experience of transition towards religious dress.

In perspective of the scientific (and societal) contribution of this work, there are two under-studied topics on which I will elaborate:
1) In chapter two, which is more of a contextual chapter, I show how religious dress is a spatial practice, which results in a different performance of gender in the two spaces: 'at home' and 'outside'. Where scholars mainly focus on the emerging Islamic dress market, and thus focus on dressing 'outside', I will focus as well on the practice of 'dressing up at home'. Not all of my informants actively engage with 'dressing up', but to most of my informants it is important to feel feminine inside the home. 'Dressing up at home' leads us to question the role of fashion when it is not seen by the popular culture that produces it. I will argue that 'dressing up at home' is a way through which gender identity is performed.

2) In chapter three I will elaborate on the transition towards religious dress in perspective of the family. The anthropological debate on family and religious dress has revolved around the practices of tradition. My data however shows that contestation may occur when religious dress is not a traditional practice, and then is perceived as a rupture. I employ narratives of family resistance in order to show the complexity that may arise when a family resists their daughters choice to veil. Furthermore I will connect this to broader societal narratives of 'veiled women as oppressed' in order to understand the way bigger social processes are connected to these individual stories.

Research group
This research is conducted among seventeen Dutch Muslim women living in different cities and villages in the Netherlands, one of them migrated to the United Kingdom. They were contacted by use of the snowball sample method, one woman leading to the next. I let this 'snowball' roll from two different women. I also conducted four interviews with the help of workgroup 'Blijf van mijn Niqaab af'[3], who have a broad network of Muslim women who wear the *Niqab*. The interviews covered three main topics: dress in private and public sphere, the experience of faith

---

[3] Translation of the name of the workgroup: 'Do not touch my Niqab'.

in general and dress within broader experience of faith.

All informants are Sunni[4] Muslims, they follow different Islamic schools of thought or followed no specific one. They relate all on both religious texts from *Quran* and *Hadith*. Among them are religious converts (five) as well as born Muslims (twelve). The women are living in different cities in the Netherlands, such as Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Leiden and a city in the South of the Netherlands. A lot of my informants' names start with 'Umm', followed by the name of their first born child, meaning their social characteristic of being a mother. Most of them were in the age group of 20 - 35, with one exception who was in her forties. The women interviewed have different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Most identify as Moroccan Dutch, others identified as Turkish, Afghan, Syrian and/or Dutch. The participants all wear religious dress as an important part of the practice of their faith, except for one who wears it as a social practice. All of my informants cover their hair. Fourteen of them wear an *Abaya*, combined with either a headscarf, a *Khimar* or a *Niqab*. I choose to use the word 'religious dress' instead of 'veils', for this is mostly associated with a headscarf whereas most of my research informants cover their entire bodies. The practice of religious dress is to my informants not something that occurred in a day, often women wear a veil for years and then adapt it to a more covered style when they obtain more knowledge or grow in faith. Therefore I use the word 'towards' (when I speak about the 'transition *towards* religious dress'), with which I emphasize on this practice as a process rather than as a singular moment or act.

Research context

It is important to understand how religious dress has become a topic of societal controversy in the past years in the Netherlands. As in most other countries of Europe, the topic of religious dress has become a heated debate. The public debate mostly revolves around more visible Islamic dress, such as the *Niqab*. In the Netherlands the debate started in the year 2005, when Geert Wilders, leader of the right wing party PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid)[5], opted a burqa ban (Moors 2009, 10). Where most parties considered Geert Wilders' proposed ban at that time a ridiculous idea, the ban, that now prohibits all kinds of face veiling (not only Islamic), is recently adopted (06-26-2018), by the Dutch Senate. (NRC[6], Dool and Geels, 2018). This shows a shift in the way religious dress is envisioned within Dutch politics. The discussion about religious dress

---

[4] Sunni Islam is the biggest denomination within Islam, Sunni refers to the exemplary behavior of the prophet Muhammad, as described in the Hadith. Within the Sunni denomination there are numerous Islamic schools of thought.

[5] Translation of the name of the right wing party PVV: 'Political Party for Freedom'

[6] I have used two electronic newspaper sources from the Dutch newspaper NRC. In text, I have put the name (NRC) before the authors that wrote this this text. NRC is considered a 'reliable' newspaper. It is mainly used to describe events.

does not only take place on political level but has been a topic of social controversy at schools as well. In 2003 and 2004 there were different schools and universities who wanted to refuse women who wear face-veils (Moors 2009, 5). More recently the discussion of religious dress (headscarf) within public functions, such as the police, has returned (NRC, Schreuder 2017). These different examples show how religious dress has become a topic of social controversy in the Netherlands. When discussing religious dress in public space (as I will do in chapter four), one should take this context into consideration.

Research methods and ethical considerations

De Walt & De Walt (2011, 128) discuss how triangulation is important, for each method offers different data, through which 'the elephant' can be studied from different perspectives, aiming to provide a holistic view. As one might have red above, my main data evolves from the semi-structured interviews I conducted. I did various attempts to find more participants and participate in their lives, by engaging with online Muslim platforms, approaching women in shopping centers and by using my personal network. The latter is the only attempt that has led to participants, besides the four participants I encountered via the workgroup 'Blijf van mijn Niqaab af'. Through the complexity to find participants and access I did only little participant observation. By walking back to the station with one of my research participants, I got to understand a little more of her experience of public space. I did participate at a women's lecture in a Mosque in Rotterdam. The main methods however were interviews and literature research. I consider the political situation concerning religious dress (and broader controversy about Islam in the Netherlands) an important reason why women were hesitant to get in touch with a researcher who conducts research about this topic. This complexity to obtain access was stressed by Annelies Moors (2009) as well, who did fieldwork among Muslim women who wear a *Niqab* in the Netherlands. Looking back at the process, I think it would have been better to locate myself at a certain place, like a clothing shop or a Mosque. For it was hard to find access, I conducted six interviews by phone, which is considered a qualitative interview method that is suiting to address politically sensitive topics (Opdenakker 2006, 5-6). The other interviews were conducted at women's homes or at restaurants. Besides interviews and literature study, this thesis relies on some secondary sources as well, by using the work of artists and articles within newspapers. I decided not to incorporate religious texts as secondary sources, for my informants relied on different religious texts and sources in their argumentations to wear religious dress. My focus lies however, on the way women negotiate their interpretation of religious text.

I conducted the interviews using a semi structured method. This offered enough space to anticipate on women's stories as well as providing a structure and scope for the interview topics (Bernard 2011, 158). I did not do a lot of informal interviews, however I did have informal conversation before and after the interview, as well as conversations via WhatsApp. These informal conversations helped me to conduct interviews in a better way. It facilitated in the growth of rapport between me and my informants (O'Reilly 2005, 15; Walt & de Walt 2011, 47). I analyzed the interviews by transcribing and coding. Through this I was able to find bigger themes that recurred within the diverse interviews. (Skinner 2012, 35-6). Although my aim was to not make any assumptions, by analyzing interviews I relied on my own referential framework in order to interpret my informants articulations and emphasizes (Bernard 2017, 373).

For my main data flows from individual interviews, one might wonder if this is suited to discuss the practice of religious dress, which is shared in a broader social context. Scholars of lived religion however show the relevance of the examination of individual stories, in order to understand the experience and practice of religion (McGuire 2009). This leads to a sometimes readable tension between the individual and broader experience. Fadil and Fernando (2015, 59), both scholars of religion, describe this tension. *"The desire to delineate the multiple and heterogeneous ways in which human being live and make sense of their lives, and, on the other hand, to underscore the commonalities and shared conditions of seemingly different life-world in order to define the human".* I aimed to address both of these desires by discussing as well commonalities and heterogeneous understandings on the distinguished topics.

Taking into account ethical considerations, all names are fictitious, as well as cities of residence, if described. In one or two occasions I changed the occupation of the women to a 'comparable' one, but only when I considered that the information could lead to a treat of the anonymity of the woman.

Structure of the thesis
I will dedicate four ethnographic chapters to understand women's transition towards religious dress, concerning the topics of faith, fashion, family and society. Chapter one deals with the existential experience of lived religion as experienced by my informants. I will argue that religious experience and practice coincide in the concept of *Iman*. Religious dress is perceived as a part of the acts of worship, with which my informants seek for the satisfaction of God. I will analyze the act of wearing religious dress as an embodiment of faith. Furthermore I will conceptualize it as a way to dwell in the world, through which belonging is derived.
Chapter two addresses how women designate the either private and public spheres. I enable their emic understanding of 'at home' and 'outside', and show how the (leading) concept of

(non-)Mahram problematizes common notions of what public or private sphere entails. Furthermore I will make sense of the practice of dressing and describe the two different ways of 'doing dress' in either private or public sphere. I will draw attention to the fact that the private sphere is perceived by many of my informants as a space for 'dressing up'. I conclude by elaborating on the notion of 'reversed' spaces, as it is used by my informants to make sense of the different spatial dress practices of mainstream Dutch women and themselves.

Chapter three is about the transition towards religious dress and the way social kin responds to this. I will argue that the transition towards religious dress is not merely a personal transition, but should be understood as a social transition that evokes a response from women's wider social network. I will focus on 'narratives of rupture' and show in what various ways and by what various motivations families resist women's personal choice. I will connect these expressions to the broader social controversy on religious dress. This chapter is about the way women negotiate the relation and moral code of family with their personal moral religious code. I will show how women negotiate these conflicting tensions in various ways. In this chapter I will adopt the moral assemblage theory to understand the various existing moral codes and the various ways women negotiate these. I will connect this to the concept of belonging, by understanding both religion and family as a way through which belonging can derive.

Chapter four is about the transition towards religious dress and the changing experience of the public space. First I will inquire a broader theoretical understanding of dress, visibility and public space. Then I will focus on the different experience that may evolve from 'becoming' visible as a Muslim, as being visible as a Muslim to other Muslims, a different experience of the male gaze and Muslim visibility and otherness. Considering that the representation of religious dress often coincides with negative stereotypes women sometimes experience exclusionary practices of 'othering' such as: prejudice, being scolded at or (physical) violence. Moreover, I will show how this sphere is something to which women relate and that when they negotiate social responses, they negotiating experiences of (non-)belonging.

Chapter 1 "With love": Religious experience and the practice of religious dress

Halima takes another sip of her green Jasmine tea, while I am trying to formulate a question about her faith. We are sitting in a quiet corner of a little coffeehouse; around us people are working on their laptops or having conversations in little groups. When I introduce the topic of faith a smile appears on Halima's face, and with a calm voice she starts speaking. *It is actually kind of funny, I'm the 'practicing' Muslim of my family*. When stating the word practicing she uses her fingers to make quotation marks in the air. *My family was never so involved with faith, so I found my own way towards it. It went very gradually though, for me it is important to gather good knowledge. (…) So when I got to know some Islamic scholars that were good and trustful, I started reading about Islam. This all came from my own interest, for my family was not really involved with it, and I went to a Christian primary school, so it did not really come from the things I saw or learned around me.* (…) I bend over a little and ask her. What does it mean to you, your faith, how would you describe that? Halima smiles again. *That is a very good question!* For just a few seconds she stares in the distance while forming an answer in her mind, seemingly grappling with the inability to put the meaning of faith into words. Then she continues. *It just moved me deeply, it really did. It gave me a new perspective on life.* She paused. *Before, I was always busy with things like "you got to study, find a job, a house, a car", that was actually kind of materialistic. Now those things do not matter to me like that, I'm living from a different perspective. Maybe before I was kind of short-sighted. But when I went to deepen my faith I realized life had more to offer. That it is good to be good for other people, that I may be satisfied with what I have and share this. It makes me a better person too.*[7]

Halima is a woman in her mid-thirties, she lives in a little town near Rotterdam. Alike other participants, faith constitutes an important part of her being-in-the-world. Faith is experienced in various ways by my informants. In this chapter I argue that the shared component within these stories is that Islam is experienced as providing ontological security. To my informants however, Islam is not merely a narrative or ideology, it is considered a 'way of life'. This 'way of life' refers to the way faith is not considered limited to the mind, rather faith is considered both within the mind and through (bodily) practice. In this chapter I connect the experience of religion to religious practice, after I first discuss the two separately. I will start with a theoretical inquiry of lived religion.

---

[7] Interview Halima, 04-09-2018.

Anthropology has a long tradition of studying religion and religious experiences, that resulted in diverse theories. While for instance Durkheim (2008) focuses on a more institutional definition of religion, McGuire (2009, 98) focuses on religion as experienced in individual everyday lives. She proposes the concept of lived religion, which leaves room for different interpretations and experiences of this same religion by its individual practitioners. *"Rather than deduce an image of individuals' beliefs and practices from abstractions about religion in general or even about particular religions, I have grappled with how to comprehend individuals' religions-as-practiced, in all their complexity and dynamism. Too often, our concepts for describing and analyzing individuals' religions simply fail to capture how multifaceted, diverse, and malleable are the beliefs, values, and practices that make up many (perhaps most) persons own religions"* (McGuire 2009, 98). The concept of lived religion, allows us to look at religion at the way it is connected to different facets of being-in-the-world. Orsi (2003, 172) describes in his argument the relevance of lived religion. "*Religion approached this way is situated amid the ordinary concerns of life, at the junctures of self and culture, family and social world, and on those occasions when the religious imagination (which itself is constituted both by culture and by personal experience and inheritance) takes hold of the world (as the world is said to be) in prayer, ritual, and theology, it is also itself taken hold of by the world"*. This definition of Orsi (2003, 172) shows how lived religion is not merely about the individual experience, but also about the way it is constituted in daily life among other things. One might wonder what the relation is between lived religion and the more institutionalized religion. Dessing e.a. (2016, 3) note that there is no sharp distinction between every day and institutional religion. The combination of pious practices and everyday lived religion is not a common point of inquiry, as Deeb (2015) notes. This perspective however enables us to understand religious experience and its practice in the broader context of life, as Orsi (2003) discussed.

Experiences of Islam 'It gives me a certain peace'.
Allah is the most important, because life on earth is just temporary. What are we doing here? We are only travelers until the moment we find ourselves in the next life.[8]

This quote is taken from an interview with Amber. She is a young mother of three children. Since five years she lives in the United Kingdom. During the day she is homeschooling her children, in the evening she teaches online classes in *Quran* and Islamic geometric design. She comes from a non-religious family and converted to Islam later on in life, which changed her and her way of living completely. In her quote one can read how she envisions this life, in

---

[8] Interview Amber, 05-09-2018.

perspective of the next. The way in which Islam provides answers to both this life and the next, is a theme that recurs in interviews. This is often described as something that leads to "a certain peace". The peace that evolves from either a first encounter of Islam or a moment of deepening of faith, is often considered a central component of the experience of religion. Azizah is woman in her thirties, she is married and has three children. She is specialized in Islamic healing practices. She explained this peace as essential to her faith. *I honestly would not know what I would do without that inner peace.[9]* This peace is often contrasted with the unrest that was present before women start to engage with Islam. While women first describe to have questions and uncertainty, now their questions and uncertainty are answered.

Tweed (2006, 80) argues how religion provides a way to dwell and inhabit the world. In this way religion can be understood as a way to make a home in the world. Young (2000, 189) discusses this search for a 'home' in the world, in reference to Heidegger's descriptions of ontological (in)security. He shows how human beings experience anxiety while finding their home in the world, and describes this as a "*nothingness, and infinitely dark and absolute emptiness that threatens*". Heidegger defines this radical ontological insecurity as an opposite of 'dwelling'. Dwelling then is 'safety', *"to be protected from harm and threat, safeguarded, cared for and protected"*. Heidegger understands dwelling as ontological security (Young 2000, 189). This ontological security was often expressed explicitly during interviews. While women who converted to Islam experienced a certain transition from this anxiety towards safety, informants that were born Muslims often experienced a moment in which their interest in Islam arose, which led to deepen their understanding of the world.

Nadirah is one of those born Muslims, she is a mother of three children and lives in Leiden. She illustrated how at a certain point in her life she experienced a certain emptiness. The knowledge of faith that she always had been taught had not been enough to answer her questions. At the age of seventeen she started to inquire more about Islam. Looking back, she explains that this 'indistinctness' had moved her to search for knowledge and answers[10]. All the stories of women show a different road to (their current understanding of) Islam. In the interviews, women discussed the meaning of Islam with words like 'inner peace', 'something to hold on to', 'answers to life'. This is one of the reasons why lived religion is a suiting concept to address the religious experiences of my informants. Religion is not perceived as something that is afar, but something through which the world and being-in-the-world is understood. Marijke is a Belgian woman who recently migrated to the Netherlands, together with her husband and baby daughter. She converted in 2014, and explains how Islam has led her to a different

---

[9] Interview Azizah, 05-10-2018.

[10] Interview Nadirah, 04-09-2018.

understanding of the world. *It has opened my eyes. Before I used to think and feel as if I was alone in the world, going through all these things. The Quran however says that no one will be burdened more than he can deal with.*[11] It gave her a perspective in which she could understand (the circumstances of) her life.

Women's articulations about God tell us something about how they envision their relation with the supernatural. God is often described at the hand of statements like 'God takes care of us', 'I can always go to Him with my questions', 'God is like a doctor', 'He is near'. While God is envisioned as something that is near, the relation to God was in general discussed as something that cannot be compared to a human relationship. God was considered too big, different, non-human and exalted to do so. Aisha is a woman in her twenties, she studies health sciences and works for a research institute. She discusses a simultaneous nearness and exaltedness when she describes God. *When I need something, or need guidance with something, He is the only one I can go to. He is the CEO of the world, as it were.* [12] She thus envisions God as someone who is near, someone who can help her when she is in trouble. Simultaneously she uses the comparison of a 'CEO' to emphasize the exaltedness of the being of God.

The relation of human and the supernatural is often described by means of *Iman*, which entails 'the sweetness of faith'. The concept of *Iman* is very clearly described by Sahar. Sahar is a young woman who works for youth services, after she graduated from her master in pedagogical sciences a year ago. She envisions *Iman* as the following:

One day you might feel really strong and pious, and then you are able to pray and you feel really good, then your contact with God and your connection with Him is really good. The other day you might experience tests, or experience that some things do not go well, and then it might be that you iman declines again. In my case it fluctuates continuously. But, as every Muslim does, I am striving to have this good contact with God every day.[13]

In her description one reads that *Iman* is not something static, but is fluctuating and depending on different actors. It refers to one's bond with God, as well as the need to practice faith in order to pertain a good bond. The practice of faith is then considered essential, at least to my informants, in order to maintain/obtain a good bond with God. Therefore the next paragraph will contain two processes of practice.

---

[11] Interview Marijke, 05-11-2018.

[12] Interview Aisha, 04-25-2018.

[13] Interview Sahar, 05-01-2018.

Religious learning: The role of knowledge

Women often describe their path towards religious dress as a process. In the next part I will describe two stories, one of Halima and one of Marijke. I show how knowledge and practice play an important but different role in each story.

Halima starts wearing a headscarf at the age of 20 years old. While increasing her knowledge about Islam, she learns more about religious dress as well. *I realized that only a headscarf was not the same as the Hijab that was described in the Quran and Hadith.* Halima values 'good Islamic knowledge', and after a thorough examination of the texts of scholars, she is convinced. Step by step she adjust her clothing to a more covered style. *I'm just doing everything slowly, gradually.* (..) *First I started wearing longer headscarves, then I stopped wearing pants and started wearing skirts instead, and eventually put on a Khimar.*[14]

In Halima's story one sees how knowledge about 'the correct Islamic dress' led to a transition in her religious dress. She took the time to undergo this transition at her own pace, adjusting her dress step by step, moving closer to her final goal. In her story one notices the way she is true to her religious knowledge/commands as well as being true to her own 'time' and pace.

Marijke is a young mother of a three month old baby. Three years ago she converted to Islam. She tells how she was convinced she would never wear a headscarf. *I remember stating to my friends 'I will never wear a headscarf, never!'.* This feelings starts to change when Marijke speaks the *Shahada*. *Maybe I will wear a headscarf after marriage.* It is only a week later when Marijke feels an urgent desire to change her dress. *I opened my closet and thought, 'I have no clothes that I can wear, I cannot wear this anymore'.* She started throwing almost all her clothes away, convinced about her feeling. This feeling of 'I cannot wear this anymore' returned at various moments in her life, leading her to adapt her dress time after time. She currently wears a *Niqab* with an extra veil to cover her eyes. Knowledge however plays an important role to her as well. *After I felt that I should change my dress, I went to research Islamic literature, and found that it indeed was incorrect what I had been wearing.*[15]

The stories of Marijke and Halima show a different path to religious dress. Furthermore it shows a different way of both individual religious learning and relating to institutional religious 'knowledge'. The theory of lived religion is earlier in this chapter used to argue for the importance of the individual experience of religion (McGuire 2009, Orsi 2003). As Dessing e.a.

---

[14] Interview Halima, 04-09-2018.

[15] Interview Marijke, 05-11-2018.

(2014) have shown, there is no sharp line between lived and institutional religion. Knowledge can be considered a part of institutional religion, produced and revised by Islamic scholars. These two stories show how Marijke and Halima both have a different way of obtaining knowledge, as well as relating to and acting according to this. Hence, there is not a singular way to discuss how processes of religious dress evolve, for human, supernatural and religious knowledge can be considered within a dialectic.

Religious dress as embodied moral agency: love and longing

When I ask Halima about her personal reasons to wear religious dress, she answers almost immediately. *I am wearing it out of love for Allah.* She tells me that God does so many things for her, and that she is very willing to do something in return. *Despite that I believe that it is a religious obligation to wear Hijab, I do not experience it like that. It is really coming from my heart.* She stresses the relevance of this by stating *And this is how it should be, you should only do it when it is with the right intention.* [16]

Halima touches upon various subjects with her answer. For now I will focus on the way she states that religious dress is considered obliged, but does not feel like it is forced. She sharpens her statement by declaring that one really must do this from the heart. Here one might find an ostensibly ambiguity. Following religious command might seem like a passive act. This is however contrasted by my informants' stories in which it is an active choice to wear religious dress. Saba Mahmood (2011, 153-164) describes how 'following religious commands' is a way to act upon religious moral guidelines. She discusses how Western philosophy has led to the conviction that agency is enacted when one is resisting a bigger structure. She contrasted this by her informants' experiences in the piety movement in a Mosque in Egypt, where women had a personal desire to follow religious commands. Religious agency might then be about obedience to the supernatural, but this is an active process in which one chooses to live according this morality. Michael Jackson (2012, 230) argues how moral autonomy is being both in harmony with your own moral code as well as moral code of others. "*Autonomy may thus refer to self-governance, in which a person is true to his or her own moral code, and to collective autonomy, in which a group seeks to determine its destiny according to its own laws, customs and values*". In this case, autonomy may thus refer to both being true to religious moral code and one's own moral code (if this is not the same). In order to understand the complex reality, one should move beyond this ideology of agency as equivalent to resistance (Mahmood 2008, 8-10).

---

[16] Interview Halima, 04-09-2018.

An example of this enactment of moral agency is the story of Zahra. Zahra is a young mother of two sons. Before she follows her desire to wear a headscarf, she endures complex negotiations. She wants to do so, but knows at the same time that her family would respond in a negative way to this. When she finally finds the courage to put on her headscarf, it feels like she can finally move on. *It just felt like a puzzle piece was resolved.* I interpret her transition towards religious dress as a change that leads her to live in harmony with her moral ideology. She stresses how earlier she often had the thought that she was not able to live a day without sinning. Putting on a headscarf has given her the opportunity to move on and focus on other religious goals. [17] In her story one sees how she negotiates her own, religious and family morality, that all impact her process in which she finds a way in her moral life. This supports Zigon's (2014) concept of moral life as an assemblage, in which various actors partake that are all related to one another. I will elaborate on this in chapter three.

Mahmood (2011, 153-164) furthermore discusses wearing religious dress as a form of embodiment of faith. She explains this by conceptualizing religious dress as a bodily enactment of religious commands. Connel and Messeschmidt (2006, 851) discuss how, through embodiment, the body becomes both object as well as a subject of (religious) practice. Combining these two theorists, following religious rule can be conceptualized as a way to embody religious commands. In which the body, in the case of religious dress, fulfills an important role through which one can enact this. Wearing religious dress is often discussed as a way in which women strive for the satisfaction of God. A recurring word to describe this is an 'act of worship'. Melissa is a woman in her forties. She works as a speech therapist in a school. She is married and has five children. She describes how religious dress is one of the acts of worship she does.

> *It is a part of all the acts I can do to worship Allah. In the Koran is written very clearly how you should live, all parts of life are incorporated. Also on the terrain of dress Allah has given prescriptions on how I should dress in the companion of (non-Mahram) men and by dressing like this I can respond to his command. I see this kind of obedience as a way to give worship, which helps me in this life, but also in the afterlife.*[18]

It is important to note that wearing religious dress is just one of the acts of worship, and together with other practices women are seeking and hoping for the satisfaction of God.

The desire to worship God was often discussed in terms of feelings like 'love' and a longing for

---

[17] Interview Zahra, 06-03-2018.
[18] Interview Melissa, 23-02-2018.

his satisfaction. While Azizah and I talk about her process of change of religious dress, she becomes more enthusiastic every minute. After the interview she tells me: *I really liked to talk about it, I felt again the great love that I experienced when wearing it for the first times.*[19] This feeling of love shows that religious dress is not merely about putting something on one's body, but that this is accompanied by feelings from within the body and mind. The longing for the satisfaction of God is often expressed as one of the reason to change religious dress to a way in which women hope to please God more.

Jamila is a woman in her early thirties, she recently gave birth to her second child. Jamila wears a *Niqab* but has not decided yet which scholar she wants to follow. There are Islamic scholars who argue that a *Niqab* is obliged, not obliged and/or recommended (Fathi 2017). Jamila explains that even while she is not convinced whether it is obliged or recommended, she considers it a way to get closer to the satisfaction of God. She compares it with the desire to get a good grade for an exam. *Imagine, you could do just enough in order to get a C, but you know that if you study just a bit harder you might get an A.*[20]

This longing to worship God can be connected to Wright's (2014, 399) discussion of belonging as both "*being and longing*". The desire to expand religious dress comes from a situation in which a woman already practices religious commands. To do more, women express their *longing* to get closer to the satisfaction of God. This has been discussed by Moors (2009) as well, who describes this desire to 'do more for God'. I think in the story of Jamila one sees how she anticipates on her *longing* for the satisfaction of God, by taking up a face veil. Her story shows how being and longing can be present at the same time. This longing for the satisfaction of God is perceived in different manners by my informants. Furthermore it is negotiated with different moralities and different longings, therefore every woman gives shape to this longing in a different way. Moreover longing does not only become visible in situation in which women desire to do more. All of the women stressed that they longed for the satisfaction of God. This is however not something one is certain about, it is something one hopes to achieve.

In sum

In this chapter I provided insight in the way women experience their faith on a personal level. I showed how practicing and experiencing faith come together in the concept of *Iman*. The practice of religious dress is one of the acts of worship women do for their God. Practicing faith should be understood as a way to dwell in the world. I argued that practicing religious dress

---

[19] Interview Azizah, 05-10-2018.

[20] Interview Jamila, 03-26-2018.

should be envisioned as a way to enact moral agency. I showed that this should be understood as an embodiment of faith, in which the practice is enacted upon and through the body (as both subject and object). Practicing dress, women give shape to their desire to their longing for the satisfaction of God.

Chapter 2: "It's just a part of me": Spatial negotiations of doing dress.

I'm a bit late when I finally arrive at Nadirah's place. After I ring the bell downstairs I rush up the staircase to the first floor, where a red door is already open. Unsure about the exact house number, I hesitantly look around me at the three other doors. "Should I just enter this house?" I carefully look inside but I see nobody standing in the empty hallway of the house. Luckily, I am not left wondering for too long, as a female voice is calling me in from behind the red door. *Come in!* As I enter, a woman appears from behind the door and greets me with enthusiasm. *Welcome!* We shake hands. *My name is Nadirah.* She wears black trousers combined with an olive-green sweater, her chestnut brown hair in a little bun on the back of her head. She is not that tall. 'I am so sorry I'm late, I..' Before I finish my sentence she exclaims, *No, no, don't you worry! I was just saying to my husband, this is perfect! I was late as well,* she says laughing. *Are you up for tea?* As I take off my shoes Nadirah continues to the kitchen to prepare two cups of tea.[21]

Nadirah is a woman in her early thirties. She is married and has three children. Nadirah lives a very active life as she states herself. She considers 'being a mother' her most import 'task'. Besides this, she takes different courses and sports (kickboxing and other) on a regular basis. She speaks in an enthusiastic and powerful manner and sometimes wanders off to different topics. In the vignette above we can read how she stands behind the door while opening it for my entrance. In this situation, the front door plays an important function, as it designates the boundary between the home and outside. For Nadirah this door marks the border between where she wears her sweater and trousers and where she wears her *Niqab*. Opening the door means opening up the space to the gaze of *non-mahram* men. Standing behind the door Nadirah makes sure she is not seen without her religious dress. In this chapter I will inquire the spatial practice of dress, as practiced by my informants. I start with a brief enquiry of the anthropology of dress and gender.

Hansen (2004) discusses how dress has always been a part of anthropological studies of societies and cultures. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992, 15) define dress '...*as an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements displayed by a person in communicating with other human beings*'. Turner (2012, 486) has similarly put emphasis on the communicating function of dress. In his study on dress codes among the Kayapo of Brazil, he describes how dress was related to social status, rituals and the creation of a social order. He envisions dress as 'the social skin'; *"the surface of the body seems everywhere to be treated, not only as the boundary of the individual as a biological and psychological entity but as the frontier of the social self as well"*

---

[21] Interview Nadirah, 04-09-2018.

(Turner 2012, 486). Another important perspective is offered by Entwistle (2015,46) in her book 'The fashioned body'. She envisions 'getting dressed' as a continuous act, from the moment we learn to tie our shoes, we constantly decide about the way we want to show our bodies. Entwistle (2015,46) then focuses on the way dressing is not only about the moment of 'getting dressed', but more about the lifelong process in which we relate to others and to our own bodies.

This perception of dressing as a continuous act is discussed by Goodman e.a. (2011, 101-3) as well. They furthermore connect this to act to the expression of gender identity, conceptualizing dress as a way to perform gender identity. They define this practice as 'doing dress'. Dress has always served an important role in society to provide information about gender. However, each society or subgroup has different rules about the type of dress that is considered to be suited to a certain gender (Roach-Higgens and Eicher 1992, 8). Especially feminist anthropology theorizes the way gender is to be considered a cultural construct. They do so by dissecting 'sex', referring to the biological aspects of being either female or male, and 'gender roles' as something that is culturally variable (Mascia-Lees and Black 2016). This conceptualization, can be connected to Judith Butler's (2011) theory of performativity. She understands gender as a 'performance', in which the 'acts' suited to a certain gender are shaped by a highly regulatory frame. "*In this way gender does not only become something one is, it is something one does, an act, or more precisely a sequence of acts, a verb rather that a noun, a doing rather than a being"* (Butler 2011,25). Therefore, I consider the practice of 'doing dress' a way to enact gender identity. In the next paragraph I will examine the designation of spaces at the hand of gender segregation and the concept of *Mahram*.

Fluid boundaries of public and private space
Almila (2017, 231-42) envisions veiling as a spatial practice, in contrast to the way this often is portrayed as merely a practice of fashion and religion. She elaborates on how the spatial practice of veiling, based mainly on gender segregation, turns the concepts of private and public into fluid concepts. Where these concepts are still dominant in the debate about spaces, they are not sufficient to address the practice of spatial dressing of women who wear religious dress. (Almila 2017, 232-235). The fluid spatiality of private and public is in contrast with the way Habermas (1991) defined these concepts as polarized spheres, strongly separated since the distinction between work and family life in the liberal era. Almila, (2017,233) one of the few scholars who addresses these fluid spheres in perspective of religious dressing, shows how a space can easily become either private or public. This may occur when it is entered by someone of the opposite gender or vice versa. While Almila (2017) focuses on the concept of gender segregation, I want to note how this should be specified with the concept of *Mahram*. This

entails men that a woman cannot marry (as such a brother, a father or an uncle) or is married to already (Rivzi 1992, 6). This term is often used by my informants to designate a space as either private or public. Furthermore, my informants generally indicate these designated spaces as either 'at home' or outside. From now on I will use their terminology to address the designation of spaces with reference to gender segregation and the concept of *Mahram*. Hence, one can roughly divide spatial practices into two categories.

In the next two parts I will discuss both spaces on the basis of dressing practices. Before continuing I briefly want to note that my focus on women's sartorial practices does not mean that men do not need to cover themselves, according to the principles of most people's interpretation of *Quran* and *Hadith*. Male *Hijab* is greatly understudied. It (often) entails (according to most scholars interpretations) that men must wear a beard and must be covered from navel to knee. (Rivzi 1992, 18) In the next paragraph one can read how Zahra experiences the transition towards religious dress, as a change in which she needs to adapt, to not only a new way of dressing, but to a new way of spatial dressing as well.

The story of Zahra: Changing practices of 'doing dress'

As I showed above, when one adjusts one's style of dressing to religious dress, one needs to adapt to a new spatial practice of doing dress. Zahra's story shows the way she experienced this change.

Zahra is a woman in her late twenties. She has two sons, and lives with them and her husband in Amstelveen. Zahra is an educated woman who finished her master's degree a couple of years ago. At the moment she is a fulltime mother, devoted to take care of her two children. Zahra's transition towards religious dress marked a moment of change in her style of clothing. She tells how before wearing a *Hijab*, she was always concerned with her appearance, her hair and her clothing. This gradually changes when she starts wearing a headscarf and more loose clothing, until the moment she wears a *Khimar* and *Abaya*. She tells me how she lost her interest in clothing for a while. *At the beginning I just thought all these robes were boring, also I was pregnant at that time, what does not make you want to invest too much either.* After a while Zahra realizes that she can adjust her religious dress to her personal taste. She does this by focusing on the color and quality of the fabric of her veils, and by adding subtle details, such as fashionable glasses. Zahra considers this a process to rediscover her interest in fashion. Her interest arises as well when she starts to engage with Western fashion again, but this time, to wear at home. She did not engage in this field of fashion for a while and noticed how much it has changed. *So now I got to find out again, what is my style, what do I like, what fits me?.* [22]

---

[22] Interview Zahra, 03-06-2018.

I interpret Zahra's story as one that reveals that the transition towards religious dress should be envisioned as a process. It is not just a static change after which the practice of clothing falls right into place. This idea of a process can be related to the way Entwistle (2015, 46) considers 'getting dressed' as an ongoing process, in which *"human beings learn to live in their bodies and feel at home in them"*. In the next paragraph I will discuss how women are doing dress 'outside'.

Doing dress outside: "Looking groomed"

Nadirah, do you always wear your *Niqab* in the same manner, or do you differ in styles? *No, actually I am always wearing it in the same style, just simple, black. Sometimes I'm wearing a shawl with it, but in general I'm wearing it just simple.*[23]

In some interviews, like the interview with Nadirah, the subject of 'dress outside' was not discussed extensively, for there was not so much to say. In other stories, like Zahra (story above), women like to engage with their outside apparel and adapt their dress to a more 'personal style'. A recurring theme was the need to look 'groomed' as contrary to 'messy', as an important requirement of 'dress outside'. In general women focus more on their appearance within their home, as I discuss in the next part.

In the past twenty years a growing fashion industry in Islamic dress has emerged and provided a growing supply of fashionable Islamic dress, available online and at physical Islamic clothing stores. (Lewis e.a. 2013, 6-11). Recently much has been written about the way the Islamic dress culture has emerged through practices of commodification and consumption culture (Gökarıksel and McLarney 2010, 2, Moors 2010, Tarlo and Moors 2013), and the (online) spaces in which this Islamic dress culture is formed and shaped, such as the hijabista movement on Instagram (Shriver 2017, Waninger 2015). Two of my informants would look on Instagram for inspiration sometimes. In general I experienced that most women did not engage so actively with Islamic fashion discourse. Some considered it useful that there were a lot of online website with nice Islamic clothing. It was not considered such 'a hot topic', however. I do want to adopt an interesting question that evolves from these Islamic fashion debates, which is whether religion and fashion are to be considered an oxymoron (Gökarıksel and Secor 2012, 853; Moors and Tarlo 2013, 3-4, 201-209). Where the practices of religious dress in first instance refer to the adherence to religious moral code, dress in general serves other purposes. Such as communicating a message to the social world by the use of participation in a discourse shaped by *"aesthetics, politics and pleasures', that are shaped by the sociospatial environments"*

---

[23] Interview Nadirah 04-09-2018.

(Gokarıksel and Secor 2012, 847). According to my research women negotiate these tensions of dress by 'looking groomed'. An important goal of the informants is not to reveal any beauty 'outside', which needs to be supported by their dress. *This does not mean ,however, that I should look messy*, as Aisha[24], a university student in her twenties, states. Looking groomed is often articulated by my informants, but they realize it in different ways. Women do this for instance by taking good care of their facial skin (when they show their face in public), by matching colors of different veils or by taking care of the fabric of the veils (for instance ironing an entire *Abaya* and *Niqab*).

Whilst the aim of most women is to not show any beauty and stay within the purpose of religious dressing, sometimes subtle negotiations are made. For instance, Ruqaya[25] a young woman in her twenties and social work student, describes that it would be better if she would wear a looser *Abaya*. However, she considers herself not ready to do this yet, for she wants to look okay as well, and feels not comfortable when she wears a looser one. Here, the negotiation of aesthetics and religion becomes visible. Ruqaya herself expresses this as an oxymoron, by stating that it is actually incorrect to wear her *Abaya* like this. This shows that 'looking groomed' is a way to overcome this oxymoron, but that this can be experienced as a very thin line, that can be easily transgressed in either direction. Here I need to note a little nuance that this 'negotiation' is not experienced by all of my informants, for some of my informants respond more 'strictly' to religious commands. They do ,however, experience the need to 'look groomed', but only within the lines of religious commands.

Doing dress inside: "Feeling feminine, feeling beautiful"

Is it important to you, things like clothing, dress, fashion? *This has always been important to me, I was always concerned with my appearance. (..) Now this is still important to me, but inside the house, I think it is important to look beautiful, for my husband and myself. And when I am going to a party I like to look good.[26]*

This is a fragment of the first seconds of my interview with Nadirah. You can read how clothing has always been important to her, and how, since her transition to religious dress her interest has not disappeared, but now takes place within different spaces. By analyzing women's descriptions on what they think about clothing, it becomes visible that women position

---

[24] Interview Aisha 04-25-2018.

[25] Interview Ruqaya, 05-08-2018.

[26] Interview Nadirah, 04-09-2018.

themselves differently on this topic. Some consider it merely practical while others are dressing up every day for themselves and their husbands. Because a lot of informants like to dress up at home and for parties (with female friends and/or family), I will focus on the practice of dressing up 'at home' in this paragraph. One of the few scholars who describes this practice is Moors (2009, 41). In her extensive rapport on Dutch face veil wearers, she discusses very briefly how women, after their transition towards religious dress, still enjoy engaging with fashion and dressing up at home or for festivities. As I build on her findings, I will elaborate on the topic of fashion at home.

Fashion is often considered as a way to communicate with others in society (Turner 2012, 486, Roach-Higgens and Eicher 1992, 15). Furthermore it can be considered a way to participate in popular culture (Fiske 2010, Crane 2012). But what role does fashion play when it is not seen in this broader social sphere? Discussing what is important about dressing up at home, women often describe that dressing up is important to feel good about one's appearance. Aliya[27] experiences this as the following, she is a university student and mother of a seven-year-old daughter. *"Yes I think it is important, just to feel really feminine, I think you just feel better when you're wearing makeup and nice dress. Then I'm looking in the mirror and thinking, is that really me?"*. She connects dressing up very much to her femininity, and stresses that one might feel more feminine when wearing nice dress and make up. These expressions in which dressing up is connected to gender, are recurring in the different interviews with women who enjoy to dress up at home. I interpret the use of dress and make-up as something through which female gender becomes accentuated. Here Butler's (2011) distinction between sex and gender roles becomes important. In fact, wearing a dress or wearing make-up does not make someone more feminine, but it does according to the framework of gender roles and expression of gender, through which gender is performed in contemporary society. Judith Butler's (2011) concept might also result in the question for whom one is performing. Whereas women consider their friends and husband important people for whom they dress up, this is often followed by stating that it is important for themselves as well. Marijke, a stay-at-home-mother of a baby daughter, explains this as the following:

I'm staying at home, 6 out of 7 days, then I won't go outside. But I'm not the person that will wear a pajama on these days, I get up and either eat something or go take a shower right away. I'm going to dress up, do my hair. So always, even when my husband is not at home all day, I'm always wearing makeup. Just because, when I do not do this, I feel lazy, useless. Do you understand what I'm trying to say? Useless is kind of a big word, but if I'm dressed up, then, and

[27] Interview Aliya, 02-06-2018.

that is something psychological I guess, I feel better. But I think this is something very psychological, but it is also the way my mother taught me.[28]

Marijke thus describes that she dresses up to feel good/better about herself. While no one else might see how she is dressed, it still has meaning to her. Not many scholars write about this practice of 'dressing up at home'. Literature on fashion is mostly focused on fashion and the public sphere. I would ,however, argue that dressing up might be more close to gender identity. Even when there is no one to perform gender identity for, even then women enjoy to dress up and feel more feminine and 'good' about themselves. Further interpretation is beyond the scope of my research, however I found it relevant to discuss this topic, for it constitutes an important part of women's fashion world and can be considered an important way to enact gender identity.

Reversed spaces: "Moving between in- and outside"

I recently watched a comedian who was talking about different kinds of women, and he said something about Dutch women too. 'Dutch women, when they come home, they take off their high heels, put on their pajamas and fall down on the couch'. We are in the middle of our conversation about dress, when Nadirah shares this story, after which she looks at me with big, questioning eyes, *Is that really true?* After sharing a laugh about her description, I realize that it is kind of true and answer her, 'Yeah of course I won't go lay down on the couch, but indeed I will take off my heels and put on something comfier, so I think it is kind of true, at least in my case, haha!'[29]

Nadirah's amazement about the idea that you would put on something comfortable when coming home, makes us understand the different spatial negotiations of dressing between mainstream Dutch culture (somewhat generalized) and women who dress up at home. When women discuss the way they spatially negotiate their dress, they often consider this as 'reversed' from mainstream Dutch society, often using this literal word [30]. Aliya is one of the women who describes this in this way. She told me about her habit of taking off her makeup before she leaves the house. She loves to wear makeup and for instance watches tutorials on Youtube about this. *So when I'm leaving the house I need to clean my face, remove all the make-up,*

---

[28] Interview Marijke, 05-11-2018.

[29] Interview Nadirah, 04-09-2018.

[30] In Dutch: omgekeerd.

It's actually reversed compared to you.[31] This emic understanding of 'reversed spaces' shows how women do not consider their dressing practices entirely different from major Dutch society dressing practices. In contrast, they consider the practice of dressing up 'the same', but then enact this in a different (reversed) location.

Women often describe how people expect them not to be interested in fashion at all. Zahra describes how she is sometimes being stared down by other women when she is shopping in Western fashion stores, like Bershka. *And then they are looking at me like, 'What are you doing here?'* [32] She explains that she can understand that people are surprised and would not expect her to shop these fashion stores, but stresses as well that her religious dress is only a part of her, just as Western fashion is a part of her as well. Her words reveal as well that she often feels to be seen from one perspective 'a religious woman', I will elaborate on this social labelling in chapter four.

This photo is made by Saskia Aukema (2017), she is a Dutch artist/photographer. From 2014-2017 she photographed women who wear the *Niqab* in England and the Netherlands. She portrayed women showing with their favorite clothing they like to wear at home. Her work shows how fashion and dressing up is an important part of the lives of women who cover themselves in public.

In sum

In this chapter I contextualized the practice of religious dressing as a spatial practice. I used Almila's (2017) concept of fluid of spaces to understand how women negotiate their spatial practice of dressing. I used the emic conceptualization of 'at home' and 'outside' to refer to the way women designate spaces. I discussed how dress is practiced outside, and discussed that 'looking groomed' is a way to negotiate the apparent oxymoronic concepts of fashion and

---

[31] Interview Aliya, 02-06-2018.

[32] Interview Zahra, 06-03-2018.

religion. Furthermore I discussed how 'dressing up' at home, is important to some women who wear religious dress. More research should be done in order to understand the practice of doing dress when it is not 'seen' by the society that produces fashion. The practice of dressing up at home often described as 'reversed' from mainstream Dutch women's dress practices. I argued that it is important to understand this part of women's dress practice, in order to understand their fashion world.

Chapter 3: The transition towards religious dress within the family.

Melissa leaves the room to prepare another cup of tea in the kitchen. I recline on the comfy green couch and look around me, while talking to her little son Ibrahim. Many elements in the living room tell something about Melissa's personal life. A small flag of Egypt, the home country of her husband, is functioning as tablecloth on the little table next to the couch. On the wall a silver frame enlists an Arabic verse from the *Quran.* And when I see the big table in the back of the living room I can imagine how family diner must look like in this home. When Melissa returns we continue our conversation about religious dress. You just told me that when you go outside you wear a *Khimar*, combined with a long skirt. *Hmhm*, Melissa responds, while putting a teabag in her glass of hot water. Can you tell me how you came to wear this, how did this process look like? *Yes of course. After the birth of my first child I started wearing a small headscarf. Just a very small one. It looks a bit like a pirate-scarf, you know what I mean haha?* Haha, are those the ones that are knotted at the start of the neck? *Yes, it is just very small. I wanted to do this for a longer period of time, but this was not that easy. It was very difficult, because my husband found this very hard.* She paused. *He had the idea that people would see him as the oppressor. He is a proud Arab men and did not want that people would think of him in that way. So I decided to take it off, and for a couple of years it stayed that way.* That must have been difficult! *Jeah indeed. At a certain point I started learning more about Islam I could not deny it any longer, 'A headscarf is a part of being a Muslim'.* Melissa's hands move along when she speaks, and especially when stating this last sentence. *So I decided to inform the people around me, in particular my husband, but also the people at my job, and I decided for myself 'When summer break starts I am going to wear it'. And since the 7th of july 2003 I did!'*[33]

Melissa is a woman in her early forties. She is married and has five children, Ibrahim is her youngest son of six years old. Melissa works in a school as a speech therapist. When she met her (now) husband, she had her first experience with Islam, in which he believed. At that time, her husband did not practice his faith so much, however, Melissa became more and more interested. Step by step she started to engage with faith, which is now constituting an essential part of her life. Her story about religious dress reveals that it is not always a straight path. It shows how she negotiated her desire to wear a headscarf with the opinion of her husband not to do so. Her husband's experience of being portrayed as "the oppressor", is related to the often discussed stereotype of veiled Muslim women as oppressed (Van Es 2016, 10-16). In her story one sees how this stereotype, that is often discussed as something that is acted by society and

---

[33] Interview Melissa, 23-02-2018.

experienced on an individual level, does not just remain between society and the veiling individual. It actively shapes and impacts Melissa's husband opinion about her desire to veil. This, among other things, is where the next chapter is about, to understand the complex ways individual stories are entangled with social processes (Narayan 2012, x).

The encounter with the family: The invisible becoming visible

As I have shown in chapter one, to my informants, the transition towards religious dress evolves from a growth of interest and/or knowledge about Islam. While interest and knowledge develop within the self (and between self and supernatural), the practice of religious dress is taking place within the social world. This first moment of either speaking about the desire to wear religious dress or wearing religious dress can be envisioned as an encounter in which families meet a new side/sight of their family member. Halima, who has been introduced in chapter one, was the first one of her family to practice Islam through religious dress. The visibility of this act revealed her personal change to her family. *When I started wearing a Hijab my parents started a conversation with me about this. Before I had kept my faith for myself, but now it was visible for them as well.*[34] Halima's family wanted to make sure her intentions were 'right'. Halima told that after they saw that her intention was to worship God, they respected her choice. This respect was not a new thing, Halima tells this a unique characteristic of her family. Halima is one of the women who comes from a Muslim family in which religious dress is not a common practice.

In families where religious dress is a more common practice, the transition towards religious dress is often perceived as 'normal'. In Azizah's Muslim family, religious dress is a common practice. When I ask her about her families response when she started to wear an *Abaya*, she tells me that it was just perceived as 'normal'. *In our culture*[35], *a Jilaba*[36] *is just something normal. I was fourteen when I started wearing it, so I was a bit young. But people were not surprised, it was not like 'What are you wearing?!!' No, people would give me a compliment, but it was just normal.*[37] Her transition means a lot on personal level, but in contrary to Halima story, she and her family do not perceive it as a rupture within the family. The big difference in their stories is whether their families considered veiling a regular or irregular practice, whether is considered logical or not. In both cases the transition can be envisioned as a social change. In families that are not traditionally veiling the social change is about a rupture that needs to be

---

[34] Interview Halima, 04-09-2018.

[35] Azizah refers to the way Abayas are a common practice in her Moroccan religious family. This is of course not the case in all Moroccan contexts/families, as for instance Halima comes from a Moroccan family as well.

[36] A Jilaba is an Abaya in Moroccan style.
[37] Interview Azizah, 05-10-2018.

negotiated (I elaborate on this below). In families that traditionally do veil, it can be conceptualized as a social change as well. In general, this change comes along with the transition from girl to woman.

This transition from girl to woman has been described by Sarah. Sarah lives in the Netherlands since three years, coming from Syria. She describes how it is a common practice in her family and social network to start veiling when a girl has her first period. *I wanted to wear a headscarf because my mother and sisters did so too. They started wearing it when they were thirteen years old. I did not have my first period yet, but wanted to wear it anyway when I was thirteen.* [38] Her mother did not agree with her, for it was not 'needed' yet, because Sarah did not have her first period yet. A few days later she however helped her daughter to put on her first pink headscarf, for Sarah was very persistent and convinced of her choice. Similar practices have been described by Abu-Lughod (1986, 161-4), in her book 'Veiled Sentiments'. She did fieldwork among a Bedouin community in Egypt. In the lives of the members of the community, veiling is a dress code that it enacted by women from and until a certain age. These articulations are often connected to sexuality and the status of 'being sexual active'.

Anthropological studies that inquire the topic of family and religious dress are in most occasions referring to practices of tradition, such as Abu-Lughod's (1986) study. Hardly any scholars inquire the topic of family and religious dress when religious dress does not evolve from traditional practice. Brenner (1996) is a scholar who inquired this context. She studied Indonesian women's transitions towards religious dress practices, which occurred during the Islamic revival of Indonesia. These practices of dress did not evolve from tradition, but were perceived as a new practice. Brenner (1996, 682-4) showed the complexity families experienced when their daughter started to practice religious dress. Where moral codes are in traditional Indonesian perspective given from the parents to the children, children now started to follow a different moral code by themselves. Brenner (1996, 682-4) conceptualizes this as a rupture in the moral (dress) code of the family. Analyzing the different stories of my participants, I notice how religious dress was in ten (out of seventeen) stories perceived as a rupture. In these stories religious dress was considered an irregular or contested choice. This rupture often was followed by resistance of the parents or husband of the woman. I elaborate below on the various motivations families had to resist to their daughters choice to veil.

Narratives of rupture and resistance

When the transition towards religious dress was experienced as a rupture, families had different motivations and argumentations with which they responded. In general, religious

---

[38] Interview Sarah, 04-12-2018.

dress was perceived as a rupture when Islamic beliefs differed on the topic, when families perceived religious dress connoted with the stereotype of 'oppressed' and when they were afraid of the safety of their daughter/wife as they became visible as a Muslim in public space. This categorization is of course not fulfilling to address the family context and narratives of rupture and resistance. I did not do family interviews, and my aim is not to provide an overview of what happened within this dynamic. I will however elaborate on each 'category' in order to understand the way individual processes are entangled with different and bigger (social) processes.

Jamila is a woman in her early thirties, last Ramadan she gave birth to her second child. She comes from a Muslim family that she describes as 'not too involved with practicing faith'. She tells how she has ignored Islam for a long time, but that it kept pulling her attention from time to time. At age 24 she started to deepen her knowledge. A couple of years later she was convinced and went after it. She then started practicing faith, and wearing religious dress. A headscarf was the first veil she wore. After a couple of months she followed her desire to cover more and started wearing a *Khimar*. Her family had a hard time to accept her transition towards religious dress. *They were really bothered by my choice to wear it, I really had to fight for it. We had a lot of trouble, a lot of conflicts.* Jamila tells that it became better after a while. *They will always make comments, for they still do not agree, but is not a conflict anymore.*[39] Jamila considers the difference in lifestyle between her and her parents an important reason why they disagree with her sartorial practices. In her personal search to Islam she has developed a different manner of practicing faith (in comparison to her family). Jamila's story shows how not only converts might experience resistance of their parents when they start to cover. It shows how when ideas about religious dress differ, this can become a topic of controversy as well. This micro-conflict refers to a bigger controversy within Islam about the correct practice of religious dress. There are many different schools of thought, that have different ways of relying and interpreting the *Quran* (and in most cases: *Hadith*). Out of these different schools of thought that vary in opinions on, if, what and how a woman should cover. (Cornell University Library, 2018). It is beyond the scope of this research to address this debate, because it is too diverse and big to address in a suiting manner. It is however important to note that for all kinds of veiling, scholars rely on (different) religious texts. For instance the debate on *Niqab* is often set aside with the argument that it is not obliged in Islam. There are however sufficient scholars that argue, by relying on religious texts, that it either is a recommended or obliged practice. (Fathi 2017).

---

[39] Interview Jamila, 03-26-2018.

Another theme in which bigger social processes and individual experiences come together is the stereotype of 'oppressed' as often associated with Islamic dress in Dutch society. I will explain this at the hand of Jasmijn's story. Jasmijn has been introduced in the introduction. She converted at the age of 21. An old high school friend of her, in this research known as Aliya, had started practicing her faith. Via her, she came in touch with Islam and became interested. After she spoke the *Shahada* she wanted to start wearing religious dress right away. After a while she found the courage to do so, and started wearing an *Abaya* and *Khimar*. She took the train home that day, and at the station she encountered her father for the first time in her new appearance. *He said to me, 'Congratulations!, I am however very curious how your mother will respond..* They walked inside the house where she encountered her mother for the first time in her new garment. *When I entered the house my mother started crying. She exclaimed 'I have raised you with so much freedom, and now you are going to wear this?!*[40] This emotional moment shows how Jasmijn's mother considers her choice to wear religious dress in contrast with her perception of 'freedom'. A similar notion was expressed by Melissa's husband (described in the beginning of the chapter). He felt that religious dress associates with the idea that it was oppressed by one's husband. The stereotype of the veiled Muslim women as 'oppressed', is often discussed in Dutch media and politics. Van Es (2016) discussed how this stereotype was commonly used in Dutch media until 2005, when it was exchanged for the stereotype of the Muslim women as dangerous.[41] While the stereotype is appearing less in media, the stories of Jasmijn and Melissa show how it is still a familiar notion. Gustavssons e.a. (2016) show how veiling is often associated with a similar notion, the one of unfreedom. They argue that this is a recurring notion within the public debate and within popular (liberal) attitudes in the Netherlands. It is beyond the scope of this research to dive into this debate. It is however peculiar to see that the stereotype of 'oppressed' is not only enacted within public space, but becomes an important motivation for resistance in private sphere of the family.

The third response concerns resistance fueled by fear and anxiety about the safety of their daughter/wife. Families were afraid that their daughters would be harassed or threatened by people since they became so visible as Muslim. Aliya is a woman in her twenties, she recently finished her master in multilingualism. She has a daughter of seven years old. Aliya explains how her mother responded with strong resistance when she discussed her desire to wear a *Niqab*. Her mother was afraid that something would happen to her. Aliya however kept wearing it, and after a while her mother became more comfortable with her daughters dress, realizing

---

[40] Interview Jasmijn, 04-24-2018.

[41] Van Es (2016) considers the murder of Theo van Gogh, a Dutch Islam critic, the moment in which this occurred. It led to the arrest of an terrorist network, of which not only men but also (veiled) women were a part. Women were no longer only portrayed as powerless, but also as dangerous.

that she probably would be safe. [42] A similar story was discussed by Hafsah, she is a woman in her twenties who works as a doctor's assistant. She explained how her mother needed to reassure her father that it would be okay if she would wear a *Hijab* to school. *My father's first response was, 'No, you are young, you better wait a little longer'. (…) After all he was just afraid I was getting bullied or something.*[43] These fears are however not entirely an imagined reality, statics from anti-discrimination offices show how discrimination occurs towards veiled Muslim women. (Mink and Bon 2016, 25) These three motivations for resistance show various connections with smaller and bigger processes.

Women's negotiations of a rupture within family

Melissa, how did your parents respond to your choice to wear religious dress? She shakes her head a little. *It is a long time ago, I do not remember exactly how my mother responded. I do remember that my dad used to say things like; 'You, with your head scarves...'So at a certain point I decided, we can take off our headscarves when he and his wife are visiting us.* Okay, so you and you daughters then took off your headscarves*? Jeah, but then he started complaining about our long skirts. Melissa's voice becomes more determined. Well. I am not going to put on a mini-skirt when he comes to visit me.*

In the beginning of this chapter, one reads how Melissa negotiated her husband's opinion by taking off her headscarf for a while. In perspective of her father, she again adapts her dress in order to meet his opinion. It shows how she negotiates both desires and is willing to adapt her dress a little, but also stays true to her conviction when he again resists to her (adapted) dress. In the previous paragraph I have shown with which motivations the transition towards religious dress can be responded with resistance. In this paragraph, I elaborate on the way women negotiate this resistance.

Analyzing stories of rupture, I notice how women need to grapple with the ostensible incompatible moralities that evolve from both relations (with supernatural and family). For some women, like Melissa, this was a reason to postpone the moment she wanted to start religious dress. Similar to Jasmijn, who adapted her dress to a *"less radical appearance"* , too please her mother. When I ask Jamila about her parents' response to her *Niqab*, she explains that has not find the courage to tell them. When she enters her parents' house, she takes off her face-veil.

---

[42] Interview Aliya, 06-02-2018.

[43] Interview Hafsah, 05-08-2018.

To be honest.. I did not find the courage yet to tell them. Now they finally accepted my Khimar, just imagining that I should enter such a fight again… I just do not know if I am having the strength right now to do so, I'm just leaving it the way it is, waiting for the right moment. I can imagine that must be hard. *Yes, but it is just my own weakness, you know? I should just stand up and say, 'This is my life'.* She pauses. *But that is somehow really hard.*[44]

Her story shows how she experiences conflicting moralities in perspective of her religious dress. For now, Jamila negotiates this by not showing them her change of dress. These different ways of negotiation offer insight in the different ways women negotiate the two relations of family and faith. As scholars of relational autonomy have shown, human beings are embedded in a social world. Western philosophy has for a long time revolved around the idea of autonomy as an individual process. To truly understand the human being and its process of negotiation, we should examine not only the self but also the social world in which it partakes. (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000,4). As Brenner's (1996, 682-4) examination has shown, we should elaborate on relations as well as moral codes that evolve from those. The concept of morality, as discussed by Jackson (2012), might also enhance our understanding of the negotiation. It is not merely the different relations that are negotiated, for it revolves around the different/conflicting moral codes within these relations. Jackson (2012, 230) explains this as the following *"Autonomy may thus refer to self-governance, in which a person is true to his or her own moral code, and to collective autonomy, in which a group seeks to determine its destiny according to its own laws, customs and values."* To be true to one's own moral code and to collective autonomy when those are in contrast, is a complex task, if not, impossible. Women all negotiate this in a different way, by adapting to family, by choosing for their own moral code, by postponing religious dress or by not sharing religious dress with family. This shows how women are indeed embedded social beings. Furthermore it shows how women negotiate conflicting moralities in a different way. By addressing this negotiation we come to know that religious dress is not merely taking place on a personal level, it takes place within and is responded and negotiated by the social (and vice versa) as well.

Zigon (2014,21) focuses on anthropological theory on morality and relations. He envisions the human being as a relational being, referring to the way humans are entangled within relationships in the world. He proposes the concept of assemblage as suiting to address the fuzzy world of morality. *"The value of assemblage theory to anthropological analyses of moralities is that it does not assume the existence of moral totalities in the world and thus provides a more nuanced perspective for understanding the fuzzy, fragmentary and oftentimes*

---

[44] Interview Jamila, 03-26-2018.

contradictory moral milieu most often characteristic of any singular social location, situation or experience (Zigon 2014, 17)". It points attention to the way moral practice cannot be understood in a singular way. If we understand human-beings as socially embedded in a bigger social context, it becomes merely logical that every negotiation is different, for all moral assemblages are constituted by different parts and contexts. As I have shown, some themes are recurring in family responses, in this one is able to see how women live in the same societal context.

In general, women eventually adhere to the moral code of Islam above their families moral code. This is however not an easy task, as I have shown above. Interviewing individual women, I did not came to know a lot about the way women relate to their families in general. I merely came to know about the role their family played in their process of religious dress. Ribbens McCartney (2012) discusses the different ways through which people relate to their families. Whereas some consider family merely a collection of individuals or individuals-in-relationships, others consider family as having a shared sense strongly connected to identity, evoking feelings of belonging. This is important to note when looking at the way women negotiate family and practice faith. Experiences of negotiation are different for relations to families are perceived and experienced different as well. Beside the logical differences of experiences of family, women consider complexity in family sphere often as painful and hard. In the first place this touches them on a personal level. Furthermore women consider it an important Islamic duty to maintain good family ties as well.

In most occasions families start to adapt to their member's new apparel, and conflicts move back to the background as time goes by. Petra is a Dutch convert in her thirties and mother of two young children. She describes how her (extended) family was at first very resistant to her choice. After a while her family began to realize that she was still the same person. *At a certain moment they experience that I'm still the same 'Petra'. So they simply see that I'm the same, have the same humor. That I have changed at certain points, but my character did not change.* She seems to say that her family experienced at first that she had changed, but realized after a while that the biggest part of her change (for them) was merely her 'social skin'[45]. While Petra in first case seemed like she had become a different 'social' person, it appeared to be mainly the 'skin' that had changed.

In sum

In this chapter I analyzed the transition towards religious dress from the perspective of family responses. I elaborated on the perspective of the transition as a rupture, and examined how

---

[45] Turner (2012) explains how dress is to be understood as social skin, facilitating as the frontier of the social self.

narratives of resistance are shaped by various motivations. Furthermore I have shown how we should understand the transition towards religious dress as a transition within moral live, and that this resonate with/against the moral codes in the social. On the basis of Zigon (2014) we begin to understand how moral life is constituted by various actors. This concept helps us to understand the complex ways small and bigger processes become connected. Furthermore it shows the very complexity of grappling with simultaneous conflicting moral codes.

Chapter 4: Changing experiences in public space and the politics of visibility.

As we step out of the coffee house, the world appears just as grey as before we went in. The green parasols of the coffeehouse contrast the grey clouds in the sky and grey streets. The wind blows fiercely and makes Azizah's veils dance around her. We start our walk back towards the train station chatting about what we are going to do later that day. Azizah tells that she will have a dinner party at her sister's place in Belgium. We walk over the bridge, where the sidewalk is so narrow we need to walk behind each other when people are coming from the opposite direction. We continue our talk while we wait for the traffic lights to cross the street. The light becomes green and we start walking again, just like the people at the other side of the road in the opposite direction. When we are on the other side Azizah asks me, *Did you hear what she said?* I tell her I did not. *She said, 'she must be insane'".* We continue our walk while we talk about the situation. *Yeah this happens often, I however really like how kids respond. When I bring my children to school, they all start screaming 'A ghost!' This makes me laugh. Sometimes they are afraid as well, then I just show my face briefly, so that they will know I am just another mother.* The train station already appears in the distance, at the corner of the street we're crossing three young Muslim girls, wearing headscarves. They are staring at us until we pass them. When we pass, Azizah greets them with '*Salaam Alaikum',* the girls respond with '*Walaaikum Salaam'.* When we reach the station, we say goodbye and our paths diverge[46].

Azizah is married and has three children. She is a born Muslim who is engaged with her faith since her childhood. Wearing a *Niqab* is an important part of her faith. In her daily life she takes care of her children. She practices Islamic healing, and hopes to open her own clinic one day. The situation described above, occurred after the interview I had with Azizah. It captures two aspects of being a visible Muslim in public space. This is where the next chapter is about, to examine the transition towards religious dress as one that lead to a changing experience of public space as well. I will start with a brief theoretical examination of the politics of visibility and religious dress.

Religious dress in public space 'politics of visibility'.
Almila (2017, 4-8) analyzes how dress has always been a subject of government control. Direct government interference with dress has recently returned in the Netherlands, prohibiting face veiling in certain public spaces as hospitals, schools and public transportation (NRC , Dool and Geels 2018). The focus of this chapter lies however on the more subtle ways of politics of dress in public sphere. Franklin (2015, 67-68) discusses one of these subtle ways in which politics on dress become visible. He examines how dress codes are communicated via public discourse like

---

[46] Fieldnotes, 05-10-2018.

television shows. He states that subtle messages are representing the current gender politics of what (not) to wear in public sphere. Franklin (2015, 67-8) shows this by analyzing make-over shows, which reveal the way women and men should look. Feminist scholars of dress often connect these gendered politics, by examining the way it is enacted. They argue that one of these ways is through 'the male gaze'. This has been described by Ponterotto (2016, 148) *"a gaze that includes a powerful mechanism which subjects women, and makes their bodies to be judged and valued by men."* As I will show in this chapter, women experience relief about the absence of the male gaze. This gaze is however interchanged for a different one. I will show how women grapple with experiences of otherness. Jouili (2009,457) discusses this otherness in relation to 'religious bodies', *"the body can become the site of social difference and public exclusion"*. This stigmatization of religious bodies, is a recurring theme in scholarly articles, focusing on the way these bodies become like an image that is often unpacked and understood as 'other, oppressed, etc.' (Macdonald, 2006, 8). Sturken and Cartwright (2009, 322-325) note how in postmodern societies the visual culture strongly dominates the social space, by the powerful practice of 'looking', which I interpret as ways to enact practices of in- and exclusion. I do not aim to state that stigmatization of religious bodies is always occurring in public space or that this is a central belief that all Dutch society members (who are not Muslim) are convinced about. My ethnographic data ,however, shows that most women experience in more or less subtle ways practices of exclusion and othering. Hallam and Street (2000,4) discuss the concept of otherness from the perspective of the division between other and self. "*The representation of the other is integrally related to the representation of the self*", one category evolves from the other and vice versa. In this chapter I will inquire in what ways the experience of otherness relates to the concept of belonging, and use Miller (2003) and Yuval-Davis (2006) to explain this.

Being visible as a Muslim: Belonging to Muslim community.
For some of my informants, like Melissa, wearing religious dress legitimizes their Arabic greeting. As a Dutch convert she was not recognized as a fellow Muslim before she wore religious dress. She feels more freely to greet people in Arabic since she wears it. *Before when I said something like 'Assalam Aleikum", I felt as if people were looking at me like, 'Mind your own business'.* [47] Kuppinger (2014, 630) describes how this greeting is a specific practice, through which shared Muslimness becomes embodied. This practice of recognition among visible Muslims is also being discussed by Tarlo (2007, 141) with her research among *Hijab* wearers in London. She discusses this as a practice that reinforces feelings of belonging with the global community of Muslims (*Ummah*).

---

[47] Interview Melissa, 23-02-2018.

Another informant, Marijke, described a contrary feeling. Marijke covers her body entirely, including her face and eyes. Marijke noticed that other (visible) Muslims sometimes look at her in an angry way. *As if they feel that I am ruining the Muslim reputation for them.* [48] As described before, Islamic dress is a contested topic within the Muslim *Ummah*. Hence, wearing religious Islamic attire might evoke inclusion in a Muslim community but can result in experiences of exclusion as well, referring to the bigger controversy on religious dress within the Muslim *Ummah*.

Being visible as a Muslima: Changing experiences of the male gaze

Alike other women, Zahra experiences how men treat her in a different way since she started to wear a *Khimar* and *Abaya*. She tells about it in an enthusiastic manner. *In the five years that I have been wearing this, I've only been approached by a men once, just once! It is just like they're seeing a potato in front on them, you know? It is really nice.* Zahra tells that she got used to this new experience in public spaces, but becomes aware of the actual difference when she is walking with her nieces in the city. *Then I remember the way it used to be! Men can be annoying sometimes..* While this different treatment is not the aim of women, they often describe this as a positive effect that comes along with veiling. This resonance is discussed as something that evolves from the material of the veil, as Zahra stated *It really does its function!* [49] It is often described as '*protecting*' as well, protected from 'incorrect' looks of men.

Zahra's story, which is shared in great unanimity, tells us something about the way women might experience the treatment of their bodies in public space, as I discussed in the theoretical part as well. Zine's (2006) study is about the experience of religious dress among Muslim women in a Canadian Muslim school. She states that 'to cover' is to perform one's gender in a different way. Where gender is performed in different attire, it is looked at differently by men as well (Zine 2006, 243). This absence of the male gaze is often discussed by my informants as a great relief. This shows how the politics of visibility and dress can be experienced as 'oppressive' in its subtle ways.

Interlude: Angelika Böck and her work "Imagine me"

'What kind of person do you imagine when you see me?' This was the question Böck (2012,170) asked at people in Yemen[50], wearing a full body veil. People had various imaginations of who she was. Their descriptions were very detailed, like the one below. It was described by an elderly businessmen *"This woman is definitely no housewife. She has completed her studies and works. She is confident, independent and eager. She is not rich, has a mobile phone but no car. She*

---

[48] Interview Marijke, 05-11-2018.
[49] Interview Zahra, 06-03-2018.
[50] In Yemen, a full body veil, is a relatively common way of dressing.

does what she wants and maintain an opinion. She is believing Muslim but not devout one. She loves nature and everything beautiful. She hates violence. Her parents were often disputing. She has beautiful eyes and a nice nose, medium length black hair and light skin. She loves to sing under the shower. She is reasonably and healthy. She has no children yet. She is between 20 and 30 years old." This vivid description came from a men who imagined her based on her posture, way of standing, way of moving, but without seeing facial and bodily features. Böck (2012, 176) decided to do the same experiment in Germany. She was amazed by the different imagination people had, compared to the people in Yemen. Where people's imaginations in Yemen were extended and in depth, imaginations in Germany were limited to a couple of words. Some with tolerance, some with intolerance, however no imaginations were about her actual life and being. Her work shows how, in a context where religious dressing is familiar, people are able to look beyond religious dress and see the human aspects through different notions and senses (besides looking and seeing).

Being a visible Muslim: Experiences of otherness and exclusion.

Where many women do not experience the male gaze anymore, this seems to be interchanged for a different gaze, that turns them into a societal "other". I will discuss these different experiences in the next part. Before doing so, I want to note that not all my informants have these experiences. Some of my informants describe the public space they move in as positive, in which they feel normal and accepted. Almost all women however have a 'story' on this topic, a situation in which they felt like an 'other', in which they were stared at, scolded at, threatened or physically harassed. The great diversity on experiences on this public space might be caused by the diverse group of individual research participants my research relies on, coming from different background, wearing different kinds of religious dress and living in different cities and villages. Women who experience the public sphere as positive towards them often ascribe this to their own attitude, as Sahar states *When you just smile, you do not give someone the opportunity to think about you in a bad manner.* [51] Another interpretation women give to these differences is the either rural or urban space they inhabit. Urban spaces are often discussed as more accepting towards the diverse expressions of visible religion. The experience of public space might also depend on the kind of religious dress a woman wears. In general, the five informants who wear a *Niqab*, experienced more fierce practices of exclusion, like being scolded at or being physically harassed. This is very different per woman as well, while Nadirah describes that she hardly experiences negative situations, Jamila and Amber experience(d) excluding practices on a daily basis. Amber, who has been introduced in chapter one, moved to the United Kingdom, the negative experiences that she had since she wore her *Niqab*, were an

---

[51] Interview Sahar, 05-01-2018.

important reason to migrate. She describes how not a day went by without being scolded at.[52] In the next part I will discuss the story of two women, Jamila, who plans to migrate to an Islamic country and Aisha, who negotiates the stereotype of "otherness" at her work. With these stories I aim to show the very diverse but somehow connected experiences of otherness that are experienced by some of my informants.

Personal negotiations of the stereotype of otherness

Aisha is a woman in her twenties. She studies health sciences at the university of Rotterdam, where she works as well. Her work is important to her, including the way people look at her at work. At the moment she is trying to wear a *Khimar*, instead of wearing an *Abaya* and a headscarf. *Recently a friend of mine started wearing a Khimar, and for her it's actually quite easy. So I started thinking, 'if it is that easy for her, why shouldn't I be able to wear it?' In this way I can be a little step closer to the satisfaction of Allah.* At the moment Aisha wears her desired dress, the *Khimar*, three days out of seven. She specifically describes that she feels uncomfortable when she wears it at work. *I am the only non-Dutch, and the only one who wears a headscarf. I just feel like if I went to wear a Khimar, I would feel even more of an outsider there. This is something that really is my own feeling, because they are very kind people.* She explains that she does not want to stretch the acceptance of her colleagues, by looking even more 'orthodox'[53].

In her story one notices how Aisha negotiates her desire to get closer to the satisfaction of God, with her feeling of 'being different' when wearing a *Khimar* at her work. She is afraid that the 'orthodox image' will impact the relation between her and her colleagues. For she considers this a very important job, she decides not to wear it at work. Her story shows her awareness of the societal image of religious dress, and how she anticipates on her perception of how her colleagues will look at her. While she did not experience actual exclusion at her work, she carefully pays attention that it will not happen. Her story shows how the politics of visibility, that concerns the stigmatization of (Islamic) religious bodies, affect her personal moral negotiation. While her desire is to do more for God, to strive for his satisfaction, this is not an easy task when this act is not perceived as the right moral thing to do in the broader societal opinion. Zahra experienced a similar thing. She described that she felt like she excluded herself from Dutch society, when she put on her headscarf. She stated how before she always had been ambitious, but felt that she needed to 'hand in' a part of this, when she started wearing religious

---

[52] Interview Amber, 05-09-2018
[53] Interview Aisha, 04-25-2018.

dress. It shows, as I have discussed in different chapters, how a choice within one relation (such as *Iman*) can evoke friction within others, as in this case, the relation with broader society.

Negotiating experiences of non-belonging

A very different story of a woman who experiences direct practices of exclusion in her daily life, is the story of Jamila. Jamila is a mother of two children and lives in the South of the Netherlands. She experiences exclusion in the public space very directly, by the way she is scolded and stared at when she goes outside. These responses make her feel unsafe, and she does not go outside anymore without her husband. Jamila discusses how these responses touch her on a personal level.

This response of people, it is just very painful. It becomes so clear that you just not belong here. But I was born and raised here, I'm a Dutch person too. (..) If I would be alone than it would not matter to me, but I just think it is terrible to my child, you know? Growing up in the Netherlands I always experienced that we were different, that, in the end, we would always be second class citizens, because we have parents who are not from this country. But now, now I wear a face-veil, this is even more, and I just do not want my child to feel this way. (..) So this will not happen, we will not raise him here.

This quote does not need much explanation, it shows the pain that emerges from daily experiences of exclusion. It shows how otherness and exclusion have always been a theme in Jamila's life, where she first experienced to be an 'other', because of her "foreign parents", she now experiences this through her religious dress. Jamila infers that she does not belong, a similar expression is stated by Marijke and Amber, who want to or migrated from the Netherlands. The decision to migrate shows the weighty impact the practices of otherness and exclusion have in the lives of the women. Furthermore it shows the conflicts that arise on the terrain of belonging, as Jamila stretched in a literal way. Yuval-Davis (2006 ,197) defines belonging as the following *"Belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling "at home" and, and about feeling "safe"".* These elements seem to be lacking, as Jamila states later on in the interview *"It makes me feel unsafe as well, I never go outside without my husband anymore".* Miller (2003) discusses belonging at the hand of three "senses". The first sense concerns social connections to a community or certain people. Historical connections as in past or particular traditions, are described by Miller (2003) as the second sense. The last sense of belonging is the geographical connection to a certain locality. She describes how we are all belonging to some extend in at least one of these three senses. While Jamila was born and raised in the Netherlands, and thus might experience a historical and geographical connection to the country, this connection is troubled through the complexity experienced in the first "sense" of belonging.

She feels that she is not a part of the social community anymore. Miller (2003, 218) discusses how belonging is an important source of well-being and has a strong ontological value. This is discussed by Jackson as well (1995, 169), in his contemplations about "the home", which he conceptualizes as *"the balance people try to look for between the world they call their own and the world they see as 'other'".* This can be connected to the stories of the women. While they experience to have become an 'other', the world they inhabit has become "other" to them simultaneously. In search for a world they can call their own, they leave the Netherlands, and hope to find a country that accepts them for the thing that already provides them belonging right now: their (practice of) faith.

In sum

Becoming visible as a Muslim, one needs to grapple with different politics of visibility and looking. I argued that this different experience occurs on the terrain of being a visible Muslim to other Muslims, a different experience of the (male) gaze and in some occasions through practices of othering and exclusion. I focused on the later in order to understand the complex desires to both be accepted within society and fulfill one's religious commands. Covering one's body might evoke senses of belonging on the terrain of *Iman* as well as with the *Ummah*, it might evoke experiences of non-belonging in Dutch society.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this conclusion I will briefly summarize the main findings of my research. After this I will describe the general conclusion. In the second part I will briefly discuss my research on a more methodological level and discuss its main limitations. I will conclude with some recommendations for future research.

- Faith (*iman*): In chapter one I examined religious experience and practice. I argued that they become entangled in the concept of *iman*, as it refers to the connection with God and the practice of faith that enhances this connection. Religious dress is considered one of the acts of worship, as it is one of the ways in which women practice their faith. I followed Mahmood's (2005) argument on embodiment and envisioned religious dress as an enactment of moral agency. I conceptualized as a way to dwell in the world, a process of being and becoming, in which the human being seeks for more of the satisfaction of God.

- Fashion: In chapter two I contextualized the practice of religious dress as a fluid spatial practice, that relies on gender segregation (and whether people of the male gender are considered *Mahram* or not). I enabled Goodman et al. (2011)'s concept of 'doing dress' and Judith Butler's (2011) concept of 'gender performativity' to show that in both spaces (outside and at home) gender is performed, but in a different manner. I argued how women themselves consider these practices 'reversed' from mainstream Dutch women's sartorial practices. Furthermore I elaborated on the practice of 'dressing up at home', which I interpreted as important for the performance of female gender.

- Family: In chapter three I examined the transition towards religious dress as a social change. I argued that this social change can be experienced as a rupture, when the change is not in line with family's tradition/morality on dress, following Brenner's (1996) argumentation. I have showed how the stereotypes about religious dress recur in the private sphere of the family, and permeate family members opinion about their daughter's decision to veil. Furthermore I examined this rupture, by providing a brief analysis on different negotiations of family responses. I showed the very complexity that may evolve from this negotiation, since women need to negotiate different relations and moral codes in their personal transition towards religious dress.

- Society: In chapter four I argued that the transition towards religious dress might lead to a different experience of public space, for women are looked at and judged from different politics of visibility and dress. I showed that the change leads to a different

experience of, being visible to other Muslim, a decrease of the male gaze, that is exchanged for an 'othering' gaze. I focused on two different negotiations of othering, a subtle negotiation of perceived othering and a story of experienced non-belonging that sometimes leads to the desire to migrate. With this chapter I showed how women relate to society in their transition towards religious dress.

The general conclusion of my work (and answer to my research question) is that, in order to understand the transition towards religious dress, we should look as at the different relations in which this transition resonates. Where the change first and foremost takes places within the relation of human and supernatural, it is responded by the social world women inhabit. At the hand of Zigon's (2014) concept of 'assemblage', I showed that moral life does not evolve from merely one relation or moral code, but is shaped and formed in various ones (that are interconnected). This enables us to understand the possible challenges a woman might experience in her transition towards religious dress, when she needs to negotiate conflicting moralities. Furthermore I argued that belonging and non-belonging may become present simultaneously in the transition towards religious dress. Where one might experience belonging in the transition towards religious dress within the human-supernatural relation, someone might experience non-belonging simultaneously within family or society.

Discussion: Limitations and future research

Anthropology, with its aim to describe the world from perspective of its research participants, puts itself in a complex task. At least, while writing this thesis I questioned myself so many times 'How to formulate one argument of a these very diverse experiences of being-in-the-world?' I felt friction finding a balance between the diverse experience and their commonalities.

Doing research on a broad theme such as 'the experience of religious dress' has shown to have its pitfalls and possibilities, most certainly when this topic needs to be inquired within a short period of three months of fieldwork. One of the biggest pitfalls of my work is the absence of participant observation, what makes my work rely on (mostly) two methods of research (interview and literature). The absence of this facet is also recognizable in the way I rely mostly on linguistic articulations of experience. Through this, I was not able to perceive how women's speaking and acting might differ for instance. The interviewing method was however suiting to inquire information on such a specific personal topic, and I noticed that women that participated were very open and honest.

My work is rather broad what led to sometime weakly articulated concepts or descriptions of certain research themes. It leaves many questions unanswered. This however served the

purpose of inquiring a more broad understanding of how different experience relate and together shape the experience of wearing religious dress.

In perspective of future research, I would recommend an inquiry of the transition towards religious dress and family perspectives. I encountered hardly any literature on this topic. Knowledge about this will enables us (academic and social) to understand the practice of religious dress in a better way. Another topic that I would recommend as something that needs further inquire, is the topic of 'dressing up at home'. An inquire of this practice would enhance an understanding of religious dress as a spatial practice. Furthermore it might challenge our understanding of the meaning of fashion.

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1986. *Veiled sentiments: Honor and poetry in a Bedouin society*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Al-Saji, Alia. 2010. "The racialization of Muslim veils: A philosophical analysis". *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 36 no. 8:875-902.

Almila, Anna-Mari. 2017. "Veiling, gender and space. On the fluidity of 'public' and 'private'." In *The Routledge International Handbook to Veils and Veiling,* edited by Anna-Mari Almila and David Inglis: 231-246. New York: Routledge.

Asad, Talal. 2006. "French Secularism and the Islamic Veil Affair". *Hedgehog Review* 8 no. 1/2: 93-107.

Aukema, Saskia. 2017. *Veiled*. Eindhoven: Uitgeverij Lecturis.

Barnard, Malcolm. 2013. *Fashion as communication*. London: Routledge.

Bernard, H. Russel. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology : Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. United Kingdom: Altamira Press.

Böck, Angelika. 2012. "Looking at me, are you? Social status and the veil". *Journal of International Women's Studies* 13 no. 5:170-179.

Brenner, Suzanne. 1996. "Reconstructing self and society: Javanese Muslim women and 'the veil'". *American Ethnologist* 23 no. 4:673-697.

Butler, Judith. 2011. *Bodies that matter. On the discursive limits of 'sex'.* London: Routledge.

Connell, R. W. and Messerschmidt, J. W. 2005. "Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept". *Gender & society 19* no. 6:829-859.

Cornell University Library. "Women in Islam and Muslim Realms: Dress Code." Last modified 06-18-2018, http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=221770&p=2559149

Crane, Diana. 2012. *Fashion and its social agendas: Class, gender, and identity in clothing.* London: University of Chicago Press.

Deeb, Lara. 2006. *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and public piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Deeb, Lara. 2015. "Thinking piety and the everyday together: A response to Fadil and Fernando." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5 no. 2: 93-96.

Den Dool, van Pim and Maartje Geels. "Ook eerste kamer keurt boerkaverbod goed." NRC, June 26, 2018. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/06/26/ook-eerste-kamer-keurt-boerkaverbod-goed-a1607978

Dessing, Nathal M., Nadia Jeldtoft, Jorgen S. Nielsen, and Linda Woodhead. Eds. 2016. *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe*. London: Routledge.

Durkheim, Émile and Joseph Ward Swain. 2008. *The elementary forms of the religious life*. New York: Dover Publications.

Entwistle, Joanne. 2015. *The fashioned body: Fashion, dress and social theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fadil, Nadia. 2011. "Not-/unveiling as an ethical practice". *Feminist Review* 98 no.1: 83-109.

Fadil, Nadia and Fernando, Mayanti. 2015. "Rediscovering the 'everyday' Muslim: Notes on an anthropological divide." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5 no. 2: 59-88.

Fathi, Sabrine. "Het gedachtegoed achter de Niqab" (Bachelor's thesis, 2017).

Fiske, John. 2010. *Understanding popular culture*. London: Routledge.

Franklin, M.I. 2015. "Veil Dressing and the Gender Geopolitics of 'What Not to Wear'". In *Transcultural Identity Constructions in a Changing World*, edited by Irene Nordin Gilsenan, 55-79. Frankfurt: PL Academic Research.

Goodman, Jill, Greg Knotts, and Jeanne Jackson. 2011. "Doing Dress and the Construction of Women's Gender Identity". *Journal of Occupational Science* 14 no. 2: 100-107.

Gökarıksel, Banu. 2009. "Beyond the officially sacred: religion, secularism, and the body in the production of subjectivity". *Social & Cultural Geography* 10 no. 6: 657-674.

Gökarıksel, Banu and Ellen McLarney.2010. "Introduction: Muslim women, consumer capitalism, and the islamic culture industry". *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6 no.3: 1-18.

Gökarıksel, Banu and Anna Secor. 2012. "'Even I was tempted': The moral ambivalence and ethical practice of veiling-fashion in Turkey". *Annuals of the Association of American Geographers* 102 no.4: 847-862.

Gustavsson, Gina, Jolanda Van der Noll and Ralph Sundberg. 2016. "Opposing the veil in the name of liberalism: popular attitudes to liberalism and Muslim veiling in the Netherlands." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39 no. 10: 1719-1737.

Habermas, Jürgen. (1962) 1991. *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: MIT press.

Hansen, Karen T. 2004. "The world in dress: Anthropological perspectives on clothing, fashion, and culture". *Annual Review of Anthropology 33*: 369-392.

Hallam, Elizabeth and Brian Street. Eds. 2013. *Cultural encounters: Representing otherness*. London: Routledge.

Jackson, Michael. 1995. *At home in the World*. London: Duke University Press.

Jackson, Michael. 2012. *Lifeworlds: Essays in existential anthropology*. London: University of Chicago Press.

Jouili, Jeanette. 2009. "Negotiating secular boundaries: Pious micro-practices of Muslim women in French and German public spheres". *Social Anthropology* 17 no. 4: 455-470.

Kuppinger, Petra. 2014. "Flexible topographies: Muslim spaces in a German cityscape". *Social and Cultural Geography* 15 no. 6: 627-644.

Lewis, Reina. Ed. 2013. *Modest fashion: Styling bodies, mediating faith*. London: IB Tauris.

Lewis, Reina. 2015. *Muslim fashion: contemporary style cultures*. Duke University Press: Durham.

Macdonald, Myra. 2006. "Muslim Women and the Veil". *Feminist Media Studies* 6 no.1: 7-23.

Mackenzie, Catriona and Natalie Stoljar. Eds. 2000. *Relational autonomy: Feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Mahmood, Saba. 2008. "Feminist theory and the Egyptian Islamic Revival". *Cultural Anthropology* 16 no. 2: 2O2-236.

Mahmood, Saba. (2005) 2011. *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Mascia-Lees, Frances E. and Nancy J. Black. 2016*. Gender and anthropology*. Long Grove: Waveland Press.

McGuire, Meredith B. 2008. *Lived religion: Faith and practice in everyday life*. Oxford University Press: New York.

Miller, Linn. 2003. "Belonging to country — a philosophical anthropology". *Journal of Australian Studies* 27 no. 76: 215-223.

Mink, Ilse and Saskia van Bon. 2016. Discriminatiecijfers in 2016: Een rapport over registraties van discriminatie-incidenten door de politie, en meldingen bij antidiscriminatie voorzieningen en andere organisaties in Nederland. Online rapport, https://discriminatie.nl/files/2017-05/discriminatiecijfers-2016-landelijk-rapport.pdf

Moors, Annelies. 2009. *Gezichtssluiers, draagsters en debatten*. Amsterdam School for Social Science Research.

Moors, Annelies. 2010. "'Islamic Fashion' in Europe: religious conviction, aesthetic style, and creative consumption". In *Engaging Otherness*, 187-213. London: I.B. Tauris.

Narayan, Karin. 2012. *Alive in the writing: Crafting ethnography in the company of Chekhov*. University of Chicago Press: London.

Opdenakker, Raymond. 2002. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Four Interview Techniques in Qualitative Research". *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7 no.4: 1-13.

O'Reilly, Karen. 2005. *Ethnographic methods*. London: Routledge.

Orsi, Robert A. 2003. "Is the study of lived religion irrelevant to the world we live in?" Special presidential plenary address, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City, November 2, 2002. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 42* no. 2: 169-174.

Otterbeck, Jonas. 2016. "Experiencing Islam: Narratives about faith by young adult Muslims in Malmo and Copenhagen". In *Everyday lived Islam in Europe*, edited by Nathal M. Dessing et.al.: 115-135. London: Routledge.

Ponterotto, Diane. 2016. "Resisting the male gaze: feminist responses to the 'normalization' of the female body in Western culture". *Journal of International Women's Studies* 17 no.1: 133-151.

Ribbens McCarthy, Jane R. 2012. "The powerful relational language of 'family': togetherness, belonging and personhood". *The Sociological Review* 60 no.1: 68-90.

Rizvi, Sayyid S. A. 1992. *Hijab: the Dress of modesty in Islam*. Dar es Salaam:Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania.

Roach-Higgins, Mary E. and Joanne B. Eicher. "Dress and Identity". *Clothing and textiles research journal* 10 no. 4: 1-8.

Schreuder, Arjen. "Dat politie uniform met hoofddoek mag dus wel." NRC, November 20, 2017. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2017/11/20/dat-politie-uniform-met-hoofddoek-mag-dus-wel-14130005-a1581924

Shriver, Carlie M. "What is Unveiled Through Veiling: Understanding the Complex Narratives of the Modern Hijabista Movement". (Undergraduate Honors Theses, 2017)

Skinner, Jonathan. Ed. 2013. *The interview: An ethnographic approach*. London:Berg.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. 2009. *Practices of Looking An Introduction to Visual Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Tarlo, Emma. 2007. "Hijab in London: Metamorphosis, Resonance and Effects". *Journal of Material Culture* 12 no. 2: 131-156.

Tarlo, Emma. 2010. *Visibly Muslim: fashion, politics, faith*. Berg: Oxford.

Tarlo, Emma and Annelies Moors. Eds. 2013. *Islamic fashion and anti-fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Turner, Terence S. (1980) 2012. The social skin. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2 no. 2: 486-504.

Tweed, Thomas. 2006. *Crossing and dwelling*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Van Es, Margaretha A. 2016. *Stereotypes and self-representations of women with a Muslim background: The stigma of being oppressed*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Walt, de Kathleen Musante and Walt, de Billy R. 2010. *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. United Kingdom: Altamira Press.

Waninger, Kelsey. "The veiled identity: hijabistas, Instagram and branding in the online Islamic fashion industry". (Thesis, Georgia State University, 2017)

Winchester, Daniel. 2008. "Embodying the faith: Religious practice and the making of a Muslim moral habitus". *Social Forces* 86 no. 4: 1753-1780.

Wright, Sarah. 2015. "More-than-human, emergent belongings: A weak theory approach". *Progress in Human Geography* 39 no. 4:391-411.

Young, 2000. "What is dwelling? The homelessness of modernity and the worlding of the world". In *Essays in Honor of Hubert L Dreyfus*: *Heidegger, Authenticity, and Modernity,* edited by Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas: 187-204. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006. "Belonging and the politics of belonging." *Patterns of Prejudice* 40 no. 3:197-214.

Zigon, Jarret. 2014. "Attunement and fidelity: two ontological conditions for morally being-in-the-world." *Ethos* 42 no. 1: 16-30.

Zine, Jasmin. 2006. "Unveiled Sentiments: Gendered Islamophobia and Experiences of Veiling among Muslim Girls in a Canadian Islamic School". *Equity and Excellence in Education* 39 no. 3:239-252.