Wardrobes of Turkish-Dutch women: The multiple meanings and aesthetics of Muslim dress
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. My Location in the Field

In 2007, I moved to the Netherlands to join the international research program, “The Emergence of Islamic Fashion in Europe,” at ISIM. At the time, Turkey was still a country where “headscarf debates” were a hotly contested issue in the political sphere (as they had been for decades); the often sensational media coverage of these debates constituted Turkey’s longest-running prime time TV soap opera. These debates did not focus on any kind of headscarf, but rather on a particular style of headscarf that was pinned and tied in a specific way. For some, this type of headscarf was a political symbol and a threat to secularism and a secular lifestyle; for others, this type of headscarf was the primary example of a “modern Islamic headscarf.” For many young women who adopted this style, it also marked a generational change. These young women were often described as “consciously” choosing to wear such a headscarf, in contrast to older women who wore “habitual,” “rural,” and “traditional” headscarves.

These narratives about the “modern Islamic headscarf” were produced in a highly polarized atmosphere in Turkey. This polarization forced a large number of people from different segments of society to take sides, even if the headscarf was not a part of their everyday concerns. As a young unveiled woman and a newcomer from Istanbul, I also experienced the effects of these contestations on women from Turkey, Türkiyeli kadınlara, in the Netherlands. It did not take long for me to realize that Turkish-Dutch women were familiar with the hostile, politicized environment in Turkey for women wearing this type of headscarf. Bearing in mind the fact that Turkey is their country of origin, as well as a Muslim majority country, many Turkish-Dutch women consider such discriminatory treatment more painful in Turkey than in the Netherlands. Even if Dutch-raised post-migrants did not

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1 I started research as a junior assistant in the NORFACE project “Islam as a Social Force in Europe: Islamic Fashion and the Politics of Presence” at ISIM (the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World), and then continued as a PhD student in the NWO project, “Islamic Inspirations: Islamic Cultural Practices and Performances: The Emergence of New Youth Cultures in Europe,” after ISIM’s closure.

2 I use the word “Türkiyeli” and “Turkish-Dutch” to describe migrants and their offspring who had come from Turkey to the Netherlands, regardless of ethnicity.
experience the exact dilemmas and discrimination that their older sisters and mothers had faced, they were familiar with the experiences of their peers and relatives in Turkey. In the Netherlands itself, they witnessed how the “guest worker’s headscarf” had gradually turned into an “Islamic headscarf.”

It was not easy to find new ways of talking about what it means to look Muslim in the Netherlands. From the very first moment of my entry into the field, I was subject to a kind of examination: some of my interlocutors vigilantly sought presuppositions and echoes of the hostile Turkish atmosphere in my questions, while others doubted my knowledge and ability to ask proper questions about tesettür. Some of my friends and relatives worried that my interlocutors might influence me to such an extent that I would become a tesettürlü woman myself. When they asked me if I would consider covering in the future, some Turkish-Dutch women were also curious to know whether my mother wore a headscarf. A similar logic shaped all of these questions and concerns: the rigid distinction between covered and uncovered women. Gradually, as my interlocutors and I got to know each other better and talked extensively about garments, fashions, styles, and different understandings of tesettür, these questions receded to the background.

Focusing only on the “modern Islamic headscarf” limits what one can say about the individual appearances of tesettürlü women, the social expectations and contextual demands they negotiate, and the effects of the gaze of others on them. Sometimes, even avoiding the word başörtüsü (headscarf) and using alternatives such as eşarp (scarf) and şal (shawl), as well as “tesettür” as a more inclusive term for religiously inspired clothing, was a relief for my interlocutors and helped to further our conversations. Focusing on the everydayness of clothing (de Certeau 1984; Colebrook 2002) and on different garments and changing understandings of tesettür helped both me and my interlocutors to better understand the complexity of what it means to look Muslim and feminine in the Netherlands today. Furthermore, by tracing and discussing their dress stories, we together discovered the ambivalences, contestations and negotiations that define Turkish-Dutch women’s lives in relation to questions of clothing and dress. These accounts illustrate women’s dynamic relations with their garments and their bodies, and show how clothing relates to different aspects of the self. Women’s sartorial stories take us beyond the dualistic constraints of the categories of “covered” and “uncovered,” and draw attention to women’s socio-spatial

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3 I employ tesettür as an umbrella term to refer an array of different styles of covered, recognizably Muslim female clothing.
mobility in a transnational field. Before zooming in on the turn from headscarves to dress and clothing in general, I first briefly discuss the shifting context in which women narrated their stories of wearing tesettür.

## 2. Sartorial Minorities in the Netherlands and Turkey

Women who wear tesettür are considered a sartorial minority both in Turkey and in the Netherlands. The political contexts of these two countries differ sharply. Turkey is a Muslim majority country moving away from assertive system of secularism in the direction of a post-secular society (Göle 2012) and seeking a more liberal interpretation of secularism (Kuru 2006; Walton 2013). In the Netherlands, the political climate has become increasingly anti-Muslim in the post-9/11 era. If debates and policies about Islam have moved in opposite directions in the Netherlands and Turkey in the last decade, how do we understand the effects of their secularization projects of the previous decades?

While the Netherlands underwent a rapid process of deconfessionalization in the 1960s (Moors 2009b), at approximately the same time (in 1960), Republican Turkey witnessed its first military coup, which dissolved the parliament and closed the Democrat Party (DP).\(^4\) The Democrat Party first achieved the support of an electoral majority in Turkey due partially to its relatively liberal attitude toward Islam (Tapper 1991; Aktaş 2005; Belge 2011).\(^5\) In the years following the coup, guest workers from rural Anatolia began to arrive in the Netherlands,\(^6\) as well as in a variety of other western European countries. In the late 1960s and the 1970s, only a small number of women came to the Netherlands as “guest workers” themselves; the first generation of women by and large left their homes in Anatolia to join their husbands.

\(^4\) From 1923 until 1946, the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi; CHP) was the sole political party in Turkey; the years from 1946 to 1950 constituted a multi-party period, during which many political parties were established. The Democrat Party won elections in 1950, and ended the period of single party governance of the early Republican era.

\(^5\) For example, the DP pushed through legislation allowing the call for prayer (ezan) to be in Arabic again. The call to prayer had been voiced in Turkish since the secularizing reforms of the early Republic.

\(^6\) In 1964 Dutch authorities established the so-called “recruitment agreement” with Turkey (Abadan-Unat 2002).
Migration both within Turkey and to destinations abroad affected the sartorial styles of women during this period in significant ways. With increasing internal migration from the Anatolian periphery to urban centers in Turkey, the headscarf had come to be associated with poverty and rurality (Lindisfarne-Tapper 1997; Öncü 1999; Secor 2002). Religion, village life and covered dress were among the favorite subjects for cartoonists of the time, who published their work in the mainstream Turkish press. Şalvar (baggy trousers), the black çarşaf, ethnic headscarves (yazma, yaşmak, yemeni, etc.) and the cummerbund did not fit the project of “wardrobe modernization” in Turkey; these garments were perceived as producing the overlapping identities of the religious and the rural (Norton 1997).

Migration entailed a transformation of sartorial preferences for almost all women, albeit to different extents. Moving from rural areas to the cities in Turkey required women to adopt and adapt to new sartorial practices. When migrant women came to the Netherlands, they were well aware of their heightened visibility, less so because of their religious identity than because of their rural peasant backgrounds. They were not only guest workers; they were also a sartorial minority. The first modern garments, including overcoats, ready-made blouses, skirt-and-trouser combinations, and small headscarves, entered the lives of migrant women during the early years of migration. Adopting the aesthetics of a modern wardrobe, and incorporating the new gestures and postures which these garments required, played a significant role in women’s formation as modern subjects.

Certain sartorial preferences were seen as indicating women’s success or failure in integrating to Dutch society. Women who succeeded in adopting a modern urban dress code attained more privileged professional positions than women who still wore their “ethnic” or “rural” clothing. At that time, wearing covering garments and a headscarf was still strongly related to immigrants’ rural and ethnic backgrounds, rather than to a religious identity, for the majority of the Dutch public. With the increasing presence of migrant women due to family reunification (Abadan-Unat 2002), sartorial differences became more visible and new styles from Turkey spread in the Netherlands.

Often, home-tailored rural garments like baggy trousers, or the combination of long skirts or dresses with trousers, were considered a sign of backwardness. A very well known saying in Dutch from the period expresses the distinct image of the migrant woman from Turkey: “zoals een Turkse die een jurk over haar broek draagt” (“like a Turkish woman wearing a dress over her trousers”). In other words, the appearance of the Turkish immigrant woman was not so much marked by her headscarf but by her ethnic and rural style of dress. In
the early years of migration, women were not considered to be recognizably “Muslim”; Turkish-Dutch women were only “discovered” as Muslim migrants in recent decades (Sunier 1997, 2002; Moors 2009a). The formation of these new categories of “Muslim” and “Islamist” was a long process, strongly related to political developments beyond the borders of Europe.

International politics began to play a role in the changing categorization of Muslims, both in Turkey and in Europe, with the emergence of the Islamic revival movement in the late 1970s. The Iranian Revolution (1979) also had a strong impact in neighboring countries. This was an era of severe oppression of religious organizations in Turkey. With the 1980 military coup, a constitutional ban was issued on the most prominent Islamist party of the time in Turkey, the National Salvation Party. The Party was charged with aiming to undermine the secular principles of the Turkish Republic and attempting to establish an Islamic order.Ironically, the leaders of the coup opened new Quranic Schools, made religious courses compulsory, added new branch offices to existing İmam Hatip Schools (Özdalga 1999; Özgür 2012; Çağlar 2012), and employed new Muslim preachers (imams and hatips). In this increasingly polarized political climate, the distinction between traditional religiosity and politically threatening Islam materialized in women’s “consciously Islamic” headscarves.

As in other western European countries at the time, a variety of Turkish Islamic organizations, including the Süleymani Community, the Gülen Movement, Milli Görüş (National View) and Diyanet, spearheaded a variety of initiatives in the Netherlands during this period. In the early years of migration, the activities of these Muslim groups were not specifically related to the position of Turkish immigrants in the Dutch society, but their policies based on the idea of temporariness (that is, temporary presence in the Netherlands) gradually changed during in the 1980s. Rather than providing services to “guest workers,” these organizations became advocates for new Turkish-Dutch “citizens” who aspired to enhanced integration in Dutch society (Landman 1992; Sunier 1997). These organizations and

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7 The Milli Selamet Partisi was founded in 1971; it was the successor to the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi), which had been dissolved by Turkey’s Constitutional Court following the March 1971 military coup.

8 İmam Hatip Schools were originally established as religious vocational state schools. For quite some time, they have been an important alternative for the children of pious families who prefer to pursue a religious education rather than follow the official curriculum of secular Turkish state education.

9 The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, a state bureaucracy responsible for monitoring and coordinating Islamic practice in Turkey. For more information, see http://www.diyanet.gov.tr/turkish/dy/default.aspx, retrieved on 12.09.2012.
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communities achieved a new role as actors bridging the migrants as citizens and wider Dutch society (Sunier 2010).

In the late 1990s, Turkey experienced another military intervention, a “soft” coup achieved through a military briefing aimed at the government, on February 28th 1997. (Cizre-Sakallioğlu and Çınar 2003). This coup was a turning point in Turkey for the politics of the headscarf. In the following years, the strict implementation of the headscarf ban affected many families, either directly or indirectly. In this increasingly politicized climate, the distinction between traditional religiosity and politically threatening Islam materialized in women’s “Islamic” headscarves (Sandıkçı and Ger 2005: 62). Women wearing one particular style of headscarf were “discovered” as “Islamists” in Turkey. The political and social costs of wearing a headscarf changed radically in both Turkey and the Netherlands.

Many migrant families in the Netherlands witnessed the impact of the 28 February process, as close or distant female relatives suffered from the ban. As a consequence of this ban, Turkey became less attractive for tesettürlü women from the Turkish diaspora, while Europe began to receive female students who could not pursue their education in Turkey because of the ban. At the same time, however, İmam Hatip Schools and Quranic Boarding schools were seen as the only alternatives for migrant families in the Netherlands who wanted their daughters to pursue some sort of education in Turkey in order to maintain their ties with the home country. The movement of women from Turkey to the Netherlands continued, but not only for educational purposes; marriage also played an increasing role in the 1990s. Young men born in the Netherlands continued to marry women from their own circles in Turkey.

In Europe, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Islam replaced communism as a major global threat to Western powers. This politicization of Islam only accelerated following 9/11 and the commencement of the global war on terror. Since the early 1990s, migrants from Muslim countries, Muslim identity, and Islam in general have all been defined as problematic in the Netherlands. Dutch politics gradually moved toward a more rigid definition of

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10 The first ban on the headscarf in Turkey dates back to 1982; this ban focused on headscarves in universities. By 1984, the Council of Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu; YÖK) had declared türban to be the unique, “modern” form of headwear allowed at universities. While only a small number of students adopted the türban style or used the term, ironically “türban” as an invented category has dominated headscarf controversy for decades (Aktaş 2006).

11 In contrast to Turkish secularism, which has attempted to ban religious signs from government buildings, Dutch secularism allows students and teachers to wear the headscarf in public schools and universities. However, Muslim women’s appearance in public has become the topic of much debate in the last decade.
secularism that increasingly understood integration to imply some form of assimilation (Moors 2009b; Bekaroğlu 2010; Bracke 2011). The effects of 9/11 and, more locally, the assassination of Dutch film director Theo Van Gogh in 2004 heightened the visibility of Muslims in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{12} These events produced increasing feelings of hostility towards Muslim migrants. In public discourse, discussion about Muslims and “Islamists” provoked questions about Muslim migrants and new Muslim citizens’ belonging to the nation and their loyalty to the state (Moors 2009b: 395). Not only in the Netherlands, but also across Western Europe generally, political discourse increasingly targeted Muslim’s sexualities, bodily attitudes and clothing as indicative of their unwillingness to join wider society and as a threat to European identity (Dwyer 1999; Van der Veer 2006; Scott 2007; Moors 2009b; Fadil 2009; Bowen 2011; Bracke 2011).

Over the course of the last decade, perceptions of the headscarf have gone in opposite directions in the Netherlands and Turkey. Whereas the migrant headscarf first transformed into the “ethnic headscarf” and then gradually evolved towards the “Islamist/Islamic headscarf” in the Netherlands, in Turkey, by contrast, headscarves have become more acceptable and the significance of the headscarf as a marker of religious difference has become relatively vague. Although this shift has been an extremely prolonged process, under the conservative democratic AKP (the Justice and Development Party) government in Turkey, implementation of the headscarf ban has become less strict.\textsuperscript{13} Turkey is leaving behind the endless debates over the headscarf in the media and lifting the headscarf ban at universities, although women who wear a headscarf still cannot work at government offices and locations, with the exception of lawyers.\textsuperscript{14} In the Dutch case, although the focus has mainly been on prohibiting the face veil (Moors 2009b), the headscarf has also become a target of political criticism. The most notorious example of this was Dutch right-wing politician Geert Wilders’s

\textsuperscript{12} Theo Van Gogh produced the film Submission, written by the well-known public figure and anti-Islam ideologue Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Ali is a Somali-born refugee who was raised as a Muslim; after receiving political asylum in the Netherlands, she declared that she was no longer a believer. She was a member of the Dutch parliament between 2003 and 2006. The film caricatures Muslim women with exclusively exotic, Orientalist imagery and misinterprets Islamic teachings; it assumes that Muslim women are nothing more than victims of their religion. See Moors 2005.

\textsuperscript{13} The AKP came to power in 2002, but only introduced legislation to lift the headscarf ban to in 2008. It was approved by a majority of MPs in parliament, but the constitutional court overruled the decision. Furthermore, this legislation resulted in a case for the closure of AKP on grounds that it had violated the principle of secularism; eventually the party was financially penalized but not closed.

\textsuperscript{14} In January 2013, the Council of State (Danıştay) ruled to suspend the application of an article from the code of practice of the Turkish Bar Association that bans lawyers from wearing headscarves while practicing their profession.
provocative proposal to impose a “headrag” tax (*Kopvoddentaks*) in 2009 (Ünal and Moors 2012), while recent years have also witnessed more restrictive policies on headscarves in some Christian schools. In the Netherlands, many women now feel a stronger need to explain their choice of wearing covered dress; they are increasingly confronted with the prejudices of others and feel pressured to defend their sartorial preferences.

Two recent publications highlight these two different trends. Turkey is now home to its first glossy Muslim fashion and lifestyle magazine, Ålâ, a periodical that also targets women interested in fashion in general. Ålâ has often been described both by scholars and pundits as “the *Vogue* of the veiled.” Importantly, however, Ålâ brings together the sartorial preferences and imagery of both covered and uncovered women, and thus blurs the boundaries between different styles of covered and uncovered dress. In the context of this magazine, the headscarf has become a matter of lifestyle; it is rarely discussed with reference to religious texts and interpretations. More generally, *tesettür* has achieved legitimation on the basis of a secular language by referring to the notion of tolerance toward different lifestyles in public space (Şişman 2011: 165). The Dutch *Hoofdboek* Project, in contrast, has appeared as the first effort in the Netherlands to normalize the headscarf as an “individual, conscious choice,” and aims “to replace prejudices with the facts” in a context that has become increasingly antagonistic toward Muslims.

3. Beyond Veiling and Unveiling: From the “New Veiling” to Complete Wardrobes

The typical tendency in academic studies of and discourse about the “modern Islamic headscarf” has been to treat the headscarf in isolation. This tendency proved immensely problematic for my thesis research. Such a strong emphasis on the emergence of one particular type of headscarf (the “modern Islamic headscarf”) distracts attention from the fact that dress is an everyday practice, and actors’ preferences of what to wear—including the headscarf—change according to social contexts. The dominant academic discourse on the headscarf restricts the meanings and significations of what it means to look Muslim to ideological contestations, and fails to take into account the material and aesthetic qualities of

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15 For more information on the *Hoofdboek* Project, see http://www.cupofculture.nl/project/hoofdboek
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religiously inspired clothing. It produces narratives about the “modern Islamic headscarf” that remain removed from the everyday complexities of living a Muslim life.

In general, the academic literature on headscarves and veils hypothesizes and pivots on two major historical ruptures. The first rupture links the “modern Islamic headscarf” to the emergence of Islamic movements in the 1980s and women’s active participation in these religious-political movements. The second rupture presents covering as an instance of the articulation of faith with consumer culture and conceptualizes Muslim women as consumers. In both cases, the aim is to explore the transformation of formerly non-or-less-agentive subjects into highly agentive subjects in a secular world, with the modern headscarf as a significant marker of this transformation. This body of literature has concomitantly defined other ways of being Muslim as non-agentive. This fits with a wider trend of feminist scholarship that often defines Muslim women’s agency solely in terms of resistance and emancipation (Acar 1994; Arat 1994, 2005; Göle 1996, 2003; White 2002; Saktanber 2002a; Çınar 2005) and criticizes depictions of Muslim women as submissive, obedient subjects who lead monotonous lives (Mahmood 2005).

The First Rupture: The “New Veiling” and Political Islam

The secularist idea that recognizably Muslim dress would simply fade away clearly does not match the contemporary social world, either in Turkey or in the Netherlands. However, such an assumption makes it easier to discuss veiling practices in the 1970s and 1980s as a mode of “new veiling” that constituted a rupture with earlier, habitual wearing of covered dress. To some extent, the Islamic movements of the 1980s also promoted the idea of the “new veiling” by celebrating wearing a “modern Islamic headscarf” as a “conscious” act. Religion thus became a matter of individual choice rather than an “inherited or living tradition.” The attire of the period, which was worn with the modern headscarf, was not only long and loose, but also uniform, austere, and sober, as a reflection of an anti-consumerist and anti-fashion stance. This was not only the case in Turkey (Göle 1996, Saktanber 1994), but also in other Muslim countries, such as Egypt (El-Guindi 1981; MacLeod 1991). It was also the manifestation of a generational shift and the emergence of an early cosmopolitan style of Muslim dress, which was similar in appearance on a global level, to some extent erasing geographically and ethnically marked variations of Muslim dress (Moors and Tarlo 2007).
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The existing literature on the “Turkish headscarf” (interchangeably used with the term “veil” in this literature) is partly a product of this rupture.\(^{16}\) For activists in new Islamic movements, the “new veiling” was considered to be both a critique of “westernization” and of “habitual” Islam, while for secularists it was a manifestation of political Islam. One of the consequences of this rupture in the continuity of lived Islam was the conceptual turn from the “Muslim” headscarf to the “Islamist” headscarf. The modern headscarf became defined in terms of a shift from a “habitual” religious practice to “conscious” practice. Both feminist scholarship and the Islamic movements of the period articulated this sort of hierarchical ordering between headscarves. They attributed an assertive agency to women whose lives were considered to be far richer and more complex than the earlier narratives of Turkish modernity and the secular nation-state project had suggested (Kandiyoti 1995; Özbay 2000).

The “Islamic headscarf” of this period was considered to have an unsettling effect in the public sphere because it was seen as subverting and contesting the privileged status of secularism in Turkey (Çınar 2005: 58). Such an understanding of agency based on the idea of a subject acting on/against social forces framed studies of the headscarf. This theoretical frame reduced the sartorial preferences of Muslim women to a binary of resistance versus submission (Abu Lughod 1990). The resistance argument was based on the interpretation of wearing tesettür as a means to achieving extra-religious ends (Göle 1996). Veiling was discussed as an emancipatory act, “a basis for identity transformation at the level of individual consciousness and a means to free women from monotonous life (Ibid.: 130).” Romanticizing the “conscious headscarf” as a marker of new identities, as opposed to the “habitual headscarf,” played a significant role in the formation of narratives about the modern headscarf.

To some extent, the growing scholarly interest in defining Muslim women as assertive, modern subjects confirmed a break with the past. As a result, it did not pay much attention to historical continuities or to differences in styles of dress and the motivations of women who wore covering attire. Phrases such as “Islamist women” and “turbaned feminists” indicated this break with the past and punctuated the newness of the phenomenon. Aspirations

\(^{16}\) The “Turkish headscarf” suffered from political circumstances for decades. The political climate consistently had profound influence on the ways in which scholarly studies approached Muslim dress and pious subjects. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, forced veiling in Iran framed the veil as a symbol to talk about “Islamic movements and revival” and “reactionary-ism” in the 1980s. For Turkey, a neighbor of Iran and a young secularizing state with an adopted version of French laïcité as its system of secularism, the case of Iran and the so-called “new veiling” have long been a dangerous specter threatening the aspiration to modernity. The headscarf as a symbol of “backwardness,” “submission,” “poverty,” and “political Islam” has been a matter of collective fear for long time, and still arouses these same feelings for some segments of society.
and motivations to be visible as Muslims were highlighted through a conceptual shift from “Muslim” to “Islamist.” Göle’s work on veiling (1996, 2003), for instance, challenged existing representations of the headscarf as “oppressive” and “submissive” by engaging with the Muslim headscarf as a visible, voluntary and controversial adoption of a stigmatized symbol (Göle 2003: 815). Göle defines the “Islamic headscarf” as something “deliberately appropriated, not passively carried and handed down from generation to generation” (Göle 2002: 181). In her analysis, the transformation from “Muslim” to “Islamist” was “the work of a collective countercultural movement” (Göle 2003: 815), through which the headscarf also changed from a stigma into a symbol of distinction and prestige for women.

Studies have mainly focused on actors who considered themselves “conscious” headscarf wearers. Merve Kavakçı’s recent book, Politics of Turkish Headscarf (2010), is one of the latest contributions to the narrative of the modern headscarf.17 Her research focuses on women who explicitly consider their headscarves to be “consciously Islamic” and who simultaneously were considered a “threat” by the Turkish state (Ibid.: 23). This exclusion produces hierarchies among individuals, with some women considered to have a higher level of consciousness than others. The notion of consciousness here refers to achieving a proper knowledge of tesettür and choosing to wear a particular style of headscarf (the headscarf of an urban, modern, educated woman), even if some segments of society dislike this and consider it a “threat.” This sort of analysis not only produces a hierarchy between women who wear headscarves more “consciously” and those who wear it more “habitually,” it also encourages a reading of the headscarf that is detached from its functions and meanings in everyday life. Above all, it ignores the ambiguities of everyday dress practices and historical continuities.

Moreover, research and literature that focuses exclusively on the “conscious” headscarf also overlooks the transformative potential of religiously inspired clothing. The attribution of “consciousness” implies that a subject already has adequate knowledge and takes responsibility for her acts. However, as the narratives of the women in this study demonstrate, wearing modest, pious clothing is part of a continuous process of self-disciplining. It is not something already achieved, but something one must always strive for. In fact, these narratives are far closer to those that Saba Mahmood presents in her seminal work, Politics of Piety (2005), in which she shows that wearing a headscarf is first and

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17 Merve Kavakçı was a very significant figure during the 1990s and early 2000s in Turkey. She was one of two covered women elected to the Turkish Grand National Assembly as a parliamentarian in 1999; eventually she was removed from parliament on the day of her swearing-in ceremony due to her refusal to remove her headscarf. Later, she was stripped of her citizenship and faced several court charges (Özyürek 2000; Göle 2002).
foremost a religiously motivated practice for women in the Cairene mosque movement. Examining such religious motivations allows us to see possible continuities in Muslim dress. Mahmood’s work is an early attempt to discuss agency not in terms of resistance, but rather in relation to the different potentialities that covering embodies and entails. Mahmood argues that covering may work as a technique of the self, as an embodied practice that serves not only as a marker of pious identity, but also as “the ineluctable means by which one trains oneself to be pious” (Ibid.: 158, emphasis in original). However, this transformative capacity of wearing recognizably Muslim dress is not only limited to the formation of an inner self; as this study argues, it also affects others. By taking seriously the motivations and potentials that define covering and the transformations of one’s self and relations with others that covering entails, we are able to consider the agency of objects—in this case, different aesthetics and styles of Muslim dress—in people’s lives (Tarlo 2007a).

The Second Rupture: The Turn to Consumption and Fashionable Styles

The second shift and rupture, dating back to the late 1990s, refers to the appearance of “Islamic chic” (White 1999; Balasescu 2003) and the effort to theorize this “faithful chic” (Sandıkçı and Ger 2001). When the first veiled models appeared on a catwalk in 1992, Turkey became a leading country in the “Islamic fashion” scene; thereafter, Turkey was often referred to in explaining new modes of Muslim life in an increasingly commodified world (Navaro-Yashin 2002a; Kılıçbay and Binark 2002; Sandıkçı and Ger 2007; Secor & Gökarıksel 2008). Increasing attention was paid to fashionable tesettür styles and to the women who wore them, in the attempt to capture what it means to be a Muslim woman in relation to images, discourses and knowledge constructed in the marketplace (Gökarıksel and McLarney 2010, Lewis 2010).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the appearance of urban, fashionable and recognizably Muslim dress in Turkey predated the 1992 fashion show, which was organized by the clothing company Tekbir. The writer Şule Yüksel Şenler, with her new style of head covering, the Şulebaşı (Şule-head), had already become a fashion icon for young urban women in Turkey in the 1960s (Altınay 2013). The literature on Islamic fashion generally identifies a shift from the Islamic political movements of the 1980s to Muslim consumer identities and communities in the 1990s. It focuses on 1990s tesettür fashions, depicting them
as if they were the first instances a modern, urban Muslim style of clothing in Turkey. This second shift in the literature was inspired by consumer studies and urban studies, and more recently by fashion and dress studies, which have made new, multiple readings of the headscarf possible. Contributions from scholars in various fields articulated multiple, new forms of living Islam, from fashion to music, from architecture to food. In doing so, this new literature began to convey the more complex, ambiguous character of pious subjectivities (Jouili 2009; Saktanber 2002b; Sandıkçı & Ger 2010; Schielke and Debevec 2012).

A focus on fashion and changing sartorial preferences, including the material and aesthetic qualities of clothing and dress, also stimulated scholars to pay attention to the different aesthetic and material dimensions of headscarves and women’s choices of particular headscarves (Sandıkçı and Ger 2005). By offering multiple readings of “the headscarf,” these studies challenged the existing narratives of the modern headscarf, which had only considered this item of dress as a significant marker of religion in the political realm. Instead of a focus on whether women adopted covered dress (or not), attention turned to matters of style, taste and status. Studies of “Islamic fashion” have directed attention to women’s management of visibility. The question of how a religiously inspired outfit can also be expensive, fashionable and attractive was one of the first challenges taken up by this literature.

The emergence of “Islamic fashion” as a concept and its increasing popularity not only unsettled established truths of fashion theory, which locate fashion exclusively in the West (Moors 2009a; Moors and Tarlo 2013). It also opened new horizons in the literature, which started to pay equal attention to other items of Muslim women’s dress in order to explore tensions between religion and fashion. The assumption that religiously inspired dress is necessarily sober and modest, and therefore that such dress would remain outside the domains of fashion and consumption, turned out to be naïve. Women creatively combined mainstream fashions with their headscarves. Recent decades have witnessed striking articulations of mainstream fashions with shifting interpretations of religious modesty.

Even the most uniform and sober form of outdoor tesettür, the çarşaf—which was seen as an anti-fashion statement for a long time—has gone through various changes and adaptations. Different kinds of textiles are used for çarşafı, and their colors vary from tones of plum to navy blue. Çarşafı today have laser-cut ornaments and edges, and women wear a variety of accessories with them. This proliferation of new styles also includes “retro” trends that function as reminders of a more distant past, when similar garments carried different
meanings and functions within the historically and socially situated conditions of their production.

The dress stories of my research reveal that Turkish-Dutch women’s *tesettür* clothing is not only the product of religious motivations and norms. The women whom I interviewed consider covering as a form of worship, but they also calibrate how they cover in relation to how they want to present themselves to others (Moors 2009a). Muslim women have different understandings of what modest *tesettür* is, and some *tesettür* fashions share and express understandings of femininity similar to those of mainstream fashions. Fashioning a Muslim appearance does not necessarily imply a subversion of modern notions of sexuality or, for that matter, a rejection of “inherited traditional Islam.” *Tesettür* clothing brings together religious concerns and contemporary ideas of beauty. This fact is exemplified by the changing definition of modesty in *tesettür*, away from “hiding one’s beauty” toward a notion of “managing one’s beauty.”

However, although the shift to “Islamic fashion” has broadened the academic approach female Muslim clothing from an exclusive focus on the politics of covering to the aesthetics of wearing *tesettür*, it also engenders its own problems. Within this new frame, the Muslim subject is no longer confined to the antagonistic categories of “conscious agent” and “victim of tradition”; rather, the subject has now become trapped in the binary of “fashion conscious” and “victim of fashion” (Karabıyık Barbarosoğlu 2006: 162). In other words, women’s interest and participation in new mainstream fashions may be seen either as a marker of a new status or as a decay of the ideal of *tesettür*. The focus has shifted in the literature from the adoption of a particular headscarf to “veiling fashions” and women as consumers of particular styles (Gökarıksel and Secor 2008, 2010) without paying enough attention to the everyday dilemmas of clothing.

Recent critiques have called on scholars to attend to the effects of previous studies in the construction of academic knowledge on the modern headscarf, especially in relation to the persistent question of whether the headscarf is “oppressive” or “emancipatory” (Sirma 2010; Fadil and Bracke 2012). Moreover, the proliferation of a variety of styles has directed attention to individual styles and taste; slowly but surely, this has also entailed a move beyond headscarves to the rest of Muslim dress (Moors and Tarlo 2013) The focus of this research has shifted from the headscarf as an exclusive marker of religiously-inspired Muslim appearance to Muslim everyday sartorial practice, and thus to *tesettür* wardrobes. My own research is clearly within this broad trend. At an earlier point, certain scholars discussed the veil as a
dress practice (e.g. El-Guindi 1999) and as a spatial practice (e.g. Secor 2002). However, focus on the “fashionable headscarf” has also excluded certain categories of women who adopted other styles. Above all, this literature excluded certain styles, and the actors involved: women who continue to wear the “ Atatürk scarf” (a small scarf tied under the chin without a pin) or çarşaf, for instance. Women who wear less fashionable or less “conscious” headscarves were ignored by these studies. In contrast, this thesis attempts to broaden the scope of academic studies of tesettür by including wardrobe research (Woodward 2007) and women’s own stories of how they put together their everyday outfits (Tarlo 2007b, 2010; Moors 2007, 2009a).

4. Tesettür Wardrobes in the Netherlands

In the context of this thesis, the notion of the “wardrobe” is not only a methodological tool, but also a conceptual principle that enables a new reading of Turkish-Dutch women’s appearance within and beyond the headscarf. I approach wardrobes both as an archive of past selves and memories (Guy and Banim 2000; Bye and McKinney 2007; Woodward 2007) and as a collage of social imaginaries. A wardrobe contains items not only from everyday sartorial practice, but also items women no longer wear. It is a personal repertoire that stores items that are constitutive of women’s selfhood as well as their public representations (Cwerner 2001; Hansen 2004). Furthermore, garments in wardrobes function like a surface that mediates among the self, the body and others. By exploring accounts of different items of clothing and tracing the changing meanings of similar garments at different times and within different social contexts, my research shows how dress is used to produce a particular kind of body and set of gestures, as well as a particular kind of pious self in relation to others.

My encounter with Woodward’s book Why Women Wear What They Wear (2007) inspired me to look into the garments and items stored in women’s wardrobes and to collect stories related to various garments, including headscarves. Woodward’s focus on the “wardrobe moment” of British women provides a solid ethnographic account of the daily dilemma of assembling an outfit as “a practice of identity construction” (Tarlo 1996). Her argument that clothing “forms a literal and metaphorical extension of the self” (Woodward 2007: 5) demands a detailed analysis of what women wear in relation to how their clothing makes them “feel” and how it makes them “look.”
Especially in minority contexts such as that of Muslims in the Netherlands, wearing covered dress makes Muslim women more visible, in contrast to the common argument that covered dress make women less visible or invisible (Tarlo 2010). In general, wearing clothing has often been understood as hiding the body, but sartorial practice is also necessarily about showing the body in a different way. Although clothing conceals, it may also emphasize what it conceals (Harvey 2011). In a similar vein, the notion of Muslim dress is more helpful to investigate what it means to look Muslim today than the exclusive focus on the headscarf, often on one particular style of headscarf, which is studied in isolation. Being recognizably Muslim in the Netherlands means managing both “beauty” and “heightened visibility” in a minority context.

Wardrobes contain a richer collection of garments and accessories than what one sees worn by young Turkish-Dutch women in public spaces. Wardrobes store personal histories. They cross the boundaries between the inside and the outside, between different spatial orders and occasions. They simultaneously include the fashionable and the no longer fashionable. They not only reflect one’s public presence, but also a person’s appearance indoors and in social circles that are more intimate or gender-segregated (women-only). Wardrobes tell us about both public and private bodies. As Rabia Yalçın, a prominent tesettür designer from Turkey, puts it, acquiring a desired wardrobe can consume a lot of time and money for tesettür wearers: “The wardrobe of a tesettür wearer has two doors: one of them opens to the inside and the other is to the outside world.”

Particularly in the diasporic context, a wardrobe contains various items of clothing and unites different regimes of morality, ethics and aesthetics. Items in these wardrobes have the potential to communicate with wider, multiple audiences. In other words, wardrobes contain items that have the potential to be perceived differently in different contexts. Like other artifacts and cultural objects, clothing communicates complex, ambiguous, controversial and context-related messages in culturally constructed fields (Appadurai 1988). Similar items might be interpreted differently in diasporic contexts. For instance, a long skirt is seen as a marker of religiosity in the Dutch context in general, even though it connotes a certain understanding of Turkish femininity for migrant families themselves.

Clothing becomes significant in different social contexts. Dress and its intimate relation to the body allow us to understand how bodies are shaped by different notions of

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18 From an interview titled “When outdoors, indoor garments are off-sides” (Evdeki kıyafet dışarıda ofsayt) with the Turkish journalist Ayşe Arman in the Turkish newspaper Hürriyet, 15 July 2009.
femininity and piety. In this vein, I approach dress as a “situated bodily practice” (Entwistle 2001: 45). Entwistle’s work brings the notion of embodiment to the fore in the analysis of mainstream clothing, which had been principally focused on fashion and clothing as matters of wastefulness, distinction and communication (Veblen [1899] 1994; Simmel 1957; Barthes 1985). According to Entwistle, dress is simultaneously a discursive and a practical phenomenon that bridges personal and social experiences. As Entwistle argues, the dressed body is actively produced through routine and everyday practices: “When getting dressed one orients oneself/body to the situation, acting in particular ways upon the surface of the body which are likely to fit within the established norms of that situation” (Entwistle 2001: 45). I approach the sartorial practices of Turkish-Dutch women as broadly embedded in and produced through a dynamic set of relations in different social contexts.

The body is a significant concept in this analysis of tesettür appearance because my work treats clothing and headscarves as mediating among the body, the self, and different publics. The body is both sentient and sensible, it sees and can be seen, it touches and it can be touched (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Crossley 1996). The body feels garments and informs us whether they are tight or loose enough for us to move comfortably; the body experiences telling textures and temperatures, even before our eyes confirm that a garment might suit us well through a reflection in the mirror. Furthermore, dressing affects how the body feels, and the body learns how to display particular gestures to different publics (Mauss 1979).

In this context, I also focus on the materiality of objects; the different feelings that garments produce on their wearers are significant aspects of the interviews about wardrobes that I conducted with various women. In order to discuss different aspects of the self and its relations to others, I collected sartorial biographies of women that illustrate how women adopt particular styles of dress. By studying of wardrobes, I pursue an in-depth analysis of the diverse sartorial preferences Turkish-Dutch women and their effects on different individuals and publics. This requires us to move beyond the limited binaries of being covered and uncovered, and exclusionist categories of the public and private body. As a collection of items of clothing, the wardrobe can be seen as “an externalization of selfhood” (Woodward 2005) that allows us to see the relational self.

This research explores different items of clothing that women put together and wear in specific social contexts to manage their heightened visibility. Women feel differently in different combinations of garments, and the effects that these combinations have on others are also different. For instance, the combination of a long maxi skirt in a grayish-brown color and
leather high heels, worn with a beige silk blouse and a matching silk headscarf in an abstract pattern, produces a different effect than white sneakers worn with white skinny jeans, a blue tunic and a cotton shawl in pastel blue. Each detail and item has the potential to become communicative and, therefore, to highlight different aspects of the self. Moreover, different notions of what “goes together” reveal the aesthetic perceptions of the self (Woodward 2005). Furthermore, by tracing the genealogies of particular garments separately, we can perceive their parallel, long-term transformations and relationships to the project of “wardrobe modernization.” The wardrobe collections of tesettürlü women embody and articulate intersecting stories of gender, piety, and the formation of new taste communities and politics in a transnational field, one that is increasingly expanding and multilayered for the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands.

5. Doing Fieldwork: Wardrobes and Interviews

I chose to focus on wardrobes and dress in order to achieve a wider, alternative approach to the controversial practice of wearing a headscarf. For my interlocutors, wardrobes and garments were more interesting to talk about than headscarves alone. Huge wardrobes from floor to ceiling, often covered by mirrors, were frequently the most prominent piece of furniture in young Turkish-Dutch women’s bedrooms. Moreover, some homes had extra dressing rooms, with wall-to-wall wardrobes, as a new interior trend. Wardrobes are located in the most intimate places in the house (bedrooms or dressing rooms); to open a wardrobe’s doors required a certain intimacy and shared interest between myself and the women with whom I conducted research.

As a newcomer in the Netherlands, I had very few contacts during the initial stages of my study. Moreover, it took some time to introduce myself as researcher who wanted to study wardrobe collections because wardrobes are not often easily accessible for researchers. I attended religious gatherings (sohbet) and religious classes offered by different Turkish religious communities in various Dutch cities from 2007 to the end of 2010. These classes included those organized by Milli Görüş, Diyanet, the Gülen Movement and the Süleymani Community. I also attended a wide variety of events such as festivals, charity bazaars (kermes), fashion shows, Ramadan dinners (iftar), seminars and conferences, and several classes on calligraphy and Islam (tefsir, fikih, siyer, akaid, hadith, and Islamic history).
organized by these communities. These were the major occasions on which I was able to meet women and introduce my research, as well as arrange in-depth wardrobe interviews. Additionally, I regularly visited marketplaces and stores in migrant neighborhoods and took street photos to track changing trends and fashions in the Turkish-Dutch teşettür scene.

Wardrobes are not only significant because they contain rich collections of garments; they also constitute a means by which to step into life stories. Inspired by Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1981), I gathered topical life stories that focus on various aspects of women’s sartorial practices. I used the preliminary results of my first conversations to guide my next steps and generate new questions about teşettür clothing beyond the headscarf. Hence, my interview questions were flexible and changed through time. These life stories gave me the insight necessary to ask proper questions about the changing sartorial preferences of women, which are often firmly related to both life events and the various social contexts that they dress for. All of the narratives in this dissertation were presented by women who told me that they wear headscarf and prefer more covered styles in order to please God. Most of them see their sartorial practices as an everyday aspect of ibadet (worship). However, Turkish-Dutch women are also well aware of the modern construction of Turkish headscarf, which eventually became a “stigmatic symbol” used to distinguish Muslim women as a sartorial minority, both in Turkey and increasingly in the Netherlands. Because of this shared awareness of the hegemonic influence of a particular type of headscarf, the women and I also shared a common interest in talking about the rest of a Muslim woman’s appearance—a concern that is less present in the literature. Both existing representations of the modern headscarf and the negative effects of the “headscarf debate” created significant challenges for my fieldwork; on the other hand, facing these challenges provided critical insight into the discursive and cultural bases of my own assumptions and observations (Marcus and Clifford 1985).

Headscarves are only one means to understanding Muslim women’s subjectivities and belongings; furthermore, in its modern form, the headscarf is a highly contested phenomenon. Within a highly politicized and ideological context, the headscarf became the sole object of explanation; these explanations were produced primarily by comparing covered Muslim

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19 I held interviews in Turkish with native Kurdish speakers as well.

20 This may not necessarily be the case for all women who wear teşettür. The fact that I became acquainted with many of my interlocutors at religious events, as mentioned above, may partially account for their consistent emphasis on the relationship between teşettür and ibadet.
women with their uncovered peers. From the very beginning of my fieldwork, I had to deal with the limitations and effects of focusing on one particular type of headscarf. These limitations inspired me to look into women’s wardrobes and to collect dress stories in order to understand Muslim dress with and beyond the headscarf. Only such an analysis can reveal the shifting positions and multiple belongings that women construct and achieve through their wardrobes. In order to gain insight what it means to look Muslim, it is more productive to focus on the dressed body and individual collections of garments than on a single, ideal type of garment.

The main primary sources for this study are interviews, wardrobe collections, field notes, videos and photographs taken during fieldwork, which I conducted between 2007 and 2011. I also made use of media sources such as news stories and advertisements, as well as Facebook pages and online stores from both Turkey and the Netherlands. Finally, I drew on secondary literature on related subjects, letters of travelers from the Ottoman era, works of literary fiction, historical photographs, and dictionaries to trace the genealogies of the garments mentioned in the interviews.

During my stay in the Netherlands, I often visited Turkey and spent time there. My close connection with Turkey gave me the opportunity to conduct multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus 1995). The Amsterdam and Istanbul Airports, check-in rows and waiting lounges were interesting sites in which I was able to expand my network and to discuss and compare tesettür practices in Turkey and the Netherlands. I also tried to follow the connections of my interlocutors in Turkey. During summer vacations, I visited my interlocutors, attended religious meetings and shopping activities with them in Turkey and talked about what it means to look Muslim in the two different national contexts.

My fieldwork was based on a combination of interviews, wardrobe research, visual archiving of garments from wardrobes and street scenes, and participant observation. I conducted in-depth interviews with fifty-six women. I tried to include women from different backgrounds, especially of different generations, even if many of my interlocutors were part of the same network of religious communities. In particular, I tried to include women with different styles of tesettür. From more covered to less covered, from more fashionable to less fashionable, my main goal was to include as many different styles and preferences of tesettür as possible. All participants appear under pseudonyms, most of which they have chosen for themselves.
I primarily conducted interviews in my interlocutors’ homes, where I was always welcomed with great hospitality and served delicious food. I always appreciated these moments, which often offered me relief from the homesickness I experienced in the Netherlands. For practical reasons, houses and apartments were more convenient contexts in which to conduct interviews, because my informants and I could easily look at the dresses and items in the wardrobes together. Furthermore, conducting interviews in women’s home also allowed us to look at photograph albums, which women often use to describe their changing styles and to compare their sartorial preferences with other female relatives and friends. Women who were more interested in clothing and fashion acted as contacts by introducing me to their close friends with different understandings of tesettür and style.\footnote{This means that I worked with a form of theoretical sampling rather than representative sampling. Theoretical sampling consists of choosing new cases based on the analysis of earlier encounters, guided by emergent theoretical notions (Glaser and Strauss 1967).}

In some interviews, I had difficulty accessing wardrobes. Particularly with young women who still live with their parents and siblings, it was sometimes difficult to visit them at home. Furthermore, some women were interested in speaking about their sartorial practices but still reluctant to allow a stranger to enter their wardrobes. In such cases, I gave women a list of items and garments (including their favorite combinations, garments that they no longer wear but still keep, their favorite headscarves, etc.) and asked them to photograph these items; sometimes, they also brought along a few photographs to show how their style had changed through time. These interviews mostly took place in my own apartment. Sometimes, it was easier for my interlocutors to discuss the feel of a dress and the characteristics of combinations in more detail by looking at photographs rather than looking at the garments themselves. Photographs sometimes provided better clues about why a particular outfit was worn in a particular context. Exploring the everyday clothing of Turkish-Dutch women and tracing the genealogies of garments at different locations and historical moments in Turkey and the Netherlands provides a rich contextual analysis of how similar garments may have different meanings in different temporal and spatial contexts.
6. Overview of the Chapters

Each chapter focuses on a different item of clothing, traces the genealogy of this particular garment, and explores its use in combinations with other items in contemporary *tesettür* clothing. The chapters cover a longer historical period than the era of “New Veiling” and are all chronologically arranged. Following the current introductory chapter on the key methodological and theoretical issues and concerns of my research, the second chapter focuses on the *çarşaf*, the most austere and uniform style of outdoor garment in the *tesettür* scene. This chapter makes a historical detour to trace the genealogy of the *çarşaf* in Turkey, proceeding from the late Ottoman era when the *çarşaf* was introduced to the turn to *çarşaf* fashions, the attempts in Turkey to ban it, and the more recent connection between the *çarşaf* and a particular religious community in Turkey (the İsmailağa cemaatî). This second chapter presents the stories of five women who adopted the *çarşaf* as their outdoor *tesettür*. The number of interviews is limited due to the small number of *çarşaf* wearers in the Netherlands in general. By bringing intimate accounts of the *çarşaf* as everyday clothing and the genealogy of *çarşaf* together, this chapter reveals a series ambiguities and shifts in *çarşaf* practice. It disputes the most commonly held depiction of the *çarşaf* as a timeless, pure form of *tesettür*. I discuss how various categories of others (family, men, friends, religious communities, and the Dutch public at large) react to women wearing *çarşaf*. Furthermore, I explore the ways in which women themselves deal with these reactions by expressing their love for the *çarşaf* and developing particular, individual styles as they mobilize different aspects of the self.

The third chapter analyzes changing styles and fashions of wearing the *pardöşü* (overcoat) and explores what wearing an overcoat means to different categories of women at different historical moments and in particular locations. It focuses on how intersections between people and objects in both Turkey and the Netherlands have enabled particular styles and stories of dress. In particular, this chapter is concerned with transformations in the urban-rural divide and how moving in and out of overcoats and their particular styles expresses the different ways women live Islam in the Netherlands. Beyond the dualistic categories of veiled and unveiled, this chapter offers accounts of the continuous renegotiations over piety and feminity that occur on the basis of women’s social-spatial mobility in a transnational field.
The fourth chapter depicts different combinations of tops (tunics, blouses, cardigans, jumpers, vests, etc.) with a particular focus on skirts and trousers. Unlike outdoor tesettür garments and headscarves, skirts and trousers are not unique to tesettür wardrobes. From the first generation’s baggy trousers to the Dutch skirts and trousers of the 1970s and up to present, this chapter investigates and compares different sartorial choices of women related to skirts and trousers. It pays attention to how women pick different styles and materials that hide and reveal certain parts of the body and aspects of the self in different ways. These accounts about skirts and trousers not only illustrate practices of covering; they also focus on gender differences that other garments do not reveal to the same extent.

The fifth and sixth chapters are each shorter essays that focus on two more specific themes, düğünlikler (festeve dresses) and makeup. The fifth chapter explores the sartorial self as an actor in festive contexts. Festive settings are powerful, exceptional occasions that require women to dress differently than they do in their everyday lives. The specific attention to and care for one’s clothing in these contexts depends on an individual’s relationship to the host family. These celebrations are rich sites where one can notice transgressions and ambiguities in tesettür clothing and observe how tesettür is also a matter of context. This chapter explores the dilemma of what to wear as a relationship between festivity and religious modesty. It compares present and earlier festive celebrations and women’s sartorial practices in these settings. Furthermore, it illustrates how the ritual moment creates a state of exception and functions as a form of tesettür in itself; weddings coordinate an abstract tesettür that produces modesty and purifies “attractiveness” from its negative connotations.

The following chapter is about makeup and the use of beauty accessories as extra, final touches in tesettür clothing. Although makeup produces feelings of apprehension because of its close association with attractiveness, a certain amount of makeup has become necessary for producing a “natural healthy look” in everyday tesettür. This chapter shows how women apply different amounts of makeup to accommodate and contest diverse understandings of femininity, religiosity and notions of care for the self. By describing how both the quality and quantity of makeup change occasionally, it shows how contemporary interpretations of modesty have evolved towards the “management of beauty” rather than its concealment.

The manuscript began with a comment on the centrality of scholarly representations of the “modern headscarf.” The seventh chapter attempts to offer a new reading of the headscarf; it approaches the headscarf as a part of everyday clothing and explores the agency of
headscarves by looking at their materiality (fabrics, patterns, colors, ornaments, pins and other ways of tying, etc.). The headscarf was the trickiest item in this research from the very first moment of fieldwork through the final phases of writing. For this reason, it is not only the last chapter in the thesis, but was also the last section that I wrote. Before zoning in on contemporary headscarf collections, this chapter traces the changing styles and names of head coverings that migrant women from Turkey still remember well. The following section turns to the materiality of headscarves by focusing on the various effects particular kinds of headscarves produce both for the Turkish-Dutch women who wear them and for a wider public. This capstone chapter ends with a thick description of the headscarf; it shows how women choose different materials, patterns and formats to highlight certain aspects of the pious self in relation to the wider context in which they live. Finally, I offer a set of concluding remarks in a brief, summary chapter.