



Cosmopolitan Veiling in Paris: Young French **Muslim Women in Transition**

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the beauty and sartorial choices of young French Muslim women in the Paris area. Through biographies on their morning rituals, this article questions the notion of cosmopolitanism when it comes to their veiling practices. Research suggests that these young women, through their double presence in the world – as French citizens and as global citizens - are powerful agents of change of the dominant material culture and consumption. Their varied beauty and sartorial choices help them construct a coherent inner and outer self and manage social and gendered interactions, facilitating circulation. It is argued that wearing the hijab can be conceptualized as a new form of cosmopolitanism, neither 'from below' nor 'from above': it reframes a Eurocentric view of conflicts between religious and secular discourses in postcolonial times, as well as French fashion.

Keywords

French youth – cosmopolitanism – sartorial choices – hijab – Muslim fashion

France is usually viewed as a secular nation in which religious differences are invisible (Fornerod, 2017; Mancini, 2012; Scott, 2010). While religious freedom is accepted in the 'private' sphere, it is not supposed to invade the 'public'1 domain. Despite a ban in 2004 on 'conspicuous' signs of religious affiliation, wearing the $hijab^2$ has become a visible practice not only in poor and socially disadvantaged suburbs but also in a number of bourgeois neighbourhoods and shopping areas in central Paris such as the Champs-Elysées or Les Halles, where groups of young women with or without the *hijab* go shopping together. Seen variously as a sign of separation from the rest of the French society (Moatti, 2004), failed integration (Duchesne & Fourmaux, 2008), a backward step in terms of female rights (Ruby, 2006; Delphy, 2004), or a challenge to the Republican model (Fornerod, 2017; Scott, 2010), these sartorial choices continue to provoke heated debate that tends to further reinforce racial, gendered and social-based frontiers (Delphy, 2008; Barth, 1969). Veiling in its different forms³ is also associated with the suburbs, particularly Seine-Saint-Denis, a department north of Paris, where a large proportion of French nationals are of immigrant descent and face on-going social problems and social unrest. While their transnational practices are usually conceptualized as a form of cosmopolitanism 'from below' (Choplin & Pliez, 2018; Silhouette-Dercourt, 2018; Appadurai, 2011), when it comes to the hijab and fashion choices consistent with female modesty, these are viewed as fixed, reified and a return to pre-modern times. This process of stigmatization (Goffman, 1963)4 tends to leave aside the broader cultural dynamics and exchanges that take place (Emontspool & Woodward, 2018; Skrbis & Woodward, 2011). On the one hand, the emergence of a globalized youth Islamic culture (Roy, 2002) and of a new generation of so-called Muslim Millennials is taking place in France as in other parts of the

¹ In France the notions of 'private' or 'public' sphere have no clear legal definitions (Durand, 2010).

² Despite the varieties of veils and veiling practices that exist over time and from one continent to another (Almila, 2017: 2), the women we met during this research used the word hijab to refer to what they wear on their heads as well as the modest appearance they are committed to. The word veil (voile in French) has been used in media debates (along with foulard or headscarf) with the implication that it might also cover the whole body (Scott, 2010). The terms veil and hijab are often used interchangeably.

³ Headscarves, abayas, niqab, burka, etc.

⁴ Stigma, in interaction, is 'the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance' (Goffman, 1963). This identity, attributed by others, may be very different from identity from the standpoint of the stigmatized individual.

world (Simon, 2010): this cosmopolitan elite (Calhoun, 2003; Hannerz, 1990) is young (15-29), digitally-connected, confident of its Muslim identity and asserting its presence in travel, food, education and fashion.⁵ On the other hand, the literature outside of France has documented the polysemic, multidimensional, multi-situated veiling practices, suggesting that these can be conceptualized as a form of cosmopolitanism connecting young Muslim and non-Muslim women around the world through social networks (Lewis, 2013). Rather than being passively imposed upon Muslim women, the act of wearing the veil is present in the literature as a possible tool of participation and selfempowerment (Abu-Lughod, 2013; Moors, 2007; Ruby, 2006) by which they are challenging Western fashion standards and creating new fashion discourses (Almila & Inglis, 2017; Lewis, 2015, 2013; Moors & Tarlo, 2013). Might this cosmopolitanism of the veil exist both in Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis? Can it be framed as a means of becoming 'citizens of the world', a sign of a receptive and open attitude towards the Other (Kendall & al., 2008)? In turn, how does the particular situation of France with regard to Muslim groups, colonial history and the relationship to secularism inform the literature on cosmopolitanism and veiling?

In the first part, we look at how the literature can provide answers to the question of the relationship between cosmopolitanism and veiling and similar questions in the French context. In the second part, we present the methodology of our research based on qualitative interviews with French Muslim women of immigrant descent living in Seine-Saint-Denis or in Paris who wear the hijab. The third part explores whether veiling practices in France can be related to cosmopolitanism. We argue that veiling in Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis is an identity construction tool for selves in transition. Social networks, particularly Instagram and YouTube, link Muslim youth in France from different social backgrounds to an imagined global community that empowers them to 'come out' despite stigmatization. We propose that wearing the hijab for these young Muslim women is a new form of cosmopolitanism, neither 'from below' nor 'from above'. It reframes not only a Eurocentric view of conflicts between religious and secular discourses in postcolonial times (Balibar, 2018; Wohlarb-Sahr & Burchardt, 2012), but also French fashion.

Source: State of the Global Islamic Economy: Economic report, 2016/2017, Thomson Reuters, p. 16.

Are Cosmopolitanism and Veiling Really Incompatible?

At first glance, yoking together cosmopolitanism and the veil (and veiling)⁶ specifically in the French context seem inappropriate. While cosmopolitanism refers to an attitude of openness, women who wear the veil often view it as a way of protecting themselves (Almila, 2017). In the Quran, veiling has both positive and negative connotations, since it may refer to a metaphoric obstacle or division as well as spatial separation, but it is actually not used to refer to women's dress codes (Ruby, 2006). In a number of countries, it is associated with continuing women's oppression and exclusion (Eltahawy, 2015). With its openness on the one hand, and protection, separation and oppression on the other, veiling seems irreconcilable with cosmopolitanism.

Nevertheless, cosmopolitanism is a multifaceted concept that has taken on different meanings as a product of a long sedimentation through Western world history (Cicchelli, 2018). Derived from an ancient Greek term, cosmopolitanism can be conceptualised variously as the by-product of globalization (Beck, 2006), a philosophy, a project, a group of individuals, a state of mind, an attitude, a number of shared values, a lifestyle, a process (of cosmopolitanization), a set of consumption practices, and so on. Beck (2004: 153) defines cosmopolitanism as 'the internalised otherness of others, the co-presence and coexistence of rival lifestyles'. It is the consciousness of belonging to a global humanity and not only to a local, rooted place. But the literature had underlined that it is not always a sign of openness, since it is often considered as a product of a Eurocentric view of the world that tends to provincialize (or exclude) the rest of the world or other forms of cosmopolitanism (Glick-Schiller & Irving, 2017; Rovisko & Nowicka, 2011). Furthermore, cosmopolitanism (or being cosmopolitan) is still associated with a 'modern', mobile, bourgeois and financial elite that is well educated, well-travelled (Brimm, 2018; Vertovec & Cohen, 2002; Calhoun, 2002; Hannerz, 1990) and distinct from other types of 'cosmopolitans'.

In turn, veil and veiling, or 'the practices, garments and elements of appearance which seek both to unite and separate groups and individuals' (Almila, 2017; Lambin, 1999), has taken on different forms and meanings throughout history, according to geographical location and religious or cultural groups

⁶ We will focus here more specifically on the *hijab* or the piece of fabric that covers the head, as it is the topic of the present research. The hijab has an Islamic significance that distinguishes it from the veil (Ruby, 2017; 2006). It also refers to women's behaviour/attitude when wearing the hijab, and research has shown that a fundamental feature of the hijab is modest behaviour (Ruby, 2006).

(Inglis, 2017; Shaheed, 2008). In the last two decades, the veil and veiling has become a major topic of discussion and an extensive academic field that draws upon philosophy, anthropology, sociology, political science, fashion studies, law, urban geography, cultural studies, gender studies, religious studies, marketing, consumption studies and history (Almila, 2017). Studies carried out in Europe (UK, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Finland, The Netherlands, Denmark, etc.), and elsewhere point to the emergence of 'modest fashion', a global phenomenon that is not limited to any one religion, gender or even place, but circulates between continents in many forms and shapes (ibid.). Such practices are also strongly framed by commercial developments in Islamic fashion in Turkey, USA, United Kingdom and other parts of the world, the spread of which is driven by social media (such as Instagram). Additionally, in recent years, fashion blogging, online tutorials and professional webstores are changing the visual imagery of what is 'Islamic' fashion (Lewis, 2013) and promoting increasing 'diversity and cosmopolitan identification' (Almila, 2017). It is also reported that young Muslim women who wear the veil are not only looking for garments that satisfy religious requirements that would tend to separate them from global fashion trends. Their challenge is in fact to find garments that balance religious requirements with 'modern' fashion styles (Almila, 2017; Kanitz, 2017; Carrel, 2013; Sandicki & Ger, 2001, 2005). But in France, the literature on the veil tends to focus on its political dimensions⁷ or on extreme forms of sartorial choices,8 leaving aside the issue of fashion and style.9

We see from these examples that dialogue between cosmopolitanism and veiling is, as suggested by Almila and Inglis (2017), not so incongruous. For these authors, national and regional veiling studies can be connected to large-scale social processes that can be termed the phenomenon of globalization. They call for 'a more systematic interpenetration of the concerns of veiling studies with those of globalization studies' (301). In these studies, cosmopolitanism is conceptualized as the defining reality of our time, a side product of globalization (Beck, 2004). A sociology of cosmopolitanism should therefore focus on studying the process of cosmopolitanization and how daily

⁷ See for instance Gaspard & Khosrokhavar (1995); Schimmel (2000); Wiebel (2000); Augis (2009); Rigoni (2010); Durand (2010); Taboada-Leonetti (2004); Beaugé (2015).

⁸ On the *niqab* and the *burqa* in France, see for example Borghée (2012).

With the exception of a limited number of studies that look at Muslim feminine identity of converts (Mossière, 2017), Muslim fashion entrepreneurs trying to reverse stereotypes by providing fashionable modest fashion (Osterling, 2013), and Bouzar & Kada (2003), who show that wearing the veil is a form of contestation that requires Muslim women to give up their religious specificities without bringing them full citizenship of and participation in French society.

practices – such as veiling – are transformed by global changes and how individuals interact with foreign others in consuming foreign cultural objects (Skrbis & Woodward, 2011; Skrbis et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2002). Can veiling in France, the country with the largest Muslim population in Europe, be informed by cosmopolitanism?

2 Conducting Research on the Veiling Practices of Young Muslim French Women in the Paris Area

We conducted a preliminary field study¹⁰ (see Table 1) between June and November 2018 in Seine-Saint-Denis and the Paris shopping complex of Les Halles. Phenomenological interviews¹¹ were organized around the everyday processes of grooming, dressing and beauty-enhancing and the role/position/ place of the *hijab* in relation to these. The acts of choosing what to wear on the face and body are discussed as a practice of identity construction, extending from the resources in the young women's own wardrobe (Woodward, 2007; Tarlo, 1996; Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975) to those available on the streets, in stores, through brands, on the Internet and in social media (Cicchelli & Octobre, 2018; Monjaret & Blache-Comté, 2018; Silhouette-Dercourt, 2017; Akou, 2010). Morning rituals and choices are seen as the locus of discussion and tensions between the self and social forces. It is a process of making oneself presentable and representable (Rocamora & Smelik, 2015; Vigarello, 2004; Bourdieu, 1979), which is highly dependent on context as well as social, gendered and racial discourses (Delphy, 2008; Roche, 2007). The body is shaped by, and shapes, social, religious and gender norms and standards (Crenn, 2007; Roche, 2007; Craik, 1993; Bruchon-Schweitzer & Maisonneuve, 1976). It is the place where tensions between multiple, contradictory discourses on how to present it and how to take care of it - 'here' and 'there' - can be particularly acute (Silhouette-Dercourt, 2017; Wilska, 2017; Sekhon et al., 2005; Lindridge et al., 2004; Calhoun, 2003a). Women's bodies support a particularly heavy burden, because the female body is (still) the main site on which societies dispute and act out their aesthetic and behavioural norms (Isolato, 2017; Burgio, 2017; Massari, 2009; Morokvasic, 2008; Scott, 2006; Grosz, 1994; Butler, 1993). The female body also articulates a symbolic activity (Bromberger et al., 2005; Cadet & Chasseigne, 2013; Schilling,

This is part of a larger on-going study on the *hijab* and modest fashion in France that aims to document the polysemic dimensions of veiling through interviews and photo reportage.

¹¹ See Blanchet & Gotman, 1992; Thompson et al., 1989; McCracken, 1988.

1993) and a system of communication. The beauty-related and sartorial system of objects can be used as an analyser of these processes and of their cosmopolitan and intercultural dimensions (Desjeux, 2018, 2006, 1990).

We carried out a microsociology of these everyday beauty practices, largely inspired by the social and symbolic interactionism approach (Goffman, 1983; Becker, 1974; Becker et al., 1961). Our focus was on the meaning of everyday beauty practices, but also on the *agency* of these young women when relating to themselves as well as 'significant others' (Capuzzo, 2012). The study sought to use the respondents' answers to trace the paths and trajectories of the aesthetic choices made by these women in the course of their day, over the year and during different stages of their lives. We also asked how they saw themselves in the future, ten to fifteen years from now. Our questions were based on the premise that identities, cultures and situations are not stable, but rather are social processes that change through the different moments of consumption (shopping, buying, and discarding), stages in the life cycle (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood), and societal changes.

Field research began in June 2018 in the Paris Île-de-France region. During the first two months, informants were recruited among those living in Seine-Saint-Denis and through the personal contacts and relatives of one of the co-authors, who comes from Senegal (informants 1 to 5 in Table 1). Appointments were made face-to-face outside the home, at McDonald's or shopping malls close to informants' homes, or by phone. Starting August 2018, additional recruitment (informants 6 and 7 in Table 1) were carried out in the market in Sevran¹² where hijab and modest fashion accessories are purchased. In September 2018, we enlarged our sample and approached young women in Les Halles, mostly at the H&M store, through informal discussions with women shopping or wandering around (informants 8 to 10 in Table 1). Phone appointments were then arranged with these informants to present the objectives, scope and organization of the study, and to assure them that their personal data would be protected. It was explained to the informants that interviews would be audiotaped and they would receive the audio files and the transcribed content for comments or changes. Interviews conducted face to face or on the phone lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. The present paper is based on the analysis of a corpus of 210 pages of these ten transcribed interviews. Using our inductive epistemology, we implemented the steps of the data analysis in accordance with Strauss & Corbin (1998).

Sevran market is one of the smallest in Seine-Saint-Denis, but is mentioned by informants living in this department as a key area where they buy their hijab or modest fashion look, as well as in the market in Saint-Denis.

List of informants
TABLE 1

	First name	First Age name	Residence	Migration Background	Occupation	Education	Marital status
-	AM	17	Tremblay en France (03)	Parents of French nationality, Student Algerian grandparents	Student	Last year before Professional Single high school degree $(Bac\ Pm)$	Single
63	ME	19	Tremblay en	Parents of French nationality, Internship Aloerian grandnarents	Internship	Bachelor's degree	Single
က	AW	23	Saint-Denis	Parents of Senegalese	Volunteering training	Certificate of Professional Competencies (CAP)	Single
4	LA	21	Saint-Denis	h Comorian	Volunteering training	Certificate of Professional	Single
κ	LE	29	Rosny- sous- Bois (93)	Moroccan	Unemployed, looking for a iob	Baccalaureat	Single
9	SD	30	Saint-Denis	senegalese/	Care assistant	Baccalaureat	Married, mother of
2	AF	25	(93) Paris 18 th district	Parents of Indian nationality Unemployed, (State of Guiarat)	Unemployed, looking for a job	Master's degree	Single
∞	HM	29	Paris 9 th	Parents of Algerian nationality	pany	Bachelor's degree Professional	Single
6	SE	24	Paris 12 th	Parents of Comorian nationality	Sales representative in a large fashion group	Sales representative in Professional baccalaureat a large fashion group	Single
10	НА	30	Paris 9 th	Parents of Moroccan nationality	Bank Manager	Master's degree	Married

We opted for a diversified team of researchers to work on this sensitive research topic (Ger & Sandikci, 2006), with a mix of disciplines (sociology, anthropology, management sciences), individual experience, 13 gender (one woman, two men), age, and religious and cultural backgrounds (two from a Catholic tradition, one from a Muslim tradition). Our team was also multicultural in that one of us has been living outside of France for the last ten years and commutes regularly, another has been living in France only for the last six years, and the third has had more than 50 years of research experience in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Finally, one of us has been teaching and conducting research on beauty practices in Seine-Saint-Denis for the last fifteen years. Our common interest is exploring the symbolic dimensions of consumption (Kopytoff, 1988; Appadurai, 1988) and the role played by products, brands and stores in the construction of identity.

The preliminary survey focussed on women born in France. The sample, which comprises women originating from North Africa, West and East Africa (Senegal, the Comoro Islands) and India, is not intended to be representative of France's migration history, but simply presents a variety of personal trajectories. At the time of the survey, the young women wore the hijab and lived in the Ile-de-France region, in Seine-Saint-Denis for six of them, and in Paris¹⁴ for four of them. Aged between 17 and 30, they came from various socioprofessional categories. 15 With one exception, all their family trajectories are related to France's colonial past: they are second or third generation of immigrants who arrived in France in the 1960s from former colonies in which Islam is a majority or minority religion.¹⁶ These immigrants are spatially concentrated in Île-de-France.¹⁷ Nevertheless, since the end of the 1980s, education levels

One of us is an Emeritus with fifty years of qualitative research, another is associate 13 professor with fifteen years of qualitative research and the third is a post-doctoral researcher.

According to declared tax returns, Paris is the wealthiest department in France, 14 Seine-Saint-Denis is 92nd. http://www.journaldunet.com/economie/impots/classement/ departements/revenu-fiscal.

Two left school before baccalaureate, four had either a professional or general baccalau-15 reate, and four had a university degree. One informant was still in high school, two were doing volunteering training one was in a professional internship, one a care assistant and two were unemployed. Three of the informants were pursuing their careers after obtaining a university degree.

¹⁶ Such as Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Mayotte in the Comoro Islands, etc.

Four out of every ten immigrants live in Ile-de-France. This proportion is even higher for 17 sub-Saharan immigrants (six in every ten). See Catherine Borrel, Bertrand Lhommeau, 'Être né en France d'un parent immigré', Insee Première, n° 1287, 2010. Some municipalities

of immigrant populations have been steadily growing. In particular women with North African backgrounds have been successful in the French education system, outperforming their male counterparts and achieving better professional integration (Simon, 2010).

3 Are Veiling Practices among Young Muslim French Women a New Form of Cosmopolitanism?

The young women we interviewed, whether in Paris or Seine-Saint-Denis, all presented themselves as French (see Simon, 2010: 117) 'from Muslim culture' (Berry et al., 2006).¹⁸ It was only after we dug deeper into their personal and family biographies that they mentioned their multiple relationships to their parents' home country, variously including: regular vacations, financing of local project developments, transnational practices such as shopping for natural beauty products (argan oil, henna), importing (furniture from Dubai), sending products, including hijab and modest fashion, from 'here' and 'there'. As such, these young women are 'born cosmopolitan' (Hannerz, 2006), in the sense that they have been raised and socialized in France and the French education system, but through their family they also live 'in another world' (Attias-Donfut & Wolff, 2009; Moro, 1998). Like all young women of this age group, they are also 'well-travelled': they all mentioned their trips to close or remote countries around the globe (Algeria, Tunisia, Comoro Islands, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, England, Asia, etc.) from an early age, as well as their ability to communicate in different languages. They of course all own smartphones and are very active in social media such as Instagram, where they search for modest fashion looks and styling advice, or YouTube, where they learn how to tie their hijab and combine colours and shapes. All this is very much in line with the findings in the veiling literature. It also resonates with the literature on 'banal cosmopolitanism' and the consumption of foreign objects (Skrbis & Woodward, 2011; Skrbis et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2002). The hijab – as an aspect of a modest look – is a sign of openness because it involves mixing and matching different styles from various places: a form of 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' (Urry, 1995). Moreover, it can also be conceptualized as a new form of cosmopolitanism

in Seine-Saint-Denis, such as Aubervilliers, Saint-Denis and La Courneuve, have the highest concentration of immigrant populations in Metropolitan France.

^{18 75%} of immigrants and children of immigrants state that they have a religion (Simon & Tiberj, 2010). In contrast, 45% for the total French population declare themselves to be agnostic or atheist.

because it takes into account cultural hybridization on the one hand and the migration and mobility that is reshaping postcolonial times (Balibar, 2018) on the other: the 'migrant' is here conflated with the cosmopolitan (Glick-Schiller & Irving, 2017). These young women display cosmopolitan competencies that derive from their migratory biographies (Vertovec, 2009).

The young informants we met are experiencing the 'global Muslim revival' or re-Islamisation process that has been documented in the literature (Ahmed, 2011; Roy, 2002)¹⁹ and that is creating transnational movements between the East and the West. They mention their vision of Islam that sets them apart from their families and previous generations (ibid.), and they position themselves as more educated and more knowledgeable than their parents or grand-parents regarding Islam. More specifically, their parents have been 'passively' Muslim or unable to assert themselves in French society. Instead of submitting to the assimilationist injunction, which did not allow their parents to obtain full recognition in French society, and because these young informants are made constantly aware of their parents' migratory experience (Sayad, 1992), they lay claim to full citizenship as both French and Muslim. Holding on to their Muslim heritage, which connects them to a tradition, they affirm this identity both within their families and within French society as a whole. This form of stigma management has been documented in the veiling literature (Sandikci & Ger, 2010). But wearing the veil in the Paris area is also a way of expressing who one is, as explained by AM (17, Algerian grand parents): My development involved adopting the veil, for others it will be in something else, but for me, my continuity is the veil...' Doing so produces a feeling of serenity, a new internal coherence, a sort of peace (Lewis, 2013), and helps them reconnect to a larger community that supports them: 'It's true that something has changed... it creates... between women who have the scarf, it creates... a certain bond... we will always greet each other religiously... "salam alikoum"...' (MA, 19, a French woman whose parents are of Algerian origin). In this respect, veiling by French Muslim young women is related to cosmopolitanism in the sense that globalization is a process that creates transnational social links – here a bond between Muslim women.

Islamic revival, or 're-Islamization' creates 'transnational movements between the East 19 and the West, between Islamist movements in the Muslim world and the uprooted Muslim minorities in the West who strive to promote an imaginary ummah, or Muslim community, not embedded in any particular territory' (Roy, 2009). In her exploration of the resurgence of the veil since the 1970s in Egypt, Ahmed (2011) shows how the meaning of the veil has evolved from a rural and traditional practice to a form of women activism in the USA.

revalues local cultures and promotes third cultures (Calhoun, 2003a; Beck, 2000: 12).

In the interviews, adopting the veil in the French context emerged as a sort of rite of passage between adolescence and adulthood. All the women referred to the personal and/or spiritual quest that appeared in their life cycle around the end of adolescence. Like all second-generation immigrants, their adolescence is very much a stage of their life associated with 'here' or the feeling of belonging to French society (Silhouette-Dercourt, 2017; Berry et al., 2006; Moro, 1998). During this period, they and their peer groups engage with Western brands and fashion, make-up and hairdos. They wear jeans, short skirts, make-up and nail polish, as mentioned by AF, 25, a French citizen with Indian parents: I was very different then, lots of make-up, short skirts or jeans, my parents did not like it...' It is with the coming of adulthood, in the lycée, that they wonder about other aspects of themselves, about what has been passed on to them, and about religion. They make a clear distinction between the 'traditional veil' - worn by 'older women', in 'traditional and rural areas' - and the 'modern and religious veil' associated with education, the rediscovery of Muslim heritage and self-development. In parts of Seine-Saint-Denis where a large proportion of women wear the hijab, the decision to adopt the veil does not set them apart, except when they are in school or at work. In the more residential areas of Seine-Saint-Denis or in Paris, where young informants are more educated, they point to the difficulty of 'coming out' alone and of not having any role models. The ability to tap into an imaginary global Muslim community through social networks has empowered them to 'go for it' as reported by HM, 29, a French woman whose parents are of Algerian origin: At the time of my decision, I had no one to look up to, neither in my family, nor in my group of friends, in Paris at that time we were just a few... I learnt with this girl on YouTube...'

They become a member of a cosmopolitan elite, a model and trend setter for others (Longman, 2018; Mahmoud, 2005, 2001; Klein-Hessling, 1999). For example, SE and HA who are both university graduates and following successful professional careers, provided us with a list of Instagram accounts. Postings on these include modest fashion style as well as quotes such as *I don't understand why we cannot be interested in fashion and be Muslim at the same time'*, attributed to Dina Tokio (28-year old fashion blogger born in Egypt and raised in London). Other quotes partake of a more engaged and activist discourse, such as *'You cannot exploit women in one country in order to empower them in another'* or *I believe modest fashion shouldn't even be labelled. It should seamlessly be integrated into the industry'*, attributed to Qatar-based art and fashion consultant Anum Bashir. The impact of Instagram since 2012 on French Muslim

women and their relationship to modest fashion was underlined by these two informants and permeated all the interviews. It has speeded up exposure to Modest Fashion styles from different parts the world as well as the hybridization between 'east' and 'west' fashion traditions. This process is an example of the role of 'generic' globalization and the revolution in electronic communication technologies that has facilitated the emergence of transnational spaces and the beginning of new forms of cosmopolitan practices for excluded and marginalized groups (Sklair, 2007).

The coming out story of the veil that Lewis detailed as 'a classic formula of first coming out to yourself, then to your family, then to the larger community' (2015: 211) was again encountered in the interviews we conducted in France. As described by MA (19, with Algerian grandparents) this process simultaneously involves self-transformation and gradually making significant others aware. I did it in different stages, it was more for my family than for me...I was the first one (in the family) and you can't make that known that all of a sudden. So, at the beginning I wore long tunics, then later, I stopped wearing tights, I switched to pants, then I started covering myself up a bit more, so they saw it coming and when I made my choice (to start wearing the hijab), well... everybody was supportive, even those who were unsure about it...' Young second-generation Muslim women are usually more successful at school than their male counterparts (Simon, 2010) and are given by their parents (fathers) as sort of intergenerational mandate (Lebovici et al., 1997) to succeed in the French society. The informants explained how difficult it was for their father or mother or both of them to accept their decision to start wearing the veil. The preceeding quote does not signal closing herself off, but rather an intent to prepare her family and friends for her new 'me' (Gokariksel & Secor 2012; Bhatia, 2002; Mahmood 2001, 2005). In this sense, donning the veil is accompanied by various strategies to reassure family and friends and remain open and connected with them – a sort of self-reflexive cosmopolitanization process (Beck, 2014).

One of the issues relating to veiling is whether or not the young adult will keep it for life (Bendixsen, 2017: 175): for example, SD, 30, parents of Senegalese/Malian nationality explains 'my goal is to keep it until my death, but I know that many people have taken it off, that they take it off due to the pressure.' The adoption ritual is also in some cases a sign of 'banal cosmopolitanism' (Beck, 2004: 151), a form of syncretism. This was the case with MA, 19, a French woman with parents of Algerian origin, and her friend KA. 'We said to ourselves: "Well, we won't do it just any day, I want it to be symbolic" and so we chose February 14th, Valentine's Day because it represents something for everyone, it's strength and love, it's cohesion....'

Donning the religious veil is a way to improve oneself, because the wearer has to be exemplary and project a positive image of the 'veiled Muslim', not only to the other veiled women who might be critical of their modest style (Isolato, 2017; Lewis, 2015), but also to non-Muslims and French society in general. Informants felt 'obliged' to be especially polite, open and attentive to others — especially to people not identified as Muslim when in public places. Little things like helping a granny carry her groceries or saying hello to people in the street. They see me as a Muslim who has chosen to be in her society.... because I know that there are people who are afraid of our religion and in fact, I want to show them that I am quite harmless and that I am like everyone else and that I am a French citizen who loves her country' (LE, 29, French with parents of Moroccan origin). Some of the informants were in fact eager, through their behaviour, to trigger discussion about their religion. Far from closing themselves off, their discourses point on the contrary to the desire to participate, discuss and interact.

Wearing the veil is also a way of facilitating circulations in public spaces where women are confronted by the male gaze or inappropriate behaviour. This was particularly the case for the young women we met in Seine-Saint-Denis, but also in Paris, as explained by ME, 19, a French woman with parents of Algerian origin: 'Boys' behaviour towards me has changed... much more respect, I don't know if that's what I was looking for ultimately because I didn't feel particularly annoyed, but I know that I won't be approached in the street and asked for my phone number, I won't be whistled at any more, ...' or LD, 21, French with Comorian parents, 'Previously there were really intrusive looks, I'd even say perverse or something (laughs)'.

Instead of following a single standardized modest look, the informants mix elements of 'Western' fashion, commonly worn by their age group worldwide (such as white diamond-studded Nike or Adidas Stan Smith sneakers), with elements of a modest look (baggy pants, tunics with long sleeves). Thus AW, 23, a French citizen of Senegalese nationality, resident in Seine-Saint-Denis, sums it up as follows: *Toften dress in black but I like to have a touch of colour anyway, for example changing the colour of my headscarf, adding a colour,... and of course, sneakers are very important to me, I always wear these Nikes.*' They also reconfigure individual garments such as T-shirts and sweatshirts, that they choose loose-fitting, in neutral tones and with long sleeves. Through personal contacts with neighbours, sisters and cousins, they alter the cuts of garments to achieve the desired look. Their *hijab*, despite its religious meaning, plays a part in this quest for an individual style: it is varied in terms of colour and types of material, knots, and accessories. For example, SE, 24, a French woman with Comorian parents, explains: *T don't wear the official veil, it's more of a turban,*

it doesn't hide my chest, my clothes fit my body closely and I wear necklines, but in fact for me it's my way of advancing... my spirituality is not stable'. The young women are cosmopolitan in their self-expression and self-realisation, using goods available in markets, derived from specific geographical and historical points of origin (Bhatia, 2002), with their associated symbolic meanings to produce a performative cosmopolitanism (Vertovec, 1999: 457). At times, their creativity is a way to adapt to exclusionary enforcement at school or at the workplace (Kejanlioglu & Tas, 2009). In the process, they develop new modest fashion looks (Skrbis & Woodward, 2011; Beck, 2004).

Their shopping destinations reflect these cosmopolitan garment choices. Shopping expeditions involve buying hijab, tunics and loose-fitting pants in markets in remote areas of Seine-Saint-Denis, where most of the stalls are run by various diasporic migrant communities from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Pakistan, India, and China. These 'ethnic entrepreneurs' have always been there (Choplin & Pliez, 2018): they operate in very precarious administrative circumstances at the margins of the dominant French society, but are connected to diasporic economic networks. Appadurai (2011) refers to their transnational activities as a form of cosmopolitanism 'from below'. For our informants in Seine-Saint-Denis, these markets are a way of saving money and being able to purchase counterfeit brand-name goods such as T-shirts, shoes, jewellery and bags. On other occasions, they shop for scarves, long-sleeved shirts and accessories at fast fashion brand stores such as H&M, Zara, Stradivarius and Camaieu in the shopping districts of Paris. They also shop online at e-commerce websites based in France, as well as in Turkey, West Africa, Dubai, etc., and make use of social networks (such as Instagram), as explained by HM, 29, a French woman with Algerian parents: 'I started following veiled women on Instagram (...) on my phone, there's a girl I like, from Dubai, a blogger, whom I like... She lives in Kuwait. Then I go to stores like Zara (...). Otherwise there are websites designed for veiled women, such as Modanisa (...) I look pretty much everywhere. There are also stores called Amal Mode in Saint-Denis. I look everywhere.'

Conclusion 4

The objective of this paper is to examine the idea of cosmopolitanism with regard to young Muslim women's beauty and clothing choices in France. Can these choices be framed as a sign of openness to others? In both Seine-Saint-Denis and central Paris, our preliminary field research shows that the *hijab* is an element of the French Muslim female dress style, together with a degree of

interpretation as what products a 'modest look'. For these young women, the hijab emerges as a source of individual well-being and self-coherence and of transition to adulthood. Furthermore, the hijab, like any article of clothing on display to others, is performative. As French citizens, these young women are particularly keen to fully participate in French society, but also, because they are French, to assert their right to dress how they want. As Muslims, they wish to engage spiritually with their religion through their daily practices, while at the same time creating new looks and challenging French fashion norms and stereotypes, especially with regard to how women's bodies are portrayed in Western media. They feel increasing pressure and stigmatization directed toward their community. Berry et al. (2006) have shown that young people with an immigrant background choose their identity strategies in interaction with the attitudes of the dominant society. When these are a form of closure or of denial of their specificities – a form of uncosmopolitan attitude – then these young adults tend to retreat into separation or self-exclusion. Our research question as to the relationship between cosmopolitanism and veiling might then be reframed: Is French society open to all children of the Republic, or is it developing uncosmopolitan attitudes towards some of them, based on their stylistic choices?

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