The Dutch inside the 'Moslima' and the 'Moslima' inside the Dutch: Processing the Religious Experience of Muslim Women in The Netherlands

Bat sheva Hass [1,*] and Hayden Lutek [2]

1   Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem 91905, Israel
2   Graduate School of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, 1012 CX Amsterdam, The Netherlands;
    Hayden.lutek@student.uva.nl
*   Correspondence: bat-shev.hass@mail.huji.ac.il

Abstract: This research focuses on Dutch Muslim women who chose to practice Islam, whether they were born Muslim ('Newly Practicing Muslims') or they chose to convert ('New Muslims'). This study takes place in a context, the Netherlands, where Islam is popularly considered by the native Dutch population, as a religion oppressive to women. How do these Dutch Muslim women build their identity in a way that it is both Dutch and Muslim? Do they mix Dutch parameters in their Muslim identity, while at the same time, inter-splicing Islamic principles in their Dutch sense of self? This study is based on an ethnography conducted in the city of Amsterdam from September to October 2009, which combines insights taken from in-depth interviews with Dutch Muslim women, observations from Quranic and Religious classes, observations in a mosque, and one-time events occurring during the month of Ramadan. This paper argues that, in the context of being Dutch and Muslim, women express their agency, which is their ability to choose and act in social action: they push the limits of archetypal Dutch identity while simultaneously stretching the meaning of Islam to craft their own identity, one that is influenced by themes of immigration, belongingness, religious knowledge, higher education and gender.

Keywords: Islam; Dutch Islam; religion in Europe; agency; women in conservative religions; religious conversion; identity; politics of belonging; culture; immigration; women in Islam

---

"It was rough to be a Muslim in the Netherlands ... no matter what they do, they'll never be Dutch ... these aren't disenchanted youth. They are well educated, and they have jobs. They feel that they've done everything right, and still they're rejected" (Quote De Koning [1] (p. 58))

1. Introduction

This research focuses on a vital issue in academia and civil society: the growing interest in Muslim populations in Europe, and the lives of Muslims in a non-Muslim world. This case study is focused on one European country, the Netherlands, and the lives of its Muslim women. The Netherlands is unique for many reasons: the country is internationally famous for tolerance, but has recently experienced divisions between different religious groups, manifested in events such as: (1) the murder of an outspoken Dutch politician, Pim Fortuyn, who was anti-immigration and anti-Islam, (2) the murder of movie director Theo van Gogh, who released a film criticizing the oppression of Muslim women, and (3) questions about immigration, naturalization and the rise of the Dutch's Right-wing, including the PVV party led by Geert Wilders (see Appendix B). This, combined with negative ideas in the Western hemisphere regarding Islam, has contributed to the development of a dichotomy between Dutch identity and Islam. This dichotomy renders the two identities (in theory) irreconcilable. In this context,

this research focuses on the lives of Dutch Muslim women who chose to practice Islam, whether they were born Muslim (Newly Practicing Muslims), or they chose to convert (New Muslims). How do these Dutch Muslim women build their identity in a way that it is both Dutch and Muslim? Do they mix Dutch parameters in their Muslim identity, while at the same time intersplicing Islamic principles in their Dutch senses of self? Based on an ethnography carried out in Amsterdam, which included interviews with 17 Muslim women and dozens of participant observations in an Amsterdam mosque, Quranic classes, informal women's gatherings, one-time events and workshops, this paper argues that in the context of being Dutch and Muslim, women express their agency, which is their ability to choose and act in social action. They push the limits of archetypal Dutch identity, while simultaneously stretching the meaning of Islam to craft their own identity influenced by themes of immigration, belongingness, knowledge, higher education and gender. This paper will examine the relationship between the two attributes (Dutch and Muslim) that appear diametrically opposed [2–4].

Yet these two attributes meet in the lives of young, independent, educated, working Dutch Muslim women, who demonstrate a convergence of imagined "Muslim" and "Dutch" identities. The conclusion illustrates what qualities comprise the Dutch identity of the (Dutch) Muslim woman, and what qualities comprise the Muslim identity of the Dutch (Muslim) woman. In addition, this paper contributes to scholarship on the lives of female Muslims living in Europe and North America, many of which confirm what this paper argues: being female and Muslim pushes against the boundaries of national and religious identities.

1.1. Islam and Conservative Religions in The Netherlands

There have always been Muslims in the Western world. The idea that Europe was Christian and then turned into a popular destination for Muslims feeds into the erasure of the other that went into the formation of the European nation-state. In the Netherlands, too, Islam is often characterized in popular discourse as a foreign religion. Yet Islam, and contemporary conversion to Islam in the Netherlands, has a historic precedent. Kaplan's research revealed that there was a Muslim presence in Amsterdam as early as the 17th century in the form of conversion, while others (Ottomans) came to the Dutch Kingdom to assist in the Dutch revolt against Spain [5]. This paper is focused on the recent discourses about Islam in Europe: the immigration of Muslims to Europe, the formation of new ethnic groups, and conversion to Islam [2–4,6–9]. In Europe, this is a topic with an established historic and political dialogue, as Western European countries engaged with actively resourced migrant labor, often from Muslim countries, along with family reunifications and the development of second and third generation Muslim communities [10–14]. Here, the focus will be on the scholarship and ethnographies from Europe [2,3,7–9,12,13,15].

1.2. Religion in Modern Society

The question of the status of religion in modern society has become increasingly central to research on Islam in Europe. Dassetto introduces an approach that takes into consideration the use and reconstruction of religious knowledge and symbols by European Muslims [16]. They argue that first generation of immigrants often live in a state of relative harmony within religious, social and national identities, but their children and grandchildren face a tension, if not a conflict, among the layers of individual, collective and national identities [10,11,16]. This was evident in this ethnography and in the literature about Islam, immigration and politics of belonging [2,3,6–8,17]. Bowen argues that this specific question rests on an indefensible premise, because Islam cannot be exclusively French, any more than it can be American or Egyptian: its claims are universal [18]. He addresses the issue of the prohibition of clothing that would indicate a pupil's religious affiliation, aimed at preventing Muslim women wearing headscarves (the hijab) in schools [19]. The media coverage of in this period depicted grave dangers to French society and its tradition of *laïcité* (secularism), presented by Islamic radicalism and the oppression of women. A large amount of scholarship focuses on female religiosity and its relationship to Islamic rules on dress code [1,2,4,11,15,18–21]. These scholars argue that while

the *hijab* is viewed by many outsiders as a symbol of patriarchal oppression, many European Muslim women explain they wear the dressing voluntarily [2–4,18,19,22–26]. Yet, it remains an unanswered question if such individualization leads to the liberalization of practice and interpretation, or to greater fundamentalism. Abu-Lughod and Mahmood present an alternative perspective on this topic [27–30] which will be returned to in sub-section about agency.

1.3. A Dutch Case Study

The Netherlands has specific sensitivities, which are affected by the historical and collective memory of the country as one of tolerance, and historical events related to immigration. First, the Netherlands has a colonial past, of which cultural and social remains remain today. Wekker claims in *White Innocence*, that the Dutch have a history of 400 years of colonial rule that has left its traces [31]: "These traces are to be found in our language, our culture, in the institutions, in the way we look at ourselves and others." Second, the Netherlands has an interesting history regarding the division of religion. For example, in Amsterdam there was a time, under Protestant rule, when it was not allowed to practice Catholicism in the public sphere [2]. Third, the Netherlands was led by a pillarization model through most of the 20th century [32]. Pillarization ('*verzuiling*' in Dutch) is the division of a society into groups based on a shared philosophical and/or socio-economic basis, with the groups thus being shielded from opposing views. This was achieved by establishing institutions based on various societal groupings, including schools, political parties, trade unions, broadcasters, newspapers and hospitals. This system changed in the 1960s, with the rise of the welfare state, the youth revolution and the sexual revolution. Though no longer relevant, there are still remnants of this pillared division. For instance, in the Dutch language there is a word that distinguishes between those born in the Netherlands (*autochtoon*) and not born in the Netherlands (*allochtoon*). Inside the term *allochtoon*, further distinctions are made between Western and non-Western *allochtonen*, the former implicitly representing closeness to Western civilization, while the latter refers to groups that are considered disadvantaged or less integrated into 'modern' societies. As a result, some now argue that a new pillarization model exists between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands [2,32].

In this discourse of a pillarization, Muslims are framed as non-modern subjects who may oppose female and gay emancipation, [2] and who prefer their own hospitals, schools, media and political parties. As mentioned before, the Netherlands has a colonial past which has facilitated movement to the country from Suriname, other Dutch Antilles, and Indonesia (for more about the Dutch Colonial past and slave trade see: [33–35]). Additionally, in the 1960s, various industries needed more workers than were available in the Netherlands. Therefore, several corporations recruited employees from countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, Turkey and Morocco. After 1973, when the recruitment of workers abroad was halted, the number of Muslims grew further because of the immigration of wives and children of migrant workers. Since the beginning of the 1990s, a number of Muslims have also entered the Netherlands as asylum seekers and for family re-unifications [32,36,37]. This reality, combined with negative ideas in the Western hemisphere regarding Islam and the rise of Islamophobia, has contributed to the development of an artificial dichotomy between Dutch and Muslim identities. Therefore, Muslimness is popularly associated with being Moroccan or Turkish, and is not yet a "Dutch" identity. Yet born Muslimas interviewed in this study often refer to themselves as being a "cultural Muslima" [2], meaning that even though coming from Muslim families, they did not know much about their religion, and for example did not learn how to pray at home. Another term for such Muslims was found in the ethnography, specifically "Newly Practicing Muslims," who often encountered the same challenges as New Muslims, as they had to learn the basics of Islam [15]. In both Vroon and this present ethnography, women's groups, Qur'anic classes and lectures at mosques welcomed converts and born-Muslimas, as well as non-Muslim women. Thus, such gatherings were always diverse, and comprised of women from different ethnic and religious backgrounds [2,15].

The transformation of the Dutch pillar system, as Van der Veer [38] notes, can be found in the fact that, in particular, the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women "is regarded as a total rejection of the

Dutch way of life" [38] (p. 120). This can also be viewed in terms of racial and phenotypical questions of Europeanness: what happens if a blonde, blue eyed Dutch woman chose to wear a headscarf? Does she confuse her peers as she passes through different identities and notions of belonging when she is Dutch and Muslim, yet not born into Islam? How are women like her changing to the concept of 'whiteness' in a Christian based society [31,39,40]?

1.4. Agency

Scholars of religious piety and of Islamic identity in the West found that women embrace non-liberal religious identities not just out of piety, but also as rejections of other social models [6–8,14,27,28,41–43] (see also [44]). This could also be understood as a reaction to 'whiteness' in a Christian based society. Is the concept of 'whiteness' applicable to the Netherlands and mainland Europe [39]? Why have these women chosen a religion that is often portrayed in popular culture and the media as problematic, especially concerning women's rights? Muslim women in the West, including in the Netherlands, are regularly perceived as being oppressed objects, rather than capable actors [2,6,27,28,39]. Following Ortner [45] and Vroon [2], we chose to describe agency in the context of this paper as: "how actors formulate needs and desires, plans and schemes, modes of working in and on the world." For many women, the choice to embrace a conservative religion is a way of finding peace and coming home. This has been shown in the literature as being true for converts to Islam and born Muslims re-discovering their faith, and for converts or born-Jews turning to Orthodox models in Judaism [41–44]. Furthermore, while some women may experience conservative religions as restricting, they are also liberated and empowered by their religion [41,46]. Thus, religious actors are capable of using the repertoire of their faith in strategic, creative and subversive ways, to meet the practical demands of everyday life [2,28,41,46]. One example is the meaning of the veil in Islam: the decision to wear a veil, Bartkowski and Reads argue, can assist a woman in living her daily life, so that she can engage in higher education or participate in the job market [46]. Agency and social action (like the decision to veil), is argued to be not only a response to forms of domination, but to demonstrate a capacity for social action in creating pious self [27,28,46]. An Islamic feminist approach to traditionalist Muslims, who judge women's devotion to Islam by their choice to veil or not, is found in Mernissi's critical reading of the Quran, and her emphasis to the "occasions of revelations," in which we must understand Quranic passages by their specific, historical circumstances [47,48]. Thus, Muslim women, and other women in conservative religions, creatively negotiate the mandates of their faith to produce religious subcultures that are at once distinctive and flexible [46]. It is worth mentioning Avishai's claim that we must acknowledge that women may participate in conservative religions in a quest for spiritual ends and that their 'compliance' may not be strategic at all, but rather, a mode of conduct and being [41]. Expanding on Butler's [49,50] notion of "doing gender" [51], Avishai's focus is on understanding the agency of the women involved in her research as "doing religion" [41]. "Doing religion" is in fact a performance of identity [52], and, in so far as this performativity can be viewed as a strategic undertaking, possibly done in the pursuit of religious goals.

1.5. Agency and Identity

In the second half of the 20th century, marginalized groups such as women pointed towards the injustices that were practiced against them, and built political movements in the foundations of their commonalities and shared experiences to fight injustice. They used identity politics as an organizing model to transform stigmas and to fight for recognition within society. Here, identity politics aims to reclaim or transform previously stigmatized perceptions offered by the dominant culture [53,54].

Identity politics is of relevance when discussing the position of Muslim women in Dutch society, since it can be used by Muslim women to challenge the image that is created of them and help them create a new image, often consisting of a hybrid identity. Dutch society often still perceives Muslim women as passive victims in need of rescue. Through the use of the politics of identity, Muslim women

can use action to make themselves visible within society, and to create a public identity that moves beyond the stereotypes of a Muslim woman in a non-Muslim context.

Butler argued that there could not be a discussion about identity without a prior discussion on gender, because recognizable standards of gender are at the core of an individual's being [54]. Additionally, when talking about Islam, Muslimness and Dutchness, the discourse is often linked to the discourse on migrants, and this discourse usually has a gendered aspect. This is especially true for women in Islam; it is the Muslim women that are often used to visualize the differences between Western and non-Western cultures, and it is almost always women who are perceived as being in need of help from western civilization [2,3,53,55,56].

Muslim women, whether born Muslim or not, are in practice already constructing their *Moslima* identities, since their identities live in a blended Dutch and Islamic construction, what we call "The Dutch inside the *Moslima*, and the *Moslima* inside the Dutch." (See Appendix B for a definition of *Moslima*).

Here we focused on one pointed example: on 26 May 2010, the Dutch newspaper the *Telegraaf* published an article titled: 'Muslim women defend themselves by being 'Really Dutch'. '*Echt Nederlands*/Really Dutch' (see Appendix A) was a campaign released by the Muslim women's organization Al Nisa, through which they fought against the prejudices about Muslim women (see Appendix A). With this campaign, Al Nisa helped create a public identity for Muslim women in the Netherlands, one that moves beyond the common prejudices and stereotypes of Muslim women in Dutch society. According to their Chairwoman, Leyla Cakir, the poster campaign aimed to make these women visible in an unexpected way [15,53]. On the posters, Muslim women are presented not only as Muslim, but also as 'Really Dutch' [53]. Thus, through this campaign, Muslim women in the Netherlands claim a public identity with the use of identity politics, challenging the way they are made (or not made) visible in society by the dominant discourse.

Frequently in the Netherlands, it is argued that freedom of speech and secularization are not present in the Islamic religion. As a result of such statements, Muslim women are seen as being a victim of their conservative religion and culture [53,57]. The media often frame these women as passive victims, but also refer to them as a homogeneous religious group, thus ignoring the variation and the different identities between these women. Thus, Dutch Muslim women are confronted with identity models which have been constructed by the dominant (non-Islamic) culture: constructions that they do not recognize in themselves and do not identity with [15,53].

Consequently, Muslim women see themselves as active agents who construct their own identity, for example emphasizing their active choice of veiling, becoming more adherent [2,27,28], or choosing to embrace Islam when coming from a secular (or another religious) background [2]. Most women we have met in the ethnography do not identify themselves as Moroccan, Turkish or Dutch, but rather as Muslim, as a *Moslima* (the Dutch term for a Muslim woman). Moreover, Vader argues that in her fieldwork that many Dutch Muslim women identify themselves not as only Muslim, but have created an identity that mediates between being Muslim and Dutch [53].

The response to the "Real Dutch" campaign was varied: some loved the idea, but others claimed that "such women do not exist" or that "a real Dutch Muslim wouldn't wear a headscarf" [53]. Yet, these posters have given Muslim women a diverse face (all four women come from different cultural backgrounds), and have given Muslim women in general a voice in the debate, something that usually had been absent. In the posters, the seemingly incompatible categories of Dutch and Muslim are presented as one: Euro coins (instead of traditional golden coins) are wrapped around a woman's head, a headscarf is worn with a Dutch pattern, and in the colors of the Dutch flag. The Dutch flag, a symbol of nationhood, and the headscarf, a symbol of Muslim culture, are not only combined, but also made into one. A stereotypically Dutch-looking girl, who has no symbols of Muslim culture, like a headscarf, states she is going to the mosque, thus obviously being religious, but being religious in a non-obvious manner. She presents that she can be a practicing Muslim, while keeping her appearance as she wishes. The posters help to create a public identity for Muslim women that moves beyond the

stereotypes, and beyond the image of Muslim women as passive and suppressed by their culture and religion. It presents women who have the capability to craft their own identity, showing that they are capable of taking part in the debate about immigration, integration, and can show their own critique of Dutch politics [53]. They show being Dutch and being Muslim is mutually inclusive rather than irreconcilable, and that it is the Dutch inside the *Moslima*, and the *Moslima* inside the Dutch that can make all of this possible.

Here, Dutchness and Muslimness play an interconnecting role and are made visible in the posters. The Dutch Muslima eating herring with her Dutch headscarf is not Muslim in one situation (at home, with the family) and Dutch in another (at school or at work), but rather, demonstrates what being Dutch and Muslim is about. In a similar argument, Bhabha suggests that a hybrid subject moves beyond the existence of categories and creates new forms of cultural meanings that are constantly repositioned, reshaped and recreated [53,58]. When an identity is created between Dutchness and Muslimness, cultural expressions like a headscarf, or particular food (such as Dutch herring), do not belong to either Dutch or Muslim culture, but rather these expressions are revaluated and belong to the newly created identity.

Thus, the present work contributes to the existing literature on identity [53,55,58] and agency [2,27,28,41,45], by bringing forward the unique case study of Dutch Muslim women, including converted Muslimas as well as born Muslimas who chose to practice at a later stage of life, in the contexts of a specific country which has a colonial past, and in the past faced a religious division (in the form of the pillarization model that has remains till today).

2. Methods

This research includes a multi-sited [59] ethnography conducted in the city of Amsterdam and its suburbs from September to October 2009. The ethnography combines insights taken from 17 in-depth observations, including participant observations in gatherings for Quranic and Religious studies, and observations in a Mosque located in a block of neighborhoods with a high percentage of immigrant and Muslim populations. All participants gave their informed consent for inclusion before they participated in the study and agreed to a taped interview. Interviews were conducted in Dutch, transcribed and sent to all participants for review. Two participants returned the transcript and asked for corrections and edits. The interviews were then translated into Hebrew for the master dissertation by the first author. In June 2018, the first author reopened the files and translated significant parts of the interviews from Dutch to English. Later, the quotes were specifically reviewed a second time by the second author, who is a native English speaker, with careful attention paid to preserving the meaning form the quotes as manifested in their original language, while still adhering to proper English grammatical structure. All participants presented in this manuscript are anonymous and their names have been changed accordingly.

The interviews were coded into themes that were divided into two main sections that arose from the field, in line with the principles of grounded theory [60]: the two sections are what we call: The Dutch in the *Moslima*, and the *Moslima* in the Dutch, under the assumption that Dutch and Muslim identities have a mutual influence on each other in the lives of these women (an assumption which we attempt to problematize). In reality, there are situations in which the Dutchness enters the Muslim identity and modifies it, while in other situations the Muslim identity is emphasized.

2.1. Engaged Anthropology

Engaged anthropology was a central framework of this study. Engaged anthropology's primary focus is on sharing the results of anthropological research with a wider audience, rather than only fellow anthropologists. Lamphere uses a rather broad definition of the term-engaged anthropology and argues that, in this view, engaged anthropology possesses three characteristics: it reaches out to the public, it aims to establish ongoing partnerships with the community's anthropologists, and it examines topics which have relevance to public policy [61]. We believe that this research topic has

the potential to deliver insights to the public, to other Dutch Muslim women and men, to other Dutch minorities, and even extend as far as policy makers and stakeholders in Dutch society.

2.2. Positionality

Through ethnography, the first author conducted fieldwork in the city she was born and in which she was raised, but focused on practices foreign to her. Coming from an ethnic and religious minority herself, the first author identified with the stories of women who have migrant parents. The first author's life story is one of migration, from Israel to the Netherlands and from the Netherlands to Israel. We hope that one of the outcomes of this published work will be an attempt to create a dialogic approach, in which the focus is on the conversation between the anthropologist and informants, as a way of exposing how ethnographic knowledge develops [62]. Positionality is a key feature for any social research. The first author's gender, for instance, was an important aspect of her ability to execute this research. The Muslimas that she studied practice a strict separation of the sexes during their meetings, and therefore no men are allowed. In this regard, the first author qualifies as an insider, since she shares their gender, ethnicity, nationality and language. However, she does not share the religion of the participants, and that is one aspect where she sometimes was an outsider. Research among Muslima's in the Netherlands is a recent phenomenon on a not so recent practice: v. Nieuwkerk in 2004 and Vroon in 2007 and 2014 write about their positionality, one as the perception of the researcher as a non-Muslim Dutch feminist scholar [3], and the other as a converted Muslima, but as one who was not familiar with the field [2].

3. Discussion

The participants in this current study are Muslim women of different backgrounds. Most of the interviewees were of Moroccan origin, but they were also women of Turkish, Algerian, Tunisian, Somali and Indonesian origin, and two converted Dutch Muslima's. All participants have an academic degree or were students of a higher education program. Fieldwork was conducted in Amsterdam.

Most of the women who participated in this study were also very interested in literacy regarding their religion. There was thus a desire to learn about Islam, to study the Quran and the Prophet's traditions. They searched for information on the Internet, read the Quran translated to Dutch, and then in the original language, (many women learn Arabic to be able to read the Quran in its original language).

We have seen in the background section that the Dutch and the Muslim are sometimes presented as absolute binary contradictions. The Dutch is said to represent freedom, liberty, liberalism, tolerance, openness and progress, while the Muslim (in the largely Islamophobic stereotypzation) represents the 'traditional,' the rigid and the primitive. The question arises: to what extent do young Muslim women who were born and raised in the Netherlands feel both Muslim and Dutch?

3.1. "The Dutch inside the Moslima"

In this section, we will examine what is most Dutch in the Muslim (woman) by focusing on some of the themes that emerged most prominently from the ethnography: academic studies, (religious) knowledge, the Dutch language, the singleness of some Dutch Muslim women and their gender roles. All these themes are built on the notion of identity.

3.1.1. Identity

"My religion is my identity" (*Asia, 22 years old*)

For Muslims in Europe it seems that Islam has two main functions: in terms of a cultural understanding of Islam, there is a conservative role in terms of identity. As the interaction with minority groups increases (for Muslims in Europe), Islam offers Muslims the possibility of distinguishing themselves from the majority group by acquiring identity. On the other hand, interpreting social

issues in Islamic sources offers the opportunity to formulate new understandings of Muslims as a minority group in Europe. The reinterpretation of Islamic sources may arise in several ways: conscious, deliberate reinterpretation can take place, while at the unconscious level, the very fact that Islamic sources are interpreted in another social context may allowed them to have new and contemporary aspects [63] (p. 79).

Knott notes that not only is identity dynamic, but also religion and religious experience may adapt according to changes that a group undergoes [64]. Here, it is possible to criticize the general statements of growing Islamization in the Netherlands as a return to the middle Ages, a return to the time of the Prophet, a deterioration of the social situation, and especially in the status of women, (these are slogans used by many people and the press).

> "You have to separate religion from culture . . . not every Muslim is necessarily Arab . . . I see myself as more Dutch than Arab, but more than anything, [I see myself as} a Muslim . . . " (*Kadisha, 26 years old*)

Self-definition tends to be dynamic and change according to certain situations. Roald shows the example of a Muslim woman speaking Arabic in a European country. Her self-awareness will be influenced by her being in the environment of non-Muslims, yet her nationality will also stand out in an atmosphere where there are other Muslims from different countries [63]. Just as a Moroccan Muslim woman living in the Netherlands will define herself in relation to her non-Muslim friend, and consider herself Muslim (Muslima), she will emphasize her Moroccanness in relation to other Muslim women.

> "Islam is the main component of my identity, and then only after [my Muslim identity} am I Moroccan or Dutch." (*Myriam, 25 years old*)

Many women define themselves first and foremost Muslim, and later as Dutch or Moroccan, etc. On the other hand, identity is individual, because women are not willing to be grouped by society as belonging to a particular silo. Thus, these women ask to be treated as a private person, even though they are aware that their headscarves publicly show the world that they are indeed Muslim.

Moslima is also a unique identity—a word containing a clear gender identity, feminine identity, ethnic identity, religious identity and national identity. Although some of the women interviewed say they do not want to accept their Dutch identity, the very use of the word "Muslima" in the Dutch language shows that this is a woman, a Muslim woman who is also inescapably Dutch.

Bartels demonstrates how adopting an Islamic identity, which includes a choice to veil, is what helps young women who feel disinterested in the Netherlands to nonetheless fit in [9]. A young woman who wears a headscarf and anchors this act with the words: "this is my own personal choice," fits in Dutch society as an independent woman, free to choose her own way of life, detached from the group context of the broader ethnic community of which she is a part. Ethnography shows that parents and family members encourage their daughters to continue to study, and as long as they are religious and live according to Islam, they do not worry about them deviating from the right path. On the contrary, they acquire education and are building their (professional) future. Yet, at the same time, prominent Muslim women also are not always accepted entirely in society: people sometimes take a distance from them or ask them to make changes about themselves:

> " . . . I see that in college, people see me and think: 'Oh, she has a veil . . . We should move away [from her]. People do not talk to me about certain subjects . . . and this is very bad for me . . . You do not have to censor words with me . . . You can talk to me almost everything . . . it makes me sad that people put me in this mold . . . And because of these reactions [from other people], it is difficult for me to be completely myself . . . " (*Kadisha, 26 years old*)

3.1.2. Dutch Identity

"Dutchness" is present in the identity of these women first through Dutch education, Dutch heritage and academic education later in life. Dutch converts to Islam grew up in a Dutch

house and acquired a Dutch education, so that Dutch is an inherent status within their Muslim character. However, if we focus on the daughters of migrant workers who arrived in the Netherlands, without knowledge of the Dutch language, their efforts were harder.

Many immigrants, whether they came to the Netherlands from the reefs in Morocco or from rural areas in Turkey, did not have the privilege of education. The men, who migrated to improve their economic situation, often did not receive basic training in the Dutch language, since it was often believed that they were temporary workers [65–67]. With the process of family re-unification, the wives and families of migrant workers were brought to the country, and the percentage of women who knew how to read and write was small [65–67]. The second generation of the children of migrant workers received Dutch education, and for them reading and writing were an integral part of coming of age. Studies in the Netherlands show that the reading level of second-generation Moroccans and Turks improved their success in school, and there was a direct correlation between reading skills and higher education. However, not everyone has the same level of success: the second generation has a disadvantage over their Dutch peers, and they have very little to no support at home regarding language and homework assignments, as most speak a different language with their parents at home, and speak Dutch only outside the home.

> " ... I noticed that many times when I go into a conversation with someone, they immediately ask [me]: 'What did you study?'
>
> 'Sociology,' I reply to them.
>
> 'Uh ... and in which ROC [lower educational institution] did you study at?'
>
> 'I didn't study at a ROC,' I reply.
>
> 'Oh sorry! You are right ... you studied at HBO [slightly higher educational institution], right?'
>
> 'No, that's not right ... I went to the university [highest education institution], I have a master's degree.'
>
> I have come across it several times; I am beginning to see it as a pattern. Someone with a name like mine, an Arab name, covering her head, is not smart enough to study at a university ... " (*Fadua, 28 years old*)

The quote above emphasizes the difficulties of reconciling Muslim and migrant background with higher education. This woman feels that by the comments she receives, she is perceived as not smart enough to be a university graduate, since people she talks to assume that she studied at lower level institutions.

3.1.3. Identity and Language

> " ... I started to speak to Dutch ... I just started to go to school, to the first grade ... You know what, actually it started even before that, when my older brother started to go to school, he would come home and talk to us Dutch. But at the age of 6, I started to learn the language formally, during the first grade, and then Dutch became my first language, and Arabic was a little marginalized [in my life], and then everything I did [was in Dutch]: talk Dutch, think Dutch, write Dutch, hear Dutch all the time around [me], and [I learned] to separate Dutch from Arabic, which you just use with your parents ... " (*Kadisha, 26 years old*)

Language is the tool with in which social actors communicate with the world around them. Through language, fluency in language, proficiency in language and proper pronunciation, one can examine the so-called (and problematic) 'level of Dutchness in a Muslim'. Language is thus related to stereotyping, since Muslim women, especially the women who wear *hijab*, are considered foreign, and therefore there are expectations that they do not speak Dutch very well. One story reveals a typical example: a woman sits in line for a doctor. When the medical secretary reads her Arabic-sounding name, a veiled woman stands up, smiles politely and presents herself, filling in the personal details'

questionnaire. She speaks Dutch very well, with a local accent of the city in which she lives. The secretary looks at her and marvels at her Dutchness. "I was born here," the woman replies [68]. This is an example of a Dutch woman who converted to Islam and changed her name, but the veil she wrapped around her head, alluding to being Muslim, suggests that she is different and that she will probably not be fluent in Dutch. Here, we see the external identity conflict in action.

3.1.4. Stereotypes in Dutch and Muslim Identities

" . . . I just spoke to her like 'Hey, how are you? I'm Fatima . . . ' I am a very open and honest person when talking to people. [This person] says to me, 'It's very surprising how good your Dutch is.' In addition, I did not know how I was supposed to reply to that, so I said, 'Thank you.' Then she went on and said, 'I notice that many Muslim women do not know Dutch very well.' Then I thought to myself: This is thinking in patterns, thinking that is influenced by prejudice. But I did not get here a year ago from Morocco! I was born here, oh dear, if I had not spoken well!? And I get comments when I go with my veil on the street . . . " (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

Dutch Islam is characterized by many tensions: The Dutch Muslim woman often feels that she is never at home: in the Netherlands she is a Muslim, she is Moroccan, Turkish, etc., and outside the Netherlands, she is Dutch. Where does she actually belong?

In the ethnography, it was often felt that the Dutch population is looking at these women through prejudices and stereotypes, seeing them as "Muslim," "Moroccan," or calling them "*hoofddoekje*" (headscarf), thus giving them a sense of non-belonging, while objectifying them. The women whose parents were migrant workers also feel discriminated against when they visit the country of origin. Although they look Moroccan from their outward appearance and have Arab names, the local population labels them "Dutch," and believe that life in the Netherlands is exceptionally excellent.

" . . . [my family] thought we were very rich in the Netherlands, but actually we were really poor . . . Our situation was relatively good for Moroccan standards, but for Dutch standards we were really poor . . . We barely got any clothes . . . I was in high school, tough years [for anyone that age], and I was so ashamed of myself and what I looked like. I was fat then, but even a fat woman can dress well . . . but I got really conservative clothes, ugly dresses, or even used my brother's pants when they did not fit him anymore . . . it would look terrible . . . but I had nothing else . . . " (*Kadisha, 26 years old*)

Women are increasingly beginning to see differences between their lives in the Netherlands and the lives of their peers in the home countries of their parents. For example, when they come with their parents to Morocco, they are expected to take on a traditional role of care, hosting and serving, that is to care for family members and other visitors.

" . . . When she took us to Morocco to visit her parents, everyone treated us like slaves. We worked and worked only to please [our] Grandpa and Grandma . . . We were not allowed to say a word . . . Our grandparents were spoiled, we had to take care of them, take them everywhere. We always wanted to do something [on our own, but] they had to join us . . . Of course, they were happy about this, but it was a bad feeling that we only worked for them, and we were not allowed to speak!" (*Myriam, 25 years old*)

The previous and the next quote emphasize a conflict that many migrant children face: as the second generation to the Netherlands, they are Dutch, although often not perceived as Dutch by their peers. They are not Moroccan or Tunisian either, even though their parents are.

" . . . Look, here in the Netherlands they will always see me as a Moroccan, a Muslim, with a veil. I do not really belong . . . But when you are there, you are treated, as Dutch because you live in the Netherlands . . . and they are right . . . I am really Dutch, I was born here . . .

My Dutch is much better than my Arabic. But what annoys me is that everyone [in Morocco] thinks that life here in the Netherlands is perfect . . . [as if] the Netherlands is the land of opportunity, you are allowed to work here [in the Netherlands], to make money . . . it is true . . . but people do not really know much about it. It's true, you learn, you work, you get somewhere in your life, but they do not know what it's like to live with the feeling that you do not really belong to a place . . . " (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

The following is from a Tunisian Muslim who grew up in The Netherlands and walks without a head cover so people do not always assume her Muslim identity, and thus she can "pass as" [52] Dutch, or French, or Italian. Once you hear that she is a Muslim, some respond with complete surprise because she is "invisible"—meaning that if there is a pattern to which Muslims are supposed to behave and look in public space, this woman does not fit into it (like many Dutch Muslim women). When people realize that she is Muslim, they act surprised.

" . . . When [people] hear my name, many people are not sure [where I am from], they think I [may be] French or Italian, and then when I tell them that I have Tunisian roots and I'm Muslim, [and then] many people tell me: 'Wow, really? But you are . . . different . . . ' They think that I am a secular Muslim, even though I am more religious than many women who wear headscarves . . . then I tell them I am religious, [that] I fast, I eat halal, I pray five times a day . . . " (*Salma, 27 years old*)

There are women who try to fight stereotypes towards them and their Muslim identity, and they do so when they enter a "non-Muslim" space (where they serve alcohol) and when they present themselves in opposition to public expectations.

" . . . (I went to) a yuppies pub, near one of the canals in the center of the city . . . I do not like to say it in these terms, but it's a" white" establishment . . . We are strangers there, who cover their heads but speak perfect Dutch (even more than some of the people there), [and yet] I saw people's fear, confusion, the confusion I sometimes experience in people when I tell them I am Muslim. We do not talk about super modest things, for example, we deliberately talk about sex (we are in women-only company [when we go to this place]). The married women tell us experiences from married life, or we tell jokes and we laugh, and we just see the looks they [the so-called Dutch people] send us, all in shock . . . " (*Kadisha, 26 years old*)

The women who participated in this study are tired of these stereotypes, although they are better off than many Moroccan families, most are not rich at all, and grew up in a migrant home with a single breadwinner and financial difficulties. These women are graduates of degrees in psychology, law, theology, education and more, and hope to improve their economic situation by finding work and building a career. Yet, these ambitions give rise to more prejudices towards them. People do not understand how a woman with a headscarf named Fatima has gotten an academic degree, and they express an insulting admiration.

3.1.5. Identity and Gender Roles

The self-image of the Dutch is that they, unlike how they often perceive the Muslims living among them, are very liberal and liberated. There is a stereotyping of the veiled woman who is forced to wear it, as opposed to the Dutch women who are free to choose. There is a thought that a Dutch woman covering her head commits a grave breach of the norm, because 'being Dutch' is 'being free." The veil, which is viewed as a symbol of coercion, is incomprehensible and even reprehensible, and therefore the stereotypes towards Muslims are sharpened [2].

" . . . She said to me once, 'When you put on a head scarf, you put on a symbol of oppression, and you have no ability to express yourself and your opinions.' Then after she saw a Dutch woman in a very Western-style, fashionable dress, and she thought she was freer and more individualistic than I was . . . " (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

Despite these stereotypes [2], many women feel less objectified and less oppressed when dressing modestly [22,69]. Dutch Muslims, especially those new to Islam, are convinced that there is an egalitarian relationship between men and women in Islam and society as a whole. Educated in the Netherlands, the young women emphasize the equality of opportunities between men and women, and they sharpen it, while giving examples of pure Islam, which is not influenced by cultural practices, such as the primary Islam of the Prophet Muhammad. Women do not see themselves as oppressed, and on the contrary, they perceive themselves as liberated and equal to their partners and other men in society [2,69].

> " . . . You've got an education, you work, you can go whenever you want and where you want, but you still think of yourself as a phantom, as a wannabe."

My sister's colleague at work said something to her (my sister is really good at her job). 'You're hiding behind the perceived need to speak properly, to speak politically correct, and in those kinds of formal patterns.' Of course, she means that my sister is making herself very professional, free, and standing up for herself, but she is not really real, because she is not like that [in reality, according to this colleague]. Many women have very strict perceptions of Moroccan women or Muslim women, sometimes even confusing two the concepts . . . " " . . . But that's how it often happens when you're a professional Muslim. You are considered an imposter . . . "(*Kadisha, 26 years old*)

Most of the Muslim women had a period during which they did not veil, or at some point in their lives decided to give up the headscarf. Dutch women who converted to Islam admit that before they converted to Islam, they also had negative perceptions of women covering their heads. They saw *hijab* as inappropriate for all the stereotypes mentioned above: uneducated, uninspired, and submissive to the men in their family. This was evident in other ethnographies as well [2,9,66,67,70].

Yet many Muslim women are an inspiration for other Muslims. They were the women of the Prophet, while one was a businesswoman, the second was his confidante, and the only one he consulted with on the most troubling issues. She was his most beloved wife, and she fought wars and left behind many Islamic laws. When Muslim women turn to pure Islam, devoid of cultural influences, they see inspiration.

One Muslim woman who speaks of one of the Prophet's wives:

> " . . . the first woman of the Prophet, a modern woman, was a businesswoman . . . so you see women can be managers and give instructions to men . . . This was quite feminist . . . Feminism and Islam are not as far apart as many people think . . . " (*Jamila, 30 years old*)

A Muslim who tries to live her life according to the perfect model of the Prophet's wives:

> " . . . I try as much as possible to live according to the lifestyle he (the Prophet Muhammad) and his wives lived by . . . I try to do good things like his wives, to perform the prayers that are within what is permitted . . . " (*Asia, 22 years old*)

On the differences between men and women, according to a Muslim woman of Turkish origin:

> " . . . I do not even have to see myself as a feminist . . . If you look at the principles of my religion, you'll see that it is all already there . . . Women and men are equal . . . And then there are things that men are allowed and women are not allowed to do . . . like wearing gold . . . Women can wear gold, and men are not allowed . . . but no one talks about it . . . Everyone talks only about the head covering and veils: women are supposed to cover themselves, and men do not . . . but in my opinion it is more than logical, women by nature are much more beautiful than men, so they have to hide their beauty when they go out . . . The assumption is correct, but what is a pity is that men exploit these assumptions in their favor . . . I really *cannot* accept it, it makes me so angry . . . In any case, there are differences between men and women, but they are equal . . . Religious women are just like the men, they should go to the mosque, interpret the Quran, pray . . . " (*Nazira, 24 years old*)

Thus, these women demand equality in the religious sphere, including through self-realization. They want to learn from the Quran (all women, without exception, even if they do not go to the mosque on regular basis) quote the Quran and want equality and participation in prayers in mosques.

3.1.6. The Single Muslima, Part 1

" . . . My father to this day never asked: What about getting married? What about getting a husband? My mother also did not ask . . . Both of them always said 'First study and whatever you need for it we will give you . . . '" (*Salma, 27 years old*)

Here, we see a fear that marriage will replace school, or interfere with the acquiring of education. Therefore, there is a perception that many immigrants, and their children who grew up in the Netherlands, gradually accept that it is necessary to invest in education first, and marriage afterwards. Many women in this ethnography were still single, even at a later age. They are 26, 27 and even 30 years old and are not concerned that they are going through life single. As far as they are concerned, their singleness is an achievement and proof that they did not compromise in choosing a partner, did not give in to their parents' wishes for marriage, and did not commit themselves to the first suitor. This is no different from Dutch women who are not Muslim. In the Netherlands, it is socially acceptable if you are a single woman aged 29, or a 32-year-old divorcee. As a Dutch Muslima who participates in the job market and has financial independence, the support of a partner becomes less and less relevant, and independence is fostered.

Being a single Muslim woman in the Netherlands passed the age of 35 can be explained by identifying the Dutchness present in their Islamic identity, but also the Muslim school of thought in Dutch culture: we here see the performance of identity and agency.

3.2. *"The Moslima inside the Dutch"*

In this section, we will examine what is preened as most Muslim in the Dutch (woman) by focusing on some of the themes that have emerged most prominently from the ethnography: discourses on free choice, or what we would call agency. We will see how religion gives these women the freedom and agency, because they are actively choosing to practice and to engage in their religion. We will examine the choice of clothing and especially the head covering, and we will look into the social life of these women.

3.2.1. Agency

The adoption of a Muslim identity and the practices resulting from this choice are controversial in the Netherlands [2,15]. Therefore, implementing changes in daily life is a good way to examine how women are living their agency. The way to live a more devout Islamic life and conversion to Islam (i.e., giving up the free life to which you were born in Dutch culture) is considered an ongoing process, rather than a sudden change, but there are changes in everyday life, such as the choice of wearing the *hijab*. Some women, when they start to engage in their faith more religiously, stop listening to popular music and begin to listen only to religious music.

"I want to talk about the music I have been listening to, because I remembered that on the way [to this interview] I listened to the music on my iPod, and a friend from the school asked to hear it and she did not like it very much (Laughs). I've been listening to some very recent music . . . mostly instrumental, or if there is lyrics than it is singing only about Islam or about Allah or about prophets, only things related to religion . . . " (*Nazira, 24 years old*)

Social life and social processes are sometimes referred to as "serious play," in which the individual is considered a social actor who embodies a certain amount of intentional activity and agency, however, it is always connected and concerned with power relations, inequality and competitiveness in society. Ortner expresses several problems in formulating this concept, which contains a great deal of ethno-centricity that is based on Western assumptions. It is also worthwhile to focus on two of its assumptions about agency: the desires and motifs of the agency, and (1) to ask whether the agency includes or does not include intent and objective; (2) to take into account the simultaneity of two components within an agency: its universality and its cultural construction; (3) The relationship between agency and power [45].

Some people associate the concept of agency with resistance, while Ortner argues that resistance is one form of agency, but that there are also other forms. Mahmood formulates the term agency, with a vision influenced by monographs in religious movements, and argues that it is worthwhile to look at agency from more than just a humanistic point of view. Agency is not only resistance to power relations and male domination, but agency should be seen as a tool for action within historically influenced power relations, that facilitates and creates an opportunity for action [28].

Agency is related to how women actively seek knowledge and motivate themselves to live according to the laws they learn. The study groups also operate according to the agency. They organize meetings, study days, publish articles, manage websites and seek to find a new audience as part of the da'wa action: reading and spreading Islam among Muslims and non-Muslims, an action associated with piety.

One of the core forms in which such piety is expressed through agency, is through the venue of dress. A woman wearing modest Islamic clothing is supposed to wear *hijab*, and by choosing her dress she accepts the religious laws of decency and separation between the sexes, especially in the public sphere. *Hijab* dress should also be based on personal belief and understanding, because without it, the religious value of choice will be lacking. Many Muslim women view their headscarves as a divine command, a great incentive to wear headscarves is the recognition of everyone who wears it as a Muslim, belonging to the Muslim nation [2], yet some woman view the wearing of the headscarf as a resistance to Dutch society, which doesn't always makes them feel part of the national fold. Thus, it is a way to say: "you don't accept me as fully Dutch, so I will show you through my visual symbol that I am indeed not Dutch"[15].

> "Putting this head cover is on one side to identify with the Muslim community, and on the other hand is a statement to wider society, to inform everyone that I am a Muslim . . . " (*Yasmin, 25 years old*)

The choice to veil is not easy, because sometimes women cannot wear the headcover in some places of work. Individuals who wish to show their commitment to their religious community sometimes encounter negative sanctions, such as expulsion from the school (see more [19,71]), termination of employment, or social mockery, because there are religious symbols (such as head covering) that highlight the differences between the minority group and the dominant group. Women are assumed to be covered by male pressure in their families, which may sometimes be the case, but this is often not true. As this study argues and has shown, many women consciously choose to dress in Islamic clothing more prominently than their mothers, and more than their families would like, a point that can suggest quite a bit about these women's agency [2,22,23,25]:

> "I put it on [at times], I took it off [at times], why I wear a headscarf was a question that I was asked a lot, and that I also asked myself . . . I feel that I am doing this out of solidarity . . . solidarity with people who wear it and are attacked for it . . . for religion, the cover represents modesty and protection, but in my opinion it's not just that . . . it's a lot of other things that merge together . . . " (*Leyla, 28 years old*)

> " . . . I have a rich cultural and Islamic background that I received from my upbringing, from my mother, so I understand from the inside how people want to experience their religion and that they need external expressions of identity to help them with it, to help them feel belonging and to feel part of a group. Through everything I'm telling you now, I feel very foreign to Dutch culture. Especially the attitude of Dutch culture to foreigners, because I know how they can communicate with foreigners, with immigrants, with anyone who looks a little different. They can make you feel you're not part of anything, not part of the larger [societal] group . . . " (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

The above quote is from a participant who is now wearing a headscarf, but had a very problematic relationship with it. Many women like her noted that the decision to wear a headscarf is not a simple decision. This participant points to the fact that she sees the cover of her head, beyond a religious imperative, as an expression of protest, a connection to a certain identity which is a foreign identity, feeling that the dominant Dutch society in which she is growing makes her feel like a 'foreign immigrant' and not a part of the (Dutch) national fold. According to Ortner, these young women express agency in the form of resistance, resistance to the mainstream society in which she lives [45].

> " . . . you represent something (with a head covering) . . . I want to be allowed to be who I am. Why do not people accept me as I am?" (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

> "Until you accept me as I am, I will continue to express myself in all the ways I can [fully] be myself. In my opinion, covering up is a very important part of my faith. Look, I do not do everything exactly according to the Islamic religious law, but I do try to do it clearly. Unfortunately, this is not always possible in Western lifestyle . . . " (*Myriam, 25 years old*)

These quotes also show the extent of the agency as resistance. She feels her society "does not allow her to be herself," and therefore her head covering reflects a great deal of identity building, of the inner-individual that drives her to social action [23,26,45]. Additionally, some Muslim women express criticism of Muslim societies and view them as too traditional (Morocco) and criticize the conduct of countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan, countries that they believe oppress women, while misusing "the name of Islam." This is in fact forbidden, because it spoils the name of Islam in the entire Islamic nation throughout the world. They explain their parents' country of origin is a home, but a home that does not allow them to be themselves:

> "In my country they do not let me be as Muslim as I want, [with people] gossiping about me while walking down the street in black veils . . . " (*Asia, 22 years old*)

Some women see the Netherlands as the place that lets them be themselves:

> " . . . Here in the Netherlands they allow me to be more myself, despite the looks I get and despite racism. But it's okay because they are not Muslims . . . but when a [fellow] Muslim misbehaves to you because you want to wear something [they do not like], regardless of whether it is a mini skirt or a veil, *ghimar*, that hurts . . . " (*Jamila, 30 years old*)

Identity search, reflections on identity, critique on identity and the desire to shape a unique identity can be seen as another example of the agency of social actors in social interaction. Current literature and ethnography show rejection and acceptance of identities, which occurs simultaneously. This has been shown above, where interviewed women experience a simultaneous rejection in the Netherlands, and in their countries of origin. In one, they are too Muslim, while in the other, too Dutch. Here, we see the painful intricacies of identity.

3.2.2. Agency, Dress and Cover

> "Tell the believing men that they shall subdue their eyes (and not stare at the women), and to maintain their chastity. This is purer for them. GOD is fully cognizant of everything they do" (*Quran, Sura 24:30*)

"And tell the believing women to subdue their eyes and maintain their chastity. They shall not reveal any parts of their bodies, except that which is necessary. They shall cover their chests and shall not relax this code in the presence of other than their husbands, their fathers, the fathers of their husbands, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, other women, the male servants or employees whose sexual drive has been nullified, or the children who have not reached puberty. They shall not strike their feet when they walk in order to shake and reveal certain details of their bodies. All of you shall repent to GOD, O you believers, that you may succeed." (*Quran, Sura 24:31*)

Head coverings and veils, especially face veils, such as *burka* and *niqab*, garner much public attention in the Netherlands. On the one hand, there is a demand to prohibit this kind of clothing, because it is considered to endanger the public (it is impossible to see who is under it), and is said to cause social interaction unpleasantness when one does not see the face of the person opposite. Today in Dutch society, a consensus (of sorts) has been reached that there are cases in which a woman will not be able to cover her face: if she works in public service, provides service in a public setting and in cases where she needs to identify herself. The former mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, stated in 2008 that face-covered women would not receive unemployment benefits on the assumption that their unemployment was a direct result of the form of cover that makes it difficult to find work outside the Islamic context. The burkas and the various facial coverings are in a minority in Dutch society, but the issue is always reaching the headlines, likely because of the mismatch between this item of clothing and popular conceptions of Western life in a country like the Netherlands. Yet, we cannot dismiss how, for the women interviewed, this clothing helps to build identity.

"In my headscarf I have my freedom . . . " (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

For the women who decide to embrace a Muslim lifestyle and identity, the veil is a form of freedom and is not oppressive. They argue that through the veil they can feel that they are watching, and not just being observed. Muslim women have the feeling that the veil frees them from the patterns of fashion, and frees them from the myth of consumerist conceptions of beauty in Western society. Covering is a means of preventing sexual harassment, allowing women to go outside, work, and even allowing them to travel around areas where a woman without a veil would not feel comfortable moving around. Covering is a means of gaining respect. Therefore, a Muslim woman who made the choice to wear a head cover does not need to be released, because she is already free. Thus, Western perceptions of "liberating women from their headscarves and the depressing patterns of Islam" can be seen as insulting to these women. This idea arose in interviews:

" . . . The desire to 'free' us from the head covering, to free us from Islam, is in my eyes oppression, because it implies that we are not mature enough or wise to choose what we think best . . . " (*Asia, 22 years old*)

" . . . I used to watch documentaries on television about women wearing headscarves, and they would say, 'I'm very conscious of myself and my headscarf.' And I always thought to myself, what is she talking about? I was very naive and thought that they [Dutch society] would accept me regardless, even if I wore a headscarf . . . But as I got older, I became very conscious of my choice to wear a long veil, because it is a choice, a choice with many implications. Because you are treated differently, you are asked different questions, for example, someone without a head covering will talk to me differently from you, because I wear a veil. I'm an open person, just some people do not see it on the outside . . . " (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

These quotes come from women covering their heads with a scarf or a broader veil. They are aware of the divine command to put on a head covering, and yet they are aware of the almost political statement that head covering symbolizes in Western, Dutch society. The most common prejudice they face is that all the Muslims are in one group and are homogenous, and that everyone wants to live according to the patterns of early Islam. These women live in contemporary reality, they know that they live in the Netherlands of the 21st century, and their head covering is not a symbol of a return to the Middle Ages, but an interpretation of life as a Muslim in Dutch society. Another angle to interpret Islamic dress, identity and agency is to dwell deeper into the material culture [72] of the dress and to adopt an approach that emphasizes the aesthetics and beauty of covering and its fashion and anti-fashion statements [22,23]. Due to space limitations, we will not address these approaches here, but we encourage the reader to take them into account.

3.2.3. Agency and Culture vs. Religion

In the Netherlands, there is a great deal of misunderstanding towards Islam and Muslims. The lack of understanding is sometimes translated into a negative image of Muslim populations in Dutch society, influenced by unacceptable patterns that Muslims brought from the country of origin when they immigrated to the Netherlands, such as female circumcision, martyrdom and honor killings. Dutch natives associate these patterns with Islam and mistakenly think that these patterns have their source in scripture [69]. Further, in all the interviews and in most of the lectures attended during fieldwork, the issue of the need to separate religion from cultural influences arose. One of the women claimed that the Dutch are making this confused mistake, but it is impossible to complain because:

> "We, as Muslims ourselves are confusing tradition and religion, so how can we expect that [so-called] Dutch people will not get confused?" (*Asia. 22 years old*)

Other participants found that primarily the parents, the first generation of immigrants, are confusing the religion and tradition, and that the young Muslim generation knows that they have a religion that is detached from the Dutch culture in which they live, and that in particular is cut off from cultural patterns from other countries like the home countries of their parents. Many Muslims find it difficult to make this separation between religion and cultural practices, and certain patterns continue to exist, even when families are already a generation or more in the Netherlands [32,69].

> " ... It does not make sense for a 15-year-old woman to marry an 85-year-old man, for example, I see all these things and I think that if I were not a Muslim, I would also be very frightened by this religion ... I would ask, 'What is this religion?' It has nothing to do with Islam ... People are always confusing religion and culture ... This is the greatest problem of Islam ... There are so many cultures within Islam ... " (*Nienke, 27 years old, converted Muslima*)

> " ... There are Moroccan women who have tattoos on their faces, it is a very traditional and a very cultural thing, but it's not a religion, people think right away: 'she committed to it for her religion. It is part of the laws of Islam.' But this is not true ... People do not know what they sometimes say ... It is Moroccan culture, not Islam. There are also things that clash between religion and culture, for example, Islam does not allow people to have tattoos at all, but people are connected to their culture and do it, but [you must] remember, it is not Islam!" (*Jamila. 30 years old.* Moroccan background)

Along these lines, many Muslim women in the Dutch context began asking questions about the difference between culture and religion. They learned that they were different, and that their lives differed from the lives of their Dutch friends because they were "Muslim," but it was difficult for their parents to make the distinction between religion and culture because the culture of the country of origin was deeply rooted in their identity. As part of the process of growing up, especially when this process is felt in a non-Muslim country, many women have begun to ask their parents questions

such as "why fast during Ramadan?", "why do they pray five times a day?", or "why as a Dutch teenager, can I not go out with friends to the cinema?" The answer that was usually accepted was "this is the way of Islam." Over time, many women felt that the answers were unsatisfactory, and they began to look for the true nature of Islam. In this active search, which differs from woman to woman, it often included meetings with other women, women's lectures, visits to mosques, a call to the Quran (translated into Dutch, or in the original language), and they found that issues such as matchmaking and finding a suitable partner were cultural influences of countries such as Morocco and Turkey. In this journey, the main criticism is directed towards their parents and the traditional culture they were raised in.

3.2.4. The Single Muslima, Part 2

> "I'm sure there are nice, sensitive, critical men. We just have not met them yet!" (*Fatima, 23 years old*)

Friendships and relationships are key issues that concern many young women. This is especially true of young Dutch women who are expected to be liberated and aware of their sexuality. On the other hand, in Muslim society (sometimes with the cultural influences of a particular country of origin) young women are expected not to go out with men, and only to go out with someone for a serious purpose: that is, for the purpose of marriage. Cohabitation is forbidden among almost all Muslims, even if they are very liberal. Of the 17 women interviewed, only a few were in a relationship: that is, married (two were in their 40s and one was 27, married half a year prior to the interview). However, 11 women were single and expressed difficulty in finding a suitable mate. Religion and Islam are very important in their lives, so it will be difficult for them to go out with a non-Muslim Dutch man. On the one hand, there is a desire to find a Muslim partner, because women often seek partners through the eyes of their parents, but many Muslim spouses are considered by the populous to be too religious, too macho or too fundamentalist, and by others as not religious enough [69]. There are modern Muslim men with critical abilities, but one interviewee noted that these men often have non-Muslim and Dutch partners. Many Muslim men also fear the female strength of their Muslim sisters who grew up in the Netherlands, and therefore "import" brides from their parents' country of origin. Some of the women noted the growing problem of Muslim women (who are aware of their religiosity) in finding suitable partners. The first author heard stories about women who fell in love with men in their country of origin, who were more than happy to come with them to the West, but when they arrived in the Netherlands, had difficulty with language, finding work, and obtaining citizenship. Many relationships also failed because some spouses leave after they have received citizenship. Many young women (20–30 years old) are well aware of these stories and are concerned about their romantic future, but in the meantime, they continue to develop themselves until they meet someone, or in the words of one of the participants: "When Allah sees that this is the right time for me, he will send me a match."

The patience that some of the women demonstrated (at least in the interview) is reminiscent of the concept of *Sabr* that Mahmud describes in her work, The Politics of Piety. Mahmoud points two women's coping with the difficulty of finding suitable partners in Egypt, and the difficulty of being a single woman. One woman, who was religious, dealt with this pressure through *Sabr*: patience and faith, while the other woman, who defined herself as more secular, faced this pressure by investing in her career and developing personally [27]. Here it is argued that the participants in this ethnography found similar ways (each in their own style) to cope with being single, Muslim and Dutch. This is seen in the attitude of the following participant:

" . . . I am not really actively looking for a partner . . . but it's on my mind . . . I want to let it come to me, it will happen for me . . . because when you look for something too much, you will not find it. . . . I hope I'll meet someone, inshallah, and if not . . . then it's probably my destiny not to meet anyone . . . if Allah says it's time . . . all is in the hands of Allah . . . and if Allah decided, God forbid—that I would live without a man, without love, then be it, then I will accept my fate . . .

. . . I have one friend who died at the age of 40, without a husband . . . It is because she never looked for anyone, and no one passed in her way . . . You cannot predict what will happen, so we say 'trust Allah.' For you, that is what it will be . . . but it is easy to say, it is a bit hard to do (laughs). I have friends [who are] a little older than me, I see them, one engaged and getting married, and my older sister . . . and I want to [get married] as well! (Laughs) My Dutch sister got engaged, the wedding day still needs to come, and sometimes I catch myself thinking, 'Well, now it's time for mine to come sometime!' But I still think we need patience, we have to wait." (*Asia, 22 years old*)

" . . . In the end, it is important to me (a Muslim partner). Maybe at the beginning of the relationship it does not really matter . . . But once we have children, I think that problems can arise . . . It seems to me that after a while . . . (pause) My religion is part of me, part of my identity, and in the long run it will bother me if my partner is not like me in this way . . . If you choose a non-Muslim spouse and raise your children as non-Muslims, you are actually going against your religion. If I meet a nice non-Muslim guy, I will be able to overcome these things because I [do not yet have] children, but in the future, it will start to bother me. It's very hard for me to meet a young Muslim man, nice and also a little liberal, someone who will not point his finger and say: I have [too] strong [of an] opinion, I'm an independent woman, I say what I think, and it's hard for a lot of men (*Laughs*) . . . " (*Salma, 27 years old*)

Some women are aware that certain choices in their lives, related to their religion and how they live their religion, make it difficult for them to find the partner they would want, or find a partner at all. It does preoccupy them but does not stop them from living the way they chose. This is reflected in their agency:

"My parents ask me to take it off and are afraid that I will not find a boyfriend or a groom when I wear a *niqab*. But to tell you the truth, I prefer not to find anyone. To be myself, with my *niqab* . . . and if a man cannot handle it, then I will be alone until I know someone who will accept me as I am . . . " (*Asia, 22 years old*)

This participant argues that for many young Muslim women, finding a partner who shares the same religious identity and ethnic identity may be a very important criterion, but the main thing that educated women who grew up in Holland want is a "modern," "open," "liberal" and "liberated" man, and "someone who will accept me as I am." These criteria seem to be the most important and powerful when women think of an ideal partner. Most of them would also be very happy if their partner was Muslim, because it would facilitate many things in the future, such as marriage, raising children and the practice of religion at home. On the other hand, the partner's ethnic identity was perceived as less important for the interviewee. Some of them noted that parents would be happy if their daughter returned home with a partner of the same origin, but for women who grew up in the Netherlands, the ethnic affiliation of the future spouse is not of great importance.

Being with Muslim partner is not just a matter of shared religion and religious practices in shared life [73], but a Muslim partner connects them to a particular cultural heritage, even if he is a Surinamese Muslim and she is a Muslim of Moroccan origin. They share something in common, even if they are not devout Muslims who live according to Islamic law. They have a deep connection to time and another place, and the possibility of joining together with the Muslim nation, and further, if they are thinking about children in the future, they too will be part of that nation [74].

4. Conclusions—The Dutch inside the Muslima and the Muslima inside the Dutch

We have presented Dutch Muslim women who are defying their perceived position as Muslim in relation to various voices in Dutch society. They feel Muslim, which is the most important thing for most of them. In terms of personal identity, they are indeed a Muslim, yet some do not feel that they belong to a classical, Western-molded Muslim model, as the Dutch media and politics try to shape it, and they do not feel comfortable with the Muslim ideal that many other Muslim women set for themselves. These are young women who regularly visit mosques, and who have recently begun to delve deeper into Islam. These women often have no aptitude for the Arabic language, so they use Dutch translations of Islamic verses and laws. Many young women start wearing headscarves to confirm their identity, especially when they may feel lost and not entirely belonging to the Dutch society. As one participant said:

> "[Some people] become a punk in adolescence, other [people] begin to cover up and hold on to her Muslim identity, but on the other hand these women feel that Muslim or Moroccan society will appreciate them more, and they actually help to create the dichotomy between "good" (covered) women and "bad" (walking with their hair visible) . . . " (*Nienke, 27 years old*)

Thus, the core finding of this study is to be found in the concepts of identity and agency: Islam allows these women to acquire an identity that was not entirely Dutch, yet not foreign (Moroccan, Turkish or otherwise); the identity is not only Dutch-Moroccan or Moroccan-Dutch: it is simultaneously both and neither. Islam in their lives allows them to be Dutch, the daughter of an immigrant, with Moroccan roots. Islam allows them to criticize Dutch society, for example, in the way that Dutch society does not always accept or tolerate them as much as one may think, and at the same time criticize Moroccan (or another) society, which is full of traditions that change the face of pure Islam. The appeal to pure Islam allows these women to draw gender critiques: intergenerational criticism of parents who would explain everything, any difficulty, any prohibition, as "the way of Islam," without knowing that they are actually mixing religion with cultural traditions of their land of origin. Gender-based criticisms of these women demand equality in religious practice, because by turning to primary sources and learning Arabic, they prove that during the time of the Prophet women were integrated into the religious sphere and decision-making.

A hybrid identity, consisting of Dutchness and other elements that are Muslim, Moroccan, etc., is therefore an individual identity:

> " . . . I think it used to be like this (gossip and social control), with the first generation, but today the bossy and gossipy behavior is almost non-existent among the young people of our age . . . Everyone lives for themselves, learns and works . . . People who grew up in the Netherlands are developing [in this way], to the point that they do not really care about what their aunt will think. People are too busy today to start keeping an eye on everyone . . . I think this behavior has gradually *become* extinct from the Moroccan community in Holland . . . " (*Myriam, 25 years old*)

> "But you do not actually get anywhere, because when you're in Holland, you're Moroccan, and when you're in Morocco, you're Dutch. The only option you have is not to be either of them. [And so it is ironic] that we have two passports, a Dutch one and a Moroccan one." (*Leyla, 28 years old*)

Muslim women in the Netherlands cannot be depicted as a homogenous group, as there are variations among Dutch Muslim women and Dutch Muslim identity, and we must blur existing categories that people assume are natural, such as Dutch and Muslim. Such categories are indeed not natural, but rather social constructions that the women interviewed above challenge every day. There are inequalities, power relations and overall a great diversity and variety between Dutch Muslims from different cultural, ethnical and socio-economic backgrounds.

Many Muslim women in the Netherlands are also much more than just Muslim, as their identities are also shaped by Dutch culture and society. Using Bhabha's [58] term of the Third Space allows us to revalue and reshape existing categories. Dutchness and Muslimness thus move beyond their imagined boundaries, and are turned into new identity positions. Consequently, the binary opposition between Muslim and Dutch can quickly vanish, since being Dutch can include being Muslim, practicing Islam can be an expression of Dutch identity, and headscarves can be worn in the colors of the Dutch flags, as sold by the famous Dutch shop HEMA in 2008–2009 [9,55,61]. This merging of categories is what we call the 'Dutch inside the *Moslima*, and the *Moslima* inside the Dutch', a new identity that transgresses stereotypical notions of identity categories.

Some of the women in this ethnography appear to resist Dutch norms through their religious practice, with their religious practice allowing them to criticize Dutch culture for not always making them feel that they belong to the national fold [2,15]. However, others see the Netherlands as a place where they can express their religious identities more freely. This can also be a two-way process: where being Muslim and Dutch allows these women to construct hybrid identities, while making active choices in their lives. Other analytic frameworks to look at Dutch Muslim women's experiences can be the realm of the politics of belonging [2,17], intersectionality [54,75] and (super) diversity [76] which is addressed in the first author's future work.

These women are inspirational, strong, highly educated Dutch Muslim women who are building their identity. They achieve success in accordance with the Dutch/Western ideal of higher education, career building, and individualism, while remaining critical of Dutch society for not making them feel completely assimilated. In contrast to popular opinion, these women make their own choice to study and practice their religion, to seek for knowledge and submit themselves to the rules they learn or re-discover in the context of curiosity, a search for meaning, a sense of belongingness, and personal spiritual development: criteria that Dutch society popularly is said to consider as important.

Two key elements were found in this ethnography: identity and agency. The choice to engage in Islam is an active choice, as most participants argued, and this is where we can see their agency. Agency becomes an important element of identity and belonging, since these women "push the limits" [2] of archetypal Dutch identity, while simultaneously stretching the meaning of Islam [15] to craft their own identity influenced by themes of religion, self-searching, immigration, belongingness, higher education, equality, knowledge and gender.

Appendix A. "Real Dutch?" Campaign

Figure A1. "Real Dutch?" Poster Campaign by Al Nisa.

Figure A2. "Real Dutch?" Poster Campaign by Al Nisa.

Appendix B. Definitions

PVV: The Party for Freedom (Dutch: *Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV) is a Dutch nationalist and right-wing populist political party in the Netherlands, founded in 2006. The PVV calls for policies like administrative detention and a strong assimilationist stance on the integration of immigrants into Dutch society, differing from the established center-right parties in the Netherlands. The PVV has also proposed banning the Quran and shutting down all mosques in the Netherlands. In addition, the party is consistently Eurosceptic [2].

Mosilima: Moslima is the Dutch word for a Muslim woman. It is a word that contains a gender identity, feminine identity, ethnic identity, religious identity and national identity. The use of the word "Moslima" in the Dutch language is this used to indicate a Muslim woman who is also Dutch. This is as opposed to "Muslim" in English, which refers to men and women and does not make gender distinctions

References

1. Nachmani, A. *Europe and Its Muslim Minorities: Aspects of Conflict, Attempts at Accord*; Sussex Academic Press: East Sussex, UK, 2010.
2. Vroon, V. Sisters in Islam. Women's Conversion and the Politics of Belonging: A Dutch Case Study. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherland, 2014.
3. Van Nieuwkerk, K. "Conversion" to Islam and the Construction of a Pious Self. In *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*; Oxford Handbooks Online: Oxford, UK, 2014.
4. Anonymous. *Proceedings of the Women's Studies International Forum*; Elsevier: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2014.
5. Kaplan, B.J. *Muslims in the Dutch Golden Age: Representations and Realities of Religious Toleration*; Faculty of Humanities, Universiteit van Amsterdam: Amsterdam, The Netherland, 2007.
6. Roald, A.S. *New Muslims in the European Context: The Experience of Scandinavian Converts*; Brill: Leiden, The Netherland, 2004.
7. Roald, A.S. The conversion process in stages: New Muslims in the twenty-first century. *Islam Christ. Muslim Relat.* **2012**, *23*, 347–362. [CrossRef]
8. McGinty, A.M. *Becoming Muslim: Western Women's Conversions to Islam*; Springer: Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany, 2006.
9. Bartels, E. 'Wearing a headscarf is my personal choice' (Jasmina, 16 years). *Islam Christ. Muslim Relat.* **2005**, *16*, 15–28. [CrossRef]
10. Cesari, J. *Ethnicity, Islam, and Les Banlieues: Confusing the Issues*; Social Science Research Council: New York, NY, USA, 2005; p. 30.
11. Cesari, J. Islam in the West: From Immigration to Global Islam. *Harvard Middle East. Islamic Rev.* **2009**, *8*, 148–175.
12. Ozyurek, E. *German Converts to Islam and Their Ambivalent Relations with Immigrant Muslims*; Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, USA, 2010.
13. Özyürek, E. *Being German, Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion, and Conversion in the New Europe*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2014.
14. Marranci, G. *The Anthropology of Islam*; Berg Publishers: Oxford, UK, 2008.
15. Hass, B. *The Moslimas: Pushing the Limits of Dutchness and Processing the Religious Experience of Muslim Women in the Netherlands: Amsterdam in the Early 21st Century*; The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Jerusalem, Israel, 2011.
16. Dassetto, F.; Conrad, Y. *Muslims in Western Europe. An Annotated Bibliography*; L'Harmattan: Paris, France, 1996.
17. Yuval-Davis, N. Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns Prejudice* **2006**, *40*, 197–214. [CrossRef]
18. Bowen, J. *Islam be French. Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2010.
19. Bowen, J.R. *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2007.
20. El Guindi, F. Gendered resistance, feminist veiling, Islamic feminism. *Ahfad J.* **2005**, *22*, 53–78.
21. El Guindi, F. *Veil: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance*; Berg Publishers: Oxford, UK, 1999.
22. Moors, A. Discover the beauty of modesty. In *Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith*; Lewis, R., Ed.; I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd.: London, UK, 2013; pp. 17–40.
23. Moors, A.; Tarlo, E. Fashion and its discontents: The aesthetics of covering in the Netherlands. In *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America*; Bloomsbury Academi: London, UK, 2013; p. 241.
24. Moors, A. Fashionable Muslims: Notions of Self, Religion, and Society in Sanà. *Fash. Theory* **2007**, *11*, 319–346. [CrossRef]

25. Moors, A. The Dutch and the face-veil: The politics of discomfort. *Soc. Anthropol.* **2009**, *17*, 393–408. [CrossRef]

26. Tarlo, E.; Moors, A. *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America*; A&C Black: London, UK, 2013.

27. Mahmood, S. Feminist theory, embodiment, and the docile agent: Some reflections on the Egyptian Islamic revival. *Cult. Anthropol.* **2001**, *16*, 202–236. [CrossRef]

28. Mahmood, S. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2011.

29. Abu-Lughod, L. Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. *Ame. Anthropol.* **2002**, *104*, 783–790. [CrossRef]

30. Abu-Lughod, L. *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 1998.

31. Wekker, G. *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*; Duke University Press: Durham, NC, USA, 2016.

32. Besamusca, E.; Verheul, J. *Discovering the Dutch: On culture and society of the Netherlands*; Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, The Netherland, 2014.

33. Stoler, A.L. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2010.

34. Stoler, A.L. *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979*; University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, MA, USA, 1995.

35. Cooper, F.; Stoler, A.L. Introduction tensions of empire: Colonial control and visions of rule. *Am. Ethnol.* **1989**, *16*, 609–621. [CrossRef]

36. Bakker, F.L. Inter-Religious Dialogue and Migrants. *Mission Stud.* **2014**, *31*, 227–254. [CrossRef]

37. Nicolaas, H.; Sprangers, A. Buitenlandse migratie in Nederland 1795–2006: De invloed op de bevolkingssamenstelling. Twee eeuwen Nederland getfield: Onderzoek met de digitale Volks-, Beroeps-en Woningtellingen 1795–2001. 2007, pp. 19–50; Available online: https://www.knaw.nl/shared/resources/actueel/publicaties/pdf/twee-eeuwen-nederland-geteld-Onderzoek-met-de-digitale-volks-beroeps-en-Woningtellingen-1795-2001 (accessed on 31 July 2018).

38. Van der Veer, P. *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*; Psychology Press: London, UK, 1996.

39. Essed, P.; Trienekens, S. 'Who wants to feel white?'Race, Dutch culture and contested identities. *Ethn. Racial Stud.* **2008**, *31*, 52–72. [CrossRef]

40. McKinney, K.D. *Being White: Stories of Race and Racism*; Routledge: London, UK, 2013.

41. Avishai, O. "Doing Religion" In a Secular World Women in Conservative Religions and the Question of Agency. *Gender Soc.* **2008**, *22*, 409–433. [CrossRef]

42. Benor, S.B. *Becoming Frum: How Newcomers Learn the Language and Culture of Orthodox Judaism*; Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ, USA, 2012.

43. Davidman, L. *Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, USA, 1991.

44. Fader, A. *Mitzvah Girls: Bringing up the Next Generation of Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn*; Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2009.

45. Ortner, S. Power and projects: Reflections on agency. In *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*; Duke University Press: Durham, NC, USA, 2006; pp. 129–153.

46. Bartkowski, J.P.; Read, J.G. Veiled submission: Gender, power, and identity among evangelical and Muslim women in the United States. *Qual. Sociol.* **2003**, *26*, 71–92. [CrossRef]

47. Mernissi, F. *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*; IIndiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, USA, 1987.

48. Mernissi, F. *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*; Basic Books: New York, NY, USA, 1991.

49. Butler, J. Gender trouble, feminist theory, and psychoanalytic discourse. In *Feminism/Postmodernism*; Routledge: London, UK, 1990; p. 327.

50. Butler, J. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*; Routledge: London, UK, 2011.

51. West, C.; Zimmerman, D.H. Doing gender. *Gender Soc.* **1987**, *1*, 125–151. [CrossRef]

52. Goffman, E. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*; Random House: New York City, NY, USA, 1978.

53. Vader, S. Really Muslim; Really Dutch Muslim Omen Constructing a Public Dutch Muslim Identity. Bachelor's Thesis, University of Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherland, 2011.

54. Crenshaw, K. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Rev.* **1991**, *43*, 1241–1299. [CrossRef]

55. Ghorashi, H. Culturalist approach to women's emancipation in the Netherlands. In *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging*; Moghissi, H., Ghorashi, H., Eds.; Ashgate Publishing: London, UK, 2010; pp. 11–22.

56. Essers, C.; Benschop, Y. Muslim businesswomen doing boundary work: The negotiation of Islam, gender and ethnicity within entrepreneurial contexts. *Hum. Relat.* **2009**, *62*, 403–423. [CrossRef]

57. Koenen, B. Moslima's in Beeld. Ph.D. Thesis, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherland, 2008.

58. Bhabha, H.K. *The Location of Culture*; Routledge: London, UK, 2012.

59. Marcus, G.E. Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* **1995**, *24*, 95–117. [CrossRef]

60. Strauss, A.; Corbin, J.M. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*; Sage Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 1990.

61. Lamphere, L. The perils and prospects for an engaged anthropology. A view from the United States. *Soc. Anthropol.* **2003**, *11*, 153–168. [CrossRef]

62. Marcus, G.E.; Fischer, M.M. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*; University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA, 1999.

63. Roald, A. *Women in Islam: The Western Experience*; Routledge: London, UK, 2003.

64. Knott, K. *Religion and Identity, and the Study of Ethnic Minority Religions in Britain*; Australian Association for the Study of Religions: South Australia, Australia, 1986.

65. Bartels, E.; De Jong, I. Civil society on the move in Amsterdam: Mosque organizations in the Slotervaart district. *J. Muslim Minority Affairs* **2007**, *27*, 455–471. [CrossRef]

66. Buitelaar, M. *Van Huis uit Marokkaans: Over Verweven Loyaliteiten van Hoogopgeleide Migrantendochters*; Uitgeverij Bulaaq: Amsterdam, The Netherland, 2009.

67. Buitelaar, M. 'I Am the Ultimate Challenge'Accounts of Intersectionality in the Life-Story of a Well-Known Daughter of Moroccan Migrant Workers in the Netherlands. *Eur. J. Women's Stud.* **2006**, *13*, 259–276. [CrossRef]

68. Vroon-Najem, V. *Pushing the Limits of Dutchness: Agency and Change in the Contexts of Female Conversion to Islam*; Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: Amsterdam, The Netherland, 2007.

69. Visser, T.; Baracs, M.; Dijk, A. *Het is Cultuur Geloof ik:15 Artikelen over Misvattingen Rondom Geloof en Cultuur van Moslims in Nederland (It is Culture, I Believe: 15 Articles about Misunderstandings in Regard to Religion and Culture among Muslims in The Netherlands)*; LIVN; Falstaff Media: Dusseldorf, Germany, 2009.

70. Van Nieuwkerk, K. Veils and wooden clogs don't go together. *Ethnos* **2004**, *69*, 229–246. [CrossRef]

71. Scott, J.W. *The Politics of the Veil*; Princeton UP: Princeton, NJ, USA, 2007.

72. Appadurai, A. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1988.

73. Buitelaar, M. Constructing a Muslim Self in a Post-migration Context: Continuity and Discontinuity with Parental Voices. *Relig. Voices Self-Narratives Making Sens. Life Times Transit.* **2013**, *54*, 241.

74. Fadil, N. Tussen Marokkaanse en Moslim: Over de etnische en religieuze identiteit van Marokkaanse adolescente meisjes. *Tijdschrift voor Sociol.* **2002**, *23*, 115–138.

75. Yuval-Davis, N. Intersectionality and feminist politics. *Eur. J. Women's Stud.* **2006**, *13*, 193–209. [CrossRef]

76. Ahmed, S. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*; Duke University Press: Durham, NC, USA, 2012.