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"No one likes that judgmental look like you are a terrorist." Sensorial encounters with the Muslim Other in Amsterdam

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ABSTRACT

Often framed in the public discourse as Europe's ultimate Other, Muslims have been heftily debated and vastly problematised by politicians, pundits, and public intellectuals as unwanted immigrants, part of a bad diversity, problematic, violent, refusals of modernity, secularism, and freedom. Thinking through the body as a phenomenal lived body, we explore Othering as a set of visual, auditory, olfactory, and haptic encounters. Employing an urban ethnography on everyday lived experiences of young Muslims in Amsterdam, the paper investigates multiple modes through which Othering is sensed, lived, and felt through the body.

1. Introduction

Meaning is relational and dependent on the 'difference'. The other is essential to making meaning not only at the discursive but also at the social level. We need difference because we construct (social) meaning through differentiation from and dialogue with the other (Hall, 2001). The Other yet is mostly a member of a dominated out-group, whose identity is considered 'different' and Othering is the process through which difference is translated into inferiority drawing a line between 'us' and 'them' based on a particular perception of self and body (Staszak, 2009; Svendby, 2018; Harmer & Lumsden, 2019). Othering is historically situated, socially institutionalised, and materially embodied. It takes shape in social institutions through the combined effect of social agents, legal and social practices, and organisational structures that, together, define the status of the Other (Godbey, 2012; Mudimbe, 2010; Richardson, 2010; Stevenson, 2011; Said, 1978; Ryan, 2012; Lawless, 2014). Discourses of Othering that differentiate people are embedded within social imperatives and wider cultural and political themes, most particularly ideas about race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, class, gender, and sexuality (Ajzenstadt & Shapira, 2012; Masocha, 2015; Said, 1978).

Perhaps the most problematised Other in the contemporary European context is the Muslim Other, often framed in public discourse and debate as Europe's ultimate Other (Wintle, 2016). Scholarship on Muslims has mostly focused either on media or socio-psychology (Sayyid, 2014; Karim & Eid, 2014). Arguments such as poor/failed integration, a parallel society, inherent violence, barbaric picture of women, extremism, and terrorism have been part of political and media debates (Kolb & Yildiz, 2019; Betts & Krayem, 2019). Much of this scholarship has also covered the socio-psychology and difficulties that Muslims experience. Next to psychological disorders such as the loss of self-worth/self-confidence/life-satisfaction, stress, illness, loneliness, depression, and even suicidal feelings, Muslims face lower employment, higher rates of racism, limited mobility opportunity, frustrations on the blocked mosque and school developments, and uneven treatment in finding housing (see the edited works of Law et al., 2019; Woodward and Lukens-Bull, 2018; also Warren, 2019; Najib & Hopkins, 2019a; 2019b; Barkdull et al., 2011; MacDonald et al., 2016; Connor & Koenig, 2015).

Whilst the phenomenal growth in ethnic and religious diversity in Western world cities has in recent years been researched and debated (Dunn, 2010a; Vertovec, 2007; Meissner & Vertovec, 2015), the notion of Otherness remains mostly abstraction, detached from the everyday sensorial life of Muslims. If Othering is a multi-faceted phenomenon, what are the different modes through which it is sensed, lived, and felt through the body? Thinking through the body as a phenomenal lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Simonsen, 2013; Simonsen et al., 2017), the paper investigates specific and multiple ways in which Otherness is perceived in the everyday urban life of young Muslims. Through an urban ethnography on everyday lived experiences of young Muslims in Amsterdam, we shed light on the sensorial dimensions of Othering. In what follows, we first briefly situate the research in the literature on encounter, phenomenology, Othering, the body, and Muslims in the West. Thereafter, we describe our urban ethnography and present Othering modes sensed via sight, hearing, smell, and touch.

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2. Sensorial encounters with the Other

Economic globalisation and global conflicts have diversified urban populations in their socio-economic, racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic profiles in conjunction with their lifestyles, attitudes, and modes of thoughts (Peterson, 2017). As Valentine and Harris (2016) argue, through normalisation of diversity, public space can be defined as a space of encounter where difference as part of everyday social routines is negotiated, lived, and experienced (also Valentine, 2008; Valentine et al., 2015). It is in urban space that transnationalism/multiculturalism becomes about encounters with others which instigate a variety of feelings and emotions, some generating sharing and exchange whereas others initiate tension, friction, and anger (Dunn, 2010a). This has shaped a new agenda for researching encounter (Valentine & Waite, 2012; Valentine, 1989; Askins, 2016; Askins & Pain, 2011). Recently, for example, attention has been paid to the spatialities of encounters which focus on how the contexts of contacts between different groups cast a role in the perception and experience of encounter (e.g. Matejskova & Leitner, 2011; Mikola et al., 2016; Dunn et al., 2016; Koefoed & Simonsen, 2011; 2012; Simonsen et al., 2017). Amin (2002), for example, suggests that micro-spaces such as libraries, community centres, corner shops, or cafes promote meaningful encounters with others.

Encounter as an attentive contact between people and their surroundings has some conscious aspects such as directed attentions to material, environmental, or human features of space registered within everyday life (Seamon, 2013; 2018). Encounter is the process through which Others become familiar, recognised, identified, known (Ataria, 2016), or perceived based on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception (1962). For him, perception is a lived dynamic between perceptual body and aspects of the world. In everyday life, the world we encounter is depicted as an interpenetrating web of sensory and bodily presence and relationships which Merleau-Ponty calls the perceptual field (1962; also Seamon, 2013; Glendinning, 2008) via, for example, hearing or seeing because they immediately evoke in the lived body their experienced qualities. Throughout their lived experiences, people employ sensorial practices and perceive spaces through smells, tastes, touch, hearing, and sight. Through the practico-sensory perception of spaces, people corporeally encounter with other bodies and register familiarity and strangeness in and through space. The Other is 'made' by the bodily appearance (e.g. Othering via visual but also auditory, olfactory, and haptic; see Haldrup et al., 2006) through what Ahmed (2000: 21) calls 'techniques of reading the bodies of Others' via considering the differences between what is familiar and unfamiliar.

The bodily experience of estrangement, Koefoed and Simonsen (2011; 2012) argue, is also related to the national constructions of Others who are imagined to be a threat to the national community (see Mikola et al., 2016). Strangers are those posing danger to society by their presence which Ahmed (2000) calls 'stranger danger.' By the same token, the Other is constructed through a process of homogenisation where the individual is met as a collective identity or an archetype (Simonsen, 2010; Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Simonsen (2013) shows how Muslim(-looking) people are usually stopped in the urban nightlife scene. The Other is stopped because they are perceived as the origin of danger, trouble, or violence who destroy 'our' party (Koefoed & Simonsen, 2012). This refers to the mismatch between certain bodies and certain spaces, where some bodies become 'out of place.' Puwar (2004) has argued that bodies outside the 'universal somatic norm,' i.e. the white usually male body, do not have the right to occupy certain spaces. According to her, as the bodies of Others cannot fully compete with the universal somatic norm, they never quite fit in or belong; they are 'space invaders,' 'trespassers,' and 'intruders' who disturb the status quo.

Muslims are one of the Others who stand outside the somatic norm. They have been subject to heightened scrutiny from a range of actors and communities. Their bodies are heftily debated by politicians, pundits, and public intellectuals who frame them as problematic and disruptive, refusal of modernity, secularism, and freedom (Ramírez, 2015; Hamzeh, 2011; Sargent & Larchanche, 2007). Muslims are frequently (re)produced as strangers and tagged as Others who do not belong (Koefoed & Simonsen, 2012). They are often depicted as either former invaders, thus the historical external Other, or unwanted immigrants as part of a 'bad diversity,' the internal Other (Račius, 2019; Frisina & Hawthorne, 2018; Haque, 2010). The Muslim Other is subject to what Essed (1991) would call 'everyday racism,' anti-Muslim racist acts manifested not necessarily through explicit, intentional practices of hatred or systemic exclusion but also in the micro-practices of daily encounters where the Othering intentions exist 'behind the backs' of actors.

Although Muslim bodies have turned into a major site of socio-political debates in the contemporary historical period (Hadžiristić, 2017), how Othering is sensed as part of their everyday life remains relatively unclear. Although scholars have approached the sensorial Othering, the literature has little to say about the sensorial Othering through the eyes of the marginalised groups, especially Muslims. Following a phenomenological approach towards the everyday sensual and bodily Othering practices, Haldrup et al. (2006) have focused on the ways in which cultural/national identities are constituted through the Danish perspective towards immigrants. Amanda Wise's (2010) sensuous multiculturalism touches upon the ways through which migrants are seen by Australian suburbanites. This paper extends this sensorial approach to give an insider's perspective, the real-life experiences of Muslims sensing Othered within their everyday urban life. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on Muslims in the West and adds depth to the understanding of the Otherness of Muslims in their lifeworld through their own eyes within their own urban habitat.

Phenomenologically, lifeworld describes the typical taken-for-granted context of everyday experience, the unquestioned ways in which people automatically accept everyday life (Seamon, 2013; 2018). We specifically focus on young Muslims' experiences of encounters when they embody their urbanism(s) as the practical knowledge of everyday urban living. By embodied urbanism, the study refers to the public representation of the body through practising everyday urban life. It is not only about the conspicuous display of religious signs but also mundane activities such as appearance, clothing, eating/going out, mobility, shopping, employment, leisure activities, and any other corporeal aspects of everyday urban life. In this respect, we are to (re) visit the young Muslim bodies on the everyday urban ground to investigate how they sense Otherness. We 're-look at the world without blinkers' to 're-achieve a direct and primitive contact with the world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: vii). This phenomenological approach towards the corporeal sensibility (Seamon, 2013; 2018) brackets taken-for-grantedness and surfaces often overlooked 'basic experience of the world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: viii) through encounter and interaction with young Muslims in Amsterdam.

3. Methodology

Although there is a tendency to research Muslims in Muslim-minority contexts, there has not been enough focus on their everydayness (Dunn & Hopkins, 2016). This qualitative research, thus, concentrates on the experience of the sensorial encounters of young Muslims to explain how the Othering is experienced, felt, and lived within their everyday urban life. Young Muslims are important actors in debates about the geopolitics of Islamophobia. They are often seen as agitated who cause troubles, questioned about their sense of identity and belonging, occupation of space, community relations, social cohesion, and integration (Hopkins et al., 2018). Consequently, we have focused on young Muslims to demonstrate how religious, racial, ethnic, and Othered youth experience and understand the sensorial aspects of anti-Muslim racism.

Amsterdam has been selected as the ethnographic site. Promoted as a liberal city with a long history of tolerance towards different religions,

lifestyles, and mentalities, Amsterdam has attracted many people from a wide variety of backgrounds leading towards its super-diversity (Uitermark & Gielen, 2010; Uitermark et al., 2014). The city today encompasses 350 different religious communities from 180 nationalities (Beck, 2013), making it one of the most religiously diverse cities in the world which puts its social cohesion under considerable pressure (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2009; Galster, 2005). Islam is highly visible in Amsterdam which is related to the high presence of Muslim population; more than 120,000 Amsterdammers are Muslim (12.1% of the population, CBS, 2016). As such, Amsterdam offers a case for studying processes of sensorial Othering of Muslims in a cosmopolitan context.

Participants were recruited through contacts with and distributing flyers and business cards at mosques, universities, and educational institutions. To recruit additional participants, the first author frequented everyday micro-social spaces (Amin, 2002) such as libraries, community centres, corner shops, local sports clubs, and public transport stations. In these places, the first author had informal conversations with young Muslims and distributed flyers and business cards. Snowball sampling was also employed to reach out to some participants based on the suggestion of interviewees. Because of the diversity of cultures in, understanding of, and practising Islam (Najib & Hopkins, 2019a), respondents were recruited from maximum diversity in terms of gender (8 women and 6 men), socioeconomic status (from working class to upper-middle class), occupation, education (from high school to PhD), Islamic branches (Sunni and Shia), religious involvement (from orthodoxy to liberal), age (young people between 19 and 32), generation (native, first, and second), and national origin (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Somalia, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Cameroon).

Some specific barriers, however, were present which, to some extent, hindered the recruitment process, including the first author's not advanced active Dutch linguistic capabilities and Muslims' mistrust about exploitation and stereotyping (Aroian et al., 2006). Both the Christchurch mosque shootings and shooting on a tram in Utrecht happened during the fieldwork which caused some further troubles regarding recruitment. After these incidents, some potential participants cancelled their participation or did not reply to the first author's calls or emails. The first author's gender, moreover, turned out problematic. Many young Muslim women declined his interview invitations or preferred not to be interviewed in person but via the phone which reduced some of the nuances of face-to-face conversation such as facial expressions and body language. However, the field researcher was mostly seen as an insider. His name, age, ethno-racial, socioeconomic, and religious background, some shared Islamophobic experiences, even his hobby (calligraphy) helped him during the recruitment phase and the interview sessions. He was seen as one of them which aided the establishment of rapport and the enhanced quality of the empirical data.

Carried out between January and July 2019, this investigation is an urban ethnography involving verbal (group, individual, and walking interviews) and visual (observations and flâneurship) methods. This methodological triangulation has enhanced the validity of the qualitative data. As the main method, a set of semi-structured in-depth (serial) interviews was conducted to elicit young Muslims' perception of Othering experiences. Interviewing was particularly useful for exploring the diversity of Muslims' beliefs, values, understandings, feelings, experiences, and perspectives of their public bodies and the potential Othering attached to their bodies. Observations and flâneurship (Nigg, 2019), additionally, were employed to have a first-hand understanding of how young Muslims use everyday spaces of urban living and/or are treated by their fellow citizens in different urban spaces.

Twenty-seven semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 14 participants were recorded. Lasting to maximum 180 minutes, in total 36 hours, four interviews were one-off and 23 sequential, up to five sessions. The majority of interviews were conducted with individuals (21 sessions) whilst six interviews were in groups of two. As Crang and Cook (2007) and Longhurst (2010) have argued, group interviews may lead towards less personal data, one participant may dominate the interview session and the rest follows him/her despite having their own opinions which hamper the depth for the nuanced qualitative data (Crang & Cook, 2007; Longhurst, 2010). However, the conducted group interviews in this research appeared rich and insightful. The field researcher did not observe any issues regarding in-group power dynamics. Both group members contributed uniquely and almost equally to each interview session. In addition, group interviews had the advantage of making the interview situation comfortable and less threatening for participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Since the group (and individual) interviews were predominantly serial, the interviewer, seen mostly as an insider, and interviewees became familiar faces which further made sessions friendly and less formal, encouraging participants to be more forthcoming. Four (one man and three women) participants were either busy or because of their beliefs were feeling uncomfortable to be interviewed in person. Consequently, alternative data collection methods such as phone, Skype, and/or email interviews were employed (see also Wilkinson & Wilkinson, 2018). Setting the route by participants, two walking interviews (Carpiano, 2009) were conducted as another verbal embodied sensorial qualitative method. The engagement of other senses, particularly haptic, allowed participants to describe the memories and histories that were forgotten during the sedentary interviews (Evans & Jones, 2011).

A range of everyday social spaces such as playgrounds, parks, squares, shopping streets, and flea markets provided the first author with opportunities to be engaged in the mundane everyday practices of Muslims to observe and record how they use, manage, and/or negotiate their bodies within their socio-cultural urban geographies. The first author was a pedestrian observer mingling with local Muslims within their own urban habitats. However, he does not embody the old-fashioned cliché of the white male streetologist flâneur (Benjamin, 1979, Nigg, 2019). He is bearded Muslim-looking who embodies Middle Eastern facial features with dark hair and dark skin tone. The first author was not only the gazer but also the gazed. His bearded ethnic body drew attention and he received many 'weird' lengthy looks. During the fieldwork, moreover, the first author was predominantly using public transportation such as bus, tram, train, and subway as a useful means to observe encounter with 'different' bodies (Wilson, 2011). In many occasions, he noticed some looks and on many trips, no one was sitting next to him. Whilst he was looking at the Other, he was looked at as the Other.

Before the fieldwork, the ethics committee of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen approved the investigation. All participants were provided with an information sheet and written consent forms were obtained. Interviewees were given a list of questions before the interview to enhance the quality of the debate and aid informed consent (Dunn, 2010b). All participants have been anonymised and given an age band, e.g. mid-20s and/or early 30s, to protect their identity. All verbatim transcribed interviews and organised ethnographic fieldnotes were inductively coded to draw out themes, patterns, resemblances, and regularities regarding the sensoriality of Othering within the platform of the qualitative data analysis computer software package, NVivo.

The first author's field diary served not only as a research log but also a reflexive platform. He is aware that what he writes is a partial truth since the story based on which he writes is just one of many. Moreover, since any acknowledgement of difference happens within the context of asymmetrical power, a non-reflective identification of difference recreates power and inequality (Ploesser & Mecheril, 2012). He had to handle this ethical dilemma that as soon as he narrates his participants' stories as different/the Other, they will be (re)produced as the Other because the recognition of difference (re)produces difference. Thus, his ethnographic gaze may further Otherize the Otherness of Muslims (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). However, the first author hopes that the specific and idiosyncratic nature of his ethnography can add depth to the understanding of Muslim 'everyday racism,' contemporary constructions of

their Otherness. The first author also had to deal with the fear of whether his ethnography functions to monitor Muslims and report on them and whether it brings any stretch of surveillance upon them (Miled, 2019). This reflective take on his ethnography, however, is not a claim for transparent reflexivity nor to solve problems of positionality (Rose, 1997) but an attempt to provide an understanding of how this paper is embedded within the context of his research.

4. Sensorial encounters with the Muslim Other in Amsterdam

Based on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception (1962), everyday meetings with the Other are understood as biomorphic and anthropological (Simonsen, 2005; Simonsen et al., 2017). Encounters are sensorial experiences based on looking, listening, touching, tasting, and smelling which are thoroughly historical, cultural, geographical, and habitual (Simonsen, 2010; Haldrup et al., 2006; Wilson & Darling, 2016; Wilson, 2017; Sayyid, 2014). Becoming the Other, thus, rested on particular conjunctions of smell, sound, taste, touch, and look (Swanton, 2010) which are registered in our bodies and demonstrate Othering in everyday life.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that the perceptual field is not the sum of the isolated sensory registers but a commingling of integrated lived possibilities in each moment of experience (also Seamon, 2018). However, for spotlighting the sensorial Othering of Muslims, we pursue the phenomenological reduction to disclose and describe the various lived structures and dynamics of Othering based on each sense (Seamon, 2013). The analysis of the empirical data suggests that sensorial encounters transversally move through bodies and become intensified at certain moments: at one moment Othering surfaces in a suspicious look; at another moment through the sound/accent of the spoken language; via the smell of homemade food; avoiding shaking hands; or the distance between (un)familiar bodies.

4.1. Visual Othering

The most repeated sensed Othering by participants is the 'weird' looks. Our interviewees stated that they perceive frequent and long looks which resonate feelings such as being judged or unwelcome. During one of the sequential interviews with Hafez, a bearded working man in his early 30s, he delved more deeply into how he feels about the looks he is predominantly receiving:

> "If you have dark hair, are coloured and shorter, you're automatically a Muslim… in my case, I think the problem is the way I sometimes dress. But also if I have a beard like now because it is longer than before. So they look very bad and judgmental at you… they look very, very penetrating like what are you doing here, go away or something like that. But it has never come to the point that they say something. When they look at me like I'm a piece of [shit], I try always to smile in a friendly way. I actually don't mind but also don't like [it]. It's not like I am happy because they're looking at me; I think no one likes that judgmental look like you are a terrorist."

Similarly, for Sara, a working/studying veiled woman in her mid-20s, these looks are part of her daily life: "some people look very hesitant like I'm hiding something under my hijab and waiting for the right moment to blow it." Sociologically, these micro-behaviours, looks, can be read as informal negative sanctions, attempts to discipline and regulate the perceived deviant behaviours of Muslims (Becker, 1997). As Puwar (2004) stresses, these looks expect conformity and perform as a method of surveillance and control. Psychologically, Gomez et al. (2019) have argued that the exploratory eye gaze behaviour with higher fixation frequency and longer scanpath indicates the unpleasantness of the gazed. Thus, there is a tone to the visual which informs about the gazer's attentional state and the agenda behind the gaze (Terry & Urla, 1995; McCrackin & Itier, 2019). As Hafez felt, the gaze is never neutral but charged with feelings which render some bodies as inferior.

Visual Othering is also spatially divergent. Fatima, a university student and a teacher at a high school, a veiled woman in her early 20s, in one of the sessions of a group sequential interviews elaborated on the 'where' of the looks:

> "Once we were shopping and I felt people were giving us bitter looks. That happened maybe because we were in a certain shopping mall. It is very prestigious for rich people… for instance, in a bank office, in general, you don't have many Muslims there. I think the looks that happen in that place are more than if you go to like a primary school. If you walk into a business for washing windows or walking into a bank, I think you get more looks at a bank because it is so prestigious and they think that the hijab is not meant for people who are at that level of society."

Merleau-Ponty (1962) notes that our very embodied being exposes us to the gaze of others yet he rejects the idea that bodies are seen exclusively as objects but sites for subjectivity. Within the perceptual field, the perceptual bodies see the world from their own first-person perspective; however, such perception is not formed in isolation from space; it is spatio-corporeal and about how the body sees and is seen by others within space (Simonsen, 2007; 2013; Ahmed, 2004). The gaze is, consequently, place-based; in certain urban spaces, the density of the gaze is higher than in other places. However, as Fatima observed, the received gaze is intersectional. She is not subject to the looks only because of her gender, ethnicity, race, religious dress code, but also her perceived socioeconomic status. A fancy shopping mall is not a 'typical' place for the veiled Muslim women who are seen lacking the economic capital. As Puwar (2004: 150) suggests, bodies that deviate the somatic norms are "often much less likely to be accepted." They are constantly under the pressure of the gaze to assimilate through minimising signs of cultural difference, particularly appearance. Thus Fatima gets many looks which for postcolonial scholars (Rose, 2001; Bourlessas, 2018; Nayak, 2010) constructs the Other via envisioning them as subaltern. This is the spatio-corporeal mismatch that turns the Muslim body into a matter-out-of-place (Douglas, 2003); they become bodies out of place which pose a threat to space suggesting some bodies to be absent. Here Othering operates and incorporates discourses of stranger danger (Ahmed, 2000) through the visual. They are looked at because they are perceived as the origin of trouble who steal 'our' joy. Certain bodies simply are not expected in certain spaces.

4.2. Auditory Othering

Sound plays a critical role in the navigation of space. People respond to hearing other languages and the words that an Othered body utters. The response of white Dutch-speaking people to hearing foreign languages plays a regular role in experienced conflicts by participants. This is one of the central Othering processes constantly repeated by our participants. Hafez, for example, who has "the gift to speak 5 languages: English, Arabic, Turkish, German, and Dutch," recalls vividly how once someone approached him when he was not talking in Dutch:

> "My brother and I speak Arabic when we see Turkish people; with Dutch people, we speak both of the other languages and when we see Arabic people we speak Turkish. So you can create your own privacy because you know people always want to listen. The Dutch people are very curious but then you see also that they are not happy that you talk Arabic or Turkish. A couple of times when I was talking in Arabic to a guy, someone said: we are in the Netherlands; we are talking in Dutch here. I said if I was speaking English would you mind? She said no. But why do you mind if I speak Arabic? She said because I don't understand [the language]. She gave herself the answer. I said maybe I don't want you to understand. And she was speechless."

When Hafez confronted the Dutch person criticising his use of language, he exposed that it was not a foreign language per se that was considered problematic but rather the use of a language the person in question did not understand. The negative response does thus not necessarily consider the uttering of a language. The further probing by Hafez showed that the real issue lies in the inability of the Dutch person to understand the conversation thus portraying anxiety related to the Other which cannot be confronted by gaining knowledge of their practices or intention by listening to what is said. The auditory experience, thus, refers to hearing and listening and the ways through which everyday socio-spatial relations are (re)produced through the sensorial perception of sounds and spoken languages (Haldrup et al., 2006). In Hafez's case, the incomprehensibility and unfamiliarity of the sound of the spoken language become associated with something foreign which generates a reaction.

The foreignness, the geopolitical distance between the heard language, e.g. Arabic or Turkish, and the main spoken language, in this case, Dutch, however, has turned not to be the only source of Othering. Myriam, a veiled Muslim woman in her mid-20s who was finishing her bachelor's degree at the time of the sequential phone interviews, revealed how her skilled and highly educated mother who does not don the hijab has some troubles because of the way she speaks Dutch with an accent:

> "My mom as a dentist has her own practice but she works in a small town and they are all white people. She feels because of her accent a lot of patients don't want to have her as their dentist. I don't know if it's the fact but it's how she feels."

Myriam's mother speaks Dutch, the majority language, but feels nonetheless Othered through her use of words and accent. This leads towards the identification of the body as different triggering discriminatory treatments (Joyce, 2018) which in her case is selecting another dentist who is either Dutch or speaks Dutch 'properly.' This experience echoes Lippi-Green's (1994: 169) argument that "there is a right and a wrong way to talk, and it is perfectly acceptable, even judicious, to censor and punish those who do not conform."

4.3. Olfactory Othering

Smell is another sensorial mode of Othering perceived by our participants. Olfactory refers to both the activity/action and the situation of the individual and/or object which expels a smell. It is a socio-cultural construct and has the potential to reify and reproduce difference (Rodaway, 2002). It is also intimately entangled with experiences of space and Otherness. Olfactory experience is geographical, "spatially ordered and place-related" (Porteous, 1985: 369). Seven participants, particularly women, mentioned their discomfort around certain places especially related to alcohol. Yusuf, a bearded highly educated newly married man who works for an international consultancy company, for example, in an email explained how he feels about: "the smell of beer when walking pass bars, which I abhor and try to avoid as much as possible." The prohibition of alcohol consumption in Islam may have caused this 'self-Othering' practices; however, it taps into the discomfort around potentials of anti-Muslim racism generated by alcohol. Participants, mostly women, argued that alcohol is related to drunk men which can escalate sexual harassment and/or racist comments. As Sara argued "there is always alcohol involved and I'm not really a fan of it and try to stay away." Consequently, similar to Valentine's (1989) work on the geography of women's fear, many of participants' public spaces, routes, and destinations are in fact the product of avoiding troubles. In addition, Farah, a housewife in her early 30s, recalled an incident that happened at her former workplace:

> "It wasn't the most progressive office to work there; it was very conservative there. I also tried to keep a distance because I didn't feel I belong there in terms of my opinion and I felt I was different… I remember once one of our colleagues around the coffee corner said: I really want something to be done about people bringing their own lunch because it STINKS of garlic when you walk in this hall."

Going beyond visual and auditory registers of difference, Farah felt that her colleague was referring either to her or her "south-Asian colleagues who would bring their own foods which didn't smell garlic to me." Her story shows how smell evokes Othering which can emphatically cast the Other as abject (Nayak, 2010). Olfactory is strongly associated with encounters through which particular smells surface specific responses. Smells associated with something foreign turn into dirt and malodorous which surface intercultural discomfort (Wise, 2010; Pickering & Wiseman, 2019). Haldrup et al. (2006) conceptualise this as practical orientalism which manifests itself in ways through which the power is performed in everyday sensorial sociality and provides the olfactory with a platform to evoke the conspicuous revulsion. For Merleau-Ponty, this repulsion would be an opening-out to and engagement with the Other, a relationship between the perceptual body and its surrounding environment, the perceptual field, constituting both subject and object (Simonsen, 2007). Phenomenologically, active subjects constitute shared meanings through their bodies and the construction of self, body, meaning, and society requires some degrees of shared perception. The smell of garlic does not fit in the (shared) perception of a workplace within the Dutch context thus it must be removed, made clean, covered up. As Pickering and Wiseman (2019) aver, the act of removing dirt, "something to be done" as Farah's colleague said, mirrors intention or desires to remove some bodies who do not maintain that imagined shared perception.

4.4. Haptic Othering

Encounters with other bodies, moreover, involve a haptic experience of the tactile receptivity of the skin and bodily contacts (Haldrup et al., 2006). The haptic part of the body is often ignored or simply taken for granted but it is fundamentally cultural (Rodaway, 2002). Skin, the liminal stage of the body, is the zone of transformation where people hesitate and reflect. It has the potential to participate in the passage of one experiential state of the body to another (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010). The social body is created through the relations of touch between friendly and stranger bodies (Simonsen, 2013). Touch can bring a body into the 'us' realm; or the other way around, the refusal to touch creates the Other. Yusuf during the second phone interview explained many of his troubles during high school when he, because of his faith, did not want to shake hands with his female teachers:

> "I think when I was 18 I told my teacher when I was graduating I didn't want to shake hands. I tried to be super, super respectful but I got a lot of troubles. One teacher said ok but all the other teachers they freaked out and called my parents and lots of talks with the principal. That was crazy… unfortunately, I was too weak and there were many problems. I was like I don't want to do it but, eventually, I shook hands when I was graduating. It was very hard and everyone was against me and I had no support. But my school was pretty much white, I'd say."

This tactile encounter is highly present in the everyday life of participants. Sumayyah, a martial art coach for children, a veiled woman in her early 20s, is clearly struggling with this: "I always find it really difficult to talk about because, on the one hand, you have to adjust yourself to the culture here in the Netherlands, and, on the other hand, you have to keep your own values." Fouad, a working man in his mid-20s, during one of the group walking interviews with his friend Ahmad, a young Muslim man in his early 20s, explained how for the sake of being employed or not to be considered radical he shakes hands yet mostly in a passive way:

> "Fouad: I do try to avoid it but if they give me a hand, I shake it. Otherwise, it's hard to live here and limits my chance of finding a job. If I wanted to be like that, I would have stayed at the food delivery for my whole life… but it's not like I give them my hand and I don't mind; it does do stuff inside me and I do think why it has to be this way.
> Ahmad: literally the same."

The Othering through the haptic encounter does not only touch upon the palm skin but involves the whole body and the whole skin covering the body. It is not just the pressure on the skin, the literal contact between bodies and environment; it also refers to locomotion, kinesthesis, and the movement of the body through the environment (Gibson, 1966; Rodaway, 2002; Wise, 2010). It points at the sensuous mediation between space, bodies, and the bodies in/through space. Bodily distance, for instance, is a significant characteristic of the haptic encounter. The stories of Fatima and Hafez clearly explain this haptic argument:

> "For instance, if you will be standing in a row to pay for your shopping, there will be a longer row on the other side. I've experienced a lot of times like especially in the village that people would stand on that longer queue just not to stand behind you. That happened so often that I didn't even count it anymore (Fatima)."
> "I wore my dishdasha [the ankle-length garments for men] and took the tram… and also on the train, I always sit next to the window which means there is always a place next to me for other people. So when I sat there, no one sat next to me and the train was almost full. It was very interesting to see and experience that you are not belonging to somewhere (Hafez)."

These instances may be read as the maintenance of the private/personal/group space, or civil inattention (Goffman, 1963), yet interviews and flâneurship suggest that the 'haptic space' of Muslim (-looking) people tend to be broader than their counterparts. Sitting alone on a busy bus/tram/train/metro, as Hafez observed, sitting alone on a bench at a busy park/square, sitting alone or mostly with other Muslims at the educational centres, classrooms, libraries, and/or eating-out places whilst others sit farther, the slightly wider distance between visible Muslims, i.e. veiled women and bearded men, and non-Muslims at the flea markets or a till queue at a supermarket, as Fatima explained above, are just some of the examples of haptic Othering. For Merleau-Ponty, space and body are central aspects of intersubjectivity. The immediate presence of specific bodies within specific spaces often incorporates a specific emotion, which for Merleau-Ponty is as another dimension of the lived body directing and sustaining the lived relations with the perceptual field (Seamon, 2018). These haptic spaces are seen as the space of threshold. This is a space between familiar and stranger needs to be entered or avoided which can be exciting and unnerving simultaneously. The haptic Othering, thus, generates a liminal zone of uncertainty, suspicion, anxiety, and danger turning the Muslim body into a dangerous Other who needs to be approached with caution.

5. Conclusion

The phenomenal lived body has been approached in this study to pay attention to the biological and sensorial aspects of the social. This conceptualisation focuses on sensing bodies rather than disembodied minds (Shilling, 2003; Turner, 2008). Moreover, the natural, taken-for-grantedness of the corporeal sensibility (Seamon, 2013; 2018) of everyday life has not warranted serious analysis in the literature of Muslims in the West. Our phenomenological approach was concerned with the study of the sensorial experience of Otherness from the perspective of the young Muslims, bracketing taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perception. Using the narrative accounts of the young Muslims, we have investigated the various lived sensorial ways that the body is perceived as the Other.

Believing that Othering is intrinsically sensorial, the paper has explored the ways through which the Muslim Other is (re)constructed via the sensorial register, i.e. visual, auditory, olfactory, and haptic, of familiarity and strangeness in and through space. This conceptualisation has offered a nuanced picture grounded in everyday realities of how Otherness is sensed, felt, and lived within the contemporary urban social collectives. By doing so, the study has critically investigated the (micro-) behaviours/aggressions/tensions and (micro-)social geographies associated with the everyday urban living of young Muslims. Thinking through the relation between sensorial bodies and space, we have touched upon how Othering is sensed in minutely meaningful yet fully felt and viscerally realised sensations. Yet, such sensorial Othering encounters are not derived from isolated sensory registers but a commingling of senses. Simply put, the Muslim Other is (re)produced multisensorially, integrated lived perceived sensorialities of smell, touch, hearing, and look in each moment of encounter which is charged with histories, emotions, and affects. Consequently, these are the multisensorial multicultural encounters -the intersections of smell, look, touch, bodily distance, and spoken language within everyday urban spaces of encounter- that become the rubric through which the difference of young Muslims is transformed as inferior and Otherness is lived.

We have also shed light on the body-society relationship and provided a better understanding of the everyday life of ordinary young Muslims within the contemporary urban culture in Europe. Muslims' bodies are a 'cultural battlefield' (Simonsen, 2000). On the one hand, their bodies are heftily debated by media, politicians, pundits, and public intellectuals. On the other, Muslims face challenges in Western society as norms of piety, chastity, culture, conviviality, consumption, and sociability are negotiated, imposed, resisted, and even refused bodily. They are defined by their bodies/embodiments and named according to the somatic norms of the dominant society/culture as ugly, loathsome, malodorous, dangerous, and deviant (Simonsen, 2010). Yet as Žižek (1990: 54) argues, "what really bothers us about the Other is the peculiar way in which it organises its enjoyment: precisely the surplus, the 'excess' that pertains to it – the smell of their food, their 'noisy' songs and dances, their strange manners, their attitude to work."

Our ethnography has merely focused on young Muslims. However, there are some 'dimensions' of Otherness which need to be taken into consideration such as age and gender. Older adults and children of Islamic background experience Othering differently from young Muslim adults. Moreover, challenges that Otherness bear upon the spatio-temporalities, performances, and embodiments of masculinity and femininity of Muslims upon which their life trajectories and opportunities rest demands serious attention. Additionally, although Othering problematises the identity of Muslims, the Other is not passive, voiceless subaltern (Bhatt, 2006). The dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' should not deny the agency of those who are Othered. Referring to the critical questions of agency, how Muslims manage the Othering attached to their bodies is crucial in the struggle for social justice. How Muslims are speaking back to Othering is not only important for a wider understanding of the continued and complex negotiations of Muslims with the Western values but also everyday negotiations of difference in the city. Further investigations, thus, seem necessary to foreground not only the role of age and gender in Otherness of Muslims but also the various strategies and responses to experiences of Othering within the diversity and multidimensionality of the everyday urban practice of Muslims. This research agenda not only thinks through the city in an intercorporeal way but also engages the scholarship on the body and embodiment with the micro-politics of everyday urban life.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Reza Shaker: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Software, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. **Sander van Lanen:** Validation, Supervision. **Bettina van Hoven:** Validation, Supervision.

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