The semiotics of the mosque and its impact on self-perceptions of the feminine body

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ABSTRACT

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From its inception, the primary focus of the field of Linguistic Landscape Studies has been the interplay between language and space, or language on display. Recently, however, scholars have begun to consider the human element of linguistic landscapes (LLs), and include the body in their work [See for example Stroud and Jegels (2014), Peck and Stroud (2015), Peck and Banda (2014)]. This thesis aims to contribute to the ongoing development of the field of linguistic landscape research from focusing primarily on text and signage to looking at linguistic and semiotic landscapes in relation to the body. The study does so by investigating how the semiotic and linguistic landscapes of the South African mosque influence Muslim women's perceptions about their bodies, their feelings of belonging in the mosque, and their ideas about Muslim womanhood. Several methodological tools are used to achieve this, including walking interviews with South African Muslim women, photographs of signage and architecture from thirty South African mosques, and autoethnographic narratives and reflection. The thesis adopts a visceral landscapes perspective to understanding the linguistic landscape of the mosque, which encourages including sign readers' visceral responses to signage and space as a vital part of understanding the linguistic and semiotic landscapes of that space. It also introduces to linguistic landscape studies the concepts of sign tonality, the perlocutionary force of signs and preference organization. In particular, the study aims to reflect on the co-construction of place and the body by working through a clearer theoretical understanding of the interplay between place, language and the body.

February 2023

DECLARATION

I declare that *The semiotics of the mosque and its impact of self-perceptions of the feminine body* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before, for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Mooniq Shaikjee

Signed:  Date: 24 February 2023

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> "I wanna thank me for believing in me, I wanna thank me for doing all this hard work. I wanna thank me for having no days off. I wanna thank me for never quitting. I wanna thank me for always being a giver and trying to give more than I receive. I wanna thank me for trying to do more right than wrong. I wanna thank me for being me at all times, [Mooniq] you a bad m***f****."

For Ma Katy and Papa

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY

abaya	A black, full-length dress worn by women, often for prayer
alhamdulillah	An Arabic phrase meaning "All praise is due to God", usually uttered when one is grateful for something
Allahu Akbar	Arabic phrase meaning "God is great". This phrase is used at the beginning of the prayer to signal that the ritual has begun.
Asalaamu alaikum	A Muslim greeting in Arabic meaning "Peace be upon you"
Asr	The name for the third of the five daily prayers
baaligh	A person who is *baaligh* has reached the age of puberty and under Islamic law is considered responsible for their own actions
du'aa	Supplications to God
Eid	A Muslim religious festival
Eidgah	a yearly mass open air gathering for the Eid prayer
Eid-ul-Adha	A Muslim religious festival linked to the Hajj pilgrimage commemorating Abraham's sacrifice of his son
fard	Obligatory
fatwa	non-binding legal opinion
ghusl	A ritual bath taken to purify oneself after intercourse, menstruation or other dirtying of the body
Hajj	The Islamic practice of pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam
hijabi	A person who wears a headscarf called a *hijab*
Imaam	Religious leader, or one who leads the ritual prayer
insha-Allah	An Arabic phrase meaning God-willing
istinjaa	The act of cleaning oneself after using the toilet
itikaaf	The Islamic practice of isolating oneself in a mosque and devoting the time there to worship).
jalsah	An annual *madressah* event, similar to a graduation to which parents are invited and students sometimes perform poems, etc

jamaah/jamaats	The Arabic word for congregation, but in this context refers to a Tableegh Jamaah, or a group of men who travel from town to town to preach to their fellow Muslim (men) and encourage further religious observance.
jamaat khana	The word *jamaat khana* is a term often used to refer to a prayer space that is not officially a mosque. The word *jamaat* is Arabic for "congregation" or "gathering", and *khana* is a Persian word meaning "place". The term *jamaat khana* is often used interchangeably with the Arabic word meaning the same thing, *musallah.*
Jamiatul-Ulama	A council of Muslim theologians in South Africa
janaazah	Muslim funeral proceedings
Jumuah	The name for the Friday afternoon congregational prayers
kanallah	The Kaaps word for "please"
kazaah	A make-up prayer performed when one has missed a prayer. Also spelled *qadhaa.*
kufiyyah	In South Africa , a kufiyyah is a fez-like hat worn by Muslim men
madressah	The Arabic word for "school". In non-Arabic speaking countries, *madressah* usually refers to Islamic classes that take place beyond secular education
masjid	The Arabic word for mosque
mimbar	pulpit
musafir	a traveller, to whom different prayer rules apply
musallah	An informal prayer space not consecrated as a mosque
musallah 2	A prayer mat used for ritual prayer
musallees	Congregants
Muslimas	Muslim women
Nabi	The Arabic title or honorific given to a prophet in Islam
namaaz	The Persian word for Muslim ritual prayer which is often used interchangeably with the Arabic word *salaah*
nazm	Urdu song-like poetry
nikaah	The Muslim marriage ceremony
paak/napaak	Persian words meaning pure or clean/impure or unclean

purdah	The Urdu word for "curtain", which refers to the practice of screening women from men who are strangers
qiblah	The direction of the Holy Mosque in Mecca, which Muslims face during prayer
qiraat	melodic Quranic recitations
Quraan	The holy scripture of Islam. Often spelled Koran in English.
Ramadaan	A holy month in the Islamic calendar during which Muslims fast and perform additional prayers
S.A.W.	Abbreviation for the Arabic phrase *salallahu-alayhi-wasalam*, meaning "Peace and blessings be upon him", a phrase which is said or written whenever the Prophet's name is mentioned
salaah	Muslim ritual prayer
shukran	Arabic for "thank you"
taharaah	In Islamic jurisprudence, *taharaah* refers to ritual purity or cleanliness
Taraweeh	Special nightly prayers unique to the month of *Ramadan*
tayammum	A waterless ablution ritual that can be performed in place of *wudhu* in the appropriate circumstances
thikr/dhikr	The Islamic practice of repeating certain words or phrases in remembrance of God as an act of devotion
Thuhr	The name for the second of the five daily prayers
wudhu/wudhoo	The pre-prayer ablution ritual

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to contribute to the ongoing development of the field of linguistic landscape research from focusing primarily on text and signage to looking at linguistic and semiotic landscapes in relation to the body. In particular, the study aims to reflect on the co-construction of place and the body by working through a clearer theoretical understanding of the interplay between place, language and the body. The study will do so by adopting a visceral linguistic landscapes approach to investigate how the semiotic and linguistic landscapes of the South African mosque influence some Muslim women's perceptions about their bodies, their feelings of belonging in the mosque, and their ideas about Muslim womanhood. I also introduce to linguistic landscape studies the concepts of sign tonality, perlocutionary force of signs and preference organization. I seek to demonstrate that feminine bodies are often seen as a "problem" in the mosque space, and are made to matter in ways that masculine bodies are not. This often leads to women feeling as though they don't belong in the mosque.

In this chapter, I explain my motivation behind the topic of this study, and how my research aims and questions developed from there. Thereafter, I provide a brief overview of each of the remaining chapters of this thesis.

1.2 Motivation

Several years ago, I had a traumatic experience at a mosque in Cape Town. I had planned an evening meeting close to this mosque so that I could do my afternoon prayers there, and arrived at the mosque just fifteen minutes after the start of prayer time. There was a burly

man standing in the doorway, and I asked politely if I could get past him to enter. He refused, replied very rudely that the prayer was over, and that he would be locking the mosque in a few minutes. I was thrown, but I stood my ground and asked if he couldn't wait ten minutes for me to pray before he closed up. He refused once again, and then added, disdainfully – "you're not dressed properly anyway". Needless to say, I was furious. He was using my clothing to deflect the blame and responsibly for this conflict onto me, in a way that eerily reflects rape culture – to blame the woman and what she was wearing for the sexual assault she experienced. It was clear to me that this was not really about my clothes, because he would not accept my assertion that I had my own burka in my bag or that the mosque provided burkas for women congregants. In addition – and maybe the most infuriating of all – I knew that if I had been a man, he would not have used my clothes to justify denying my entry. I left this experience crying in frustration – who was this man to deny me access to the place where I was supposed to connect with my Allah, and in this way?

My experience is not an isolated one. Both globally and in South Africa, discussions about women's access to the mosque have steadily become more visible over the years, largely due to the increasing prevalence of social media. US-based projects like Side Entrance, a Tumblr page dedicated to showcasing photographs of women's spaces relative to men's in mosques from around the globe[1], and the UnMosqued documentary film produced by Ahmed Eid in 2014 highlight growing feelings of isolation amongst American youth who feel unwelcome in their local mosques, and seeks to draw attention to the importance of making mosques more women-friendly and the danger of treating women as second-class citizens in places of worship.

Among other things, the film featured narratives of people's experiences in American mosques. Hebaa Youssef was one of these people, and she recounts one of her experiences in a mosque in America.

[1] https://sideentrance.tumblr.com/ [Accessed 8 December 2022]

"All of a sudden, after I say Allahu Akbar [i.e. after she had started her prayer], I see a hand and foot coming in front of me. One of the guys who was running the masjid – the mosque – he like literally interrupted my prayer, and he said "You can't pray here" […] I've given up to be honest. It's just too hard and too emotionally… painful". (At this point she touches her hand to her chest, then continues). "Every time I try to get back into a masjid it's always met with a lot of opposition. " (Eid, 2014).

Figure 1. 1 Screenshot from the UnMosqued documentary showing an interview with Heba Youssef

Both my and Heba's incidents mentioned above are examples of Muslim women being made to feel as though they don't belong in the sacred space. Other incidents make it clear that the women's section in the mosque is often viewed very differently from the men's. In an article written for an online publication called The Daily Vox, Hajira Amla, a convert to Islam in South Africa, says:

"When I got married to my husband in 2008, I wanted to know if my (non-Muslim) parents would be able to come to the nikah, or marriage ceremony, at the Sultan Bahu Mosque in Mayfair, Johannesburg. The imam informed me that the women's gallery where the nikah was to take place was not consecrated as part of the mosque, and so non-Muslims could come and witness the ceremony. The

revelation rankled. Why then, should women even bother to come to these non-consecrated spaces?" (Amla, 2014).

In my experience, sentiments such as the above are regularly expressed in discussions around gender inclusivity in mosques. In my case, the incident made me feel incredibly self-conscious about my body, and made me feel like a trespasser in a space I thought should be open to me.

Aryanti (2013) argues that the marginalization and exclusion that women experience in mosques around the world demonstrate how the mosque, and architecture more broadly, can be and has been used as a political space to push a patriarchal ideology. Furthermore, she states that "the mosque space has served as what Althusser calls an "ideological state apparatus," by which the conception of spatial segregation and gender differences in the mosque are sustained through practices performed recurrently by the adherers." (Aryanti 2013: 387)

As a sociolinguist interested in issues of space, such anecdotes brought up several interesting questions. Does the linguistic and semiotic landscape of a building like a mosque, which in most countries is gender segregated, play any role in making Muslim women feel as though they belong, or don't belong, in the space? To what extent can we attribute these feelings that Muslim women feel and evoke in relation to the mosque to the emplaced semiotics of the sacred space? To what extent are these feelings a result of their experience and knowledge of the mosque? In what ways are bodies made to matter in mosque spaces?

I have decided to tackle these questions by locating this study within the field of linguistic landscape research. This approach to dealing with the issue of body in place is a direct outcome of the development within this field over the last fifteen years. The discipline has moved from being a study of the artefact – the linguistic landscape – to a study of how people perceive the landscape and read it, and in more recent years, to the study of how

people actually move in the landscape, construct it, and are themselves constructed by it. I begin this study with the hypothesis that the ideologies about women and gender difference that contribute to producing the semiotic landscape of the mosque (architecturally and performatively) constitute men as the default or norm, and women as marked or different. These emotional and bodily experiences of not belonging, of being interpellated as different, can similarly form habitualized patterns of behaviour and movement when engaging with the mosque, and thus shape the way women think about themselves and their bodies (cf. Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus).

As a way to engage with my own experiences as an insider-researcher in this study, I opted for an autoethnographic approach to some aspects of this thesis, but have also incorporated participant interviews, as well as more traditional linguistic landscape data collection methods like photography.

Listening to how women talk about their bodies and how they negotiate the sacred space is a valuable way to come up with tools to talk about the ways in which place impacts our lives. The central phenomenon that this study seeks to understand is the interplay between body, place and language. In particular, it seeks to interrogate the notion of the body, by investigating how language constructs the body, and how this construction in turn constructs and is constructed by place but mediated by language.

1.3 Aims and research questions

The aims of this study are thus as follows:

1. To understand the ways in which bodies are made to matter in place in the mosque, and how this process is semiotically mediated.
2. To explore how some Muslim women's and my visceral readings of the semiotic and linguistic landscapes of the South African mosque influence our affective practices in and around the space.

The research questions of this study are thus as follows:

1. "What is the semiotic landscape of the mosque like?"
2. “How can the space of the mosque be read viscerally?”
3. “How are bodies made to matter in the mosque?”
4. "How does the semiotic and linguistic landscape of the mosque make women's bodies matter in the space in ways that men's bodies do not?"
5. “How do women talk about their bodies in relation to the mosque?”

The next section outlines how this thesis will go about answering these questions chapter by chapter.

1.4 Overview of chapters

Chapter two contains the literature review section of this thesis, as well as the theoretical framework upon which the study is based. The literature review provides the reader with a broad overview of the field of Linguistic Landscape Studies (LLS) from its inception all the way through to the developments that led to this study. The theoretical framework draws out the theory from the literature review that is relevant to this study, and also introduces affect and affective practice theory which I use to analyse my data.

In chapter three, I explain the process I went through in designing the study, from choosing the autoethnographic approach, developing the interview schedule, and adapting my interview process into a walking interview, to how I photographed sites, catalogued the images, and analysed them.

Chapter four aims to provide the reader with contextual and background knowledge of mosques and Muslims in South Africa. It also has a large autoethnographical element, which I use as a tool to make explicit my own positionality and the cultural knowledge I carry with me in this study.

Chapter five addresses research questions 1 and 2, namely "What is the semiotic landscape of the mosque like?" and “How can the space of the mosque be read viscerally?” In this chapter, I adopt a narrative style to present data collected on one particular site visit, sharing my own visceral reading of the landscape and demonstrating how useful autoethnography can be as a method for a linguistic landscapes study. In addition, I present a taxonomy of mosque signage, and introduce the concept of sign tonality for understanding the effects signs have on readers.

In chapter six, I present data to address research questions 3 and 4, namely, “How are bodies made to matter in the mosque?” and "How does the semiotic and linguistic landscape of the mosque make women's bodies matter in the space in ways that men's bodies do not?" This data includes photographs of signage from one of the categories of signs in my taxonomy, as well as interview extracts where relevant. The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the significance of the human body in the semiotic landscape of the mosque, as well as the implications this significance has for making people feel (un)welcome or (un)comfortable in the space. I argue that the linguistic landscape constructs the mosque as a space which does not tolerate dirt or disorder, and the human body as one that sometimes brings dirt and disorder with it into spaces. I also argue that it constructs women’s bodies as sometimes dirty and disorderly as well, and communicates that they are not welcome in the space under those circumstances.

In chapter seven, I present some of the affective responses expressed by participants in recounting their experiences with visiting the mosque in order to continue the discussion of research question 4, and also to address research question 5, namely “How do women talk

about their bodies in relation to the mosque?" Since I am particularly interested in what the body experiences and how it is treated differently inside the mosque versus outside of it, I discuss extracts that I placed into one of my main thematic categories, *Entering the mosque*, since it involves moving from one space into another. I explore the affective practices that Muslim women engage in when preparing to visit the mosque, while navigating through men to get into the mosque, and when crossing the actual threshold. In this chapter I argue that Muslim women find it necessary to do a lot of work in order to access the mosque space, and that this could create additional barriers to their access.

Chapter eight is the conclusion chapter, which provides a summary of the major findings of the study. In this chapter, I address each of my research questions in addition to bringing together the various arguments I make in different parts of the thesis.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This thesis is located at the intersection between linguistic landscaping – or semiosis in place – and the role that people – and bodies – play in the field, as actors, interpreters, and agents. The study aims to explore how Muslim women's visceral readings of the semiotic and linguistic landscapes of the South African mosque influence their affective practices in and around the space. To lay the theoretical groundwork for this investigation, this chapter has two broad aims: the first is to give the reader a comprehensive review of the state of the field of Linguistic Landscape Studies (LLS) as I understand it. The second aim is to provide the reader with insight into the main theoretical assumptions surrounding affect and affective practices on which this research is based. The chapter is thus divided according to these aims, and begins with a literature review, before moving on to the study's theoretical framework.

Literature review: From multilingualism to the body: The development of LLS

From its inception, the primary focus of this field has been the interplay between language and space, or language on display. Recently, however, scholars have begun to consider the human element of linguistic landscapes, and include the body in their work (see for example Stroud and Jegels, 2014; Peck and Stroud, 2015; Peck and Banda, 2014). In the first half of this chapter, I trace the history and development of LLS as a field from its earliest beginnings, all the way to the point at which this study is located – at the field's current interest in space and the body.

2.1 Proto-LLS – Preliminary works

Landry and Bourhis (1997) are generally considered to have produced the first definition of the linguistic landscape (or LL), stating that "[t]he language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on

government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25). However, several studies investigating text on display in public space were conducted before this point, with the phrase even appearing in work in Japanese by Masai (1972), a geographer using the term *"gengo keikan"* and in French (*le paysage linguistique*) by Monnier (1989: 36). Many of these early studies took place in cities that were widely considered bilingual with two distinct linguistic groups. Researchers were interested in how the two languages manifested in the landscape of one urban space. The methodologies of these studies were largely quantitative, including surveys of areas in which instances of text on display were counted, and interesting methodological questions were raised even then.

For example, Tulp (1978) examined languages on billboards in Brussels in order to investigate the city's gradual move to French from Dutch. Like many such studies after hers, she assumed that a language's visibility in public space affected the language's vitality among speakers in that space. Wenzel (1996) conducted a similar study in the same city, although she was also interested in the geographic distribution of the languages, the order of the languages as they appeared on the signs, and whether or not there was a link between what language appeared on a sign or billboard and the service or product it offered or advertised. Her study highlighted several methodological problems that LL researchers would grapple with in the future, one of which was having to make decisions about English product names that appear on signs in other languages. Should these be recorded as an instance of English on the sign, or should the English name be considered a borrowed word into the other language? In her study, Wenzel decided to record them as the latter. Another problem she encountered was how to deal with language-mixing in her survey, as French-Dutch-English word blends appeared in her data. For example, should a blended word like *Formidiesel* be counted as an instance of French, or English? (Wenzel 1996).

In 1989, Monnier set out to investigate to what extent the linguistic practices in the commercial sector of Montreal were in line with a bill enforcing the use of French in the city. He was particularly interested in the languages that appeared on shop signs. During his data collection process, he made the decision to count not whole signs, but "information units",

one sign being able to carry multiple units in different languages at once. Certain brand names and shop names (often international ones) that the author felt were out of the control of the business owner were left out, as he did not consider their presence to be a contravention of the bill in question. The author also investigated the "linguistic origin of the owner of the shop" to try to understand the linguistic preference of different shopkeepers.

Rosenbaum et al (1977) were interested in the relationship between Hebrew and English in Jerusalem, and conducted a survey of languages on display in one street in the city. The authors used the presence of the Roman script to guide their classification of signs, finding that almost all words in Roman script were English words. Their study also included investigations into the spoken language taking place in that street as well as the language spoken by the shopkeepers who had stores there.

Later on, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) conducted a similar study in a different part of Jerusalem, but unlike Rosenbaum and his colleagues, they did not rely on script to determine language used, taking into account transliteration, which they found was a common linguistic strategy on the signs they encountered. In a move before its time in the field, the study not only took into account the symbolic value of languages on signs, but also considered the effect that the sign writers' linguistic skill and the presumed reader of the sign had on the choice of language put on display (1991: 81).

Work by Calvet (1990) examines the presence of languages other than French on signage in Paris. He found that hardly any Spanish or Portuguese was visible in areas with large groups of these speakers, but signs containing Arabic or Asian scripts were quite prevalent in areas with large Asian and north African communities. He also concluded that the presence of Chinese served different purposes on different signs. In some areas, Chinese appeared on the signage of Chinese restaurants to lend an "*air chinois*" to the business, whereas in other areas, the sign included additional details which were meant to be read and understood by those speaking the language.

Calvet's (1994) study on signage in Dakar is interesting in that it took into account script choice and script contact. Texts on display in Dakar featured three languages – Wolof,

French and Arabic – in two scripts – Roman and Arabic. He found that when trying to classify signs, one had to distinguish between the graphic form of text and its linguistic content, as these were not always the same, for example with Arabic words appearing in Roman script.

Smalley (1994) and Masai (1972) were also interested in script choice on public signage. Smalley (1994) conducted a survey of languages on display in Bangkok as part of a general discussion of the linguistic situation in Thailand. His survey concentrated on three parts of Bangkok and looked at the distribution of Chinese, Thai and English, as well as the presence of three scripts – Thai letters, Chinese characters, and Roman script. Like Calvet, he found that choice of language on a sign did not determine the script used. Masai's (1972) study was conducted in Tokyo, and looked at patterns of language choice and script choice on shop signs, script choice in Japanese being particularly interesting due to complexities of the Japanese writing system.

To summarize, pre-LL researchers were mainly interested in how multiple languages manifested in the landscape of one urban space, as well as diachronic development of languages on display over time. The methodologies of these studies were largely quantitative, including surveys of areas in which instances of text on display were counted. These studies also highlighted several methodological problems that LL researchers would grapple with in the future. Such problems usually revolved around making decisions on how signs should be counted and recorded, and whether or not particular items on signs should be counted as one language or another, or one script or another, as well as how to deal with language-mixing and word-blending. Many of these difficult issues continued to be experienced by early LL researchers, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 Early LLS

Subsequent to Landry and Bourhis' coining of term “linguistic landscape” several early works adopted the phrase in their studies of shop signs in certain urban areas. These studies viewed public signage as artefacts, with their linguistic and orthographic features as points

of interest, paying little if no attention to the people who created or read the signs. Examples include McArthur's (2000) study on the languages of shop signs in Zurich and Uppsala, MacGregor's (2003) work on shop signs in Tokyo, which included a focus on which of four orthographic scripts were chosen for the signs, and Martinez's (2003) survey of signs along the US-Mexico border, with an interest in morphological variations in names of businesses in that area. Several such studies also appeared in languages other than English (see for example Someya, 2002; Gorter, 2003; Satō, 2003; Kim, 2003).

A major criticism of the early works is related to the limited, quantitative methodology used (although as an exception, see Collins and Slembrouck's (2007) use of ethnography and interview data). In most of these studies, often called "surveys", a researcher walked through a specific survey area in search of the kinds of signs they were interested in. When found, signs were often photographed and the instances of language occurrence were counted. As a result, signs in many early studies were often examined in isolation without taking into account the spatial and temporal context in which it was created or displayed. These studies were often very descriptive in nature, and many of them, like Heubner's (2003) investigation into the influence of globalisation on 600 signs in Bangkok, tended to focus on the presence of English in predominantly urban areas. Another example is Griffin's (2004) study on the presence of English in the LL of Rome, which also considered other types of signage as described in the original Landry and Bourhis (1997) definition, expanding its focus to include street signs, graffiti and billboards alongside shop signs.

Interest in the field slowly began to move to include the authors of the signs, as LL researchers began interrogating deliberate language choices made in the production of signage. In doing so, it was believed that conclusions could be drawn regarding language use and the spread of multilingualism over a certain geographical area, the assumption being that multilingualism in the LL reflected the multilingualism of the speakers in that area. Studies that focused on the presence of different languages on display in certain spaces proved to be quite valuable for research on what Gorter (2013) terms societal multilingualism. Many studies hereon dealt with issues relating to different orthographies on display (eg. Inoue, 2005, Backhaus 2005), language variation and language maintenance

(eg. Backhaus 2005), language hierarchies (eg. Ben-Raphael et. al, 2006), and language contact and conflict (eg. Cenoz and Gorter, 2006).

2.3 The field expands: Geosemiotics, contextual considerations, and symbolic value

Scollon and Wong Scollon's (2003) theory of geosemiotics attempted to address some of the limitations of earlier studies. They define geosemiotics as "the study of social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world" (2003: 2), arguing that in order to have a nuanced interpretation of signage, researchers have to take into account the cultural and social context of LL items. They were also among the first to point out that language presence in the LL is not necessarily a direct reflection of the languages that are used in that geographical area, but can be symbolic, indexing not only the geopolitical location or community in which that language is used, but also the sociocultural meanings associated with that language (see also Ross, 1997, who came to a similar conclusion about the use of English in shop signs in Milan).

Ben-Rafael et al's (2006) study about the visibility of Arabic, Hebrew and English in Israeli cities illustrates this well, concluding that languages in this linguistic landscape were not an accurate reflection of the language use in this area. Moreover, they argued that the linguistic landscape functioned as a way to symbolically construct space. Building on this, Shohamy (2006) pointed out that power is a significant element in LL and should not be ignored. She argued that the linguistic landscape is the site of language struggles and contestations, and that the choices of languages represented in the LL can produce a domination of space. Furthermore, she maintained that texts in the LL are often used to implement language policies that reproduce and reinforce language ideologies.

Further expansions to the field had three dimensions, all of which are crucial to this study: (a) expansions regarding the boundaries around what counted as LL objects or texts in space that could be studied in this field (b) attempts to question and complexify ideas about space that underpinned earlier studies; and (c) the role that people (and later on, bodies) play in the field, as actors, interpreters, and agents. I elaborate on each of these developments in

turn below. Along with this three-pronged development came an increased interest in a larger range of semiosis in the landscape rather than just language, a focus on mobility and fluidity, as well as shifting perceptions of the body and the self in relation to place. With this has come a whole range of different data-collection methods, such as narrated walking and video walking, which put the body as it moves through spaces and attends to the semiotic landscape in focus.

The first dimension of the field's progression, the expansion of LL objects, saw text come to be seen as more fluid (e.g., flashing digital billboards), more mobile (e.g., advertisements on buses) and multimodal in nature. Shohamy and Gorter (2009: 4) have characterized this new approach as an expanded notion of LL that incorporates not only a documentation of signs, but also "multimodal theories to include signs, images and graffiti". A study that exemplified this expansion of the field in this way is Reh's (2004) study of Lira Town, in Uganda. She was interested in the spatial mobility of texts, classifying signs as stationary or mobile. She argued that each type required different reading conditions. She also examined the placement of texts on signs and the sizing of instances of text in relation to one another, drawing conclusions about the status of different languages in the area.

The ubiquity of digital cameras and mobile smart phones brought with it exciting possibilities for LLS, making it easier for researchers to record signs, note geographical positioning, and create maps of linguistic landscapes. An early example of this is a large-scale research project undertaken by the Italian Centre of Excellence for Research, which aimed to systematically map linguistic landscapes like that of the Esquilino district of Rome (Bagna and Barni, 2005, 2006). Furnished with digital cameras and handheld computer devices with specialized software, researchers were able to rapidly record large amounts of LL data, all the while geotagging each photograph's spatial positioning.

Recent work by Lyons (2017, 2019) has looked at the LL of San Francisco in relation to social media platforms like Instagram, while Purschke (2017) presents an exciting way of involving participants in LL data collection through an app called Lingscape. In their work on the LL of social media posts associated with specific geographic locations, Hiippala et. al. (2019) go as

far as proposing an expansion of the idea of the Linguistic Landscape to include virtual spaces.

Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) made a major theoretical contribution to the expansion of LL objects by introducing what they term "semiotic" landscapes, arguing that the linguistic element is just one important aspect in the construction and interpretation of place. Following Scollon and Wong Scollon's (2003) distinction between semiotic and non-semiotic spaces, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) define semiotic spaces as "any (public) space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making". With the expansion of what was considered a semiotic landscape came a focus on more and more different kinds of "scapes", for example, graff-scapes or graffiti in the Linguistic landscape (Pennycook, 2010; Kallen, 2009; Karlander, 2016), "skinscapes" or inscriptions on the body (Peck and Stroud, 2015), "smellscapes (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015), chronoscapes (Baro, 2018), and "sexed" signs (Milani, 2014).

The second direction in which the field moved centred around questioning and complexifying the ideas about space which underpinned earlier studies. Following Lefebvre's (1996) conception of public space as "dynamic, flowing, non-linear and interactive", LL researchers began to think about space and the landscape as fluid and in a constant state of flux, rather than being a static backdrop to signs. For example, building on developments in contemporary geography, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) posit that space is not simply something physical; it is socially constructed as well, and can function as a semiotic resource itself. Landscape is both a physical thing, a context for things to happen, and also "a symbolic system of signifiers with wide-ranging affordances activated by social actors to position themselves and others in that context." (2010: 6) In other words, landscape is rather like language, in that it can be used by people to make meaning about themselves and other people. Furthermore, the authors argue that if we think about space as discursive, then displaying signage in space is a metadiscursive act – signs telling people about the space is discourse about discourse. The metadiscursive acts are thus ideological, as they are deliberate, with ideology behind them. Not only did LL researchers begin thinking of the displaying of signage as ideological and metadiscursive, but they also began to think of public space as ideologically fraught rather than neutral. Shohamy and Waksman

quote Auge (1995) in explaining how space can be a "negotiated and contested arena" (Shohamy and Waksman, 2009: 314): “The public space is a shared domain which is embedded in history, culture, ideology, geography as the meaning of place is also of ‘identity of relations and of history’” (Auge 1995: 52). Space also reflects, reproduces and reinforces society's moral order:

> Each society’s ‘moral order’ is reflected in its particular spatial order and in the language and imagery by which that spatial order is represented. Conversely, the social is spatially constituted, and people make sense of their social identity in terms of their environment. Their place of residence offers a map of their place in society: we produce not housing but ‘dwellings of definite sorts, as a peasant’s hut or nobleman’s castle . . . [in] a continuous process of social life in which men [sic] reciprocally define objects in terms of themselves and themselves in terms of objects’ (Sahlins, 1976: 169), To ‘place’ someone, to ‘know one’s place’: this language of social existence is unmistakably geographical. Cultural geography thus calls for a decoding of landscape imagery, a reading of the environmental ‘maps of meaning’ (Jackson, 1989) which reveal and reproduce – and sometimes resist – social order. (Mills, 1993: 150, in Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010: 6)

LL research began to consider how linguistic and semiotic text in space was involved in "spatialization", a process which refers to the ways in which space is "represented, organized and experienced" (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010: 7). One of these processes involves turning space into place, or making space meaningful. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) explain that human beings make space meaningful through their actions and interactions, in physical ways – by manipulating the environment – as well as symbolic ways – by depicting the space, narrating it, or remembering it. The linguistic landscape clearly plays a major role in this process, and LL research began taking this fact into consideration.

The last direction in which the field moved – and possibly the most important for this study – was the increased emphasis placed on the role that people (and their bodies) play in the field, as interpreters and readers of signs, but also as the creators of signs. Malinowski's (2008) study on authorship in the linguistic landscape, for example, looked at Korean

American business owners as sign-makers in Oakland, California, and part of Jia Jackie Lou's (2016) ethnographic examination of Chinatown in Washington DC is an analysis into how her participants experienced the Linguistic Landscape of the area. (See also Lou, 2010, and Shohamy & Waksman, 2012.) Shohamy and Gorter (2009) argue that language in space cannot be divorced from people, as they produce it and make decisions about representation and display:

> "People are the ones who hang the signs, display posters, design advertisements, write instructions and create websites. It is also people who read, attend, decipher and interpret these language displays, or at times, choose to overlook, ignore or erase them." (2009: 1)

Later, this interest in the people who live amongst the signage at the heart of LLS became an interest in the body in relation to signs and space. As I mentioned earlier, it is at this point that the present study is located, and I elaborate on this in the section below.

2.4 From texts in space to bodies in space

The movement towards a focus on the significance of the body puts linguistic landscaping research well in line with more recent work in 'embodied sociolinguistics'. This term is used by Bucholtz and Hall (2016) to describe sociolinguistic research which takes as its starting point the assumption that language is actually an embodied phenomenon. They argue that years of logocentric linguistic research has placed the body as secondary to text and speech, when in fact it is indispensable for language to be produced, perceived and interpreted. Not only is language produced by bodies, but it also produces bodies. It is "a primary means by which the body enters the sociocultural realm as a site of semiosis, through cultural discourses about bodies as well as linguistic practices of bodily regulation and management" (Bucholtz and Hall (2016: 173).

At this point in the trajectory of the field of LLS there had already been several studies in LLS that hinted at links between linguistic landscaping – or semiosis in place – and how the body

is perceived in different spaces. One such study by Stroud and Jegels (2013) looked particularly at how a participant engages in place-making while walking through and narrating their neighbourhood to a researcher. In doing so, they noted that "a central aspect of place-making is in fact the way affect and movement through space is organized, narrated and interactively accomplished by means of – direct or indirect – engagement with situated material semiotic artifacts" (2013: 3). They argued that their walking-narrator talks about Manenberg in affective terms as a "result not just of his experience and knowledge of a particular place itself, but equally the consequence of the emplaced semiotics" (2019: 7). Furthermore, they noted how some of the signs in the landscape they investigated interpellated their participant in particular ways; for example, the graffiti marking gang-territory make him aware that he was a trespasser in that space.

One of the first Linguistic Landscape studies to make very explicit links between the linguistic landscape and the body is Peck and Stroud's (2015) work on "skinscapes". The authors examined conversations between clients and tattoo artists in a tattoo parlour, noting that much of the talk revolved around the types of bodily inscriptions a person's body could carry comfortably in different spaces and at different times. Certain inscriptions on the body – certain signs on the skinscape – affect how the body fits into certain domains and times. For example, tattoos on one man's body render his body inappropriate at work because of his job as a principal at a prestigious school. In another case, a tattoo artist tells an anecdote of a prospective client with no previous tattoos asking for a tattoo on his face which the artist refused. He explains to the researcher that the man was too inexperienced and not masculine enough for such a tattoo. The client is interpellated in a certain way because his request for a highly stigmatised facial tattoo does not match his inscription-free body and his gender presentation. In this case, his body cannot comfortably carry such a tattoo. Peck and Stroud's paper looks at the processes at play in fitting a body into place by investigating how the body is co-constructed through negotiations about the prospective tattoo, as well as looking at how the body and the inscription is framed within space and time. Furthermore, the study investigates how discourses of race and gender envelop the body, and how these discourses are mediated through affect such as pain, shame and apprehension.

Another study to link the body and the Linguistic Landscape was Milani's (2015) exploration of the *One in Nine* Campaign protest that took place at Joburg Pride in 2012. The *One in Nine* group, consisting primarily of black women hoped to bring attention to violence suffered by black queer South Africans, and attempted to temporarily disrupt the mostly white, middle-class parade by staging a "die-in". The women lay on the street in front of the parade holding signs saying "No cause for celebration". This resulted in some of the Pride participants reacting with violence and anger. Milani argues that One in Nine were using the image of black bodies on the tarmac – an image that evokes a particular traumatic past in post-apartheid South Africa, as an affective practice (Wetherell, 2015) to elicit shame from the party-goers in an attempt to get them to reflect on their privilege and on the work that still needs to be done in this area. Had the authors not considered the role of the protestors' bodies in this event and only focused on the placards and signage visible at the time, they would have missed this added layer of meaning. In paying close attention to the body in space this way, the study sought to highlight the importance of including the corporeal when studying discourse and space.

This idea is taken even further by Stroud, Peck and Williams (2019), who propose a new way of thinking about the linguistic and semiotic landscape, namely, reading the landscape through what they call "the visceral". They are interested in what they call the "meat and guts of reading place" (2019: 9), asking how the semiotics of place move the body – how they make the heart race or the stomach churn, and to what extent we can think of the gut as the reader of LL signage. Visceral linguistic landscape research takes into account sign readers'/space users' bodily reactions in relation to signs they encounter and takes these reactions as central to the reader's meaning making process. It posits that it is impossible to separate a sign reader's visceral reaction to signage and landscape from their reading of the sign. Even further, it argues that there is no place without people, and no people without place. Place cannot exist without the practices of people. The authors argue that "the sign is an aspect of corporeal, sensorial placement of self in place", and therefore reading semiotic landscapes through the visceral is a useful way to "refine our approach to embodiment in the field and in sociolinguistics." (2019: 8).

Of particular interest is the work that visceral readings of the landscape do – what effect do such readings have on relationships between people, and people's relationships with space? For example, in their study of the visceral landscapes of Israeli nationalism, Milani et al (2019) look at how viscerality plays a part in trans-national reach of Israeli nation-building and governmentality, and how feelings like mourning, shame, guilt and nostalgia in the landscape work as social glue to tie the Jewish reader to an imagining of the nation state.

The concept of visceral landscapes is the latest exploration in Linguistic Landscape scholarship to explore the links between linguistic landscaping – or semiosis in place – and the role that people – and bodies – play in the field, as actors, interpreters, and agents. With this scholarship has come a whole range of different data-collection methods, such as narrated walking, which put the body as it moves through spaces and attends to the semiotic landscape in focus, as well as the use of language portraits (Busch, 2012) as a tool for participants to express the effect that landscapes have on the body. (See chapter 3 for a deeper discussion on both these methods.)

The present thesis sits squarely at this juncture, seeking to follow in the trajectory of these studies by putting the corporeal at the centre of an examination of the LL. It will do so by focusing on how Muslim women see their bodies in relation to the mosque, and how they feel in their bodies when they engage with the space and its signage. In addition, the thesis adds to visceral linguistic landscape research through exploring visceral readings of the mosque landscape, both by participants and by the author.

The first half of this chapter was focused on providing the reader with a broad overview of the field of LLS and situating the present thesis within this field. In the following half of this chapter, I will introduce the reader to the main theoretical ideas that inform the design and analysis of this study.

Theoretical framing: Affect and affective practices

I begin this section of the chapter by continuing with the theme of the body and viscerality touched on above. I then introduce the theory of affect that I will be using for this research, before moving on to a discussion of affective practice theory. My point of departure for this study is that the ideologies about women and gender difference that contribute to producing the semiotic landscape of the mosque (architecturally and performatively) constitute men as the default or norm, and women as marked or different. These emotional and bodily experiences of not belonging, of being constructed as different, can similarly form habitualized patterns of behaviour and movement when engaging with the mosque, and thus shape the way women think about themselves and their bodies.

2.5 Viscerality, body memory and performativity

In order to build their argument for reading landscape through the visceral, Stroud et al. (2019) review some scholarly work on cognition in the body rather than the mind. They draw on Wilson's (2015) work on "gut feminism", which argues against a binary body-mind separation and argues for seeing the gut as an "organ of the mind" (2015: 6). She theorises that the visceral can be seen to be "cognitively structured" rather than simply raw biological material of feeling, that the periphery of the body is not psychologically inert, but part of the psychological substrate. Stroud et al. (2019) also make use of work by Massumi (2002) and Gormley (2005) on "body-first perception", which posits that when an image or perception first hits us, we are overwhelmed with feeling, and outside meaning, i.e. in a space before we can interpret that feeling. This first hit of perception then heavily impacts how we later make meaning of what we saw or perceived. With this reasoning, studies which investigate how readers make meaning of signage and place should take into account this body-first encounter in order to fully understand how a reader makes sense of their experience of place.

Busch's (2015) inclusion of the body in her work on the lived experience of language, though not located in LLS, played a big role in the conceptualisation of this study. She expands the traditional conception of linguistic repertoire to include speakers' lived and bodily experiences of language. She argues that a person's bodily and emotional experience of language forms habitualized patterns of language use through body memory (Fuchs, 2011) and thus impacts on their linguistic repertoire. Fuchs's (2011) work on body memory builds on Merleau-Ponty's (2002) phenomenology of the lived body, seeking to locate the unconscious within the body. Body memory is a term used to describe the phenomenon of repeated situations and interactions from the past fusing together to form a "style", or way of being in the world of which a person is unaware (cf. Bourdieu's (1986) notion of habitus). Busch explains that that "body memory forms an ensemble of predispositions and potentials for perceiving the world, for social action, communication, and desire. It functions as an intersubjective system, in which bodily patterns of interacting with others are established and constantly updated, from childhood onwards" (2015: 11).

Busch's argument in this regard is that these repeated interactions fuse to form patterns of language use of which a speaker is unaware. A speaker may, for example, feel acutely aware of their lack of linguistic skill in a particular situation or feel shame about their accent, and as a result habitually avoid a certain language variety in a particular domain. If we were to extend this to the LL, we could say that repeated experiences with or visceral readings of place and signage fuse together to form patterns of social (and affective) practice around place.

The idea of repeated situations and interactions fusing to form an unconscious "style" is reminiscent of Butler's (1990) theory of performativity, which conceptualises people's relationships with their gender. It has its origins in speech act theory, which argues that certain utterances said in the right contexts cause material changes in reality, such as promises, vows, prison sentences, and so on. Butler relates this idea to gender, arguing that gender is constructed, and that gender is not something someone has, but rather something that they do. It is not something that is intrinsic, flowing directly from our bodies, but rather

a performance that has to be constantly reiterated and publicly displayed throughout our lives. People are active producers of their gender identity, but the “highly rigid regulatory frame” (Butler, 1990: 33) within which they operate privileges some performances and punishes others. Over time, certain linguistic features and speech styles, as well as ways of dressing and behaving, become associated with certain gender positions or identities, and are naturalized (or “congealed”). Their socially constructed nature is obscured and it becomes generally accepted that "this is just the way things are". The constant repetition of certain behaviours by some genders functions as "on-going gendering processes that tightly link certain bodily poses, facial expressions, hair-cuts, clothing, and even drinks with either men or women" (Milani, 2014: 5). These ways of being and behaving become signifiers of gender over time, and these signifiers are used to communicate a person's gender identity to the world. Conceptualizing gender in this way makes visible how people negotiate or resist the gender norms placed on them by culture and society by drawing on semiotic resources to index their place on the continuum in different contexts and for different means. In this study, we can draw parallels between the theory of performativity and the way the landscape of the mosque is created by repeated (affective) practices, and by how people repeatedly move through the space.

2.6 Theorising affect

There is much contestation amongst scholars about the precise definitions of the terms “affect” and “emotion”, as well as the relationship between the two concepts. Some use the terms interchangeably as synonyms for one another, whereas others posit important differences between them. One such theorisation is made by Wee and Goh (2020) in their work on situating affect in the LL. In their framework, they align themselves with the theory that emotion is housed *within* a feeling entity, such as a person or group. It is a state of being that one's body and mind are experiencing, and it is often seen as something that is fleeting. With this framing, a study investigating emotion may focus on the phenomenon as something whose boundaries do not necessarily extend outwards into the world around it.In addition, for them affect is a feeling or stance towards or about or because of

something. It is always relational – it is an orientation towards something. In other words, affect can be seen as a kind of orientation towards an object with some level of assessment. Affect thus encompasses a much wider variety of phenomena than emotion – as Wee (2016) points out, being unemotional is an affect – and does not necessarily come with limiting and culturally specific labels like “sadness” or “fear”.

Wee and Goh (2020) argue that it is this relational quality of affect that makes it a more useful concept than emotion when studying the semiotic landscape. They explain that focusing on emotion (as they define it) in the landscape tends to move the spotlight away from the landscape itself and onto the feeling entity. A focus on emotion also positions the landscape simply as a backdrop or container for the feeling entity, and obscures the role that the landscape plays in shaping or affecting people's feelings. Because affect is by definition relational in their framework, and involves orientation towards an object, it is useful for trying to understand the relation between the environment and a feeling entity. The notion of affect is thus always contextual or environmental, and so allows us to investigate and demonstrate how the semiotic landscape is involved in the process of the affect being formed.

A further difference between affect and emotion is how each relates to cognition. Scholars differ in their ideas about when and how cognition takes place when a person feels, or is affected. According to Shouse (2005) (as explained by Flockemann, 2019), affect is "outside meaning", a "pre-cognitive phenomenon, and […] thus nonintentional" (2019: 13). Some affect theorists argue that affect only becomes recognized as emotion once it is cognitively captured. Others criticize this separation of affect and cognition saying that both are interrelated and part of a "synergic system" (Merleau Ponty, 2002 in Pink 2011: 266).

Another important aspect of affect is that it is seen to move between people and objects. Rather than seeing affect as an object, one should think of it as what happens when a person or thing impinges on, or acts upon, or moves another. Affect is what happens when

one body affects another and is affected in turn. When this happens, there is seen to be a transmission of affect between these bodies. (Massumi, 2002).

According to Ahmed (2004: 120), "affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an effect of the circulation between objects and signs". Because of this movement between people, affect is social and has a "contagious energy" (Wee and Goh, 2020: 7). Zembylas (2014) argues that there are political implications to this social aspect of affect, saying that “power is an inextricable aspect of how bodies come together, move, and dwell”. He adds that not only is affect crucial for creating collective identity through "communities of feeling", but it is also important for participating in social and political action.

Milani et al (2019) explain that while emotions are often acknowledged in many studies, they are not usually treated like analytical categories themselves, but more like "invisible underpinnings that structure the relationship between individuals and collectivities" (2019: 2). They point out that in order to make affect useful for analysis it can be more helpful to think about emotions in terms of their performative ability rather than their ontological status. In other words, it is helpful to focus on what emotions do rather than what they are. Rather than trying to locate where emotions are situated in our data – within our participants’ minds or bodies – we can try to ascertain how they function as social forces, how they are produced, how they move, and how they attach things together or keep them apart. We should examine their ability "to do things, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective" (Ahmed, 2004:119).

Before explaining the approach to affect I have decided to use in this study, I'd like to briefly look at some of the ways affect theory has been used in LLS to date.

2.7 Affect in LLS

Peck and Stroud's (2015) skinscapes study and Milani's (2015) study on Joburg Pride discussed earlier in the literature review section above both use an investigation of affect as a way to study the body in place. They are among a number of LL studies to consider affect in the landscape in some form, a few of which I will mention here.

Bilkic (2018), for example, studied the inscription of hate into turbulent graffscapes (or graffiti-landscapes) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, looking at this graffiti as linguistic violence (Tirrell, 2012) which generates hateful places. Borba (2019) examined the semiotics of Brazilian protests for and against the 2016 impeachment of Brazil's first female president. He was particularly interested in how the geopolitics of hate and hope evident in the protests affected larger affective discourses in the country. More recent work on affect in the LL is Niedt's (2020) case study of an Italian-American festival in South Philadelphia, where he investigates how time and affect influence the identity constructions of residents in this neighbourhood. Another recent LL study, which also includes a temporal element, is Comer's (2022) investigation into the linguistic landscapes of pandemic lockdown Melbourne. He uses Wetherell's (2012) notion of affective practice, and Wee's (2016) concept of affective regimes in his autoethnographic and citizen sociolinguistic self-reflexive research into signs of hope and love appearing in public spaces during the various COVID-19 lockdowns Melbournians experienced.

It is of course, essential to include a discussion of Wee's (2016) aforementioned concept of affective regimes, a theory he developed in his work on the production of honour and respect in the LL of Arlington National Cemetery. This framework works well to situate affect theoretically in the linguistic landscape, but is perhaps not without limitations, a few of which I will mention here.

Wee's concept draws on Hochschild's (1979, 1983) work on feeling rules (how individuals manage their emotions to meet social expectations) and display rules (how those feelings should be overtly expressed). The framework operates on the assumption that all sites have normative expectations regarding how one should or should not behave in that space, including what kinds of emotions one is allowed to display there. Furthermore, the environment is sometimes structured to manage the public display of affect, often through signs in the LL. The semiotic landscapes of some sites are much more involved in regulating affect than others, such as the Arlington National Cemetery examined by Wee in his 2016 study. To illustrate his point, Wee demonstrates how the signs in the cemetery create an atmosphere of reverence by cultivating appropriate affect like honour and respect.

Wee (2016) argues that the feeling rules that operate at a given site form a coherent system, have some relation to power, and are not unchallengeable, and thus should be thought of as forming a regime. In each site there are one or more affective regimes operating, and the signs within these sites express the rules that constitute this regime. The affective regime restricts the affect that can be felt and displayed there, and sometimes even demands that certain affect be experienced or displayed in a certain way.

Wee (2016: 109) explains that "an affective regime operates at the level of the site, even in the absence of any particular individual, that is, even when a given site happens to be uninhabited or unoccupied". However, this point leads to my main critique of this framework: It makes a distinction between the LL (as a physical artefact) and individuals' emotional responses/reactions to it. I believe however, that it is impossible to separate the two. The LL is composed of the physical space as well as the readings of those around it, and the discussions around and about it. A related issue is the illusion that as researchers, we are able to read the LL "as it was intended" or we are able to have a drone's eye view of a landscape without people in it. As researchers, there is no way to access the LL devoid of people. Once we interact with the LL, we are involved, because we are people. The reading of the Arlington National Cemetery's LL presented in the paper is the author's experience and interpretation of the affective regime. It is not a universal one. The framework implies

that the LL is a pre-existing static thing with an affective regime already attached, into which subjects are inserted, and it is not clear how the rules themselves could be affected or changed. This approach would not be appropriate for this study since I am not interested in the mosque without women's bodies in it – I am interested in how women perceive the rules and then relate those feelings to their own bodies.

Moreover, I am interested in the covert and unacknowledged intentions and effects of the affective regime. Were I to use this framework in my study and focus only on the hegemonic affective regimes that appear to be in place in mosque LLs, I would be limited to focusing on the "intentions" of those who created the signs, perhaps without considering the "excesses of meaning" (Malinowski, 2008) that may be present for women who use the mosque.

These are some of the reasons that I have opted instead to use Wetherell's theory of affective practices as a framework for this study. I elaborate on further motivations in the next section.

2.8 Affective practices

My discussion of Milani's (2015) One in Nine study earlier addressed black female protestors staging a "die-in" to make their demands heard. Milani labels this protest an affective practice, a term coined by Wetherell in a paper on trends in the turn to affect in social science research.

In this paper, Wetherell (2015) reviews three approaches to the study of affect, one of which is Sara Ahmed's work, discussed above. While she appreciates that Ahmed's theorising helps to free affect from the confines of the mind and highlights its social manifestations, Wetherell takes issue with the way Ahmed's metaphor of the movement of

emotion sometimes mystifies things unnecessarily and obscures what human social actors do. She says, "[e]motion understood simply as movement becomes untethered, a kind of mysterious social actor in itself, a force which arises from its circulation, attaching and detaching signs and objects and subjects. […] Affect […] seems to swirl, move, and 'land' like a plastic bag blowing in the wind." (2015: 159).

Wetherell suggests focusing on the practical aspects of affective categories by repurposing Ahmed's ideas within a practice approach to affect. She argues that affective activity is actually a form of social practice (2015: 147) – a familiar social science concept – and that affective practice is a more pragmatic way of thinking about affect for social science research. Wiesse (2019) explains that an affective practice can be thought of as a social practice whose affective dimension becomes significant and is reflected on as a part of that social practice. Affective practices are thus a subcategory of social practices in which affect is being produced and reflected on. Affective practices can also be thought of as the *work* done by the visceral (Stroud et al. 2019).

To fully appreciate Wetherell's argument, it is helpful to spend some time understanding some of the theory behind social practices themselves. In a social practice theory framework, the "social" consists of practices, unlike other social theories where the social often refers to individuals or structures. Social practices are defined as collections of human activity, and in many cases include the skills, implicit knowledges and presuppositions that underlie human activities (Schatzki 2001: 11). Practices can be thought of as "threads of activity" (Wiesse, 2019: 133), or, as Schatzki put it, "[nexuses] of doings and sayings" (2012: 15). Sociolinguists are no strangers to social practice theory. As Markus and Cameron (2002) remind us, language use is a form of social practice, and language is not simply a vehicle for information. People use language to do things. Sociolinguistic scholars have long treated users' linguistic choices as significant, as they carry speakers' ideologies and values along with them.

Underlying social practice theory are three assumptions about practices that are particularly useful when applied to affective practices. Firstly, practices are embodied, meaning that they are bodily activities that always somewhat affect the actors involved. According to Schatzki (2001: 11),

> "A central core […] of practice theorists conceives of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding. The point of the qualifier 'embodied' is that, as many late twentieth-century thinkers (above all feminists) emphasize, the forms of human activity are entwined with the character of the human body. Practice theorists who highlight embodiment typically believe, further, that bodies and activities are 'constituted' within practices."

For Wetherell, affect is "embodied meaning-making" (2012: 4) and refers to emotional states and the perturbations they cause in the body. As social practice theory conceives of human activity as embodied, Wetherell puts forward a social practice approach to affect as a way to bring embodied human activity back into the discussion on affect.

Secondly, practices are public occurrences and cannot be thought of as purely internal affairs, unlike psychological approaches to emotion. It is always possible to be involved in, scrutinize, or modify a practice, even by actors not originally carrying out the practice. In fact, practices always involve multiple actors and do not "belong" to any participant. In relation to affective practices, this means that the affect in question is public, and that the actors affected are also engaged in making their affect recognizable and meaningful to others. Because of this, affective practices are a useful way of thinking about how affect is collaboratively produced.

Lastly, another feature of practices is that they are not single events, but rather unfold as processes over time. So, not only are practices open to involvement by multiple actors, they are also open to interpretation at any point in time. Actors can refer back to past meanings of a practice as part of that practice, and they can anticipate future phases of the practice as

part of that practice as well. Taken all together, these three assumptions make affect an ongoing, practical, embodied accomplishment.

A practice approach to affect is suited to this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, related practices are linked together. In the same way that practices of reading are linked to practices of publishing, writing, printing and paper-making, LL practices like creating and displaying mosque signage are intertwined with mosque-going practices. This provides a more wholistic view of how the LL of a space interacts with people who are linked to that space.

Secondly, affective practices can include every aspect of emotions, such as physical or bodily disturbances and feelings, as well as the elaborated subjective experiences that follow, as Wetherell (2015) explains. In other words, affective practices encompass how people make meaning or create understanding around what happened to them. These interpretations are considered part of the practice itself. Using a practice approach in a study on affect in the linguistic landscape means that my own and my participants' interpretations and reported experiences of the mosque space are an important facet of the study.

Thirdly, practice theory involves non-human participants as much as human participants, overturning common-sense understandings of the differences between subjects and objects. In this theory, objects can be seen as doing things – a space can intimidate you, a sign can make you feel unwelcome, etc. This allows me to explore how buildings, signs and objects interact with people and bodies.

Lastly, social practices are understood to "inscribe" (Wiesse, 2019: 133) themselves onto both their human and non-human participants. Non-human participants, such as artefacts and sites, take on meaning through this inscription of practices. For human participants, practices inscribe themselves into the body, shaping participants' habitus or their ways of behaving in the world. In this regard, affective practice theory links well with Fuchs' (2011)

ideas on body memory and Busch's (2015) work on *Spracherleben*. This repeated and continuous inscription is what allows practices to be re-enacted and turned into routines. This idea is useful for this study, as one of its core concerns is understanding not only how the linguistic landscape of the mosque acquires meaning, but also how it affects women's bodies. Examining how affect is inscribed onto my research sites and participants' bodies through affective practices can further both investigations.

A particularly useful affective phenomenon Wiesse (2019) mentions is something called "atmospherization". Atmospherization refers to the affective practices that serve to create the atmosphere of sites or situations. It is a kind of "doing" that is worth investigating – how atmospheres are practically performed as atmospheres – right alongside how particular emotions are performed, recognized and understood, or how affect is collaboratively produced. It is also one of the ways in which sites "take on" or become inscribed with meaning through practices. And unlike with affective regimes, laypersons "do not merely 'consume' the atmospheric offer of a structure but rather create atmospheres of their own during the course of everyday interactions (cf. Augoyard, 2007: 135–164)." (Wiesse, 2019 :137). This idea is very useful for understanding how mosque atmospheres are produced by the signage therein, as well as the interactions that take place in those spaces.

A practice approach to affect is concerned with "the emotional as it appears in social life and tries to follow what participants do" (Wetherell, 2012: 4), thus taking on a performative rather than ontological focus. Wetherell believes that a practice approach to affect could help us to "find shifting, flexible and often over-determined figurations rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotional characters" (Wetherell, 2012: 4).

2.9 Theoretical framing of this study

This study uses the framework of affective practices, viscerality and body-memory to investigate how the semiotic and linguistic landscapes of the South African mosque influence some Muslim women's perceptions about their bodies, their feelings of belonging in the mosque, and their ideas about Muslim womanhood. Additionally, I supplement this framework using several theoretical concepts novel to the field of linguistic landscapes, namely sign tonality and the perlocutionary force of signs, as well as markedness and preference organization. Sign tonality is the idea that signs can be read to have a "tone of voice", which the author may or may not have intended. This led me to think about the impact of signs on a reader as the signs' "perlocutionary force" (cf. Austin: 1975). I also use the concept of markedness to argue that the linguistic landscape of the Mosque frames men as the "unmarked" norm, and women as the "marked" Other (cf. de Beauvoir: 1949). I take from conversation analysis the concept of preference organization – where there are preferred and dispreferred responses to certain utterances -- and use it as an analogy to understand the role the linguistic landscape plays in the inaccessibility of mosques to women. I elaborate on these concepts further during my analysis in Chapter 5.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have situated this study within a rich body of Linguistic Landscape studies that focus on people in place. I have also broadly sketched the theoretical framing of affect and affective practice I have chosen to work with in this research, as well as introducing several new theoretical concepts I make use of, and will explain during my analysis. In the next chapter, I move on to the methodological aspects of this thesis, detailing the project design, data collection methods and analytical tools used to engage with the data.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the overall design of the study, as well as the data collected for this project and the process through which its collection, coding and analysis evolved. As explained in the previous chapter, this study builds on LL studies that place affect, and by extension, the body, at their centre, and is an attempt to understand how woman experience the mosque and how they talk about these experiences. By definition, such an approach is qualitative in nature. Since the study centres what it feels like, from the participants' perspective, to experience the LL, it was clear that traditional LL methods of photographing signage in place would not be sufficient, and that I also needed to engage with the people who use this space and for whom the space is intended.

The first versions of the design of this study anticipated two main sources of data: participant interviews with South African Muslim women, and site visits to numerous mosques in Cape Town and Johannesburg, which would include photographs of signage and architecture with fieldnotes made before, during and after the visit. It was only later that I realised there was a third source of data – my own experiences, memories, and knowledge of the social context. It was in grappling with my position as an insider-researcher (Unluer, 2012) that I became drawn to the idea of framing parts of this study as autoethnography.

This chapter begins by discussing this realisation in more detail, and then moves on to an explanation of the methods used to collect and then analyse data for this project.

3.2 My positionality

I spent much of the first stages of the writing up process trying to find the best way to make clear and be explicit to my reader about the background knowledge I took with me into the data collection period. I have access to the mosque and to the communities that engage with it, and I have a particular lived understanding of the ways in which Muslim women are

expected to move through the sacred space, and how they have very different embodied experiences of the space than men from the same community. Much of what I wanted to convey about the social context of this study relied on memory and other lived knowledge I had about my community. I was particularly afraid that my background knowledge would not be seen as "legitimate", or that I would be criticized for not being "objective" during my research. During my interviews, I was acutely aware of how I was co-creating the text, of how participants assumed that I knew certain things or that some things did not need further explanation or that I agreed with certain views. Throughout the transcription process, I noticed and highlighted places where I completed a participant's sentences, or where my nodding or minimal responses meant that a participant trailed off and didn't elaborate on certain points.

While grappling with data from a site visit or a transcription of an interview, I felt nervous about how much I wanted to add from my memory or from reflections that took place many days later. I didn't know how to explain why I found certain data interesting or worth commenting on, and others not.

I soon realised it was impossible to divorce this knowledge from my own experience as a Muslim woman living in South Africa, so I had to find a way to engage with this knowledge as I worked. I needed a framework that would enable me to reflect on my own background knowledge of the space and the people who use it, and I had to try to understand how it affected this study. Autoethnography provided useful tools to help me deal with the tensions between being both researcher and participant, and also allowed me to include personal narratives, reflections and memories in my work. It gave me the language I needed to engage with this type of knowledge in a scholarly way. I explain this in more detail in the next section.

3.3 The suitability of the autoethnographic approach

Autoethnography is a qualitative ethnographic research method in which the researcher uses their own experience of a phenomenon to help them understand the wider cultural

and social aspects of that phenomenon. Autoethnographies are “highly personalized accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding” (Sparkes, 2000: 21). They provide a way to connect the autobiographical to the social and cultural, as well as a framework to analyse the personal in a systematic way and from a different vantage point (See McClellan, 2012 and Laslett, 1999). Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013: 1) define autoethnographic stories as “artistic and analytical demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experiences”.

McClellan narrows down "own experience" to mean specifically "introspection and emotional recall" (2012: 92). This was particularly useful for me when thinking about the knowledge I brought to the study and reflecting on how my experience may impact the analysis, the conclusions drawn, or the choice of data to analyse. My conversations with women often involved responding to their own recollections and expressions of emotions with my own. Data analysis included remembering the data collection experience, and allowing my memories to interact with all the insights I had gained since then. This often resulted in me noticing something new or interesting which influenced the analysis and the way I represented that experience later. Autoethnography values memory and memories of the field, terming these contributions "headnotes" (Wall, 2008). As Wall explains, "There is demonstrated value in relying on memory in ethnographic work, so, like Ottenberg [1990: 144], I use my headnotes, my memories, when I write, even when I cannot corroborate them with written data, because “I remember many things . . . [and] I am certain that they are correct and not a fantasy” (2008: 46).

Autoethnography also allowed me to value rather than doubt the knowledge that I brought to the table, and to trust my own voice as someone who had lived experience of many of the issues discussed. As Chawla and Atay (2018) explain, the autoethnographic approach is designed to work with insider knowledges as a way to disrupt conventional ideas about truth, objectivity and what counts as knowledge.

Wall (2008) made the eye-opening (at least to me) observation that according to typical research conventions, data about personal experiences only seems to count as legitimate if

it is collected and (re)presented by another researcher. If I were a participant in someone else's study and my memories and insights were taken as valid there, then surely it is as valid if I were the researcher myself. Realising this helped me to feel more confident in my ability to conduct this research.

McClellan (2012) explains that, while readers of autoethnographies are allowed to agree or disagree with the autoethnographer's representation of the phenomenon under discussion, scholars of autoethnography agree that the most qualified people to discuss the phenomenon are those who have lived through it themselves (Collins 1998; Guy-Sheftall 1995; hooks 1984).

Autoethnography is particularly useful for research that involves what Chandrashekar calls "embodied truth-telling" (2018: 73) that overturns the Cartesian division between mind and body. Dutta (2018) views the method as "a radical form of making embodied knowledge claims that resist the normative use of knowledge as an inherently colonial tool". This is particularly apt for this project which is interested in how women experience the LL of the mosque through the feminine body.

Furthermore, this approach is an excellent methodology for a researcher who enjoys stories and story writing as I do, as it entails the writer telling a story of emotions, intimate detail, and the meaning of human experience (Ellis, 1999). According to Dutta (2018), autoethnography is a way of voicing knowledge claims in storied form.

I am also drawn to the ways in which autoethnography challenges regular scholarship conventions by insisting on first-person narratives (Chawla & Rodriguez, 2008) and rejecting objectivity, which Muncey (2005) argues researchers and readers often use to protect and distance themselves from the "emotional and intimate details of human lives" (Wall, 2008: 44).

Moreover, autoethnography ties in with my own feminist ideology as it makes the personal political (Griffin, 2012) and insists that research be socially just and socially conscious (Adams and Jones 2008; Spry 2001). It aligns with my own commitment of using my

research to centre stories of those on the margins, stories that don't usually get told. This approach is designed to carve out a space for the experiences of the marginalised in our body of knowledge, and to challenge hegemonic naturalised ways of doing research that see Southern/Brown/Black contexts as sites for extracting data, but White/Western/Eurocentric imperialism as sites of knowledge production (Dutta, 2018). I enjoy the way autoethnography overturns traditional power imbalances in research, for example between researcher and participant, between *who* knows and what knowledge is valued.

Now that I have clarified my general approach in this study, I'd like to move on to the details of how I went about collecting and analysing the data. In the section that follows, I explain the evolution of the data collection methods for each data set.

3.4 Data Collection

As explained earlier, this study was designed with two major data sources in mind. In this section, I first elaborate on the design of the interview data collection, explaining the sampling methods I used, the pilot interviews conducted, as well as the evolution of the interview schedule. Thereafter, I move on to explaining how I went about collecting the photographic data for this study.

3.4.1 Interviews

My initial research design for collecting this data set included a number of methods to try to obtain a more complete idea of the participants' experiences of the mosque. I planned to conduct audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with a number of Muslim women, in which I elicited narratives in which they reflected on their experiences within the mosque space, in order to understand how they are made to feel welcome or excluded there. Additionally, I intended to supplement my interviews by making use of the body silhouette (Busch, 2012) as a tool to elicit a visual representation of each participants' experiences of the mosque mapped onto the body. However, after conducting pilot interviews and

observations, I came across a number of issues and had to modify my initial research design. In what follows, I will discuss how the data collection method for this part of the study shifted from semi-structured narrative interviews to less structured walking interviews, as well as the body silhouette experiment that I tried in the second pilot interview and ultimately abandoned, for a variety of reasons, outlined below.

Sampling

I set out to recruit participants for my study through the snowball sampling method, which is when initial participants are asked to identify further participants within their own networks (See Goodman 1961 and Voicu and Babonea 1997). I began by tapping into my own social networks for initial participants, and then asking participants to suggest other possible interviewees. I had hoped to interview a total of twelve participants, and by the end of the data collection period I had completed eleven interviews, each ranging from 45 mins to two hours. Initial contact with participants took place over WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. Starting with my networks meant that many of my participants were around the same age and from similar backgrounds. Snowballing did help this somewhat, particularly with regards to recruiting participants of different ages. However, a clear limitation of this study is that my participant pool is not as diverse as I would've liked – my participants all identified as cisgender women, with roughly the same class and racial backgrounds. I conducted pilot interviews with the first two participants I recruited, using interview design versions 1 and 2, discussed below, before settling on version 3 for the remainder of the interviews.

Pilot interview one

The questions in the first version of my interview schedule – which I used for my first pilot interview – were intended to get participants to talk about the emotions they associated with the sacred space, as well as to elicit narratives from my participants. I chose to include narratives as part of my data because they allow for first-hand accounts of people's

experiences of a phenomenon. As Riessman (1993) states, "people lead storied lives". Not only do we make sense of experiences by creating narratives around them – linking events up in a kind of plot to give them a larger meaning – but we also use narrative to tell people who we are. We understand who we are as a result of what came before in our lives. I would like to tap into the narratives that women form in order to make sense of their experiences of belonging or exclusion in the mosque. Eliciting narratives through interviews also allows me to focus on how participants linguistically mediate and represent their experiences of belonging and exclusion in the mosque. Narratives are also important in this kind of research because they give a voice to marginalized individuals who don't usually get to speak. In this case, Muslim women who are often side-lined due to being both Muslim and women are given an opportunity to shed light on their experiences. Through this method, I hoped that discussions of the body in space would emerge organically and in the participants' own words, and that the narrative-focused interviews would ensure that participants had ample opportunity to discuss their experiences with the mosque in a more general way at first, without being restricted by my particular interest in the body. In addition, I was also aware that I hold my own beliefs about how unsatisfactory a woman's experience of mosques can be, and I hoped that structuring the interviews in this way would allow for other perspectives to emerge.

I began by developing an interview schedule – a list of questions I wanted to ask my participants, ordered in a particular way to serve as a guide for the interview process. The first version of this schedule appears below.

Version 1

Date:

Participant pseudonym:

What words do you associate with the mosque/the masjid?

What feelings do you associate with the mosque/the masjid?

Tell me about the first time you visited the mosque. What happened? Why did you visit? How did you feel?

Do you still visit the mosque? Why/not? How often?

Is there a specific mosque you enjoy visiting? Why?

Is there a mosque that you avoid or don't enjoy visiting? Why?

What do you like about visiting the mosque? What do you find rewarding or meaningful about the experience?

This version of the interview schedule had a number of problems which became evident in the pilot interview. Firstly, the interview ended up being too short and over too quickly, not only because of the number of questions, but because the interview was too structured and didn't really allow for deviations and longer narratives. This was not just down to having close-ended questions. While most of my questions were open-ended, it felt as though it was the interviewer-interviewee format that was hindering more open communication. I tried to use word associations as a strategy to ask about the mosque indirectly, but this turned out to be too abstract a question. As with the rest of the questions, it resulted in responses that were stilted and formulaic, and expected. I felt that the respondent was answering with what they felt were the answers I wanted, or the answers they should give as a "good" Muslim.

Another problem was the way I was taking notes of the respondent's answers. I had printed out an A4 sheet with my questions on it, and included spaces between the questions to write notes that would supplement my audio recording. However, I found that this big sheet on a clipboard felt invasive to the conversation, and that stopping to write notes after each question made the interaction much less of a conversation, and made the respondent very aware that they were being interviewed. I believe that this contributed to the stilted nature of the conversation.

Keeping these realisations in mind, I developed a second interview schedule, which appears below.

Pilot interview two

Version 2

Interview schedule

Warm up

Tell me a bit about yourself.

Do you go to the mosque?

How often do you go to the mosque?

When was the last time you went to the mosque?

Which was the last mosque you visited?

What was the experience like?

Do you have a favourite mosque that you've ever been to? Why?

Do you have a favourite mosque in your area?

Stories

Tell me about your first memory of the mosque. What happened? Why did you visit?

How did you feel?

Has anything ever happened to you in a mosque that elicited strong feelings for you?

Have you ever been aware of your body in the mosque? How? Tell me about this?

Prompt: Story of the old woman struggling up the stairs.

What do you think?

How does that make you feel?

Has anything like that ever happened to you?

Prompt: My story of being barred from entering the mosque.

What do you think?

How does that make you feel?

Has anything like that ever happened to you?

Body work

Take some time to think about how you feel right now in your body. How do you feel?

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a mosque space

How do you feel in your body now?

What kind of space are you imagining?

Prompt: Sara Ahmed

"To be comfortable is to be so at ease with one's environment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins. One fits, and in the act of fitting the surfaces of bodies disappear from view (Ahmed, 2006: 134)."

How do you feel in your body when you are in the mosque?

Have you ever felt comfortable in this way? Tell me about it.

Have you ever felt this kind of comfort in a mosque space?

Drawing exercise

Draw an outline of how you think of yourself in prayer (in the mosque?)

Or choose one of the outlines provided and customize it however you want to make it personal

Make a list of words (adjectives/thoughts/feelings) you think of when you think of yourself praying (in the mosque)

Represent these things on the drawing in any way you want.

For example

Using specific symbolic colours

Placing things in the body in any way

Drawing on images or symbols or words

Reflection

Tell me about your drawing.

What would your ideal mosque look like?

Questions to end off

Do you have anything further you would like to add?

How do you identify in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality?

Are you comfortable with being contacted in future for a follow-up interview?

In this version, I extended existing questions and added in more questions, grouping them into similar themes in an attempt to help the conversation flow more naturally. I included prompts in which I narrated two of my own mosque experiences and asked the participant to respond to them. The first was my experience of exclusion from the mosque which I

recounted in chapter 1, and the second an incident in which I witnessed an elderly woman having to crawl backwards up a staircase in order to access the upstairs women's prayer area because there was no ramp, elevator or ground floor prayer space for women. I kept this strategy in later versions of the schedule since it worked quite well and yielded interesting comments and stories in return. This schedule also included more pointed questions about the body and feelings, focusing on how the participant felt during the interview, and also trying to gauge how they felt when visiting the mosque. This was not very successful, for two reasons related to distance – namely distance from the body and distance from the space. Firstly, I once again felt restricted by the interview genre, as it pre-empted a disconnect in my participant from her body: it was clear that my participant had not been expecting such questions and found it difficult to shift from more cerebral exercises like recalling memories, to thinking about how her emotions were sitting in her body at the time. Secondly, it was clear that the location of the interview was too far removed from the mosque space itself, so my participant was having trouble remembering (or imagining) how she felt or would feel in a mosque space. I realised that it would probably be more effective to have the interview inside a mosque itself, so that participants could be experiencing their emotions more immediately and then be able to share these experiences with me more easily.

On a more practical level, in an attempt to encourage a more natural flow of conversation, I decided to print my questions onto cue cards rather than an A4 sheet and also avoided taking any written notes during the interaction. This helped a lot, but it still felt as though the participant was very aware of my cue cards and of being interviewed.

This version of the schedule also included the body silhouette drawing exercise, which I mentioned earlier as not having been successful. The body silhouette is a multimodal methodological device that has been traditionally used by sociolinguists to uncover their participants' perceptions of their own linguistic repertoires (Busch, 2010, 2012). Each participant is given an image of the outline of a body and is then required to paint their languages onto it, creating what is termed a language portrait. In some cases, they are also able to draw their own silhouette if they so wish. The different colours and shapes used in the process and the different areas of the body onto which the languages are placed

represent the emotions and ideologies the participants hold about both their languages and their bodies. The participants' explanations of their drawings also generate rich metalinguistic narratives. Below is an example of a language portrait created with the body silhouette, taken from Busch's (2012) study on the linguistic repertoire.

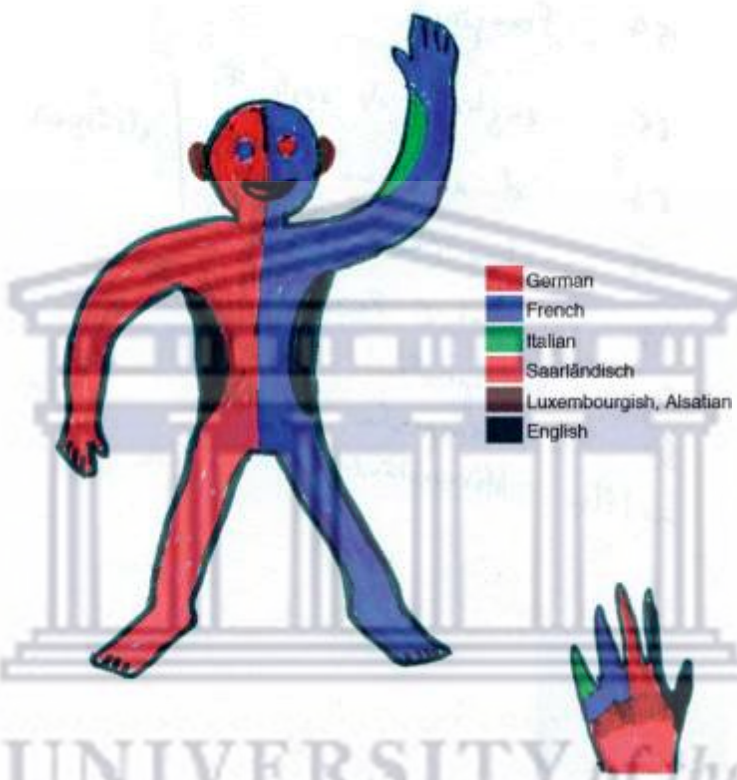

Figure 3. 1 A language portrait appearing in Busch's (2012) study

This tool was first used in the field of language awareness. For example, Gogolin and Neumann (1991) employed it in their research with bilingual children in monolingual elementary schools, and it has also been used to investigate how children see second language German in relation to their first languages (Krumm and Jenkins, 2001). Coffey (2015) has used language portraits in his study on a phenomenological perspective on teachers' language learning histories. In an attempt to promote a speaker-centred approach to school language policy and to expand current understandings of linguistic repertoire, Busch (2010) used language portraits to unpack the language profiles of South African learners, and in another study, used them to argue that drawings of teachers from the

German–French border area of Saarland and Lorraine carry traces of historical language ideologies (Busch, 2012). Prasad (2014) took the language portrait approach further by moving away from using fixed silhouettes to prompting children to create their own multimodal portraits from scratch. Recently, however, the body silhouette has also been used in linguistic landscape research. Roux et. al (2019) used the body silhouette to see how participants talked about tattoos on the body, and how they compartmentalized the body and assigned different meanings and values to different body parts when they were inscribed upon or left blank. In a similar vein, rather than using it to investigate linguistic repertoires or ideologies about linguistic resources, I wanted to use the body silhouette and the body mapping of affect to explore an understanding of the personal significance of place. I thought that the silhouette could be a useful way to tie affect and emotion to the body, as well as a means to elicit and focus the participants' reflections on their experiences within the space. My idea was that each participant would be provided with paper and coloured pencils, and then prompted into the exercise as shown in the interview schedule above. My hope was that this process would result in the creation of a corporeal landscape with inscriptions on it, or an artificial "skinscape" (Peck and Stroud, 2015), which could then be discussed and analysed. In the discussion, participants would be asked to talk through their picture with the researcher, and to explain what they had drawn and why.

My first trouble with the drawing exercise came in the design stage. I anticipated that participants would find this exercise strange and unfamiliar, and I was unsure as to how to phrase my question and prompt so that they would understand what to do. I decided to incorporate the word association question into my prompt. The second problem lay in the form the silhouette itself took. I have a problem with the original silhouette used in the Busch's study, because I feel that the figure is somewhat gendered, evoking a masculine body. I decided that I wanted my participants to draw their own silhouette, but realised that they would need an example to know what to do. I decided that the best compromise would be to show them a few different silhouettes as examples, then ask them to draw their own. If they were unwilling to do so, they could choose one of the examples in the figure below and use that for the exercise.

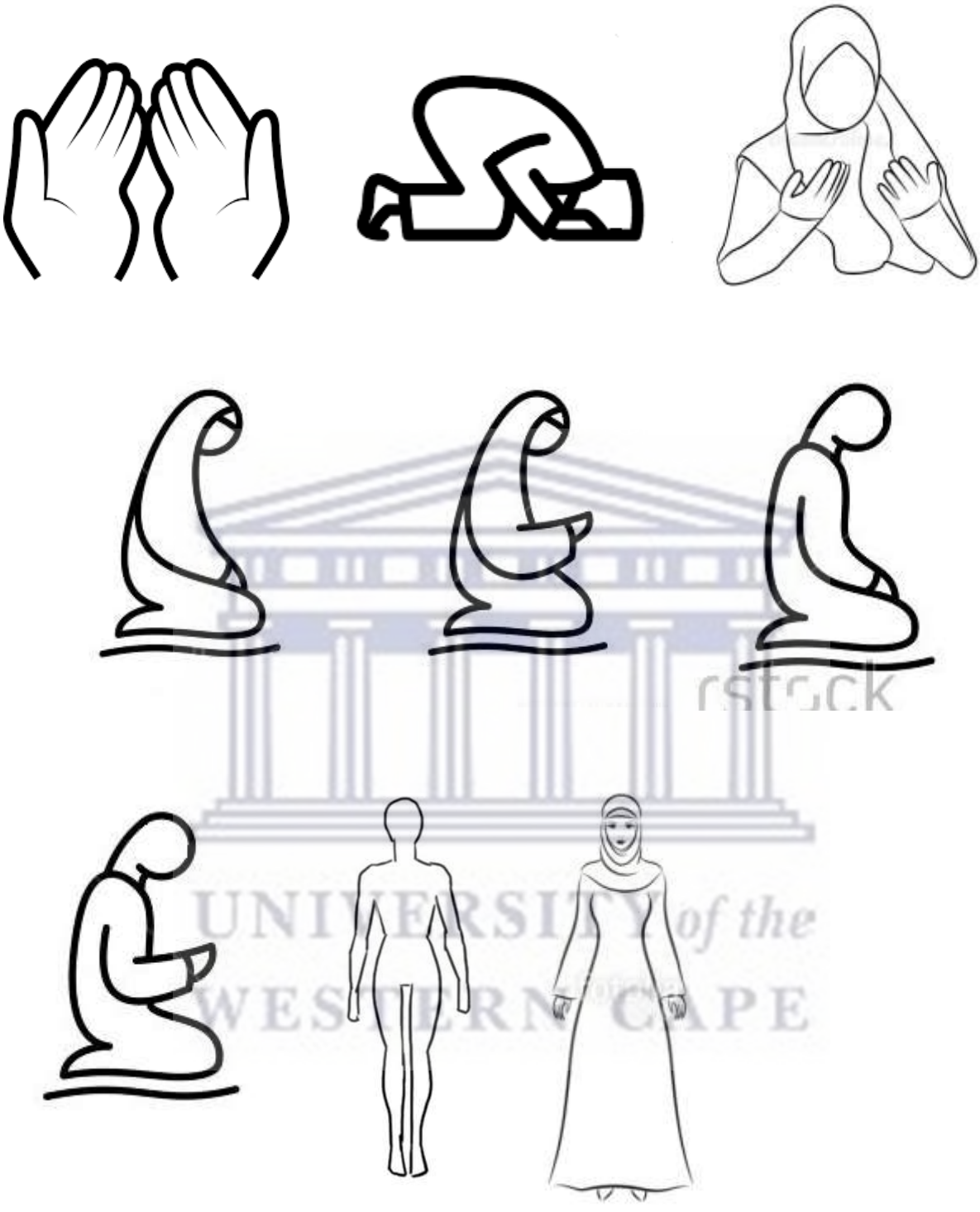

Figure 3. 2 The range of silhouettes I supplied in the pilot interview

Perhaps it was the phrasing of the question, but I found the data it yielded very unsatisfying and repetitive. I was also uncomfortable with the fact that some of the silhouettes I provided could also be thought of as masculine, including the one chosen by my pilot interview participant.

Figure 3. 3 The body silhouette created by the participant in my first pilot study. The words on the left read "emotion", "environment" and "objects". An arrow leads from the word "objects" to the word "environment". Another arrow leads from "environment" to "emotion". There is also a link drawn between "emotion" and the heart, and another between "environment" and the brain.

Figure 3. 4 Pilot one participant also added this word diagram unprompted

I also felt that the silhouette actually increased or highlighted the distance between my participant and their body. They had to transfer their feelings and experiences out of their bodies onto a piece of paper in a very abstract exercise that they found strange to begin with. For these reasons, and my increased interest in walking interviews, I decided not to proceed with the drawing exercise as part of my future interviews.

The move to walking narrative interviews

Led by the realisation that the interview may work better when conducted *inside* a mosque, I decided to change my interview method to a walking interview which still included narratives. The walking interview has become a popular tool in LL research in recent years. Garvin (2010:1) used walking tours in Memphis, Tennessee to investigate participants' responses to the LL around them. As discussed in the previous chapter, Stroud and Jegels (2014) use what they term narrated walking to explore how residents of Manenberg, Cape Town experience different areas of the township, and how they read and make sense of signage and graffiti in these areas. Banda and Jimaima (2015) use walking interviews to understand how residents expand their understanding of what counts as signage in linguistic landscapes in rural Zambia. Similarly, Mokwena (2018) uses walking interviews in her investigation into two rural districts in the Northern Cape, South Africa, thus building on LL research in non-urban environments.

From this point on, I began asking my participants to choose a mosque in which to conduct the interview. My idea was to pick them up and drive to the mosque, all the while engaging in conversation on topics relating to the research focus. We would then enter the mosque, walk around, reflect on the space, notice how we're feeling, notice how we change our behaviours when we're inside the building and when we're outside it, and then leave together as well. Anderson (2004) describes walking interviews as "conversations in place", where the interviewer and participant talk whilst walking through a place significant to the research being conducted. He argues that human knowledge is socio-spatial in nature, and that such a method "harness[es] place as an active trigger to prompt knowledge recollection and production" (2004: 254). It is also what he terms a "bodily tactic", as it involves the

physiological movement of the body. Both of these factors make it a suitable method to use in a study on the body within the LL.

An additional advantage of the walking interview is that this data collection method lends itself to creating knowledge which is much more collaborative in nature than standard interviews. I felt that this was particularly important given my insider-outsider status in this study, as it meant that my interactions with my participants were less like interviews and more like friendly conversations between women of the same community, disrupting the conventional power structure inherent in interview situations. Brown and Durrheim (2009) note that walking interviews not only allow the responsibility for the conversation to be shared between the researcher and the participant, but also subvert traditional ideas about knowledge production in research, i.e., that the researcher collects raw materials from the participant and then uses that to create knowledge. Rather than be positioned entirely as knowledge creator, I wanted the interviews to be a tool to uncover knowledge that already existed in my community, within myself and within my participants, and I found that the walking interview method worked well to do that.

Using the walking interview method solved most of the problems I had been encountering in my pilot interviews around receiving formulaic responses and hesitant conversation from my participants. It allowed for much more relaxed interaction between us, and there was no shortage of prompts in the environment. It also allowed the questions around participants' bodily reactions to the mosque to be much more fruitful, since we were less removed from the space than in the pilot interviews, meaning participants could reflect on their sensations as they were happening, rather than from memory.

During the process, I carried two audio recorders for as much of the journey as possible, sometimes asking the participant to carry one for me in case we strayed too far from each other while walking or background noise interfered with my own recorder. I also reworked the interview schedule to adapt to the new methodology and to address some of the problems I experienced in the pilot interviews. In this version of the schedule, I spread the questions about feelings in the body throughout the interview, which made sense for the walking interview, as we were constantly moving through new environments, which could

prompt new responses. Once again, I avoided taking a full printout of all my questions with me, because I had found them to be restrictive and disrupted the conversation during the pilot interviews. Instead, I developed keywords to remind me of each question, and then kept the list of keywords with me during the interview, on just one cue card. This meant that I didn't have an intimidating document with me in front of the participant. The final interview schedule and cue card appears below:

Version 3 – walking interview

Warm up

Tell me a bit about yourself.

BODY: Take some time to think about how you feel right now in your body. How do you feel?

How often do you go to the mosque?

When was the last time you went to the mosque?

Which was the last mosque you visited?

What was the experience like?

Do you have a favourite mosque that you've ever been to? Why?

Do you have a favourite mosque in your area?

Why did you choose this mosque? What do you like about it? What don't you like about it?

Stories

Tell me about your first memory of the mosque. What happened? Why did you visit? How did you feel?

When have you felt the most comfortable in a mosque?

When have you felt the most uncomfortable in a mosque?

Has anything ever happened to you in a mosque that elicited strong feelings for you?

What would your ideal mosque look like?

BODY: Take some time to think about how you feel right now in your body. How do you feel?

Prompt: My story of being **barred** from entering the mosque.

How does that make you feel?

Has anything like that ever happened to you?

What do you think?

Prompt: The recent incident of women going for Taraweeh in Ormonde

Do you have any thoughts on what happened?

How did it make you feel?

Questions to end off

What did you think about this whole process?

Take some time to think about how you feel right now in your body. How do you feel?

Do you have anything further you would like to add?

How do you identify in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality?

Are you comfortable with being contacted in future for a follow-up interview?

Final version (Cue card)

Bodywork	Memory
Before	First memory
Outside	Most comfortable
Inside	Most uncomfortable
Afterwards	Strong feelings
Habits	Prompts
Mosque habits	Prompt: Barred
Last time	Prompt: Ormonde
Why this?	Ideal mosque
Favourite	
	Ending
Demo	Process reflection
Gender identity/presentation	Additions?
Sexual orientation	Follow up?
Class background	

Racial/cultural background Age	

The prompt questions allowed me to tell a story of my own to which my participants could respond. Once again, the first refers to the story I shared in the introductory chapter of this thesis. The second was related to a recent incident that happened around the data collection period, where a group of women attempted a "pray-in" at a local mosque to protest the lack of access for women, and an altercation ensued. If the participant knew of the incident, we discussed it, and if they didn't, I would recount the events and then prompt a response.

I also decided that I wouldn't be too strict about the order in which I asked the questions. I allowed the conversation to unfold as naturally as possible, checking the cue card only when there was a lapse in the interaction, and at the end of the interview to ensure I had covered all the areas I was interested in.

In this interview schedule I also included some demographic questions so that I would have some background information on my participants, in case this impacted my data in some way. I found these questions difficult to ask, as they disrupted a lot of the natural flow of conversation that we had built up through the interview. My participants and I nearly always found the question about class particularly difficult. Afterwards, I realised that there may be cultural reasons for this, (for example, it is impolite to ask about someone's financial background) and that this was a moment when my identity as a researcher was in tension with my identity as someone who is a part of my participants' community. In a few cases, the question confused my participant, and they were not sure how to answer. In others, they answered with many qualifiers.

I noticed that treating my questions in this way and using the walking method meant that there was much more give and take during the interview, with both of us participating and disclosing things about ourselves. It made us both feel relaxed, and helped the participant

feel less self-conscious about being interviewed. It also allowed for flexibility in the interview, meaning that sometimes the conversation moved to places I had not been expecting, and yielded interesting data. In this version, I also included a few reflection questions about the interview process. The biggest advantage, as I anticipated, was that my participants and I were able to reflect on our bodily reactions to the space and the LL in real time, as well as take prompts from the environment for our conversation. As a result, the participants' responses and reflections felt more spontaneous and less formulaic.

Despite these major advantages, however, I did experience some difficulties with this method. The biggest of these arose when my participants expressed discomfort with the proposal to conduct our interviews in and around the mosque. This occurred on three occasions. One participant, who happened to be the oldest woman in my sample, felt awkward about walking around a mosque and talking. This interview was conducted at the participant's home, where she felt most comfortable. Another admitted that she has a difficult relationship with the mosque and that she generally avoids going there, and would thus feel uncomfortable and out of place inside one. We conducted the interview at a restaurant that was convenient for her. I met the third participant at a coffee shop, as we intended to go to a mosque together from there. However, once I arrived, she asked that we stay there since she had limited time for the interview and had an important appointment afterwards and it would be easier for her. I did get the sense that she may have been a little reluctant to go to the mosque, but I didn't confirm this. In all three cases, I allowed this to be a prompt to discuss how the participants felt about the mosque, and attempted to elicit memories and narratives to make sense of these feelings.

Another problem I noticed was that my older participants asked to meet me at the mosque rather than be picked up, which was my original idea. It seemed that it was more convenient for them to fit the interview into their day if they could arrive independently and move on to something else immediately afterwards. This wasn't too much of a problem, since we were still able to have long conversations inside the mosque. However, I noticed afterwards that it resulted in us starting the recording process once we were settled inside the mosque, and this meant that any interactions that occurred outside of the mosque were not recorded. In contrast, my younger participants found it helpful if I provided the transport,

and this meant that the interview started soon after they got into my car, meaning we could experience moving through different spaces within the city as well.

A third possible issue that I noticed is a concern hinted at by Brown and Durrheim (2009) in their discussion of this method, namely that, with the subversion of the traditional interviewer-interviewee power relationship, there is the possibility that societal power relations could reassert themselves in the interaction. I noticed this particularly in my interview with my oldest participant, Amina (a pseudonym). During the initial WhatsApp interactions, I had been addressing her by her first name as I was unaware of her exact age at that stage. Once we met however, I found it very difficult to continue doing so and began calling her "Aunty Amina" instead. Later while listening to the recording, I also noticed that I had used a more respectful tone and seemed a little less relaxed in this interaction than in the other interviews. There also seemed to be a lot fewer interruptions and instances of overlapping speech, although this could also be attributed to the nervousness she expressed at the beginning of the interview and the general caution she exhibited due to her unfamiliarity with this kind of interaction.

All in all, this method was received well by my participants. Below is an extract of a reflection on the process by one of them:

> *I'm glad we had it in this space because now I'm embodying my comfortability in a mosque space because outside you know, it's- (.) you're not- (.) because now I'm conscious that I'm in a mosque and what I'm saying. [indistinct] I have to be conscious of what I say because you can't lie, obviously. Not that I would have in the car, but also because now you have to watch how you say, what you say kind of a thing because you have to be aware that there's other people in this space as well.[…] And look this space, it's much better than outside, because outside also anybody can just interrupt or overhear what you say and then cause conflict, even though, like "are you eavesdropping?" kind of a thing, so ja I'm very grateful it was in*

this space, because also now you're consciously thinking about all the memories that you have of this mosque and other mosques as well.[2]

~ Rifqah, participant interviews

At the end of this data collection stage, I had accumulated 14 hours of talk that needed to be transcribed. I will discuss the transcription and thematic analysis of the interview data in section 3.5.1. Before doing so, however, I will briefly explain the data collection process for the photographic data set of this study.

3.4.2 Photographic data collection

The second set of data for this study involves a more traditional data collection strategy of LL research, relying primarily on the researcher taking photographs at a research site, in this case a number of mosques in Cape Town and Johannesburg, along with my autoethnographic fieldnotes of each experience.

I chose to collect data in Cape Town and Johannesburg as these were the two cities I have lived in and have access to. I did not set out to collect an exhaustive survey of signage in all the mosques from both cities, nor was I attempting to take a representative sample of any kind. I was, however, deeply aware that apartheid spatial planning has divided both cities along racial and class lines, so I tried my best to choose mosques located in a variety of different neighbourhoods, using Google maps as well as my own background knowledge of mosques in the city. Even so, I did not feel comfortable visiting mosques in black townships in either city, as I felt like too much of an outsider and intruder. I felt that in these spaces I

[2] Transcription key:

(.)	Pause
=	Latched utterance
Wor-	False start
[laughs]	Extralinguistic feature
(word)	Gloss
[the men]	author's clarification
word	Emphasis
[…]	omitted talk

would be positioned as less of a worshipper and more of a researcher, and did not like the idea of taking photographs of and conducting research on these spaces. Even if my snowball sampling method had yielded me participants who attend township mosques (it didn't, because the Muslim community is as fractured along class and racial lines as any other community in South Africa), I feel that any knowledge I produced from such spaces would be superficial at best. (See also Fakude, 2002 and Rahman, 2021 for more nuanced discussions on the tensions between black and Indian Muslims in South Africa).

By the end of the data collection period, I had collected data from thirty different mosques in total.

Initially, in addition to taking photographs, I had intended to spend longer periods of time in each mosque to watch the comings and goings of the women who used them in order to observe their trajectories through the space and their responses to the semiotic landscape. However, as the data collection progressed, I found myself avoiding visiting mosques at times when there would be many people present. Upon reflection I realised that there was some tension between my researcher and worshipper identities, causing me to have anxiety about being seen doing anything too out of the ordinary for a worshipper. This was also the reason I stopped using a clipboard, pen and paper to take fieldnotes, and I found that a notebook didn't work either. Eventually, I found it a lot easier to take my fieldnotes in the car directly before and after each visit, and also to audio record myself talking through my experiences rather than noting them in writing. In one of my earlier mosque visits, I tried to record a video of my own movement throughout the research space using a GoPro camera strapped to my chest, which turned out to be an anxiety-inducing experience. Not only was I hyper-aware of the bulky apparatus on my body even though I had tried to cover as much of it as possible with my clothing, the device also drew attention to itself with a bright red light that would blink as it was recording. I abandoned this method in the end as I felt the camera was hindering the process, and it was much easier to take pictures using my cellphone instead. By the end of the data collection period, I had collected a total of 1153 photographs and 51 mins 5 secs of video field notes which were transcribed as needed.

3.4.3 Ethical considerations during data collection

Since this study involved human participants, certain ethical issues needed to be taken into account throughout the research process. During data collection, all participants who were interviewed were asked to sign a consent form prior to the interview, granting permission for the interaction to be recorded. They were also given an information sheet which explained what the study is about, that participation was completely voluntary and that there would be no monetary remuneration for participating. Participants were also made aware that they were able to withdraw at any point in the study without any consequences, and that all material they contributed would be deleted if they chose. All participants were asked verbally whether they wanted their contributions to be indicated with a pseudonym, or if they wanted to be named. I felt that it was important to give my participants this option because I did not want to remove their agency, nor participate in the erasure of their stories. Four of my eleven participants asked that their real names be used, as they wanted their contributions to this study to be known and acknowledged, although I have not specified which is which. Participants who requested a pseudonym were given the option of choosing their own themselves. Any other individuals named within the interviews were anonymised. The names of mosques mentioned were kept as is.

With regards to ethical considerations around taking photographs in and of mosques, it is generally argued within LLS that signs which are placed in the public domain are open to be documented, although Androutsopoulos (2014) notes exceptions such as military sites. The mosque is, of course, not a public space in the same way that a street is public. In his research on shop signage in Gambia, Juffermans (2015) explains how some public spaces are only public under certain conditions: for example, shops are often private property which potential customers are able to enter in order to shop, but not for other purposes. In the same way, it can be argued that the mosque is only public under certain conditions, i.e., that one is able to enter it to use the facilities inside for acceptable uses (for example one is not allowed to conduct business inside a mosque). Generally, it is expected that one belongs to the Muslim community as a whole, although many mosques in Muslim countries welcome non-Muslim tourists. As a member of the Muslim community, I had access to the mosque and felt that I was entitled to interact with the signage, as I used these spaces regularly

anyway. During most of my research visits, I did spend some time inhabiting the space as a worshipper and performed prayers there. As recommended by Androutsopoulos (2014), I chose times when the site would be quiet and I would not disturb anyone. At no point during my data collection period was I questioned about what I was doing, although I was fully prepared to explain my research project had anyone done so. While taking photographs, I did my best to ensure that I did not take pictures of other people using the mosque, as I felt this was disrespectful. However, there were times where this was unavoidable, and in these cases all individuals' faces were blurred out of the photograph.

Now that I have explained the data collection process for this study, the remainder of this chapter outlines how I engaged with and analysed the data I collected.

3.5 Data Analysis

The first steps in my analysis of both my interview data and my photographic data involved a broad thematic analysis to identify patterns in the way participants talked about their experiences and patterns in the kinds of signs that appear in the mosque LL. Thematic analysis, as defined by Braun and Clark (2006), is a qualitative method for identifying and reporting themes or "repeated patterns of meaning" (2006: 86) within a body of data. It is a useful tool for organizing data that can be applied in conjunction with other qualitative data analysis methods and across many theoretical approaches. As a blueprint for the analysis process, I used the authors' six phase approach to thematic analysis. Before detailing the steps followed in this process, I'd like to make some brief comments on the motivations behind the type of thematic analysis I chose to use.

Braun and Clark (2006) explain that it is vital for an analyst to be transparent about the decisions made when conducting a thematic analysis, specifically with regards to a) the motivations behind the analysis, b) whether the analysis is inductive or theoretical, and c) whether the themes found are at a semantic or latent level. Regarding the first decision, the thematic analysis in this study is meant to provide a nuanced and detailed account of particular themes linked to specific research questions, rather than a thick description of the

entire data set. In other words, the thematic analysis I present in this thesis is not meant to give the reader an "accurate", or "complete" representation of all the themes covered in every interview or appearing on every sign. Rather, I will be presenting themes that relate specifically to my research questions around Muslim women's bodies, and affective practices in the mosque LL. I hope to present a more complete account of my data elsewhere in future projects.

The second decision a thematic analyst makes relates to what drives the coding process – whether the coding process is data-driven (inductive) or analyst-driven (theoretical). Coding in an inductive or "bottom-up" analysis tries not to follow any pre-existing coding frame, nor does it try to fit into a researcher's existing analytical assumptions. In this type of analysis, research questions emerge out of the coding process. The opposite is true for an analyst-driven analysis: coding is conducted towards a particular research question and with a theoretical interest in mind. The present analysis is very much an analyst-driven one – I had particular codes and possible themes in mind from the data collection stage (which I will say more on below), as well as an existing research question. This is not to say, however, that I did not keep an eye out for recurring patterns that I had not been expecting. For example, I had not expected any of my participants to characterise the women's section as one of safety or permission, and yet this idea showed up in several interviews.

A third decision to be made in a thematic analysis centres around the "level" at which themes are searched for. An analyst can look at data at a surface, explicit, "semantic" level, assuming that what a participant says is a transparent report of their experiences, or a "window" into their world. Or they can go beyond the semantic content and search for "latent", underlying meanings, which involves more interpretive work. For this study, I have chosen very deliberately to search for themes within my interview data at a semantic level, and themes in my photographic data at a latent level. The reason for this is that I am more interested in how my participants make sense of their experiences and how they themselves put these into words, rather than how *I* make sense of their experiences. The idea is that they have already done some of the interpretive work of understanding their experiences, and taking their words at a more explicit level means that my participants play a more active role in the knowledge production in this study. In contrast, I am less

interested in the semantic content of the LL signs I have photographed, and more concerned with what the signs mean for the structuring of the space and what the implications of this structuring are for how women are valued in this space. In the analysis of this data set, I am reporting on my own experience of reading these signs, as well as trying to understand the underlying ideologies about women that shape them.

In the next section, I will discuss how I coded and analysed both sets of data according to the six-phase approach mentioned earlier. Of course, it is important to remember that a thematic analysis moves back and forth between each phase rather than completing each step in a consecutive manner (Braun and Clark, 2006). The steps of this method include: a) familiarising oneself with the data, which includes transcription work, b) generating initial codes, c) grouping these codes into possible themes, d) reviewing these themes, e) defining and naming the themes and lastly, f) producing the report (Braun and Clark, 2006: 87).

3.5.1 Analysis of interview data

Transcription of interviews and familiarizing myself with the interview data

In order to adequately address the research questions set out at the beginning of this project, I was going to have to examine not only the content of my participants' responses, but also how these responses were delivered, to some degree, as well as how our conversations were co-constructed between us in each interview. Therefore, it was necessary to transcribe in some detail my respondents' manners of speaking, as well as what they said. In the transcription process, paralinguistic features such as laughter and smiling were noted, as well as tone and pitch where possible, for example whispers, loud voice, surprised voice, speaking quickly, etc., and indicated using square brackets []. Interruptions, overlapping speech and pauses were also noted, although their exact timing was not recorded. Notes about gestures were included from memory. Non-English words were indicated by italics, and glossed where necessary. Any outside factors that had affected the conversation were recorded as well, for example someone speaking to another person, interacting with the building or the space, and so on. Additional fieldnotes about

context were also added from memories jogged by the recording. Names were changed and personal information was deleted where necessary. Initial thoughts and first musings about the data were added as comments during the transcription process.

Coding

Coding is a process whereby interesting features of a data set are tagged with a word or short phrase, and then this tag is used whenever the same feature occurs elsewhere in the data. This allows a researcher to organise data into meaningful groups. The codes are later grouped to form broader themes. The coding process for each transcribed interview began with annotating the transcripts, making sense of the conversations, making comments of my thoughts while reading, adding further detail from memory, correcting any transcription errors I noticed, and noting words that needed further clarification for a reader. During these initial read-throughs, I also identified and delineated extracts that I was interested in analysing later.

As mentioned earlier, I had already come up with a few codes and possible themes I wanted to investigate further. As a starting point for identifying affective practices, feeling words were highlighted and used as codes to tag any parts of the conversation where I thought emotion was being expressed. Since one of my initial interests included how women moved into and through the mosque, I went through each interview identifying extracts that related broadly to "Approaching the mosque", "Entering the mosque" and "Being in the mosque", coding them as such. In addition, I deployed codes that were emerging in my photographic data (which I was coding concurrently and discuss below), and kept the interview codes in mind during the photographic coding process as well. I also coded for ideas I saw recurring but had not anticipated as much. Below is a table showing some of my initial codes early on in the coding process.

Possible codes	**Feeling words/affect**
Finding the way in	"anxiety"

Interacting with men at mosque "they are aware of you"	"relief"
Familiar/unfamiliar – Knowing/not knowing – Shame/fear/discomfort at ignorance Insecure – Not being able to "do" the mosque properly	"frustrated", "frustration"
Agency?	"helpless"
Belonging – insider/outsider – welcome/unwelcome – connectedness/community	feeling "infantilised"
Body – locating feeling in the body Reports of visceral reactions/bodily responses	"scary", "fear", "petrified"
Childhood/memories – visceral memory?	"anger", "angry"
Children	"inconvenient"
Transitioning from inside to outside the mosque	"exciting"
Surveillance – "the men are aware of you"	feeling "judged"
Talking about architecture/signage	"surveilled/watched/gazed upon", "feeling like you're being watched"
"Being made to feel"	"squashed" (literally?)
Other religious spaces e.g., graveyards	"connected", "feeling united"

	"awkward", "awkward" re interview process, re entering
	"on edge"
	"calm", "tranquillity", "calmness", "peace"
	"sad"
	"loss"
	"hopelessness"
	"intimidates"
	"liberating"
	"exhilarating"
	"safe", "safety

Generating Themes

Once I had completed the coding process, I began copying coded extracts into a Microsoft OneNote notebook, with each extract on its own page and with the code in the title. This way I was able to drag extracts into different groups in order to generate initial themes. Themes I began to identify included the following (in no particular order and by no means an exhaustive list): *anxiety and self-consciousness; preparing for mosque visits; interacting with men; mothers/motherhood; childhood memories; surveillance/being watched; belonging; issues with dress/clothing.* The analysis chapters of this thesis expand and elaborate the themes I felt most pertinent and illuminating to my research questions.

In the next section, I outline the process I used to analyse the photographic data collected for this study.

3.5.2 Analysis of photographic data

Coding and generating themes

Traditionally, researchers in LLS have coded their photographic data according to their particular research questions. The kinds of elements that are generally noted are things like the presence of certain languages on signs, the number of languages on signs, the positioning and sizing of languages in relation to one another, multimodal aspects such as colour, picture, font, layout, etc., and whether or not the sign is a "bottom-up" or "top-down" sign (Gorter 2006: 3), i.e., whether it was institutionally made or created by an individual. However, since this is not a traditional LL study, I did not follow this coding scheme (except to note the presence of any languages other than English on any signage encountered) since I was not really interested in these elements of the signs in my data. In addition, only pictures that were to appear in this thesis were transcribed.

The photographs were coded using a metadata editor called AnalogExif which allows you to add metadata tags to image files. I chose this program because it was free to download and easy to use. Through the tags, each picture was assigned to one of four groups: *signage, architecture, oddities*, and *other*. Photographs of signs (in the lay understanding of the word "sign") were tagged *signage*, and pictures of details of the mosque buildings, inside and outside, were tagged *architecture*. The decision to use the *oddities* tag arose during the data collection process, where I kept noticing things I thought were out of place being stored in the women's sections. All remaining images were tagged Other.

In order to address the research question around what the semiotic landscape of the mosque is like, I decided to categorize mosque signage into a taxonomy, and so pictures in the *signage* category were then coded with one or more of the following tags if necessary: *Wayfinding signage*, *Posters, Injunctions*. I was also curious about the presence of any language other than English on mosque signs, and coded for these. (These turned out to be Arabic, Afrikaans, Kaaps, Swahili, Chichewa and Somali. If I felt a sign was directed specifically at women congregants, I tagged it *Women.* Some signs in this category were

further tagged *motherhood*, *dress* and *menstruation.* Some *architecture* pictures were tagged *entrances.* A subset of pictures under *other* were further tagged *mosque resources.* The photographs were also tagged with their city and the name of the mosque in which they were taken.

The themes I identified were very closely linked to my focus on women's bodies, and included *dirt*; *regulating the body*; *regulating the woman's body*; and *othering/markedness*. I elaborate on these themes in chapters 5 and 6.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the general autoethnographic and LL approaches to data collection followed in this study, as well as the main methodological tools used to collect and analyse the data. It unpacks the decisions I had to make during the thematic analysis, and also briefly reports on the major themes picked up in the data. The analysis chapters which follow contain a more thorough and nuanced report on the findings of this study.

Chapter 4 – Mosques, Muslims, Mooniq

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I hope to provide the reader with important contextual information about Muslims and mosques in South Africa, as well as making explicit my own positionality and the cultural knowledge I carry with me in this study. My method for this section was frequent free-writing sessions, in which I tried to write down everything I knew or thought about mosques related to this research. Later, I conducted a literature search to find academic work which backed up what I knew, or gave me a better understanding of my own context. I present some of the findings of both processes here. I begin with an explanation of mosques and Muslim society in South Africa, before discussing my lived experience of the same. Thereafter, I take a brief look at activism by Muslim women for greater access to the sacred space, before ending off by presenting some of the debates around women's participation in the mosque relating to the body.

4.2 Mosques and Muslims in South Africa

Many of the mosques in this country are very old, the first one having been built in 1794 in Bokaap, Cape Town. The reason for this is that Muslims have been in South Africa for hundreds of years, from the first slaves brough from Indonesia and Malaysia to the Cape in the seventeenth century, all the way through to indentured Indian labourers brought to the east coast between 1860 and 1910, from the merchant class that arrived from India thereafter, through to the post-Apartheid migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malawi and Somalia, to name a few countries. The exact number of Muslims in South Africa is currently unknown, as the last census to include questions on religion was conducted in 2001. According to Vahed (2021), unofficial estimates in 2020 suggest that two million out of South Africa's 60 million population are Muslim. To use outdated Apartheid racial categories, the bulk of South African Muslims could be classified as Indian or Coloured, with a small minority being black, most of whom are migrants from African countries. However, a

small but growing community of black South African Muslims also exists. (See Vahed, 2021; Rahman 2021; and Fakude, 2002).[3]

The outline of a mosque on the city skyline is therefore not at all alien to most South Africans, with dozens of mosques in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban alone. Mosques in this country are concentrated in big cities, primarily in areas where people of colour live and have their communities due to Apartheid spatial planning and its legacy. In some areas more than one mosque was built, and the sounds of their respective calls to prayer intertwine five times a day.

Mosques are primarily used by the Muslims who live and work around them[4], or those who find themselves in that area away from their own community at prayer time. Mosques are mainly used for communal prayer five times a day. On Fridays and on Eid mornings there are sermons with the prayers, often termed "lectures". Mosques are not only places of worship, but also sites at which religious knowledge is taught and learned. Most mosques host *madressah* classes for children, either within the building or in an adjoining building, a smaller number host adult classes as well (Figure 4. 2). The Muslim marriage ceremony, or *nikaah*, also takes place in mosques, although this is often a gender segregated event, with many brides actually not being in attendance at the ceremony at all. Occasionally, a mosque may also have facilities for preparing the dead for burial (Figure 4. 3). During *Ramadaan*, most mosques have provisions for congregants to break their fast after sunset, and this meal ranges from simply dates and water, to full-blown meals in some wealthier communities.

[3] Of course, people's everyday lived experience of their racial identities is much more complex than these neat classifications. I myself have a complicated and ever-changing relationship with my own race. Having been born at the tail-end of Apartheid in 1989 I was classified Indian, but both my parents have mixed-race Indian and Coloured backgrounds. Outside of my family, I spent most of my childhood around the Indian Muslim community; within my family it was a much more mixed and complicated affair altogether.

[4] Just as the Muslim community in South Africa is not homogenous racially, it is also complex in terms of class distinctions. (See Vahed, 2000 for further discussion of the class complexities of the Muslim community in South Africa). I identify as middle-class, having lived in middle-class areas all my life, and having attended middle-class schools. However, my grandparents and many of my extended family members have working-class backgrounds.

Figure 4. 1 Posters on the wall at Goodwood Mosque, providing information about the extra-curricular activities on offer to the community

Figure 4. 2 Posters on a noticeboard at Habibia Soofie Mosque, advertising the mosque's madressah programme (above) and a lecture series (below).

Figure 4. 3 Janaazah (Funeral) facilities at Greenside Mosque in Johannesburg (left). The door pictured here is to accommodate a hearse transporting a body to receive its last rites

As far as I know, it is unusual for people to opt to travel a distance to go to a different mosque rather than one in their own area, unless there is a special event like a wedding at a particular mosque, or a visiting speaker from another country being hosted. In her study on Muslim residential patterns in Cape Town, Motala (2013) found that most Muslims in that city appeared to attend the mosque closest to where they grew up regardless of ideological differences. (My parents are constantly perplexed when they hear that my partner and I prefer to drive twenty minutes to a different suburb in Cape Town to go to the mosque there, rather than go to either of the two within walking distance from us).

In many cases, mosques form the heart around which Muslim communities revolve. Ismail (2002) agrees, saying, "The Mosque is the spiritual hub and heart of the community, the place of learning, the place where important social, political, economic and religious matters

are discussed; in short, it is the place that moulds and directs a community" (2002:1). Even though I have moved to a different city from the one I grew up in, I still think of my Muslim community as the people who were linked to our mosque at home at some point or another: people whose children went to its *madressah* with me, uncles who prayed there, aunties I sat next to in the crowded upstairs section or in a tent outside during a *jalsah* (I elaborate on what a *jalsah* is in the next section). This may change the longer I live in Cape Town, but for the time being I am still closely linked to the Johannesburg mosque of my childhood even though I haven't visited it in years.

Aryanti (2013) reminds us that in countries where Muslims are a minority, mosques play an important role as community centres and symbols of religious identity, and that women's exclusion from these spaces not only limits their access to knowledge, but also means an exclusion from community.

Architecturally, South African mosques reflect the diversity of Muslim traditions and identities in this country, but can usually be identified as a building with one or more domes and/or minarets. Inside, there is usually some sort of foyer or entrance space with shoe racks, where congregants can take off their shoes. Ablution facilities and toilets usually lead off from this area. Ablution, or *wudhu* in Arabic, is an important and obligatory cleansing ritual that takes place before the *salaah*, or ritual prayer. It typically involves washing the hands, mouth, nose, arms, forehead and feet, usually while seated. Mosques provide facilities for congregants to perform this ritual before they pray. One such ablution room appears in Figure 4. 4 below.

Figure 4. 4 Wudhu (Ablution) facilities in the women's section of Greenside Mosque in Johannesburg

Inside the main building of the mosque, most of the space is taken up by the large, carpeted open prayer section, devoid of furniture except for the *mimbar* or pulpit at the front (see Figure 4. 5 for an example). Occasionally there is a little alcove set into the front wall, where the imam stands at the front of the congregation (facing Mecca like the other congregants) and leads the communal prayer. Where possible, the building is constructed so that it faces Mecca. In repurposed buildings, printed carpets are used to guide congregants to face the right direction. (Chapter 5 contains more images of what I describe here.)

Figure 4. 5 The Imaam's prayer space next to the mimbar (pulpit) on the right at Masjid Nasriellah, Cape Town. This photograph was taken over the balcony of the women's section.

South African mosques that accommodate women congregants usually have a balcony or gallery section upstairs, which can be reached by a staircase. In many cases, there are two staircases, one inside the building and one outside the building. Sometimes the staircase is only accessible from an entrance around the side of the building, or around the back. In some cases, these entrances are signposted – in others, the staircase or side-door serves as the sign to women trying to access the space. The balcony section upstairs is carpeted as the main section below, without the *mimbar* or alcove for the imam. In some cases, the balcony is covered with a curtain, screen or frosted glass, so that the women are not visible from downstairs. In well-resourced mosques there will be speakers to allow the women to hear what is being said downstairs. In one or two mosques I've visited, there are screens projecting a live video feed where the women are able to see the imam, but this is most definitely a luxury. In some more conservative mosques in Johannesburg that I've visited, the women's area is not attached to the main mosque building at all, and is considered a "prayer facility" rather than an extension of the mosque. These spaces are usually a small prayer room with a small ablution area or a repurposed classroom intended for women who

are passing by and need a space to pray. It is usually not possible to follow the congregational prayer from here, and the space is not meant for women to do so (see for example Figure 4. 6 below).

Figure 4. 6 Sign directing women to a prayer room away from the mosque building itself at Masjid Omar Farouk in Johannesburg.

According to Patel (2013), many of the mosques in Johannesburg and the east coast of South Africa were built by Indian business people who had come to South Africa during the second wave of Indian migration to the country and settled there. Looking to recreate some of their society in India here in South Africa, they often staffed these institutions with scholars and imams trained at North Indian Deobandi seminaries. Patel explains how, according to Deobandi Muslim thought, women are discouraged from going to the mosque and rather encouraged to pray at home. It's for this reason that many mosques in cities like Johannesburg and Durban have no women's section at all. In contrast, the Shafiee school of thought followed by most of the Muslims in Cape Town (descended from enslaved people brought to the Cape by Dutch and British colonialism from countries like Indonesia and

Malaysia) allows women to attend at least the Friday prayers. As a result, mosques in Cape Town are usually more likely to accommodate women than mosques in Johannesburg or Durban.

Most mosques are still controlled by middle-class Indian Muslims, particularly outside of the Western Cape. In the case of mosques in Johannesburg and Durban, a board of older men from the community (often descended from the same middle-class businessmen who funded the mosque) are in charge. Cape Town mosques are also run by committees of residents, and are often funded by donations. Some South African mosques, particularly those in new immigrant communities or black South African communities, are built and run by an NGO or charity organisation. To my knowledge, very few women are involved in the running of the mosque in any of these cases. If they are, it is often as admin staff, as *madressah* teachers of children, or in running a kitchen, managing the cleaning, feeding staff, and so on.

In later sections of this chapter, I elaborate on the position of Muslim women in mosques in South Africa. Before I do so, however, I'd like to give a bit more insight into some of my lived experience of what I have discussed above, as well as provide the reader with a better understanding of my positionality as I undertake this research.

4.3 Mooniq

My earliest memory of the mosque was the one in our area, where I went to *madressah*. At the time, it was a house that had been bought and was being reconstructed into a mosque. We had our classes in an adjacent building, and we were not allowed into the construction area that would become the mosque. I do remember peering into this place that is now shadowy in my memory, a place for grown-ups, and playing amongst rubble and leftover building materials with my friends after class.

It was only once I got older that I realised why the mosque I grew up with was so new compared to other mosques in the city. Not long after I was born, my young parents took advantage of the changes in soon-to-be-democratic South Africa and moved with their new baby to what had been a white area, which had better schools and better services, but no mosque. As more Muslim families began settling in the neighbourhood, the need for a mosque and *madressah* arose. A middle-class businessman of Indian descent purchased a property and began construction of what is today a large and successful mosque and *madressah* complex.

When I was a little older and the main construction had been completed, I remember the mosque being a beautiful yet simple building painted a lovely light green. It had the customary minaret and dome, with a big, quiet, airy, space inside that I only experienced when it was empty, allowed in only occasionally to use the ablution facility or get cold water from the water cooler during a *madressah* class.

Since it was not customary for us to join my father and brother at the mosque for prayers, and the fact that our mosque didn't really accommodate women, visits to the mosque were limited to our *madressah jalsahs* once a year, for the women in my family at least. The *jalsah* was a special annual event held at our mosque, when students graduated from the *madressah* and sang *nazms* (Urdu song-like poetry) and did *qiraat* (melodic Quranic recitations) for all the parents gathered there. Even then, it was seldom that we actually entered the mosque. Most years the women sat in a tent in the mosque courtyard that was equipped with a crackly sound system, and what was going on inside the mosque was left to our imaginations. Mothers had to visualise their children singing *nazms* and getting end-of-year certificates and prizes.

I know the mosques in Johannesburg from the outside only. For a long time after I had left *madressah* and stopped going to *jalsahs*, I experienced the sacred space only as a distant call to prayer. Occasionally, if we were out somewhere and the time for prayer came about, I would have to wait awkwardly in a hot car in the mosque parking lot with my mother and sisters, while my dad and brother did their prayers. I remember how self-conscious I felt, so aware that there were few or no other women around. I remember avoiding eye contact

with the uncles and boys who milled around after the prayer, greeting one another and chatting before getting into their cars and driving off. We would then have to rush home, or to the closest relative's house to make it in time for our own prayers.

It was only when I visited Cape Town on holiday at age 21 that I prayed in congregation, in a mosque. I remember the novelty, putting on my *abaya* (black, full-length dress) with my mother and sisters, feeling a little unsure what to expect. I kept anxiously asking my dad about the minutia of the proceedings: How long is the ritual prayer? Is the sermon before or after the prayer? I didn't want to get it wrong. A few years later, after I'd moved to Cape Town, I went to my first Eid salaah at Masjidul Quds in Gatesville. I remember phoning home afterwards in excitement, telling my mother all about how I walked to the mosque surrounded by other families making their way towards a communal spiritual experience. My brother couldn't understand why I was making a big deal out of something so mundane. But it was a big deal for me. I was finally tapping into an energy that he experienced every week, that he took for granted, and most importantly, that he had instant access to whenever he needed it. For him, the mosque had always been there, from the time he was a toddler and my father decided he was old enough to come along. The mosque was part of the fabric of his experience as a Muslim, and he most likely had never realised that this was not the case for me. It's understandable, then, why being in Cape Town felt like such a luxury to me. It was luxurious to know that I was able to stop at any mosque come prayer time and be fairly certain there would be a place for me there.

As time went by and the novelty of the mosque slowly wore off, I started to see things I had not noticed before and I realised that walking into a mosque as a woman in Cape Town was not as easy as I had first thought. There are unique challenges that women face in mosques that men are not even aware of.

One Eid I went for the Eid prayer at Habibia Soofie mosque, where the women were separated from the men by a thick floor to ceiling black curtain. I remember feeling very disorientated and not knowing which direction to face, having no architectural cues. I lingered by the door until another woman walked in and faced the right way, and I followed her example. Has this ever happened to a man in a mosque? In situations where women are

cut off from the prayer happening in the rest of the mosque, this can seriously hinder their prayer. More than once I've been in places where the sound system malfunctioned or didn't exist, and we couldn't hear the Imam and got muddled and couldn't follow the salaah. Needless to say, praying as a woman in a mosque in South Africa can be an incredibly frustrating experience.

I only really started feeling dissatisfied with my mosque experience when using the mosque made me realise that I had to do extra work to be in the space. I started reading other women's experiences around the world, and started to be aware of the activism that had taken place and was still taking place around women's access to the mosque. I began to feel more and more resentful of the women's entrance, and was struck by how similar it was to hostile architecture in apartheid South Africa. I could not understand how in a country like ours, it could be so acceptable to have separate entrances and segregated spaces. It got me thinking about what it must've felt like to go through that architecture, and brought to mind my visit to the apartheid museum and having to go through separate doors and seeing the benches marked non-European only. This was my only real experience of having to move through blatantly apartheid architecture.[5]

The incident I recount at the beginning of this thesis, of being stopped from entering a mosque to pray because of my supposedly "inappropriate" clothing traumatised me, but it also made me passionate about the issue of making the mosque more accessible for everyone. It was a major contributing factor to my choice of this topic for my dissertation, an opportunity for me to understand the situation more deeply, to find out if other Muslim women felt the same, and also a way to feel less powerless about the interaction.

This struggle has been fought by many Muslim women before me. In the next section, I'd like to briefly mention some instances of South African Muslim women's activism for better access to the sacred space.

[5] I had obviously been moving through subtly segregated spaces my whole life, due to apartheid spatial planning.

4.4 Activism for access

Activism around making mosque spaces more inclusive for women is not new. In fact, Ismail (2002) goes as far as saying that any access Muslim women have in the mosque in this country has never been bestowed, but fought for and hard-won.

In South Africa, many of the women who were involved in gender activism in the mosque were also involved in anti-apartheid organising. In her thesis on Muslim women in Cape Town, Abrahams (2011) argues that Muslim women related to the mosque in a specific way under apartheid because mosques were places where anti-apartheid sentiment was quietly expressed and political talks were happening. It was a place where protesting students hid when in trouble with the police, and many women were told to stay away from the mosque because it was dangerous. Motala (2013) confirms that mosques served as meeting grounds for political protest under apartheid. Davids (2012) and Motala (2013) both give useful overviews of the role that South African Muslims played in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Jeenah (2006) argues that it was at the intersection between this anti-apartheid struggle and Muslim women's struggle for greater access to the mosque that South African Islamic feminism developed. Shamima Shaikh was an integral figure in this movement, bringing attention to the issue of women in mosques in the early nineties, rallying support amongst Muslim women, staging numerous sit-ins in mosques in protest, and presenting many talks on the topic as well. Sadly, she faced a lot of abuse from her community for it, being labelled "that mad Shaikh woman" (Esack, 1998). (See Rivera and Jeenah (2019) for more on the life of this remarkable woman.)

In 1994, Muslim gender activists took advantage of the historic changes happening in the country to further their agenda of better access for Muslim women in sacred spaces. The end of the struggle against Apartheid inspired the Claremont Main Road Mosque to open the main prayer space to women (See Bang, 1999), and, even more controversially, to invite

a woman to address the congregation at Friday prayers (Shaikh, 2012). (See also Joyner, 1994). Figure 4. 7 is a photograph of the address, which took place on the 12th August 1994, and Figure 4. 8 shows a protest a week later against the address. Despite the protests, the mosque still includes women speakers and has women congregants praying in the main body of the mosque today.

Figure 4. 7 Newspaper image captioned "A first: American Islamic theologian Amina Wadud-Muhsin addresses the congregation of the Claremont Mosque, making her one of the first women in the country to do so. Photograph by Leon Muller (12 August 1994)"[6]

[6] Source: https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/islandora/object/islandora%3A15500 *(Accessed 21/09/2022).*

Figure 4. 8 Newspaper image captioned "Purdah protest – Muslim women in purdah outside Claremont Mosque yesterday protesting against American woman theologian Dr Amina Wadud-Muhsin's address to the congregation last week. Photograph by Benny Gool (19 August 1994)."[7]

In 1996, Muslim gender activists in Johannesburg launched a campaign for women to be included in the *Eidgah* – the yearly mass open air gathering for the Eid prayer. After much controversy they were ultimately successful, with Masjidul Islam in Brixton hosting an *Eidgah* with the men and women's sections side-by-side, although, according to Ismail (2002), this was also in large part because President Nelson Mandela decided to make an appearance at the event and the mosque wanted to present an egalitarian view of Islam (Ismail, 2002).

Access to the *Eidgah* continued for a while but was not consistent, because 2010 saw renewed debate and activism around access to the *Eidgah*, in response to a fatwa (non-binding legal opinion) issued by the Jamiatul-Ulama KwaZulu-Natal, which read "According to the overwhelming majority of Scholars, it is not permissible for a young female to attend the *Eid Salaah*. The reason for this prohibition is that the coming out of such young females could become a cause of spreading immorality in the society. This is especially clear in our times." (Rawoot, 2010) This time, the debate raged on social media as well. After a flurry of

[7] Source: https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/islandora/object/islandora%3A15497 *(Accessed 21/09/2022).*

heated blog posts and internet articles, the conversation slowly dissipated, without much change to women's access to the *Eidgah*. (See Surtee, 2010).

I witnessed this lack of progress myself at the Houghton *Eidgah* at *Eid-ul-Adha* in 2022. The prayer took place on a huge school sports field in Houghton, but despite the surplus of space, women congregants were relegated to a tiny area behind screens far behind the main congregation. Women were deliberately marginalised and invisibilized, to such an extent that when we arrived, my sister and I feared that we were the only women who had shown up.

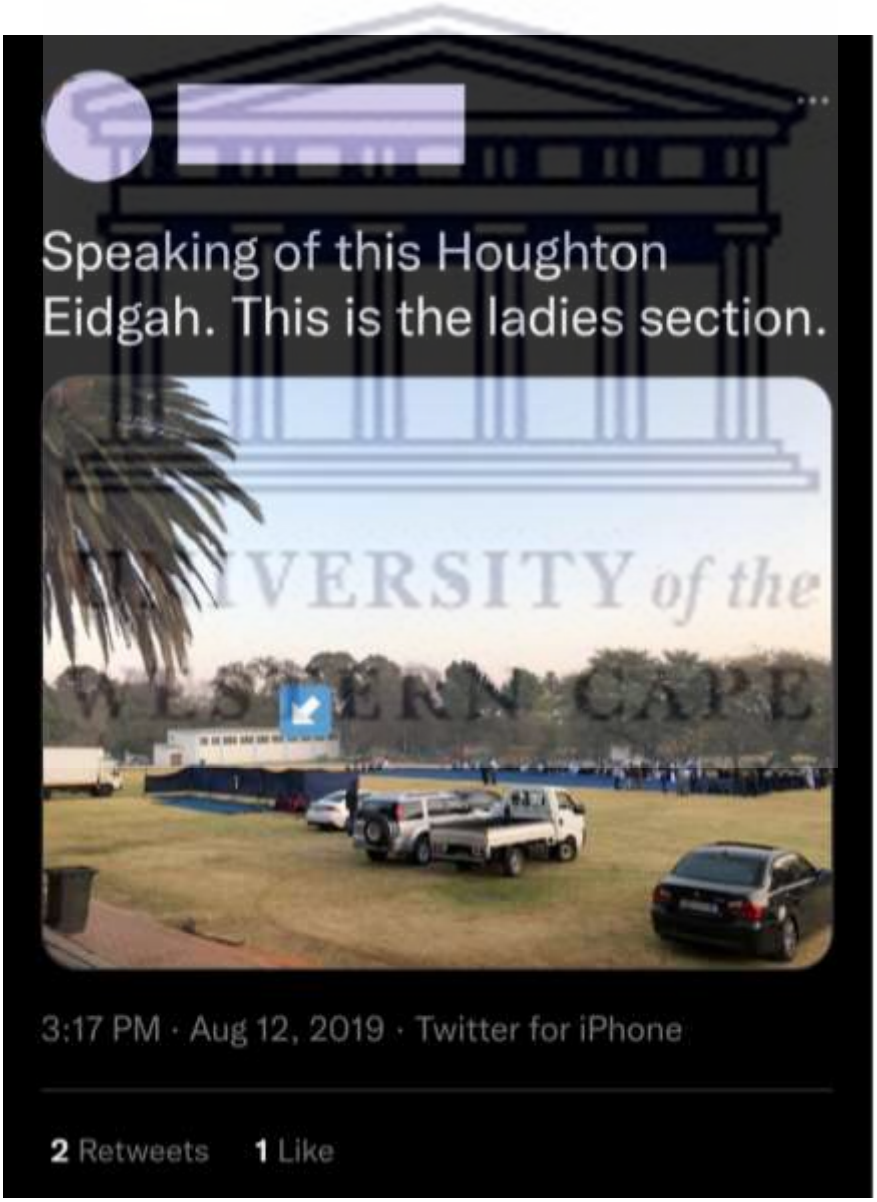

Figure 4. 9 Screenshot of a tweet with an image of the Houghton Eidgah in 2019. The image shows the size of the women's area (indicated by the arrow) relative to the men's area. The setup was the same when I attended in 2022.

Figure 4. 10 Photograph of the author inside the women's prayer area at the Houghton Eidgah in 2022. We could not see the Imaam nor the rest of the congregation in front of us.

Debate around women's access to the mosque resurfaced in 2014 with the opening of the so-called Open Mosque (see Surtee, 2014), and again in 2018, when another notable protest occurred at Masjid Siraatul Jannah in Ormonde, Johannesburg. A group of women attempted to join the nightly *Taraweeh* prayers during *Ramadaan*. What was remarkable was that they didn't attempt to enter the mosque itself, but occupied a nearby classroom on the mosque property. An altercation ensued when some of the men confronted the women to voice their disapproval. The incident was filmed and went viral on social media. The women then called for nightly "pray-ins" at the mosque to protest the lack of access for women. (See Masweneng, 2018).

Of course, what I have discussed here is by no means all the organising that South African women have done around access to mosque spaces. The incidents I have discussed above are simply those that received media attention. I have no doubt that there is other, equally

significant work being done by women in mosques all over the country. Denise Ackermann (1990) points out that women in general have been kept out of decision-making in religious spaces, regardless of faith. Her point demonstrates what I've always believed, that patriarchy in the mosque is a symptom and extension of patriarchy in society, not because Islam or Muslim culture is inherently patriarchal. While writing this chapter and the whole thesis in general, I have been very wary of reinforcing the idea that Muslim women are passive victims of a patriarchal religion. I hope that this glimpse into Muslim women's activism in South Africa has undermined that stereotype somewhat.

In the next section, I would like to connect the issue of women in the mosque to another area of interest in this study – the body.

4.5 The woman's body in the mosque

The woman's body and her sexuality play a central role in debates about Muslim women attending the mosque. Growing up, I was taught that men and women should not intermingle, and that women should avoid wearing noisy jewellery and perfume in order not to attract the attention of men.

I became painfully aware of my body the year it stopped being seen as a child's body. My father often sat for *itikaaf* during the last ten days of *Ramadaan.* This meant that he would be away from us for ten days, living for a while in the mosque away from society, focusing his energy and attention on worship. Every day, my mum would pack him meals in a basket, and take us to mosque to visit my father. She would sit outside in the car as we went in to give him his basket and sit on his lap, excitedly telling him all our news for the day. One year, my mother told me that I couldn't go into the mosque with the others to see my dad. I was now *baaligh* – I had started menstruating that year – and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to go into a mosque full of men any more. So that year I sat in the car with my mum, and had to wait until the end of *Ramadaan* to see my dad again.

I felt deeply resentful of my body that year. Something had happened to it that made people treat me differently, that meant that the rules had changed. I was moved to a girls' only *madressah*, and later a girls' school. The way I was expected to dress changed, and my relationship to the mosque changed as well.

The thrust of arguments against women having more access to the sacred space centres around woman's supposed status as a sexual being with a body that will distract and tempt men. As Shaikh (2012) puts it "Women's Otherness is defined in this view as primarily in relation to a powerful sexualised body that ultimately desacrilizes the mosque for male worshippers" (2012: 8). Not surprisingly, there is no equivalent argument that men's bodies will desacralize the mosque space for women – because men are not seen primarily as sexual beings, and because women are not seen as beings who actively desire – only beings who are passively desired. The arguments are also heteronormative in nature – there is no mention of men who would be distracted by their desire for other men, or women who would desire other women. So, the argument is based on very normative and problematic and patriarchal ideas about Muslims' gender and sexuality. The fact that I was no longer allowed to enter the mosque once I became *baaligh* demonstrates very clearly that it was because I now occupied a sexualizable women's body – regardless of the fact that I was only eleven years old – and that this body would desacralize the space for the men.

Of course, many women find the gender segregation of the mosque and its concomitant rules of engagement very appealing. To them it is important that they are shielded by the mosque from men's gazes, and that the mosque building allows them to maintain this privacy. In a paper by Nawawi et al (2014), the research team visited various Malaysian mosques and rated each on how women friendly they were, and one of their criteria was that the mosque be built in such a way that it allowed women congregants to maintain hijab (not just the head covering, but the broader idea of the separation of men and women's spaces) throughout the mosque, from the ablution facilities right into the prayer space. Several mosques were rated low for "women friendliness" because the way the building was structured meant that women were exposed to men in certain parts of the building.

The body is the most salient element in both these arguments, and it is this focus that I'm interested in. How do women experience the mosque when their bodies become such a salient feature once they enter the building, and when their bodies begin to matter in specific ways, and take precedence over their spiritual experience? The chapters that follow will hopefully shed some light on possible answers to these questions.

4.6 Conclusion

This contextual and autoethnographic chapter aimed to make explicit my own cultural knowledge around the topic of women in the mosque in South Africa, as well as provide the necessary background for fully understanding the nuances in the data I present in the analysis chapters which follow. The next chapter centres around autoethnographic and linguistic landscape fieldwork conducted at a mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Chapter 5 – Autoethnographic site walkthrough

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I address the research questions "What is the semiotic landscape of the mosque like?" and "How can the space of the mosque be read viscerally?" Most of the data I use to do so was collected during one particular visit to a specific mosque – Houghton West Street Mosque in Johannesburg. However, at various points throughout the chapter I weave through insights from my interview data with participants and select photographs from other site visits to support, confirm or complicate some of my arguments. I present the discussion here as a "walking autoethnography", in which I describe walking through a particular mosque with my research assistant while allowing my autoethnographic voice to dialogue with my participants' voices. The purpose of this chapter is to shed some light on the process of recording my own visceral reactions to signage and place as part of understanding my meaning-making processes when reading a semiotic landscape.

A further aim for this chapter is to use the walkthrough description to demonstrate the process I went through in distilling a taxonomy of mosque signage. The chapter begins with this attempt to categorize mosque signage in a meaningful way, and then moves on to the description of the site visit I conducted while covering examples of wayfinding signage, community notices, and injunction signage (see Section 5.2 for an explanation of these terms). Before doing so, however, I would like to spend sections 5.1.1 – 5.1.3 introduing some theoretical ideas which inform my argument throughout the chapter.

5.1.1 Sign tonality and the perlocutionary force of signs

As explained in chapter 2, visceral linguistic landscape research takes into account sign readers'/space users' bodily reactions in relation to signs they encounter. It takes these reactions as central to the reader's meaning-making process. It posits that it is impossible to separate a reader's visceral reaction to signage and landscape from their reading of the sign. Bearing this in mind, one of the aims for this project is to understand how Muslim women

like myself and my participants experience the semiotic landscape of the mosque, and how our visceral reactions to the signage therein shape our experience of the space and our understanding of that space. Therefore, throughout this chapter, I elaborate on what it's like for me to move through the space as a Muslim woman, as well as provide a sense of what kinds of signage exist in the space and what the architecture of these mosques is like, using a visceral linguistic landscapes perspective.

Additionally, I would also like to propose the idea that signs can be read to have a "tone of voice", which the author may or may not have intended. In the spirit of Austin's (1975) speech act theory, I am interested in the *perlocutionary force* of LL signage, or the effects signage is reported to have on the Muslim women reading them. To briefly recap his ideas, speech act theory posits that speech acts have a locutionary force (the grammatical language of the utterance), an illocutionary force (what the speaker wants to achieve with the utterance) and a perlocutionary force (what kind of effect the utterance has on an interlocutor). If we see signs as speech acts, then much of LL scholarship has been focused on the locutionary force of signs (what text they display) or the illocutionary force of signs (what their authors intended them to do).

My focus on perlocutionary force is well in line with Malinowski's (2008) work on authorship in the LL, which demonstrates that signage can have "excesses of meaning" where more meanings can be ascribed to a sign by a reader than an author intended. He draws on Judith Butler's (1997) ideas about the "excitability" of speech, where she argues that a speaker can never have complete control over how their interlocutor interprets their speech, because all the participants involved, as well as the occasion for interacting, and even the words themselves are always enmeshed in broader cultural relations. As Musselman and Thompson (1998: 205) explain, "The speaker always-already exists within a web of historicities and discursive formations that encourage her/him to attach already-taken-for-granted meanings to words as s/he articulates them in the public sphere."

Malinowski (2008) applies this to LL authorship by arguing that rather than seeing the author of a sign as an individual with intention and complete control over the production of

the sign, LL authors are "complex, dispersed entit[ies], who [are] only somewhat in control of the meanings that are read from [their] written utterance" (2008: 108).

These “excesses of meaning” of signage could be seen as located in the perlocutionary force of the sign, or how the sign is taken up or responded to by readers. One of the ways in which a reader responds to a sign is by interpreting the tone of voice with which it addresses them, and I believe that paying attention to tone in signage can be a useful tool when reading landscapes through the visceral.

5.1.2 Otherness, markedness and preference organisation

Furthermore, as a way to approach questions about women's belonging in the mosque, I'd like to draw on a concept of "otherness" similar to one used by influential feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in her well-known work *The Second Sex*. A very brief explanation of the gist of her idea is that men constantly construct women as "the Other" and themselves as "the Self", and use this relationality to understand themselves as subjects, and also to oppress women. She argues that women are seen as “the sex”, whereas men are “the humanity”, and that these marked and unmarked categories are the effects of power imbalances between the two groups. In a similar way, I'd like to argue that women congregants are framed as the Other in mosque spaces, and that these spaces are designed with the assumption that men are the "default" worshippers in the space. Mosque design frames men as the “unmarked” norm, and women are “marked”, the inconvenient additional visitor that has to be accommodated after the fact.

A linguistic analogy from conversation analysis may help in understanding my argument about this situation. In conversation analysis, adjacency pairs are interactional units consisting of pairs of utterances that go together, like a question and an answer, or an invitation and a response. The second utterance in a pair can be a "preferred" response, for example an acceptance of an invitation, or it can be a dispreferred response, like declining an invitation. The theory posits that preferred responses are often short and to the point, whereas dispreferred responses are often lengthier and more elaborate. According to

Stokoe (2008: 296), "dispreferred responses are 'marked' and 'mitigated': they are more elaborate turns that often follow a gap, they may be prefaced with turn-initial delays like "well" and contain pauses and other signs of "perturbation", and may contain accounts for why the speaker cannot produce the preferred response."

If one thinks of the act of attempting to enter the mosque as an utterance, in particular a request to enter, then the preferred response would be "Yes, come in!", allowing one to enter easily. A dispreferred response would include many twists and turns to finally respond, "No". My argument with this analogy is that mosque spaces say "Yes" to men congregants with the lack of barriers they encounter and the ease with which they can access the space. However, mosque spaces give very lengthy, elaborate noes (or very reluctant yeses) to women, placing barrier after barrier in their paths – marking women's spaces poorly, hiding entrances away around the back of the building, making them feel as though they are an afterthought and that their access is very begrudgingly granted.

Now that I have mapped out the overarching argument for this chapter, I would like to briefly introduce the taxonomy as a precursor to explaining the process through which it came about. I will also demonstrate how I used the concept of sign tone to guide my categorization of signs, before delving into the ethnographic description of the visit.

5.1.3 Using *sign tonality* to develop a taxonomy of mosque signs: Wayfinding signs, notices, and injunctions.

As explained earlier, in analysing the photographs of the signs I came across during my field visits, I developed my own taxonomy of South African mosque signage made up of three categories. I decided on these categories based on what I thought the purpose of the sign was, but also based on my visceral reading of the tone of the sign.

The first category consists of what I have termed "wayfinding information" signage. These signs help a congregant or visitor find their way around the space, or find certain resources

or information they may be searching for at some point in their visit. Tonally, I felt that wayfinding signs were saying "Should you need X, here it is!" The second category of signs consists of community information and notices, which I felt had the tone of someone saying "Here's some information you may find interesting". These mostly took the form of printed posters displayed on noticeboards, advertising upcoming fundraising events, classes, or community initiatives that were taking place in and around the site. The third category is the one I find the most intriguing with regards to my interest in the body in place. I have labelled this category "injunctions". These signs often evoked the strongest emotional responses in me. I felt they were saying "You must do this while you are in this space", the tone suggesting that non-compliance is not an option. The more I came across these signs, the more I began to develop the theory that behaving "correctly" in the mosque involves inhabiting the space in a particular way, and signage in the semiotic landscape appears to me the main instrument for regulating and controlling the human body when it crossed the threshold into the mosque. I develop this argument further in chapter 6.

I am, of course, well aware that a different researcher could possibly classify the signage differently, and may disagree with me on what tone lies behind each sign. However, I am writing from a particular “locus of enunciation” (Mignolo, 1999: 236), or positionality from which my thinking and speaking takes place, and thus my taxonomy reflects my own, lived experience. It’s also important to remember that taxonomies are by no means universal, and by definition have an element of arbitrariness to them. They are merely tools for ease of analysis, and the categorization of signage depends on the theoretical purpose determining the reading.

In the next section, I present my autoethnographic narrative, constructed from my fieldnotes, photographs and memory. I have included images wherever possible.

5.2 Site Visit – Houghton West Street Mosque, Johannesburg

My data collection for this project included visiting thirty South African mosques, and while this chapter does draw on images from the entire corpus, I have decided to focus on this particular mosque for this walkthrough discussion for a number of reasons. In analysing my data after the fact, I realized that this particular site visit moved me particularly viscerally, and sticks out in my mind as a memorable one, probably for this very reason. I experienced apprehension, excitement, surprise, relief and anger at various points during this visit, despite not meeting any other congregants. I would like to understand what role the semiotic landscape had here in creating such a feeling in me.

Figure 5. 1 Image of Houghton West Street Mosque from their public Facebook page.[8]

[8] Source: https://www.facebook.com/houghtonmasjid/photos/a.655363724492604/965527900142850/ [Accessed 07/12/2022].

Houghton West Street Mosque (Figure 5. 1) is located in the wealthy suburb of Houghton, Johannesburg, an area of immense privilege. Previously home to many of Johannesburg's wealthy white residents, it has seen a surge of Muslim residents in the past decade. The mosque itself is relatively new, having been opened fairly recently in 2013. Unlike many of the older, community-built mosques in South Africa, West Street Mosque was funded by the King Fahd Islamic Trust Centre in Saudi Arabia. It is possible that some of the unexpected signage I encountered there can be attributed to this, although I must admit that I did not know about the origin of the mosque before I visited it, and my experience in this mosque has been mostly quite similar to others I have had in more traditional South African mosques. According to an article published by the Sunday Times, the mosque was designed by two architects, Egyptian-born Abdel-Wahed El-Wakil and South African-born Muhammed Mayet. (Premdev, 2013). The same article states that the building can accommodate 2000 congregants, which includes room for 300 women. This is just 15% of the total space, in an upstairs gallery area.[9] The floorplan in the next figure (Figure 5. 2) gives a sense of just how small this is relative to the rest of the mosque. I have marked up the image such that the main mosque area (the men's area) is highlighted in green. This space is on the ground floor level of the building. The women's space is upstairs on the first floor, and is highlighted in orange.

[9] The fact that I am only really able to access 15% of the space in this mosque because of my gender hit me in a visceral way near the end of this project during the writing up stage, several years after having conducted the actual site visit. I was looking up additional information about this mosque online when I came across photographs of the interior of the mosque uploaded by users on the Google Maps platform, and I was able to see the interior of the main space for the first time. I was amazed at how lovely the interior was. I had expected the mosque to be beautiful of course, but had had no idea that the building had a kind of indoor courtyard area where (male) congregants could pray in a room filled with gorgeous natural light. I had no idea that parts of the ceiling were covered in elaborately carved wooden beams. This awe was almost immediately followed by an overwhelming feeling of grief – I had visited this mosque about four times in total at this point, and had glimpsed none of this beauty.

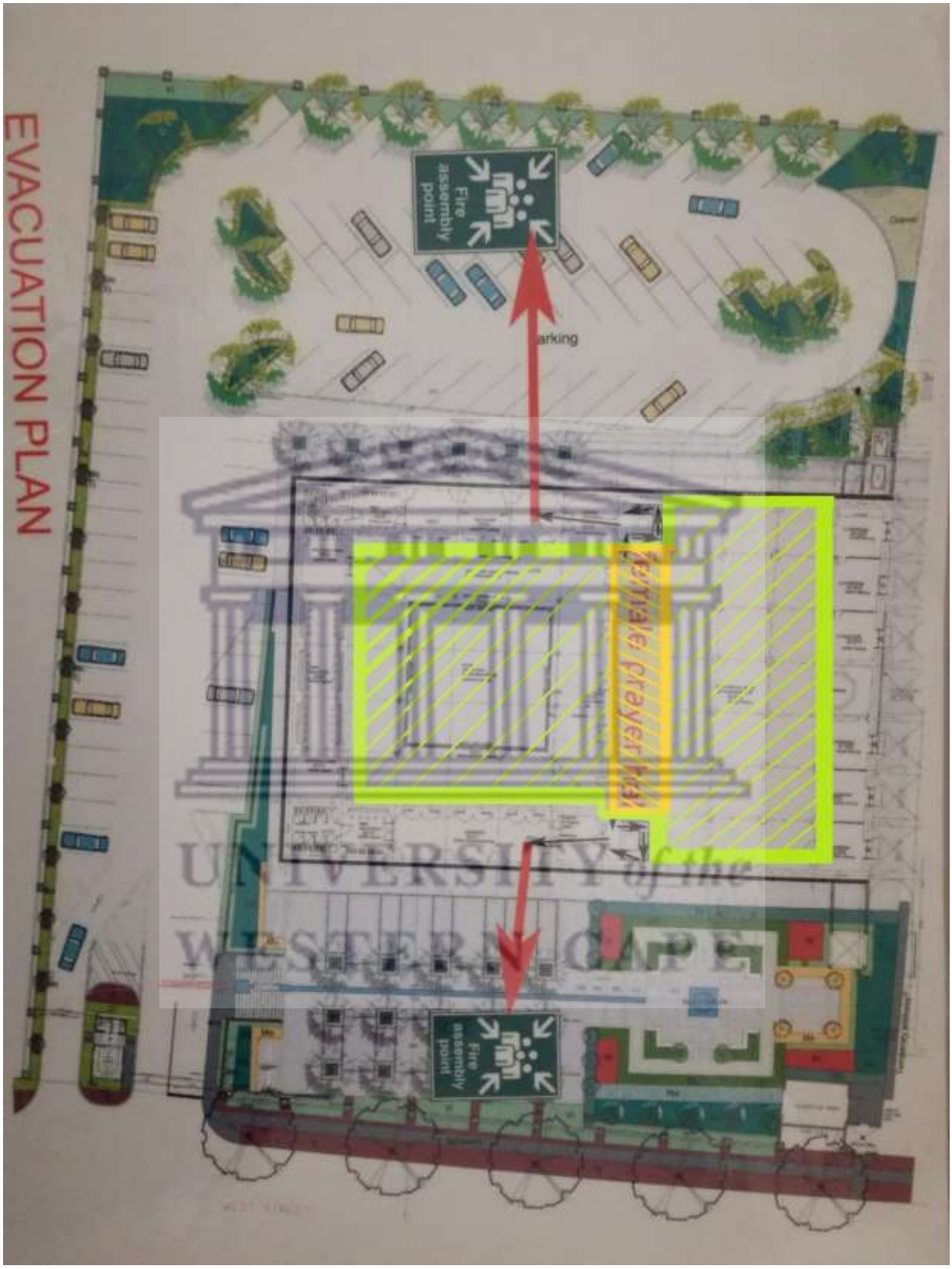

Figure 5. 2 Evacuation procedure sign showing the layout of the entire mosque building

5.2.1 Approaching the mosque

Conscious of the fact that my readers were not likely to be familiar with the layout of a South African mosque, I spent part of my site visit taking "point-of-view" photographs in which I stopped at certain points in my trajectory through the mosque and tried to capture photographs that would approximate what I could see at that point. In order to help the reader create a mental map of the kind of space I am investigating and to shed some light on what the semiotic landscape of the mosque is like, I will share these images alongside my narration of the experience. I would like to point out, however, that while the architecture of Houghton Mosque exemplifies mosque spaces in South Africa in my experience, this is not necessarily the case with the signage I encountered there. At several points I encountered signage I had never seen before, or signage I knew was rare.

On the day of the site visit, my younger sister accompanies me as research assistant, and we plan to reach the mosque in time for the midday prayer which we hope to incorporate into the observations. We arrive slightly late, however, and miss the communal prayer. Before we start, I observe in my fieldnotes that although I have visited this mosque before, I feel nervous about our visit today, saying that I feel intimidated by this mosque but am unsure as to why. My assistant, a Muslim woman herself, reports no such feelings of nervousness, saying that she feels quite comfortable visiting this mosque as she comes here quite regularly to pray. She notes that she knows from experience that the women's section will be unlocked and we will have no trouble accessing the mosque or praying, despite having missed the communal prayer. I also note feeling relief at having missed the prayer, as the mosque would be emptier and I would be under less scrutiny from other congregants while collecting my data.

Usually, the first signs I encounter on visits to the mosque are signs I've classified as "wayfinding" information signage, most often pointing the way to the women's section (when there is one). While the first notable sign I come across at this mosque falls in the same "wayfinding" category, it is rather a sign placed right in front of a parking bay next to a

wheelchair ramp, indicating a designated disabled parking spot for women, as seen in Figure 5. 3. (Figure 5. 4 shows where this sign is placed on the floorplan). I am impressed and heartened by the apparent accessibility indicated by the presence of such a sign, but also slightly sceptical, knowing from past experience that the women's section in this mosque is upstairs and having no memory of a lift or ramp leading to the space, or of a second women's section downstairs. The issue of disability access is particularly interesting to me because of my own focus on the politics of access as they apply to Muslim women in mosques.

Figure 5. 3 Disabled parking bay sign outside the women's entrance, reading "Ladies disabled parking only"

Figure 5. 4 Location of disabled bay sign, timber screen and staircase and foyer

Disappointingly, this site visit revealed no evidence of an elevator or a downstairs women's prayer section. It seems to me that at Houghton West Street Mosque, a woman with mobility issues is able to park and then enter the building, but has no way of getting to the women's section to pray. This mirrors the half-hearted performance of access people with disabled bodies have to deal with on a daily basis, where designers of buildings use disability access as a way to check boxes, without really thinking through the space or involving disabled people in the design process. (See for example Jones et. al 2019 and Slater and Jones, 2021).

As we approach the entrance from the car park, I notice that there are three glass doors leading into the mosque, and that the door furthest to the left is enclosed by some kind of wooden structure (Figure 5. 5). From my experience of mosques in South Africa, I know that this means that the enclosed door is intended as the women's entrance. There is no matching structure for the other entrances (Figure 5. 6).

Figure 5. 5 Wooden screens concealing one of the entrances

Figure 5. 6 Entrances to the right with no enclosure, women's screened-off entrance to the left

The practice of screening off women's entrances and sections at mosques and prayer areas is not unusual (see Figure 5. 7 of an example from a different mosque), and various rationales are put forward to explain it. One is that it is a way to further separate the genders to prevent intermingling in spaces in and around the mosque. Another is that it is a means to hide women's bodies from view to prevent men's lust; and a third is that it is a way to give women some level of privacy from an unwanted male gaze.

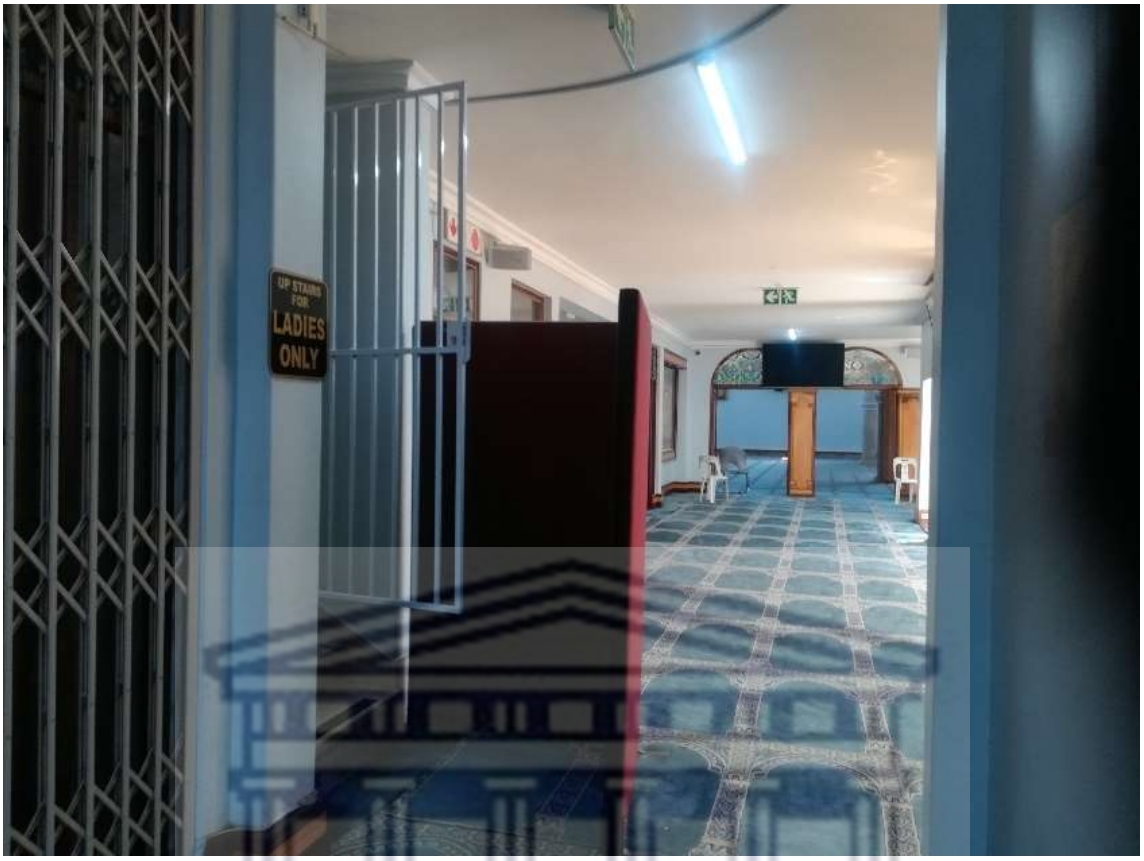

Figure 5. 7 An example of a screened-off staircase leading to the women's section at Masjidul Quds in Cape Town. A sign next to the staircase reads "Upstairs for Ladies Only" which I discuss below.

At both Houghton Mosque and the example from Masjidul Quds in Figure 5. 7, it's clear that the screens have been added after the construction of the building, rather than incorporated into the original design. This reminds me of the way in which special provisions are belatedly added, often as an afterthought, to make spaces accessible to people with disabilities. I'd like to argue that there are parallels between that way most spaces are almost always designed for able-bodied people by default, and the way mosques spaces are designed – for men as the default worshipper. Some of the features of the mosque building specifically for women congregants are added later when the need becomes clear once people start using the building. This hints at the lack of women involved in designing and creating mosque spaces, in the same way that disabled people are left out of designing so-called accessible spaces.

To return to Figure 5. 6, this image is a useful visual depiction of what I mean by women's mosque entrances being very obviously different to men's entrances, and I would like to

frame this using the idea of *markedness*, as I indicated earlier. Women's entrances are *marked*, whereas men's are *unmarked*, and I argue that this marked/unmarked distinction constructs women as "Other" in this space. In the next section, I discuss the signage placed around the entrance of this mosque, as well as common trends I experienced in mosque entrance signage in general.

5.2.2 Mosque entrance signage

Before I enter the building during this visit, I notice some signage on the wall between the two doors on the right, so I approach it first (Figure 5. 8). It reads "Men's entrance only. Ladies entrance on the other side of the timber screen", confirming what I had guessed about which entrance is which.

Figure 5. 8 Sign outside the men's entrance reading "Men's entrance only. Ladies entrance on the other side of the timber screen"

This sign is a little difficult to place in my taxonomy, as it appears at first to contain wayfinding information, but also holds an additional, implied injunction: "if you are a

woman, you must not enter *here*, you must enter *there*". The sign is also unusual in that it relates to the entrance to the women's section but actually appears closer to the men's entrances. It is fairly small and cannot be read from afar, so it would mean having to walk all the way up to the door in order to read it. A woman who is familiar with the location of the women's entrance at this mosque or correctly worked it out would not see this sign. It is thus directed at women who have made the mistake of walking up to the men's entrance, and it functions to redirect women to the correct entrance. It functions more as a "No entry" sign directed at women than an entrance marker directed at men.

In my experience, signs indicating entrances to mosque buildings are almost always exclusively placed at the women's entrance. It is then taken for granted that all other unlabelled entrances are for men (see for example Figure 5. 9, of a mosque with one labelled entrance and one unlabelled entrance). In some cases, none of the entrances are labelled, and in these instances, men can always assume that the primary entrance to the space is the men's entrance (see for example Figure 5. 10, of a mosque with all entrances unlabelled). Women, however, would need to ask for directions or use their background knowledge of the layout of mosques to find an entrance around the side or back of the building. If there is only one entrance, then it is guaranteed that men can enter there. Women would first have to find out if they were allowed entry there (see for example Figure 5. 11, of a mosque with only one entrance, where I had to ask for assistance).

Entrance signs at mosques are almost always directed at women, because those are the entrances that are marked. In most cases, women's entrance signs are usually wayfinding signs, displaying words like "Ladies", "Ladies entrance", "Females" or "Female entrance", as evidenced by figures below.

Figure 5. 9 Example of an unlabelled entrance and a labelled women's entrance at a mosque in Cape Town

Figure 5. 10 Al-Azhar Mosque in Cape Town, with three unlabelled entrances. Main entrance on the far left is for men. Entrance at the far right is where I entered to go to the upstairs women's area. The Arabic script above the main door is the name of the mosque.

Figure 5. 11 A prayer room in Lenasia, Johannesburg with only one entrance. I asked for directions to the women's section and was told that there was no space for women to pray here, which is ironic because the space is named after a revered woman, Khadija, the Prophet's (PBUH) first wife, and the first person to accept Islam.

When the women's entrance is out of view, as is often the case, signs are sometimes placed directing women congregants towards the entrance (see for example Figure 5. 12 – Figure 5. 14).

Figure 5. 12 Sign directing women congregants upstairs, at Masjid Nasriellah in Cape Town.

Figure 5. 13 Sign directing women around the side of the building at Goodwood Mosque, Cape Town.

Figure 5. 14 Despite multiple signs assuring me that I could pray at Musjid Uthmaan Ghani in Johannesburg, I was unable to locate the women's prayer area and no one was around to direct me. The sign beneath the airconditioning unit in the image on the left reads "Lenasia South Muslim Association Ladies Salaah Facilities".

The "Men's entrance only" sign at Houghton in Figure 5. 8 is therefore an exception, as it is a sign explicitly labelling the men's entrance at a mosque. I found three other such

exceptions in my data, where men's entrances were marked as such, in Figure 5. 15, Figure 5. 16 and Figure 5. 17.

Figure 5. 15 Sign marking the men's entrance at the Wits University prayer room in Johannesburg

Figure 5. 16 Signs directing men to the prayer facility at the Oriental Plaza Mall in Johannesburg. The sign on the right displays a directory of the businesses found in that section of the mall, as well as "Muslim prayer rooms (Ladies and Gents)". However, the sign hanging from the ceiling on the left only indicates the direction of the men's prayer room.[10] It reads "Gents Muslim Prayer/Jamaat Khana[11]"

[10] I remember feeling confused at this site visit because the signs seemed to contradicted each other, and I decided to trust the sign on the wall that there was a space for me to pray, and then followed the arrows on the ceiling sign. It turned out to be correct.

[11] The word *jamaat khana* is a term often used to refer to a prayer space that is not officially a mosque. The word *jamaat* is Arabic for "congregation" or "gathering", and *khana* is a Persian word meaning "place". The term *jamaat khana* is often used interchangeably with the Arabic word meaning the same thing, *musallah.*

Figure 5. 17 Sign marking the men's entrance at Masjidul-Islam, Johannesburg

At first glance, these signs marking the men's entrances appear to be directed at men ("Men, this is where you enter"), but one could argue that they are in fact, directed at women in a similar way to the Houghton sign ("If you are a woman, you must not enter here"). The Houghton sign adds an explicit direction for women towards their entrance ("Your entrance is over there"), but these signs could be said to be implying this more indirectly ("This is where men enter, your entrance is somewhere else). These men's entrance labels function as a way to let women know that a space for them to pray does exist at this facility, but its entrance is elsewhere, not here. Had no women's prayer area existed in this space, there would be no need to label the men's entrance.

Women are thus marked in that nearly all entrance signage at mosques is directed at them. An interesting exception occurs occasionally when, rather than being wayfinding signage, entrance signs at mosques display something like "Ladies only" (e.g., Figure 5. 7 and Figure

5. 18), an implied injunction form similar to the entrance sign in Figure 5. 8 at Houghton Mosque. While saying who the entrance is for, it also emphasises and is directed at those who are barred from entering here. Rather than saying "Women, this is where you go", these signs are indirectly saying "Men, you are not supposed to go here". The result of this phrasing is that the signs have an exclusive and exclusionary tone (“This space is only for us, you cannot share it”), setting up a kind of in-group out-group distinction.

Figure 5. 18 Close-up of the sign in Figure 5. 7 reading “Upstairs for Ladies only” at Masjidul-Quds in Cape Town

However, the tone of voice of the “Men’s entrance only” sign at Houghton does not have the same effect as the tone in the “Ladies only” signs at Masjidul Quds, nor does it have the same implications. The reason for this is because of the differences in the nature of these spaces. Usually, spaces are labelled “x only” in order to reserve them for group “x”. When group “x” is a marginalized group, then allocating certain dedicated spaces for them is a way

to make the space more accessible in cases where it is not guaranteed that they will be able to access the space. An example of this in a different setting is when parking bays close to the entrances of buildings are reserved for people with mobility issues. This reservation is necessary because it is not always guaranteed that disabled people will be able to park in spots that are convenient for them.[12] Because men's prayer spaces are always guaranteed, it seems strange to place signage there to reserve them, and having a sign in an "x only" format therefore reads as very hostile. Consider for example what it would be like if, instead of having designated parking bays for disabled people, a parking lot marked all other bays with signs saying "Able-bodied parking only. Disabled parking on the other side of the parking lot" or some such formulation.[13] The "x only" formulation on signage serves to protect a space, and doing so in a way that "protects" it from a marginalized group is hostile and discriminatory.

Earlier when discussing the timber screen, I explained that there were several rationales for screening off women's entrances at mosques: to keep women out of view of men or to provide women privacy from an unwanted male gaze. It is difficult to know for sure which of these reasonings is behind the installation of the screen (it may also be both), but the exclusionary effect on the "Men's entrances only" sign does make me lean towards "hiding women from view". There is no corresponding "Ladies only" sign at the door behind the timber screen to make me feel as though the space is being reserved for a group that is usually excluded from the space. It is certainly the case that the sign and screen at Houghton made me feel as though I was being hidden away, even being told to *go* away, when I visited, rather than being led to a place of safety.

An unusual sign I found at Masjidul-Islam in Johannesburg is an example of what a sign directed at men and protecting a women-only space could look like (Figure 5. 19). It reads, "No men allowed beyond this point", and also displays a no-entry symbol commonly used as

[12] Of course, it is important to remember that, while allocating designated and labelled spaces for marginalized groups is just, doing so does also mark them and construct them as different.
[13] This is not to imply that I have any knowledge of the experience of disabled people. The point of the analogy is not to show that the experiences of disabled people are the same as those of Muslim women. It is purely to clarify something about the nature of the women's space for the reader.

a traffic sign – a red circle with a horizontal white line through the middle. The tone of this sign is strict and official, compounded by the use of the traffic symbol, which adds an institutional air. While the sign could be read as hostile to men, the inclusion of the traffic symbol also adds a specific nuance – an implication that disobeying the sign may lead to severe consequences and that the sign is necessary to prevent an "accident". Think of how the symbol is used to warn drivers not to drive the wrong way down a one-way street.

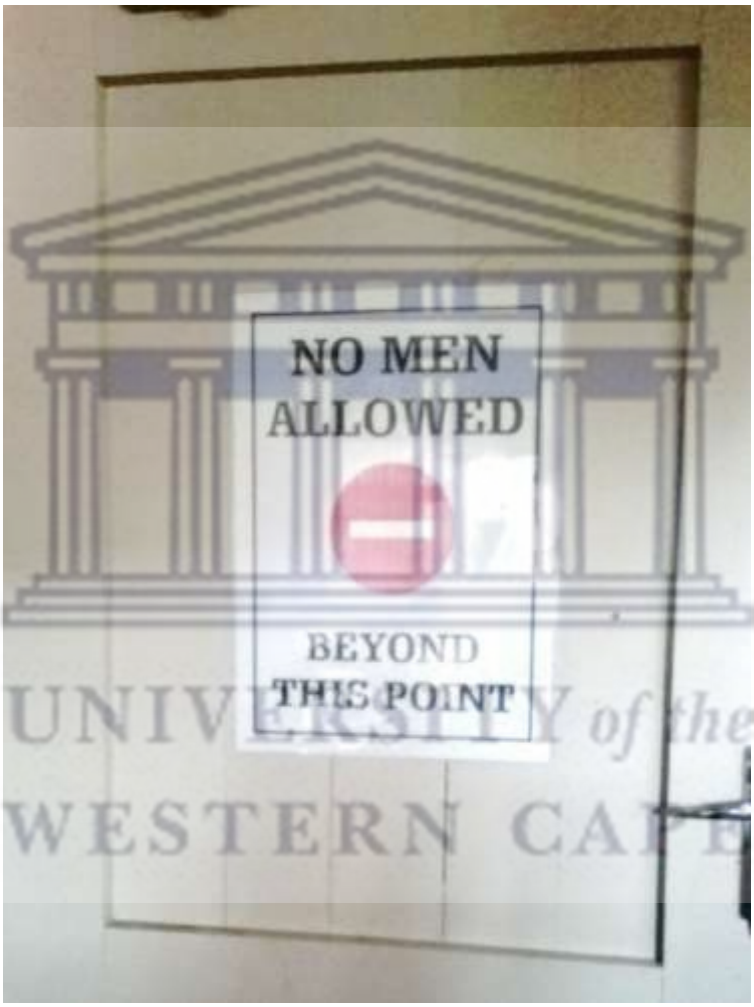

Figure 5. 19 Unusual sign at Masjidul-Islam in Johannesburg directed at men.

Interestingly, however, this sign was not found at the boundary between the men's and women's sections at this mosque, as I would have expected. This door is actually *in* the women's section, and leads to the women's bathroom and ablution area. A man would have to be inside the women's section in order to encounter this sign. The fact that the people who run the mosque felt it necessary to display this sign here means that men are frequently in this space and attempt to use this door. It also means that it is accepted that

men will enter the women's space at some point, and that the mosque is actually okay with that, but stops short at being okay with men entering the women's bathroom. At the time I collected this data, I did not notice this discrepancy – rather I was caught up in feeling pleased at the existence of the sign in the first place. The question is, then, why does this sign not appear where we would expect it, cordoning off the entire women's prayer area rather than just the bathroom area? I would like to argue that it is because the women's space in mosques is not truly reserved for women. I will discuss this further a little later on in this chapter, but for now, I'd like to return to the Houghton site visit at the centre of this discussion.

5.2.3 The body on mosque entrance signage

Figure 5. 20 Behind the screen: The women's entrance at Houghton West Street Mosque

Behind the timber screen, a sign attached to the wall next to the door shows a figure kneeling with a hijab around its head, and the word "Ladies" underneath (Figure 5. 20 and Figure 5. 21). This is not a standard symbol used to mark women's spaces in South African mosques, but a creative sign I have seen once before at the university prayer room at Wits

University discussed earlier (Figure 5. 15). Such signs are custom-made and chosen by those designing the mosque. This sign is an example of an interesting subset of entrance signs depicting the human body, often as kneeling figures, sometimes accompanied by text, and sometimes not. In this section, I'd like to further discuss the depiction of the body on mosque signage.

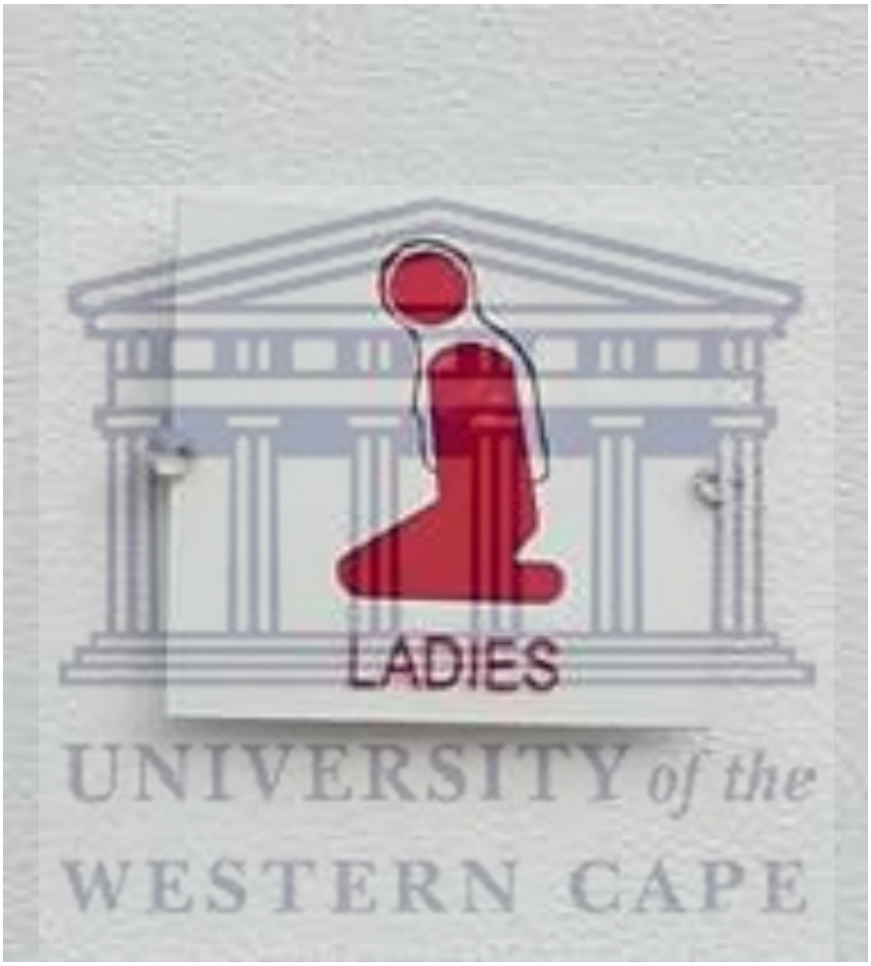

Figure 5. 21 Close-up of the sign marking the women's entrance at Houghton West Street Mosque

In my experience outside of Muslim spaces, the symbol used for "woman" most often takes the form of a figure gendered by a triangular dress, whereas symbols for "woman" in and around mosques appear to use the hijab as the primary gender marker (although see Figure 5. 22 for an exception, an entrance marked with the traditional symbol for "woman"). Figure 5. 23 has a kneeling figure with hands raised in the traditional supplication gesture, and the figure's hijab and feminine dress is implied by the shape of the silhouette. In the Houghton and Wits signs, the hijab is indicated by a simplified outline added around the head and shoulders of the stylized kneeling figure.

Figure 5. 22 A women's entrance marked with the traditional symbol for "woman" at York Road Mosque, Cape Town

Figure 5. 23 Sign marking the women's entrance at Jaame mosque in Nelspruit.

While the Wits "Men" sign in Figure 5. 15 is a kneeling figure with no obvious gender markings (although the figure can be read as “male” due to its similarity to the everyday symbol for man), the sign in Figure 5. 24 at Eastgate prayer room *does* display an obviously masculine gendered figure, wearing a men’s *kuffiyah* (hat). This sign is an example of how a

mosque sign depicting a human figure can actually be gendered masculine, and leads one to question why other “male” mosque signs are not gendered in the same way. The reason is related to my argument about men being unmarked, *human* figures, whereas women are marked, *gendered* figures. It could be argued that the Wits signs (Figure 5. 15) are showing entrances for "praying people" and "praying women", whereas the Eastgate signs (Figure 5. 24) are showing entrances for "praying Muslim men” and "Praying Muslim women", as the *kuffiyah* genders the sign as masculine, as it is a masculine clothing item. Houghton mosque has a hijabi performing ablution as well (Figure 5. 38, which is discussed later), even though this is impractical, as one usual removes the hijab in order to wash the face and forehead. All other "body" signs I found at Houghton Mosque were ungendered, for example the assembly point sign in Figure 5. 27 shows a group of people, none of whom are wearing a hijab, and in the disabled women's parking sign in Figure 5. 3, gender is indicated by the word "Ladies" and not the body. It must be noted though that the assembly point sign and the disabled user signs may look the way they do for reasons relating to outside regulations about standardised official signage.

Figure 5. 24 Sign marking the prayer room and men's entrance at the Eastgate Mall prayer facility in Johannesburg.

Figure 5. 25 Sign marking the women's entrance at the Eastgate Mall prayer facility in Johannesburg.

Back at Houghton Mosque, I see a completely different sign marking the men's entrance through the glass on the other side of the screen. It shows an unmarked human figure without a caption (Figure 5. 26), the kind you would find above a men's restroom. This leads me to think that, rather than marking the men's entrance, it actually points to the availability of a bathroom through that doorway. It feels as though these signs are saying "This is the *people* section, and this is the *women's* section. In the *people* section it only becomes relevant to highlight gender at the toilet. Here is a space for women, and it is on the same level of specificity as the place where men do their ablutions."

Figure 5. 26 Sign outside one of the men's entrances at Houghton West Street Mosque

Figure 5. 27 Sign indicating an emergency assembly point in the parking lot of Houghton West Street Mosque

The Houghton Mosque's choice not to add anything to the traditional male symbol in any of their "body" signs highlights how marked the women's sign is. At this place, men's gender is not relevant to highlight on signage, but women are different and their signs must reflect that difference.

The next section continues the walkthrough into the foyer section of the mosque and uses what is found there to further discuss the precarity of the women's space, and how the women's space in mosques is not truly reserved for women.

5.2.4 The precarity of the women's space

Walking through the glass doors of Houghton West Street Mosque takes me into a foyer area. To the right of me is a portable opaque white screen with a bench placed in front of it (Figure 5. 28). Straight ahead of me is a closed door, and to my left is an open door labelled with another "Ladies" sign (Figure 5. 29).

Figure 5. 28 Screen dividing the mosque foyer area into two spaces. A bench stands in front of the screen, and on the bench is a small pile of papers, presumably a newsletter or newspaper of some sort.

Figure 5. 29 Doors inside the foyer area leading to the women's section (left) and the men's area (right)

The white screen serves to divide the larger foyer into two unequal parts. It also performs the same function as the timber screen encountered earlier, blocking women from the view of men who would enter the same foyer through the other two doors. The closed door ahead of me seems to lead into the main body of the mosque, i.e., the men's section. From my experience of mosques, this setup tells me that the women's entrance could very easily be changed into a men's entrance if necessary, by removing the screen, locking the side door and opening the door ahead.

This points to a feature of South African mosques regarding the transience and precariousness of the women's section. It is very common for the boundary between the main section and the women's section to be (re)movable to be able to change the configuration of the spaces on days when the mosque expects an influx of congregants, for example on holy days like Eid, during *Ramadaan*, or for a specific event, like a talk given by a well-known visiting scholar. One of my participants addressed this in her interview:

> *And especially in Ramadaan(.) like I would read the whole-(.) all the Salaahs [all month] then when they make the announcement for the Eid Salaah, then they will say okay-(.) they'll tell the musallees* (congregants) *"Okay you must come early, and for the ladies, the space will be now halved because they're [the men] going to use the upstairs", you know but equal amount of women have prayed the Taraaweeh* (*Ramadaan* Salaah) *the whole of Ramadaan, but now on the Eid day you're going to come, your space is going to be taken away.*
>
> *Zainab*[14]

[14] Transcription key:

(.)	Pause
=	Latched utterance
Wor-	False start
[laughs]	Extralinguistic feature
(word)	Gloss
[the men]	author's clarification
word	Emphasis
[…]	omitted talk

In this extract, Zainab expresses how disappointed she feels when, after a month of prayer during *Ramadaan*, she is told that she might not be able to join the Eid prayer because the women's prayer area will not be able to hold as many women congregants as it usually does. The reason for this is because part of the women's section will be repurposed for this prayer to accommodate the increased number of men expected. In her case, she was told that the gallery area upstairs usually reserved for women would be divided in half, with one half of the space accommodating women, and the other half the spillover of men from downstairs. The men's prayer area is enlarged at the expense of the women's area, as quite often no additional space is added for the women. It's clear that Zainab thinks this is unjust, as she believes she has earned a right to be at the Eid prayer after having been devout all *Ramadaan*, and yet this is not acknowledged.

For me, this tendency for the layout of the space to be changed occasionally means that the space is unreliable and insecure, and I believe this contributes to my own anxiety about using the space, knowing that the way a mosque space is arranged today is not necessarily the way it will be arranged tomorrow. Women's spaces in mosques are thus not always reserved for them, and this has implications for how women feel about how they are valued and whether they belong in this environment.

The non-exclusivity of women's prayer spaces goes beyond the occasional changing of the layout, as we saw earlier with the "No men allowed" sign with the no-entry traffic symbol in Figure 5. 19. Sometimes it is an (unspoken but generally accepted) outright disregard for the reservation of the space itself. During a field visit to a different mosque, I noticed a group of men relaxing at one end of the (admittedly quite large in this case) women's space. I was slightly taken aback, but not overly surprised, as this was not the first time I had encountered men in the women's section, particularly outside of congregational prayer times. In my experience, it seems that the women's sections in mosques that I have visited do not work like a women's public bathroom, where men are almost never allowed to enter, and where some men may feel emasculated if they do enter. From what I have observed, men appear to be welcome in the entire mosque, provided that it is not during a communal prayer, and that the boundaries that keep them out of the women's section only apply during prayer times, if women are present.

In fact, I have even come across men in the women's ablution area and toilet in the mosque several times, and know through personal communication that other Muslim women have experienced this as well, as I demonstrate below. Outside of the mosque, I have never encountered men in women's public bathrooms before. It is true that we do not know if the men we have encountered in mosque bathrooms also enter women's bathrooms in other (non-Mosque) places. However, it can be argued that women's bathrooms in mosque are not treated as out-of-bounds for men as other women's bathrooms are, (hence the necessity of the "No men allowed" sign in Figure 5. 19), and that women-only spaces in the mosque do not belong to women all the time, even if they are not present. There is only an attempt to respect the "women's only-ness" when women are present, and even then, this is not always the case. An extract from one of my participants, Zainab, who I quoted earlier, confirms this. Here, she recounts an example of such an incident while talking about men in the women's prayer space.

> *Zainab : We [her and a friend] were at Bontheuwel [a suburb in Cape Town] (.) It was- it was past Asr time [an afternoon prayer time], but we wanted to read our Asr Salaah, and so the two of us, we- (.) obviously we go into the [mosque] space (.) and there's (.) they- I don't know if they the guys that clean or they were painting or they were doing something (.) like we go up to the ladies- (.) it's like really abandoned there, (.) dark and stuffy, ne? But they like* ***sleeping****= (.)*
>
> *Mooniq : =in the women's section=*
>
> *Zainab : =in the women's section, like sleeping, and just the two of- (.) like- (.) she- (.) we- (.) like it was very quiet and no one else in the masjid, so we were just talking about like how easy it is, like like nobody* ***questions*** *when (.) um like strange men are in the mas- in the women's section, nobody questions. (.) And even us at that time, we thought- we didn't verbalise (.) our uneasiness but we both said afterwards, we spoke about it, and you know- that's exactly it, I mean like we were both are uneasy, we didn't say to each other- (.) but the fact that we were making Salaah, but we also know behind us there's about three or four men, just like lazing about, sleeping and they had their overalls and stuff, but it's strange (.) there's no one else around. They could do anything, we could scream, nobody's going to hear*

us. And we were just speaking about that, like just the idea of how (.) of safety, especially when it's closed, like every other entrance is closed and ja, so it's- (.)

Mooniq : I- (.) I remember also I did observations, I think it was in Salt River Mosque or something and I came at an odd time of day, so it wasn't Salaah time or anything and I just was going past and I stopped and there was a jamaah[15] *in the women's section, and they were chilling and laying down. And I remember feeling (.) instead of feeling like* ***they're*** *in the wrong place, I was like [overlapping speech] ooh, I'm in the wrong place.*

Zainab : [overlapping speech] Like you were intruding in their place, ja.

Mooniq : Ja, and like [asking myself] "Is it okay if I come in here?" and "okay, I'm in the wrong place", because they're now relaxing there (.) when actually- (.) ja…

Zainab : Even like […] at the last ten nights of- [Ramadaan] (.) when the men sit in Itikaaf (.) and they (.) ***occupy*** *the ladies section (.) then they go away when there's ladies (.) but all their stuff is- [overlapping speech]*

Mooniq : [overlapping speech] still there=

Zainab : =there and stuff, so you feel like (.) oh okay like (.) they're taking over your space and they- (.) there's just like there's this assumption that women are not going to be there, they're not going to want to do that [use the space] so it's okay for you to sleep in the ladies section.

This extract begins with Zainab recounting an incident in which she and a friend visited a mosque at a quiet time and found men resting in the women's section. It's clear that the men did not leave once they arrived, and that the two women continued their prayers in the presence of the men. She mentions being incredibly aware of the men's presence near them, and of the remoteness of the space – a common heightened state of vigilance women everywhere have experienced. It is telling that both women felt uneasy but did not question the occurrence, and only fully realised afterwards that there had been any kind of transgression.

[15] The Arabic word for congregation, but in this context refers to a Tableegh Jamaah, or a group of men who travel from town to town to preach to their fellow Muslim (men) and encourage further religious observance. These groups are usually hosted by a local mosque for the few nights they are in town, and very often sleep or rest in the women's section if there is one.

In the extract, I respond to Zainab's story with a similar one of my own, adding details of my own visceral reactions of discomfort at the time. I note that instead of feeling as though a transgression into my space had occurred, I immediately began to doubt my own presence there. I recall now that it was only once one of the men waved me through that I felt able to enter and find a corner of my own to pray in. Zainab responds to my story with another example of a time she feels frustrated at the presence of men in her space – during the Itikaaf period, when the men who isolate for worship usually sleep in the women's section.

I decided to present this extract here in transcript form to demonstrate how the two of us agreed with each other and identified with and recognized our similar experiences. This, as well as the fact that we were able to produce multiple examples, proves that coming across men in the women's space is not a rare occurrence. This means that for some women, the women's space is not a safe or reliable one. Women are visitors in the mosque space, whereas men almost always behave as though it is their own and as though they belong, even in the space designated for women.

5.2.5 Entering the mosque

Now I'd like to return the reader to the Houghton Mosque walkthrough. At this point, I had entered the glass door behind the timber screen and walked into the foyer area.

As I mentioned earlier, a second set of doors leads off to the left and is marked with a "kneeling hijabi" ladies sign (Figure 5. 29). The door leads to another foyer with a staircase. Although this space appears after the "Ladies" sign, I would consider it a blurred gender space – leading up to the women's space but not quite part of it, particularly if, as I mentioned earlier, the portable screen is taken down to enlarge the men's area. This space contains several signs I'd like to discuss before taking the reader upstairs into the women's section itself. There is a noticeboard on one of the walls, which I expect to display signs from the second category of my taxonomy – community notices. However, I find it surprisingly

bare, with just one such sign, inviting congregants to an awards ceremony (Figure 5. 30). Compare this to a noticeboard I photographed at Masjidul Quds in Cape Town (Figure 5. 31).

Figure 5. 30 Noticeboard in the foyer at the Houghton West Street Mosque

Figure 5. 31 For comparison, the noticeboard at a different mosque, Masjidul-Quds in Cape Town

Figure 5. 32 sheds some light as to why this might be the case, and it is the first in a series of signs evoking visceral responses of uneasiness and apprehension in me. It is a sign that reads, "No Pamphlets, Literature, Books, Quraans are to be placed in the masjid without the permission of the Imaams or Trustees. All unauthorised material will be removed from the Masjid. Pamphlets for fundraising and relief projects will be removed unless prior arrangements have been made with the Imaams or Trustees."

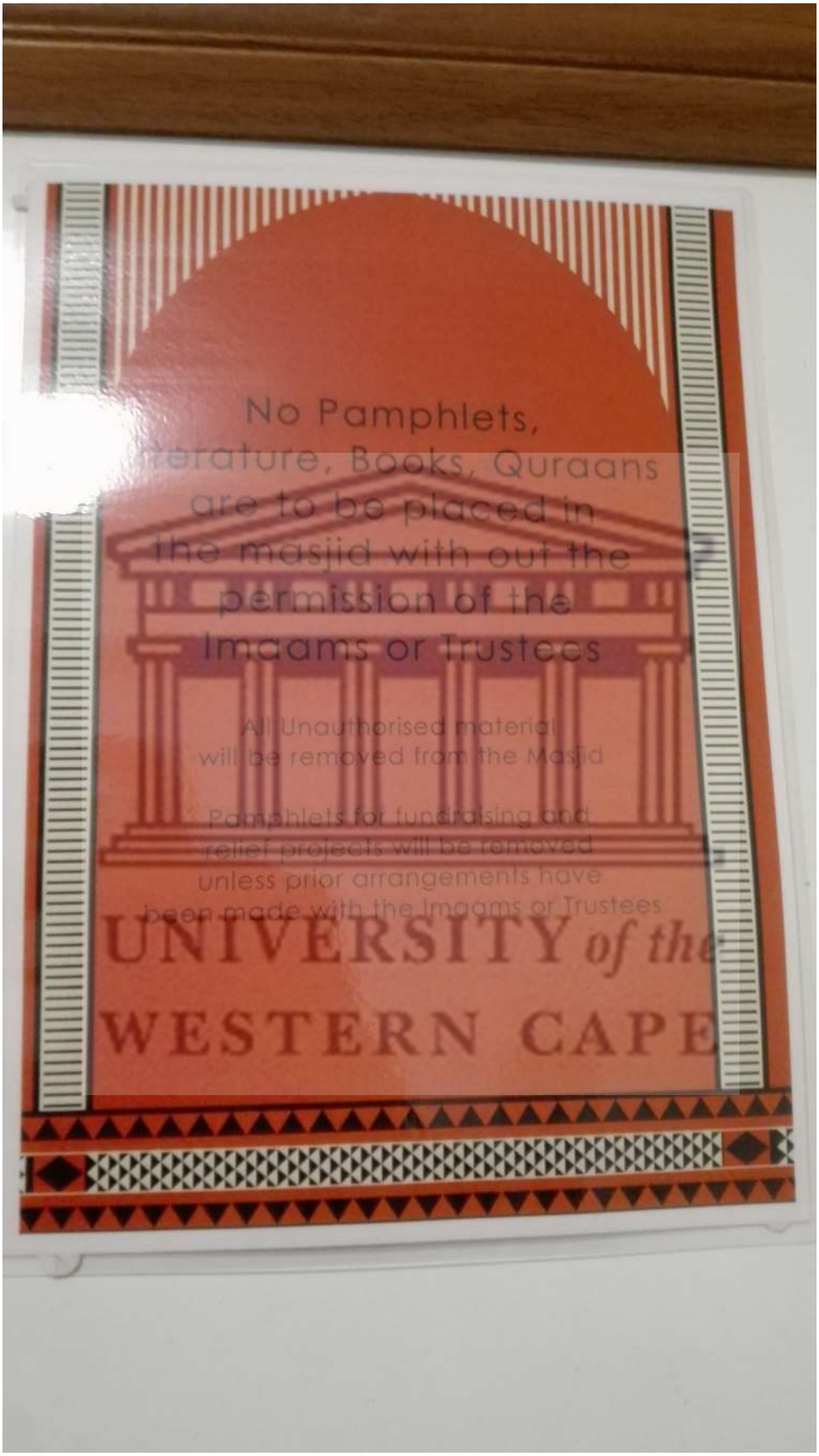

Figure 5. 32 Close-up of a sign on the noticeboard at the Houghton West Street Mosque

The first point I would like to make here is that I am fairly certain other mosques have similar such rules, though in my experience they are usually unspoken and rarely addressed in this way. The tone of this sign is authoritative and paternalistic, and this is achieved in several ways. Firstly, this sign (along with three others I discuss below) are made to look official and uniform, printed in colour in the same style and laminated. The materiality of the sign contributes to the construction of its authority, giving the sign an institutional feel, contributing to its overall tone. Secondly, the language in the sign constructs a particular idea of authority, and then positions the reader in a particular way in relation to that. Words such as “permission”, “Imaams or Trustees”, “unauthorised” and “prior arrangements” all contribute to what feels like a “legal” register, which creates the impression of punitive consequences if disobeyed. The fact that there is no explanation of how to obtain this permission creates the sense of a faceless, inaccessible authority. There is also the implication that this rule is actively enforced, and is not simply a warning for congregants to be mindful of the literature they share at the mosque. The sign is not phrased as though it addresses a community with shared rules and values. It is clear that this is in no way a "community noticeboard". The paternalistic tone is emphasised by the implication that, even if you share literature around a cause or project that is valid or just or noble, your material will be removed if it has not first been approved by "those in charge". This also positions the reader in a particular way in relation to the "authority", with the implication that the reader does not have the capability or power to make decisions about the appropriateness of their material, even if this material includes copies of the Quran itself.

Reflecting on this visit later on, I realised that it was at around this point that I began to feel a heightened sense of nervousness and apprehension, and that these feelings began to build as I encountered the next few signs on my way to the women's space. This is likely due to atmospherization, a term I touched on in chapter 2. According to Wiesse (2019), atmospherization refers to the affective practices that serve to create the atmosphere of sites or situations, or how certain atmospheres are cultivated or performed. I’d like to argue that the tone of voice in which signs “speak” contribute to the atmosphere of a space. Here, the authoritative tone created a strict and uncompromising atmosphere which I found uncomfortable. The next few signs compounded this atmosphere.

Figure 5. 33 Close-up of another sign in the foyer

The sign in Figure 5. 33 is displayed on a noticeboard just on the other side of the door, not much distance from the pamphlets sign. It reads, "The sanctity of the masjid demands neatness at all times and shoes not neatly placed displays a disregard for this sanctity". The phrasing of this sign is very interesting. Unlike many of the other signs discussed here, this one is phrased as a statement of fact, rather than an injunction or command. The way it is

phrased limits the possibility for debate or contestation – this is how the world *is*, and there can be no argument about it. Consider the difference had the sign been phrased "We the trustees believe that...". In such a phrasing, it is implied that other beliefs are possible. The existing wording has been chosen to influence behaviour by provoking shame and fear, and is designed to position someone who does not follow the rules in a particular way. Untidy shoes in this place are constructed as not simply a mild inconvenience to others, but rather a wilful disrespectful action towards the mosque. Someone who does not place their shoes neatly is positioned not as someone who has made a mistake or is absentminded, but as someone contemptuous of the sacred space they are in.

The strict and uncompromising tone in this sign builds on the feelings of unease evoked in me by the previous sign and compounds the atmosphere of control, surveillance and regulation it created. I begin to feel slightly more anxious and afraid of behaving the "wrong" way by mistake, and being accused of disrespecting the mosque. The sign has thus caused me to re-examine my entire bearing, not just the manner in which I store my shoes.

The next section follows my trajectory upstairs to an area just outside the women's prayer space proper.

5.2.6 The space outside the women's prayer area

We move on to ascend the staircase (Figure 5. 34) and reach the landing (Figure 5. 35).

Figure 5. 34 The staircase off the foyer area leading to the women's section upstairs

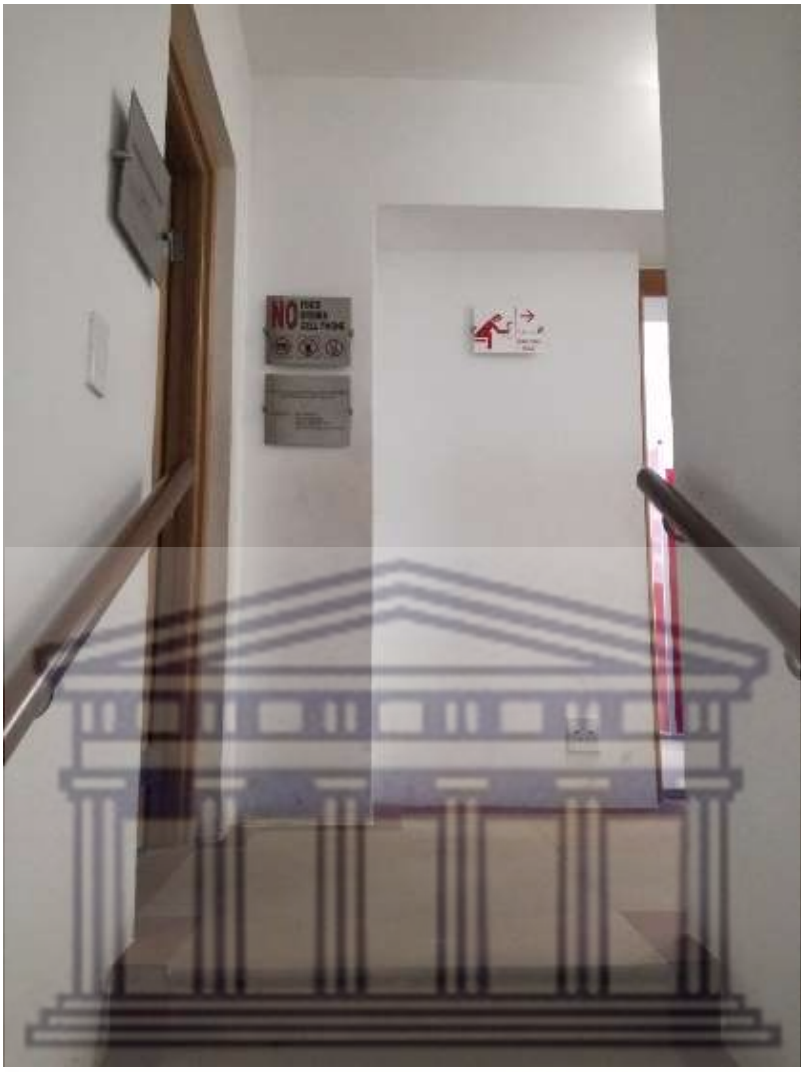

Figure 5. 35 The landing outside the women's prayer section (I will provide close-ups and further discussions of each of the signs in this image in detail below).

To the right is the entrance to the toilets and ablution facility (Figure 5. 36), as well as a closet labelled "burka cupboard" (shown close up in Figure 5. 39).

Figure 5. 36 View of the right side of the landing outside the women's prayer area, with a door leading to the women's bathroom and ablution facility

Figure 5. 37 View of the left side of the landing, with a door leading into the women's prayer area

To the left is the entrance to the women's prayer section (Figure 5. 37). The sign directing us to the women's ablution facility (Figure 5. 38) shows a figure wearing a hijab while performing the *wudhu,* or pre-prayer cleansing ritual.

Figure 5. 38 Sign outside the women's bathroom depicting a figure in hijab conducting the ablution ritual. The Arabic word for ablution, "wudhu", appears in Arabic script above the English word

My first reaction to the sign is one of amusement: in general, women remove the hijab during this ritual, as it involves passing wet hands over the forehead and the top of the head. It seems silly to me that the designers of the sign would insist on gendering the sign to such a ridiculous degree. The presence of the burka cupboard just outside the women's section containing burkas for female congregants who may not feel adequately dressed for prayer further strengthens the connection between the concept of *Muslim woman* and *a figure in a hijab*.[16]

[16] As far as I know, mosques in South Africa often do also provide covering clothing in the men's section. However, these garments are not called burkas and would not be labelled as such. Men are also encouraged to cover their bodies in the mosque, but not to the extent that women are, and these garments do not have the same cultural meaning as the hijab.

Figure 5. 39 Close-up of the sign marking the cupboard holding burkas for women to use when they pray

Outside the door to the women's prayer area is the sign in Figure 5. 40, which exemplifies signage that falls into the third category of my taxonomy, namely, injunction signage. The sign proclaims, “No food, no drinks, no cell phone. Please ensure that your children are silent in the masjid. Strictly no eating no drinking no climbing on wooden balustrades.” In my experience, signage containing injunctions that police the body are quite common in the linguistic landscape of the mosque, directing congregants to inhabit the space in a particular way in order to "do" the mosque correctly. I elaborate on this argument in chapter 6 of this thesis.

Figure 5. 40 Signs outside the door to the women's prayer section. The top sign reads, "No food drinks cell phone" above symbols indicating the same. The bottom sign reads "Please ensure that your children are silent in the masjid. Strictly no eating no drinking no climbing on wooden balustrades".

Although variants of this sign appear frequently in the mosques I've visited and I'm not surprised at all to come across them, this sign is particularly interesting because of its mention of children and behaviour associated with children. The phrasing "your children" indicates that the sign is directed specifically at mothers, thus constructing the reader in a

gendered way, as *someone who takes care of children* in this space. The presence of the baby-changing table in the bathroom reinforces this positioning of women as the carers of children (Figure 5. 41). I am particularly struck by the way the sign hones in on a very specific childlike behaviour – climbing on the balustrades – which constructs the children in question as rather rambunctious. Once again, the tone of this sign is reprimanding, as though from one who has expected this "incorrect" behaviour and needs to warn against it. This authoritative and disapproving tone adds to my overall impression of this mosque as a strict and unforgiving place.

Figure 5. 41 Baby changing-table in the women's bathroom

The sign is also interesting because of the response it causes in me. I feel saddened by the anti-children sentiment expressed here. It's not uncommon for mosque signage to ask congregants to keep the noise levels down, but this sign is particularly hostile in a very targeted way. It is often argued that spaces that are unwelcoming to children become essentially unwelcoming to women as well, as women are so often the carers of children. I discuss the issue of mothering in the mosque space further in the next chapter.

5.2.7 Inside the bathroom

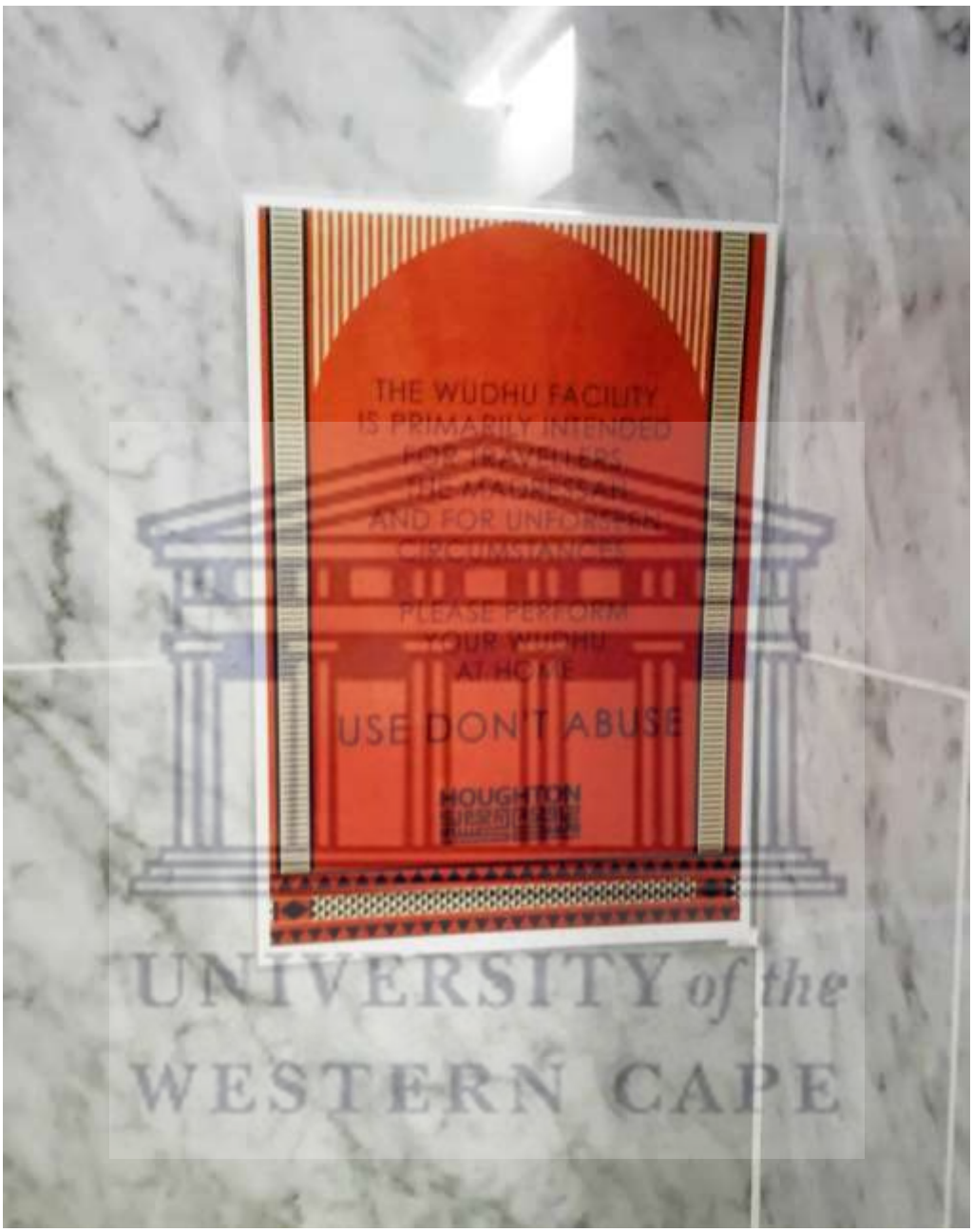

Figure 5. 42 Sign affixed to the tiles in the women's ablution facility

Inside the ablution room, I find a sign (Figure 5. 42) appearing in the same style as the signs about pamphlets and shoes downstairs. It reads, "The wudhu facility is primarily intended for travellers, the *madressah*, and for unforeseen circumstances. Please perform your wudhu at home. Use don't abuse." Similar to the previous sign on shoes, the first sentence of this sign is once again phrased as a statement of fact with no possibility for contestation or debate about the function of the facility. Here, however, the rule-breaker is positioned not as disrespectful, but as abusive.

The tone of this sign is one of a reprimanding parent figure, scolding the reader for not behaving properly and once again demanding obedience. The sign could have read something like “Reserve this water for those who really need it”, orientating the reader towards taking care of their fellow congregants, rather than causing the reader to feel as though they are abusing the mosque’s facilities. The sign strikes me as unnecessarily hostile, and to me exudes middle-class privilege, assuming that its congregants have access to ample running water in their homes. It makes me angry that it does not depict the mosque as the community resource I believe it is supposed to be.

5.2.8 The menstruation sign

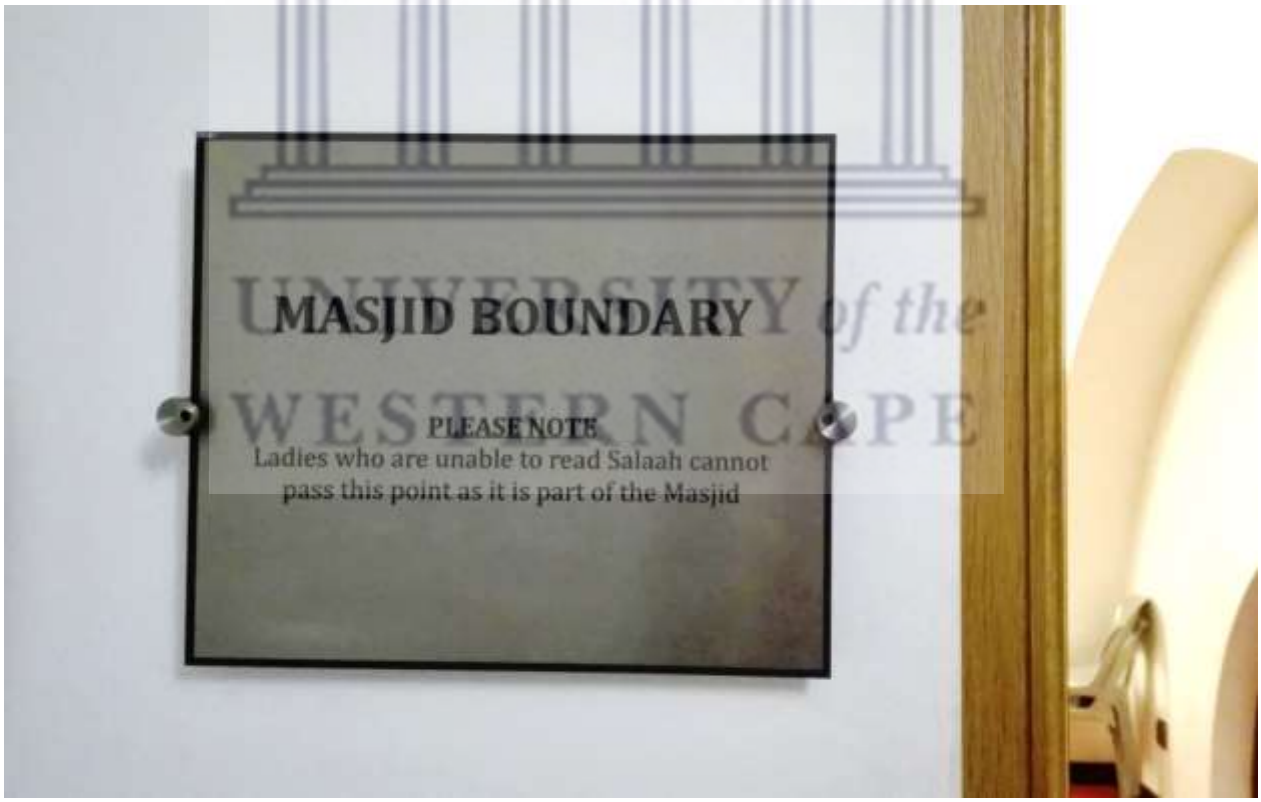

Figure 5. 43 Another sign outside the door to the women's section

I encounter the next sign as I am about to enter the prayer space, as it is displayed at eye-level directly next to the entrance (Figure 5. 43). It is a sign which I have yet to see in

another mosque. It evoked the strongest affective response from me during this visit, and further compounded the earlier discomfort caused by the previous signs. The sign reads, "MASJID BOUNDARY: Please note Ladies who are unable to read Salaah cannot pass this point as it is part of the Masjid." Assuming that one understood the words salaah (prayer) and masjid (mosque), at face value it seems that the sign is referring to women who are physically unable to perform the prayer (due to the words "unable to"), for example they do not know how, or they are incapacitated in some way that means they cannot perform the gestures or say the words that make up the ritual. However, my background knowledge as a Muslim woman allows me to read into the actual meaning of the sign. "Ladies who are unable to read Salaah" is a euphemism for menstruating women, whom many Muslims believe should not make salaah or enter a mosque during this period. The sign thus prohibits menstruating women from entering the women's prayer space in this mosque.[17]

While I understand the choice to use euphemism here, I find the rest of the phrasing in this sign interesting. Most of the injunction signs I came across during this study were phrased as a command, for example "Do not enter here". This sign is phrased as a statement, and even then, not as "Ladies who are unable to read Salaah *may not* pass this point" as I would expect. The use of the word "cannot" implies that there is a barrier that physically stops them from crossing the threshold. It is phrased as a statement of fact about the world that cannot be contradicted or disputed. However, we know that it is indeed physically possible for a menstruating woman to cross this threshold.

Subsequent to my site visit at this mosque, I asked a male family member to check for a similar explicit indication of the mosque boundary in the men's section of this mosque, and he reported being unable to find one. I have since discovered – through a conversation with my father – that some mosques do occasionally have similar boundary markers in the men's section, but they serve a different purpose to the menstruation boundary sign. A clue to this purpose can be seen in the sign next to the boundary sign in Figure 5. 44. It displays the Arabic words one would need to utter at the start of a period of *Itikaaf.* As I've mentioned

[17] I have used the phrase "menstruating women" and not "menstruating bodies" intentionally, because the sign (and even its placement) relies on the reader's assumption that it is "ladies" who menstruate. The existence of trans or non-binary bodies that menstruate is erased.

before*, Itikaaf* refers to the practice of confining oneself to the mosque for a set time in order to focus on worship. Knowing the location of the boundary of the mosque is crucial to accomplishing this. This boundary sign thus demarcates the space in which men performing *Itikaaf* need to remain. Since women do not customarily perform *Itikaaf* in the mosque, these boundary markers are usually absent in the women's section.

Figure 5. 44 An example of a sign marking the mosque boundary in the men's section of a different mosque. Picture by Salim Shaikjee.

For a while after my visit, I found it difficult to put my affective response to the menstruation sign into words. I definitely felt anger and indignation at the presence of the sign itself. It felt unnecessary and invasive, and deliberately exclusionary, which to me felt contrary to the spirit of inclusion I felt the mosque should have. In my experience, Muslim women are well aware of the belief that they should avoid the mosque space when menstruating, but the rule is generally quietly followed or flouted with no monitoring whatsoever. I have never seen it mentioned as explicitly as this, nor enforced in any way. I felt sure that it had been a man's decision to display this sign, even though I am aware that I cannot know this without investigating further. The sign felt like an unjust policing of my body, and an invasive intrusion into an intimate part of my life that I am quite capable of managing myself. It felt akin to the affect I experience when male politicians legislate around abortion and women's reproductive health. Coming across this sign turned the fear I had experienced earlier to anger at the surveillance and oppressive atmosphere created by these signs. (I discuss this sign further in chapter 6).

5.2.9 Inside the women's prayer area

Figure 5. 45 The view from the door of the women's section. (Picture taken at a different visit and used here for illustrative purposes)

The women's prayer area in this mosque (Figure 5. 45) is a long, narrow carpeted room that sits above the main prayer space. The carpet is printed with markings to show congregants which direction to face during prayer. A decorative wooden floor-to-ceiling grill covers the gaps overlooking the area below which serve the same purpose as the timber screen out front, concealing the women from the view of the men below. There are speakers set into the wall which connect to the sound system downstairs allowing congregants to hear what is being said.

Figure 5. 46 A section of the wall at the front of the women's area, at the edge of the gallery/balcony

Figure 5. 47 Close-up of the decorative woodwork obscuring the view over the balcony and concealing the space from the men downstairs

At this point, my assistant and I stop to perform our prayers. Figure 5. 46 and Figure 5. 47 are my view of the front of the mosque while sitting on the carpet in the front row. Since I am curious to see how much of the main prayer space is visible from this area, I go all the way to the grill and look through one of the gaps after our prayer, even though I know that it is considered improper mosque etiquette for a woman to do so.

Figure 5. 48 Extreme close-up of a gap in the woodwork, looking down onto the mimbar or pulpit at the front of the men's prayer space

Figure 5. 48 is all I can see, a view into the main men's area downstairs. I find it amusing that this grill is so robust, with three layers of decorative wood, and it strikes me as a bit excessive. (For comparison, see the construction of the barrier at Masjid Ittihad in Johannesburg in Figure 5. 49). Despite the amusement, I do feel relief that the women's section is empty, and that there isn't anyone to see me behaving in this unorthodox manner.

Figure 5. 49 The curtain screening off the women's prayer area at Masjid Ittihad. Like Houghton Mosque, it is located in a narrow upstairs balcony above the main mosque.

After a bit more wandering around, we decide to wrap up the visit and head back downstairs. Before we leave, we walk around the outside of the mosque several times to try to find an elevator or ramp we may have missed, or a second women's space on the ground floor level, but disappointingly, there is no evidence of either. We then return to the car and I record my video field notes. From these, it is clear that I feel a sense of relief that the field visit is over.

5.3 Findings

In sum, Muslim women who use mosques are othered in a number of ways. Firstly, it is not guaranteed that a space for them to pray exists. Secondly, when a space does exist, its entrance is always in a secondary position to that of the men. Either it is smaller, further away, or more hidden, or, if men and women use a shared entrance, the path to the

women's section branches off to a peripheral space. Thirdly, when entrances are marked, they are always marked to direct women; very rarely are they directed at men. Fourthly, signage depicting human figures are gendered when they refer to women, usually with the addition of a hijab, but human figures are ungendered when they refer to men or mixed groups of people; the figures are almost never depicted with a man's head covering like a *kuffiyyah*. Lastly, women's prayer areas are not exclusive, and are often used by men in multiple situations – as places to rest or sleep outside of prayer times, as places to host visiting *jamaats* or men congregants observing *itikaaf*, or as places to hold *madressah* classes. They are also not secure and subject to change or disappear – during Friday or *Eid* prayers the space may shrink or be repurposed entirely for larger numbers of male congregants, and in these cases another space is allocated to women, or they are not accommodated at all.

As I mentioned in the opening of this chapter, I experienced a wide range of emotions throughout this site visit in response to certain signs in the LL and features of the mosque's architecture, leading to a particular visceral reading of the landscape. The cumulative visceral effect of the sign tonality in this mosque created feelings of trepidation, unease and dissatisfaction in me. Overall, I would say the environment cultivated by the signs I came across was unwelcoming, authoritative and punitive. I am of course aware that other congregants may not experience the space the same way I did. The atmosphere in this mosque was collaboratively produced by the interaction between the existing signage and architecture and my own unique response to these elements. Semiotic landscapes are thus active participants in the affective practices of the people who use them.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter sought to address two research questions, namely "What is the semiotic landscape of the mosque like?" and "How can the space of the mosque be read viscerally?" In answer to the first, I have presented a taxonomy of mosque signage, as well as a detailed ethnographic description of the landscape of one mosque in particular. I have addressed the second through autoethnographic reflection, as well as through a discussion of *sign tonality*

and *atmospherization*, demonstrating how both can be useful in reading landscape through the visceral (Stroud, Peck and Williams, 2019). In doing so, I have made a number of observations. I found that Muslim women in the mosque are constructed as marked or other, as beings who must be covered, hidden or protected, as the primary care-givers of children, and as having bodies that are occasionally not pure enough to be inside the sacred space. I have also concluded that the tone of signage can have an impact on how welcome or unwelcome people feel in a space. This chapter demonstrates that in this mosque the signage is particularly unwelcoming, but some signs are targeted towards women in particularly gendered ways. The next chapter will investigate this phenomenon in more detail.

Chapter 6 – The body in the Linguistic Landscape

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter sought to demonstrate what the semiotic landscape of the South African mosque is like. In doing so, it touched on some aspects of how the human body figured in the landscape, for example, the use of screens and curtains to shield bodies from view, or the depiction of human symbols on signage. In this chapter, I would like to explore the significance of the body in the mosque a little deeper by addressing the research question "How are bodies – in particular women's bodies – made to matter in the mosque?"

To recap, one of the main sources of data for this project was a corpus of photographs collected at thirty mosques in Johannesburg and Cape Town in 2018. As discussed in Chapter 5, I created a taxonomy of mosque signage to classify the different kinds of signage I came across in my photographic data collection. The taxonomy consisted of three categories: wayfinding signage, which encompassed signs directing congregants to certain spaces around the site; community notices, which consisted mostly of printed posters advertising upcoming events or community initiatives; and injunction signage, or signage instructing you on how to behave in the space.

To address the research question above, I draw on photographic data of signage primarily from the *Injunctions* category of my taxonomy. I also include several relevant extracts from my participant interviews, as well as an incidental online discussion about one of the signs which took place on Facebook.

The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the significance of the human body in the semiotic landscape of the mosque, as well as the implications this significance has for making people feel (un)welcome or (un)comfortable in the space. I begin the chapter by presenting signage I believe regulates the human body, before moving on to signage which regulates the woman's body in particular.

6.2 Regulating the body

In analysing the photographs of the signs I came across, I noticed that an overwhelming number are related to telling congregants what to do in the space. As per the taxonomy I created in the previous chapter, most of them fell under the "injunctions" classification when their tone suggested that non-compliance was not an option. In this section, I'd like to explore exactly what the LL of the mosque directs people to do with their bodies. How does it want them to move through the space, how does it expect them to behave? What position does the body play in the mosque, according to its LL?

To do so, I'll begin by presenting examples of the kinds of injunction signage I came across during my site visits.

Some of the first injunction signs one encounters when entering the mosque space relate to shoes. It is common practice in mosques around the world for one to remove one's shoes before entering, and so it is unsurprising that a major theme in the injunction signs I found is related to shoes: at which point to remove them, where and how to store them, etc. Shoes are considered dirty as they come into direct contact with the ground outside. It is also not uncommon for Muslim households to have shoe-free areas, and one does not stand on a prayer mat wearing shoes either.

Figure 6. 1 to Figure 6. 4 are some examples of mosques signs instructing congregants to remove their shoes at certain points just outside the prayer area.

Figure 6. 1 Sign on the tiles at Al-Falaagh Masjid in Cape Town, instructing congregants not to wear shoes while walking on the carpeted stairs

Figure 6. 2 Sign reading "No shoes on carpet" placed on a portion of carpet surrounded by shoe racks in the foyer of Zeenatul-Islam Masjid in Cape Town

Figure 6. 3 Signs on the tiles indicating a no-shoes zone at Zeenatul-Islam Masjid in Cape Town

Figure 6. 4 Sign at Bosmont Masjid in Johannesburg which reads, "No shoes please" on the left, and on the right "Asalaamu-alaikum" (in Arabic script), followed by "Welcome. Kindly remove your shoes before walking upstairs. Shukran[18]."

[18] The Arabic word for "thank you".

In one mosque, where the women's prayer room doubled as a *madressah* classroom, this desire to control the dirt that accumulates under one's shoes and feet extended to asking people not to walk barefoot in the area where they would usually wear shoes, presumably as this would mean that their feet would be contaminated and in turn dirty the shoe-free spaces (Figure 6. 5).

Figure 6. 5 Sign at Masjid Omar Farouk in Johannesburg outside the women's prayer area that doubles as a madressah classroom

In another mosque, the same kind of extension happened, but towards wheel-chair users. The sign pictured in Figure 6. 6 below reads "Wheelchair users please make use of the plastic material provided when entering the mosque. Shukran for your cooperation". I understand this sign to mean that plastic mats are laid over the mosque carpet to protect it from dirt on the wheels.

Figure 6. 6 Sign at York Road Mosque in Cape Town asking wheelchair users to keep their wheels on the areas of the floor covered in plastic mats

Many of the signs relating to shoes involve instructing congregants on how to store their shoes after they've removed them, for example in Figure 6. 7 and Figure 6. 8. Recall also the sign regarding placement of shoes discussed in chapter five (reproduced here as Figure 6. 9).

Figure 6. 7 Sign attached to the floor at Habibia Soofie Mosque in Cape Town, asking congregants to use the shoe racks provided to store their shoes while they are in the mosque.

Figure 6. 8 Sign at Maitland Mosque in Cape Town

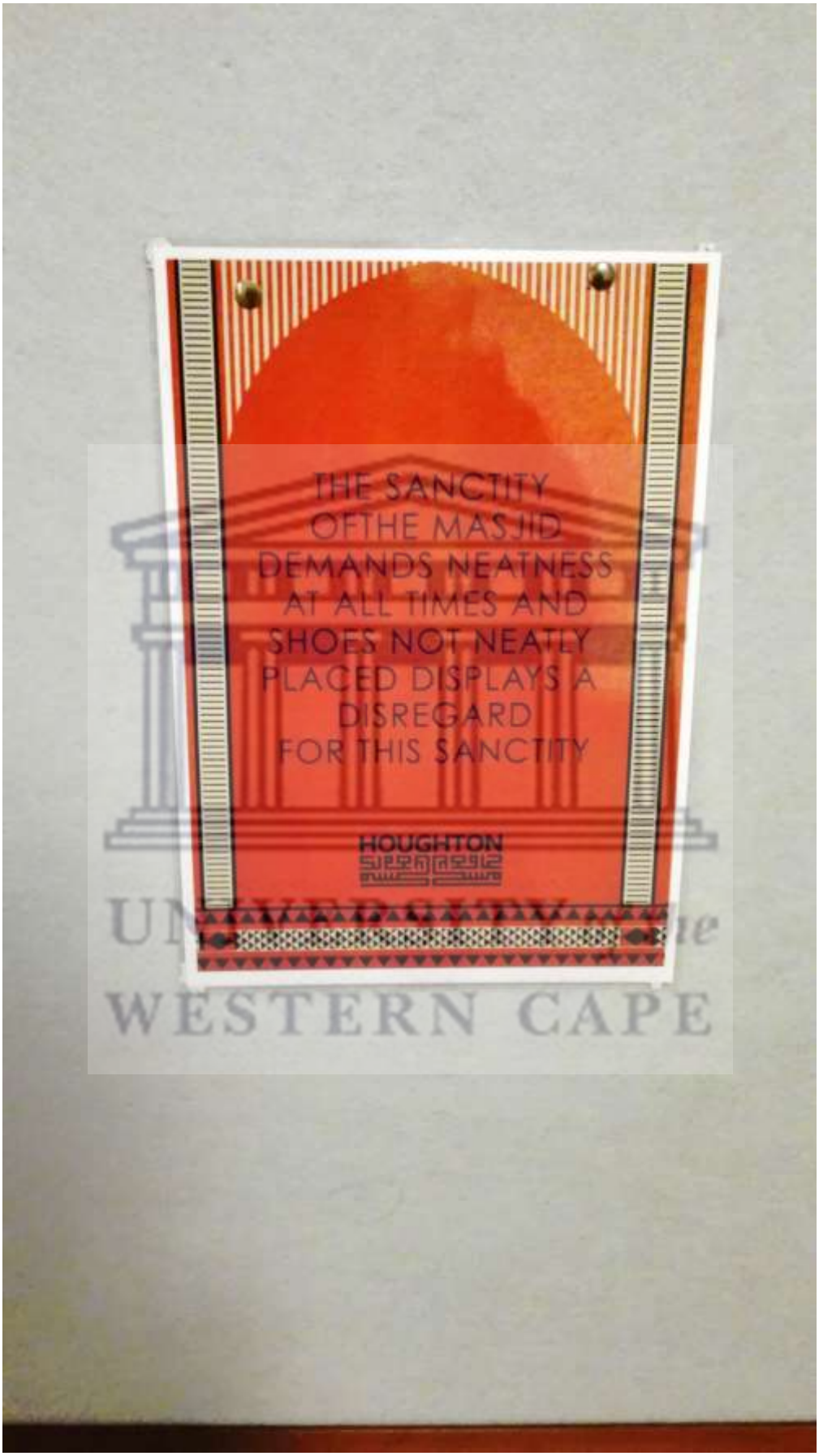

Figure 6. 9 Houghton West Street Mosque in Johannesburg

The desire to control dirt inside the mosque manifests in the signage in other ways as well, like in this official City of Cape Town sign (Figure 6. 10) in Afrikaans in a mosque bathroom explaining how to wash one's hands effectively. (The photograph of this sign was taken two years before the COVID-19 pandemic made such signs more commonplace.)

Figure 6. 10 Pre-Covid handwashing sign in Afrikaans at Al-Falaagh Masjid in Cape Town. The title translates to "Hand-washing. Hand hygiene with soap and water", followed by nine illustrated instructions. It then reads "Minimum wash time: 10 – 20 seconds"

As I explained in chapter four, ritual ablution or *wudhu*, is an important precursor to the prayer in Islam, and mosques usually provide ablution facilities for congregants to complete their *wudhu* before prayer. Signage found in mosque ablution facilities often attempts to provide guidance to congregants on how to conduct these rituals. Figure 6. 11 is an example

of a common type of poster seen in mosques which displays the correct Arabic supplications (*du'aa* in this sign) to recite at different points during the pre-prayer cleansing ritual (spelled *wudhoo* here).

Figure 6. 11 Sign provided by an NGO called Africa Muslims Agency to Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town. It displays four different prayers to say at different points during the ablution ritual. The prayers appear first in Arabic script, followed by an English transliteration and translation.

The sign in Figure 6. 12 was posted in the ablution facility of this mosque during a severe drought in Cape Town in 2017-2018, where there was a drive to get congregants to use less water during the pre-prayer ablution. It provides an explanation of how to shorten the ritual by only conducting obligatory (*fard* in Arabic) elements while leaving out the elements that are simply expected of practicing Muslims.

Figure 6. 12 Sign at Al-Falaagh Masjid in Cape Town showing congregants how to save water during ablution

In Figure 6. 13 we see a mosque going even further to save water by asking congregants to actually forgo the water-based ablution ritual altogether and conduct instead *Tayammum*, a waterless purification ritual done when water is scarce. Figure 6. 14 then uses pictures to explain how to conduct *Tayammum*. [19]

[19] This was an uncommon response to the drought; most mosques still encouraged performing the water-based ablution, as many people believe the *Tayammum* should be reserved for situations when absolutely no clean water can be found within a certain radius.

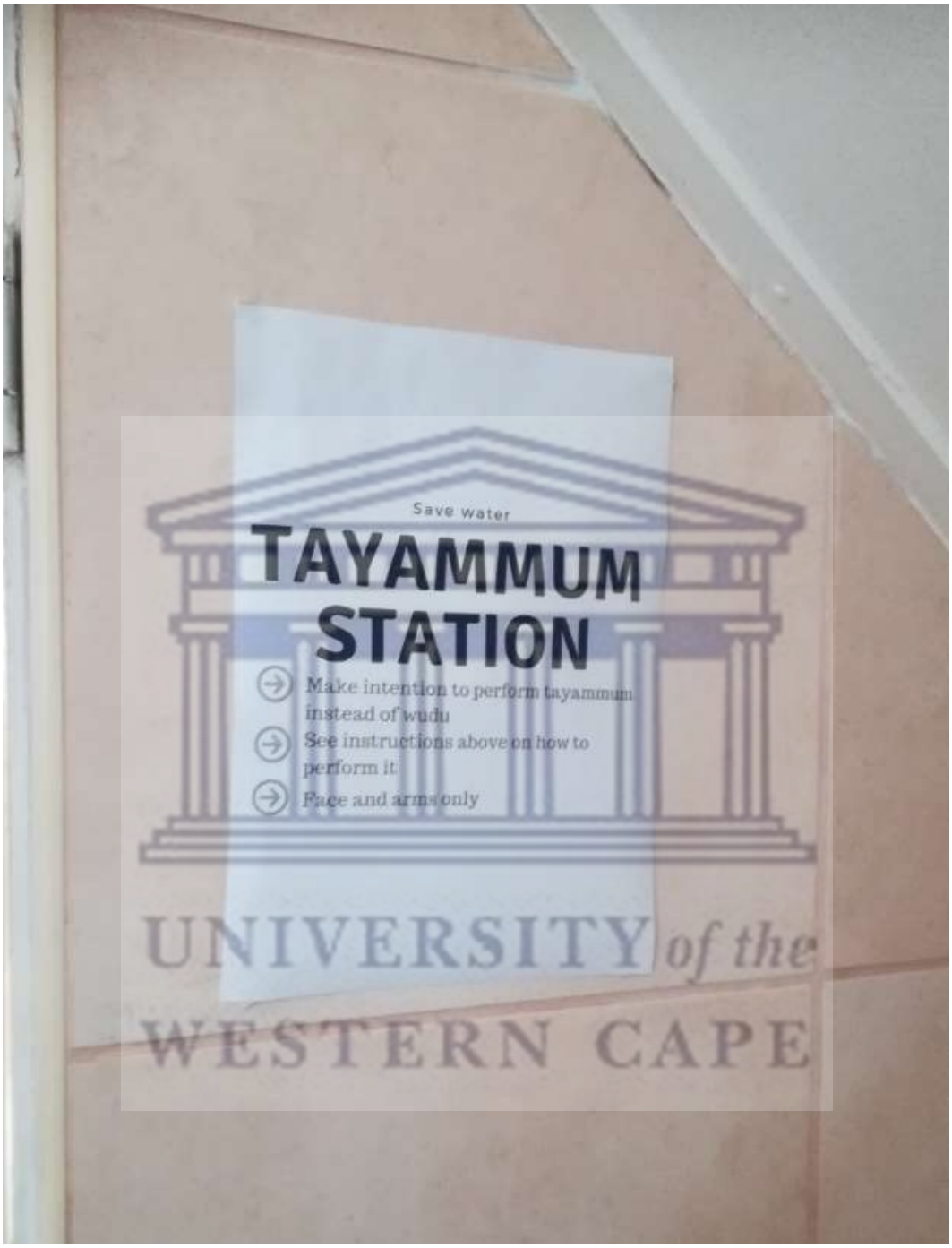

Figure 6. 13 Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town encourages congregants to save water by temporarily renaming their wudhu *area a* tayammum *(waterless ablution) station and providing instructions on how to conduct the alternative ritual.*

Figure 6. 14 Illustrated instructions for how to perform the waterless ablution ritual called tayammum *displayed at Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town. The first image shows an English transliteration of the prayer before the ritual, and the second image displays the formal intention one would say as part of the prayer.*

So far, the signs I have presented deal with dirt in its most common-sense understanding, i.e. as the stuff that makes things unclean. However, the research question currently guiding my argument relates to the body and how it is presented in the LL. Up until this point, the LL has presented the body as something which must be rid of dirt before entering the prayer area of the mosque: dirty shoes must be removed and different parts of the body must be washed.

However, other injunction signs in my data set were more orientated towards managing the *disorderly* body rather than the dirty body. For example, I found that a significant portion of injunction signage often directs congregants about where to place their bodies whilst in the building. Examples include these signs below in Figure 6. 15 - Figure 6. 19 telling people where or where not to stand, or how to fill the rows in the congregation.

Figure 6. 15 Sign at Masjid Noorul Islam in Cape Town. During the communal prayer, congregants stand shoulder to shoulder facing Mecca. To keep the rows orderly, congregants are asked to stand with their heels on the lines printed onto the carpets.

Figure 6. 16 Another sign asking congregants to stand with their heels on the lines, at Masjidul Furqaan in Cape Town

Figure 6. 17 Sign at Goodwood Mosque in Cape Town explaining to congregants how to line up for the communal prayer. The sign reads, "Please start the row from the front and complete a row before starting a new one. Please do not block the entrance."

Figure 6. 18 A sign at Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town asking congregants to fill the rows from the front.

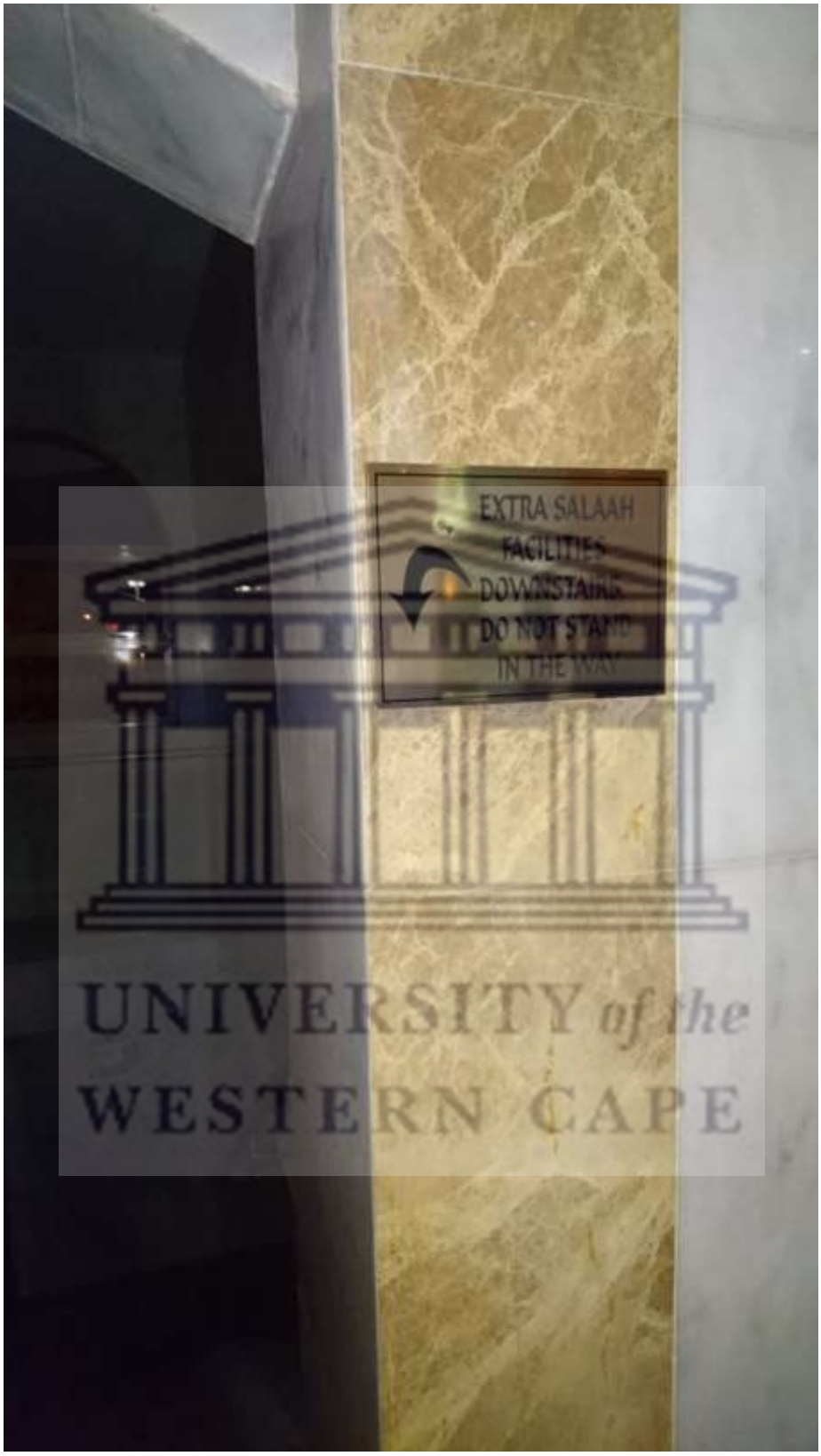

Figure 6. 19 A sign at Masjid Siraatul Jannah in Johannesburg, combining wayfinding information and an injunction.

In Figure 6. 20, signage explains the *sunnah*[20] way of entering and leaving the sacred space along with the supplications purportedly recommended by the prophet.

Figure 6. 20 Sign at Masjied Nasriellah in Cape Town explaining the sunnah way of entering and leaving the mosque.

In the next series of images, I present some signs in which the body is further regulated in ways other than how it moves. For example, signs prohibiting eating and smoking in certain areas are commonplace, thereby authorizing what the body is allowed to put into it while it is in the space. Figure 6. 21 is an example of a sign on a door located inside the mosque leading to the women's ablution room. These kinds of signs are present in both the men and women's sections of mosques.

[20] Practiced by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

Figure 6. 21 Message painted on a door at Masjid Nasriellah in Cape Town. It reads, "No smoking, no shoes, no eating here kanalla". Kanalla *is Kaaps for "please".*

The LL of the mosque manages not only the body's consumption of food and cigarettes, but also how the body is allowed to consume mosque resources. These signs detail to congregants how to effectively and considerately use the mosque's resources, and most often occur in the bathrooms and ablution facilities. Figure 6. 22 – Figure 6. 26 are some examples.

Figure 6. 22 Sign in the ablution room at Masjidul-Furqaan in Cape Town, telling congregants at what volume to open the taps, presumably to save water during the drought

Figure 6. 23 Sign on the bathroom door of Zeenatul-Islam Masjid in Cape Town instructing congregants not to spill water onto the floor

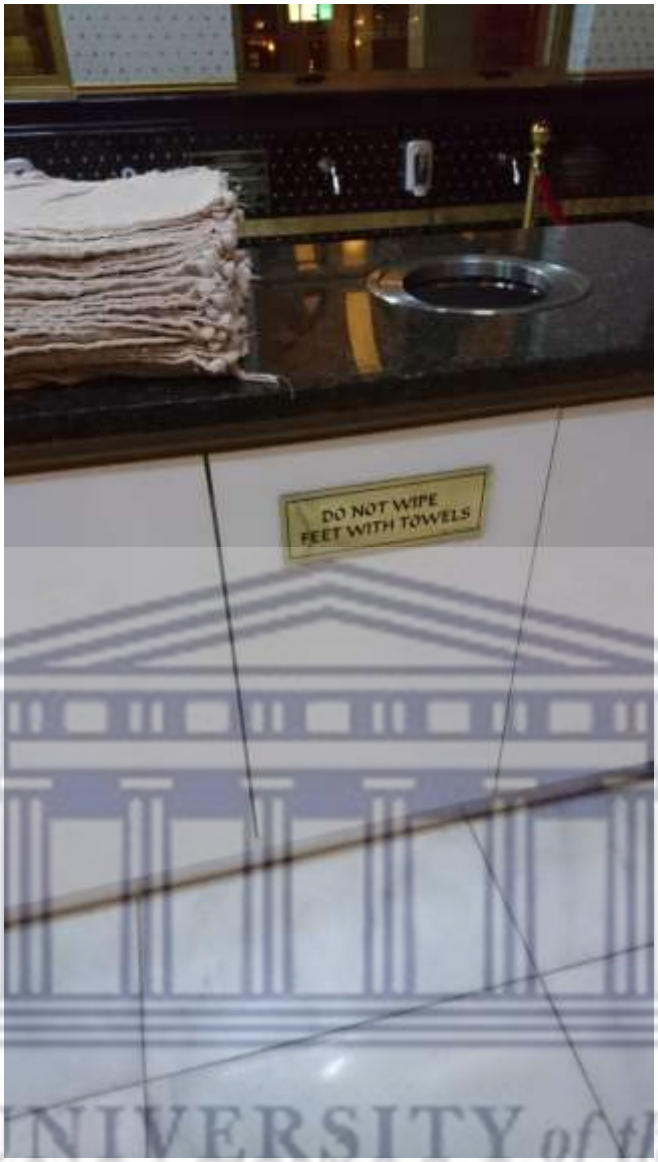

Figure 6. 24 Sign at Masjid Siraatul Jannah instructing congregants not to wipe their feet with the towels provided. This is not an unusual rule in mosques that provide cloth towels for ablution. For sanitary reasons, the towels can be used to dry the face and arms, but not the feet (pre-COVID).

Figure 6. 25 Signs at the Oriental Plaza Musallah enjoining congregants to save water, and to keep the prayer room (or namaaz *room here) clean and tidy*

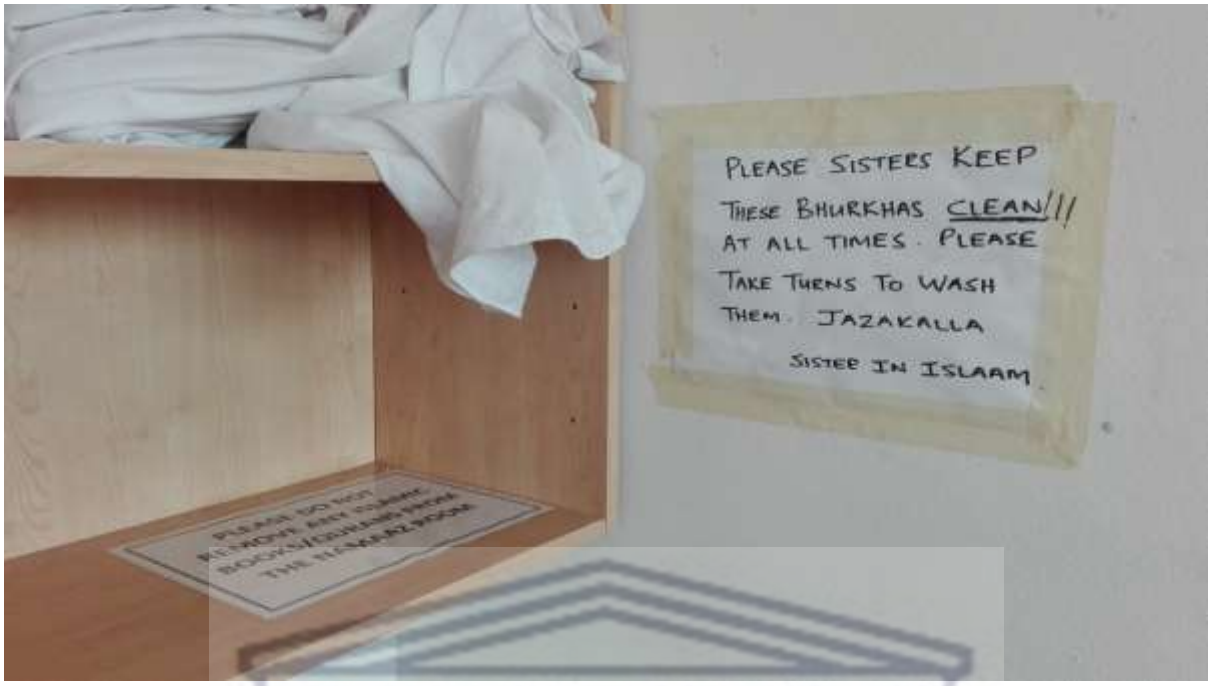

Figure 6. 26 Two signs at the Oriental Plaza Musallah in Johannesburg. The sign on the shelf reads "Please do not remove any Islamic books/Quraans from the namaaz room". The second sign asks women congregants to keep the burkas provided clean, and to volunteer to wash them as well.

The next series of images demonstrates how the LL of the mosque sometimes works to control people's noise levels, or in other words, the amount of sound a body emits while in the space. Figure 6. 27, for example, asks congregants at Masjidul Islam to "observe silence", and Figure 6. 28 is a "No cellphones" sign in Somali and English that I came across at Al-Falaagh Mosque in Cape Town. This is the one instance of Somali on signage in my corpus, and is probably meant to accommodate the Somali immigrant community in the area.

Figure 6. 27 Sign at Masjidul-Islam in Johannesburg

Figure 6. 28 "No Cellphones" sign at Al-Falaagh Mosque in Cape Town. The Somali text at the top translates to "Brother, please turn off the phone, thank you". [21]

Figure 6. 29 below attempts to control not the sound coming out of a person's mouth, but the noise they make while engaging with objects in the environment, by asking people to close the door in a quiet manner.

[21] This sign was found in the women's section, but addresses the congregant as "brother". It's very likely that the translation on the signage in the men's section was simply copied for the women's section without changing "brother" to "sister".

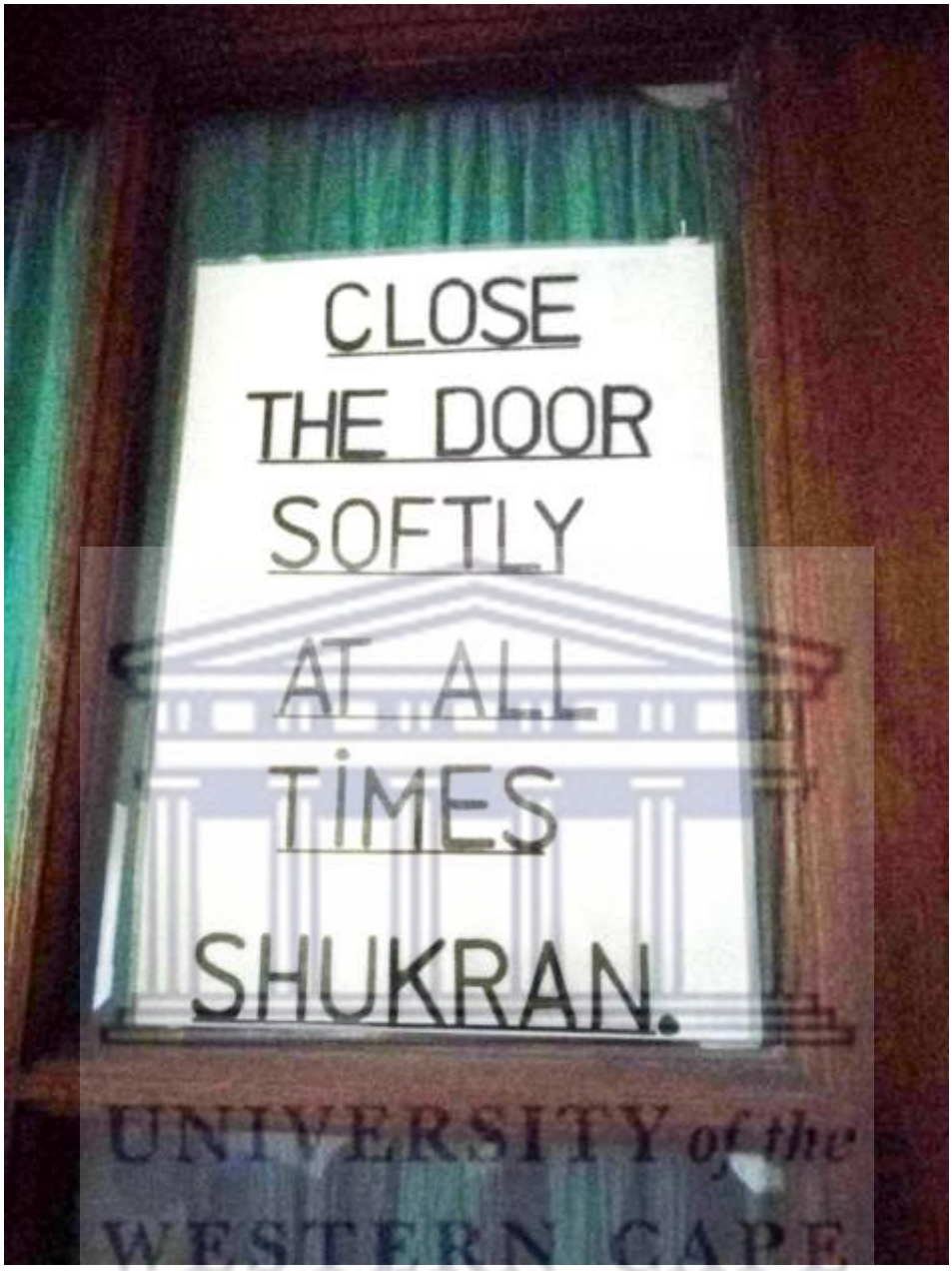

Figure 6. 29 Sign affixed to a door inside Awwal Mosque in Cape Town

Figure 6. 30 and Figure 6. 31 below manage the sound a body emits by attempting to control the type of talk congregants engage in. The sign in Figure 6. 30 reads "Silence please: If you have to whisper, whisper a thikr. Shukran." Here, the LL regulates the volume of talk ("a whisper"), as well as the content of what the congregant says (a *thikr*). *Thikr* is the Islamic practice of repeating certain words or phrases in remembrance of God as an act of devotion, and is not really talk at all.

Figure 6. 30 Sign at Al-Falaagh Mosque in Cape Town which reads "Silence please: If you have to whisper, whisper a thikr. Shukran."

Figure 6. 31 below displays a list of rules for congregants, with the fifth rule instructing congregants not to "indulge" in worldly talk. The phrase "worldly talk" is a familiar one to English-speaking Muslims – for example, I remember being taught not to engage in "worldly talk" during the ablution ritual – and it refers to any everyday conversation not related to the ritual at hand. "Worldly talk" is considered trivial and distracting. In this sign, it is also constructed as something "indulgent", a practice that is decadent and self-gratifying, and contrary to the values of the mosque.

Figure 6. 31 List of rules displayed in Greenside Mosque in Johannesburg

The injunction signage I have presented in this section works together to create a system of rules about what is allowed in the space and how behaviour in the space differs from what is acceptable outside of it. They construct the mosque as clean – a place in which certain things associated with the body are not allowed, for example dirt, food/drink/smoking, or noise. At the same time, they construct congregants as having bodies that are sometimes dirty, disorderly and need regulating before they can belong inside the mosque space. Disorder is frequently tied to the body – what the body wears, where it is placed, how it moves, the sounds it makes, and the messiness it brings with it.

6.3 Dirt and matter out of place

Looking at how the LL of the mosque constructs things that are dirty or disorderly can help us understand how it constructs what doesn't belong. The phrase "dirt is matter out of place" is an iconic one within sociology (Douglas, 1966), and while it has been discussed, critiqued, and subverted (see for example Duschinsky, 2013; Pickering and Rice, 2017; and Ditlevsen and Andersen, 2021), its basic premise (that things that are dirty don't belong – they are not in their "place") may be useful in this investigation. I have also demonstrated how this idea is particularly useful if we expand the concept of dirt to refer not only to unclean things, but also to the disorderly. Investigating dirt and disorder can also help us understand what is considered "the other" in the spatial order of the mosque.

In order to give the reader a brief insight into how I was taught to think about the dirty body in relation to prayer and the mosque, I would like to introduce the Islamic concepts of *paak* and *napaak* to this discussion, which are concepts I have been familiar with since childhood and which shape the way I look at cleanliness and dirt in relation to the mosque. The words *paak* and *napaak* are Urdu words meaning pure/clean and impure/unclean (Platts, 1911), of Persian origin (Bonnin and Dawood, 2013), and are commonly used in many countries in Islamic jurisprudence on "tahaarah", or cleanliness. The words mean more than just "clean", though, and have a spiritual element to them as well. It is not unusual to hear people refer to God as Allah Paak, or the Prophet as Nabi Paak (S.A.W.).

Growing up, it was my mother who instilled a very strong sense of *paak* and *napaak* into us. We knew not to wear shoes when standing on chairs or climbing on beds, because shoes were dirty, and contact with them would make the beds and chairs *napaak,* which would in turn contaminate our clothes, meaning we wouldn't be able to pray in them. We also knew that if we didn't clean ourselves well after using the toilet (*istinjaa*), we would be *napaak* as well. If you were *napaak*, you couldn't make *salaah* or touch the Quraan until you cleaned yourself up, either through *ghusl*, a ritual bath, or *wudhu* (ablution). Many of my *madressah* classes centred around learning what would make one *napaak*, or invalidate one's ability to perform the prayer, such as urinating, defecating, vomiting, bleeding or menstruating,

ejaculating, or coming into contact with urine, faeces, vomit, blood/menstrual blood, or ejaculate. Being licked by a dog rendered one *napaak* as well.

It is not surprising, then, that a lot of effort is expended in trying to keep the prayer spaces inside the mosque *paak*, and to keep anything *napaak* outside the boundaries. According to the mosques LL, the body has the potential to bring dirt and disorder into the space, and dirt and disorder are not welcome in the mosque.

In the process of examining how human bodies are regulated in the mosque through the LL, I came across instances where women's bodies specifically are regulated in very particular ways. I became interested in exploring what might happen if this signage constructs women as dirty or disorderly in specific ways, ways in which men are never constructed, thus indicating a unique way that women don't belong in the scared space. I expand on this further in the next few sections through an analysis of signs referring to menstruation, mothering, and hijab. In each case, I demonstrate how the issue is presented in the LL, and then look at some affective responses by Muslim women.

6.4 Regulating the woman's body

6.4.1 Menstruation

I'd like to begin by revisiting one of the signs I came across during my visit to Houghton Mosque in Johannesburg, which I presented in chapter 5 (reproduced here as Figure 6. 32). In this analysis I discuss the sign further, but also include other women's affective responses to the sign. During the course of this study, sometime after I had conducted the site visit at this mosque, I came across a picture of this sign on Facebook (a screenshot appears below in Figure 6. 33). The post and the responses to it were very interesting, and I would like to spend some time examining them. They also corroborate my interpretations of the sign, as

well as my statements about the lack of consensus about the rules regarding menstruating women in the mosque.

Figure 6. 32 Houghton Mosque in Johannesburg

To recap, the sign reads, "MASJID BOUNDARY: PLEASE NOTE Ladies who are unable to read Salaah cannot pass this point as it is part of the Masjid." As I explained before, the sign is directed at menstruating women ("those who are unable to pray"), prohibiting them from entering the women's prayer area. The sign assumes that everyone who sees it agrees that Muslim women are barred from prayer and from entering the mosque when on their period. As I explained then, this belief is common but not universal amongst Muslims, but the sign portrays it as though it is an unquestioned and unquestionable truth.

To clarify, this sign is displayed inside the building, not at the entrance to the building from the outside. It is displayed at the doorway that leads from the women's ablution and bathroom area to the women's prayer space. This makes it clear that the sign is specifying which sections of the building are considered part of the mosque, and which are not – or, in other words, which sections are "sacred" or "special" because prayer and worship take place inside them.

However, there is a difference between trying to keep “impure” bodily fluids like menstrual blood out of the mosque, and barring menstruating women from entering, especially if there are no equivalent overt restrictions on people who are temporarily *napaak* for other reasons. For example, there are no signs barring men/people with penises with ejaculate on their bodies from entering, or barring people who are bleeding from wounds, or barring people with colostomy bags attached to their bodies.[22] I would like to argue that the presence of this sign, and the absence of other signs barring bodies rendered *napaak* in other ways, says something about how women's bodies are viewed in this mosque.

It could be argued that with this sign, the mosque LL is telling congregants that women are periodically “dirty” (when they have a menstruating body) and need to guard against bringing this “dirty” body into the parts of the mosque that are “sacred”, where dirt does not belong. In other words, women with menstruating bodies are “out of place” in the mosque. In this situation, the woman’s body is regulated in a specific way tied to its (assumed) biology in a way that the man’s body is not, and is thus made to matter in the space in a way that the man’s body is not.

In chapter 5 I reported having a very strong affective response to this sign, specifically anger and indignation, feeling that it was unnecessary, invasive and an unjust policing of my body. As it turns out, I am not alone in interpreting the sign in this way, nor in experiencing this kind of affective response. The sign had been photographed and posted onto the Facebook page of a Muslim women's group in Johannesburg, South Africa (Figure 6. 33).

[22] The existence of people who menstruate who are not women is almost never acknowledged.

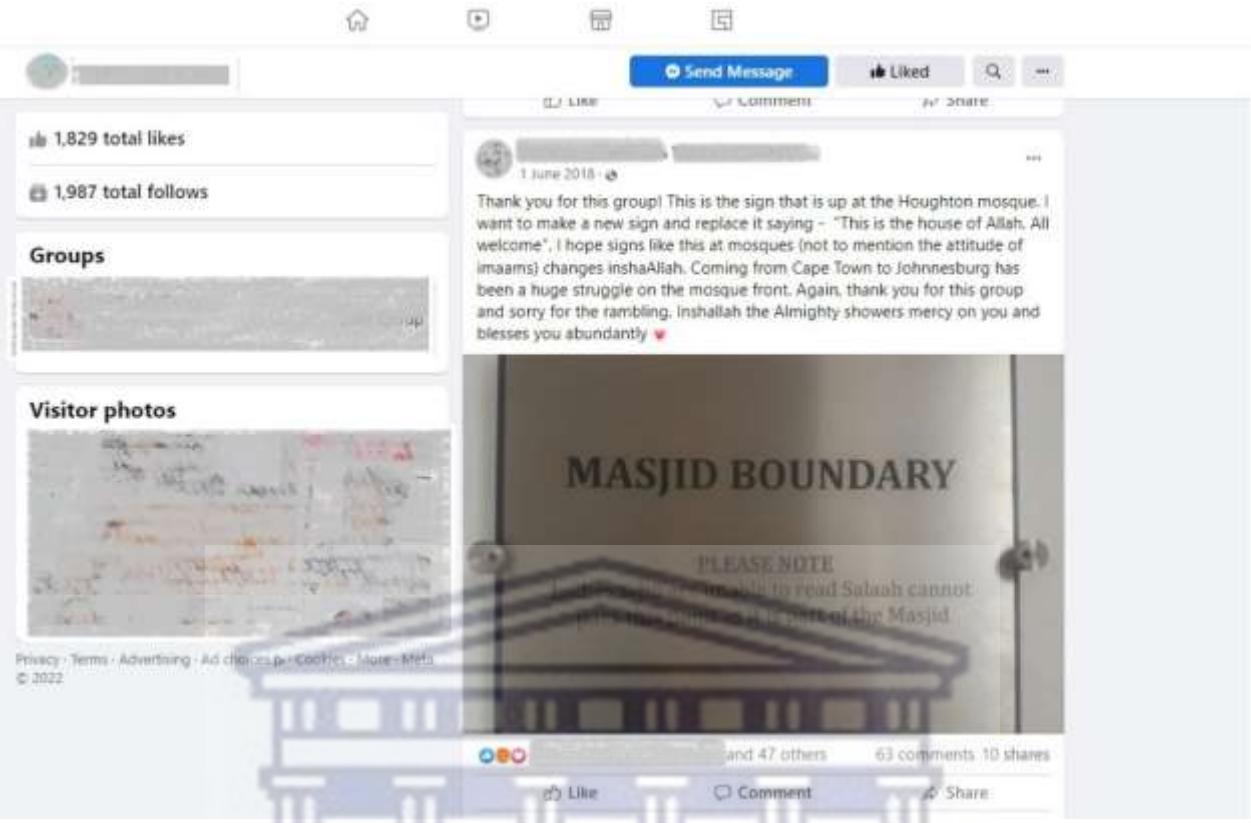

Figure 6. 33 Screenshot of a Facebook post about this sign

The group itself was formed in 2018 in response to women being excluded from mosque spaces during *Ramadaan* that year. As I recounted in chapter 3, they organised several small "pray-ins", where women showed up at a few mosques where no real accommodations had been made for women to participate in the nightly *Ramadaan* prayers. They then attempted to join the prayers in protest, usually in empty rooms or *madressah* classrooms on site, and never actually in the main prayer area with the men. Their actions were met with both support and scorn, and the group's Facebook page saw a lot of heated debate around the issue of women's participation in mosques.

The photograph of the sign in question was posted around this time (1 June 2018) by a disgruntled woman, and was captioned as follows:

> *"Thank you for this group! This is the sign that is up at the Houghton Mosque. I want to make a new sign and replace it saying – "This is the house of Allah. All welcome". I hope signs like this at mosques (not to mention the attitude of imaams) changes* inshaAllah *[God-willing]. Coming from Cape Town to Johnnesburg has been a huge*

struggle on the mosque front. Again, thank you for this group and sorry for the rambling. Inshallah *the Almighty showers mercy on you and blesses you abundantly* 💞"

While she does not explicitly express the emotions she feels regarding the sign, her rejection of it is clear from her desire to have it replaced with something more "welcoming". It's also interesting that she reports having different experiences with mosques in Cape Town versus mosques in Johannesburg, something which I discussed briefly in chapter four.

At the time this screenshot was taken (22 July 2020 11:35am), the post had 63 comments, 10 shares, and 49 likes/reacts. Comments ranged from similar outrage and calls to take it down, to debates about the validity of the argument that menstruating women shouldn't enter the mosque, to comments arguing that the mosque is justified in putting up such a sign. These responses and discussions form part of the affective practices that take place around this sign and this mosque. Women congregants used the social media tools available to them to surface discussions they were having about the LL, making their responses and contestations to the "faceless" authority of these signs visible to us. (See Appendix III for a full transcript of the exchanges).

I'd like to examine one of the exchanges a little closer. Figure 6. 34 is a screenshot of a reply to a comment about respecting different viewpoints on whether or not menstruating women should be allowed to enter the mosque.

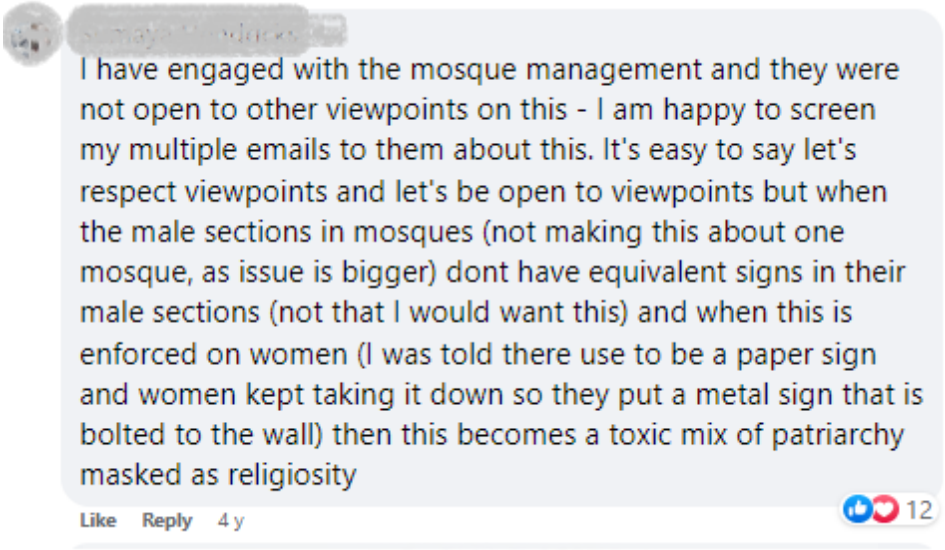

Figure 6. 34 Screenshot of one of the comments to the post

Some of what this commenter has posted resonates with what I've already talked about, but there are a few very interesting new and striking aspects I'd like to highlight. Firstly, considering what I said about the signage in this mosque implying the existence of an authority but providing no easy way to appeal to them, I find it remarkable that she has actually tried to talk back to the LL by engaging with the mosque via email. Secondly, and perhaps even more strikingly, her comments reveal the possibility that women have been talking back to this sign for years by repeatedly taking it down to express their disagreement and discontent. Indeed, both this practice and the Facebook comments are both examples of affective practices formed by and forming the LL of the mosque.

Of course, the mosque authority's reaction in replacing the sign with something more difficult to remove is itself an affective practice (though one that is beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on women's affective practices). What I find interesting is that the affective practices of the women changed the landscape in two ways: firstly, by removing the sign, and secondly by it being changed to a metal one in response to their practice. This change in turn changed their affective practices – removing the sign was no longer possible, or at least much more difficult, so they had to find a new way to talk back to the landscape, through social media. The women could, of course, have tried to remove or damage the metal sign, but this is more of a transgressive act than a removing a paper sign. This

exchange is an example of how the materiality of the sign can directly control the affective practices that are possible in a LL.

One of the other comments on the post above provides a neat segue into the second way in which women's bodies are regulated – through children.

Figure 6. 35 Screenshot of another comment on the post

This commenter reports the presence of a sign saying that children under seven should not be brought along to this mosque. I did not come across this sign during my site visit, but, while upsetting, this is quite believable, especially given the tone of the other signs present in the mosque as discussed in chapter 5. In the next section, I would like to examine two instances of women's bodies being regulated in the mosque through mothering and children.

6.4.2 Mothering

As we know, in our society there is a close link made between women and motherhood, and the mosque is no different. In my experience, the labour of childcare falls on women during mosque visits, as it does everywhere else in society. Very young children mostly accompany women caregivers to the women's section. Young boys will accompany male caregivers to the men's section, although they will most likely be made to sit at the back of the space, out of the way. In my experience, young girls rarely go to the men's section, although other congregants would not object if the girl is a toddler. Young boys stop accompanying women caregivers when they start to exhibit signs of puberty, for example, facial hair.

In the linguistic landscape of the mosque, mothering is very closely tied to monitoring and controlling the behaviour of children. Signage that refers to children or mothers is often geared towards ensuring that children do not disturb other congregants. Childcare is often constructed as an individual mothers' responsibility, and not a community responsibility.

There is a common discourse around women being noisy and children being unruly in the mosque, and the women's space is often talked about as the noisy space, the noisy part of the mosque. Noisy children and fussy babies disrupting the prayer is a common complaint among congregants, with imams often announcing "please can the women be quiet and please keep your kids quiet. You're making a noise and disturbing the rest of us." Some mosques deal with the situation by attempting to regulate congregants' (especially women's) behaviour, often asking them to remove the disorderly child from the communal prayer space.

This is interesting in light of one of the arguments I made in chapter five, that women are positioned as "the other" in mosque spaces. Ana Deumert (2015) talks about noise as a "sonic experience which tends to be associated with the Other, a core figure in postcolonial theory. Certain types of bodies and spaces are commonly associated with noise. Foreigners are noisy, African markets and bars are noisy, the working classes are noisy, genres of music have been called noisy, political protests, demonstrations and crowds are noisy and so forth." In the mosque, women (and the children they bring with them) are frequently described as noisy and disruptive.

During my site visits for this study, I came across two mosques that had attempted to make provision for women congregants to exit the women's prayer space and move to another space should they have a noisy child in their care (in essence asking women to remove the disorderly child from the space). Separate rooms were set aside where a woman could go to soothe the child, with signage informing them of this and directing them to the spaces. In this section, I'd like to examine the signage and the spaces where possible.

The first case I came across was at the Zeenatul Islam Mosque in District Six, Cape Town. This is quite a large mosque, with a spacious women's section. Dotted around the space were several copies of these signs (Figure 6. 36). They read: "Mothers with restless infants please use the infant room". A sign underneath it then points an arrow in the direction of the space.

Figure 6. 36 Sign at Zeenatul Islam in Cape Town asking mothers with restless infants to "use the infant room", which I later found outside the prayer area

The word "restless" and the picture of the bawling baby – mouth open in a scream and tears coming out the eyes – make it clear that this is directed at congregants with "disorderly" children in their care. This mosque had decided to name the space provided the "infant" room, suggesting that provision was being made for the infant and not the mother. While I

have not confirmed it, I highly doubt such a sign and room exists downstairs in the men's section.

I decided to follow the arrows and have a look at the space provided. Multiple signs led me around several corners a fair way away from the main space (Figure 6. 37), and down a passage to a door (Figure 6. 38).

Figure 6. 37 The signs lead away from the prayer area

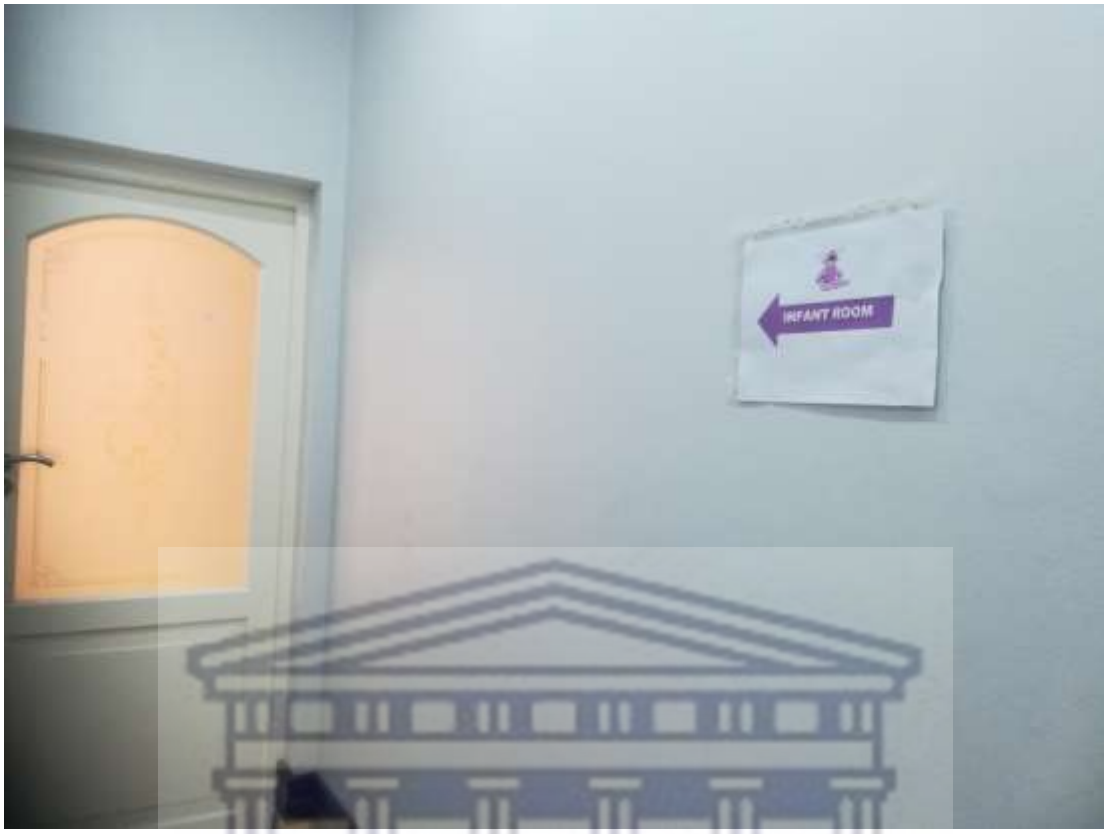

Figure 6. 38 Door leading to an open courtyard away from the prayer area

Through this door was an open courtyard lined with more doors (likely classrooms for conducting *madressah* classes). One of the doors was labelled "Infant Room", with a reappearance of the bawling baby image (Figure 6. 39). The door was unlocked, so I entered and was able to snap a quick picture of the space (Figure 6. 40).

Figure 6. 39 The Infant Room at Zeenatul-Islam, Cape Town

Figure 6. 40 Inside the "Infant Room" as Zeenatul-Islam in Cape Town

The room itself was fairly small, the floor covered by a loose, stained carpet. It was empty save for a few chairs and some old cushions. The space was dusty and not well looked-after, likely from neglect, and nowhere near as pristine as the prayer space I had just come from. While dingy, it was more equipped than I was expecting. The image shows evidence of an air-conditioning unit, lights, and speakers fitted into the ceiling, presumably to broadcast audio from the main prayer space. (I was not able to confirm whether any of these actually work or not.)

I came across the second instance of visible childcare facilities at Masjidul-Islam in Brixton, Johannesburg. Here, the space is labelled the "Mother's Room" (Figure 6. 41).

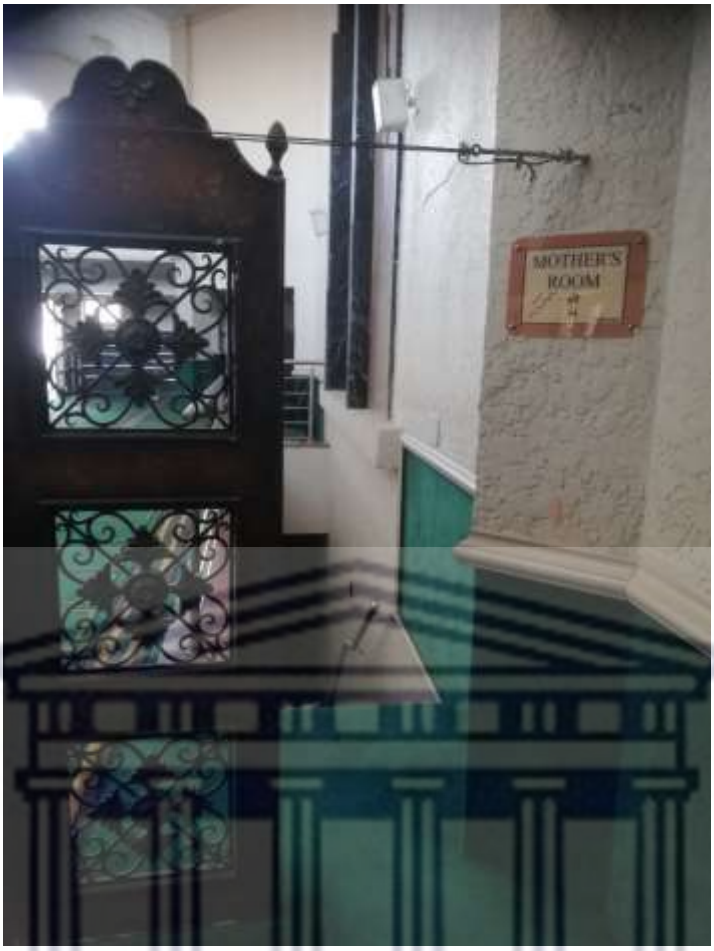

Figure 6. 41 Sign directing congregants to the "Mother's Room" at Masjidul-Islam, Johannesburg

Unlike at the first mosque, the signage here puts the focus on the caregiver rather than the child. Figure 6. 42 is a close-up of the sign pointing the direction of this room.

Figure 6. 42 Close-up of the sign pointing to the "Mother's Room" at Masjidul-Islam in Johannesburg

Rather than an image of a bawling baby, this sign depicts a figure in both dress and hijab, holding an infant. The image, along with the choice of the name "Mother's Room", constructs the act of care-giving as a particularly feminine activity in a way that is missing from the signage at Zeenatul Islam (although the first sign in Figure 6. 36 is addressed to "Mothers"). This construction is compounded by the absence of a "father's room". This absence does not communicate to men that they should not come to mosque with children, but rather is evidence of the assumption that they would generally not have children with them.

Figure 6. 43 The stairs leading down to the Mother's Room, with an obstruction halfway down

The sign pointed down a stairway that appeared to lead to a basement level room. Unfortunately, it was impossible to inspect the room itself at this visit, as there was an obstruction on the staircase. Several rolls of carpet and fabric had been deposited there, probably to get them out of the way quickly temporarily.

The existence of these rooms is, of course, much better than them not existing at all (when functioning as they are meant to). It means that women caregivers can still participate somewhat in mosque activity, and don't have to leave the space altogether if their child is

being noisy. However, the fact that this room was inaccessible, and that the "Infants Room" at Zeenatul Islam was not well looked-after, communicate that these spaces are not valued or respected as equally sacred as the rest of the mosque, even though caregivers who use the facilities will be doing all the same activities other congregants do, like performing ritual prayer, or listening to sermons.

While I do not have direct responses from other women to these specific signs as I did with the menstruation sign, the issue of bringing children into the space and then being asked to leave did come up at several points during my interviews.

Women are often made to feel uncomfortable if they do not remove a fussing child from the mosque, and often cite the hostility towards mothers with children as a major reason why they avoid mosques. One participant, Noor, says,

> *When we come to mosque with babies, I bring my kids, and I do have that anxiety of "don't cry, don't cry" [to the child]. It actually happened at Houghton Mosque the once, where this child was crying like so badly […] this child was just crying and crying and crying (.) and I could hear there was a bit of irritation in the person that was giving the lecture, and I thought like, "but like, you know (.) why? Why?" And I could see the mother was getting flustered and all of that (.) And I think again, when I looked at this lady and the way she picked up her child, again, it was like you know (.) she picked up the child, she walked out and she was like apologising to all of us, like "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry" and I was like "you don't have to be sorry, it's a baby, she needs something, see to her", and she went out and she never came back.*

Noor's account demonstrates the affective practices that surround women caregivers in the mosque. She describes not only her own apprehension when she has her children with her when visiting the mosque and the anxious shushing she may engage in, but also the affective practices of another caregiver on one occasion, with them apologising, leaving the space and not returning. Her empathy towards the woman in this situation is evident.

What does it mean when a person is asked to leave a space in order to make it more comfortable for other people? Usually when this happens, the person is engaging in behaviour that is discouraged. For example, smokers are now almost always made to leave indoor communal spaces in order to smoke, and part of this strategy is to discourage people from smoking in general. Of course, seeing to a fussing child is not comparable to smoking, but asking women caregivers to leave the space still communicates that what they are doing – attending the mosque while looking after children – is undesirable and discouraged. It is not surprising then that women avoid going to the mosque with their children, which in practice often means not going to the mosque at all.

Therefore, just as we saw with the menstruation sign, women are being regulated and ultimately excluded from the mosque because of their woman-ness. In our society, this woman-ness is tied to menstruation and childcare. Men are sometimes excluded for having human bodies – which means to be occasionally dirty – but not for being men.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter sought to address the research questions ""How are bodies made to matter in the mosque?" and "How are women's bodies made to matter in the mosque?". To answer the first, I have presented a range of signs from the corpus I collected which I argue serve to regulate the congregant's body in the mosque. I argue that these signs work together to create a system of rules about what is allowed in the mosque space and how behaviour in the space differs from what's allowed outside of it. Furthermore, I argue that the LL I examined constructs the mosque as a space which does not tolerate dirt or disorder, and the human body as one that sometimes brings dirt and disorder with it into spaces.

In answer to the second research question, I analysed two instances in which women's bodies in particular were regulated, in relation to menstruation and childcare. In both situations, women were asked not to enter or to leave the sacred space in certain circumstances: if they were menstruating, or if they had a child with them causing a disturbance. I argue that the LL of the mosque communicates to women that they do not belong in the space on these occasions because they are dirty or disorderly, and that this disorderliness is closely tied to their woman-ness.

Chapter 7 – Crossing boundaries

7.1 Introduction

So far in this thesis, I have focused my analysis on the photographic data collected during site visits, using the interview data mostly to support the various arguments made in each chapter. I would now like to centre the contributions made by my participants by presenting some of the results of the data collection conducted during the interviews with South African Muslim women who worship at the mosque. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss some of the affective responses my participants express in recounting their experiences. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the research question "How do women talk about their bodies in relation to the mosque?" It also continues to respond to the research question addressed in Chapter 6, namely, "how does the semiotic and linguistic landscape of the mosque make women's bodies matter in the space in ways that men's bodies do not?"

To recap, I conducted semi-structured walking interviews with eleven Muslim women at mosques in Cape Town and Johannesburg. In analysing the interview transcripts, I grouped extracts into themes, and in this chapter, I would like to examine extracts from one of the broad themes I created. Since I am particularly interested in what the body experiences and how it is treated differently inside the mosque versus outside it, I will focus this chapter on extracts that I placed into the *Entering the mosque* theme, since it involves moving from one space into another. This broad theme was divided into sub-themes – *pre-ritual rituals, navigating through men,* and *embodied boundary crossing* – each of which will be discussed in the sections that follow.

7.2 Finding the way – Pre-ritual rituals

There seems to be a lot of rituals and preparing to come into the mosque.

Saadiya, participant interviews

As I explained in chapter four, and as was evident from the autoethnographic walkthrough in chapter five, Muslim women need to do a lot more work than Muslim men to enter the mosque as worshippers. Some of this work includes spending extra time, energy, and mental effort preparing to visit mosques and finding the way inside the buildings themselves. It was evident from my interviews that a lot of this work is suffused with anxiety for my participants, but is often viewed as compulsory. Therefore, this work often hinders some women from going to the mosque forming an additional invisible barrier to their access to the space. In this section, I'd like to examine several instances where my participants talked about this preparatory work, and think about them in relation to affective practice theory.

The idea of anxiety came up naturally fairly early in my interview with my participant Zainab in response to my question asking her how she was feeling at the time. (Our interview took place inside a mosque, if you recall.)

> *I also feel a sense of anxiety before you enter because first of all- (.) especially if I go with my husband, or my sons, because they already know (.) okay they're going to enter, then I must like- (.) then they have to wait for me, because I first have to see "okay, is there a ladies entrance?" first of all and then where it is, can I actually find it, and then if it's going to be a safe place for me to go up and- (.) so that's always- (.) and that's majority of masjids, wherever we go, so it's always a sense of anxiety before I enter, […]when I enter an unfamiliar place, so I must check.*
>
> *Zainab, participant interviews*

In this description of what it's like for her to enter the mosque, Zainab explains what it is about the process that makes her anxious. She compares her experience of going to an unfamiliar mosque with that of her husband and sons, explaining all the steps she has to take before entering the mosque that her male family members don't. These include finding out if there is a separate entrance for women, assessing whether or not she can locate it,

and whether or not she feels safe using it. She reports feeling anxious about having to complete all these added steps in this situation.

If we take a closer look at the way Zainab expresses herself here, we see that she explains the steps she takes in a way that emphasises how laborious the process is for her. The use of the phrase "first of all", as well as the second use of “first" after her aside, is a way to communicate to an interlocuter that she is about to explain a lengthy process. At one point, she uses the word "okay" as a way to show her readying herself before the process. The repetition of the phrase "and then" before each action further emphasises the burden the process is for her. Part of this process is seeing if she can "actually" find her entrance, because she knows that sometimes the women's entrance is tucked away somewhere and one may not be able to locate it. It might be there "theoretically" but in practice it is inaccessible.

Her anxiety during these occasions comes through particularly when she adds that things become "especially" difficult when she attends the mosque with her husband and sons. The phrase "then they have to wait for me" makes it clear that her process is lengthier than theirs, as they "already know" what they need to do. Knowing that there are others waiting on her is an added pressure that contributes to the anxiety of the situation. She is also positioning herself here as *someone who does not know what to do*. She expresses this as though it demonstrates a lack of some kind on her part in comparison to her sons and husband. In reality, the problem lies not with her, but with the fact that she starts on the backfoot at every new mosque she encounters. Her husband and sons are able to take for granted that the main entrance to the building is one that will admit them, whereas she cannot do this. Note her repetition of the word "always", and her use of the phrase "that’s majority of masjids, wherever we go". She reports having this experience repeatedly, with very few exceptions.

Earlier, I mentioned that much of this pre-visit work is seen as compulsory by participants. We see this reflected in Zainab's repeated use of "I must", and "I have to". For her, visiting mosques requires this work; it is compulsory and unavoidable. It's possible that many

women find the anxiety before a mosque visit compulsory as well. The only way to avoid it is not to go to the mosque to pray.

Another participant, Noor, expresses similar distress in the extract below.

Noor: *So— (.) and this is something that I feel, whenever I go to a mosque, is that the— (.) kind of like the anxiousness of "Where do I park?", "Is it close enough to the ladies' entrance?", "Am I dressed appropriately to go through all the men?" and you know, kind of (.) also because of how people kinda judge you and so— (.) It's not just the men, it's the women as well. I think previously— (.) I mean— now it's very easy for women to go to mosque, previously it was kind of frowned upon, so 'til today (.) maybe it's just the way we're brought up, that I do still have that like, "I need to park in the proper manner and I need to, you know, be dressed appropriately", however— (.) and that's exactly how I felt coming in, as I walked in, the minute you come up it's like okay (.) kinda like "I'm safe, I'm secure, I can be me".*

Mooniq: *So, where was the point where you started feeling safe, like between the anxiety and the safety, like so where is that point? [overlapping speech]*

Noor: *[overlapping speech] It's just as we start coming up, so once the door closes=*

Mooniq: *=and we start going up the stairs [overlapping speech]*

Noor: *[overlapping speech] and we start going up the stairs, yes.*

Mooniq: *That's when you feel safe.*

Noor: *Yes, like okay you know, "I think I'm fine, I'm okay now and it's a safe zone". But ja, definitely there's a lot of anxiety around my first parking, entering.*

In this extract, Noor talks of anxiety being one of the main feelings she experiences in her trajectory into the mosque. Like Zainab, this is a repeated experience "whenever" she visits the mosque, although her anxiety is less around where to go, and more around her contact with other people in the space, particularly with men. I believe that her worry about finding parking close to the women's entrance has to do with how much walking she will have to do from her car to the entrance. Her next sentence reveals that she is particularly concerned

about how the men in the vicinity will see her. She says, "Am I dressed appropriately to go through all the men?", and that leads me to think she is anxious about the length of time she will be exposed to an outside gaze, and to possible judgement about her appropriateness. Of course, this is not an experience wholly unique to Muslim women—women are often self-conscious about their clothing when walking through a crowd of men. Since there are overwhelmingly more men at the mosque than women at any given time, it's not unreasonable for Noor to be expecting to have to navigate through crowds of men. Here however, the "appropriateness" of Noor's clothing is not just about it being seen by men; it is also about it being seen by men in a mosque setting, because there are particular rules about how a woman should be dressed in this space.

Interestingly, Noor seems to realize that she is saying she feels judged by men at the mosque and quickly adds that she feels judged by women as well, but it is clear from what she says later about feeling safe once she enters the women's space that the judgement is not the same. Whereas Zainab earlier expresses a fear that the women's space will be remote and therefore unsafe, for Noor the woman's space represents a refuge from the distressing work she needs to do to get inside the building.

I had not really been expecting any of my participants to characterise the women's space as a space of safety, so this caught my attention during the interview and I tried to pinpoint the boundary between her feeling safe and unsafe. The mosque at which this interview was conducted had its entrance to the women's section around the side of the building, as a door leading up a staircase to the first floor of the building. If you recall my account of one of my mosque visits in chapter five, I explained that the spaces just outside the women's section, such as foyers, landings or staircases, are sometimes mixed-gender spaces in practice. This was not the case at this mosque; the door and staircase leading to the women's space lead nowhere else and could reasonably be considered part of the women-only space (at least during prayer times). What this means is that Noor's boundary between safe and unsafe space at this mosque corresponds with the boundary between the mixed-gender space – the parking lot outside – and the women's-only space. Despite saying that she feels judged by both men and women, Noor clearly feels less self-conscious "once the door closes". Her utterance "I'm safe, I'm secure, I can be me" implies that she felt unsafe,

insecure and not herself before this point. This kind of self-consciousness and worry about being watched and judged is a recurrent theme throughout the interview data.

Another participant, Saadiya, like Noor, also reports spending time before a mosque visit worrying about the appropriateness of her clothing.

> *I do feel anxious coming into the mosque space. Because I started thinking about my dress. So just, kind of, picking out what to wear. I wear nail polish, so— and I realized [this morning], "ooh I've still got my nail polish on my toes". So what do I do? Do I try and break into someone's room to get nail polish remover? And then I just couldn't find any of my abayas, which I think has all been taken out and re-packed in another cupboard. So there was a lot of, kind of, "how do I come into this space?". So I start off, always, from a place of anxiety coming to the mosque because I believe there's a particular dress code I have to adhere to. And then also I know that in some mosques, the wearing of socks is quite important so I thought, well, I'll have my socks and that will hide my nail polish [laughs] And then just even wearing a scarf - I find it really very difficult to wear a scarf. It's extremely hot […]. Generally, I don't wear [a scarf] but I do wear a scarf when I come to mosque. But in fact, what I tend to do when I come to mosque is not even wear a loose scarf, which is, you know, because it falls off my hair. I wear a burka. So that's what I grabbed. So, I start off, it's an anxiety-provoking experience.*
>
> *[Later] In fact I think sometimes if there were no expectations in terms of dress code, I would probably be less erratic [in visiting the mosque].*
>
> *Saadiya, participant interviews*

Saadiya's mosque visit begins with a self-inspection, where she rates the suitability and acceptability of her appearance according to "a particular dress code" she feels she has to adhere to. She checks her clothes, nails, and head covering, and thinks about whether the particular mosque she's going to visit requires women to wear socks or not. It is interesting that she states that "she believes" there is a dress code – this implies an understanding that this belief may not be shared by everyone, and that it might be the case that such a dress

code is not "real" and only exists in her head. Later on, however, she says "if there were no expectations in terms of dress code" implying that such a dress code does exist in reality, and that it is the reason she isn't a more regular visitor.

She notices her nail polish, and knowing that it is disapproved of in mosques[23], tries to think of a way to remove it, but doesn't have any nail polish remover. Her need to comply with the dress code, imagined or not, is so strong that it leads her to consider forcing herself into the space of another to remedy the situation. This is something she would not normally do, as we can tell from her choice of the phrasal verb "break into", as it has criminal connotations and moral implications.

Similar to Zainab above, the way Saadiya describes how she gets ready to go to mosque emphasises how laborious the process is for her, with the constant repetition of "and then" when adding to her list. She further highlights this inconvenience when talking about her difficulty with *hijab*. Using the word "just" in "just even wearing a scarf" shows her belief that the wearing of *hijab* is a small thing, the bare minimum that she should be able to do but struggles with. Saadiya explains that she is not even able to find relief by wearing a more comfortable kind of hijab, as it is not acceptable in the space. Instead, she wears a more fitted garment, a *burka*, that doesn't require wrapping or tying and is easier to put on and take off. Her use of "even" in "just even wearing a scarf", and later in "not even wear a loose scarf" intensifies her description of her burden – not only does she have to do ABC, but she also has to contend with XYZ. Like both Zainab and Noor, this is a repeated experience – she "always" has anxiety before a visit.

From the extracts above, it's clear that the participants I interviewed feel that preparing to visit the mosque involves numerous labour-intensive affective practices, many of which are repeated over and over again at every visit. These often make it even more difficult for them to visit the mosque and contribute to them avoiding using the space. It also

[23] Muslim women are generally discouraged from wearing nail polish as it prevents water from touching the nails during the pre-prayer ablution ritual, rendering the ritual invalid according to some.

compounds feelings of not belonging, particularly if they compare their experiences to those of the men in their lives.

These affective practices sediment into habits and rituals, and thus I have termed them "pre-ritual rituals". This lines up with what Wetherell (2015) argued happens with affective practices, that "affective repertoires emerge in bodies, minds, in individual lives, in relationships, communities, across generations and in social formations". (2015:147). Muslim women develop affective repertoires of anxiety, discomfort and avoidance in relation to the mosque space.

In the next section, I move on to the second sub-theme related to entering the mosque, i.e. navigating through men.

7.3 "He said I don't belong there": Navigating the mosque through men

A recurring theme in many of the stories shared by my participants are incidents of them having to negotiate their entry into the mosque through men. This negotiation took different forms, from simply being forced to walk through a crowd of men on the way inside like Noor above, to being directed to the women's space (sometimes asked for and sometimes not), to having to ask for help or permission to enter the prayer space. I rarely asked about this directly and it mostly came up organically in conversation. For example, in this extract I had asked my participant Ziyara to tell me about a mosque she enjoyed visiting.

Ziyara : So Mayfair Jumah Masjid I think will stick out because it's the first, I think (.) Well as far as I can remember, it's the first one that I've been to to read Salaah, and I think it's ease of access, so it's- (.) the entrance is accessible, you can easily go in, there's not- (.) you know sometimes it can be- I find, it can be a bit awkward when you're walking, perhaps because of the whole dynamic and what you're taught about interacting with males and whatever, especially in that space, it can be a bit awkward when you're walking with a lot of men around or whatever. So, the way that it's set out, I find it very easy to go in

and use. […] For me (.) accessible would be in the terms of- (.) what is the word? (.) modesty-wise I think. So, in that sense, a space easy to get to without it being awkward.

[some lines omitted]

Mooniq : I notice you're using the word awkward a lot.

Ziyara : Yes, I find it awkward. Because of the whole notion of- (.) you know, it's- (.) you know, that whole notion of segregation during prayer I think, as well as, you know, daily life or whatever the case is. So I mean- (.) I can interact with people at work, I mean men at work or whatever, and I don't feel awkward, but if I have to do that within that space, I find it awkward (.) uncomfortable.

For Ziyara, accessibility in a mosque has a very particular meaning: a mosque is accessible to her if she is able to enter without coming into contact with any men. She seems to have difficulty expressing this, however, searching for the right words with several false starts and reformulations. First, she says she prefers this mosque for its "ease of access", then reformulates to clarify that "the entrance is accessible", and "you can go in easily". She has trouble expressing why this is the case, and it takes a while before she reveals that the setup of this mosque allows her to avoid men entirely.

She explains what she means in very vague terms, like "the whole dynamic", and "whatever" twice. At several points, she avoids articulating what she means by assuming that, as a fellow Muslim woman, I know to what she is referring. For example, she says, "you know, sometimes it can be-" and then breaks off, not verbalising the rest of her thought. She follows this by referring to a shared experience she thinks we have had – "what you're taught about interacting with males and whatever, especially in that space". She does not elaborate on what that is.

Later, she mentions "that whole notion of segregation", also without further elaboration, and with the demonstrative adjective "that" referring to something already known to the interlocuter. I suspect that she experiences difficulty explaining this because she is talking about something rather abstract, intangible, and not often talked about – the fact that many women find it difficult and awkward to be around men in the mosque setting.

The practice of segregation in religious spaces and the particular rules and conventions of interaction between men and women in these spaces result in feelings of awkwardness when being forced to interact due to the architecture of the space. At the end of the extract, she makes an interesting juxtaposition between how she is at work versus how she is in this space. She does not find it awkward to interact with men at work. At work, her "Muslim-ness" may be backgrounded, but at the mosque, her "Muslim-ness" and "Woman-ness" is foregrounded, and thus different rules of interaction apply when she comes into contact with men. For Ziyara, ease of access means not only avoiding men, but also avoiding being made to feel awkward – avoiding a particular visceral response when encountering the space.

Another participant, Aunty Amina, has similar feelings about sharing a mosque entrance with men. Interestingly, she uses the same words Ziyara does – "uncomfortable" and "awkward". They both talk of having a kind of uneasy hyper-awareness of the men who are around them when they have to share the space.

Aunty Amina: I suppose just being the way we [were] brought up, you just kind of feel like the men generally wouldn't find it- (.) or they would- (.) you know, you just don't feel comfortable, like you just feel <u>they aware of you around there</u> and things like that, you know, like something that- (.) Where you don't experience that at the Turkish mosque [in Midrand, Johannesburg], like you can walk in, you can feel like comfortable, you're going in, and you don't feel like you're being watched or things like that, ja.

Mooniq: Okay, so have you had experiences where you went to mosque and you felt like you were being watched?

Aunty Amina: Er, like more when we go in, more like when we're entering the facility then some men would like kind of <u>make you feel like</u> you know (.) like <u>"What are you doing here?</u>" kind of thing, like you know- (.) and especially if you have to share an entrance going in, you go in, <u>you don't</u>

watch, but you kind of feel that you're being watched like you know, in that way.

Like Ziyara, Aunty Amina attributes these feelings of awkwardness around men in the mosque to our upbringing as Muslim women. For her, though, there does seem to be something "local" or situated about it, something culturally-specific in our upbringing as South African Muslim women. She reports not feeling this way when she visits the Turkish mosque in Johannesburg, or when she visits the Holy Mosque in Mecca. Perhaps these spaces are free of the cultural baggage that mosques usually hold for her – they are exotic and different, and thus different rules apply.

Unprompted, she specifies that this is acutely felt on entering the mosque, particularly when having to share an entrance (which sometimes happens due to spatial limitations, particularly in more informal prayer spaces). She is very aware of the men around her and is constantly speculating about how they view her, how they judge her behaviour, and what they must be feeling because of her presence. She reads their responses to her presence as annoyance and impatience.

Compare these unspoken and understood rules of engagement with those I have experienced in a gym bathroom, or communal shower, or the rules I have heard men report around using a urinal – there are rules about where you can look, if you can make eye-contact, what you can talk about, how close you can stand next to each other, etc.

The feeling of being "watched" is a strong one for this participant. She says, "you don't watch, but you kind of feel that you're being watched". She goes on to tell a story of a specific incident as an illustration of the above.

Aunty Amina: I remember there was a mosque in Lens, the Sabiri Chisti mosque that we had been to, and we had to use the same entrance and it was like so awkward, and it was so- (.) and then I felt- (.) It was a function [an event], it had been at the salaah [prayer] time, and we had to go and you know- (.) at the stage where you just like all (.) just like the men and the women [are all crowded together] and you

kind of felt like "Ay, I shouldn't have come, I should have rather just sat in the hall [the venue]" and you know, that kind of thing. And maybe again, one of the things could have been was because my husband was feeling quite like stressed then you know, kind of like, "Did you have to come?" kind of thing, you know, "You could have just sat there". Because you know, you're taking off your shoes and when you come down [downstairs from the women's section] and you have to watch and you know, and they make you feel like you're in the way. [overlapping speech]

Mooniq: The men make you feel like you're in the way?

Aunty Amina: Yes, make you feel like (.) you know like, you know (.) "This is where we're supposed to be", like "What are you doing here?", like "You're in my way", like "Move on!" or- (.) you know they make you feel that way and and- (.) unfortunately at that time we were using the same entrance, they had to go in at the bottom, we had to go up the stairs, so what do you do with your shoes? Like you're awkward, you know, you're feeling awkward and I suppose maybe a little- (.) I was a bit stressed beforehand because I knew I'm going with him [my husband] and he could see this thing happening and whatever, so that made feel really, really awkward and- (.) but then I felt I should have just sat you know, I shouldn't have come and I could have gone home and read the Kazaah [the catch-up prayer] or whatever.

In this extract, Aunty Amina recounts a time when she felt discomfort at having to enter a mosque space amongst men. Even though no one actually says anything to her, she gets the sense that the men around her are impatient and annoyed at her presence. This could also be due to her feeling unpractised and self-conscious about using the space. As a strategy to put the abstract into words, she imagines what these men are thinking at the time they come into contact with her. These imagined voices are possessive over the space. They tell her she does not belong, that she is taking up space that she should not, and that her presence in the space is an obstruction and inconvenience to those who do belong.

It's clear that part of her distress is influenced by her husband's discomfort – he foresees the awkwardness, and seems to express annoyance that she insisted on praying at that time,

rather than choosing the easier route that many women do, which is to miss their prayers and catch-up at home, even though deliberately missing prayers is frowned upon in Islam. The distress Aunty Amina feels makes her doubt her choice to pray as well.

She repeats "you have to watch", which here I take to mean to be aware of oneself in relation to other congregants rather than to observe the behaviour of others. This is not the same as when she says "you don't watch" earlier, which there I take to mean "you don't make eye-contact or visibly have your gaze on the men".

She gives an example of a particular worry she has on this occasion – her uncertainty with what to do with her shoes. Since this is an unfamiliar prayer space for her (she is only there because of the event she is attending at the time), she does not know what the protocol will be here and dreads the slight chaos there will be as a crowd of people try to figure out when they should remove their shoes (before or after the stairs?), where they should put them down, whether there will be a convenient shoe rack or not, how long you'll have to hold them in your hands walking around barefoot before you figure it all out, all the while having to "watch".

In the next few extracts, we move from discussions of having to walk past men enroute to pray, to being forced to gain access to the space *by means of* men. I had asked Ziyara to tell me about a mosque she had visited that stuck out in her memory for any reason. In response, she told a story about an uncomfortable experience she once had at a mosque in the small town of White River.

> *I remember the first time we went there, there was no sign or any notification that there is a ladies' section and I had to read Salaah outside in the parking lot because I didn't- (.) like there was no communication, there was no indication that there is a space. And now when we went, there was a sign (.) So we went just now in December holidays, there was a sign and you know- (.) but the keys were with the Imam, so my father and brothers had to kind of get the key from him, come back (.) like come and give it to me, I had to go and open it, and then afterwards I had to*

bring the key back and it was a whole process but it was still, you know- (.) at least there was a space.

Ziyara, participant interviews

The first time she visited, the lack of signage meant that she was not informed of the existence of a prayer space for her. This resulted in her being displaced, having to pray out in the open in an uncomfortable space while her male relatives utilised the building provided to them with ease. When asked a little later about how she felt praying in the parking lot, she replied, "awkward" and "exposed". At her next visit, the problem had been remedied slightly and a sign for the women's section had been put up, but this did not mean her experience was as smooth as her brothers' yet. She had to negotiate her entry through men on two levels – she needed her male relatives to speak to the male Imam on her behalf, who then had the power to grant access to the space or not. She had to work her way through two sets of gatekeepers, all men, in order to use a space that had been provided for her to pray. This is incredibly disempowering, and there are parallels to be drawn between this kind of situation and stories that people with mobility impairments tell of having to access locked disabled public bathrooms through building staff while able-bodied people can use public bathrooms independently. Note how she ends off by saying, "at least there was a space". She is willing to put up with going through a lengthy process to access the space in order to avoid the unpleasantness of praying outside.

Ziyara's story reminds me of my own experience of being barred from entry into a mosque, which I recounted in the introduction to this project. In each of my interviews, I recounted this experience to my participants as an interview prompt. Interestingly, in my interviews with Ziyara and Nazifah, stories of "hospitable" men arose to counter my story of an unfriendly male gatekeeper. In fact, Nazifah shares three recollections of times when men went out of their way to help her pray in situations where there was no women's prayer space available.

So when we went to (.) let me try and recall now, I think it was Mpumalanga, I actually can't remember exactly but I think it was on the way to Mpumalanga and we stopped somewhere to read salaah and it was a very small, sort of musallah [informal prayer

space] which didn't have a ladies facility at all but my father went in and he asked you know, "Is there a place for the ladies to read salaah?" and the Imam there said "No, there isn't actually a place for the ladies to read salaah, but my room is here and you can come through and they can read salaah there." And so he set up a musallah [prayer mat] and he brought us in and the room was actually within that musallah [informal prayer space] and he allowed us to go inside there and to pray. So that was one situation. Another one, as well, was in Nelspruit and I think Graskop [laughs], somewhere around there. And the same thing again. It was (.) there was no ladies- (.) separate ladies section, and we were musafir [travellers, to whom different prayer rules apply] but it wasn't jamaat [congregational prayer] time, and the Imam let us in to read salaah and he says "no go in with the whole family, you can go in and you can read salaah, I'll wait for your outside when you're done", and he waited, and it was actually a power outage, so he made sure he waited outside until we were done and then when we came out- (.) and ja, he was even asking, "Do you need lights or anything?", so he was actually being very accommodating which was very lovely. So I'm not sure if it's just the smaller towns that tend to be more welcoming or what, but I always experienced (.) better you know, if that makes sense. And then the other day, just going to like Mochachos [a fast food joint] for example, there was a.. (.) Muslim man, I think it was the manager, an African man and I asked him "Is there a place to read salaah in the mall?" and he said "There isn't", and then I said "Okay no, don't worry it's fine, I'll make a plan", and I had ordered food and so then the food was coming, and while I'm still waiting he comes up to me and he says "Sister, do you need to read salaah?", I was like "Ja", he was like "Okay, I'll be right back". So what he did was, he actually put up like the purda (.) what are those called? (.) dividers [privacy area], he put that up and then he called me and he said "follow me" - and I was alone that day - and he said "follow me", and he had a musallah [prayer mat] in his hand and he laid it out for me, qiblah [facing Mecca], behind those dividers and he said "you can read salaah here, I made a plan for you". That was so heart-warming for me. So I think, I don't know if it's ignorance, I don't know if it's just the smaller communities, I don't know, I tend to find that you know, a lot of the African Muslims tend to be more welcoming, so I really don't know what it is but alhamdullilah [praise God] I have had good experiences.

In the first situation, the man was the Imam who set up a space for her to pray within his own living space attached to the prayer room in a small town. Note her use of the word "allowed" in this story. His permission was needed to access the space, both because he is the imam and because they are in his personal living space.

In the second, once again in a small town, the Imam there changed regular mosque conventions somewhat by letting her family use the mosque as a mixed gender space (although it is important to note that family members are allowed to pray together in a mixed congregation in private). The Imam then stood outside to ensure no strange men entered while the family were using the space, as that would make it impossible for the space to continue being mixed gender.

In both situations, Nazifah is not alone and has male family members negotiating entry into the space on her behalf. Had she been alone, she may have experienced this incident very differently. In fact, she may have even have been afraid of the men in question. Indeed, in the third situation, even though she is recounting a positive experience, there is a moment when some hesitancy shows through. The situation takes place not in a mosque but in a more unusual setting, where a restaurant manager sets up a makeshift private space for her to pray in a corner of his store. When she gets to the point in the story where he tells her to follow him into a more private section of the room, she mentions as an aside that she was alone that day. This tells me that her awareness of this fact is at the forefront of her mind as she tells the story, and it is likely that this was also the case at the time of the incident itself. Nevertheless, she decided to trust him, probably because of their shared faith, and because he addressed her as "sister", a term of address which foregrounds her Muslim-womanness, and sets up their interaction as one between two people of Muslim faith. The terms "sister(s)" and "brother(s)" are regularly used in mosque settings in place of "men" and "women" or in place of the phrase "ladies and gentlemen" (although Muslim women are often referred to as "ladies" as a group on their own, as was evident in the signs marking the women's sections I shared in chapter five).

For other participants, their experiences of being directed by men were not as positive.

Tasneem: I was there [at Claremont Main Road Mosque] 3 weeks ago, but not for- (.) not to pray, like Thuhr or Asr or Jumuah, I was just there, and the minute I arrived there was a guy who said- (.) a man who said (.) "Oh the women's entrance is that way", you know that=

Mooniq: = Did you even ask him?

Tasneem: No, I had just arrived and I went to the first door I saw and he was like "oh no, the women's section is that way", I'm like [to herself] no, this is not as inclusive as they might want to think that they are at Claremont.

[…lines omitted]

Mooniq: But that's so strange because both of the doors, you should be able to enter to go to the women's section, even downstairs.

Tasneem: Yes, that first door- (.) ja, that door.

Mooniq: Ja, that door leads you to the women's section as well, so he was- (.)

Tasneem: Exactly.

Mooniq: Deciding for you, where you needed to go, that's interesting.

Here, Tasneem recounts an incident that took place while visiting Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town, in which a man stopped her from entering through a door which led to the downstairs section, and directed her to another, which led to the upstairs section. What was upsetting about this was that Tasneem had been correct about where to enter, as I will explain below.

I have discussed Claremont Main Road Mosque before, particularly in chapter four where I related how it created more access for women at the dawn of democracy in South Africa. As I explained, it is one of the rare mosques in South Africa to have the men's section and women's section side-by-side in the main body of the mosque. There is a very minimal barrier between them – just a retractable queue barrier with a belt, like you'd find in a bank – and men and women are not hidden from each other's view in this area. It is, however, important to note that the building is not divided exactly in half - the men's side takes up the lion's share of the mosque. Before 1994, the mosque was structured in the "traditional"

way, with women allowed only upstairs in a small balcony area. In 1994, with the advent of democracy in South Africa, the mosque made the decision to bring women into the main downstairs area as well. This was also when the mosque started to include women as speakers in the Friday sermons. The former women's section upstairs was divided in half with a more substantial barrier, and is used by men and women who are uncomfortable with the minimal barrier downstairs, and for the overflow of congregants when the downstairs area is full. Both the upstairs and downstairs entrances are thus technically used by both men and women.

Tasneem had been trying to enter the downstairs area when the man stopped her, and by directing her upstairs, he was demonstrating where he thought she belonged in the mosque. In a space where women are provided with the opportunity to choose where they wanted to pray – in the traditional, more private section upstairs, or in the main section next to the men – he was attempting to remove that choice for her, knowingly or unknowingly.

Rifqah was also once prevented from using a mixed-gender entrance to her mosque.

Rifqah: *I live directly opposite a mosque and I grew up there, I know that mosque before it was revamped, I know how the women used to sit, where they used to sit, what the conditions were and when we started renovations at the mosque. And then there was this new women's section and to get there, you have to use the main entrance and the men's entrance, and this one man stopped me and he's like, "You can't go up here", and I'm like "But the woman's section is up there", and he was like "But you can't use this entrance", and I'm like [sarcastically] "Well then what entrance do you want me to use?"*

[…]

There is another one [entrance], ***now*** *yes, but back then there wasn't because they were still in renovations, so like how do you want- (.) do you not want me here then? Like I've been living here for twenty years, you can't tell me I can't come here man, wow.*

Mooniq: Tell me more about that, like how did you feel when that was happening?

Rifqah: Well first of all I felt like he was kicking me out of the House that didn't even belong to him, because you know, it's the whole concept that a mosque is a House of Allah, so who are you to kick me out? And also, because I live directly opposite the mosque, I know the mosque like the back of my hand and I know this is the only way in.

Mooniq: So that made you particularly upset?

Rifqah: Ja and because it's a Friday's Jummah, and we are all going to use this entrance, did you not see the other ladies go in? Well, what specifically about me made you say I can't go in?

Mooniq: Do you think there was anything about you that made him=

Rifqah: =No I just think it was because I was younger I guess and because older people don't like younger people in the mosque because they reckon we just-(.) kind of a thing (.) maybe it was that, I don't know, but I just felt like not at home, or that I didn't belong there or something, because he said I don't belong there.

The label "The House of Allah", is often used as a way to remind people that it belongs first and foremost to God, before it belongs to any human. By drawing on this idea, Rifqah questions the man's authority in this space. Any congregant belongs, because this is the House of Allah, but she also wants to emphasise that she is "not just any congregant". She stakes her claim on the space, by pointing out that she is a regular who lives close by and has been visiting the mosque for twenty years. Not only does she feel she belongs there, she also feels that she has more knowledge than him about how this mosque operates – "I know the mosque like the back of my hand and I know this is the only way in" – and is frustrated at this knowledge being undermined. In other words, she is understandably angry about being mansplained to – where a man condescendingly explains something to a woman that she is better positioned than him to know. The last line of this extract is rather poignant and saddened me, knowing that she had been made to feel unwelcome in the mosque she felt most at home in.

In a subsequent story, Rifqah tells me of another time she had an encounter with a man outside a prayer space, this time on her university campus. She had just explained to me that the Muslim prayer space on campus was right next to a chapel-like building where Christian students would worship.

Rifqah: *I remember I was wearing a shorts one day, like a very short shorts (.) I mean it was hot, it was like 27 degrees [Celsius] outside, I'm not going to come in long pants and things and I didn't own skirts at that point (.) and I had a vest, a t-shirt thing and my shorts, and this boy, in his Salaah top [his mosque clothing], goes and opens the chapel door for me and he's like "Here you go" (.) [To the man, possibly in her head:] You see me every day, who the hell are you?*

Mooniq: *What do you mean, he was on purpose being spiteful?*

Rifqah: *Ja, like [To the man:] how dare you, you know I'm going there and I was like "no Shukran [Arabic for thank you]" and I walked on.*

Mooniq: *So basically he's telling you you're not Muslim?*

Rifqah: *Ja, because of the way I'm dressed. [To the man:] Don't look at me then, if you don't like what I'm wearing.*

Mooniq: *And what did you do after that?*

Rifqah: *I went on, like I just ignored him, I don't waste my energy on stupid nonsense, I don't have time for it. So I said "No, Shukran", with as much dignity as I could muster because I really wanted to punch this guy in the face. And like all the guys were like "oh, she said shukran!", like- (.) and then I carried on and I opened the [prayer room] door and I walked in and there was Muslimas [Muslim women] greeting me "Salaam", so like they know [that I'm Muslim] and some of them they don't really care what I'm wearing, but here this idiot goes and opens the [chapel] door like (.) "since you're not looking like a Muslima you can go to the chapel."*

Here, a man rather pointedly tries to make Rifqah feel that she does not belong in the prayer space because she is not dressed correctly. Regardless of whether or not he had

made a genuine mistake or was actually being unkind, her faith is called into question and she is positioned as an interloper in that space.

It's important to note the impact that the nature of this particular space – a prayer space on a university campus – has on this interaction. The exchange would not have happened in the same way, perhaps at all, had it been a traditional mosque outside of campus. Rifqah would not approach a regular mosque dressed as she had been. On campus, she is more likely to be dressed in "everyday" clothing which she would have to temporarily cover up during prayer, whereas she would most likely be already dressed for mosque had this been a visit like the one in the previous extract.

It is clear from the extracts presented in this section that having to navigate through men to access the mosque adds to already-present feelings of anxiety and discomfort for my participants. Not only does it add extra steps to their processes of entering and the pre-ritual rituals they feel they must engage in, it also disempowers them by making it such that they cannot access the space independently in some cases. They may also feel that they don't belong in the space because the men around them treat them as though they shouldn't be there.

In the extract below, Saadiya voices this by describing how she sometimes feels infantilised in the mosque. However, she does point out that, for her at least, this all falls away once she enters and is reminded why she enjoys being the space, and she feels empowered again through prayer.

> *I feel that when I come into this space, that I've <u>become very much like a child</u> and <u>I'm almost expecting the men to tell me how to behave</u> […] <u>So I feel quite powerless</u> in terms of the physical space. And then I come in and I'm reminded of the coolness of the space, which I absolutely love. I'm reminded of the quietness of the space. […] And when I enter and I feel the coolness and I hear the quietness, <u>I then actually get back my power</u> because I then just go back into myself and it becomes a conversation between myself and my Maker.*
>
> *Saadiya, participant interviews*

For these women, their experiences of the space and feelings of belonging depended so much on how they were treated by the men in that space. In addition to that, their affective practices in relation to the space were affected. The extracts above not only demonstrate the things women do to avoid men when entering the space, but also show evidence of women avoiding mosques that have entrances where they have to walk through men. Women often include speaking to men or asking men for directions as part of their entering processes, or sometimes skip their prayer altogether to avoid awkwardness or upsetting a man they are with. Having a women's body matters in the mosque in that it has consequences for how one accesses the space, and also shapes how one experiences interactions with people there.

In the next section, I'd like to explore the significance of the body in space in more depth. To do so, I will be presenting several instances where one of my participants spoke specifically of the ways in which crossing the threshold into the mosque affected her body, in an effort to understand how the body matters in this landscape.

7.4 Embodied boundary crossing

One of my participants, Jannat, began talking quite early on about what she called a "shift" into a particular "persona" that was triggered by entering the mosque. She brought up the topic on the way to the interview site when she noticed the camera I was carrying[24], wondering how people would react.

> *Jannat: I'm like looking forward to seeing what's going to happen at the mosque and the reactions of like people for example- (.) ja when they see the camera. I know usually people are very like reluctant to (.) to research like*

[24] This interview took place quite early on in the data collection process, when I was still experimenting with using a Go-Pro camera to film myself walking through mosques. As I explained in chapter three, I soon abandoned this method.

religious things and the moment you step into a religious (.) and especially Islamic context, you sort of like have to shift you know. There's some things that are obviously very you know (.) [indistinct] and anything outside rituals is kind of like weird obviously, so ja

Mooniq: So what do you mean by "shift"?

Jannat: Ja, I mean like you know you go into this like complete other persona, you know, it's like you're not even- (.) you have to watch the way you speak, you know, you lower your voice, you know, sort of like you know- [indistinct overlapping speech] ja, that's the type of like persona that you take with you when you go to the mosque, for me at least. You know even like now, I was looking for something more appropriate [to wear] for mosque, I wouldn't like leave to go for mosque dressed the same way I would be dressed for example at campus, you know.

According to Jannat, going into the mosque requires one to take on a different persona, which affects a variety of things. It begins with how one dresses before the visit, continues with a step into the building and affects one's voice as well. It's also interesting that she characterises the research I'm doing as maybe not belonging in that space, and thus is interested to see how bringing this activity into this space will play out.

Not long after this, Jannat anthropomorphises the mosque, speaking of how it "expects" certain behaviour from her. She implies the existence of a standard of behaviour and dress demanded by the space that she aspires to meet and uphold outside the space as well.

Jannat: I feel that the way I dress when I go to mosque, I dress the way I should be dressing, you know the way I should be dressing, ja.

Mooniq: Okay, the way you feel like you'd like to dress every day anyway.

[…]

Jannat: I think you are very aware, you know, when you are in a setting, that expects you to act a certain way.

I then tried to tease out her idea of the persona a bit further.

Mooniq: What do you think it is about the actual mosque that makes us cha- (.) step into this persona?

Jannat: I feel like, you know the moment you step into it (.) like step foot into the mosque, you feel a complete different vibe. It's very calm, it's very you know, you know (.) known as like the house of God, so you- (.) you feel that way and you feel like anything that you have to do has to be in you know (.) agreement with, you know (.) things that pleases God there, you know, so you wouldn't do anything out of the ordinary in that sense. Ja, so it's more the vibe that you get from the mosque that you try and like maintain I guess, so ja.

Here, she reveals the point at which the shift happens for her, "the moment you step […] foot into the mosque", and attributes the catalyst for the shift to the atmosphere inside the building, the "calm" and "different vibe". She elaborates on what exactly she feels is expected of her by the space, namely, that all her actions there have to please a higher power, and "maintain" the vibe. Interestingly, it seems that to her, things that are "out of the ordinary" would displease God, which I take to mean anything that deviates from "regular" mosque behaviour.

In the next question, I attempted to gauge to what extent gender affected the existence of the mosque persona.

Mooniq: Do you think that (.) that whole stepping into the mosque and feeling a certain persona is particular to you being a woman? Or do you think it's for everybody?

Jannat: I feel that to a certain extent it's for- (.) for- (.) for us (.) because like=

Mooniq: =For us as women?

Jannat: As women ja, not so much for males, in the sense that dress code- (.) the dress code (.) I feel like it's more for women but the whole you know- (.) the awrah *of the mosque thing, that should- (.) I feel like it could be for everyone you know. Because of course we have more restrictions when it comes to like covering up you know, whereas a male could you know, he could pray*

wearing like, you know, clothes that they wear every day, whereas for us it's [overlapping speech] not the case.

Mooniq: [overlapping speech] a (.) a bit of a change.

The Islamic concept of *awrah* refers to the parts of a person's body that need to be covered in public and during prayer, and they are different for men and women. There are differences of opinion as to what these parts are, but I was taught the Sunni Hanafi rule that the *awrah* of men included the area of the body between the naval and the knees, whereas for women, it extended from the neck to the ankles, not including the hands (Misbah et al. 2021). As we know, however, modern everyday clothing for women often leaves these areas of the body bare, whereas everyday clothing for men usually covers their *awrah*. The implications of this are that men are more often able to walk into the mosque as they are and pray in what they are already wearing, whereas women are more likely to have to change or put extra coverings over their bodies.

Though the mosque space asks everyone to cover their awrah, this means different things for men and women. According to Jannat, in asking her to cover her awrah, the LL of the mosque demands something different from her than it demands from men congregants – it asks that she become a different person, or a different version of herself, that she don a particular guise before she enters. The act of putting on this persona is an affective practice Jannat engages in at every mosque visit.

In the next extract, she talks more about who this persona is for, and what adopting it entails.

Jannat: Ja, I think also you know, when you're outside of the mosque, to me, I feel like when I step in the mosque, I should try and and take advantage of being in a mosque, so being like <u>the house of God</u> and then, I feel like <u>I should be constantly thinking of God</u> and <u>God is watching me or God is present</u> and God is (.) you know, and you somehow <u>also feel closer to Him</u>, you know, there's al- (.) there's someone always- (.) My mom used to tell me you know, because some people- (.) of course women are not compelled to go to

mosque, like on a Friday prayer, things like that, but she would always prefer going because she always felt like, you know, going to Mosque, you feel a bit closer to God than if you would pray at home, you know, because obviously again, being in His presence, so ja, I feel like it's just your thought processes also, you try and- (.) you don't try and like, you know entertain sort of like unnecessary kind of thoughts, you kind of like leave everything, all your baggage, or like (.) you just leave that all behind and you're just like there for one particular purpose. It almost feels like you're going on Hajj [pilgrimage] type of thing you know.

[…]

Jannat: *Like that, you know, so you sort of leave everything behind you, coming to this house of God, taking full advantage of it you know and then- and doing what you must do you know. So it's completely a different "you", that you try to maintain outside of, you know, the mosque.*

Over and above changing how she dresses, Jannat reveals that her mosque persona also entails avoiding certain thoughts and adopting others. Her affective practices then contribute to the calmness and godliness of this space – she wouldn't bring certain practices into the mosque which might affect this "vibe".

For Jannat and her mother, the mosque space amplifies the feeling of being in the presence of God over and above the rituals. Being closer to God means that she must be on her best behaviour, monitoring her thoughts and actions, because "God is watching".

These extracts from Jannat's interview give us some insight into what effect crossing the threshold into the sacred space of the mosque could have on women's bodies. The woman's body matters in these circumstances because of how closely it is tied to the *awrah* and to one's appearance, dress and behaviour.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to address the research questions “How are women’s bodies made to matter in the mosque?” and “How do women talk about their bodies in relation to the mosque?” It does so by examining extracts from walking interviews conducted with eleven Muslim women participants, in particular extracts from one major theme of my thematic analysis entitled *Entering the mosque*, which comprised three sub-themes – *pre-ritual rituals, navigating through men,* and *embodied boundary crossing.*

In this chapter, I argue that Muslim women engage in more labour in the process of visiting the mosque, much of which can be considered affective practices. Feelings of anxiety and dread often affect the way they prepare to come to the mosque, and sometimes even lead to them avoiding the space altogether. Muslim women also often have to access the mosque through other Muslim men, creating an extra barrier to their access. Lastly, I examined the way one participant talked about her own process of entering the mosque and how her affective practice in this circumstance involves stepping into an entirely different persona to the one she carries on a day-to-day basis.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I will be summarizing the major findings of the study and bringing together the various arguments I make in different parts of the thesis. In addition to this, I will draw out the original contributions this study makes to the field of Linguistic Landscapes Studies, as well as to our understanding of Muslim women's experiences of using the mosque. To do so, I will revisit each of the five main research questions and discuss what contribution this study has made to answering them. Before doing so, however, I would like to briefly recap how the study proceeded.

8.2 Summary of the study

I will begin by restating the main aims of the study as a whole, as well as the method of data collection and analysis employed. In general, this study aimed to explore how Muslim women's visceral readings of the semiotic and linguistic landscapes of the South African mosque influence their affective practices in and around the space. It also aimed to gain some insight into the ways in which bodies are made to matter in place in the mosque, and how this process is semiotically mediated. This thesis is located at the intersection between linguistic landscaping – or semiosis in place – and the role that people – and bodies – play in the field, as actors, interpreters, and agents.

Sources of data for this study included participant interviews with South African Muslim women who have visited the mosque, as well as site visits to numerous mosques in Cape Town and Johannesburg, which would include photographs of signage and architecture with fieldnotes made before, during and after the visit. Through adopting an autoethnographic approach, I was able to find a further source of data in my own background knowledge, memories, and experiences as a Muslim woman researcher. Data analysis for all sources began with thematic analysis, which included coding data items and grouping them into

themes and sub-themes. From that point, I selected data and themes that were relevant to my research questions to discuss in the analysis sections of this thesis.

The study was designed with five broad research questions in mind. In what follows, I will revisit each question and discuss what contribution this study has made to answering them.

8.3 Question 1: "What is the semiotic landscape of the mosque like?"

This study attempted to address this question in three ways in chapter 5. Firstly, a very detailed autoethnographic description of the landscape of one mosque in particular was presented. I achieved this by chronologically narrating my first site visit to Houghton West Street Mosque in Johannesburg, from the point of arrival at the site. The narration covered how I accessed the site – walking up to the front doors, crossing the threshold, walking through the foyer and up the stairs, and so on – and included my visceral readings of the signage I encountered along the way.

The second manner through which the study provided insight into the nature of the semiotic landscape of the mosque was through photographs. Part of the site visit was dedicated to taking "point-of-view" photographs of the space, in which I stopped at certain points in my trajectory through the mosque and tried to capture photographs that would approximate what I could see at that point. These photographs were then presented alongside my narration at the relevant points. This allowed the reader to create a mental map of the space, and shed some light on what the semiotic landscape of the mosque is like.

The third means of providing insight into the nature of the semiotic landscape of the mosque was through the creation of a taxonomy of the mosque signage I encountered. I categorized mosque signage into three groups: wayfinding signage, which directed

congregants to different spaces in the mosque or towards particular resources (for example towards the ablution area, or towards clothing to cover oneself for prayer); community notices, which usually took the form of posters advertising various workshops or community outreach programmes; and injunction signage, which encompassed signs telling congregants what to do and how to behave in the space. This third category was then examined in further detail in chapter 6.

Through these three methods, the study provided the reader with a comprehensive view into what the semiotic landscape of the South African mosque is like.

8.4 Question 2: "How can the space of the mosque be read viscerally?"

As explained in chapter 2, this study adopted a visceral landscapes perspective to understanding the linguistic landscape of the mosque. This approach encourages including sign readers' visceral responses to signage and space as a vital part of understanding the linguistic and semiotic landscapes of that space. In this study, I have used a variety of methodological tools to elicit my own and my participants' visceral landscape readings. This study demonstrated what a possible visceral reading of a landscape could look like, through including autoethnography, additional contextual information, making use of affective practice theory, adopting walking interviews as a method, and employing the concepts of atmospherization and sign tonality in discussing the effects of signage on readers.

Firstly, I employed a walking autoethnographical description to record my own visceral reading of the landscape of one of my field sites. This description was created by compiling my photographs, fieldnotes, memories and reflections of the visit into a storied form, punctuated occasionally with relevant extracts from my interview data as well. This account included detailed descriptions of the signage I encountered, my own emotional responses to the signs at the time, as well as my feelings about them at the time of writing. The purpose

of this walking narration was to shed some light on the process of recording my own visceral reactions to signage and place as part of understanding my meaning-making processes when reading a semiotic landscape. Using autoethnography allowed me to include my subjective experience of a linguistic landscape in a systematic way, and thus facilitated a reading of the landscape through the visceral.

In the process of implementing an autoethnographic perspective, I also included vital contextual information which allowed the reader to better understand my visceral reactions and some of my interpretations of them. This mostly occurred in chapter 4, where I make explicit my own positionality and the cultural knowledge I carried with me into this study. In doing so, this study demonstrated how understanding something about a sign reader's locus of enunciation (Mignolo, 1999) and positionality can aid analyses of responses to and readings of the semiotic landscape.

Secondly, this study demonstrated how using affective practice theory could aid in visceral readings of landscapes. One of th ways a practice approach to affect works so well for a visceral landscapes study is that it allows us to include multiple aspects of emotion, not only physical or bodily disturbances and feelings, but also the elaborated subjective experiences that follow. In other words, affective practices encompass how people make meaning or create understanding around what happened to them. These interpretations are considered part of the practice itself, and thus allows us to include them in our LL studies, rather than focusing on the landscapes alone. This does not mean that the landscape is devalued however. Practice theory involves non-human participants as much as human participants. In this theory, objects can be seen as doing things – a space can intimidate you, a sign can make you feel unwelcome, etc. This allows us to explore how buildings, signs and objects interact with people and bodies.

Using affective practice theory for this study also enabled me to use a concept called "atmospherization", which proved to be effective for conducting a visceral reading of a

landscape. To recap, atmospherization refers to the affective practices that serve to create the atmosphere of sites or situations, focusing on how atmospheres are practically performed *as* atmospheres. Alongside the concept of sign tonality (which I discuss again below), atmospherization broadened my understanding of how mosque atmospheres are produced by the signage therein, as well as the interactions that take place in those spaces.

Thirdly, this study demonstrated another methodological tool that aided in eliciting visceral landscape readings of myself and my participants, namely walking interviews. My decision to use this methodology arose from reflections on the interview process after two pilot interviews conducted in participants' homes. As I explained in chapter 3, I was dissatisfied with the responses I was getting and realised that part of the problem was that the location of the interview was too far removed from the place we were discussing, and my participants were having trouble remembering (or imagining) how they felt or would feel in a mosque space. I realised that it would probably be more effective to have the interview inside a mosque itself, so that participants could be experiencing their emotions more immediately and then be able to share these experiences with me more easily. This realisation led me to change my interview method to a walking interview that would take place while walking towards and then inside of a mosque space. The process included entering the mosque, walking around, reflecting on the space, noticing how we were feeling, noticing how we changed our behaviours when we were inside the building and when we were outside it, and then leaving together as well.

This study demonstrated how well walking interviews work for visceral landscape studies. As a "bodily tactic" (Anderson, 2004: 254), it uses the physiological movement of the body in place as "an active trigger to prompt knowledge recollection and production" (2004: 254). I found that not only was there no shortage of conversation prompts in the environment, but that the method also allowed the questions around participants' bodily reactions to the mosque to be much more fruitful, since we were less removed from the space than in the pilot interviews, meaning participants could reflect on their sensations as they were happening rather than from memory.

Lastly, in conducting a visceral reading of the mosque landscape I developed a concept called sign tonality in order to better understand the visceral effects signage could have on people in the space. Sign tonality is the idea that signs can be read to have a "tone of voice", which the author may or may not have intended. I argue that one of the ways in which a reader responds to a sign is by interpreting the tone of voice with which it addresses them, and that paying attention to tone in signage can be a useful tool when reading landscapes through the visceral. A reader's judgement of the tone of voice of a sign is based on their visceral reaction to the sign, or how they feel when the sign "talks" to them. In this study, I use sign tonality to guide my categorization of mosque signage into a taxonomy, deciding on these categories based on what I thought the purpose of the sign was, but also based on my visceral reading of the tone of the sign. More importantly, however, my analysis showed how sign tonality contributed to atmospherization in a site.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, I experienced a wide range of emotions throughout the Houghton Mosque site visit in response to certain signs in the LL and features of the mosque's architecture, leading to a particular visceral reading of the landscape. I interpreted various signs to be written in particularly strict and unwelcoming tones of voice, and as a result, the cumulative visceral effect of the sign tonality in this mosque created feelings of trepidation, unease and dissatisfaction in me. The atmosphere in this mosque was collaboratively produced by the interaction between the existing signage and architecture and my own unique response to these elements. I thus concluded that the tone of signage can have an impact on how welcome or unwelcome people feel in a space, and also illustrated how sign tonality and atmospherization can form part of a visceral reading of a semiotic landscape.

8.5 Question 3: "How are bodies made to matter in the mosque?"

One of the main areas of interest in this study is around the significance of the human body in the semiotic landscape of the mosque, as well as the implications this significance has for

making people feel (un)welcome or (un)comfortable in the space. The third research question points to this by interrogating how bodies are made to matter by the mosque semiotic landscape. The study addresses this research question by means of three arguments, which will be discussed below.

The first is an argument I made based on the analysis of signage I conducted in Chapter 6. In this chapter I examined photographic data of signage from the *Injunctions* category of my taxonomy, which are signs that give commands to congregants or prohibit certain actions. My main finding with regard to this kind of signage is that in the mosque space, this signage actually regulates the human body while it is present in the space. For example, injunction signage tells congregants where to stand in the building, when to remove their shoes, or how to conduct certain rituals. I argue that these signs work together to create a system of rules about what is allowed in the mosque space and how behaviour in the space differs from what is acceptable outside of it. Here, the body matters in the space in that it is directly or indirectly related to what injunction signage is about.

The second argument regarding the body is related to the first. Based on my analysis of injunction signage, I argue that signage in the mosque LL I examined constructs the mosque as a space which does not tolerate dirt or disorder. They construct the mosque as clean – a place in which certain things associated with the body are not allowed, for example dirt, food/drink/smoking, or noise. At the same time, they construct congregants as having bodies that are sometimes dirty or disorderly. Disorder in the mosque (according to the LL) is frequently tied to the body – what the body wears, where it is placed, how it moves, the sounds it makes, and the messiness it brings with it. The body thus needs regulating before it can belong inside the mosque space, and this regulation is accomplished through injunction signage in the LL of the mosque.

Lastly, the body is significant in relation to the mosque because of the way social practices are understood to "inscribe" (Wiesse, 2019: 133) themselves onto their participants.

Affective practices in the mosque inscribe themselves into the body, shaping participants' habitus or their ways of behaving in the space. This repeated and continuous inscription is what allows practices to be re-enacted and turned into routines. In this study, I argue that experiencing the mosque space over and over in particular ways affects congregants' habitus or how they behave in the space. Repeated readings of sign tonality and atmospherization can imprint onto participants – for example, repeated experiences of uneasiness or discomfort in a particular mosque can lead to feeling of anxiety or avoidance of the space altogether. This was illustrated in Chapter 5 with my feelings of apprehension during the site visit at Houghton Mosque.

8.6 Question 4: "How does the semiotic and linguistic landscape of the mosque make women's bodies matter in the space in ways that men's bodies do not?"

I make three arguments in this thesis that address the question above. The first is that women congregants are marked and othered in the mosque space, and thus made to feel unwelcome. I argue that mosque spaces are designed with the assumption that men are the "default" worshippers in the space and the "unmarked" norm, whereas women are "marked", and their design needs are often an afterthought. This argument is based on the following findings: that women's prayer spaces are not always guaranteed, and when they do exist, they are most likely an offshoot of the main area, often smaller and peripheral; that wayfinding signage towards the prayer space is almost always directed at women; that signage depicting the human body is only gendered when it depicts women; and that women's prayer spaces are not exclusive – men are able to make use of these spaces for a range of reasons, whereas women are not free to use the men's spaces in the same way, if at all.

The second argument related to women's bodies in the mosque is that mosque signage sometimes constructs the woman's body in particular as disorderly. In Chapter 6, I analysed two instances in which women's bodies in particular were regulated, in relation to

menstruation and childcare. In both situations, women were asked not to enter or to leave the sacred space in certain circumstances: if they were menstruating, or if they had a child with them causing a disturbance. I argued that the LL of the mosque communicates to women that they do not belong in the space on these occasions because they are dirty or disorderly, and that this disorderliness is closely tied to their woman-ness.

The third argument I make that is relevant here is that much of the extra labour women have to do to access the mosque space is tied to their bodies. Participants talked about the energy they spent thinking about how to clothe their bodies before entering the mosque, thinking about how to move it into the building, or how to move it past men. They described the changes they felt happened to their bodies when they entered – how their voices changed into whispers, or how they tried to focus their thought patterns in certain ways. Talking about their bodies was thus an integral part of my participants' discussions of their experiences with the mosque.

8.7 Question 5: "How do women talk about their bodies in relation to the mosque?"

This final question was addressed primarily in Chapter 7, where I presented a selection of extracts from the interview data I collected for this project. This selection dealt largely with my participants talking about their experiences with accessing and entering mosque spaces. The purpose of this chapter was to discuss some of the affective responses that participants expressed in recounting their experiences. Through the analysis of these particular extracts, I found that feelings of anxiety and dread often affect the way women prepare to come to the mosque, and sometimes even lead to them avoiding the space altogether. Muslim women also often have to access the mosque through other Muslim men, creating an extra barrier to their access. Lastly, I examined the way one participant talked about her own process of entering the mosque and how her affective practice in this circumstance involves stepping into an entirely different persona to the one she carries on a day-to-day basis.

8.8 Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to highlight some contributions this study has made to the field of Linguistic Landscape Studies in particular. This study demonstrated not only the usefulness of autoethnography as a Visceral Landscapes methodology, but also the effectiveness of using affective practice theory for this perspective. In addition, it added to the LL scholarship adopting walking interviews as a way to better explore our movement through space. The concepts of sign tonality and the perlocutionary force of signs developed in Chapter 5 are novel additions to our understanding of the relationship between sign readers and sign writers, and proved useful for honing in on the visceral aspects of experiencing an LL and for unpacking the atmospherization of sites. A further novel contribution made by this study is the application of the concept of preference organization (from the field of conversation analysis) to our understanding of how space is organized. Lastly, this study adds to the growing body of Linguistic Landscape research that adopts a Visceral Landscapes perspective, placing the body at the centre of our discussions around the significance of place in our lives.

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FACULTY OF ARTS

Linguistics Department

University of the Western Cape

13 October 2016

Information Sheet: The semiotics of the mosque and its impact on self-perceptions of the feminine body

I, Mooniq Shaikjee, am a PhD student in the Department of Linguistics, at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. For this degree, I am exploring women's experiences in South African mosques. The aim of the study is to find out how praying in the mosque affects how Muslim women feel about themselves and their bodies.

In more detail, the study asks questions such as the following:

- What feelings do women experience when they go to the mosque? Are they specific to different areas of the mosque?
- How do these emotions that women feel link to their bodies? Do they associate certain feelings with certain parts of their bodies?
- Do they link certain parts of their bodies to certain spaces in the mosque, or to certain rituals or activities that take place in the mosque?
- Do women ever feel vulnerable or self-conscious about their bodies when they are in the mosque? Are these feelings linked to certain parts of the mosque?

You are kindly requested to participate in an interview because you can provide valuable insights for this research. It will take only about an hour of your time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to leave the study at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. If you choose to do so, your answers will not be included in the study. You are also allowed to choose not to answer any particular question or questions. Your responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. No one will have access to your anonymised responses without your permission. Your name will not be linked with the research materials and you will not be identified or identifiable in the reports or publications that result for the research without your permission.

My supervisor is Professor Christopher Stroud in the Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape, South Africa. He can be contacted at +27 21 959 2978 or at cstroud@uwc.ac.za.

My contact details are as follows: Mooniq Shaikjee, Linguistics Dept., UWC, phone 0813196033 or email mooniq.shaikjee@gmail.com.

This information sheet is for you to keep so that you can be aware of the purpose of the interview and so that you may have contact details for the researcher should you have any queries. With your signature on the attached document, you indicate that you understand the purpose of the exercise.

Regards,
Mooniq Shaikjee

Appendix II – Participant consent form

Consent Form University of the Western Cape

Research Project: The semiotics of the mosque and its impact on self-perceptions of the feminine body.

Researcher: Mooniq Shaikjee

Please initial box

1. I have read and I understand the information sheet explaining the above research project. ☐
2. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐
3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary ☐
4. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences, and that if I choose this, my answers will not be included in the study. (If I wish to withdraw I may contact the lead researcher at anytime). ☐
5. I understand that I can choose not to answer any particular question or questions. ☐
6. I understand that I am allowed to say no to the audio recording of my interview. ☐
7. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. ☐
8. I understand that no one will have access to my anonymised responses without my permission. ☐
9. I give permission for the researcher and her supervisor to have access to my anonymised responses. ☐
10. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and no one will be able to identify me in the reports or publications that will come from this research. ☐
11. I agree that the data collected from me can be used in future research. ☐
12. I agree to take part in the above research project. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant (*or legal representative*)	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of person taking consent *(If different from lead researcher)*	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Lead Researcher (*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*)	Date	Signature

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research purposes only.

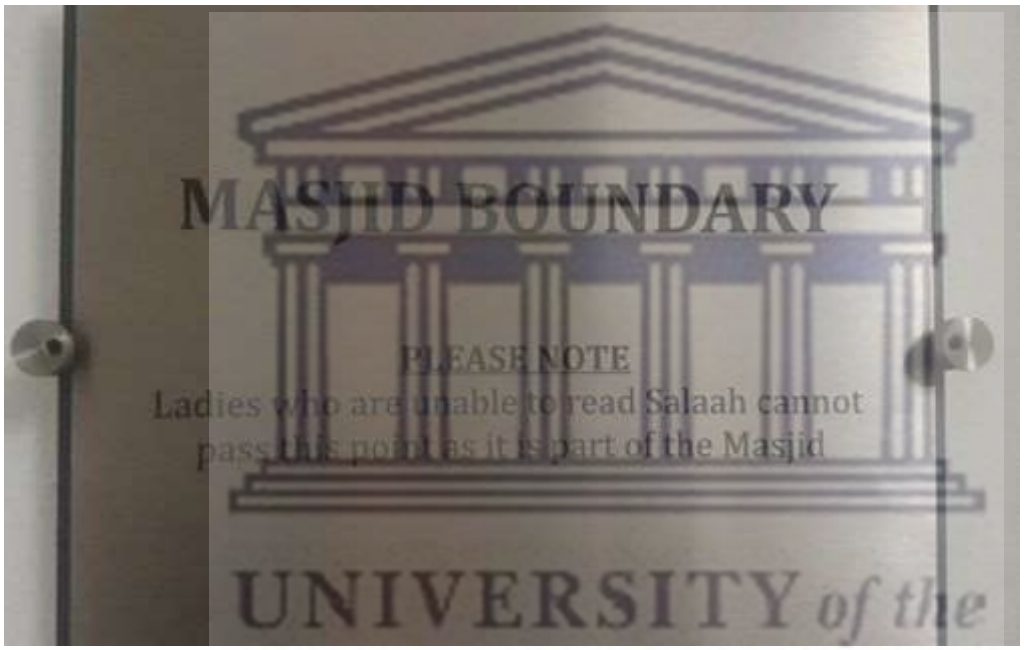
Researcher:	**Supervisor:**	**HOD:**
Ms. Mooniq Shaikjee Mobile: 081 319 6033 Email: mooniq.shaikjee@gmail.com	Professor Christopher Stroud Office: 021 9593746 Email: cstroud@uwc.ac.za	Professor Bassey Antia Mobile: 082 8154293 Office: 021 959 3090 Email: bantia@uwc.ac.za

Appendix III – Full Facebook discussion

Sumaya [redacted] *to* Women Of Waqf

June 1, 2018 ·

Thank you for this group! This is the sign that is up at the Houghton mosque. I want to make a new sign and replace it saying - "This is the house of Allah. All welcome". I hope signs like this at mosques (not to mention the attitude of imaams) changes inshaAllah. Coming from Cape Town to Johnnesburg has been a huge struggle on the mosque front. Again, thank you for this group and sorry for the rambling. Inshallah the Almighty showers mercy on you and blesses you abundantly 💝



63 Comments10 Shares

Comments

Zaheera [redacted] The sign in the ladies section says children under the age of 7 to stay at home😔...
Ameen to your Duaas!! May "signs" of welcome be abundant in all mosques!

Sumaya [redacted] At the West street Houghton mosque? Or the big white one I am talking about near killarney?

Zaheera [redacted] Sumaya [redacted] yes the big white one near Killarney. That is West street :)

Sumaya [redacted] Zaheera [redacted] Ya Allah. Our women and children want to go to the mosque (not a nightclub or bar etc etc) and then they meet these signs 💔💔💔😭😭😭

Crystal [redacted] Solidarity from Los Angeles sisters!!!

Bahia [redacted] Imagine we had that sign in ct with my 5kids all under the age of 9!

Women Of Waqf You should take take that sign down and certainly replace it with a better one. Insha'allah if we all do our part we can change the status quo ameen.

Sumaya [redacted] It's a metal sign mounted to the wall so need to make a metal sign to replace. InshaAllah will go measure it soon ameen ameen

Women Of Waqf Ameen thuma ameen! Keep fighting the good fight.

Crystal [redacted] BURN IT WITH A BLOWTORCH

Chloë [redacted] Throw it in the bin with the rest of the garbage

Fathima [redacted] So masjids have funds to blow on useless signs these days 😳

Yasmin [redacted] Allah make it easy for our sisters in JHB! I don't understand how this is the state of the masajid 😭

Alhamdulillah in Pretoria (Laudium/Erasmia particularly) we are spoilt for choice for ladies facilities.. I can't fathom that our cities are so close yet the mentalities are so different!!!

Faiza [redacted]

Fatima [redacted] Houghton has a womens prayer space.This sign is there to inform women who are in the state of haidh (menses) where the boundary of the masjid is as women in the state of haidh as well as any person male or female in the state of janabah (ritual impurity) are not allowed to enter a masjid. This is due to injunctions from Quraan and Hadith

“O you who believe! Approach not As-Salaah (the prayer) when you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter, nor when you are in a state of Janaaba (i.e. in a state of sexual impurity and have not yet taken a bath), except when travelling on the road (without enough water, or just passing through a mosque), till you wash your whole body”

[al-Nisa’ 4:43]

He (meaning the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) commanded us to bring out on the two Eids the adolescent girls and the virgins in seclusion, but he commanded the menstruating women to stay away from the prayer-place of the

Muslims." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 324; Muslim, 890. Risaalat al-Dima' al-Tabee'iyyah li'l-Nisa', p. 52-53.

Please try to be objective in your posts, try to explain the full picture, try to understand and convey the full reality of the situation in light of the Shariah.

Noorjan [redacted] Asalaamu'alaykum fatima. Thank you for sharing the one opinion on this matter. There are however varying opinions as to whether women are allowed in the mosque during menstruation. You can obviously follow the opinion that aligns with your heart but in the spirit of educating ourselves and becoming objective muslimah's please read the following article which speaks to women being allowed in the masjid based on ahadeeth. http://www.dar-alifta.org/Foreign/ViewFatwa.aspx?ID=10509

dar-alifta.org

Fatawa - Are menstruating women allowed to enter the mosque?

Fatawa - Are menstruating women allowed to enter the mosque?

Fatima [redacted] Wslkm ukhti. I understand that they may be different fiqh viewpoints, but in my humble understanding that a person in a major state of impurity should rather not enter the house of Allah SWT unless there is necessity. The objection to this poster, in my opinion, unnecessarily detracts from the true purpose of having masaajid more accessible to women. Maybe you can politely ask the board directly to rephrase the poster, with footnotes and objective explanation on both viewpoints, especially with what is recommended and what is of neccesity. I would not object to a poster that, for example, states only one view point on making Sajdah Tilawat, if I know that is what the viewpoint in the area is. I could recommend that the other be explained.

Sumaya [redacted] I have engaged with the mosque management and they were not open to other viewpoints on this - I am happy to screen my multiple emails to them about this. It's easy to say let's respect viewpoints and let's be open to viewpoints but when the male sections in mosques (not making this about one mosque, as issue is bigger) dont have equivalent signs in their male sections (not that I would want this) and when this is enforced on women (I was told there use to be a paper sign and women kept taking it down so they put a metal sign that is bolted to the wall) then this becomes a toxic mix of patriarchy masked as religiosity

Fatima [redacted] Thanks for this, it definitely helps to put the context behind the specific post for a bystander on Facebook :) .

Shaakira [redacted] Fatima [redacted] salaams Fatima. I had a look at the hadith you quoted and Maybe we've used different sources but i think it's important to verify for onesself first. The one by bukhari, 324, was on something else related to menstruation. With regards to the reference by Muslim, Women were not commanded to stay away. Please see pic as reference :)

Fatima [redacted] Shaakira [redacted] asslkm Ya ukhti. Please have a look at all three Hadith that are classified together. The command, while allowing the menstruating women to attend the Eid prayer, was that they do not go on to the Musallah (prayer place). A fiqh ruling is not based on one hadith, but rather all Hadith that speak of the matter are taken into account holistically. The masjid boundaries are, in the similar sense, the Musallah and prayer place.

Crystal [redacted] Ladies, we need to get away from viewing menstruation as a "state of impurity," it is not. Our blood is not dirty it is LIFE GIVING. Men invent rules to police our bodies and yes even transmit false hadith. When the Prophet commanded that women should not be prevented from going to the mosque, he did not say "all except menstruating women."

When understanding our religion we must do so through the lens of justice - what will establish more justice? How does preventing women from entering the mosque establish justice? It does not. It only seeks to demoralized and punish women form an entirely natural

Crystal [redacted] For experiencing an entirely natural state of being. They are attempting to oppress women on the basis of our natural cycle of life. This is the worst munafiq strategy.

Who taught you that your body was dirty? Men. Time to let that idea go

Fadeela [redacted] I share the same view that it is better for menstruating women to stay away from the mosque. We are clearly prevented from praying during this time. I do acknowledge the difference of opinion, and I think the wording of the poster can be revised to take that into account

Zainab [redacted] If it doesn't sit well with the Feminist than its a big problem and the rest of us women need saving!!!
Just leave us to be!
May Allah SWT protect us from your evil western feminists ways

Sumaya [redacted] Zainab [redacted] I wish knowledge and light upon you

Nahida [redacted] The verses you cited command not to pray in this state. They don't command us to not go to the masjid or enter the area in this state. The entire world is a masjid. Your logic here is not remotely sound.

Shaakira [redacted] Fatima [redacted] i agree with you 100% when you say that the hadith should be considered holistically. I'm just trying to say that the hadith by bukhari (324) had nothing to do with what was quoted above when looking at the section of menstruation. Hadith are not a research paper that you can put together and state all sources at the end, unless it is agreed upon.

Fatima [redacted] Shaakira [redacted] maaf, I think my comment did not get posted on Bukhari 324. Please see the picture attached.

Umm [redacted] You should print out enough copies with your preferred quotes about women being allowed to go the mosque, maybe even fatawa that state women have a

right to the mosque. Stick it over the metal sign, if they take it down - replace it. This sexist circus has to stop. Men do not own the masjid.

Amreena [redacted] Wow. This is disgusting. There should be a petition going around to remove this sign.

Crystal [redacted] How about arranging a day where the women of the community call the mosque consistently reporting complaints about the sign with supporting evidence for why it is haram to ban ANY woman from the masjid

Crystal [redacted] For God's sake a man peed in the Masjid and the Prophet didn't stop him

> Umm [redacted] He was blind
>
> Umm [redacted] He was from the village area
>
> Crystal [redacted] Exactly you never know what a person is going through
>
> Zakiya [redacted] Subhanallah. We should all go and check the context of the hadeeth. This hadeeth was about a man who was a villager and a new muslim. He was later taught the correct way but none other than the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) himself
>
> Crystal [redacted] Subhanallah- the point of the Hadith is that you don't know what people are going through so don't judge them and their behavior in the mosque until you approach them privately and discern the issue. Islam is not about public censure.
>
> Aayesha [redacted] When the sign is put up its to INFORM OR TEACH the person entering if they maybe do not know that they cant enter during menses

Jennifer [redacted] Unfortunately I do not have my fiqh-us-sunnah books with me where I live, but I remember reading two things that stuck with me. One was that the Prophet (s) asked A'isha (ra) to enter the mosque to fetch something for him and she replied that she was menstruating, his reply was that the impurity was not in her hand and she was able to enter. The second story that remained with me was of a woman who had continued bleeding and used to sit over a bowl in the mosque and listen to the teachings. And yes, this may be viewed as an illness / medical condition rather than menstruation and therefore subject to different fiqh rules. However what stood out for me was that (i.) her condition (a gynaelogical one) was known; (ii.) people knew how she managed it. Now think about the practical issues involved in this … she was not prohibited from passing through or remaining in the mosque, in contrast with the attitudes expressed in the sign.

> Shifa [redacted] Would love sources for these! Want to look them up too ☺

Abdoeragmaan [redacted] Caution to those who are trying to act outside of what the scholars have already made ijtihad upon. Follow one madhab, when in difficulty

take dispensation in the others but be very careful not to follow you own hawah and discredit all the valid views.
Which of the illustrious scholars of the 4 schools permitted women or men to enter a masjid while in a state of major ritual impurity without a valid excuse.
Fight for your place in the masjid but don't demand that which is not warranted

Shana [redacted] Wait...my understanding of this☝ particular sign is that women who have their menstrual cycle must not enter🙅 why the big fuss? Personally i would rather stay home during my menses unless its a lecture i want to go listen to...in that case bring a blanket and sit at the back..

2 years ago Mufti Ismail Menk passed a fatwa saying (something like) women on their menses can enter a masjid provided they sit on a blanket…and further back so as not to be in the way of other women coming for prayers…

> Abdoeragmaan [redacted] Most masjids have a space where they could sit that is not masjid. I wouldn't just take a fatwah, our scholars have ruled upon this centuries ago and nothing has changed in the human anatomy for this to be changed except that technology has allowed us to listen to the lecture far away from the salah area of the masjid with a live televised broadcast or podcast. Facebook Live. That in my view was an unnecessary since our ulama in the times where there was absolutely nothing to transmit the lecture still didn't validate it

Pumzalu [redacted] Im confused.. As far as i know.. Women get greater reward performing salah in their houses than in masjid... Why would a women want less reward and go to mosques?

> Zenzokuhle [redacted] And the same hadith Vusi also say that but if woman want to go to masajid then do not forbid her and give her permission!
>
> Pumzalu [redacted] Zenzokuhle [redacted] i agree.. But if i can get more thawaab reading at home.. Than why not
>
> Pumzalu [redacted] Nothing wrong going to masjid.. But pls see where greater reward is given..
>
> Abdoeragmaan [redacted] Vusi u correct, but for men it's the reverse. And have u ever seen a man insulted for performing his salah at home. Also have we ever seen men kicked out of the masjid because it's better to make ur Sunnah at home.
>
> Soraiya [redacted] It's not just about prayer. It's about building community. The musjid is a place where people seeking Allah (SWT) gather. Our faith puts a strong emphasis on community but without being able to regularly visit the musjid, pray together, participate in programmes etc it is very hard to build the bonds of faith between women. My home town generally restricts women's access to the musjid (similar cultural attitudes to Joburg) but I've also lived in cities with women that are active in the musjid, and regularly attend. In these

cities there is a much better sense of community. The Muslim community is healthier and there are many young people keeping Islam alive. That's not true in my hometown where women have been excluded from the musjid after they finish childhood madressa. At home, there is an increasing alienation from faith because there is no place to bind people together.

Omar [redacted] Is there actually a Hadith about this?

Aayesha [redacted] its a simple sign telling women that if they napaak they can not enter the masjid. WHY is it made into such a big deal? CLEARLY most women dont even know the rules of the masjid but they want to go read namaz there. MENSES IS IMPURE. so much so that u cant fast, read or touch quran, cant read salah, cannot enter the room or ghusl khana of a deceased person, etc .. CAN YOU NOT understand the simple reason of the board being put up? oh let me GUESS, WOMENS RIGHTS.. next yourl will be fighting that having a seperate womens and mens BATHROOM is being SEXIST.. AND PROBABLY INSIST FOR LADIES RIGHTS TO MENS BATHROOMS😂😂😂

Jamila [redacted] The best salaah I heard today read by moulana Choonara