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**Clothing as a Mean of Communication:
Misinterpretation and Misuse of the Symbol of the Veil**

Master's thesis

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Study programme: Media Studies

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Year of the defence: 2019

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

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References

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to bring better understanding into the problematic of negotiation of veiling behaviour among young Muslim women. In the current world they face many challenges caused by stereotypical images that are being spread about them through various media platforms. One of those stereotypes is the misuse of the veil as a symbol and taking it out of the context. Main goal of this work is therefore to observe the role of media, new media in particular, within diverse socio-political contexts in the lives of young Muslim women, especially on the negotiation of their veiling behaviour. Misinterpretation and misuse of the symbol of the veil by the media within diverse socio-political contexts will be investigated from the perception of these young women, with help of the qualitative approach, namely in-depth interviews with the sample of seven Muslim women between the ages of 22 and 36 living in Czechia, Lebanon, Netherlands and Switzerland. To put this issue into perspective of the researcher's home country, Czechia, additional and supportive data was collected among 100 respondents from Czech non-Muslim public. This survey investigated the perception of Islam and veiled women by the Czech public to prove or disprove the hypothesis that the Islamic tradition of veiling is perceived rather negatively among Czech non-Muslim public in Czechia.

Abstrakt

Smyslem této práce je vnést větší porozumění do problematiky zahalování mladých muslimských žen, které jsou mnohdy pod tlakem předsudků vytvořených na základě stereotypních obrazů, které jsou o nich šířeny skrze média. Jedním z těchto stereotypů je také zneužití zahalování coby symbolu, který je vyňat ze svého původního kontextu. Hlavním cílem této práce je tedy pozorovat roli médií, převážně nových médií, uvnitř rozmanitých socio-politických kontextů různých zemí na životy mladých muslimských žen, a to zejména na jejich rozhodovací proces v oblasti zahalování. Misinterpretace a zneužití symbolu zahalování médií v kontextu různých socio-politických oblastí bude zkoumáno z pohledu samotných muslimských žen za pomoci hloubkových rozhovorů se vzorkem sedmi muslimek ve věku 22 až 36 let z Česka, Libanonu, Nizozemska a Švýcarska. Podpůrná data k tomuto výzkumu byla sesbírána pomocí dotazníkového šetření mezi 100 respondenty z české nemuslimské populace. Toto dotazníkové šetření bylo provedeno za účelem vyvrácení či potvrzení hypotézy, že islámská tradice zahalování je vnímána spíše negativně mezi českou nemuslimskou populací.

Keywords

Acculturation, Hijab, Muslim women, New media, Veiling

Klíčová slova

Akulturační, Hidžáb, Muslimské ženy, Nová média, Zahalování

Title

Clothing as a Mean of Communication: Misinterpretation and Misuse of the Symbol of the Veil

Název práce

Oblékání jako způsob komunikace: Misintepretace a zneužití symbolu zahalování

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1. Introduction

In the current world, young Muslim women that migrate to the Western countries may often face prejudices that are partly caused by the stereotypical images that are being spread about them through various media platforms. Great number of these images uses a stereotypical picture of a woman in a veil, that piece of fabric being often used as a symbol of reference to Islam. Therefore, the main purpose of this work is to bring better understanding of negotiation of veiling behaviour among young Muslim women in the current world and comment on the challenges they may face during the time of globalization and tremendous influence of social media.

The first idea was to compare the lives of Muslim women in Czechia and Netherlands based on the general opinion of public on veiled women that I would investigate with quantitative approach, namely surveys among public, and finally compare the results. However, as veiling is such a complex issue that deserves much deeper understanding, I decided to conduct in-depth interviews with Muslim women from various countries instead (Czechia and Netherlands included) and do not base my research on the comparative approach, as I wanted to stay unbiased. I also did not find any supportive study that I could base my decision to compare these two countries on. The only reason to do such comparison would be the fact that the percentage of Muslims living in the Netherlands is higher than of those that live in Czechia¹, however that did not seem as a sufficient base for such study. The intent to analyse media coverage of political campaigns of Czech and Dutch political parties that used the stereotypical images of veiled women and finally compare the results of these two countries did not come through due to language barrier and limited knowledge of the socio-political context of the Netherlands compared to my knowledge of the socio-political context of my home country. Thus, there could have been a prone to bias in such comparison. Hence, I diverted from the original assignment of the thesis.

I started with my research on negotiation of veiling behaviour in young Muslim women's lives during my Erasmus exchange that took place in summer semester of 2018 and I spent it studying at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. My colleagues and I conducted a group project which

¹ See chapter Socio-political context.

focused on the negotiation of veiling behaviour among Dutch Muslim women and we investigated the role of new media within it. That research brought many interesting findings as it will be explained in following chapters², so I decided to broaden it in this Master's Thesis and focus on Muslim women living in other countries as well, especially my home country, Czechia. Finally, I wanted to fulfill the goal of bringing better understanding into this problematic as I saw from my personal experience that the veil is at times being misused as a symbol within media communication without any context and is often misunderstood by the Czech audience. Therefore, I decided to conduct the in-depth interviews with several Muslim women living in different socio-political contexts and share their stories as they talked about the impact of stereotypical images that are being spread about Muslim women through the media. Naturally, I drove my main focus on Czechia, being my home country, and instead of analysing the use of symbols in political campaigns there, I decided to investigate deeper the opinions on Islam of Czech non-Muslim public and their perception of veiling. Subsequently, I gathered supportive data from electronic survey among Czech non-Muslim public to prove or disprove the hypothesis that *the Islamic practice of veiling is perceived rather negatively among Czech non-Muslim public in Czechia*. The hypothesis was based on findings in books by Topinka (2016), who conducted media analysis on news coverage with focus on stereotypical images of Muslims in the Czech mainstream TV in 2013, and Ostránský (2017) who describes Islamophobia in Czechia in detail.

Main goal of this work is to observe the role of new media within diverse socio-political contexts in the lives of young Muslim women, especially on the negotiation of their veiling behaviour. Misinterpretation and misuse of the symbol of the veil by the media will be investigated from the perception of these young women. Therefore qualitative approach, namely in-depth interviews seemed to be the most reasonable method to bring better understanding into this problematic. The sample were Muslim women aged 22-36. Veiling was not a part of the criteria as the goal of this research was to find the reason of their choice to veil or not to veil and possible role of new media and socio-political context on such decision. Although to gain more insight and observe the role of socio-political aspect, data from other countries than Czech Republic, such as Netherlands, Switzerland and Lebanon were also part of the research. To obtain additional and supportive data about the perception of Islam and veiling among Czech non-Muslim

² See chapter Literature review.

public, quantitative approach was used in conducting an electronic anonymous survey among 100 respondents.

2. Literature Review

The previous research done in this field was mostly focused on the negotiation of veiling behaviour among Muslim women in general and religious, cultural, as well as legal aspects of it. Concerning the field of new media, research was focused mostly on the negotiation of Muslim women's identities in the online space. Limited research has been done specifically with the focus on the changes of veiling behaviour due to the impact of social media and socio-political context. In Czechia, this specific topic was never deeply investigated.

One of the main sources for this work was the comprehensive publication by Topinka: *Muslims in Czechia: Establishment of Muslims and Islam in Czechia* (2016), which brings great insight into the lives of Muslim people living in this country and contains very detailed information about legal aspects of the establishment of Muslim minority in Czechia. Even though, this publication also includes very detailed media analysis of the image of Islam in the Czech media, the impacts of new media with the specification on negotiation of veiling behaviour among young Muslim women living in this country were not yet observed. Great research was done in an academic work *Veiling of Czech Women Converting to Islam* by Michaela Davidová (2014). She provided detailed insight into the topic of veiling in this country and the qualitative approach that she used brought rich data about Czech women who converted to Islam and their own perception of their image in this country. However, as this research was focused only on the converts, it served mainly as a source of inspiration considering the research method and brought some additional information about the socio-political context in Czechia. Another research conducted by Read and Bartkowski *To Veil or Not to Veil* (2000) provided great insight into the negotiation of veiling behaviour among Muslim women living in the USA. In this study the researchers work with theory coming from even earlier research by Hermansen, 1991: "Such research has revealed that Muslim American women creatively negotiate their gender, religious, and ethnic identities in light of dominant U.S. social norms and modernist discourses that often define these women as "other" (Read and Bartkowski, 2000, p. 396). The researchers focused on perception of veiling and cognitive meanings attributed to the veil. They also deeply discussed the arguments of pro-veiling and anti-

veiling opinions that may influence decisions of young women to make a choice about the negotiation of their veiling behaviour. This study comes up with an interesting finding making a connection between the participants who veil and those who do not: „*Women who veil are not typically disdainful towards their unveiled Muslim sisters, and unveiled women in our sample seem similarly reluctant to impugn their veiled counterparts. Such findings were unanticipated in light of elite Muslim debates about the propriety of veiling.*” (Read and Bartkowski, 2000, p. 406). Secondly, they brought up the importance of socio-political context on the negotiation of veiling behaviour stating that: „*The social context within which the women are situated seems to provide them with resources that facilitate the gender innovations.*” (Read and Bartkowski, 2000, p. 410). As the sample of participants in this research was composed of well-educated, middle-class Muslim women, there was a conclusion to be made that the progressive, multicultural climate and the human capital can foster greater empathy between the veiled respondents and their unveiled counterparts. This study, as well, worked with the in-depth interview approach to the participants and therefore served as an inspirational and relevant source to the current research. However, till this day it is quite outdated especially because of the tremendous influence of new media that can play a crucial role in the lives of young Muslim women, as it will be specified in the following chapters. The study by Latiff and Alam (2013) is very similar to the topic of this research bringing in the quantitative analysis of the roles of media in influencing women wearing hijab in Malaysia. Nevertheless, that study focuses specifically on the influence of hijab fashion. Meanwhile this topic is important and it will be discussed among the participants of this study, larger focus will be given to the stereotypes that are being spread through the media.

Another source for this work is a research I conducted during May 2018 on *Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication in Rotterdam* together with my colleagues S. Kossi, S. Shao and Y. Sherstyuk under the supervision of Dr. A. Paz Alencar focusing on the negotiation of veiling behaviour among young Muslim women that migrated to the Netherlands. The focus was drawn mainly on the process of acculturation and the influence of new media, as we found out that up till then there has not been enough research that would focus specifically on the changes in veiling behaviour among young Muslim women and the impact that new media might have on that. The results of that study provided quite rich information regarding the young Dutch Muslim women’s negotiation of veiling behaviour. The main finding of this research was that due to the fear of being perceived as outsiders by others with stereotypes, attitudes and portrayal from the

host media have the considerable impact on their choice to veil or not to veil. However, the foundations of family traditions that young Dutch Muslim women own can to some extent stimulate their decisions to veil regardless of the negative portrayal from the host media³. As the findings of this research are quite limiting to one place, the decision was made to broaden the research even more and focus additionally on the influence of socio-political context bringing participants from other countries to this study, namely Czechia, Lebanon and Switzerland. However, this study will follow similar theoretical concepts within acculturation, new media and veiling, with addition of socio-political context and the theory of using clothing as a mean of communication. This work will also briefly draw attention to the theory of stereotypes and Islamophobia as this concept is emerging in the current western world.

The theoretical framework of this study will be divided into following chapters: *Clothing as a mean of communication*, *Acculturation*, *Veiling*, *The role of new media*, *Socio-political context* and *Stereotypes about Islam and Muslims and the role of media*. Each of these chapters will provide the limits of existing research within the given topic and historic examples. These concepts will also be used as a theoretical approach for the research which will be laid out at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Clothing as a Mean of Communication

Clothing has been one of the most visible options to portray differences, either gender, political, ethnic or social ones, for the centuries. The way we dress is connected to the cultural identity, whether it is conscious or subconscious decision of an individual. Clothing serves as a tool to express our own status or even our own world-view. Through clothing individuals might as well communicate their religion or economic background. A simple example of using clothing as a mean of communication is the western custom of wearing a wedding ring as a sign of being married. There are several famous empirical studies that document the effects of clothing upon behaviour towards people dressed differently from one another, such as Lefkowitz, Blake and Mouton (1955) and Bickman (1971). Both of these studies consisted of experiments that confirmed that the way people are dressed has an effect on other people mainly in terms of authority or trust. Holman (1980) summarizes three main focuses of studies about clothing as described in the previous research: as an extension of the psychological state of its user (Dearborn, 1918),

³ See Appendix no.:2

as an indicative of the wearer's group membership position within a group (Barthes, 1967) and finally the effects of clothing upon behaviour toward people dressed differently from one another as described in the studies mentioned above (f.e.: Bickman, 1971).

The gap between “Western“ and “traditional“ view on clothing was criticized in a study by Hansen (2004) who explained such distinction with capitalism. Nevertheless, he comments that “traditional” way of clothing was always a changing practice influenced by the fashion system of the West among other factors: „*The distinction between fashion in the West and the "traditional" clothing of much of the rest of the world drawn by scholars who explain fashion's origin in terms of the development of the capitalist production system in the West. "Traditional" dress was never a cultural "heritage issue" in anthropology but was always a changing practice, remaking itself in interaction with other dress styles, with garments of Western commercial manufacture and the West's fashion system.*” (Hansen, 2004, p. 372).

In the history of humanity, there are a number of examples of misusing the clothing as a symbol to persecute or discriminate a specific group of people, even using a political power to do so. Concerning Islam, the controversy in the Western societies caused especially by 9/11 attacks, escalated into banning the wearing of burqa in public spaces in some European countries, such as France or Denmark, mostly for the security reasons.⁴ These bans created a society-wide discussion about the freedom of expression and discrimination on the one hand, as opposed to the security of the Western countries and protection of its citizens on the other hand.

This research will examine the importance of clothing for the participants, both as an individual decision that they make for themselves, as well as how they perceive clothes on other people who may or may not be part of the same culture or religion as them. The research will also investigate the reasoning behind the choice of clothing for the participants.

2.2 Veiling

This chapter will cover the history of the tradition of veiling, introducing some of the reasons this tradition is still practiced in certain socio-political, religious and cultural

⁴ The French ban on face covering passed by the Senate of France on 14th September 2010 and resulted in banning all the face-covering headgear, followed by Denmark and other European countries. The Guardian. *Burqa Bans, Headscarves and Veils: a Timeline of Legislation in the West*. [online]. In: 31.5.2018. [2019-05-02]

contexts. Finally, it will comment on the controversy of this practice that escalated in the past two decades. *'Perhaps no single issue better captures the controversy over Muslim integration than the Islamic practice of veiling'* (Read, 2007). We refer to veiling in general as to wearing a head covering and loose fitting gowns (Göle, 1996). The first reference to veiling dates back to 13th century. In the Assyrian text of that time, the practice of hair covering was described as reserved for elite women in order to differentiate them from prostitutes who on the opposite hand were forbidden from veiling themselves (Hoodfar, 2003). Veiling, considered a religious practice, used to be a common habit in ancient Mediterranean countries, such as Greco-Roman, pre-Islamic Iranian and Byzantine societies, and it was practiced both by men and women. It had also been adopted by Christian religion and Judaism (Amer, 2014). The veil emerged as a symbol of social status among Muslims in the 16th century. Since the 19th century veiling is embraced more as a cultural practice than only an Islamic practice. Number of Muslim men also covers their heads as a means of showing modesty. Furthermore, in some traditions, Christian and Jewish women might wear a headscarf as a cultural practice or commitment to modesty or piety (Ternikar, 2009).

One of the most frequently cited Qu'ranic verses used to defend the wearing of the hijab is the surah 24:30-31: *„The believing men are enjoined to lower their gaze and conceal their genitals and the believing women are enjoined to lower their gaze and conceal their genitals, draw their headdress to cover their cleavage, and not to display their beauty, except that which has to be revealed, except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or eunuchs or children under age; and they should not strike their feet to draw attention to their hidden beauty. O believers, turn to God, that you may know bliss,“* (Qur'an 24:30-31). In the following verse, Muslim women are encouraged to wear a veil, as a means of distinguishing them from “others“ and as a way of avoiding harassment: *„Those who harass believing men and believing women undeservedly, bear (on themselves) a calumny and a grievous sin. O Prophet! Enjoin your wives, your daughters, and the wives of true believers that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): That is most convenient, that they may be distinguished and not be harassed,“* (Qur'an 33:58–59). These verses connected to the veiling of women are being interpreted in various ways, as some can interpret them as being recommendations and some might take them more strictly.

The origin of the word hijab is Arabic, meaning „cover“. The type of *hijab* worn mostly by the women in the western countries is a scarf in a square shape covering the head and neck but leaving the face clear, unlike *niqab* that covers face, mouth and nose, leaving only eyes clear. The most covering of all types of veils considered in this research is *Burqa* that covers the entire face and body and leave only small screen for sight.⁵

Wearing a hijab has to do with modesty, for women who chose to wear hijab for this reason, it is a personal choice made after puberty usually after their first menstruation and reflects the devotion to God. Some women also wear hijab in order to identify with Muslim community. While some Muslim women do not perceive the hijab to be obligatory to their faith, other Muslim women wear the hijab as a means of visibly expressing their Muslim identity. Hijab is also perceived as a protection from patriarchy and from being objectified by other men than her husband or men from her family. Western society often criticises these dress rules as they appear to oppress the woman, however Muslims argue that this protects the women and allows her be treated more like a human being than a sex object (Blakeman, 2014).

However, in the past few years, the veil became a symbol that is frequently being misused in terms of political communication and is almost exclusively connected to the Islam, perceived as a symbol of the unknown, which can be terrifying for certain societies (Soukup, 2014). Muslim women are even prohibited from wearing hijabs in public space in some western countries (Brünigand and Fleischmann, 2015). In the United States, particularly since 9/11, the hijab is perceived to be synonymous with Islam „*Because the hijab is a prominent indicator of the Islamic faith, it is a visible indicator of being Muslim, and women who wore the veil post 9/11 were treated with less respect,*”(Blakeman, 2014, p. 9). Therefore, Muslim migrants in Western countries may often face certain stereotypes based on their cultural visibility caused by veiling, which influences the way they negotiate their own self-representation (Van Es, 2016). Brünig and Fleischmann (2015) claim that religious identity, education, contact with natives, and gender role attitudes have different associations with the behaviour of veiling. For instance, socially well-integrated women, who have frequent contact with Dutch nationality, tend to veil less as wearing hijab might be a controversial sign of their religion (Brünig and Fleischmann, 2015). When Muslim migrants veil in western countries, it reveals not only societal meanings in host countries

⁵Arabs in America. *Veiling*. [online], In: 2018. [2019-03-31].

(Varashk, 2014) but also Muslim women's spiritual status of well-being in terms of religious identity negotiation (Ward, 2013).

Pressure from certain Muslim communities on women to veil themselves has also been an object to study, especially the discussion about the religious versus cultural reasons behind the choice to veil. „*Social practices that imbue the veil with cultural significance include the rhetoric of religious elites who equate veiling with religious devotion, as well as the actual ostracism of unveiled Muslim women from some Islamic institutions,*” (Read and Bartkowski 2000, p. 397). There is a number of Arab women who choose to wear the hijab as an expression of their cultural identity. By wearing the hijab, Muslim women hope to communicate their political and social connection with their country of origin and challenge the prejudice of Western discourses towards the Arab world (Zayzafoon, 2005). It can also be used to challenge the discourse, which presents women wearing a hijab as being oppressed or silenced. Wearing a hijab may also be an interpretation of the principles of modesty for some women. While some of the Muslim women believe that the principles of modesty are clearly outlined in the Qu’ran, they perceive the wearing of the headscarf as a cultural interpretation of it. Therefore many Muslim women agree that it is a woman’s choice whether or not she wears the hijab⁶.

The main goal of this study within the theme of veiling is to observe the decision making process of Muslim women behind their choice to veil or not to veil and to find the crucial factors that influence such decision among the participants of this study. For this specific research the type of veiling that I focused on primarily is hijab or „headscarf“. As this is the most common type of veil worn among Muslim women living in the western world, it is most relevant for this research to focus on this type of cover. However, previous studies had shown interesting findings in women’s perception of their own identity depending on the fact whether they wore hijab or niqab, it will not be the subject of the study of this particular research. Therefore in the further research every reference made to „veil“ will be connected to hijab.

2.3 Acculturation

To have a better understanding of the negotiation of veiling behaviour among young Muslim women, specifically those who migrated to countries with significant cultural differences, the process of acculturation has to be explained first. Ward (2013)

⁶Arabs in America. *Veiling*. [online], In: 2018. [2019-03-31].

explains acculturation as a typology of two components that include both maintenance of traditional heritage culture and adaptation to the new society. According to Berry's theory of acculturation, it is a process that can be performed through four different strategies, namely: *integration*, *assimilation*, *separation*, and *marginalization* (Bhatia and Ram, 2009). Immigrants tend to facilitate both communications with their ethnic group as well as with foreign or dominant group (Alencar and Deuze, 2017). *Integration* can be considered as a two-way process from both sides: immigrants and host society (Ager and Strang, 2004). An *assimilation* strategy takes place when immigrants decide not to maintain their original cultural identity and instead seek for the interaction with the foreign dominant group (Bhatia and Ram, 2009). *Separation*, however, occurs when immigrants tend to place a higher value on their original culture, thus avoiding contact with a dominant group. Finally, immigrants are influenced by a strategy of *marginalization* when there is a loss of psychological and cultural contact with both ethnic groups (Bhatia and Ram, 2009). Therefore, for Muslim immigrants all around the world, it may become particularly hard as they bring a rich cultural heritage that they had already formed and adjust to a culture, by accepting a new country and a new way of life, which is different from their original one (Khawaja, 2016). With the biased perceptions of the surroundings, immigrants are more likely to be trapped in the separation stage of the acculturation process, where the contacts with the dominant group are avoided and immigrants tend to suffer psychological stress, social incompetence and weak intercultural relations (Ward, 2013).

In the research itself, there will be a focus driven on the unique lived experiences of the participants especially those who migrated to a country with different dominant culture. They will be asked to explain their point of view on the attitudes of the host society towards them and the impact it had on their process of acculturation.

2.4 Socio-political Context

As stated above, the study of Read and Bartkowski (2000) suggests that the socio-political context may play one of the crucial roles in the way that Muslim women negotiate their veiling behaviour. Therefore participants from three countries with considerably different socio-political context will be covered in this research, namely Czechia, Netherlands and Lebanon. Two other countries, Switzerland and Pakistan were added in

the process of research. Nevertheless, main focus of this research will be given to Czechia for various reasons.⁷

In the following chapters, focus will be given specifically to the representation of Muslim community in this regions and their socio-economic and political status as the citizens of the three countries named above. Czechia was chosen as the home country of the researcher and the home state of the university where this research takes place. For this reason the data needed for this research were more easily accessible and this country receives the main attention of this study. Netherlands was chosen as a country inside European Union with considerably more multicultural population in comparison to Czechia. Czech Statistical Office (2017) reported 524,000 foreigners (281, 000 of them with permanent residence) out of 10,5 million citizens in total, whereas in the Netherlands the number of people within the first generation migrant background is little over 2 million and 1,8 million of second generation, out of 17 million in total⁸. Lebanon was chosen as a representative of a country where veiling is considered both part of the culture as well as part of one of the main religions of the country, as the Muslim population consists of little over 57% out of the total population of 6 million (CIA, 2019).

Brief socio-political context of two other countries, Switzerland and Pakistan, was added during the process of the research as several informants shared their personal experience from these countries. Thus, it was necessary to connect their stories with context. I did not add the information about other home countries or current residency of the participants if they did not specifically talk about their life in such country. The research has been conducted with the focus on Czechia, as explained earlier.

2.4.1 Czechia

The estimation of Muslims living in Czechia was over 23 000 in 2016 (Topinka, 2016, p.: 36-37). However, this data does not have the information whether these Muslims practice their religion actively or not. There is no official number of Muslim population in Czechia as it is not obligatory to fill in the religion of an individual to the respective authorities. Given the population of little over 10 million people in this country, the estimated Muslim population is still considerably low.

⁷These reasons are further explained both in *Introduction* and *Methodology* chapters.

⁸ Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2017, later in the text referred to as CBS

The presence of Islam in Czechia is a relatively new phenomenon. The first contacts with Muslim people are connected to annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 under Austro-Hungarian Empire. Number of people of Balkan origin then became citizens of the newly emerging Czechoslovak republic. Since the 1930s *Czech Muslim Community (Česká obec muslimská)* began to form also with the Czechoslovak converts joining the community. During the communism era (1948-1989), the number of Muslims living in this region was increasing mainly because of the business partnership between Czechoslovak and progressive Arabic countries. These included the export of weapons but also student exchanges which resulted in assimilation of Muslims to this country as they formed families there. Since 1989 the immigration rate began to rise which resulted in increasing number of Muslims living in this country as well. The number of Czech converts also began to rise after 1989. Between the 1989 and 1999 the efforts into establishing several official organizations took place. The majority of the Muslim organizations that still function till this day were established during this era, such as *Islamic Foundation in Prague, Islamic Centre in Brno, Islamic Centre in Teplice* or *Muslim Union* (Topinka, 2016, p. 23-24).

Islam has then become to be perceived as a potential threat to Czechia together with the rest of the world especially after the 9/11 attacks. Islam became a topic of heated public discussion between the years of 2010 and 2015 as it also became part of political programs of numerous political parties. Former chairwoman of a party “*Czech Sovereignty*” (*Česká suverenita*) appeared covered in niqab in a promotion video during her campaign for election into the European Parliament. She warned the European women that there might come a time in the future when they will have to be covered and might be lynched for kissing their husbands in public. The former party “*Dawn of Direct Democracy by Tomio Okamura*” (*Úsvit přímé demokracie Tomia Okamury*) used the anti-Islamic theme in their campaigns as well. (Topinka, 2016, p. 25). Politician and public figure Tomio Okamura later on formed another political movement “*Freedom and Direct Democracy by Tomio Okamura*” (*SPD Tomia Okamury*), which continues with using anti-Islamic rhetoric during their campaigns.

Between the years of 2010 and 2015 there was a rapid growth in intensity and frequency of demonstrations against Islam and Muslims in Czechia. These activities were both spontaneous and organized, sometimes even supported by politicians or public figures with anti-Islamic agendas. In the online world, there are few Facebook groups that can be considered potentially powerful in sharing anti-Islamic views. One can be named here as

one of the most visible and powerful among others: *“We do not Want Islam in the Czech Republic” (Islám v ČR nechceme)*. This group also helped organise several demonstrations against establishment of this religion in Czechia (Topinka 2016, p. 24-26).

The study of the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Czechia focused on the *tolerance to the selected group of people* conducted in March of 2016. It documented that 23% of Czechs would not want to have people with different religious beliefs as their neighbours, meanwhile in 2014 it was only 11% (Křížek, 2017: p. 124). Křížek (2017) also suggests that Islamophobic rhetoric during the waves of immigration might be a major cause of such result. Based on a survey conducted among Muslims living in Czechia, several respondents were targets of the verbal abuse based on their appearance which was visibly Muslim. 21 out of 24 women who claimed they were veiling, were also targets of the verbal abuse at least once (Topinka, 2016, p.379). According to Czech Press Office (ČTK, 2019), the number of hate attacks against Muslims that were reported to the police increased between 2017 and 2018 from 8 till 13 attacks.

The findings in the books by Topinka and Ostřanský (especially the chapters by Křížek, 2017) and the latest news about the rise of the hate attacks against Muslims in Czechia were one of the main reasons I decided to do a supportive quantitative research in this country that would investigate the Czech non-Muslim public perception of Islam and veiling.

2.4.2 Netherlands and Switzerland

For the first time, in 2018, over half of the Dutch population claimed to be not religious (CBS, 2018). Only 5% out of the total population of 17 million is Muslim. However, not all of them practice their religion actively. *„A considerable proportion of self-identified Muslims never or almost never visit the mosque (to attend a religious gathering) and say they never or almost never pray. On the other hand, 40% visit the mosque every week”*⁹

The study of *Muslim in Nederland* from 2012 draw some interesting lines between the connection of education and religion practice in this country: *“Well-educated Muslims of Moroccan and Somali origin; some of this group of (young) well-educated Muslims in the Netherlands engage with their religion in a very conscious way. They seek out a lot of information about Islam on the Internet, talk a lot about their religion, wear the headscarf*

⁹Study Muslim in Nederland, 2012

as a sign of that Muslim identity and are more often dissatisfied with the social climate for Muslims in the Netherlands."¹⁰.

At the end of July 2018, the Dutch Parliament passed a law banning wearing a burqa – covering face and a body, and niqab in some public places, such as schools, hospitals or public transport. However, it does not apply on the public streets. That caused a lot of controversy inside the country, especially with a public figure of Far-right Freedom party politician Geert Wilders who is known for his extremist anti-immigrant views¹¹. Some claiming this ban as a good step towards better security of the country, while others perceive it as an attack and discrimination on Muslim women and their choice and freedom to decide what to wear.

The connection between socio-political context in the Netherlands and negotiation of veiling behaviour among Muslim women was brought up in a study by Brünig and Fleischmann (2015). In their research, they claimed that even Muslim women with the strong identity consider the decision of veiling as hard and resolve not to because of a prejudiced attitude of Dutch society towards them.

The total population of Switzerland is over 8,4 million and consists of foreigners from 25%. Geneva, being the most populated by foreigners out of all the cantons. The official data state that 5% of the total population affiliates with Islamic religious communities.¹²

As in several other European countries, Switzerland followed with passing a ban on face-covering veils which was approved with 67% vote in favour of the ban in 2018. *“Facial coverings are a symbol of radical Islam that have nothing to do with religious freedom but are rather an expression of the oppression of women,”* Anian Liebrand, a Swiss campaign leader, said when presenting the collected signatures. (Reuters, 2018). The news coverage from past years state rising hostility against Muslims in this country.

2.4.3 Lebanon and Pakistan

Lebanon is officially known as the Lebanese republic with Beirut being the capital city and population little over 6 million people. The half of the population is of Islam

¹⁰ Moslim in Nederland, 2012, p. 181

¹¹The Guardian. *Burqa bans, headscarves and veils: a timeline of legislation in the west.* [online]. In: 31.5.2018. [2019-05-02].

¹² Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 2018

religion, 40% Christians and the minority of people within the Judaism religion and other religions (CIA, 2016)¹³. Lebanon is the one state in the Arab world that does not have an official religion. „*While the Lebanese arrangement is distinctive, it is hardly secular. Rather, it amounts to granting official status to various sects*” (Brown, 2017). Lebanon’s constitution does not mention an official religion but, as amended in 1989, commits itself to the abolition of political “confessionalism.” Though confessionalism is not comprehensively defined in the text, it is understood as a system in which specific shares in state institutions are reserved for different religious communities and political arrangements are, effectively, negotiated among their leaders. Today, the Lebanese state recognizes eighteen different religious communities: five Muslim, twelve Christian, and the Jewish community. Most have a leadership recognized by the state (Brown, 2017).

Islam is the state religion in Pakistan. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, nearly 97% of the population consists of Muslims out of the total population of Pakistan is over 200 million. That makes this country the second largest Muslim population after Indonesia. The majority is of ethnic group Sunni and ethnic group Shia forms the minority. The lives of the people of Pakistan are affected by the numerous war conflicts and tensions. When it comes to veiling, women in Pakistan veil for both religious and cultural reasons.

2.5 The Role of New Media

In negotiating own cultural identity of Muslim women, new media can play an important role in both positive and negative way. This chapter will therefore focus on the role of media in young Muslim women’s lives from both perspectives. According to Walorp (2015), new technologies, especially social media, are often used to follow and challenge social norms and habits of Muslim women living in Europe, creating crucial implications for their cultural identities. There will be special focus driven also on the new media technology and the usage of it among Muslim women in this research. Despite the previous studies (Komito, 2011; Midden and Ponzanesi, 2013) that extensively investigate the impact of digital practices on diverse aspects of Muslim women’s acculturation, limited research has been conducted on how these practices influence the negotiation of their veiling behaviours specifically.

¹³ This data do not include the Syrian and Palestinian refugee populations. CIA, 2019

New media technologies are believed to have spread many stereotypes including those about Muslim women based on their cultural visibility. Thus, Brünig and Fleischmann (2015) claim that Dutch media portray negative impressions toward Islamic religious women, regarding headscarf as “a symbol of fundamentalism and patriarchal power”. On the other hand, new media has rapidly changed communication practices of immigrants and offered an opportunity to explore community (Komito, 2011). Dekker and Engberson (2012), developed the above mentioned further, by saying that new media technologies assist in transforming the networks of migrants and simplifying their migration process through four key components, which include strengthening ties with family and friends; generating weak ties with people who can contribute to the process of migration and integration; creating networks of latent ties; and generating a source of the “insider knowledge”. Through new media technologies, for example, strong disagreement with the ban on hijabs is being expressed, revealing how female Muslim online religious faiths intersect with struggles for the emancipation (Midden and Ponzanesi, 2013). In addition, the sociological approach to technology raised by William (1997) explores both the individual and contextual factors in the usage of new media. Muslim women specifically use digital media to negotiate their religious affiliations and multiple belongings. (Midden and Ponzanesi, 2013). The socio-political conditions of the context of reception, such as integration policies or labour market conditions can enable or constrain the media practices in the lives of migrants (Alencar and Deuze, 2017). Although new media are part of the cause of spreading the stereotypes about the woman who veil, diverse new media platforms can also be useful tool for them to search for practical and emotional support of veiling and places to identify themselves with fashion trend of hijabs.

Internet serves as a tool to create and negotiate new online identities which can be also multiplied and potentially even reshape the offline identity. When it comes to negotiating the identity of an individual in an online world, Goffman (1959) introduced the idea of identity as a performance. He argued that in social interactions we present ourselves to others in a way that conveys the way we want them to define us. *„In other words, we perform our identities through interactions that are context and audience bound”* (Guta and Karolak, 2015). The online hijab fashion world for example, gives and spreads aesthetic insights of headscarves and enables young Muslim women to gain peer support and a sense of community to veil as well as relieve the stress and anxiety from stereotypical perceptions of others, which can offer a breakthrough for their negotiation of veiling behaviour.

The research previously done in this field focused mainly on the negotiation of identity in general among young Muslim women. The research of Guta and Karolak from 2015: *Veiling and Blogging and Social Media as Sites of Identity Negotiation among Saudi Muslim women* brought many crucial findings in this field. “ *Without gatekeepers, the internet brings new ways of self-expression and identification among Saudi females, thus creating a safe space where female body, predominant in daily life, is nonexistent and only thoughts count,*” (Guta and Karolak, 2015). As Saudi Arabia is a very conservative country among the other countries of predominantly Islam religion, one of the main findings was also the fact that women feel more free negotiating their identities online than in real life, for example as they are able to stay in contact with their male friends in online world opposite from the offline one (Guta and Karolak, 2015). They discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of the social media usage among the society of Saudi Arabia. “*The perceived disadvantages relate to relaxed mores, especially among women, and the exposure of body as way to attract attention of the opposite sex*” (Guta and Karolak, 2015).

2.6 Stereotypes about Islam and Muslims and the Role of Media

In 1922 Walter Lippman stated that the outside world is too complicated and ungraspable for an individual to understand therefore it is necessary to simplify it into the images and stereotypes (Křížek, 2017). At the end of the 1960s Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger (1966) introduced the *Theory of social construction of reality*, which is a media theory stating that symbols form the reality instead of just mirroring it and this reality is later being approved in social interactions.

Historically, the creation of Islam and the fast emerging and wide spreading of Islamic civilization meant a crucial impulse into forming the “European identity” in the Middle Age Europe as an opposition to Islamic civilization. Belgian historian Henri Pirenne claimed that “*there would probably not be any Frankish empire and Charlesmagne without the prophet Muhammad*”.¹⁴ The first Muslim expansion in the 7th and 8th century was followed by Christian Reconquista, the invasion of Osman empire to Balkan, the European colonization and the mutual suspicion and hostility was strengthening through the years (Křížek, 2017). From the sociological, anthropological and psychological point of view the construction of the “other” and the paradigm of “us versus

¹⁴Křížek uses this reference in his publication (2017): Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities*, 27.

them” is natural. Every society needs to define themselves against a foreign group in order to strengthen the connection inside the group (Křížek, 2017). That resorted in many Europeans referring to Muslims as “others” over the centuries and even using the hostile narrative towards them. Bartolomé de la Casas, Spanish Dominican priest, who tried to protect the native Americans from the Spanish colonizers in the 16th century, because “*it is in the nature of Muhammad to massacre people, steal, rob, ravage, rampage, enslave parents and children*”¹⁵.

Muslims also often happen to be confused with Arabs. According to the opinion polls Muslims are quite often marked as “*radical, fanatical, cruel, violent, lazy or dirty*” (Křížek, 2017, p. 124), the words with positive connotation being used in relation to Muslims are most often *generosity or honesty*. Hollywood movie industry is one of the main designers of misinterpretation of the Muslims in the media. Křížek (2015) refers to the representation of Muslim (Arab) individuals in Hollywood movies in a hyperbole as 3B: *bomber, billionaire, belly dancer*. Therefore the interpretation of the Arabs or Muslims (as often mixed and confused in the mainstream media) is either as an Islamic extremist, sheikh or dancer if there is an actress portraying the character, a belly dancer. Another over exaggerated stereotype is the polygamy even though it is a marginal phenomenon in the current Muslim societies. It is always being misused as a proof of the amorality of Muslims in comparison to the Western societies (Křížek, 2017).

When it comes to portraying Muslim women specifically, it is often perceived by Western societies that the Muslim women are discriminated and oppressed by Islam religion and that Islam religion itself predestine women to inequality and Muslim men misuse this system as a tool to emphasize their *Islamic identity* (Křížek, 2017: p. 127). Fatima Mernissi and her book *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* from 1975 studies the impact of Muslim discourse of sexuality on the women's position in the society. In this book Islam is being reduced as a tool to control women's sexuality and construction of the patriarchy and blames women themselves as responsible for such social structures (Křížek, 2017). The feminist discourse is brought up by Abu Lughod who is also trying to challenge the ethnocentric approach used by many when commenting on Middle East. „*Women in the Middle East in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, have been portrayed frequently in the Western media as passive, submissive and oppressed a lot. These portrayals have been challenged by many feminists who rightly*

¹⁵ Daniel Nam Yong Choe, Bartolome de las Casas, 197.

argued that these portrayals conceptualize non-Western cultural identities as static and ahistorical and only served to reinforce the illusion that Middle Eastern patriarchal institutions are unchanging and untiring.” (Abu Lughod, 2002). Hijab is often viewed as a symbol of Islamic oppression, in France even as a lack of loyalty towards the state and resistance towards assimilation (Křížek, 2017, p. 129). The public discussion considering this piece of cloth even led into banning the veiling in public spaces in 2014, followed by Denmark and Netherlands in 2018.

The book by Topinka (2016) furthermore provides the content analysis of the news coverage by Czech TV stations during the year of 2013 which was very informative for my research. Television is the main source of information for Czech audience, as majority of the respondents (51,6%) confirmed, therefore this analysis form a great source of data to this study. During the year of 2013 there were 218 news that mentioned Islam in the three major TV stations in this country. 80% of these news was international and only 2% was concerning the home country. The more interesting part of this study consisted of the image analysis. 56% of all the news that mentioned Islam broadcasted in 2013 by three main Czech TV stations was considered as using stereotypical images. Three most frequently used images were the following: *demonstrations, men with the weapons and hijab, niqab or burqa* (Topinka, 2016: p. 292). These findings are extremely important for the base of this study, as I plan to discuss the topic of stereotypes shared by mainstream media with the participants during the in-depth interviews.

Concerning stereotypes, the focus in this study will be drawn mainly on participants' own perception of the stereotypical images of Muslim women that are stated above, great amount of them being spread by new media platforms. The in-depth interviews will investigate the Muslim women's experience with facing the stereotypes in both online and offline world, in case they have had any. The survey among Czech non-Muslim public will investigate the public perception of veiled women.

3. Methodology

This study, focusing on veiling behaviour among young Muslim women aged 22-36 aims to fill in the gap in the research and offers deeper explorations in the behaviour among specific gender, religion, and appearance in different socio-political contexts. Additionally, it will focus on the role of new media technologies on both the host society

(for the participants who migrated to another country) and personal media usages. That will provide a better understanding of the outside influence that can form own negotiation of veiling behaviour among young Muslim women.

Main research question is:

What is the role of the new media in young Muslim women aged 22-36 negotiation of veiling behaviour within their diverse socio-political context?

Methods

To gain more insight into this problematic, research applies both qualitative and quantitative approach or mixed method research. This type of research consists from collecting and analyzing both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data (Wisdom and Creswell, 2013). However, major focus was driven on the qualitative method: a unique lived experience of Muslim women aged 22-36, therefore in-depth interviews were chosen as the most suitable method. Each of the chosen methods will be described in detail in following chapters. To gain additional and supportive data about socio-political context of Czechia, survey among 100 respondents was conducted. The advantages and disadvantages of each method will be described in the following chapters together with the reasons for selecting them.

3.1 In-depth Interviews

The main reason why this method was chosen as the most suitable for this type of research is the fact that it allows the researcher and the participant to explore deeply an issue within the framework of guided conversation. The role of in-depth interviews is mainly to explore the boundaries of the problem and obtain context for a problem or an issue (Prairie Research Associates, 2001).

The primary advantage of this method is the fact that it provides very detailed information, being a more personal experience between interviewer and participant. Interviewer can provide a relaxed atmosphere so participants feel more comfortable with sharing their personal information. The limitations of this method might be the prone to bias, the level of interview leading skills of the interviewer and the fact that in-depth interview cannot be generalized and applied to a whole group (Boyce and Neal, 2006). The

in-depth interviews provide a mediation of a unique lived experience of the participants and are therefore ideal for the exploratory research that this study focuses on.

For better understanding of the problematic, participants from four countries with considerably different socio-political contexts were chosen: Netherlands, Czechia, Lebanon and Switzerland. From each of these countries 1-3 participants that fall into a category of Muslim women aged between 22 and 36 were interviewed. Considerably lower number of participants was chosen because of the character of this research which focuses on unique lived experience of the participants and the goal is not to generalize the results and apply them on the whole group but to understand the behaviour of an individual.

Purposive sampling was used for the selection of participants, meaning that the selection was based on the certain characteristics of a sample and objectives of the study (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). Veiling was not a part of the criteria, since the goal was to know the reason behind the choice to veil or not to veil and how socio-political context and new media influence might contribute to such decision. All the participants were chosen through the networking of the researcher.

The criteria for selecting the participants were the following:

- *Age: 22-36*
- *Gender: Women*
- *Country of residence: Czechia, Netherlands, Lebanon, Switzerland*
- *Religion: Muslim*

The obstacles in conducting this research were most importantly the difficulties in finding the informants willing to participate in the in-depth interviews. Paradoxically the biggest interest and fastest response was made by the participants from geographically farthest country, Lebanon. The snow-ball method (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004) was very effective in gaining contacts especially in Czechia, meaning that after getting one informant, that informant was later on helpful with getting other contacts. I also have to mention great help from Mrs. Smolíková from *Integration Centre Prague (ICP)* who helped me with contacting some of the informants from Czechia.

All the interviews lasted for little more than one hour, with one exception of hour and a half long interview as the longest one and 51 minutes for the shortest one. All the interviews with participants from other countries than Czechia were conducted through Skype due to geographic proximity between the researcher and the participant. One of the

participants from Czechia preferred the option of video call as well due to her busy schedule, other two interviews with Czech informants were conducted in several cafes in Prague city center. For the purpose of this research, prior to other interviews one pilot interview was conducted with a non-representative of Muslim women using Skype video call.

In-depth interview was used with focus on the biographical method which motivates the interviewees to share their personal live stories through storytelling (Bornat, 2008). Using this approach I tried to navigate the participants to talk about four certain topics. The topics discussed with the participants were the following: *lived experience and daily live, clothing, veiling and on-line activity and media*. The ice-breaking questions to make participants more willing to talk with me were most of the time these: *How did you spend the weekend? How are you feeling today?* Then I followed with asking the participants about their personal background and questions about their daily live: *How do you usually spend your day? Where do you feel the most/the least comfortable? Where do you usually spend most of your time?* They were also asked about *the religious and cultural traditions that they practice, the importance of veiling and clothing in general* and finally we discussed their *online activity*, such as the amount of time they spend on social media, if they discuss religion or politics there and whether they are part of any groups or follow any content related to veiling or religion in general. The important part of each interview was also *the discussion about the impact of new media and the stereotypes that are being spread about Muslim community*.

3.1.1 Participants

The following chapter will shortly introduce the participants of this study to provide more insight into their personal background. The order of the participants follows the order in which the interviews were conducted. That depended on the time schedule of the participants. The table with personal information such as age, country of origin, country of residence and the fact whether the participant wears hijab daily or not, will be laid out at the end of this chapter for better clarity.

Ghadir, 22, Participant 1

Ghadir was a first participant that I interviewed. I obtained her contact through Facebook group *Arab Journalism and Communication* which connects university students and journalists of Arabic origin. The interview was conducted using WhatsApp call due to geographic proximity. At the time of the interview, Ghadir was 22 years old and living and studying in Lebanon, although she had also lived in Saudi Arabia since between the ages of 5 till 17. Ghadir works as a journalist. She wears hijab for religious reasons and practice Islamic traditions, such as praying five times a day and fasting during Ramadan.

Ghofran, 26, Participant 2

Ghofran was a second participant I interviewed. Same as with Ghadir, I gained her contact through Facebook group *Arab Journalism and Communication*, I became a member of. The interview was conducted through Skype video-call. She lived in Lebanon for most of her life, however at the time of the interview she had already lived in Switzerland for 2 years, in a city of Lausanne where she moved to finish her Master degree and work on a project in virtual reality field. She also works as a graphic designer. Ghofran is married since 2016 and her husband also works in Switzerland, although in a different city.

Yasmine, 26, Participant 3

Yasmine lives in the Netherlands, she was born and raised in the city of Amsterdam, but her family originally comes from Morocco. The interview with her was conducted via Skype video call. She studies Psychology and works as motivational coach, she also starts her own company selling popsicles. She is married. Yasmine does not wear a veil. Yasmine participated as an interviewee in my group project from last year¹⁶ that was conducted in the Netherlands and agreed to participate again.

¹⁶ More about this group project is mentioned in the Literature review chapter. See the whole project in Appendix no.: 2

Mahrukh, 36, Participant 4

The interview with Mahrukh was conducted face-to-face in Café Martin, Prague and lasted for about an hour and half, which was the longest interview out of all. Mahrukh lives in Czechia since 2009, now she works as an English teacher for different companies in Prague. She is originally from Pakistan and was raised in a Muslim family. She used to veil for cultural reasons and after the age of 22 also for religious reasons. She stopped after few years. Now she does not actively practice Islam religious traditions anymore.

Ratna, 28, Participant 5

Ratna currently lives in Jakarta, Indonesia. The interview with Ratna was conducted through Skype video-call for this very reason. She works as an economist for government institutions. She lived in Rotterdam, Netherlands for almost two years to study for her Master degree and recently moved back to Indonesia for work. Like Yasmine, Ratna participated as an interviewee in my group project from last year and agreed to participate again. She wears hijab daily and comes from religious family.

Amira, 31, Participant 6

Amira is originally from Egypt, but lives in Czechia now. The interview was conducted through Skype video-call as she preferred this type of communication over the face-to-face due to her busy schedule. Amira is a software engineer and moved to Czechia in May 2018 because of her husband's work. I received her contact from *Integration Centre Prague*.

Zeinab, 27, Participant 7

Zeinab is originally from Syria. She moved with her family to Czechia in 2012 because of the war. I gained her contact from Mrs. Smolíková from *Integration Centre Prague*, where Zeinab also worked during her internship. Zeinab is currently finishing her studies of Economics at ČZU. She comes from religious family and wears hijab every day. Interview with Zeinab was conducted face-to-face in a café The Kavárna in Vršovice, Prague.

Table of participants:

Name	Age	Country of residence	Country of origin	Wears hijab daily
Ghadir	22	Lebanon	Lebanon	Yes
Ghofran	26	Switzerland	Lebanon	Yes
Mahrugh	36	Czechia	Pakistan	No
Yasmine	26	Netherlands	Morocco	No
Ratna	28	Netherlands	Indonesia	Yes
Amira	31	Czechia	Egypt	Yes
Zeinab	28	Czechia	Syria	Yes

3.1.2 Ethical Aspects of the In-depth interviews

As the method used in this research, namely in-depth interview, is very personal and can touch subjects that the participants might be sensitive to, the assurance of confidentiality must be given as well as the agreement with being recorded. Recording the interview serves several purposes such as encouraging considered responses and providing the back-up information for the interviewer (Prairie Research Associates, 2001). Therefore, all the participants were asked to sign the agreement where they stated that they agree with being recorded and the information they shared being used for academic purpose. They were also given the option not to answer the questions they do not feel comfortable with. By signing the agreement they agreed with their first name and age being published. None of the participants had the problem with that and all of them agreed that they do not need nor want their first name being changed for the purpose of this study. I tried to bring positive and friendly atmosphere during the interviews so all the participants felt comfortable sharing their stories and not feel pushed into telling me information they did not feel comfortable sharing.

3.2 Survey

Additionally, to gain more information about the socio-political context and public opinion on veiling, I decided to conduct a small survey in Czechia, to confirm or disprove the hypothesis, that *the Islamic practice of veiling is perceived rather negatively by Czech non-Muslim public in Czechia*. This hypothesis was based mainly on the findings in books

by Topinka (2016) and Ostránský (2017)¹⁷ and own experience of the researcher from using new media and interacting with her peers in Czech media environment. The survey was created and conducted electronically through the platform Survio.com. The survey was later shared organically through social media platforms, such as Facebook, especially among researcher's peers, as well as it was spread through e-mail when communicating with older generation.

The main advantage of this method is high representativeness, especially when conducted among great number of respondents. Due to the standardization, the results of surveys are usually pretty precise. The data gathering especially with electronic surveys is very convenient and fast. If the survey is conducted anonymously it also stimulates the respondents to be more honest with their answers. The main disadvantage of surveys is the fact that they are not the best method to investigate complex issues as they do not offer that much flexibility in the questions and answers (Urban, 2005). That is the main reason why this method was chosen as an additional way to support the main qualitative research.

What was investigated in this survey was mainly the perception of Islam and the perception of veiled women in Czechia. Respondents were also asked, if they actively participate in any online groups or follow any content concerning politics and religion. Although this quantitative research might provide interesting and rich data, main focus will still be given to the findings from the qualitative research and the results from this survey will be viewed as additional and supportive data.

3.2.1 Respondents

This is the **demographic** of the survey:

Gender

Women:	70 %
Men:	30 %
Other:	0 %

Age:

Under 18:	8 %
18 – 27:	20 %

¹⁷ See chapter Stereotypes

28 – 40:	39 %
41 – 60:	22 %
Over 61:	11 %

Residence:

Prague:	34 %
Brno:	2 %
City with less than 20 000 citizens:	44 %
City of 20 000 – 100 000 citizens:	7 %
City of 100 000 – 300 000 citizens:	4 %
Capital city of the region:	9 %

Education:

Elementary:	9 %
Secondary vocational:	6 %
High school with graduation:	46 %
University:	49 %

Finally, the respondents were asked about their **religion**, as being non-Muslim was a part of the criteria to participate in this survey. The majority of the respondents are atheist (86 %), the rest (14 %) claims to be either of Christian or Christian Catholic religion.

3.2.2 Ethical Aspects of the Survey

When conducting the survey, the researcher should bear in mind the autonomy, decision-making and dignity of the respondents as well as not causing harm of any kind to them. Ethical standards also protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the subjects, especially if the survey contains sensitive questions. Only researcher should have access to the data and he/she should never share this data with other respondents.¹⁸ Therefore, the survey used in this study was conducted anonymously. The respondents were not asked to

¹⁸Centre for Innovation and Research in Teaching. *Ethical Concerns in Research*. [online],[2019-04-20].

share their personal data, apart from the demographic data, such as their gender and age. None of the respondents was obligated to fill in the survey, they choose whether they wanted to participate or not and if they did not feel comfortable with any of the questions, they could have ended the survey and not participate at all without any consequences.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Analysis of the Qualitative Research Phase

Thematic approach was used for the data analysis of the qualitative research. The thematic approach is based on a constructivist theory, which involves open, axial, and selective codes (Boeije, 2010). Firstly, collected data were analyzed using open coding, which is the literal interpretation or initial representation of data, and the meaning that is clearly observed from the data. After open coding, the data were analyzed using axial codes, where the open codes were grouped into categories/clusters, where the relation between codes was applied. Finally, to answer the research question selective codes were created in order to make data more structured. The connection between the themes and theory eventually took place where necessary (Boeije, 2010).

4.1.1 Theme 1: Clothing as a Mean of Communication

The participants mostly agreed that they view clothing as a way of expressing themselves, their identity, their emotions or mood or basically to match the occasion. However, the reasons behind their choice of clothing varied as the answers showed. There were noticeable differences between expressing either personal, cultural or religious identity.

Clothing as a way to express own personal identity and current mood for women who live in Western countries for more than 10 years

As it turned out, women who live in Western countries for more than 10 years (2 participants in total) answered that they look at clothing more as a way of self-expression of their own personal identity and also current mood, which might be different every day. „*For me clothing is the way of self-expression. How I feel, How I want to feel.*“ (Yasmine). They both expressed joy in talking about their clothing choice process. „*I like to dress up.*

Through time I came to: I like to dress up for myself... good (laughter). I finally found the strength to dress up for me and not for other people. So I had always been into colours, type of clothes that brought out joy in me. So for me clothing is part of me, it brings lot of fun and joy.“ (Mahrukh).

Other participant who wore a hijab also expressed her joy with clothing even in dressing in a more sexy way. However, only her husband, family or other women are allowed to see that: *„Like other girls, I like pretty dresses and clothes, sexy and bright ones, I wear them inside my house in front of my husband. I can also wear them in front of my family, and in front of any other woman too as long as there is no other men who can see me.*” (Amira)

The importance of clothing modestly for veiled women as a protection from patriarchy

The participants who answered that modesty is very important for them, wear hijab every day for religious reasons. Two participants who did not mention modesty at all, do not veil, or very occasionally, mostly only for cultural or other than religious reasons. Women who veil daily put more accent on the modesty as playing a big role in their clothing choices. *“I try to wear what is usually called modest clothes.”* (Ghofran). All of the participants who wear hijab described their decision to wear modest way of clothing as a protection from being viewed as sexual objects: *„...also modesty and decency. God does not want women to be judged by their appearance, sexuality or being objectified.”* (Ghofran). Not wanting to be objectified is a strong motivation to dress modestly for Ghadir: *„I don't have to worry about guys cat calling me on the streets. If I am doing a presentation at work or at university I feel like people listen just for the content of my work. I do not give people a chance to view me as a sexual object. I respect myself.”* (Ghadir).

Yasmine has never worn a veil and she does not intend to. However, she understands hijab as being a general way of covering herself and protecting herself from the outside world and patriarchy. She claims that she covers herself in her own way, meaning she does not wear hijab on her head. Although she did not use the word modesty or modest clothes specifically: *„I always say hijab is just general way of coverage and I do it in my own way. If you choose to do it in your way, do it, if you choose in any other ways, do it, I respect that.”* (Yasmine).

Combination of modest clothing with modern approach

Three out of five participants who veil everyday showed interest in dressing in a modern way, although still being modest in their clothing choices: „*I am modest but at the same time I am modern. Right now I enjoy my jeans and make up, but maybe in a future I hope I will be able to dress more and more modestly.*“ (Ghadir). They all accented the importance of looking fashionable while wearing a veil. „*I think, as a Muslim girl living in Czechia and wearing a veil, it is important to look elegant and fashionable as much as I can, most of the people think that clothes reflect who you are and they judge you as a result of it.*“ (Amira). Ghofran supported such statement by saying: „*So I try my best not to wear any dark colours and to always be neat and to be a bit fashionable.*“ (Ghofran).

Feeling as a representative of Muslim women in Western countries

For Ghofran, who lives in the Western country for two years now, the answer was very specific and it can be said, she feels very self-conscious when it comes to the choice of dress but for different reasons than other participants. She feels that she is being viewed as a representative for all Muslim women, therefore the pressure to dress both modestly and modern is high. „*As a woman living here, you always feel like you are a representative for all the Muslim women around the world.*“ (Ghofran).

Clothing on other people from Muslim women perception

In relation to clothing on other people, all interviewed women agreed they do not judge others and do not expect them to dress in a same way as they do, meaning in a modest way. „*I don't care if my friend is wearing a hijab or not,*“ (Ghadir). However, Ghadir also expressed her confusion with Western women calling to stop being objectified while still dressing in a sexy way: „*I am not judging women who dress sexy but for me personally it does not make sense for someone to dress in a sexy way and then come and say: why are you calling me sexy?*“ (Ghadir). Zeinab herself did not put much attention to clothing on others, as she view it as their own personal choice, although she did mention some of her Arabic friends who do question the way people in Czechia dress: „*Maybe some of my Arabic friends question why people wear such short things especially in summer, almost like beach clothes (laughter). But for me, I do not mind.*“ (Zeinab).

Clothing on other people as a source of inspiration for women who live in Western countries for more than 10 years

Both participants who live in Western countries for more than ten years agreed that they observe others and seek inspiration in their creativity when it comes to clothing. *„I do observe clothing on other people. Whatever catches my eye. Interesting colors, combinations, whatever inspires me. The way this person is carrying themselves. So I look at the person, at their clothing, how are they carrying themselves. It is a nice thing to watch, I take inspiration.“* (Mahrukh). Yasmine mentioned the role of media in seeking inspiration and fashion trends in clothing, *„Maybe on the Internet, on Instagram , I scroll sometimes and see trends and fashionable girls.“* (Yasmine).

4.1.2. Theme 2: The Reasons to Veil and not to Veil

The answers among participants varied when it came to the reasons behind their choice to veil or not to veil. Two participants named modesty as a main reason to cover themselves with hijab. Two other view it mainly as a recommendation and obeying God command. One participant also views it as a command from God but additionally as a must for every Muslim woman. One of the participants used to wear hijab as part of her spiritual journey and understanding the religion. However, she mentioned physical discomfort due to the heat as one of the reasons to stop. Lastly, one of the participants has never worn a veil and she does not intend to.

None of the participants who wear hijab felt pressure from their family or others when it came to their decision to start to veil. All of them agreed it was their own personal decision after some consideration.

Veiling as part of the spiritual journey

One of the interviewees used to wear a veil for a specific time period of her life and described it as a part of her spiritual journey of finding herself and the answers to her questions. *„And then there were more like spiritual reasons, that I got deeper, I wanted to know more about myself and spirituality. Spirituality was always important in my family, we always talked about that. That was also the time I started to wear scarf, I had longer sleeves. It was my own decision.“* (Mahrukh).

Physical discomfort of hijab

Mahrukh as the only participant tackled the aspect of physical comfort of wearing hijab. She referred to hot weather being a crucial problem that actually was one of the main reasons to loosen and finally remove the hijab: „*So I chose to wear the religious one and I liked it, then I went to hotter city for banking training. And it was really hot, so it started to be bothersome. It was the point probably where I decided to leave it (laughter),*“ (Mahrukh).

Veiling as obeying God's command

All five women from this study who wear veil every day agreed that they wear hijab for religious reasons rather than cultural. Four participants referred specifically to veiling as obeying a command from God. They never questioned their decision to veil. Amira viewed veiling herself as a representation of the fact that she follows God's order. Ratna viewed it as a must for every Muslim woman, claiming it to be mandatory. „*So veiling for me is one way to obey what God command for us. It is not an option in Islam, it is not a yes or no question even though I started with veiling like 5 years ago. Actually I have to start to veil when I enter adulthood. It is a mandatory for Muslim women, actually. So it is my way to obey what is command for me.*“ (Ratna). Nevertheless, Ratna admitted she did not search for the information about veiling actively but as she comes from very religious background, the practice of veiling seems natural for her: „*As far as I remember I didn't search for this information. But you know in Indonesia we are quite religious, I have quite religious environment. For example I have very religious parents and family and they all lectured me about why do I have to wear it. I didn't really look with intent for any source to convince myself. I had quite a lot of exposure without intent. And yeah I convince myself in the end.*“ (Ratna). That is in an opposition with a statement made by other participant, who claimed that you are supposed to learn these information, you do not inherit it.,, ...*this is actually in Islam as well, you are not supposed to inherit the religion, you are supposed to learn it,*“ (Ghadir). Zeinab who understands veiling as a command from God admitted that Quran can be interpreted differently by each individual or community.,, ...*obeying the God, what does he want from me. Or what is written in Quran...but as I said it can be interpreted differently everywhere.*“ (Zeinab).

Veiling as identification with other Muslims

Zeinab who lives in Czechia and wears hijab daily stated that for her veiling is also a way of identification with Muslim community. „...*for me the hijab is really important for Muslim women, it is like identification that I am Muslim.*“ (Zeinab). That can be supported by Amira’s statement that hijab makes her feel free and doing what she wants and believes in even inside a non-Islamic country.

Veil as a protection from being objectified

Several women accented the importance of veil as a protection from the patriarchy or being viewed as an object as one of the decisive factors to wear a veil: „*So if I walk around with my hijab on and people are talking to me, they are talking to me because of my the content of my work or my character. So they can appreciate my work, because I do not give them a chance to view me as a sexual object,*” (Ghadir). Ghofran shared the same view: „*for Muslims, we are advised to wear it for the fact that it is a protection from the patriarchy.*” (Ghofran). For Zeinab, when it comes to wearing hijab, protection from patriarchy is the second most important thing after identification as a Muslim. „*So wearing hijab is also as a protection for Muslim women. It protects me. I do not wear it in front of women and there are some men I do not have to wear it in front of.*” (Zeinab).

Veiling for cultural reasons rather than religious

Only one of the participants veils for cultural reasons over the religious ones. She does not wear a veil every day here in Prague. Nevertheless, when she visits her home country (Pakistan), she veils there for the cultural reasons. This practice is very important to her as she views it as a part of being accepted by the society. „*So with my city when I go there I still wear the headscarf, it is the cultural dress code, the requirement. When I do it there, I do feel powerful! When I follow their requirements from me, it doesn’t mean I have to follow everything, but just the basic cultural needs, then I can play my card, I do feel more powerful, there is a barter, people accept me.*“ (Mahrukh).

Pressure from Muslim community that goes with both the decision to veil and not to veil

Most of the women admitted that there is a certain pressure coming from the Muslim community itself, especially other women who wear the hijab. *„I did have struggles being in a company of other women who wore it. They were like: yeah you a Muslim, why don't you wear it. Then I said I am not ready to wear it in a way you are wearing it and I am covering myself in my own way.“* (Yasmine). Yasmine also feels certain pressure from her mother-in-law who insists she should dress even more modestly even though she claims to dress very decently.

Mahrukh spoke about the rise of expectations from the religious community for women that goes hand in hand with their decision to start to veil. *„And when I started to wear the Islamic way, it was more a way to show I practice my religion. People expected me to be more religious. Those who wear scarf, the expectations for them rise. People start thinking: You better be a better person.“* (Mahrukh). Ghofran described in more detail the struggles of her relative who decided to stop wearing the veil. *„For example my other sister, she is still a believer but a year ago, she removed her hijab. It was a big struggle for her, it was hard for my parents to accept, because of the fact that she would be stigmatized and bullied. Because people in the community talk a lot, so my parents did not want her to be part of that talk and also my dad did not want to be part of that talk. Because people will say: „Daughter of Hassan removed her hijab“ and especially the people from the small town. It took a lot of courage for my sister to make that decision.“* (Ghofran).

4.1.3. Theme 3: The Role of Socio-political Context

Different perception of veiled women within one country

Ghofran claimed that even within one country there can be certain differences in the perception of veiled women, concerning the regions. That makes them feel more free and accepted in one part of the country yet very self-conscious and aware in another part. *„In the French part of Switzerland, I feel like they are more open. And they are more or less accepting me, because now I understand the language. Lausanne also has some important schools here, so there is a lot of especially Iranians, so people here are used to see Muslim women more. Walking here I would see Muslim women frequently. But when I go*

to visit my husband in the German part, because he lives in a small town. I feel very self-conscious. In a train everyone is looking at me and it makes me really uncomfortable.“ (Ghofran).

That showed up to be true not just for non-Muslims viewing Muslims but also for Muslims themselves in the perception of their own religious and cultural dress code in their home countries. For Mahrukh who veils only for the cultural reasons, the cultural context of each region was a decisive factor whether to wear a veil or not: *„When I got back to my city, I still wore the scarf, we call it chador, I still had that. For me it was strictly just for that region, not for religion. That city was always more conservative. So with my city when I go there (hometown in Pakistan) I still wear the headscarf, it is the cultural dress code, the requirement. So this is how I feel. When I move to the other city, I do not have to wear the other scarf anymore.*“ (Mahrukh).

Being visibly Muslim in diverse socio-political contexts

Participant living in Lebanon felt really comfortable with her veil and to a question whether or not she ever faced any trouble because of her decision she answered: *„Maybe because I live in the Middle East, not really.*” (Ghadir). Ghofran brought up the difference between her experiences with clothing in Switzerland and Lebanon: *„I actually do dress differently here than in Lebanon, sometimes. Here I am less conservative. When I am here, I feel more comfortable.*” (Ghofran). She felt more judged by the Muslim community in Lebanon based on her way of clothing modestly.

Two of the veiled participants were victims of a verbal abuse in their current country of residence. Zeinab met with verbal abuse two times in Czechia only because of her visibly Muslim appearance. *„There were some old people yelling at me why am I here, to go back to my country, why do I wear a veil, if I am sick. So just these sentences, nothing too extreme. I did not reply back. But happen to me one time when one old woman started really screaming, so then I could not be quiet. So I told her I did not make any mistake and I live here and that it is my own decision to wear the hijab.*” (Zeinab). Ghofran had similar experience in her current home in Switzerland: *One of the first situations, I was in a supermarket and fairly old lady started shouting at me and spitting at me for no reason and I was shocked and could not answer anything more but: This is not nice. It happens rarely, but it happens. So usually when this happens, I have a very strong personality but in these cases I sometimes just freeze, so that is a little bit stressful.*“ (Ghofran). She also

tried to estimate how often such incidents happen: „*I have been living here for 2 years and around 8 months, and this happened around 6 times, 7 maximum. So not very frequently you can say. In Stuttgart, people were also calling me names.*“ (Ghofran).

4.1.4 Theme 4: Acculturation

In terms of acculturation, main focus was drawn on the four strategies that immigrants tend to apply when accommodating to the host country: assimilation, separation, marginalization and integration (Berry, 1997). Not all of the participants had the experience with going through acculturation process, as this was not a part of the criteria for participant's selection. Therefore, this part of study focuses only on those who had migrated to different country. For the purpose of this research, we will refer to such country as *host country/culture/society* and the country they migrated from as *home country/culture/society*.

Combining home culture with host culture in a beneficial way for the immigrant

Several of the participant's stories were very informative for this topic of acculturation, as they have their own personal experience with migrating to another country or struggling with two cultures at a time. As linked to the acculturation theory, all of the participants with such experience perform the strategy of *integration*, when they try to maintain the contact with her home culture, as well as accepting the aspects of the host culture.

The importance of the host country's acceptance towards the immigrant

Participants spoke about the importance of the acceptance from the host society towards them as one of the crucial factors of their well-being in that country. The most important factors were social live, such as finding friends but also finding work and being able to live in a host country as a complete citizen.

All of the veiled participants mentioned the stares they often receive in Western countries. However, they do not feel particularly offended by that if these stares are not followed by a hateful action. „*Sometimes, some people in the streets look at me weirdly*

here in Czechia, but I don't care as long as they never did a hateful reaction against me.” (Amira).

The everyday situations and social interactions appeared to be very important for two of the participants who live in Czechia and wear hijab *“I do care about the everyday situations between me and the Czech people, which are fine and I find them kind and nice especially when they discover that I can speak a few words in Czech,”* (Amira). However, Zeinab would appreciate more social life: *„I still miss more social life. But I do have friends now, I am happy”* (Zeinab).

Although feeling happy and content with her life as a student now, Zeinab voiced some worries she is having about her future living as a veiled woman in Czechia in terms of finding work. She referred to experience from her friends who had to overcome such problems: *„I think about the future. I am really worried that I might not find work here in Prague. I know...I think that it will be difficult because I wear veil. Second thing is that I do not have the citizenship I have the long-term residence. I have heard some stories from friend who is Czech, convert to Islam. And she couldn't find work at all because she wears hijab. So I am worried for my future, where I can work. I can work at NGO, they do not care about my appearance. But I think in my field where I study it will be hard”* (Zeinab). Amira mentioned that in some aspects of life she can feel quite limited as living here in Czechia now: *„Here in Czechia I can't go to any swimming pool because of my veil and burkini.”*(Amira). Ghofran talked about her life in Switzerland with mixed feelings, however quite positively: *„It took me a while to get used to Switzerland, they are very nice people in general, especially in the French part but some people can be a bit racist sometimes.”* (Ghofran).

Identity crisis as a clash of two cultural identities

Yasmine though, referred to her situation, being Moroccan Dutch although born and raised in Netherlands, as identity crisis: *„We struggle with two cultures you know. We are Moroccan but we are also Dutch you know, we have two legs and one is in the water and other on the ground. It is like identity crisis. With me, I am just a human being you know. I dont put labels on myself and I do as I feel. I want to feel free...but people around me are like: Oh you are Moroccan. Or you are Muslim. I can't hang out with you, you can't go to the bar or to a café. Or hangout with people that drink. And that makes me uncomfortable and sad. I am just me.”* (Yasmine).

Feeling like a global citizen after living in a host country for more than 10 years

Mahrukh has a very unique experience compared to other women who participated in this study. She already lives in Prague for 10 years and it can be said that she performs the combination of strategies with dominance of assimilation, thinking of herself as a global citizen, not attached to any culture specifically. For example, she does not wear a veil anymore and does not practice the religion actively.

„I think over time I became this international person with international culture I would say (laughter). I see myself as citizen of the world. I am not attached to any culture I would say. It happened over time, I am not forcing anything and also I am not rejecting anything.” (Mahrukh).

4.1.5 Theme 5: The Role of Media

The power of negative portrayal of Muslim women in the media which might result in abandoning the veil by Muslim women living in the Western countries

All the participants admitted that negative portrayal of Muslim women in the media might have a power to change the way some of them negotiate their veiling behaviour, thus abandon the veil. If not for them, then for their “veiled sisters” who might have some bad personal experience and feel in danger because of the overall media portrayal. All of the participants showed understanding for those who chose to abandon the veil, however the majority of those who wear it, did not come to a point where they questioned their decision of veiling themselves. *„For me, it would be hard to put it away, but there are some cases where there is an opposite issue.”* (Zeinab).

One of the participants was sceptical about the future where news including the news without particular context are shared extremely fast and in minds of some people Muslims are put into one box that is being prejudged. She accented the huge role of media in spreading the stereotypes. *„Yes, I think it makes it harder to insist to wear hijab. I have internal worry that if the situation would become worse or if the media fires up the general opinion against hijab, will I continue to wear it? I hope so, but I don't know what will be my choice at that time.”* (Amira). She followed with explaining that in Islam if your life is in danger, individuals are free to abandon some of their practices in order to keep

themselves safe. „*Our religion gave us the freedom to choose to wear it or to take it off...if there is any threat against us without our blame. Because the safety of women is more important than hijab itself.*“ (Amira).

Yasmine also emphasized the role of media in such choice, nevertheless she admitted the final choice is always personal. „*At the end I will chose it myself. But media have a big role,*” (Yasmine). She viewed media as being the determinant of what is and what is not accepted in the society. She would see as a solution if in contrary, media started to share positive content about the veil. „*So, if they put a lot of positive things about the veil, people will feel positive about it. If they put negative, people will feel negative. Input, output, you know. If media can help in a positive way, it would be nice.*” (Yasmine).

Nevertheless, two of the participants claimed that if the devotion to God is strong and the reason behind veiling is religious rather than cultural, there is no need to question the decision to veil even under pressure from negative portrayal. If the woman is strongly convinced in her beliefs, our participants think such woman will not question her decision to veil. „*If they feel like it is a mandatory, it is necessary to obey the commands of God, they will not be afraid. If they feel strong, they know it is God command to veil.*” (Ratna). The religious reason of veiling is therefore crucial and more important than the cultural one as this statement showed: „*If I was veiled for culture reasons then maybe, if I lived in Europe for example I might question it. But I feel like my religion is really universal, I can apply it everywhere. I feel like I can be anywhere in the world and I would still believe the same things.*” (Ghadir).

The feeling of being under the watch of Western society because of negative portrayal of Muslim women in the media

Majority of the participants also pointed out the power of negative media portrayal in the way they negotiate their behaviour in general. The main factor of that is the cultural visibility of Muslim women. „*Sometimes, you feel like you need to try harder to explain yourself more. It is not my job everyday to wake up and go to work and explain to everyone my clothing. I do not want to do that but sometimes I feel forced to do that,*” (Ghofran). The pressure of being under the watch of other people escalates mainly after negative news about Muslim community are being widespread by the media. „*Sometimes, when something happens, for example the terrorist attacks in Paris, I feel people were really judging me and then you feel like apologizing for something you did not have your hand*

in.” (Ghofran). Another participant, although not veiled herself, confirmed such statement and again emphasized the role of media as a determinant of what people believe in. *„If something goes wrong in the Muslim country and it is shown several times in the media, so whenever word Muslim comes up, people are scared to talk to them...so now so many times things are repeated and shown in the media, so people automatically start to believe it.”* (Mahrukh). Mahrukh continued with giving a personal experience when talking about woman from Western society in her surroundings that is influenced by the negative portrayal of Muslim women in the media in her perception of them. *„One of my acquaintances used to say this: I saw these women in scarfs and I was so scared you know ..And I asked: What were they doing? And she said: Oh they were just shopping. Then I asked what is the point of getting scared? Women shopping just dressing differently than you.”* (Mahrukh). She explained such behaviour with the fact that her acquaintance is not familiar with many veiled women or with this practice in general and what is presented to her is taken out of the context. *„She travels a lot but she has never been in a Muslim country, maybe just Turkey on the beach, so not really experiencing the country. So that is the thing, this is unfortunately how it is portrayed in the media. That Muslims do shit and everybody gets scared. These people wear these kind of clothes, so stay away.”* (Mahrukh). Yasmine presented certain injustice that she perceived from the Dutch media when it comes to presenting news. *„When something bad happens, they will say it was caused by a Moroccan guy, but when a Dutch guy does the same, they will not show him. They will say it is a mental illness or so.”* (Yasmine).

Mahrukh strongly emphasized the determining role of media in spreading a bad picture about her home country Pakistan by saying: *„ unfortunately my culture, my society, my country, there are many bad things happening and these are the things that catch attention and it is repeated so many times, that it is imprinted in people’s minds.“* (Mahrukh). Ratna on the other hand thinks that the media do not determine the reality and gives the decisive role to the audience. However, she admitted that Islam is being portrayed in the bad light. *„I can’t deny that some of the media still picture Islam as extreme religion but at the same time I feel like not all of the people are as stupid and they can digest what is true and what is not.”* (Ratna).

Positive media content about the Muslims in Western countries

Only two of the participants mentioned some positive media content on the other hand, for example the response after the recent attacks on Muslims in New Zealand¹⁹. „*For example after the bomb in the Christchurch. I felt like the international feeling for Muslims is quite Ok, they respect us, they support us. So I don't feel like everyone is hating Muslim or everyone is attacking Muslim. I can feel the love as well.*“ (Ratna). Mahrukh perceived positively the touristic programs on certain TV channels. „*On the other hand, there are some interesting touristic programs, so at least there are two sides.*“ (Mahrukh).

Stereotype of confusing Muslims with Arabs

Women who are originally from the Middle East mentioned the stereotypes that go with presenting their religion in the media. The confusion that is being made with mixing Arab and Muslim is particularly offensive to Ghofran who is originally from an Arabic country. „*Also I am bothered when they mix Arab and Muslim as a same thing. For example in Lebanon, half of the people is Christian. Not every Muslim person is Arab person and other way around. So after 9/11 or ISIS there is lot of bad connotations with Arab people in general.*“ (Ghofran). She also specifically mentioned the power of stereotypes that are being used by the Western movies productions: „*In general I feel that in Europe or in the US, you see the movies. It really hurts when for example I am watching a movie and they portray Beirut as a desert. We do not have a desert in Lebanon! Or when they talk about civil war, they portray US that comes there to the rescue but that is not true. Or when the bad guys is always an Arab man.*“ (Ghofran).

Stereotype of oppressed women

Several participants also mentioned the stereotype of a woman in a veil that is presented as being oppressed quite often from the perception of our participants. They mentioned how these pictures do not reflect reality at all, as from their point of view majority of the women do not feel oppressed for wearing a hijab. „*There are some media*

¹⁹ Attacks at two mosques happened on March 15th, 2019 in Christchurch, New Zealand and left nearly 50 people dead and 48 wounded. BBC. *Christchurch Shootings: 49 Dead in New Zealand Mosque Attacks*. [online], In: 15.3.2019. [2019-05-01]

outlets that show women as oppressed by their husbands, fathers or religious leaders. And maybe there is a tiny minority of women being oppressed like this but it is still a minority.“ (Ghadir). She accented the role of media in spreading such stereotype: *„I feel like if they found one girl in a million who wears a hijab who is forced to do so, they would make a story out of it. And not focus on the millions who wear it as their choice.*” (Ghadir). Ghofran linked this issue to feminism, as she personally considers herself to be a feminist and she feels particularly offended if feminists from the other cultures portray Muslim women as being oppressed: *„And Muslim women are always portrayed as oppressed which I hate because I am a feminist. It hurts me when another feminist talks about another Muslim girl in a way that she is being oppressed.*“ (Ghofran).

The misuse of the symbol of the veil by the media

Only one of the participants referred specifically to veil being used a symbol by the media in a negative way: *„Unfortunately, the media shows the veil as a symbol of ignorance and uneducated person who can kill others.*” (Amira).

Following hijab fashion for inspiration and entertainment

Two out of five participants who wear hijab admitted that they do follow trends of so called hijab fashion, whether to seek inspiration or just for fun and their own entertainment. *“Yes, I follow so many actually. Because sometimes I wear my jeans and my shirt and do not know which hijab to wear because it also has to suit my purse and my shoes.*” (Ghadir). Second participant follows such content only to watch as all the shops she follows on Facebook are located in Egypt: *„I follow veil fashion groups on Facebook but all of these brand shops are in Egypt so I just watch.*” (Amira). However, there is a little disapproval with the way hijab is sometimes portrayed there as a trend that emphasizes only the beauty: *„Although not all the models wear the hijab properly, because hijab is not a trend. It is supposed to cover our beauty not to emphasize it.*” (Ghadir). One participant does not follow these trends at all for this very reason. *„Sometimes, I feel like they are using the hijab in a way I do not like that much, just for the fashion.*” (Ghofran).

The purpose of following hijab fashion purely for entertainment can be observed in the statements of Yasmine, who does not wear a hijab herself but still follows content about it. She spoke about one of her favorite fashion bloggers Dina Tokio with passion:

„And I admired her for all the effort she put into showing young women they can wear the hijab in a way that can be fashionable. Trying to use her power to fill the hole in the market, acknowledge that we, the Muslim community, also love fashion.” (Yasmine). Other participant who does not veil herself does not actively follow any content about veiling, but when she finds such content by accident it makes her happy. „If I see something by accident, for example in the hijab fashion and some interesting combination of clothes, I get excited. It intrigues me.” (Mahrukh).

Ratna does not follow such content anymore, nevertheless she admits that when she was making her decision to start to wear hijab, this content was very helpful. *„When I was starting to make that decision of veiling, I followed them, because I needed to convince myself, I didnt want to look bad or ugly you know and from social media I can convince me that I can look quite well with this hijab.” (Ratna).*

Struggling in online space because of visibly different culture identity

Only one of the respondents expressed personal experience with getting into uncomfortable situation in online space only because of her cultural appearance. *„Just one time the center where I was learning the Czech language posted my picture between my class attendants in the center Facebook page and the comments were diverse, some said hateful words towards immigrants and that they should not stay in Czechia and others liked the idea of the diverse students in the center.” (Amira). However, she did not feel particularly affected by this situation and did not reflect it onto her daily life. „For me, I didn’t consider it as hateful speech, because I know that online speech is different than the reality speech. There are a lot of guys who find it easy to speak badly behind their keyboards.” (Amira).*

The help of new media with accommodating to a new country

Most of the participants who have the experience with moving from one country to another mentioned the great help of new media during such stressful process. Facebook groups were the most mentioned ones for their ability to connect expats living in a given country or a tool to buy/sell stuff or inform about accommodation and learn about a life in a foreign country. These functions were crucial for all the participants with such experience. *„There are groups of foreigners in Czech Republic, I became part of. To see*

life of other foreigners in Czechia, to see life of Czech people here. So I started meeting people from these groups in real life as well from these groups. At the beginning I also joined some groups like Muslims in Czech Republic, because of course I come from that background. Women were asking where to buy scarf or a veil etc." (Mahrukh). Zeinab from Czechia confirmed the helpfulness of such groups and also mentioned specific ones that she is being part of. *...like Arabs in Czech Republic. There are two groups. They put news, like if someone dies, if someone opens a new shop, restaurant, when they find employees, like in Kebab places."* (Zeinab). Amira has the same experience. *„I joined a group on Facebook for Egyptians in Czechia to communicate with them and to benefit each other."* (Amira). Ratna also mentioned the helpful groups from her study exchange in Netherlands: *„...there were some of the groups, we help each other there in the groups. It was helpful a lot."* (Ratna). Ghofran, although not actively using any of these groups, mentioned the help of new media for enabling her to stay in contact with her family in Lebanon.

4.2 Analysis of the Quantitative Research Phase

The survey was conducted among unrepresentative sample of 100 respondents from Czech non-Muslim public. As the survey was conducted in Czech language, the results are translated in each paragraph dedicated to certain question. The formulation of the hypothesis and finally the compilation of the questions in this survey were based on the findings in previous studies published by Topinka (2016) and Ostránský (2017). The hypothesis of the survey is the following: ***the Islamic practice of veiling is perceived rather negatively by Czech non-Muslim public in Czechia.***

The survey analysis was conducted through the portal Survio.com which provides convenient electronic tools that enables the researcher to filter the answers of the respondents based on each questions, demographics or the date of the survey submission by the respondents.

The results of the survey will be divided into several chapters based on the topics of the questions. The themes will be divided into following chapters: *Online political and religious activity* and *The perception of Islam and veiled women by Czech non-Muslim public.*

4.2.1 Theme 6: Online Political and Religious Participation

Respondents were asked about their online activity: how much time they usually spend on social media per day, which apps they use the most and whether they discuss politics, culture or religion in the online space. These questions were asked in order to get a better picture about new media usage and content consumption of each respondent.

The majority of the respondents (46%) uses the social media between 1 and 3 hours per day. 26% uses social media less than an hour a day. 13% of the respondents do not use them at all, 13% uses them between 3 and 5 hours per day. 1% uses the social media between 5 and 7 hours a day and 1% uses it for more than 7 hours. The majority of the respondents uses mostly Facebook (72%), Whatsapp (63%) and Instagram (46%). Some of the other platforms that were mentioned by the respondents are Pinterest, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn.

The majority of the respondents also agreed that they do not discuss politics or religion in an online space. However, the number of respondents **never** discussing politics online was lower (72%) than in terms of religion (85%). 13% agreed that they discuss politics/religion online **less than once a month** and 1% agreed they discuss these topics **once a week**. 2% discuss politics in online space **daily** compared to none for religion. 12% discuss politics and 1% discuss religion **occasionally** (elections, etc.).

Another question asked specifically if the respondents were ever part of the discussion about Islam or Muslims in the online space. Majority of them (86%) claimed that they never participated in such discussion in comparison to 14% who said yes. 66% of the respondents stated that they never publically shared any content about Islam and veiling. 10% of the respondents shared such content at least once and 24% doesn't recall doing so.

4.2.2 Theme 7: The Perception of Islam and Veiled Women by Czech non-Muslim Public

Concerning the perception of Islam by Czech non-Muslims, 28% totally agreed and 31% rather agreed with the fact that Islam is totally incompatible with the Czech culture. 32% rather disagreed and 9% totally disagreed with this statement. When it comes to the importance of this topic in Czech environment, 48% of the respondents thought the

importance of this topic is average, 26% that it is very important and 21% claimed it to be marginally important. 5% thought that this topic is not at all important in the Czech environment.

The majority of the respondents answered that they perceive the habit of veiling **neutrally** (46%). However, 33% perceive it **rather negatively** and 19% **very negatively**. On the other hand 2% perceive veiling **rather positively** and none of the respondents perceive it **very positively**. As results showed for those respondents who answered that they totally agree with a statement that Islam is incompatible with Czech culture (the total of 28% out of all the respondents), the great majority perceived the habit of veiling **very negatively** (46,4 %) or **rather negatively** (39,3%). 14,3% perceived veiled women **neutrally**. On the other hand, 9% of the respondents claimed they that they totally disagree with a statement that Islam is incompatible with Czech culture. Nevertheless, out of those respondents 22,2% still perceived veiling **very negatively**, 11,1% **rather negatively**, 44,4% **neutrally** and 22,2 % **rather positively**.

The majority of the respondents (82%) did not have any woman who practice the tradition of veiling in their surroundings. 18% of the respondents had at least one woman who practices this tradition in their surroundings. Even out of those, only 11,1% perceived veiling **rather positively**, 55,6% **neutrally**, 27,8% **rather negatively** and finally 5,6% **very negatively**.

Another question investigated if the respondents perceived veiled woman as potentially dangerous. Half of the respondents answered that **never**. 21% answered **rarely**, 17% answered that they perceived them as potentially dangerous **occasionally**, 9% **often** and 3% **every time**.

Respondents were also asked how they perceive the reason behind Muslim women's veiling. 63% perceived veiling as a **command from religion towards woman**, 19% perceived it as a **command from man towards woman**, 15% as a **voluntary choice of a woman** and 14% as **discrimination towards woman**. The rest of the respondents either perceived it as *combination of factors* or *other*. Those respondents who chose to answer *other* were more explicit in their answers claiming they perceive veiling as: „*cultural habit*”, “*totally incompatible with Czech culture in the way it is presented to us*”. One respondent wrote this: „*To continue with the practice of veiling even after migrating to EU is ignorance towards European traditions and values and unwillingness of integration in my opinion.*” Other respondent stated this: „*In the past due to stereotypes I used to perceive it negatively as a command towards women, however now I view it as it a*

voluntary choice of a woman.”. Some claimed in their answers that it can be either one of these factors.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, the results of both the qualitative and quantitative research phase will be summarized and linked to the theories outlined in the literature review.

The results of the survey showed that the majority of respondents perceived the tradition of veiling among Muslim women rather negatively or very negatively. Less than 20% of the respondents had a woman who practices the tradition of veiling in their surroundings. Even for these respondents who have a contact with veiled woman, the perception of veiling was still either neutral or rather negative. Half of the respondents also admitted that at times they perceive veiled woman as potentially dangerous. When it comes to reason behind veiling of Muslim woman, majority of respondents perceived it as a command towards woman from the religion. There were several respondents who also commented on this tradition, one of the respondents claimed it to be ignorant and a sign of unwillingness to integrate and second who admitted that in the past under the influence of stereotypical imagery, the respondent’s perception was negative but now this respondent understands it as a voluntary choice of the woman. In conclusion, the hypothesis that *the Islamic practice of veiling is perceived rather negatively by the Czech non-Muslim public* was proven during the quantitative research phase.

When discussing clothing as a mean of communication, the participants mostly agreed that they view clothing as a way of expressing themselves, their identity, their emotions and mood or to match the occasion. However, the reasons behind their choice of clothing varied. There were noticeable differences between expressing either personal, cultural or religious identity. For the two participants who were either born in a Western country or lived in such for longer than 10 years, the choice of clothing was rather an expression of their own personal identity and everyday mood. They expressed joy in clothing choices. In their case clothing can be viewed as an extension of the psychological state of its user (Dearborn, 1918). All the rest of the participants wore hijab daily and for majority of them modesty played the biggest factor in their clothing choices. They view hijab as a protection from being objectified by the society, especially as a protection from patriarchy. It can be said that for the participants of this study wearing a hijab goes hand in

hand together with choosing to dress modestly. Therefore, we can say that our participants interpreted the verse of Qur'an: „...and the believing women are enjoined to lower their gaze and conceal their genitals, draw their headdress to cover their cleavage, and not to display their beauty, except that which has to be revealed,...” (Qur'an 24:30-31) as a recommendation to dress in a modest way. Three of the participants even spoke about it as being a command from God. One of the participants mentioned the identification with Muslim community as the biggest motivation to wear a veil for her, which can be connected to the theory of clothing being an indicative of the wearer's group membership position within a group (Barthes, 1967). Furthermore, for all the participants who practice the tradition of veiling, religion was the main reason behind their decision to veil. Only one of the participants veils for cultural reasons whenever she visits her hometown in Pakistan, but otherwise she does not wear a veil at all at her current home in Czechia.

As linked to the theory of acculturation (Berry, 1997), it can be observed that those participants who migrated to the Western countries perform the strategy of integration, which can be seen as a two-way process from both sides: immigrants and host society (Ager and Strang, 2004). With the biased perceptions of the surroundings, immigrants are more likely to be trapped in the separation stage of the acculturation process, where the contacts with the dominant group are avoided and immigrants tend to suffer psychological stress, social incompetence and weak intercultural relations (Ward, 2013). Therefore, Muslim migrants in Western countries may often face certain stereotypes based on their cultural visibility by veiling, which influences the way they negotiate their own self-representation (Van Es, 2016). Thus, the importance of attitudes from the host society towards the immigrants is perceived as extremely important by our participants. As it turned out, one of the participants who lives in Czechia and wears hijab expressed concern about her future in this country. Although she is very content with her life in Prague as a student now, she is worried that veil can be the reason she might not find a job in the future as she heard such stories from her peers. Such worries are also supported by the findings from the survey I conducted among Czech non-Muslims, as it turned out that the majority of respondents perceive veiled women rather negatively or very negatively. None of the participants of this study met with physical attacks towards them, but one veiled participant was a victim of a verbal abuse by a Czech person two different times. Participant who currently lives in Switzerland and wears hijab was also a victim of a verbal abuse that was based on her visibly Muslim identity. Such statements are supported by the findings of Křížek (2017) who described Islamophobia and its roots in western countries with a theory

that Muslims are historically perceived as “others” by Europeans, stating that from the sociological, anthropological and psychological point of view the construction of the “other” and the paradigm of “us versus them” is natural. Every society needs to define themselves against a foreign group in order to strengthen the connection inside the group (Křížek, 2017). Recent statistics from Czechia about the rise of hate crimes towards Muslims²⁰ also justify the worries of Muslim women living in this country.

Only one of the participants talked specifically about the misuse of the veil as a symbol by the media, but all the veiled participants acknowledged the struggles they go through based on their visibly Muslim appearance that goes with wearing hijab, based on the fact that their surroundings and media usually misinterpret this symbol and take it out of the context. All of them also showed sympathy and understanding for those who might decide to abandon the veil for such reasons. They supported this decision by stating that their religion allows them to decide to not to practice all the religious traditions fully when their health or well-being might be in danger. That showed up to be true as one of the participants, Yasmine, does not fast during Ramadan as she suffers from hypoglycemia, but otherwise she is actively practicing Muslim, even though she does not veil as well for personal reasons. Three out of five veiled participants admitted that there is a certain pressure coming from Muslim community on a woman that goes with her decision to veil or not to veil. As linked to my personal observation during the analysis of the on-line content focused on hijab, I came across this pressure from so-called „hijab community“ in one of the YouTube Channels owned by a Muslim influencer called Dina Tokio that participant Yasmine recommended to me. This vlogger experienced a major backlash on social media after her decision to remove her hijab. One of her videos which is almost an hour long, she only reads negative comments that people posted after she revealed her decision of removing the hijab publicly. Some of these people who commented presented themselves as Muslims. Nevertheless, that cannot be verified.²¹

Concerning the perception of stereotypical imagery used by media, the stereotype of woman pictured as being oppressed resonated within the participants the most. All of the participants who wear hijab made this decision as a personal one and such stereotypes are therefore very offensive to them. One of the participants, Ghofran, identifies herself as a feminist and she emphasised the wrongdoing of feminists from Western countries who

²⁰ Czech Press Office (ČTK). *Loni policie evidovala více trestných činů proti romům a muslimům*. [Last year police documented more crimes against Roma people and Muslims]. [online]. In.: 21.4.2019 [2019-04-21].

²¹ Dina Tokio: *The Bad, the Worse and the Ugly*, Youtube.com, Published on: 1.1.2019

support such stereotype. The ethnocentric perception of veiling and viewing veiled woman as someone who need help is highly criticised in a work of Abu-Lughod (2013). Participants from Middle East felt as also particularly offended by the stereotypical confusion of Muslim with Arab and the imagery of Muslims or Arabs pictured as terrorist, sheikhs or belly dancers used mainly by the Western movie industry (Křížek, 2017). All of them agreed that at times they feel as they are under the watch of Western society, especially after some negative news concerning Muslims. They all emphasised the role of media in spreading these negative image and imprinting it into people's minds. Nevertheless, the positive impact of the media was also mentioned, for example international feeling with and support for the Muslim community after the attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand in March, 2019.

To further discuss the role of media in lives of young Muslim women, both negative and positive role are taking place. All of the participants acknowledged the entertainment role of social media in their daily lives. Great help from the social media was offered to those who had experienced the process of acculturation. New media technologies assist in transforming the networks of migrants and simplifying their migration process through four key components, which include strengthening ties with family and friends; generating weak ties with people who can contribute to the process of migration and integration; creating networks of latent ties; and generating a source of the "insider knowledge" (Dekker and Engbersen, 2012). The existence of Facebook groups that connects expats or offers accommodation and job offers and supports learning about daily life in a host country was crucial in lives of those women who had to go through this process. It is also important to mention the ability to stay in contact with their friends and family who stayed in their home countries. When it comes to negotiating their identity in online space, only one participant of this study ever faced struggles based on her visibly Muslim appearance in an online space, being a target of negative comments. All the participants acknowledged the negative role that media play in spreading the stereotypes especially in socio-political context of Western countries, however they greatly appreciated the existence of platforms where they can search for cultural connections and make their daily lives easier.

6. Conclusion

The goal of this research was to notify the stereotypes that are being spread through various media platforms about veiled Muslim women within their diverse socio-political contexts and to investigate their negotiation of veiling behaviour and possible challenges they may face due to their choice to veil themselves. Main focus was given to the role of new media within the socio-political context of Czechia.

The results of this study show that new media within the diverse socio-political contexts play an important, yet not decisive role in the negotiation of veiling behaviour among our sample of Muslim women aged 22-36. To those participants who were personally dedicated to veil for religious reasons, media within the socio-political context of the country did not make a decisive factor for them. The participants from countries with large Muslim population, such as Lebanon, felt very confident with their decision to wear a veil and did not face any particular struggles caused by the socio-political environment. On the other hand, even for the participants dedicated to wear a veil, socio-political context of a country had the power to make them feel more self-conscious and self-aware and sometimes they had to face struggles and challenges because of their own choice of dress code as they are visibly Muslim. However, that did not make them question their decision to veil. There is also a certain pressure for veiled Muslim women living in a Western country to dress in a modest, yet fashionable way. Majority of the participants of this study who live in a Western country also accentuated the negative role of new media in their lives due to the stereotypical images that are being spread through various media platforms. They feel that they are being unfairly judged by non-Muslim public and see the media as being in a blame for that. On the other hand, all of the participants who had experienced the process of acculturation in terms of moving from one country to another highlighted the positive impact of social media during this process, such as Facebook groups that connects expats in each country or the ability to stay in contact with their friends and family who stayed in a home country. All of them also appreciated the entertainment role of social media in their lives.

The results of the survey prove the hypothesis that *the Islamic practice of veiling is perceived rather negatively in Czechia by Czech non-Muslim public*. Even though the majority of the respondents answered that they view the habit of veiling neutrally, the percentage of those who view it rather negatively or very negatively together was still

higher. One of the interesting findings of the survey was that high proportion of those respondents who had at least one veiled women in their surroundings still perceived the habit of veiling rather negatively or even very negatively. Hence, it can be said that the presence of veiled woman did not make a changing factor for them.

Finally, there are a few limitations of the study. First, only seven young women were interviewed in this study. Increasing the number of respondents would make the results more convincing and develop a greater understanding of the role of new media and diverse socio-political contexts in their negotiation of veiling behaviour. Additionally, the age range of the participants can be expanded as this study was focused only on the sample of woman between the ages of 22 to 36, who spend around 3-5 hours on social media in average. It would be interesting to investigate the behaviour of the younger ones who might considerably be under more influence of new media as they are believed to tend to spend relatively higher amount of time on such platforms. It would also be beneficial to investigate the role of new media on the veiling behaviour of Muslim women above the age of 36. For further research, it is also suggested to survey other aspects of Muslim women's lives that contribute to their media usage. For the future research concerning the Czech non-Muslim public, it would be necessary to gain representative sample of the respondents for the survey. The survey in this study served only as an additional and supportive data, therefore the results cannot be generalized.

Summary

The main goal of this work was to investigate the role of new media within diverse socio-political contexts in lives of young Muslim women. This study worked with the theory of perceiving clothing as a symbol of communication, explaining the specifics about the reasons to wear a veil and its history. The study also touched the subject of acculturation and four strategies that migrants perform when accommodating to a host country. For Muslim women who migrate to Western countries the attitudes of the host country towards the immigrant are particularly important, as the integration is a two-way process between both the immigrant and the host country. Socio-political context of Czechia, Netherlands, Lebanon, Switzerland and Pakistan was briefly introduced as these are the resident or home countries of the participants of this study. Main focus was given to Czechia, naturally, as home country of the researcher, she had the biggest interest in investigating the issue within her socio-political context. The theory of stereotypes formed important part of this study, as well as introducing the role of new media in Muslim women's lives.

For the purpose of this research, in-depth interviews with Muslim women between the ages 22 and 36 were conducted in order to bring greater insight and understanding into this problematic. The study observed the negotiation of veiling behaviour of the sample with a focus on the role of new media within their socio-political context. The research showed that new media within diverse socio-political context play an important, yet not decisive role in negotiating the veiling behaviour. Additionally, to gain supportive data a survey was conducted among Czech non-Muslim public with focus on their perception of veiled Muslim women. The survey proved the hypothesis that the Islamic practice of veiling is perceived rather negatively within Czech non-Muslim public in Czechia.

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Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky FSV UK Teze MAGISTERSKÉ diplomové práce		
TUTO ČÁST VYPLŇUJE STUDENT/KA:		
Příjmení a jméno diplomantky/diplomanta: Bc. Markéta Kafková	Razítko	podatelný:
Imatrikulační ročník diplomantky/diplomanta: 2017		
E-mail diplomantky/diplomanta: 91379638@fsv.cuni.cz		
Studijní obor/forma studia: Mediální studia		
Předpokládaný název práce v češtině: Oblékání jako způsob komunikace: Misinterpretace a zneužití symbolu zahalování		
Předpokládaný název práce v angličtině: Clothing as a meanofcommunication: Misinterpretation and misuseofthe symbol of a veil		
Předpokládaný termín dokončení (semestr, akademický rok – vzor: ZS 2012/2013) (diplomovou práci je možné odevzdat <u>nejdříve</u> po dvou semestrech od schválení tezí) ZS 2018/2019		
Charakteristika tématu a jeho dosavadní zpracování (max. 1800 znaků): Oblékání je vnější znak, kterého v komunikaci může být využito i zneužito. Na základě stylu oblékání si vytváříme úsudky o dané osobě, potažmo o celé skupině (kultuře, subkultuře), která se vyznačuje daným stylem oblékání (chování). I v současné době, stejně jako v minulosti, se dopouštíme řady pochybení během komunikace na základě špatných úsudků vytržených z kulturního kontextu. Misinterpretací je pak vědomě či nevědomě zneužíváno především v rámci politické komunikace. Toho jsme aktuálně svědky u zneužití zahalování jako symbolu.		
Předpokládaný cíl práce, případně formulace problému, výzkumné otázky nebo hypotézy (max. 1800 znaků): Upozornit na problematiku pomocí aktuálních i historických příkladů. Na základě dotazníkového šetření zjistit, zda a jak rozdílné kulturní prostředí determinuje vnímání kulturních symbolů, které nejsou dané kultuře vlastní-konkrétně symbolu zahalování. Porovnat odpovědi respondentů dvou zemí Evropské unie: Nizozemska, jako multikulturní země a České republiky, ve které je nyní hojně zneužíváno tohoto symbolu převážně v rámci politické komunikace. Zahalování se v posledních letech stalo symbolem, kterého je zneužíváno v rámci politické komunikace a i tento povrchní vnější symbol rozděluje společnost do několika názorových táborů. Zahalování bylo vyňato ze svého původního kontextu a fakta spjatá s původem tohoto zvyku jsou zahalena množstvím dezinformací. Nakolik kulturní prostředí, ve kterém se pohybujeme a politická komunikace v místě našeho pobytu, ovlivňuje názor, který si tvoříme na prvek kultury, který nám není vlastní? Je rozdíl ve vnímání kulturních prvků nevlastních dané kultuře u otevřených a uzavřených společností? Jak je na tom Česká republika v porovnání s podstatně multikulturnějším státem Evropské unie – Nizozemskem? Řešitelka si bude pokládat tyto otázky a snažit se na ně najít odpověď pomocí kvalitativního výzkumu.		
Předpokládaná struktura práce (rozdělení do jednotlivých kapitol a podkapitol se stručnou charakteristikou jejich obsahu): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Úvod: Představení problematiky, zdůvodnění výběru práce a stanovených cílů práce. ● Historické příklady zneužití vnějšího symbolu k perzekuci jednotlivých skupin, subkultur. ● Koncept zahalování a jeho historie i aktuální pojetí. Pohled konkrétních českých a nizozemských muslimů na tuto problematiku. ● Popis metodologie 		

- Výzkum a jeho výsledky (kvalitativní výzkum publik ve dvou rozdílných státech: Nizozemsko a Česká republika)
- Vyhodnocení a okomentování výsledků výzkumu.
- Komparace dvou států (Nizozemsko a ČR) na základě výsledků výzkumu.
- Závěr a použité zdroje.

Vymezení podkladového materiálu (např. titul periodika a analyzované období):

Dotazníkové šetření probíhající ve 2 zemích EU (ČR a Nizozemsko) od dubna do října 2018. Uvedené publikace.

Metody (techniky) zpracování materiálu:

Kvalitativní výzkum publik, tedy výzkum ve dvou rozdílných státech (Nizozemsko a Česká republika). Pomocí dotazníkového šetření, cíleného na občany a obyvatele těchto států (respondenti rovnoměrně rozdělení dle demografických údajů), zjistit, zda a jak prostředí ovlivňuje vnímání konkrétního vnějšího symbolu: zahalování. Pomocí kvantitativní analýzy zkoumat, nakolik jsou občané těchto států vystaveni používání tohoto konkrétního symbolu v rámci politické komunikace – v období září 2017-říjen 2018.

Základní literatura (nejméně 5 nejdůležitějších titulů k tématu a metodě jeho zpracování; u všech titulů je nutné uvést stručnou anotaci na 2-5 řádků):

HENDL Jan: Kvalitativní výzkum: Základní teorie, metody a aplikace, Portál 2005

Popis metody, která bude použita pro výzkum, tedy kvalitativní výzkum publik pomocí dotazníkového šetření. Popis výhod a nevýhod této metody.

EI GUINDI Fadwa: Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance, Berg 1999

Staví na rozsáhlých antropologických, historických poznátcích, které propojuje s původními muslimskými zdroji. Bourá mýty a předsudky o zahalování jako o symbolu zneužití, studu, či odloučení.

SCOTT John Wallach: The Politics of the Veil, Princeton University Press 2007

Zaměřuje se převážně na francouzské prostředí z důvodu dominantního postoje francouzské vlády k nošení muslimských šátků. Staví se proti stanovisku tamní vlády, že tyto šátky reprezentují sexismus, šovinismus, patriarchát a anti-modernismus.

TOPINKA Daniel: Muslimové v Česku, Společnost pro odbornou literaturu, 2016

Sociologické a antropologické výzkumy týkající se etablování muslimů a islámu v českém prostředí. Odpověď na otázky, kolik muslimů pobývá v ČR, jaký je jejich sociální a demografický profil.

FELSHIN Nina: Clothing as subject, Art Journal, Vol. 54, No. 1, Clothing as Subject (Spring, 1995), pp. 20-29, Published by: College Art Association, DOI: 10.2307/777502

Zabývá se oblékáním jako subjektem, kterým vědomě i nevědomě komunikujeme. Nabízí sociologický pohled a zamyšlení se nad touto problematikou.

SOUKUP Martin: Jak nabourat mýty o zahalování muslimek a islámu, 29.10.2014, Česká pozice

Článek zabývající se problematikou nahlížení na vnější symbol zahalování. Přináší historická i náboženská fakta, o které je možno se opřít pro hlubší pochopení problému.

Diplomové a disertační práce k tématu (seznam bakalářských, magisterských a doktorských prací, které byly k tématu obhájeny na UK, případně dalších oborově blízkých fakultách či vysokých školách za posledních pět let)

Mgr. Alena Bouchalová: Analýza vybraných akademických prací o zahalování v islámu, Univerzita Karlova 2013

Kamila Abbasi: Zahalování muslimských žen v Evropě: Kritická reflexe judikatury, Masarykova univerzita 2016

Mgr. Lucia Molčányiová: Analýza feministické interpretácie koránu, Univerzita Karlova 2017

Datum / Podpis studenta/ky

30.1.2018



TUTO ČÁST VYPLŇUJE PEDAGOG/PEDAGOŽKA:

Doporučení k tématu, struktuře a technice zpracování materiálu:

Případné doporučení dalších titulů literatury předepsané ke zpracování tématu:

Potvrzuji, že výše uvedené teze jsem s jejich autorem/kou konzultoval(a) a že téma odpovídá mému oborovému zaměření a oblasti odborné práce, kterou na FSV UK vykonávám.

Souhlasím s tím, že budu vedoucí(m) této práce.

Příjmení a jméno pedagožky/pedagoga

.....
Datum / Podpis pedagožky/pedagoga

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TEZE NA IKSŽ SCHVALUJE VEDOUcí PŘÍSLUŠNÉ KATEDRY.

List of Appendices

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Appendix no. 1: Interview Transcripts (text)

Appendix no. 2: Previous Research Results, Erasmus University Rotterdam (text)