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**Wardrobes of Turkish-Dutch women: The multiple meanings and aesthetics of Muslim dress**

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*Citation for published version (APA):*

Unal, R. A. (2013). Wardrobes of Turkish-Dutch women: The multiple meanings and aesthetics of Muslim dress

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## CHAPTER THREE: OVERCOATS

### 1. Tracing the Genealogy of the Turkish *Pardösü*

The *çarşaf* was not the only new style that replaced the *ferace* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Empire. Although the *çarşaf* became highly adapted to European fashions, the *yeldirme* (women's cloak) was the first explicit example of a European-style overcoat in the Ottoman Empire. The appearance of these European overcoats in Ottoman public space dates back to the early 1910s. For elite Ottoman women, the *çarşaf* had become old-fashioned by 1918 (Sevin 1973). Unlike the *ferace*, which was worn by men and women in a similar way, the *yeldirme* was first the gendered style of garment in a modern sense. With an overturned collar, set-in sleeves,<sup>33</sup> buttons on the front and a light texture, the *yeldirme* became a popular style of summer outdoor garment (Taşcıoğlu 1958: 29).

The following anecdote about the graduation ceremony of a sewing school from the early 1910s illustrates the velocity of the transformation and state-sponsored wardrobe modernization that Ottoman women experienced. One of the first sewing schools, *Biçki Yurdu* (Sewing House), was opened in the 1910s, led by a female tailor, Behire Hakkı, who had received training in Paris. The aim of the sewing school was to instruct girls from poor families in modern tailoring skills and methods. At the first graduation ceremony, young women presented their skills to elite intellectuals and bureaucrats. They selected an overcoat to display their skills, even though this was not yet commonly worn attire at the time. They promoted the style that was to become a marker of status in the new Republic.

In the 1950s, when Taşcıoğlu wrote about this event in her book, *The Social Status of Women and Clothing in Turkish Ottoman Community*, European-style overcoats were already very popular as a new urban style of overcoat. Wearing an overcoat rather than ethnically marked garments or a *çarşaf* was an indicator of becoming a modern, urban citizen of the Republic. During the Republican years, the image of a woman with an overcoat and a small headscarf tied under the chin signified a break with the Ottoman past. In the 1950s, campaigns

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<sup>33</sup> A sleeve joined to the body of a garment by a seam, starting at the edge of the shoulder and continuing around the armpit.

against *çarşaf* and the promotion of overcoats heightened the new visibility of women as status markers in Turkey. The overcoat produced a unique, modern, and somewhat uniform appearance for women in the Republic. For the first generation of migrant women discussed in this research, the overcoat was the first modern outdoor attire, which many women had begun wearing soon before or just after they moved to the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s.

This chapter will explore overcoat fashions from the early years of migration up to the present-day Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* scene. It offers an analysis of changing styles of wearing overcoats and overcoat fashions. Furthermore, it explores and illustrates what wearing such overcoats means to different categories of women at different historical moments and in particular locations. In order to achieve this analysis, I focus on how the mobility of people and objects within and between Turkey and the Netherlands has enabled particular styles and stories of dress. I trace the migration stories and changing sartorial practices of women from early years of migration to today. In particular, I am concerned with transformations in the urban-rural divide; therefore, I discuss at length how moving in and out of overcoats and their particular styles intersects with the ways in which women live Islam in the Netherlands.

### The Guest Worker's Overcoat: Becoming Modern

Three-quarter overcoats were the most commonly worn outdoor attire in the accounts of migrant women who had come to the Netherlands. The first generation of migrant women described this particular style of overcoat as the first modern and urban (*şehirli*) item of outdoor clothing they had ever worn. These three-quarter overcoats were relatively close-fitting, intended to be worn in winter, and produced by the mainstream textile industry. Women mainly referred to this style of overcoat as *manto* or *pardösü* (originally both French terms, *manteau* and *par-dessus*) and used these terms interchangeably in their accounts.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Overcoat producers have promoted the label of *pardösü* for covered and religiously inspired styles of overcoats since the 1980s. *Tesettür* companies continue to release fashionable, long overcoat collections with the label of *pardösü*.



Figure 9 Amsterdam, 1976, by Bertien van Manen in her book *Vrouwen te gast* (1979), courtesy of Bertien van Manen.

The *manto* style overcoat was tighter and shorter than the outdoor garments Anatolian women previously wore. It fashioned a distinctively modern visibility, concealing local and ethnically specific markers of provincial dress.<sup>35</sup> While obscuring older ways of differentiating among women, the *manto* also produced new forms of difference among women. Wearing such an overcoat required a transformation of bodily gestures and movements. A closely fitting, three-quarter overcoat requires the body to move in a slower, more elegant way. These overcoats produced certain effects in their wearers as well as in their viewers, constituting different understandings of femininity and modesty with a stronger division between the home and outside experience. This distinction was particularly marked among women in the cities, who, of course, no longer labored in the fields.

<sup>35</sup> Simultaneously, ethnic and local types of apparel were displayed as the traditional garments of Anatolian villagers in national museums.

Women described their new posture in overcoats as well-mannered and more ladylike (*hanım hanımcık*). This style of dress would not allow women to sit cross-legged on the ground, but rather encouraged them to sit on chairs as a sign of having mastered a more civilized, modern way of life. Other urban accessories completed and complimented the elegant style and feminine posture performed by the body in a *manto*: a small, modern headscarf, a handbag, and a pair of shoes instead of slippers. Not all women welcomed these changes in posture and garments. In some accounts, learning these new forms of feminine visibility was portrayed as an embarrassing experience, which took some time to get used to.

As previously discussed, in the wake of the campaigns against the *çarşaf* in the 1950s and later, overcoats became a popular item through which to fashion a modern, secular appearance. The rural-urban divide constitutes the main line of demarcation in women's narratives. Wearing *manto* was also a tacit requirement that came with the displacement of migration. It concealed the markers of poverty, a rural background and local-ethnic aesthetics, and transformed migrant women's bodies in a manner that made them acceptable in modern, urban public space. The first generation of migrant women often simply referred to two categories of garments, those worn on a daily basis at home and those for wearing outside and on special occasions. Most women only had a few outfits in their suitcases when they set out for the Netherlands. Stories of their engagement with the overcoat and its shifting styles are shaped by the specific backgrounds of the women concerned and their patterns of mobility. Some women emigrated directly from small Anatolian villages; others had already experienced work and life in one of the big cities in Turkey. This rural and urban divide was a major factor in shaping their experiences in the Netherlands.

The styles of outerwear they had worn in their villages of origin varied, depending on understandings of body covering, modesty, and piety, as well as the climate of their home region. Mükerrerem and Pelda—both in their late sixties now—joined their husbands in the Netherlands in the late 1970s, together with their children. In their sartorial biographies, changes in clothing style were not only strongly linked to the migration process, but also intersected with different regional styles, aesthetics, and notions of comfort in body covering.

The black *çarşaf* was commonly worn as outdoor dress in the village where Pelda spent her early life, near the city of Elazığ in Eastern Anatolia. Pelda came out of her *çarşaf* on her way to the Netherlands. At the airport in Istanbul, she took it off and put it in a plastic bag. The next stop on her way to Amsterdam was Frankfurt. When she arrived at the passport control desk in Frankfurt, she was wearing an *entari* (a long, loose-fitting dress) combined

with a loose white cotton scarf and new leather shoes. She emphasized that she did not have a proper purse because she had never needed one before. She had a small hidden pocket inside her clothes, attached with a cord and safety pin. Her passport was in her husband's pocket. In Frankfurt, one of her relatives bought her a red leather handbag. She kept that bag for almost four decades. It was this outdoor accessory that completed her new elegant posture and look.

Pelda bought her first overcoat from a market in the Netherlands. It was a green, close-fitting three-quarter length overcoat. It was the first and last overcoat she bought in the Netherlands. It felt too tight and short for outdoor clothing, especially since she was accustomed to wearing a *çarşaf*. She felt embarrassed wearing it. For a long time, she continued to wear a *çarşaf* when visiting her village in Turkey on summer vacations. Several years passed before she felt able to wear her outdoor overcoat in the village. The overcoat worn over skirts or trousers and accompanied by shoes and a handbag gradually transformed the image of the provincial migrant woman into that of an urban subject. Although worn with headscarves, such styles were not yet labeled as "Islamic." To the women who adopted them, they were perceived principally as modern garments.

The ways in which women combined former sartorial practices with new fashions were ambiguous, and depended on the social context. Sometimes, the guest worker's overcoat was combined with baggy trousers, or with skirt-trouser combinations, which women had worn before emigrating. Women frequently told me that without their overcoats, they lost their self-confidence and felt uncomfortable, as they were not used to displaying their bodies in public. On the other hand, for some time, they would also feel uncomfortable when they returned to their native villages wearing their new styles. In this context, they also used overcoats to hide the changes in their clothing and taste.

Mükerrem, who is sixty-eight years old, bought her first overcoat after she came to the Netherlands in the late 1970s, and still wears *pardösü*. She followed her husband to the Netherlands, who had come to the Netherlands "as a tourist."<sup>36</sup> Married when she was fifteen years old, Mükerrem still perseveres in her unhappy marriage; she spends most of her time in the Netherlands, unlike her husband, who spends most of the year in Turkey. When she moved to the Netherlands, *şalvar* (baggy trousers) was the most commonly worn garment in her village close to the city of Yozgat, in Central Anatolia. Such a *şalvar* is often worn with blouses and a vest, which conceal the contours of the upper part of the body. But Mükerrem

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<sup>36</sup> The word *tourist* was commonly used by my interlocutors to denote people from Turkey who stayed in the Netherlands without a required residential permit.

did not come to the Netherlands in her *şalvar*. Although she still wears *şalvar* when she does housework, on the day she arrived in the Netherlands, she was wearing a long, loose skirt (a maxi skirt with an elasticated waist) over loose cotton trousers to cover her legs.

*Şalvar* and cotton (*pazen*) trousers were commonly worn in Turkey's rural areas. These were replaced by the popular flared trousers of the period, often worn in combination with a long dress or short skirt. Wearing more modern combinations allowed Mükerrerem to adjust more easily to urban life in both Turkey and the Netherlands. Although her village clothes were replaced by urban garments, Mükerrerem still tried to maintain her earlier understanding of modesty, and wore her new garments so that that they would cover her body properly. She often wore a skirt or a long dress over her new Dutch trousers, beneath her new overcoat. Her overcoat also hid the fact that she was inexperienced with urban fashions. As she put it:

I never wore modern clothes in my village. I never had an overcoat in Turkey, then I came here...then, here I never took my *pardösü* off.

For Mükerrerem, the overcoat is still formal attire. In familiar and intimate contexts, she does not need a *pardösü*. For instance, although she still does not put on her *pardösü* in the village, she wears it when she leaves the village and visits the city. There, Mükerrerem prefers to put on a long, loose, dark, and plain-colored overcoat that flawlessly hides her figure. She completes her *tesettür* style with a scarf in a plain color that loosely covers her chest and shoulders.

Not all migrant women started to wear overcoats after coming to the Netherlands. Among the first generation of migrant women, there were women who had first left their villages for the big city (*büyük şehir*) to seek a better life in Turkey. Therefore, it is important to note that adopting the overcoat during that period was not unique to stories of emigration to Europe. Overcoats played a similar role in the modern urban public spaces of Turkey. They fashioned an urban (*şehirli*) look for women from small Anatolian villages.

The overcoat has a longer history in Kadriye's wardrobe than it does in those of other older women whom I interviewed for my research. When she first came to the Netherlands, Kadriye already owned modern urban outfits. As she emphasized, she never really dressed like the other women in her village because she had gone to school and married a young man from a pious family in the city. As one of the few girls attending school, she used to wear a hat as part of her school uniform. She recalls feeling that her hat she helped her empathize with the girls who wore headscarves in the village. As a little girl, she had tried to hide her hair under her hat as if she were wearing a headscarf.

When she came to the Netherlands in 1978, Kadriye had already been wearing an overcoat for several years. Her father-in-law had bought her first overcoat for her in 1961 as a present. She married at the age of seventeen and then left her village in the region of Nevşehir for Ankara, Turkey's capital. There, she cultivated positive feelings towards the overcoat. Her description of her arrival in the Netherlands illustrates her feelings of comfort and confidence as a modern *şehirli* woman in *tesettür*.

I did not come to the Netherlands in village dress. My eldest son bought a very nice skirt from *Karamürsel Mağazası* (a popular department store of the period in Turkey) on Mother's Day. I bought a green blouse from a boutique, which matched with the skirt. I had an overcoat and a matching scarf, too. I did not come from the village. I came from Ankara. My outfit was proper.

Relatives and friends also contributed to the formation of these new styles. Those who were more experienced in urban settings and had knowledge about shopping places and urban fashions helped newcomers or those who had previously lived in a village. Garments and styles started travelling between Turkey and the Netherlands. Sevda vividly remembers how her clothing changed as a small child. Her uncle played important role, both in her migration story and in helping her to fashion a new appearance. Her family followed her uncle, who first left the village for the Netherlands. He married a Dutch woman and settled in the Netherlands in the early 1970s. Sevda started to wear modern fashions in their village, in the province of Erzurum in Eastern Anatolia, before moving to the Netherlands. Her Dutch aunt always brought nice clothes for Sevda, while her mother, a *pardösü* wearer, adopted an elegant, urban style with the help of her relatives in the Netherlands.

My aunt is Dutch; she brought us clothing from the Netherlands. When my mother came here, she wore high heels. If you look at elderly women from Erzurum, they wore *atki* or *ihram*, that is, very thick, large shawls (covering the upper part of the body from the head down), when they first came here, and their *tülbents* (plain white cotton scarves) covered their faces up to their noses. We had neighbors who wore clothes like that...

Modern overcoats either replaced or covered the great variety of provincially-geographically marked attire of Anatolian women in the Netherlands. In the early years of migration, adopting an overcoat created social and spatial mobility for women. Not only geographical mobility, but marriage, too, could lead to a comparable change of style. Marriage not only increased the mobility of women in the villages but also signified a transition to adulthood as a woman with a new sense of femininity. Overcoats were portrayed as a precious and expensive item in their dowry.

As the narratives of women suggest, the adoption of the overcoat in the 1970s both signaled and enabled social and spatial mobility for the first generation of migrant women arriving from Turkey. While not many of them found employment, most did eventually have interactions with Dutch public institutions and encountered members of the Dutch public. However, adopting the overcoat was not restricted to women who migrated to Europe. Overcoats also fashioned an urban look for women who left Anatolian villages for the Turkish cities, playing an important role in the formation of new forms of visibility for women in Turkish public space.

### The Overcoat Turns “Islamic” and “Fashionable”

In the 1980s and 1990s, full-length, loose-fitting overcoats combined with large, loose-covering headscarves in plain colors became more and more visible in Turkey and in the Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* scene. The cultural politics of emerging civic religious organizations and movements in the 1980s played a significant role in promoting a particular style of outdoor clothing, and knowledge about it, among young, educated urban women. Students at Quran courses and *İmam Hatip* schools of the period began to distinguish between habitual forms of covered dress and consciously learned forms of body covering that they considered explicitly Islamic. Education played a significant role in transforming women into pious Muslims. Young girls began to learn about proper, conscious (*bilinçli*) forms of *tesettür* based on religious texts.

The *robadan* overcoat was one early expression of urban Islam (*şehirli İslam*) in women’s clothing. It was different from the existing long overcoats of the period, as it had a seam placed just below the shoulder level, thereby creating a loose shape that conceals the figure from head to toe. Wearing a *robadan* overcoat and fashioning an understated look was considered a stance against attractive femininity and sexuality (Şişman & Karabıyık-Barbarosoğlu 2000). The *robadan* overcoat produced the figure of the urban educated Muslim woman as completely covered. This style of overcoat, combined with dark-colored, plain scarves and worn on a daily basis, produced a kind of uniform style (Sandıkçı and Ger 2010).

In Turkey, such new, long, loose forms of *pardösü* distanced their wearers not only from more provincial styles but also from earlier urban styles of outdoor garments. For instance, the black *çarşaf*, an equally covering outdoor garment, came at that time to be seen

either as a statement radical Islamic politics or as outdated rural attire. The narratives of women about this period focus on “the heightened visibility” (Tarlo 2010) of wearing *tesettür* in public spaces and underline the importance of commitment and strength nourished by faith and religious education. Besides shifting understandings of body covering from habit to a consciously learned practice, these modest and pious styles differentiated devout women from those who followed the many fashionable styles of outer garments developing at that period. In circles of committed Muslims, *robadan* overcoats replaced the closer fitting, three-quarter overcoats of the 1970s. Wearing a uniform style was seen as a sign of modesty and piety, even as fashionable styles of *tesettür* proliferated, in part due to the developing textile industry, which benefited from the liberal economic policies in the 1980s. The former style of overcoat, which had been the first modern outdoor attire of migrant women, gradually became perceived as rural and identified with poverty.

The 1980s witnessed frequent family reunions for Turkish guest workers in the Netherlands. This was not a one-way process. Girls were also sent back to Turkey to pursue alternative education in Quranic boarding schools or *İmam Hatip* Schools.<sup>37</sup> Returning to Turkey enabled young Turkish-Dutch girls to better master the Turkish language, to maintain their ties with the homeland, and to receive an Islamic education in addition to a secular Dutch one. They also learned about new Islamic fashions that were emerging in Turkey. On their return to the Netherlands, they introduced new styles of outdoor *tesettür* clothing. They also played an active role in religious organizations and in propagating modern, correct *tesettür* fashions, spreading their knowledge about Islamic clothing in the Netherlands. As educated, pious women from *İmam Hatip* and Quranic schools, young *tesettürlü* women linked their own sartorial preferences to religious texts and teachings. They disseminated knowledge about *tesettür* and introduced idealized styles within Turkish religious circles. These young women also brought new *tesettür* fashions from Turkey to the Netherlands.

Ela Nur, for example, first came to the Netherlands in 1980 when she was seven years old. Her father was an imam, employed by the Turkish state in the late 1970s. Ela Nur followed him, studied theology in the Netherlands, and now teaches Islam at a college there. In 1987, she left the Netherlands to study at an *İmam Hatip* School for three years. She returned with a change in her style of dress. She had started wearing a headscarf and *pardösü*, but her first *pardösü* was chic and elegant in comparison to the *robadan* style. It expressed

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<sup>37</sup> Chapter Two, which focuses on the *çarsaf*, discusses the experiences of my interlocutors in Quranic boarding schools and *İmam Hatip* Schools in more detail.

both her Islamic education and her understanding of *tesettür* fashion, as well as her personal style. *İmam Hatip* graduates not only propagated new styles of *tesettür* and knowledge about them, they also embodied new aesthetic preferences and tastes linked to different understandings of femininity and bodily posture.

I wore a *pardösü*...but it was a cool one, I never wore something wide like the *robadan pardösü*. I returned to the Netherlands with an overcoat on. I had an *İmam Hatip* background; (I thought that) people should see what a girl educated in *İmam Hatip* School dressed like...that is why I wore it. The overcoat gave a different feel to the way you walked and the way you sat, but you could learn to carry it off.

Dressing plays a constitutive role among people in a diaspora, as it transforms not only their sense of self but also their relationship with others (Moors 2009a; Tarlo 2007). Styling does more than signify degrees of religious practice and modernity, it is also lived as an expression of personality and one's inner self. Young women try to find ways of expressing their individual identity through dress. At the same time, personal styling and the individual search for religious meaning in dress become a source of inspiration and motivation for others.

Ela Nur and her older sister were aware of their responsibility as role models, both as daughters of a well-known imam and as educated *tesettürlü* women originally from Turkey. They introduced a new aesthetics of *tesettür* to the Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* scene. Ela Nur's narration powerfully articulates the role of femininity in the formation of the modern pious female subject:

As the daughters of an imam, we had to be careful all the time. What might others say about our father if we were to misbehave? My sister had a beautiful outfit. Everything matched perfectly. Her style was very different from what people were used to here. She wore a sugar pink overcoat, a matching scarf and pinkish shoes. From head to toe, everything matched. Girls admired her style, and so they covered, too. They adopted *tesettür* not because they admired her understanding of Islam but because of her style.

Stylish combinations of long, loose overcoats with large scarves (90 x 90 cm) covering the shoulders and the chest had appeared in Turkey's major cities in the late 1980s, and diversified into an expanding market in the 1990s (Sandıkçı and Ger 2010; 2007; White 1999; Gökarıksel & Secor 2010). During these years, the wardrobes of Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* wearers also began to include expressive and stylish overcoats. Women began to create alternative outdoor *tesettür* styles in order to escape being perceived as "uniform" and "fundamentalist." They looked for ways to articulate individual taste with the religious norms and aesthetics of *tesettür*. In this context, *robadan* overcoats came to be labeled as rural and a

sign of poverty, while they were also perceived as markers of radicalization and political Islam. As more fashionable, stylish overcoats appeared on the market, *robadan* coats disappeared from the urban *tesettür* scene.



Figure 10 Women in more form-fitting overcoats and headscarves shopping at a community event.

In her discussion of the centrality of a changing habitus of consumption in the formation of identities and the marking of internal cultural differences in Turkey during the 1990s, Navaro-Yashin (2002b) mentions the increasing popularity of stoned-silk overcoats in the mid-1990s.<sup>38</sup> Stoned-silk overcoats were not made from locally produced cloth, but were promoted as a “foreign product” of better quality than local products. Stoned-silk was the most expensive style of *pardösü* of that period. In big cities, stoned-silk overcoats replaced pale-colored, cheaper overcoats made of cotton or polyester. Particular colors were popular

<sup>38</sup> Navaro-Yashin did her fieldwork in Istanbul in 1994.

among covered university students: light pink and lavender, diverse tones of purple, pastel blue and green, dark yellow and grey (Ibid.: 225).

For some women, however, their long overcoats functioned to hide their preference for new fashions when they visited relatives in Turkish villages over the summer, as these would have emphasized emerging differences and inequalities between those remaining in Turkey and those in the Netherlands. Sevda is forty-five years old and lives in Den Haag. When she was in her early twenties, she had one *pardösü*, which she only wore when she went back to her village of origin.

In the early years of my marriage, I wore a *pardösü*. I put it on when we went to visit my husband's relatives in Turkey. They live in a small village. My appearance would not have been not proper; my dresses were showy and were made of thin material. My husband's family wanted me to wear a *pardösü*. We bought a loose, lilac-colored stoned-silk overcoat from his acquaintances. After we returned here (to the Netherlands), I told my husband 'You may ask anything of me but don't ask me to wear this,' and he said 'I wouldn't force you to. Dress as you wish.'

Overcoats, then, both obscure local styles in modern public space and allow their wearers to conceal their personal taste if they so desire. Elderly women also feel comfortable wearing long, loose overcoats, not only because such overcoats hide their aging bodies but also because they hide their preferences for old or new fashions that people might judge them for. Pelda gave up her *çarşaf* almost thirty years ago on her way to the Netherlands, and since then she has only worn overcoats. In addition to feeling good about wearing a loose fitting overcoat as a pious Muslim woman, she also employs her overcoat to camouflage her personal style and tastes. She likes to wear colorful clothing. Bright red, purple and green are her favorite colors. She also loves *kadife entari* (long velvet dresses), which used to be the dress-of-choice for wealthy women in her village. After thirty-five years, Pelda no longer feels embarrassed; on the contrary, she feels comfortable and good in her overcoat. She describes the feeling of the overcoat as free and more ladylike. During the first years following her emigration, her *pardösü* primarily concealed her poverty and old clothing, but now her overcoat covers her personal choices: the colorful, chic dresses of village women, which, as she says with pleasure, hide the young woman inside her:

I like bright colors, I like my dresses to be shiny. (What do your friends think?) When I go to a wedding party, I put on *yazma* (a white cotton scarf) with my overcoat. Women look at me and see me as an eighty-year-old woman, and then, when I take off my *pardösü*, they say, 'You look like a fifteen-year-old!'

The example above indicates that the boundaries between “conscious” and “habitual” ways of wearing an overcoat are often vague, contingent and sometimes contradictory. Overcoats reveal and hide not only bodies, but also often the social life, tastes and personal preferences of the wearer, which vary according to social contexts and audiences.

Younger women frequently portray the choice of *pardösü* as a well-thought-out decision, rather than as a habitual form of body covering. This emphasis on conscious practice reveals and relates to women’s long search for sufficient, accurate knowledge about Islamic dress. The story below offers another account of wearing the overcoat in the 1990s. Fatma Nur started to cover late in life. She does not come from a pious family. In the mid-1980s, she was the first immigrant girl at her university. For a long time, she was an active member in the Dutch Turkish Women’s Union, an organization for labor rights. She spent a lot of time in Amsterdam with the leading leftist activist and intellectuals of the period from Turkey. Only later did she learn about Islam and decide to live an Islamic life.

In the 1990s, when she decided to practice *tesettür*, she was thirty years old. She desired a proper *tesettür* appearance according to her knowledge of Islamic clothing. Her decision was a conscious one, which came about after several years of Islamic education from different religious circles.

Gradually and discreetly, I changed my wardrobe; I bought a new blouse, a skirt and an overcoat. For months, I searched for the right overcoat. It took such long time...I bought new brown boots that match my overcoat. I prepared everything for the change. It was Eid (*bayram*). I left home, my heart was beating fast...I did not want anyone to see me in the neighborhood...

Women often postpone wearing an overcoat, as it can be a more difficult decision than adopting the headscarf. The overcoat produces a different set of effects on both the wearer and the public. This is not only a matter of preparing oneself physically and spiritually, but also a process of fashioning a personal style that feels positive and right in order to bear the negative reactions to *tesettür* in modern public spaces. “Can I be the woman I desire to be with this particular outfit?” was a constant question for the women who decided to adopt the overcoat in those years, and this question is still central and urgent for young Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* wearers today.

## Denim (*Kot*) *Pardösü*

The denim overcoat was one of the first alternative styles that combined different aesthetics and knowledge of *tesettür* clothing with mainstream trends and fashions. Compared to other styles of outdoor *tesettür* worn by Turkish migrant women in the Netherlands, the denim *pardösü* was unique in the way it integrated the global fabric of denim with the aesthetics and concerns of *tesettür*. Importantly, according to both secular and religious understandings of fashionable dress, being modern requires engagement with the mainstream clothing industry.

Denim had long been absent in general from the Turkish-Muslim milieu because wearing denim suggested a particular lifestyle and animosity toward religion connected to leftist movements in the 1970s (Karabıyık Barbarosoğlu 2006). Denim fabric worked to convert the old-fashioned, austere and fundamentalist image of the Muslim woman in her full-length overcoat into a moderate, urban, trendy and modern figure. This particular design of overcoat brought diverse ideas of femininity, beauty, fashion, modernity, and modesty together. *Kot pardösü* (the denim overcoat) and other denim clothes, especially long denim skirts, came to occupy a unique place in the wardrobes of some contemporary *tesettür* wearers.

The long, loose-fitting denim overcoat was one new trend that also became very popular among Turkish-Dutch *tesettürlü* women. As previously discussed, wearing *pardösü* signified a religiously-informed, conscious, personal preference. This new style gained an urban and relatively upper class status while also creating codes of distinction among *tesettür* wearers (Secor 2002; White 2002). In the late 90s, fashionable *tesettür* overcoats became markers of both piety and of a new status. While the principle of body covering remained the same, the new overcoats were distinguished on the basis of a variety of accessories and a change of fabric in the 1990s.

In their respective works on denim, Miller (2007) and Woodward (2011) discuss the ubiquitous character of denim fabric as a global phenomenon. The ubiquity of denim and the fact that it is worn globally produce commonalities among people of very different backgrounds. Denim jeans, in particular, are the single most common form of everyday attire around the world. The growing Turkish *tesettür* market embraced the ease and comfort of this global fabric and combined it with pious understandings of femininity and piety. The ubiquitous nature of denim fabric allows *tesettürlü* women to solve the dilemma of everyday

clothing. Denim grants a certain stylishness to a garment, and it is easily matched with other items. Women especially prefer denim overcoats made of thinner fabric in the summer because they hide the figure of the body while also being light and refreshing. Both overcoats and denim garments in general are styled and patterned with motifs and embroidery that fit Turkish *tesettür* taste.



Figure 11 A fashionable denim overcoat from Asu's wardrobe.

Figure 12 A denim overcoat.

Denim overcoats attract women from very different age groups and economic backgrounds, and they are also visible in the Dutch scene. Over the last several decades, they became distinctive enough to achieve a prominent place in the Dutch *tesettür* scene. Two Dutch artists created an archive project titled *Exactitudes* by systematically documenting people on the streets who followed similar fashions over the last sixteen years. *Exactitudes* is a global project consisting of a series of photographs from many different locations; the series called "Brigades," from Rotterdam (2010), features women in denim overcoats.



128. Brigade – Rotterdam 2010

Figure 13 By Ari Versluis & Ellie Uytttenbroek in *Exactitudes* (2011), courtesy of Ellie Uytttenbroek and Ari Versluis.

Denim overcoats are produced at different lengths and degrees of tightness for women with different understandings of *tesettür* and practices of body covering. They are practical for everyday clothing; moreover, they soften the formal, austere posture of the long overcoat wearer. Wearing long, loose overcoats (often in dark colors), once labeled as fundamentalist (*irticacı*), becomes a somewhat less conspicuous style due to the ubiquity and anonymity of denim fabric.

Although wearing denim was severely criticized in certain religious circles, and some *tesettür* producers and sellers avoided the fabric, denim overcoats retained their popularity

until recently, as they were one of the few alternatives to the uniform overcoats of the 1980s. With the proliferation of more fashionable styles of overcoats, however, long, loose-fitting denim overcoats lost their popularity and became old-fashioned. Nevertheless, denim overcoats are still mainly produced by *tesettür* companies rather than mainstream Turkish denim manufacturers. The presence of unusual denim garments, in particular long overcoats and skirts, distinguishes clothing stores owned by Turkish-Dutch entrepreneurs in the Netherlands (see Chapter Four for a discussion of denim skirts).

### The Generational Shift in Producing Overcoats

It was not only the materiality and styles of overcoats that changed over time, thus displaying a generational shift. Just as young Turkish-Dutch women no longer want to wear their mothers' overcoats, but seek to display their personal aesthetics by fashioning a modern form of *tesettür*, young executives of *tesettür* companies do not simply want to continue their *tesettür* businesses as their fathers had done (most *tesettür* companies are still run by male family members). The pencil-drawn overcoat figures featured in the advertisements of early 1980s (Sandıkçı and Ger 2007), have been replaced by glittering catwalks at the yearly-organized Istanbul International Islamic Clothing Fairs, which began in the 2000s. Young company owners considered this the right moment to appear in public spaces with attractive shop windows and fancy billboards. These overcoat producers (*pardösücüler*) left the dusty, grey commercial buildings (*iş hanları*) and side streets of Istanbul to open luxurious stores with fancy names on main shopping streets and in malls. The names of companies have changed as well, shifting from family names to attractive monikers for the global Islamic clothing market, such as Sheray and Setrems.

Similar shifts are visible in the Netherlands. For a long time, Turkish-Dutch women preferred to buy their overcoats in Turkey, where they could find the latest trends. The first Turkish stores in the Netherlands where women could find overcoats were *çeyiz mağazaları* (dowry stores).<sup>39</sup> These stores were quite old-fashioned; few, if any, young women patronized them, and they gradually disappeared. New *tesettür* stores with fashionable collections of brand name garments have appeared in migrant neighborhoods in the Netherlands over the

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<sup>39</sup> A kind of store that sells a wide range of items, from wedding gowns to teapots, from copies of the Quran to prayer carpets.

last few years. Young women not only have access to the Turkish *tesettür* market via the Internet, they also shop at stores in migrant neighborhoods that import textiles from Turkey while also resembling mainstream clothing stores. They organize shopping trips to Istanbul, and regularly make purchases from the increasingly available Internet stores based in both Europe and Turkey. Moreover, these young women have begun to maintain separate sections in their wardrobes for large collections of *pardösüs* and new three-quarter *tesettür* overcoats called *kap*. *Pardösü* wardrobes are costly to own: a brand-name overcoat costs at least one hundred euros, sometimes even more. A fashionable Turkish-Dutch overcoat wearer often has around twenty to thirty overcoats, which she seasonally upgrades with new styles.

Mainstream clothing stores such as Zara, Mango and H&M sell overcoats that are similar to the overcoats of the Turkish *tesettür* market, particularly the tight-fitting and three-quarter length models. These stores are very popular among young Turkish-Dutch women. Not surprisingly, the Turkish *tesettür* market responded to the demands and interests of *tesettür* wearers by beginning to follow mainstream fashions closely. Well-known headscarf producers such as Armine expanded their product range and introduced overcoats and other items of clothing. The boundaries between *tesettür* and non-*tesettür* collections and stores have blurred, as they have both adjusted to mainstream fashions and store concepts.

## 2. Contemporary Overcoat Trends

### *Kaps*

Over the course of the last decade, the contemporary *tesettür* scene has witnessed two distinct trends, both of which could be considered “retro.” On one hand, there has been a gradual transition from increasingly fashionable, full-length styles of *tesettür* to three-quarter length, tighter overcoats (now called *Kap*). On the other hand, a contrasting development has been the return to full-length, loose outer garments, somewhat similar to those of the 1980s, but displaying a more cosmopolitan Islamic style, described by both the Arabic term *jilbab* and the Ottoman term *ferace*.

The three-quarter-length, close-fitting *kap* style is reminiscent of a winter coat from the 1960s or 1970s in its form and shape. However, these new *kaps* are made from a much wider variety of fabric, which varies according to both the seasons and distinct occasions.

*Kaps* have largely adapted to mainstream fashion trends; moreover, they are mainly produced by well-known *tesettür* companies and marketed with other *tesettür* items and accessories such as headscarves, purses, skirts, and tunics. Like the *robadan* overcoat, the name of this new style originated from its tailoring. The waist of the overcoat is tightly fitted with additional stitches along the front of the chest and back. These extra stitches highlight the slimness of the waist.

*Kaps* are worn together with fashionable, trendy accessories. Footwear ranges from high-heeled shoes and knee-high leather boots to Converse All-Star sneakers and sandals. Original as well as imitation bags, showy watches, and big sunglasses from well known luxury brands, which are worn together with fashionably patterned silk scarves from seasonal collections, and stylishly tied around the neck with a swinging short edge at the back, complete the look of the fashionable *Kap* wearer. Young Turkish-Dutch women in the Netherlands call this new trend the “Istanbul style.” It is urban, modern, classy and hip. Young *tesettürlü* Turkish-Dutch women claim that the introduction of *Kaps* to *tesettür* clothing led to two different trends. Some young women who previously wore full-length overcoats shifted to this less covered style, while others who had previously found it difficult to wear a *pardösü* now felt able to do so.

Dicle is a shop assistant in a Turkish clothing store who first came to the Netherlands in 2004. She grew up in a very small village in Central Anatolia and later moved to a small Turkish town. She is twenty-six years old and also an *İmam Hatip* graduate. Her taste and preferences in clothing changed as she moved and made new friends in the Netherlands. Her story epitomizes the more general success story of the young women who have arrived from Turkey in recent years. Dicle received her Dutch degree and applied for a job as a social worker, while simultaneously working in a clothing store. Her style continues to change, and she has become a trendsetter and source of inspiration for *tesettürlü* girls and customers in her neighborhood. *Kaps* are new items in Dicle’s wardrobe. Through the *kap* she has gradually adopted the practice of outdoor *tesettür*. Although she thinks that wearing an outer garment is an important element of *tesettür*, she had not previously been able to find a suitable style of overcoat to wear. Now, however, the new style of *kap* highlights the dynamic figure of the body and can easily be adapted to mainstream fashion trends. Most young women who wear it now associate former *tesettür* overcoats with elderly women. Asked if she ever wore a *pardösü*, Dicle replied:

No, I never wore *pardösü*. I sell them here and I have tried them on a few times. They are not appropriate for my age...I want to wear proper *tesettür*. I do not want to pretend to be *tesettürlü*; I actually want to be so. *Tesettür* is not only about putting on a headscarf. I want to pay more attention to my appearance than that. I bought this recently from Istanbul (she points out an Armine *kap* hanging behind us)...it is from Armine. (This *kap* had an asymmetrical cut at the front, with a thin leather belt.) I wear it even on hot days...I feel naked if I go out without it. I do not feel comfortable. Besides, I like the style.



Figure 14 Dicle's *kap* in an Armine catalogue, courtesy of Armine.

In the contemporary *tesettür* scene in the Netherlands, there are different styles of outer garments and various ways of fashioning these styles. Some fashionable *kaps* can hardly be considered covering outer garments, as they display the wearer's figure quite clearly. Some are very eye-catching, especially when worn with accessories and ornaments. Wearing such new styles of overcoat relates to a different understanding of *tesettür*. These new garments and the concept of *tesettür* that corresponds to them can sometimes lead to contestations

among young women, their parents and *hocas*. The question of which style of outer garment to choose has also become more pressing with the proliferation of new styles and friendly competition in women's networks.

*Kaps* enable young women to practice outdoor *tesettür* and display their personal understanding of *tesettür*. They are an alternative for those who do not like older styles of overcoats but are willing to wear an outer *tesettür* garment in public spaces. For others however, fashionable *kaps* are not proper to a modest understanding of *tesettür* because they are attractive and expensive.

Zeynep is a twenty-five-year-old, college-educated woman from Amsterdam. She decided to put on the headscarf five years ago. Her *tesettür* decision was not unexpected, but it was still difficult for her parents to accept. Her story reflects how wearing *kap* mediates questions of style and piety in new ways. The *kap* allows her to practice outdoor *tesettür*; furthermore, it rescues her *tesettür* from her parents' criticism, as they had not wanted her to wear a full-length *pardösü*. Zeynep does not think that her current style reflects her understanding of *tesettür* entirely. She has tried to find a middle way in order to diminish the tension caused by her decision to cover. She sees her current style as transitory, with the *kap* enabling her to practice outdoor *tesettür*. With a rather loose *kap* and a shawl covering her shoulders and chest, Zeynep has fashioned a style that her parents do not find too radically religious or old-fashioned. As Dicle emphasized above, the *kap* style is modern and does not evoke the same meanings as the older *tesettür pardösü*. Zeynep explains:

When I first covered, I wanted to wear a long *pardösü* so much. But my mother did not let me. 'Well, you can cover but you cannot wear the *pardösü*' she told me...for her that style is *sofu* (puritan, fanatical). But what I wear now is not my ideal style. I envision a particular look with a *pardösü* and a big shawl. This will be my real statement in the future *inşallah*...it does not have to be all black. I can make it individual through the colors I choose.

Zeynep does not consider the color black to be an option because it produces such a strong visibility and would hide her personality (for a more detailed discussion of this issue, see the previous chapter). There is a particular contradiction involving the color black in *tesettür* clothing. Black is the color of modesty and elegance, but wearing only black in *tesettür* clothing is strongly associated with "fundamentalism" in the Turkish *tesettür* scene. In the Dutch context, wearing all black *tesettür* is also considered as a sign of "radicalism." In both contexts, wearing only black *tesettür* has become less and less common.



Figure 15 A form-fitting long black overcoat.

In the practice of outdoor attire, women adopt a wide variety of particular signs of piety and thereby shape and contest the category of “conscious *tesettür*” in general. Like *ex-çarşaf* wearers who have given up their *çarşafs*, there are *ex-pardösü* wearers who no longer consider *pardösü* necessary to their *tesettür* practice, or, more simply, do not find it comfortable. Even if new, fashionable, long overcoats enable some women to deal with the dilemma of heightened visibility, and therefore practice outdoor *tesettür*, for others, these same overcoats are no longer an option. Serap is a twenty-two-year-old educated woman from Amsterdam. She wore *pardösü* for a year in the past, particularly when she attended the meetings of a religious community; however, she does not feel good in an overcoat anymore. The overcoat has become solely a winter outfit for her. The change in her style also related to her changing environment and social life:

The overcoat was commonly worn in my milieu at the time. My friends from that community, all of them wore *pardösü*. [Do they still?] Yes they still do, and they do not consider three-quarter-length overcoats as *pardösü*. For them, only the long overcoat is a real *pardösü*. I was only able to wear it for a year...I was young at that time, perhaps sixteen or seventeen. It makes you

look older than you are. *Pardösü* is beautiful, but I still don't prefer it. Let me put it this way: I do not find it practical. I am a student. I have a busy life. I am always in rush and moving around. *Pardösü* is long—it tangles your legs.

For some religious communities, wearing a long overcoat is a significant element of proper *tesettür*. In the Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* scene, women from the *Süleymanlı* community stand out, with their long overcoats and scarves tied under their chins with a knot. Nonetheless, ideas about the necessity of wearing outdoor *tesettür* and its style differ greatly among women. Young Turkish-Dutch *tesettürlü* women strive to fashion distinct styles of outdoor attire, even when they would rather wear long overcoats. Personal preferences are not always in line with mainstream fashion trends. As Göle (2002) points out, for some individuals, the search for authenticity can entail a critical distance from the assimilative strategies and potentially homogenizing practices of modernity. Different understandings of *tesettür* are often marked by the peculiarities of personal style. Knowledge about combining certain colors and kinds of fabric, as well as a thorough understanding of the aesthetic principles of different publics, inform choices of outdoor *tesettür*, and help to construct an ideal of *tesettür* for pious young women. Contemporary styles reflect not only new ideas of femininity and piety, but also taste, social status and distinction in the manner famously discussed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984). In this sense, sartorial practices become a “performance of difference” (Göle 2002: 185), and necessarily involve the search for an individual, innovative image in a larger field of sensorial interaction. On the basis of an innovative look and a multiplicity of aesthetic ideals, women are able to manage the heightened visibility that wearing certain types of garments produces (Tarlo 2010: 11).

## Loose-fitting, Long Overcoats: A New Cosmopolitan Aesthetics

Old-fashioned, loose-fitting, full-length overcoats in dark colors are disappearing rapidly. Nonetheless, a few young women have purposely adopted this elderly, unfashionable look. They wear this style with plain color large scarves, or, in some cases, with a *çarşaf* cape. In doing so, they make a personal statement about their constant attention to working on their inner selves and thereby achieving higher levels of devotion. While some young women wait for the right moment to adopt what they think of as an ideal *tesettür* style in order to make a personal statement, others choose old-fashioned styles associated with elderly women. Even if these young women own wardrobes full of fashionable dresses and accessories, they purposely adopt an elderly look or more covered styles of outdoor garments as their *tesettür* appearance. In the collections of contemporary Turkish *tesettür* producers, these old-fashioned overcoats can hardly be found, at least not in high quality fabric. Hence, women often need to have them tailor-made. Both the producers of this style and its young wearers label call it the “grandma’s overcoat.”

Nermin, whom I first introduced in the chapter on *çarşaf*, wore a *çarşaf* for six years before becoming an overcoat wearer. She teaches the Quran and several different courses on Islam and organizes religious meetings (*sohbet*) among women. She interprets her practice of outdoor *tesettür* in direct reference to the Quran. Sura Al Ahzab, verse 59, instructs women to wear covering outer garments:

O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves (part) of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.<sup>40</sup>

Nermin’s outdoor *tesettür* has been black and very simple since she first put on a *çarşaf* in the 1990s. Her present style consists of a black, loose-fitting, long overcoat and a large black scarf that also covers her shoulders and chest. Her conversation with the shop assistant in a *tesettür* store illustrates how difficult it has been for her since choosing this style.

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<sup>40</sup> Sahih International, retrieved from <http://quran.com/33/59> on 19.04.2012.

You go into a store, you describe what you want and they say it is *babaanne* (grandma) style. Eventually, you have to say ‘Yes!’ They frankly say ‘We don’t sell *babaanne* fashion.’ They call it a grandma’s overcoat when you ask for a loose fitting overcoat.

There is no doubt that many older women still prefer this particular style of overcoat. Both the form and the color conceal their aging bodies, as well as the layers of other garments that they often wear underneath. Garments that women find comfortable are not always aesthetically pleasing. Aging requires a change of sartorial preferences. Elderly women are often more concerned with covering the figure of their bodies properly, and they are careful not to wear colors and ornaments that are very attractive. Most importantly, they do not wish to give the impression to others that they want to look younger.

For younger women, on the other hand, wearing a grandma’s overcoat usually denotes a different understanding of *tesettür*. As its name indicates, this garment demonstrates a woman’s willingness to distance herself from mainstream ideals of beauty. By choosing this elderly style, she cultivates a particular understanding of modesty. Thus, the choice of the “grandma’s overcoat” on the part of a young woman designates a devoted and modest self, especially in the current era, with its emphasis on youth fashion.

Sartorial preferences also change for elderly women. Their preferences have become more complicated and influenced by the others in the contemporary *tesettür* scene. As children become educated young professionals, their parents’ social milieu also changes. Older Turkish-Dutch Muslims have also gradually altered their sartorial preferences. As I discussed in the previous section, Kadriye has worn what she considers proper urban outfits since her very first days in the Netherlands. For a long time, she was responsible for clothing her entire family. They still remember their early years spent in poverty in the Netherlands. Kadriye used to sew for her sons until they started to study in high school, and no longer liked the clothes she made. She is very proud of her sons, all of whom became well-educated Muslims, and who have not compromised their religion in spite of their success as businessmen in the Netherlands. Nowadays, they go shopping together, and they like to buy new clothes for their mother. One of them bought Kadriye her first fashionable *pardösü* in Turkey. It is a well-covering garment, but in a color that is new to the elderly style:

My son bought a proper *pardösü* for me...(it’s) beautiful! It is a soft, pink, creamy color—such a sweet color. He said ‘Mom you always wear black, brown, let’s buy this one for you.’ I agreed. I put it on, and I liked it very much.

While some young women adopt the “grandma’s overcoat” as a personal *tesettür* style, other young Turkish-Dutch women try to combine a religious understanding of bodily

covering with cosmopolitan aesthetics. In the final section, I will illustrate how women bring together diverse elements of outer-garment fashions from various localities in a transnational field and how they combine them innovatively, both according to their understanding of Islam and in relation to different publics in the Netherlands. New cosmopolitan styles and an aesthetics of displacement are means for Muslim women to construct a new mode of visibility in the Dutch public sphere.

Rüzgar is a twenty-two-year-old university student who works as a tour guide at the natural history museum. She was born in the Netherlands. She is one of the few young women who have adopted loose, long outer-garments in the “grandma style.” Not only does she make a sharp distinction between indoor and outdoor clothing, she also changes her preferences according to those present in her context. Rüzgar takes off her *pardösü* indoors when there are only women present. She chooses the simplest overcoat and the plainest headscarf possible. She thinks of ornaments (pockets, buttons, patterns, etc.) as additional elements that attract the wrong type of attention.



Figure 16 A “grandma’s overcoat” from Rüzgar’s wardrobe.



Figure 17 Rüzgar’s combination for work: *ferace* and jacket.

A young Turkish-Dutch *tesettür* wearer who adopts Egyptian-, Gulf-, or Moroccan-inspired styles distances her individual style from mainstream *tesettür* fashion trends common among the Turkish community. This style communicates well with the wider, diverse public in Dutch public spaces. Yusra is another young woman who synthesizes different aesthetics and diverse styles in order to facilitate communicating with a wider public. Her understanding of bodily covering and outdoor *tesettür* is similar to those of Nermin and Rüzgar. She was born in the Netherlands and is the only woman in her family to wear *tesettür*, which she adopted eight years ago when she was fourteen. Yusra changed her career and future plans when she chose to live a more pious life. A few years ago, she decided to quit her job at a bank and began to study Islam and Spiritual Guidance at university, while also working actively for a Turkish religious community. Yusra decided to add an outer garment to her *tesettür* during a trip to Egypt; she returned to the Netherlands in what she calls a *jilbab*. This Arabic word is used to refer to a woman's outer garment in the Quran. Her outer garment is a long, black, loose overcoat made from thin silky fabric. It is light, airy and comfortable to wear both outside and indoors. This particular style, which is relatively new in the *tesettür* scene both in the Netherlands and in Turkey, has become increasingly popular among young women. In Turkey's *tesettür* market, this new style of outer garment is called a *ferace*.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the *ferace* was the most common form of attire for Ottoman women. It disappeared with the emergence of new *çarşaf* fashions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the popularity of European style of overcoats. The name still recalls Ottoman women's outdoor clothing, even if the designs are different. The label *ferace* fits well with the promotion of an Ottoman revival in Turkey and beyond (Walton 2010). New outdoor *feraces* are generally black in color and have ornaments around the sleeves. They are made from a thin, shiny fabric called "Medina silk." They are cheaper than long, fashionable *pardösüs* (the price of a fashionable overcoat is around one hundred euros whereas that of a *ferace* is about thirty-fifty euros).

One of the most popular Turkish *tesettür* fashion magazines, *Âlâ*, promoted *ferace* in a recent issue as an ideal style for urban, conservative women. In the Netherlands, *feraces* have become an alternative for *tesettürlü* women like Yusra, who neither like the fashionable, close-fitting long *pardösü* nor the old-fashioned, loose, long *pardösü* that has become known as the "grandma overcoat." Speaking of her *ferace*, Yusra comments:

I feel free in this, I feel so comfortable. I do not care about my body. I feel free to mix with men...you can find these in Moroccan stores. This is from Egypt. In Turkish stores, you only find close-fitting overcoats that just fit on your body—you might as well wear a short jacket and skirt. Loose overcoats in the Netherlands are mostly for elderly women...

Now three years since we first met, Yusra continues to wear the *ferace*. She has different ones from Syria, Jerusalem and Istanbul. Although *feraces* are made from very thin fabric, she wears them during the winter with layers underneath. In general, they are more comfortable in indoor contexts with a mixed crowd such as workplaces and universities. On the whole, the number of *ferace* wearers is increasing in both Turkey and in the Netherlands. Furthermore, new styles of *ferace* have already become tight and fashionably ornamented, as well as expensive. To some extent, *feraces* solve the dilemma of the distinction between indoor and outdoor *tesettür*, blurring the boundaries between the two and highlighting changes in the practices of both.

This chapter aimed to address the complex set of dynamics that play a significant role in the changing meanings, styles, and practices of the overcoat among Turkish-Dutch *tesettürlü* women. Initially, the guest worker's overcoat, as a status symbol, indicated its wearer's spatial and social mobility, from small villages to urban areas and finally to Europe. The urban outdoor garments of provincial women concealed the markers of rural poverty and ethnic backgrounds as they entered modern public spaces. Later, in the 1980s, wearing an overcoat was transformed into a religiously inspired and informed practice. The accounts of the women that I have presented vividly illustrate how fashionable styles of loose, long overcoats worn in the 1990s transformed into the "grandma style," even before the promoters of the style became grandmothers themselves. In the 1990s, more fashionable styles emerged, which, within a decade, had become bifurcated into tighter and shorter *kaps*, on the one hand, and new cosmopolitan overcoats, on the other. These longer cosmopolitan overcoats are often known by the Quranic term *jilbab* or the Ottoman term *ferace*.

The mobility of both garments and individuals has transformed the practice of wearing overcoats in *tesettür* clothing. The proliferation and dissemination of styles enables actors to develop their unique appearances through diverse aesthetics addressed to different publics. Connections between actors and styles across countries constitute new *tesettür* preferences, aesthetics and personal styles in a cosmopolitan transnational field.