

Islamische Mode: Die Entstehung des Islam als soziale Kraft in Europa / Islamic Fashion: The Emergence of Islam as a social Force in Europe.

In the 1970s a 'new veiling' emerged in the Middle East. Young, well-educated women, often students or professionally employed, started to wear a new style of covered dress as part of the Islamic revival movement. In those early years, this new style of dress tended to be uniform, austere and sober. This changed when the number of veiled women increased rapidly, motivations to wear Islamic dress became more diverse, and Islamist movements became interested in attracting a middle and upper-middle class female constituency. With identities increasingly expressed through consumption, Islamic dress became more and more part of the world of fashion, and a distinctive style of Islamic fashion emerged.

While the emergence of Islamic fashion and its complex meanings in the Middle East and, more recently, also in Africa and Asia, have become the focus of research, theoretically informed studies on Islamic fashion in Europe are virtually non-existent. Studies on Muslim women's presence in the public sphere in Europe are by and large limited to discussions on veiling which, moreover, are often framed in terms of debates about the incompatibility of Islam with European values and Islam as an obstacle to integration. This proposal, in contrast, centres on the public presence of young women wearing styles of dress that are both recognizably Islamic and fashionable. Wearing Islamic fashion as an everyday practice has become far more widespread in the course of the last decade.

Tracing the emergence of Islamic fashion on the streets of Europe this research proposal speaks to the larger issue of the presence of Islam as a social force in Europe. Focusing on young Muslim women's embodied practices and performances, it traces the conditions under which Islamic fashion has emerged in the European public sphere, investigates the various ways in which the tensions between Islam and fashion are negotiated, and analyzes the effects of such emerging embodied practices of young Muslim women on the presence of Islam as a social force in Europe.

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