

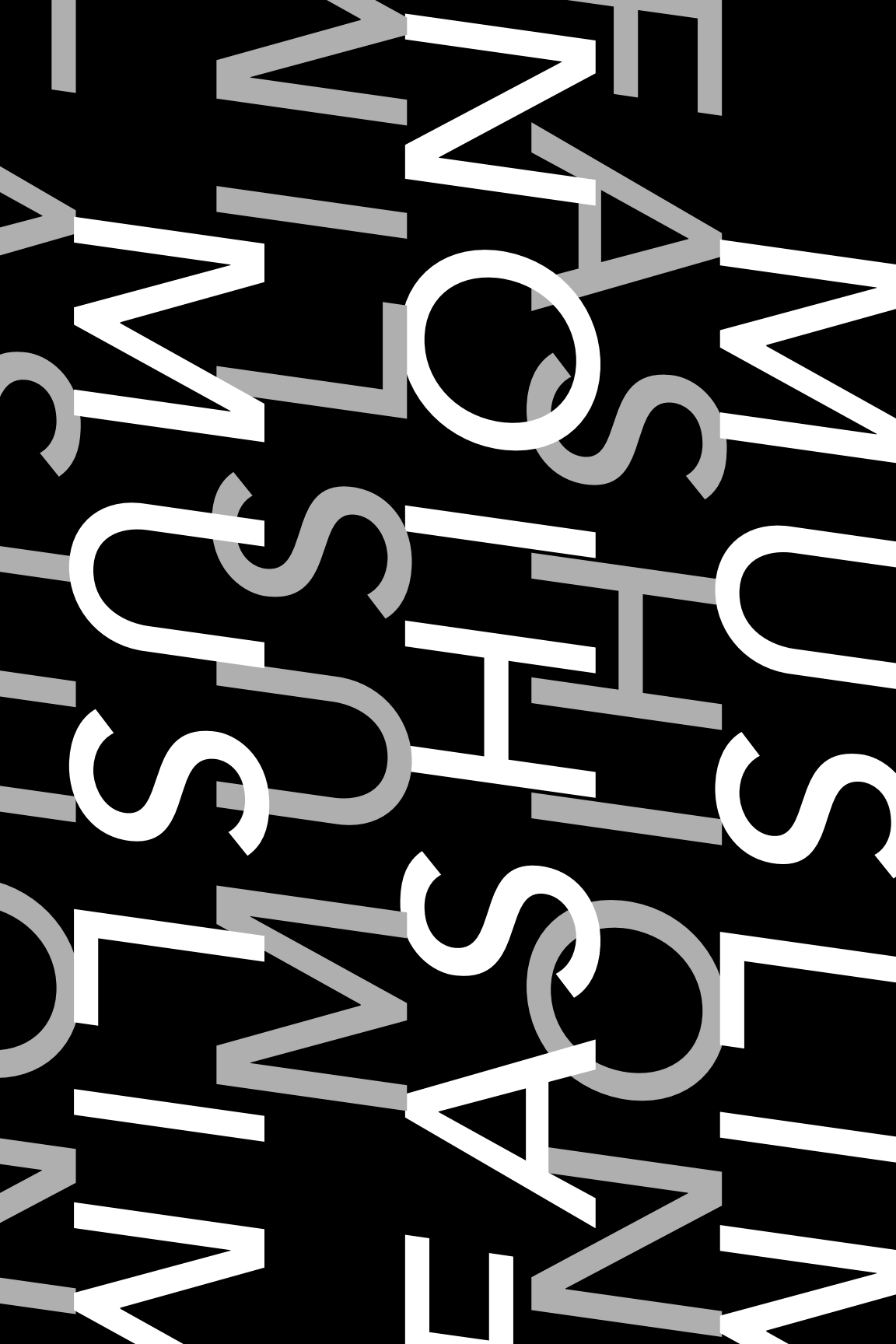


# MUSLIM FASHION

CONTEMPORARY STYLE CULTURES

REINA LEWIS

**MUSLIM FASHION**



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*Contemporary Style Cultures*

**REINA LEWIS**

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Dina Toki-O, Oxford Street, London, 2012.

WITH LOVE  
FOR  
Áine Duffy



IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

Estelle Lewis

1930–2014

Loving and Beloved



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## INTRODUCTION

### Veils and Sales

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2005.

**O**ne month after the bombs in London on July 7, and Oxford Street is buzzing with shoppers. Retail figures are down, and travel on the tube has diminished by a third, but the sales are in full swing, and bargain hunters are not to be deterred. Walking from Oxford Circus to Marble Arch reveals a significant number of visibly “Muslim” women: girls in tight jeans with patterned scarves over their hair cluster around the makeup counter in Top Shop; older women in embroidered salwar kameez with filmy dupatta thrown loosely over their heads mooch around Debenhams; hip twentysomethings in black boot-cut trousers and skimpy T-shirts wear their black head wraps tight with a fashionable ghetto-fabulous tail cascading down their backs from their high topknots as they check out bargains in Mango; clusters of young

women in black jilbabs move around the accessories department of Selfridges looking at handbags, perhaps to augment the selection of bags worn on wrists and over shoulders; in Marks and Spencer at Marble Arch, mothers in black abayas with niqabs over their faces select children's clothes. On the street, at the cafés that now increasingly line the pavements of this and other British high streets, women in various forms of veiling are highly visible, bearing these (generally presumed to be) most easily recognizable and decodable signs of religious and cultural identity. And in their activities as consumers the women in hijab, and not in hijab, are likely to be served by shop assistants who also veil. A trawl down the street reveals women in British Home Stores in cream jilbabs working alongside female colleagues in uniform blouses; in Marks and Spencer, young women wear the uniform-issued long-sleeved shirt with a store-issued (nonbranded) black scarf pinned close about their heads; in New Look, young women keep the changing rooms under control in colored headscarves worn over the items from this season's selection that constitute the store's "feelgood fashion" uniform choices. All this in a month when assaults on Muslims, or those perceived as Muslim, have increased dramatically from the police figures of this time last year, and in a week when some Muslim "leaders" have been quoted in the press advising women that they should relinquish their veils if their public prominence makes them likely targets for abuse or attacks.

Ten years on, and the vibrancy of Muslim wardrobe display has not abated. The streets, workplaces, and leisure spaces of Britain have for some time been animated by ever proliferating versions of modest fashionable dress. But the media and mainstream political response to these manifestations of religiously related fashion continue to regard the veil, in all its forms, as controversial political symbol, not as fashion. With innovations in hijabi fashion excluded from celebrations of British street style, for the mainstream observer it remains remarkable to put faith and fashion in the same frame. Yet the fashion choices of the Muslim women in the Oxford Street consumptionscape, including those whose dress did not announce their faith, are increasingly likely to be served by a growing niche market in Muslim modest fashion and advised by a rapidly expanding Muslim style media in print magazines and on social media. In publisher speak, the strapline for this book could have been "Muslim fashion: underrepresented in the style media, overrepresented in the news media" because, seemingly unaware of these developments in Muslim fashion commerce and commentary and ignoring women's everyday wardrobe choices as they style public modesty, the mainstream media persists in

utilizing images of veiled women to illustrate and symbolize the presumed alterity of Muslims, continuing historical Orientalist stereotypes within contemporary debates about social cohesion, and the perceived rifts between Islam and the West.

Simply to pitch shopping, fashion, and veils together generates immediate interest because veils are seen by those outside veiling communities, and sometimes by those inside, as inimical to fashion and outside the commercial circuits of the fashion industry. With shops, and fashion shopping, operating as an indicator of modernity, and with Islam often presented as resistant to modernity, the presence of veiled shoppers and shop assistants becomes a potent mix of two contrasting spatial and social codes, often interpreted as a temporal clash. This is why the Oxford Street shopping scene is so interesting: it highlights how religious and religio-ethnic diversity is enmeshed within the experience of selling and consuming fashion in the globally recognized fashion city of London, even as responses to the bombs four weeks earlier in 2005 were reactivating the perceived opposition between Islam and modernity that had flared across the non-Muslim world after the attacks on America on September 11, 2001. In the British context this lack of coevalness (Fabian 1983) between Muslims and modernity had come to the fore during the Rushdie affair of the late 1980s and in 2001 had been inflamed by the urban riots involving young working-class Muslim men in northern England that preceded September's events in the United States. After the London bombs politicians and commentators again focused debate on the apparent non-integration of Muslim populations. With the bombers (as with previous rioters) seen as representative of a globally youthful Muslim population (Pew 2010), anxious discussions about alienated Muslim youth homed in on the perceived threat posed by the "new folk devils" (Archer 2007: 74) of Muslim young men, yet the image of the veiled Muslim woman continued to be ubiquitous.

Arguing that Muslim fashion needs to be taken seriously *as* fashion, this book switches attention away from questions of alienation and extremism among young men to explore how and why young Muslim women are using their engagement with mainstream fashion to communicate their ideas and aspirations about modern Muslim identities to coreligionists and to majority non-Muslim observers alike. The trends in Muslim style that I cover in this book have originated as a youthful phenomenon: the inaugurating cohort of designers, bloggers, and social media hosts—

many of whom I interview here — were predominantly young women aged between eighteen and twenty-four, as were most of the other women who shared their stories of styling hijab at home, college, and work. These style practices and modes of dissemination and mediation, with microgenerational distinctions among younger dressers developing rapidly during the course of my research, can be regarded, as I argue in chapter 5, as a form of youth subculture. This is a subculture in which religiosity figures as one among other mutually constitutive terms of social differentiation alongside class, ethnicity, and gender; a subculture that defines itself in relation to and distinction from the social and cultural norms of both a dominant or mainstream (and often hostile) non-Muslim majority and parental cultures of religion and ethnicity that are themselves socially and politically minoritized; a subculture in which creative practices of bricolage appropriate and transform commodities from multiple intersecting fashion systems including mainstream, “ethnic,” and new niche modest commercial cultures; and a subculture in which style and values transmit “up” from daughters to mothers as well as across spatial divisions between neighborhoods and nations.

To explore these generational and geographical transmissions of style this book situates Muslim style in Britain in relation to other selected Muslim modest commercial cultures. This includes designers, journalists, and bloggers in North America, whose Anglophone culture in a Muslim minority context links Muslims to coparticipants in modest fashion cultures from other religions (on Australia, see G. Jones 2012). I focus also on Turkey because, while Britain is today recognized as a style setter in Muslim fashion (Moors and Tarlo 2013), it was Turkey that led in the initial commercial development of Islamic fashion from the 1980s, its covered or *tesettür* industry an important antecedent to the modest fashion industries developing now around the world. Located in a Muslim majority secular state in which “religious” dress has been regulated by the state and regarded with hostility by secularists, the longer established Turkish companies were part of the rise of Islamic or green (as in the color of Islam rather than eco-) capitalism that emerged during the liberalization of the state economy in the 1980s and the subsequent incorporation, as I discuss in chapter 2, of large parts of the population into diverse consumer cultures (Gökarksel and Secor 2010b; Kılıçbay and Binark 2002). Now demonstrating generational change in style and modes of consumption, the distinctive aesthetic of Turkish Muslim fashion continues to be a reference point in Britain and elsewhere, though likely, as I go to press, to face

challenges from Indonesia, another Muslim majority nation, where the secular state has shifted from outlawing to sponsoring Muslim fashion as part of its economic development plan and national branding strategy (Arthur 2000b; C. Jones 2010).<sup>1</sup> These shifting power relations between globalized corporate capital, nation states, and supranational (capital, political, third sector, and religious) forces reconfigure people's experience of the intersectionalities of gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, and religion (Ong 1999) that frame processes of identity formation, the context in which to understand the historical and contemporary transnational transmission of styles between Muslim populations around the world (on Europe, see Tarlo and Moors 2013; on Egypt, see Abaza 2007; and on Yemen, see Moors 2007).

To examine the changing relationships between religion, gender, and society this book follows Appadurai's call to recognize the "relations of disjuncture" inherent in experiences of globalized capital "characterized by objects in motion," in which the "various flows we see—of objects, persons, images, and discourse—are not coeval, convergent, isomorphic, or spatially consistent" (Appadurai 2001: 5). Investigating the transnational movement of Muslim fashion objects—garments, images, discourses, people—I propose that commercial style cultures be seen as significant factors in the regulatory and liberatory "role of the imagination in social life," through which emerge "new patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life" (Appadurai 2001: 6).

I argue (following McRobbie 1998) that the significance of modest Muslim designs lies not only in sales but in their influence as image within discourses of female religious and religio-ethnic identity that achieve enhanced valency in the visually led digital and social media of which this youth population are notable early adopters. To explore the interconnections of production, distribution, and consumption, this book works thematically with selected examples from its constituent territories, providing historicized accounts of moments in the design, marketing, retailing, mediation, and consumption of self-consciously Muslim fashion and its reception. Here, I draw on the circuit of culture model (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Madsen, Mackay, and Negus 2013) that challenges the precedence conventionally given to production over consumption by linking both to representation, identity, and regulation as part of a mutually constitutive and interdependent set of relations through which commodities are brought into being and given meaning in the lives of human subjects. While this corrective conceptualizes the consumer as active rather than passive and

emphasizes the significant role of businesses' own cultures, its emphasis on "meaning-making as an ongoing *process*" forged "through usage" (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Madsen, Mackay, and Negus 2013: 79–81) in particular times and places also foregrounds how regulation constrains what is produced and how it can be consumed. Regulating factors in production, from safety rules to component prices, are matched by economic constraints on consumer spending that are themselves culturally framed by historically specific variables of class, gender, location, and (I add) religion. Curbs on consumption may be overtly "moral," such as prohibitions on drugs or alcohol (for those "under" age). With religiously related practices in Muslim women's dress often designed, and serving, to regulate female and male sexuality, the field of contemporary Muslim modern fashion is immersed in a longer history of religiously regulated embodiment marked by forms of interpretation, contestation, accommodation, and imposition that vary across time and space. These intra-Muslim constraints intersect with external constraints such as school or workplace uniform codes or state bans on veiling that also impact unevenly and often unpredictably on the dressed experiences of Muslim women.

Susan Kaiser has adapted the circuit model for fashion, replacing representation with "distribution," a term preferred for its "connotations of both material and representational elements" (2012: 19). For my project this foregrounds the role of retail, bringing into critical view the physical spaces of the store and the bodies of those who labor and shop there as I discuss in chapters 2 and 5. Distribution also highlights fashion media and marketing as image and practice, as I discuss in chapters 4, 7, and 8. The mutually constitutive relationship between production and representation/distribution becomes even more embedded in the era of social media as the affordances of new hardware and software extend to the general population the experience of "prosuming" or "produsing" content initially the terrain of early adopter geeks (Jenkins 2006, noted in du Gay, Hall, Janes, Madsen, Mackay, and Negus 2013), itself restricted by the uneven global access to Internet infrastructure of the digital divide (Bunt 2009). Conditions for and constraints on the highly regulated practices of Muslim fashion thus can be understood as the "articulation" of "distinct processes . . . located in the contingencies of circumstance" (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Madsen, Mackay, and Negus 2013: xxx).

Attending to the enabling and restricting effects of spatio-temporal location (Hopkins and Gale 2009), my account locates Muslim fashion as contributory to a network of overlapping local, regional, national,

transnational, religious, and diasporic fashion systems whose impact on Muslim design and dressing is always context specific and changeable. As Osella and Osella (2007) demonstrate in the context of rising Hindu nationalism in India, particular experiences of Muslim minority living produce Muslims as minoritized (rather than targeted/normative) consumers in particular ways: in Muslim-majority Turkey, the hostile reception of Islamic religiosity produces changes in women's style of covered dress and determines the modes of retailing and marketing available to modest fashion firms (chapters 3 and 4); just as in Britain, with a majority South Asian Muslim population, the diaspora fashion industry that I discuss in chapter 5 frames opportunities and limitations for hijabi designers and dressers regardless of their own family heritage.

In the locations covered in this book matters of Muslim self-presentation have come to operate as the limit case in debates about citizenship and belonging, secularity and modernity, for both the majority non-Muslim (or, in Turkey, nonreligious) public and often for Muslim (religious) communities themselves. In Britain the dress and demeanor of Muslims in public has taken on new significance, increasingly required post-9/11 and post-7/7 to declare themselves within a politically created dichotomy of good, moderate Muslims versus bad, extremist Muslims. With a historically immigrant Muslim population, the generational cycle of change and increasing acculturation and selective readoption of "traditional" practices common to most migrant communities has accelerated in a glare of often hostile publicity that puts a unique emphasis on the dressed behavior of Muslim bodies, often operationalizing a transnational civilizational discourse for localized political purposes. Elsewhere in Europe, legislation attempts to control Muslim women's dress with bans on face veils (*niqabs*, *burqas*) disproportionate to the small numbers of women actually wearing them in France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, upheld in July 2014 by the European Court of Human Rights. In Quebec, bans on the hijab and niqab (Zine 2006c, 2012) are matched with preemptive legislation to prohibit "Islamic" stoning (in a town with zero Muslim inhabitants), followed in 2013 by proposal for a province-wide French-style ban (see chapter 1) on all forms of religiously distinctive dress and adornment. In fact, completing this paragraph was becoming near impossible by autumn 2014, so constant was the stream of measures proposed to control Muslim female dress in Britain, Europe, and North America. Whether moral panics actually lead to legislation (always variably enforced and resisted), in all these instances the actual or presumed dress practices of some Muslim women

impact discursively on their coreligionists who find their communities put in the spotlight over and again.

### **Secularities and Modernities: The Contested Emblem of the Veiled Body**

In much of the non-Muslim-majority world Muslim women's dress, as with furors over the construction of new mosques, has become a flash-point for controversy, understood by opponents and proponents to be an assertion of religion into the presumed secularity of modern public life. Challenging popular understandings of secular society as a religion-free zone, Talal Asad links the development of secularism to "the rise of a system of capitalist [and colonialist] nation-states," whose character he argues is inevitably mediated by the religious cultures (and conflicts) from which they emerged:

Thus although in France both the highly centralized state and its citizens are secular, in Britain the state is linked to the Established Church and its inhabitants are largely nonreligious, and in America the population is largely religious but the federal state is secular. "Religion" has always been publicly present in both Britain and America. Consequently, although the secularism of these three countries has much in common, the mediating character of the modern imaginary in each of them differs significantly. The notion of toleration between religiously defined groups is differently inflected in each. There is a different sense of participation in the nation and access to the state among religious minorities in the three countries. (Asad 2003: 5–6)

With religion relegated to the domain of the private, in western European and North American (WENA) countries at the turn of the twenty-first century it has been demands in the name of Islam, a minority faith, that reveal and bring into crisis the normative Christian religious underpinnings of the secular nation-state. For France the priority of the secular state to protect citizens from religious intrusion has historically been melded onto a civilizing imperial mission that aims to assimilate migrants into a homogeneously unmarked secular national identity, *laïcité* has no scope for the sorts of hyphenated ethnic and religious identities that underwrite America's integrationist ideal of the multicultural melting pot (Scott 2007). In France, secular freedom from religious control has historically been equated with masculinist ideals of sexual freedom that, as Scott

explains (following Foucault), positions veiling as a refusal of the male appraising gaze that defines modern (hetero)sexual liberty. Dating to 1989, French attempts to control Muslim women's dress through legal initiatives have impacted around the world, covered in Muslim lifestyle magazines and hijab fashion blogs as well as community news media. Centering on removing headscarves from the state secular school system, legislation expanded to include any religious symbol coded as "ostentatious" in 1994 and as "conspicuous" in 2004. Despite the civilizational rhetoric of protecting young Muslims from oppressive parents and communities (sometimes supported by French feminists and secularists), these developments were motivated, as Scott argues, by center Right politicians countering the rising power of the French Far Right post-9/11. Extending beyond schools, the ban on wearing the face veil (the practice of only a tiny minority of Muslims in France) in public in April 2011 prompted riots in summer 2013, while in the same period Belgium's niqab ban was challenged in the Constitutional Court (Donald 2012), and Germany devolved to federal courts decisions about controlling Muslim women's dress in municipal employment. With many French Muslims in favor of secular education (some having opposed religious Muslim rule abroad) and with Turkish secularists welcoming the early bans, and despite that in Europe as elsewhere the Muslim religious Right is joined by the Christian and Jewish religious Rights as cocombatants against *laïcité* (Helie-Lucas 2012; see also Killian 2003), it remains the case still that "Muslim fundamentalism appears in the media today as the primary progenitor of oppressive conditions for women when Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Confucian, and other forms of extreme fundamentalisms exert profound controls over women's lives" (Grewal and Kaplan 1994: 19).

In the context of the nation-state as an imagined community (Anderson 1983) formulated through and endorsed by self-representation in a free press, Asad (2003: 8) notes that "a secular state does not guarantee toleration"; rather, it creates a changing array of threats and guarantees. While much of this book is concerned with how Muslims as minorities are perceived as a threat within and to WENA countries, the minoritization of religion is not simply about numbers. In Muslim majority Turkey, the constitutional secularity of the modern state has been similarly, but differently, perceived to be under threat by manifestations of (Islamic) religiosity in the public domain. Established in 1923 as one of the successor states of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish republic adapted from the multiple models of modernity already available in the West (Eisenstadt 2000)

a version of secular and Westernizing modernity that was enshrined in the narrative of the new nation as a liberation from the despotism and religious obscurantism of the sultanic ancien régime. As Göle points out, in adopting from “French Jacobinism, a centralist [authoritarian] model of change, rather than Anglo-Saxon liberalism” as the rubric for the secular state, Turkey created a version of *laïcité* (*laiklik*) that “gives priority to ‘freedom from religion’ [rather than] priority to ‘religious freedom’” (Göle [2005] 2011: 105). Abolishing the caliphate in 1928, Turkish secularity differed to the French separation of church and state by retaining control of the religious domain through the Ministry of Religious Affairs that regulated the official version of Sunni Islam at home and among migrant Turkish populations abroad.

From the early nineteenth century in the development and representation of modernities in what might broadly be called the Muslim world, the veil in particular and female dress in general were a source of continual tension in debates about modernity and its compatibility with Islam. As in subsequent and contemporary discussions, the figure of woman stood for both defense of tradition and the march of modernity. In Turkey, the unveiled, shingle-cut heads of the stylishly dressed “daughters of the republic” in the late 1920s and 1930s (Durakbaşa 1993) advertised secular modernity to the Turkish population and the world. Specifically positioning the veiled body as the opposite of modernity and, by inference, of civilization (Göle 1996), the veil was eventually banned in 1928. Like the temporal alterity ascribed by colonialism to “primitive” subject peoples, the veiled female body and the communities it represented were not seen as inhabiting the time of modernity, a lack of coevalness that was both spatial and temporal. As Gökariksel and Mitchell propose, for both French and Turkish secular republics committed (differently, I would add) to neoliberal governmentality, the Islamicized female body is unassimilable because it challenges the norms that the “neoliberal individual must be free of any particularist spatial ties that prevent him or her from competing effectively in the global marketplace” (Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005: 150). For France, the veiled woman is typified as a North African migrant from “outside the state’s territorially defined borders,” while for Turkey the presence of the veiled rural migrant in the modern city emblemizes the Islamic threat that derives from within the state’s own borders, an alterity that is temporally as well as spatially intimate: “the ‘dark and distant (Ottoman) past’ when Muslim women’s veiling was the norm” (Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005: 148).

While part of the purpose of this book is to challenge the terms of the current hypervisibility accorded the veil within a post-9/11 securitizing discourse in the West, it would be incorrect to imagine that the veil's symbolic prominence is generated only externally to Muslim society. The heightened visibility of covered dressing as a *Muslim* phenomenon was also a desired aim of the global Islamic revival that from the 1950s and especially since the 1970s promoted veiling as both a form of religious observance and of religious distinction. The history of head covering as a mark of social distinction among women of diverse ethnic and religious communities in the Middle East and South Asia was reframed by Islamic revivalists as an exclusively Muslim marker, in a repositioning of Muslim daily practice intended as much as a counter to other forms of Muslim practice as it was as a riposte to the non-Muslim West (L. Ahmed 2011; Mahmood 2005; Moors 2009). For Göle, in 1996, the urban Islamist woman stood as emblem of a supranational Islamist collectivity and as evidence of the "latent individualism" emerging among the increasingly autonomous female elite cadres of the revivalist movements (Göle 1996: 22). Since then, vibrant Islamic consumer cultures have grown and diversified alongside the rising political power of Islamic politics and the growing alarm of secularists.

The Muslim character of the Turkish republic has been central to debates about religion in the present and future character of Europe at the turn of the twenty-first century. The perceived threat of Turkey's EU accession bid has, as Göle points out, "become a matter of identity for the Europeans (rather than, as was expected, for Turks)" (Göle 2011: 5). Responses to Turkey's EU bid reactivate the memory of the Ottoman assault on Vienna, a foundational moment in the construction of Europe as a supranational imaginary: it "was not Europe that the Turks threatened but Christendom, since Europe was not then distinct from Christendom" (Asad 2003: 162). For Muslims already in Europe, the framework for gaining minority protection demands assimilation to a naturalized Christian narrative: "Europe (and the nation-states of which it is constituted) is ideologically constructed in such a way that Muslim immigrants cannot be satisfactorily represented in it. [This has] less to do with 'absolute Faith' of Muslims living in a secular environment and more with European notions of 'culture' and 'civil' and 'the secular state,' and 'majority' and 'minority'" (Asad 2003: 159). In a world of global communication technologies news spreads quickly, and individual understandings of ethno-religious cultural identities as well as local community relations are conducted in a transnational frame, in which national, community, and religious politics com-

bine with changing practices in Muslim dress increasingly encountered within and framed by consumer culture.

### **Multiple Modernities, Multiple Fashion Systems**

Related to the recognition of and debate about multiple modernities is the transition from seeing fashion exclusively as a component of Western capitalist modernity to an approach that considers multiple fashion systems and style cultures. I started this introduction by saying that Muslim fashion was underrepresented in the style media not simply because new hijabi styles have been under the fashion radar: the entire concept of Muslim fashion has conventionally in the West been regarded as outside the worldview of the fashion industry and to studies of it. This derives from two related presumptions: that fashion is a Western experience and that Muslims are not part of the West. From this it follows that Muslims, even if “in” the West, will be wearing clothing that is “ethnic” or is “religious,” categories outside the parameters of Western fashion. Until recently in fashion histories and popular parlance non-Western clothing was often relegated to the domain of costume that, as with the treatment of “folk” costume at home, was regarded as the unchanging expression of essentialized collective cultural identities antithetical to the rapidly shifting self-creation of Western fashion; a temporal atavism matched by the spatial restriction of folk or ethnic clothing to “very precise places” in contrast to the “vast” “geographic remit” available to Western fashion styles and commodities (Riello and McNeil 2010: 358).

While all human societies mediate the naked body through body adornment and modification (from garments to tattoos) and are characterized by change over time, the pace and purpose of change that evolved in the context of Western modernity from the fourteenth century can be regarded, Joanne Entwistle argues, as a distinctive feature of today’s now globalized fashion system, with fashion arising in situations of potential social mobility to offer the subject a technique of dressing with which “self consciously to construct an identity suitable for the modern stage” (Entwistle 2000: 75). Debate about the origins of fashion outside the West have centered on when originality came to be valued in non-Western contexts, and the pace of and extent to which ethnic dress while serving to demarcate group boundaries also interrelated with (Eicher and Sumberg 1995) and contributed to (Lemire and Riello 2006) “world” fashion.

Jennifer Craik argues that there are several coexisting and competing

fashion systems of which “European high (elite designer) fashion [is] one specific variant,” decentering the elite in favor of most people’s experience of “everyday fashion” that has more in common with “other fashion systems, including those in non-European and non-capitalist cultures” (Craik 1993: x–xi). Although as Entwistle points out, it has long been the case that style derivation goes both ways, with trends trickling up from the street to couture, this characterization of syncretic everyday fashion practices has much in common with the blending of everyday religion that I discuss in chapter 1. Associated with a religious culture seen as non-Western and framed for some as the submission to transcendent religious truths, Muslim fashion is easily rendered outside the place and time of fashion; fabricated with garments from “other” clothing systems, or, even weirder to some, through the appropriation of items that would otherwise read as fashion into religiously demarcated ensembles. These articulations of style (Tulloch 2010) through the melding of diverse mainstream, non-Western, diaspora, and ethnic items are indicative of forms of (inevitably limited) human agency from designers and dressers that transcend binarisms of Western or non-Western, mainstream or ethnic, modern or traditional, authentic or inauthentic. As Kaiser argues, the contradictory and fluid experiences of participating in fashion need not be understood in terms of either/or when it is more realistic to conceptualize experiences as encompassing both/and, such as “dressing to belong *and* dressing to differentiate” (Kaiser 2012: 3).

For these reasons, my understanding of Muslim fashion practices situates them in relation to a web of multiple fashion systems seen within the frame of multiple modernities. This allows me to historicize and track the transmission over space and time of contemporary trends and modes of production and distribution in relation to their particular regional, national, and transnational geopolitical contexts and histories. For fashion, as with studies of other cultural forms and practices, repositioning Western modernity as one among a series of mutually constituting multiple modernities revises progressivist narratives of an “inexorable march forward,” recognizing that “past-oriented traditionalism is as much a feature of modernity as modernisation” (S. Friedman 2007; see also L. Taylor 2002). This creates an opportunity to incorporate Western and other imperialisms into accounts of fashion history, recognizing that the generalized shift from “the reign of sumptuary law to the reign of fashion” relied on large-scale change and “socially organized forms of consumption” (Appadurai 1996: 72). As with imperial missionaries positioning “un-

dressed” natives as nonfashionable recipients for outmoded Western fashion goods (Comaroff 1996), so too were Western observers (as I discuss in chapter 1) unable to recognize as fashion the diverse modes and temporalities through which Western garments or styles were indigenized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the Ottoman Empire. Histories of fashion could similarly be cognizant of how in the Turkish republic in the 1920s and 1930s the imposition of Western clothing and headwear by the secular elite repurposed Ottoman Orientalism to picture as primitive and nonmodern the nonelite and rural Turkish population in terms previously applied to the Arab and provincial minority populations of the Ottoman Empire (Eldem 2007; Makdisi 2002).

Elizabeth Wilson’s argument that “in modern western society no clothes are outside fashion; fashion sets the terms of *all* sartorial behaviour” (E. Wilson [1985] 2003: 3) can bring minoritized, disparaged fashion practices like Muslim fashion into view by emphasizing the relationality of dressed bodies. Even those who aim to be antifashion cannot entirely escape fashion, but neither do fashion participants escape antifashion. The mainstream and the alternative are mutually constitutive in ways that are socially, culturally, and historically specific: as I discuss in chapter 5, the apparently traditional styles of so-called ethnic dress are repositioned by their occasional adoption as mainstream fashion just as mainstream styles, like the layering of T-shirts under sleeveless dresses popular in the 2000s, can be kept *in* fashion for longer when adopted as part of hijabi cool. Similarly, Muslim fashion cultures are framed by their “mutual entanglement” with persistent Islamic antifashion discourse and practices (Moors and Tarlo 2013: 13).

Experiencing and contributing to dress practices at the intersection of diverse and differently valued fashion systems, Muslim modest dressers in Muslim minority contexts and (differently) in contexts of Muslim majority may both be frustrated that fashion trends do not allow for modest self-presentation and find ways to adapt them for hijabi fashion; they may deploy a neoliberal discourse of choice to counter stereotypes that Muslim women are forced to wear a headscarf and argue that hijab is a religious requirement; they may say that how women cover is up to them and feel intensely uncomfortable when women dress the “wrong” way; they may become famous as tastemakers giving guidance on how to achieve religiously appropriate modest styling and prefer not to regard this as a form of religious interpretation. And, above all, they are likely to be engaging with multiple fashion systems and clothing values, each system histori-

cally, socially, and spatially located and each variably both enabling and restricting individual women's wardrobe options and forms of expression. While the debate about Western and non-Western fashion and fashion norms continues, I note that for fashion and cultural studies the modest fashion practices of Muslim women and the growing market that supports them may be emerging as a paradigmatic diversity case study in books aimed at the classroom (Craik 2009; Kaiser 2012), incorporating religion within discussions of style, subject formation, and cultural regulation. Welcoming this, my study situates Muslim fashion within a wider frame of related circuits of faith-based and secular modest fashion and their constituent geographies.

### **Temporalities: Historicizing and Terminology**

As with any book-length project on contemporary fashion and style, this book should be regarded not as a statement of the now but as a history of the present, written while it was happening. Writing about fashion is inevitably subject to problems of time; this year's trend is last year's retro, next decade's old news. The macropolitical events that frame, shape, and sometimes determine changes in, responses to, and recognition of Muslim women's self-presentation have also changed spectacularly and sometimes violently during the period covered. This book becomes therefore less a singular history of the present than a history of several presents: magazine editors speak of future plans in the now of their present, unaware that the title will have closed before this book is printed; designers may be full of creative plans that don't come to fruition, or unknowing that they will subsequently become the poster girls for new Islamic branding initiatives only recently waking up to the potential profits of fashion commodities; Turkish shopkeepers and modest fashion brands speak about the promotional advantages of association with the First Ladies of the Islamist Justice and Development (AKP) government before Prime Minister Erdoğan's antidemocratic responses to events in Gezi Park in 2013 discredit the party's claim of moderate Islam and highlight splits within the party and its international supporters, reframing previously established academic approaches to the sociopolitical significance of veiling fashion in the republic.

Muslim politics and cultural trends in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have demonstrated astoundingly rapid development and ever wider transmission, rendering them a hot topic for aca-

demic enquiry, yet also dating rapidly. Less a problem than an opportunity, I seek to capture images, opinions, and dress practices in their moment, to situate them historically in relation to the transnational past of religious and cultural relations and clothing and material cultures, and to situate them contemporaneously as part of ongoing local and transnational dialogues whose forms and interlocutors are changing and growing as I write.

The commercial development of Muslim and modest fashion that I analyze in this book increases the variety of garments available to Muslim women and the pace of change in modest fashion. Like all fashion systems, the replacement and recycling of trends makes it impossible to tie down “the” look for Muslim cool. But battles over wardrobe definitions in the case of Muslim fashion are highly ideological, as different individuals, groups, and state agencies compete to patrol and control women’s modesty. In all the territories covered by this book, the women I spoke to or whose blogs and journalism I followed are characterized by their emphasis on choice and variety in whether and how to cover, but they are surrounded by (and sometimes despite themselves participate in) forms of judgment about Muslim women’s dress that most often center on the idea of “the” veil.

In my teaching and writing to date I had often used the term *veil* or *veiling* as the starting point for discussion, explaining that although the veil is today predominantly associated with (or claimed by or for) Islam, it is a practice that is pre-Islamic in origin and that has been adopted by diverse religious and ethnic communities, especially in the Middle East. I would also explain that in the Middle East, the veil often signified status rather than piety or ethnic allegiance and was more common among urban than rural women. For those women who did or do “cover,” I would elaborate, there is no single garment that equates to the veil: different versions of clothing that are held suitably to preserve modesty in mixed-gender environments have been adopted by different communities (often with different names for the same garment). In recent years in non-Muslim-majority countries, controversies over the niqab or burqa have become more prevalent, shifting legal and popular definitions of veiling from head to face covering. This book does not focus on face veils, albeit there is now a developing fashion market. It does not focus on jilbabs and abayas either, because these robes are not the predominant garments used by the generation of young Muslim women studied here. While some young revivalists (male and female) living in Muslim minority WENA contexts prefer the long robes they regard as closer to the dress of the “ideal” society of the

first Muslims of the Arabian Peninsula (Tarlo 2013a),<sup>2</sup> these garments are rarely adopted by the young women who make up my study. In contrast, their self-conscious creation of modest fashion, mostly but not always in a headscarf or hijab, is deliberately staged through participation in mainstream fashion. Combined with judicious use of offerings from the ethnic and modest sectors, the taste communities they develop with the bloggers, journalists, and designers featured in this book cannot be tied down to singular definitions. As for previous generations of women, the form and combination of garments that produce veiling changes over time, quite often within the lifespan of a single woman, rendering attempts to legislate which type of body covering is properly Islamic as only ever partial and located.

Historically, the veil has been intended primarily as outerwear, something that preserves modesty between the sexes when outside the gender-secluded space of the Islamically structured home (or when nonfamilial men are present in the domestic space, as may be the case more often in Muslim minority contexts). While the women in this book do cover in relation to who they are with or will be seen by, they have developed fashions in hijab that do not differentiate between spaces in the same way: assembled as part of their outfit for the day, more like a hairstyle than a hat, the hijab is not always so easily thrown on and off. These often quite complicated wraps are of a different order to the abaya, *çarşaf*, or *chador* that is left by the front door. Changes in the abaya fashion market have led to designer abayas (Al-Qasimi 2010; Belk and Sobh 2011) sometimes worn more as a dress rather than as outerwear, like those sold in the Gulf by Barjis Chohan (chapter 7). But this is not the predominant style of the women featured here, whose sometimes elaborate styles of hijab produce alterations in the conventional spatial relations of modest dressing; when hijab styles involve more than one piece of cloth, accessories, and difficult wrapping procedures (such as are demonstrated in the YouTube hijab tutorials of chapter 7), young women are more likely to keep them on when visiting environments in which hijab is not necessary (chatting in a friend's home when no men are present), rather than remove them at the door and don them again on leaving.

I still use the term *veil* or *veiling*, and when I refer to face covering I specify niqab or burqa. In the Turkish context, I refer to *headscarves* or *tesettür*, the commercially manufactured form of modest dressing associated with revivalist fashions (though this term is itself now repudiated as too limiting by some of the commercial brands discussed in chapter 2).

Other forms of Turkish covering are named and defined in context. In the other western European and North American territories of this book hijab remains the predominant term for head covering: there are fashions in hijab (different types of head covering arrangements) and there is hijabi fashion (the complete ensemble of which the head covering is part). Women might discuss how to “hijabify” an item of clothing to render it suitable for their modesty requirements. Women who wear a head covering in whatever style are often referred to as hijabis, not to be confused with niqabis, who cover also their faces, or “dejabis,”<sup>3</sup> whose decision to stop covering their hair, as I discuss in chapter 8, often marks a different stage in, rather than rejection of, their participation in modest fashion.

Many Muslim women rightly argue that the focus on what Muslim women are wearing takes away from thinking about what they might actually be doing (al Yafai 2010). This can be true of all women, and men, in a period when neoliberal enterprise culture presents “freedom and independence [as emanating] not from civil rights but from individual choices exercised in the market” (du Gay 1996: 77). But while the proliferation of neoliberal consumer culture into personal and community life creates and exploits ever more finely defined consumer segments, requiring a “choosing subject” (N. Rose 1999) for whom identity and self-worth is established and communicated through consumption, it also creates opportunities for the emergence of new social subjects and different articulations of existing power relationships. Akin to the conditions for the emergence of modern homosexual subjects created by the shift into capitalist wage labor from family household production units (D’Emilio 1993; Hennessy 2000), so too for Muslim women has the combination of neoliberalism and advances in information and communication technologies created opportunities for the development of a woman-led sector within Islamic cultures. In contrast to the masculinist jihadist modes most often seen to arise from this conjuncture (Bunt 2009), this book argues that the possibilities of Internet commerce and commentary combine with offline practices in modest fashion to foster women’s agency in the making of new forms of Muslim habitus, those shared embodied values and dispositions of everyday life that cohere classes or communities (Goffman [1956] 1990; Mauss 1973; Bourdieu 1994). While for Bourdieu the values and tastes that make up subjective dispositions are unconsciously acquired and held—so embedded into class identity as to need no explanation—the conscious development of new Islamic revivalist habituses and especially the emphasis on women’s embodied dress practices suggests (qua Mahmood 2005)

a degree of agency in the cultivation of the pious self. It is at this nexus that I argue for the influence and significance of the range of women-led activities and practices cohered in this book: just as early feminist work in cultural studies had to argue that girls' "private" unspectacular "bedroom cultures" (McRobbie and Garber [1975] 2006) were as significant as what boys did on the public street, so too I propose that these design companies, magazines, blogs, and social media not be dismissed as small-scale or low-circulation, but be seen as a part of a shared (and internally contested and variable) new Muslim dress culture whose significance extends into other contemporary forms of Muslim habitus and beyond into relations with other faith and secular communities and societies.

The structural imperial racialized inequities of class, gender, and sexuality that underwrite the globalized relations of consumer culture in late capitalism so often disavowed in the celebration of consumer pleasure as agency (Comaroff 1996; Hennessy 2000; Ong 1995; Slater 1997) also inhere in the modes of production and dissemination on which these new Muslim style cultures depend. As I discuss in chapter 8's consideration of the development of Islamic branding, for a population that until recently did not enjoy the dubious privilege of being considered (constructed as) a marketable consumer segment (Sandıkçı 2011) in a marketized context where "those whose consumption does not matter for the successful reproduction of capital are virtually non-people" (du Gay 1996: 100), it not surprising that the development of Muslim consumer cultures produces its own panoply of marginalized others as failed consumers. Despite concerns that the predominance of "Islamic brand fetishism" may define non-participants as less pious Muslims (Süerdem 2013: 7), I see no reason why Muslim consumers or cultural entrepreneurs should be politically "pure," though I note how concerns with sustainability (a recent preoccupation of Euro-American consumer fashion discourse) meld with discourses of Islamic values of equity and redistribution. With the construction of marginalized nonconsumers inherent in the dynamic of consumer culture, as the Muslim lifestyle market diversifies women may simultaneously find themselves priced out by the ever more rapid turnover of styles (Sandıkçı and Ger 2005) or excluded by the new subcultural taste communities of Islamist "cool" (Boubekeur 2005), leading some modest fashion participants, as I discuss in chapter 8, to bewail the pernicious high-gloss unattainability of "halal celebrities" in a reactivation of earlier antifashion discourses.

Despite the significance of new hijabi fashions and discourse in the de-

velopment and contestation of intra-Muslim distinctions, externally the veil in all its forms suffers from an almost generic illegibility in that the dress acts of most veiling women in the UK are observed by a majority nonveiling and non-Islamic audience who cannot adequately deduce the significance of their veiling choices. Women who veil are almost inevitably read as Muslim by a majority audience—even though, in Britain for example, there are substantial communities of Hindus and Sikhs, some of whose female members also sometimes veil. In a situation where the expression through dress of ethnicity and religion are often united in the minds of their practitioners, the likelihood of veiled women being presumed Muslim by those outside their communities is high, with noticeable increases in violence and abuse after 9/11 and 7/7 (WNC 2006). Islamophobic prejudice and violence or well-intentioned protectionism rain down on any woman who veils, regardless of her actual ethnic or religious identity.

In highlighting the contemporaneity of veiling fashions and distinguishing generational and microgenerational cycles of change, this book aims to challenge attitudes that read Muslim dress as signs of collective ahistorical community identities. Putting hijabi and modest dressing in the context of individuating fashion contributes to the political project of deexceptionalizing Muslim youth, an antidote to the alterity made common by securitizing discourses. This is also advanced by analyzing hijabi fashion within a subcultural frame that locates dress practices (on the body, in print, online, and in commerce) within overlapping local, national, and transnational contexts that are constitutive of and constituted by interlocking social factors including ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and faith. Given the essentializing effects of the Orientalist gaze it remains necessary to emphasize that Muslim women's styles documented here will change over their lifetime. While Muslim women's dress is politically conspicuous and contentious at present, and may remain so, with a globally youthful Muslim population it is salutary to be reminded that it is impossible to predict what they will be wearing twenty years' time.

### **How This Book Works**

In compiling a cultural history of present practices and discourses in Muslim modest fashion I move back and forth between a number of themes and examples that, along with their related histories and methods for examination, I do not presume will be equally familiar to all my readers:

experts on Turkish Islamist politics may not be instinctively familiar with the structural logic of fashion magazines; fashion historians may know little about conventional modes of Islamic knowledge production and transmission. With elements of case studies—garments, images, media, people, spaces, theoretical approaches—recurring to elaborate new points, I provide explanations of specialist terms and theoretical approaches where they seem most useful, aware that historical and critical fields are unevenly developed and rarely connected in these particular ways. Although each chapter contains a chronological approach and introduction to its particular study, I hope my examples not only advance my case but also indicate how the ideas developed here might be applied elsewhere.

Chapter 1, therefore, introduces the key geographies of this book, with attention to the histories of their Muslim populations and the debates about secularity, ethnicity, religion, culture, politics, and gender with which they have engaged and through which they have been defined and define themselves. Arguing that current preoccupations reactivate and reframe previous Orientalist stereotypes and knowledges, this chapter traces the emergence of new discourses about Islam post-9/11 and post-7/7, in order to identify the ways in which the figure of the Muslim woman has become central in deliberations about citizenship and belonging across the political spectrum and round the world, including in the British context, the shift in multiculturalism from ideas of difference based on race and ethnicity to those conceptualized in terms of faith. Linked to histories of Islamic revivalism since the 1970s, the present revitalization of the *umma*, the supranational community of Muslim believers, which for many young Muslims has modified previous parental migrant affiliations, is situated in relation to the wider global increase in religious revivalism among young people. The ways in which dress, as part of Islamic consumer cultures, has become a key mode for the experience and expression of revivalist identities is identified as an example of everyday religion (Ammerman 2007; McGuire 2008), characterized by syncretism, by interaction with the market, and by a discourse of choice in the articulation of achieved rather than, or in addition to, ascribed inherited religious identities. The oft-discussed globalized relations of the fashion industry are thus linked to the cultural (and commercial) significance of the supranational *umma*. Proposing that majoritarian anxieties about encountering the covered female body outside of specifically religious spaces are based on the naturalization of secularized norms of body management, I ar-

gue that discussions about which garments constitute (acceptable forms of) the veil need to be reframed by an understanding of embodiment, challenging the tendency to focus on the veiled woman as static image by repositioning veiling as an embodied and located dress practice (Entwistle 2000). In the context of the development of the fashion industry as a feature of Western, and non-Western, modernities, the chapter combines cultural, fashion, and material culture studies understandings of body management (McRobbie 1998; Miller 1987; E. Wilson [1985] 2003) with Mahmood's argument (2005) that for adherents of modest dress the act of wearing the hijab is itself a process for creating a pious disposition.

Chapter 2 further elaborates how participation in mainstream fashion cultures can contribute to the creation of a devotional self. Historicizing and theorizing the commercial context in which the Turkish *tesettür* market emerged as market leader, I provide an international comparative account of the development of modest or Islamic fashion as a niche market, analyzing the creation of overlapping national and international customer bases at a time when many brands were switching their focus from European to Middle East and Central Asian territories in keeping with changing regional and global priorities of the AKP government since 2002. The commercial geography set out in this chapter is mapped politically in relation to disputes about religion, secularity, and modernity within and outside the EU, with Islamists using a discourse of rights to assert as consumer citizens a place within state and secular systems (Gökarkınel and Secor 2009; Göle 1996; Navaro-Yashin 2002). Interviews with directors at leading companies combine with visual analyses of ads, catalogues, and visual merchandising to chart the expansion and segmentation of this burgeoning market. I outline its complex interactions with, and impact on, the commercial and media norms of the global fashion industry, examining the significance of increased ethnic diversity among *tesettür* models within local discourse of ethno-national and religious identity. In a precursor to the focus on British fashion retail in chapter 5, this chapter also includes the agentive function (Sandıkçı and Ger 2010) of the *tesettür* shop in creating work environments for covered women (that in the religious district of Fatih extends to proximate non-*tesettür* shops).

Chapter 3 documents the content and production processes of Muslim fashion and lifestyle print media that in the mid-2000s inaugurated a new phase in the development of Islamic consumer cultures (the subsequent extension into digital and social media is covered in chapter 7), to examine the extent to which neoliberalism can incorporate the articulation of reli-

gious identities (Grewal 2005). This chapter's analysis of fashion editorial in Muslim lifestyle media is conducted through an examination of how content is generated, providing profiles of the working practices of journalists and aesthetic service providers (bloggers, photographers, stylists, and models) as they deal with the often conflicting demands of the mainstream and minority fashion industries without losing sight of the need to grow a new readership. Making links to the development of the lesbian/gay/queer niche media a decade earlier (R. Lewis 1996), this chapter explores how Muslim lifestyle media in seeking to meet the needs of an emergent international Muslim bourgeoisie (Ömer, Acar, and Toprak 2004) elaborates for Muslims a sense of identity through consumption parallel to that established for other minority cultures, such as gays and lesbians (Mort 1996). Focusing on magazines in Britain (*Emel and Sisters*), in the United States and Canada (*Azizah and Muslim Girl*), and in Turkey (*Âlâ*) as an example of minority media activity in a Muslim majority context, the chapter analyzes the profound controversy provoked by fashion photography in the Muslim style media, exploring how media and commercial image makers are creating new aesthetic strategies for the picturing of the presumed Muslim modest body.

Chapter 4 addresses the discourse of choice that predominates in discussions about, and justifications for, veiling and veiling practices. It argues that new taste communities based on modest fashion are emerging that create generational and social distinctions (Bourdieu [1984] 2010) for those with the cultural capital to engage in new modes of interaction with mainstream fashion cultures and religious practice. Proposing that these taste communities can be seen as a subcultural formation, the chapter situates the privileging of choice as one of the distinguishing factors of hijabi and modest subcultures, focusing on how the limitations of the neoliberal choice paradigm (N. Rose 1999) are recognized, managed, and negotiated through embodied dress practices and their representation. With ethnic and religious family and community norms about dress and comportment functioning as the grounds against which choice is often defined and/or contained, the chapter examines in the British context the changing relationship of contemporary hijabi fashion to South Asian dress cultures. Using interviews with designers, retailers, and consumers, I examine how Muslim, ethnic, and religious distinction is reframed by younger generations able to move between minority and mainstream fashion systems. The chapter identifies the range of styles that are being used by young women to achieve modesty (as defined by each wearer)

and fashionability, relating these new trends to national, diasporic, and transnational fashion developments (Bhachu 2004; Breward, Crang, and Crill 2010; El Guindi 1999; Jones and Leshkovich 2003; Puwar and Raghuram 2003; Tarlo 2010). As with Schulz's account of the mix of garments and modes of acquisition that make up a contestatory "political economy of propriety" in Mali (2007: 274), my study challenges commonplace concepts of a polarized mainstream/Muslim fashion binary by arguing for a network of overlapping, mutually constituting—secular, religious, ethnic, alternative, mainstream—fashion circuits.

Chapter 5 connects the experiences of hijabis shopping for fashion with their experiences of selling it, elaborating further the scale of Muslim participation within the fashion industry by examining the contribution of hijabi shop workers to British high street fashion retail in the context of British (2003) and EU (2000) legislation protecting the expression of religion or belief at work, a development of previous provision for race and ethnicity to which Muslims were unable to appeal. Providing a still rare qualitative account (Bowlby and Lloyd-Evans 2009) of Muslim employment experience, the chapter examines how Muslim women combine their need to dress modestly with the requirements of employers that shop staff represent the brand by wearing a store uniform. Asking what happens when the branded body wears a veil, my research matches employee accounts with employer responses to the visibility of faith on the shop floor to add religious embodiment into considerations of aesthetic labor—"the mobilization, development and commodification of [employees'] embodied 'dispositions'" (Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson 2003: 37)—that retailers require for delivery of their preferred service mode. Based on interviews with Human Relations and Employee Relations directors of major high street multiples and department stores, I establish the extent to which, in the transition from equal opportunities to diversity, private sector companies incorporate faith overtly into codes of conduct, including the potential to commodify diversity for internal and external reputation management. Studies on service sector employment have moved beyond an initial focus on emotional labor to a concern with how the spread of demands for aesthetic labor may restrict employment opportunities for those without middle-class dispositions (Witz, Warhurst, and Nickson 2003), while also exploring how corporate branding is responsive to (constrained by) the embodied capacities available within the local workforce (du Gay 1996; Pettinger 2005a). At this juncture, my research suggests circumstances in which Muslim religio-ethnic dispositions and forms of cul-

tural, ethnic, and religious capital may allow hijabi women to preserve (in some cases enhance) the value of their aesthetic labor.

Chapter 6 focuses on how digital information communication technologies have been used by hijabi bloggers and designers to create new forms and understandings of modest fashion. Interviews with bloggers and social media hosts as well as designers and entrepreneurs bring new agents into discussions about the significance of the Internet for the re-activation of contemporary understandings of the umma (Bunt 2009). Situating this historically in relation to discussions about religion and communications technology, the chapter also deexceptionalizes Muslim youth cultures by locating hijabi bloggers within a wider account of the development of the fashion blog genre. The opportunities for Muslim fashion start-ups offered by e-commerce are similarly located in relation to previous forms of diaspora ethnic fashion and the lifestyle media. In a context where the deethnicization of Islam and the revitalization of the umma provide spiritual and political opportunities for transnational Muslim affiliations, designers find themselves dealing with national and regional taste distinctions between Muslim consumers. The chapter concludes by arguing that in the mode of everyday religion the blending between commerce and commentary seen in online modest fashion discourse creates new forms of religious knowledge production and transmission through which are developed new forms of religious authority for women.

The potential of new forms of religious and spiritual capital in the actualization of diaspora Muslim identities for marketing professionals is investigated in chapter 7's discussion of Muslim branding, adding faith to previous market segmentation focused on ethnicity (Grewal 2005; Halter 2000). Responding to Sandıkcı's (2011) call for more research on Muslim entrepreneurs within a "situated understanding of Muslim consumers," I combine interview material about the building of Ogilvy & Mather's Noor Islamic branding initiative with examination of how the uneven interest in Muslim consumers affects modest designers and cultural entrepreneurs in the context of the development in mass-market apparel of South Asian ethnic fashion at Walmart and Asda. The impact of new taste communities in Muslim fashion is explored in relation to the international development of modest fashion commerce and commentary in the other Abrahamic faiths and among secular consumers, in which trans-religious consumer activity on- and offline brings new forms of interfaith and suprafaith contact. As well as extending into interfaith dress practice, hijab fashion has also widened to include the growing demographic of de-

jabi women, whose decision to uncover their heads does not take them outside the wider zone of modest self-presentation and fashion. Drawing together and extending the interviews and textual materials used throughout the book, the chapter concludes by examining how this form of Muslim self-presentation is rendered visible, invisible, or offensive to Muslim and majority viewers.

### Notes on Method and Sources

Styles change, what *styles* mean changes, and how women interpret religion in their lives changes. It should be clear by now that I am not in the business of arbitrating which, if any, form of covering is most correct or authentic. Neither do I distinguish between orthodox or heterodox Muslim affiliations or practices. This book is not concerned with religious doctrine. When respondents advance definitions of religious doctrine I do not challenge: everyone who agreed to participate was made aware that I am not Muslim or working from a religious perspective.

Muslims, especially young Muslims, complain about being over-researched, or researched for the wrong reasons (S. Ahmed 2009): youth workers report calls from think tanks wanting potentially radicalized young men;<sup>4</sup> women made, or presumed, visible by their dress are likely to be stopped by journalists for vox pops on almost any story with a Muslim angle; individuals are asked by members of the public about their clothes, sometimes with great hostility, sometimes with more neutral interest. Potential participants often checked if I was hostile to hijab before agreeing to take part, to which I answered that I am not hostile to hijab, neither am I advocating it. In taking this line, I am aware that my engagement with participants is not without impact, and is made harder or easier by various elements of my own social positioning. It is not simply that the neutrality of the unmarked masculinist “objective” ethnographic researcher has been debunked (Clifford 1986; Geertz 1984, 2000), but that the presumption that particularity will itself produce authentic results has also been shown to be erroneous (Archer 2002).

Not being Muslim was sometimes a benefit because it took me outside the nuances of spiritual or political judgment faced by coreligionist researchers (Ger and Sandıkçı 2006). Declaring myself (sometimes) as a (nonreligiously observant) Jew could provide points of affinity on growing up (white) in the third generation of an ethnicized religious minority in Britain. Being an older (to them!) woman who is interested in fashion

(with teenage years of part-time shop work) credited me with sufficient fashion capital to recognize nuances of style and opportunities to bond over the serious pleasures of caring about clothes. Being at the London College of Fashion brought desirable glamor through association for non-professional respondents and gave me industry insider status with brands and designers (whom I realized needed assurance that I was not engaged in potentially competitive commercial research).

None of this stops my participation in this research having an impact on the field that it studies, which for studies of youth subcultures, as Sarah Thornton points out (1995), means that by validating hijabi fashion as an object for intellectual enquiry I, like journalists and in-group cultural mediators, am contributing to the production and promotion of knowledge about it. This is also why women agreed to speak to me. Those who were not promoting their own magazine, brand, or blog wanted to contribute positive information about Muslims. I found participants in several ways. Those I met in their professional capacity (whether their work was waged or, like bloggers, unwaged) were contacted directly; this included all media professionals, designers, and brand representatives in Britain, North America, and Turkey, and store HR managers in Britain. Shop workers in Britain came initially from a request posted for me by Jana Kossaibati on her blog *Hijab Style* that also brought some respondents on personal dress. Other personal dress narratives came from my personal and professional contacts, and from snowballing introductions from existing participants. Hijab fashion is a small, if growing field, and people were generous in sharing their contacts. This also means that some of the companies and individuals with whom I spoke have gone on to become “faces,” the usual suspects for academics and journalist alike. This overlap can be productive, widening the archive and range of interpretation in what is still an underdocumented field of fashion practice.

To some extent I also became a face in the field of Muslim and modest fashion. Writing pre-Internet, Thornton could not have predicted how doing subcultural research in the mid-2000s would increase the means and modes by which the researcher could be incorporated into the field. Acting in accordance with research ethics concerning privacy and aware that online interactions have offline consequences (Buchanan 2011), I chose not to seek access to any online or offline discussions that might be closed to non-Muslims or the nonreligious. I also chose not to post responses or directly ask questions: except for the callout to shop staff that Kossaibati posted on my behalf, I “lurked” (Hine 2000) on digital