THESIS

CONSTRUCTING AND PRESENTING THE SELF THROUGH PRIVATE SPHERE DRESS:

AN INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF SAUDI ARABIAN WOMEN

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2014

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ABSTRACT

CONSTRUCTING AND PRESENTING THE SELF THROUGH PRIVATE SPHERE DRESS:

AN INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF SAUDI ARABIAN WOMEN

The purpose of this interpretive study was to explore how married Saudi Arabian women construct and present the self through their choice of dress for the private sphere. Of particular interest was the marital dyad as a context for Saudi women's presentation of self through dress within the private sphere. The work was situated within the interactionist and dramaturgical traditions. Data were collected via in-depth interviews with fifteen married Saudi couples and were analyzed using constant comparison processes. Two manuscripts were developed through the analysis stage. The first manuscript focused upon three key themes related to Saudi women's use of private sphere dress to construct and present the self: (a) conceptualizing the desired self, (b) making sense of the marketplace: the role of traditional and Western dress in mobilizing desired selves, and (c) looking glasses: the role of others in mobilizing desired selves. Findings revealed that as they presented the self through dress within the private sphere, Saudi women engaged in a complex process of navigating Islamic teachings and Saudi cultural conventions, shifting cultural mores, and the diverse expectations of others. The second manuscript explored the marital dyad as a specific context for Saudi women's presentation of self through dress within the private sphere. Three themes were identified: (a) meanings that Saudi husbands and wives associated with traditional and Western dress for the private sphere, (b) "his place" and "her place" in shaping private sphere dress decisions, and (c) forging the private sphere self through lived interactions between Saudi husbands and wives. Findings revealed that there was

some variation with regard to the roles assumed by husbands and wives in guiding wives' private

sphere dress decisions and in the value wives accorded their husbands' appraisals of their

appearances. The data did, however, provide evidence in support of the interactionist premise

that the private sphere selves the wives constructed through dress were shaped, in part, through

their interactions with their husbands.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Finally, I am most grateful to my husband Ahmad Samman for his love, encouragement, and great patience at all times. Without him I wouldn't be able to finish this journey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditional dress (sometimes also referred to as "ethnic dress") encompasses all items, garments, and modifications of the body that incarnate the past traditions and members of a group in order to preserve and provide significance for a cultural heritage (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Traditional dress not only defines its wearer in terms of ethnic or cultural origin, it also provides insights into cultural values and ideals (Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Rovine, 2009). In Saudi Arabia, traditional dress has historically played a significant role in the daily lives of women (Long, 2005; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). In the public sphere – that is, anywhere outside of the home where women are in the presence of males who are not considered to be next of kin – Saudi women are required by law to practice *hijab* or veiling (Le Renard, 2008). For Saudi Arabian women, observing *hijab* includes the wearing of traditional forms of dress (e.g., the *abbaya* with a head-scarf and *burqah* or *niqab*) that cover the entire body except for the hands and eyes (Goodwin, 2003; Kelly, 2010; Long, 2005; Omair, 2009; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). These forms of traditional public dress assist in the separation of men and women, which in Saudi Arabia, constitutes a religious and a cultural obligation (Doumato, 2003; Kelly, 2010; Long, 2005; Omair, 2009; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). Additionally, in Saudi Arabia practicing *hijab* fulfills a familial obligation; the husband's role in the family as provider and decision maker places him in a key role of influence (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Le Renard, 2008), and in some families, husbands may play a salient role in their wives' decisions about public sphere dress (e.g., to what extent they should cover their faces in public, as the *burqah* and *niqab* provide differing degrees of coverage) (Al-Munajjed,1997; Bullock, 2003).

Dress conventions for Saudi women are different, however, within the private sphere, which encompasses women's interactions with their next of kin (male or female) and/or with women to whom they are not related. These interactions may occur within private homes or gender-segregated locations (i.e., spaces where only women are allowed). So defined, the private sphere of Saudi women encompasses a broad range of situations and contexts, including their interactions with other women at gender-segregated schools, workplaces, shopping centers, and events (e.g., weddings, holiday celebrations) (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Le Renard, 2008). In contrast to their public sphere dress, Saudi women's private sphere dress is not mandated by law, but rather, is open to individual choice and may include traditional Saudi styles (e.g., modest, long dresses with long sleeves), or in recent years, Western styles (Le Renard, 2008).

The bulk of the research exploring Saudi Arabian women's dress has focused upon that worn in the public sphere. Taken together, work in this area has provided detailed descriptions of garments worn in the public sphere (e.g., the *abbaya*) and has explored diverse perspectives on the practice of *hijab*/veiling (e.g., Doumato, 1992; Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Pharaon, 2004; Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). In contrast, relatively little is known about Saudi Arabian women's private sphere dress practices, perhaps owing to the relative impenetrability of outside researchers into the private sphere of Saudi Arabian women. Within the Arabic language research literature, a few studies provide accounts of the characteristics of women's traditional, private sphere dress in Saudi Arabia, with care taken to distinguish the characteristics of regional Saudi dress (e.g., Al-Bassam & Sedqi, 1999; Ali 1993; Iskandarani, 2006; Khalil,1991; Memeny, 1996). However, research exploring Saudi Arabian women's perspectives on private sphere dress is quite limited. And, the work that has been conducted has yielded findings that may not aptly reflect the lived realities of contemporary Saudi Arabian

women, as it has been conducted by Western researchers employing *a priori* categories for purposes of data collection (e.g., Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). Additionally, this work is rather dated; since these studies were conducted in the 1980s, the forms of mass media (Western and otherwise) available in Saudi Arabia have increased exponentially, as have the number of women seeking higher education, traveling abroad, and working outside of the home (Fatany, 2007; Mernissi, 2005; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2009; Zuhur, 2005). Together, these factors have exposed Saudi Arabian women to many new ideas and possibilities for self-presentation. In fact, according to some, these expanded possibilities for self-expression through dress pose a quagmire for contemporary Saudi Arabian women, who experience a tension between adopting fashions and behaviors promoted as desirable within the Westernized media and adopting more conservative and moralistic fashions and behaviors that traditionally have been valued within their native culture (Zuhur, 2005). As such, it is important to consider how these new ways of thinking and being may shape Saudi Arabian women's expressions of the self through private sphere dress. Finally, also missing from the extant literature is a consideration of the influence that Saudi Arabian husbands may exert upon their wives' construction of identity through dress in the private sphere. Although prior work has suggested that Saudi Arabian husbands may play a role in their wives' decisions about public sphere dress (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003), researchers have not explored the potential role of husbands in shaping self-presentations in the private sphere (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003).

Purpose Statement

The overarching purpose of this interpretive study was to explore how married Saudi Arabian women construct and present the self through their choice of dress for the private

sphere. Of particular interest were women's views on traditional versus Westernized dress for the private sphere. Also of interest was the role of others in shaping Saudi Women's presentation of self through dress giving particular attention to the husbands' roles by considering the marital dyad as a context for Saudi women's presentation of self through dress within the private sphere.

Research Questions and Approach

1. How do married Saudi Arabian women use dress to construct the self within context of the private sphere?

2. What meanings do married Saudi Arabian women and men associate with various forms of private sphere dress available within the contemporary Saudi marketplace, including traditional and Western forms of dress? How do these meanings shape married Saudi women's self-presentations within the private sphere?

3. How do important others in married Saudi Arabian women's lives shape their presentations of self through private sphere dress?

4. What role do Saudi husbands play in shaping married Saudi women's dress for the private sphere? How do interactions between Saudi wives and husbands lay a foundation for Saudi women's self-presentations through private sphere dress?

To answer these questions, a grounded theory approach and in–depth interviews were adopted. Grounded theory focuses upon generating meaningful understanding of events, especially human action and experience, and thus, is well-suited for the present exploration.

Theoretical Framework

Three related theoretical frameworks– symbolic interaction theory, the dramaturgical perspective, and Gergen's (2011) notion of the saturation of the self – provided a rich foundation for an interpretive study exploring married Saudi Arabian women's presentation of the self

through private sphere dress. Symbolic interaction theory and dramaturgy explore the ways in which individuals use dress to convey identity to others and also explore the ways in which the self is "collaboratively manufactured" through interactions with significant others, such as one's spouse (Goffman, 1959, p. 253). Gergen's (2011) work on the saturation of the self lends insights relative to how individuals may experience sometimes conflicting meanings – such as those circulating within contemporary Saudi society – about how to be and look.

Limitations

Due to Saudi Arabia's vast size, the differences among the cultures represented from one region to another, the relatively small participant sample size, and the nature of the methods used to gather data, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all Saudi Arabian women. Producing generalizable findings, however, is not a goal of interpretive research; the aim of interpretive research is to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them.

Definitions

Identity: the reflection of one's location within social context, (Stone, 1962); an unfixed, constructed and reconstructed presentation of self in relation to the diverse realities faced every day (Gergen, 1991).

Public Sphere: anywhere outside of the home where women are in the presence of males who are not considered to be next of kin – Saudi women are required by law to practice *hijab* or veiling (Le Renard, 2008). (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003; Le Renard, 2008).

Private Sphere: women's interactions with their next of kin (male or female) and/or with women to whom they are not related within (a) private homes or (b) gender-segregated locations

(i.e., spaces where only women are allowed). (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003; Le Renard, 2008).

Dress: the "act of altering [one's] appearance" (Kaiser, 1998, p. 5) includes intentional modifications to the color, texture, shape/size, and/or scent of the body as well as the addition of enclosures and attachments to the body as well as the processes of planning, contemplating, or evaluating the social consequences of one's appearance (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992; Kaiser, 1998).

Traditional/Ethnic Dress: all items, garments, and modifications of the body that incarnate the past traditions and members of a group in order to preserve and provide significance for a cultural heritage (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995; Iskandrani, 2006).

Western dress: dress that takes its cue primarily from European costume and art (Craik, 1994; Niessen, 2011) and frequently looks to previously fashionable styles for design inspiration (Craik, 1994).

Postmodern dress: dress that borrows from multiple cultures and can arguably be defined as global fashion (Kaiser, 1998); often encompasses design characteristics inspired by many different cultures; characterized by some as superficial and lacking in cultural individuality (Craik, 1994; Morgado, 1996); changes quickly (Morgado, 1996); and challenges modern rules and conventions for dressing, encouraging difference and diversity in style (Morgado, 1996).

Arabic Gulf Country: all of the Gulf Cooperation Council states: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Omen; countries sharing common faith, language, cultural traditions and geographical areas (Long, 2005).

*Abbaya***:** an ankle-length black robe that covers the entirety of a woman's body except for the hands, feet, and face (Doumato, 2003; Kelly, 2010; Long, 2005; Omair, 2009; Winter & Chevrier, 2008).

*Niqab***:** a sheer fabric which leaves an opening for the eyes only (Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Omair, 2009).

*Burqah***:** a sheer fabric that covers the entirety of the face (Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Omair, 2009).

*Hijab***:** an Arabic word which means "cover"; A general term for the head-scarf in which the head and hair are covered but the face is left exposed (Omair, 2009); In Saudi Arabia, a full-body cover including at least the *abbaya* and the head-scarf, often the *burqah* or *naqib* as well (Al-Ahmed, 2000; Mernissi, 1975; Nasr, 2003).

Veil: a collective term for the wearing of the *abbaya*, head-scarf, and either the *burqah* or *niqab* (Al-Munajjed, 1997).

*Allah***:** the sole God of Islamic faith (Nasr, 2003).

Islamic Faith: a monotheistic religion guided by the Quran, the written world of *Allah* and the Hadith, the words and deeds of Prophet Mohammed (Nasr, 2003).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is organized into four major sections. Section one focuses upon the background of Saudi Arabian culture, including the teachings of the Islamic faith and the changes that modernization has brought to the country's traditions. Section two explores gender roles within Saudi Arabia, focusing specifically upon roles within the family and the changing role of women in education and the work force. Section three provides an overview of women's dress practices in Saudi Arabia. In section four, the theoretical framework guiding the study is presented. The review concludes with a summary of existing work.

Background on Saudi Arabia

The region of Saudi Arabia has been inhabited for 6,000 years, but the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not officially established until 1932 (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Long, 2005; Pompea, 2002). Thus, Saudi Arabia is a relatively young country in terms of its historical founding date. However, the country has a rich history in the area of dress and textiles that reflects the region's enduring traditions, which took root long before the country was officially founded. The region of Saudi Arabia also is the birthplace of Islam and has been the religious center for Muslims since the inception of the Islamic faith in the seventh century (Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). For this reason, the cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia, including its dress, cannot be separated from its religious ties to the Islamic faith.

Islamic Faith

Saudi Arabia is the center of the Islamic faith wherein are located two holy cities– Mecca and Medina. Thus, Saudi Arabian lifestyle and culture have been shaped in large part by the religion of Islam and the life example of Islam's last Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad.

The Prophet Muhammad was born in 570 A.D. in the holy city of Mecca, located on the Arabian Peninsula and now found within the country of Saudi Arabia. When he was forty years old, Prophet Muhammad had a revelation from God through the angel Gabriel. This revelation continued for twenty-three years. In 610 AD, Muhammad began a prophetic mission as he traveled much of Saudi Arabia preaching the revelation of God. Through his travels, Muhammad introduced the people of the Arabian Peninsula to new ways of living and thinking that have been instrumental in shaping Arabian culture. Today, we know his revelation – memorized then recorded by scribes – as the Quran (Berkey, 2003; Dashti, 1994; Harper, 2003; Nasr, 2003). The Quran includes the "Five Pillars" of Islam – faith, prayer, "*Zakat*" or concern for the needy, self-purification or fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able – which constitute the guiding principles for Muslim life.

The base of Muslim faith is monotheism, or the belief that there is no God but *Allah* (Nasr, 2003). Though the Prophet Muhammad is not worshiped as God, he is viewed as *Allah's* last human messenger, and the citizens of Saudi Arabia have been strongly influenced by his life (Doumato, 2003). Saudis maintain a close emotional tie to the Prophet Muhammad, who lived on the land that is now considered Saudi soil. As a result, observance of Islamic teachings in Saudi Arabia often expands beyond standard traditional practices (Goodwin, 2003; Harper, 2003); Islam, rather than being considered a religion, is integrated into every facet of Saudi Arabian life (Long, 2005; Nars, 2003; Wilson, 2004).

Influenced by the Islamic *Hanbali* school of thought, the majority of the Saudi Arabian population follows *Wahhabi* teachings, representing the strictest doctrine of Islam (Champion, 2003; Pompea, 2002). *Wahhabism* was founded in the eighteenth century as a religious reformation to bring the peoples of Saudi Arabia back into the graces of *Allah* after a period of

disavowment (Al-Rasheed, 2007; Long, 2005; Omair, 2009; Pompea, 2002; Wilson, 2004; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). *Wahhabi* school interpretation dictates that the Quran and Hadith are elementary texts and rejects any newer interpretations (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003; Pompea, 2002; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

Because, within Saudi Arabia, Islam is viewed as not only a religion, but a system of law and a way of living (Keating, 2004; Long, 2005; Nasr, 2003; Wilson, 2004), there is no separation of church and state (Ayoob, 2008; Long, 2005; Pharaon, 2004; Pompea, 2002). For instance, the teachings of Islam are integrated into primary and secondary school curricula (Rugh, 2002). The government also has mandates and restrictions pertaining to many areas of public and private life, including driving, gender separation, and travel without a male guardian escort (Doumato, 1992; Goodwin, 2003; Rugh, 2002; Wilson, 2004). Islam also dictates women's rights. Under Islamic law, women have the right to refuse a proposed marriage; to inherit, own and dispose of property, to seek an education, and to work in one of several occupations, providing this work does not negatively affect familial responsibilities (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Hamdan, 2005; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). Further, the *Wahhabi* doctrine, as well as Saudi law, mandates that when in public, Saudi Arabian women cover the entirety of their body with a veil, excluding only the eyes and hands (Long, 2005; Pompea, 2002; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). However, it must be noted that the public dress differs greatly from the private dress that is worn by women both underneath the veil and within the confines of the home (Bullock, 2003; Kahf, 2008). Unlike women's public dress, their private dress is not subject to government sanctions, and the choice of style is left to the wearer.

Population and Geography

Saudi Arabia's strong tie to the religion of Islam influences the population and age dynamics of the country. The Prophet Muhammad is upheld as a role model to all Muslims regarding how they should live and interact with others. In the name of religious guidance, Muhammad encouraged people to have large families and praised women who gave birth to many children (Binothaimeen, 2002; Dahl, 1997), which, in turn, has inspired Saudi Arabia's burgeoning population. The median age of the population is fifteen – one of the lowest in the world – and the birthrate is ranked among the highest in the world (Long, 2005; Wilson, 2004). This high birthrate supports a steadily growing population: in 2005, the population was roughly 23 million (Long, 2005), and had grown to at least 27 million by 2010 (Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2010; Kutbi, 2010).

A large country, Saudi Arabia is over 770,000 square miles and covers 80% of the Arabian Peninsula (Long, 2005; Pompea, 2002). Within this land mass, there are six separate regions: *Najd*, *Hijaz*, *Asir*, *Najran*, *Al-Jawf*, and the Eastern Province (Long, 2005; Wilson, 2004). Each region has unique styles and forms of traditional dress (Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004); most of which are quickly falling out of favor among the women of Saudi Arabia (Fatany, 2007; Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Yamani, 2004). This is perhaps due to several factors, including the advancement and increased freedom of Saudi Arabian women (Fatany, 2007; Pharaon, 2004) as well as the increasingly strong ties to the West through means of the oil economy and globalization.

Economy

In 1938, a large reserve of oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia (Pompea, 2002; Wilson, 2004). After World War II, this oil was exported in large quantities and generated revenues for

the Saudi government that brought about large-scale economic changes (Harper, 2003; Keating, 2004; Long, 2005; Pompea, 2002; Presley, 2002), including an influx of foreign workers entering the country and the introduction of capitalism.

When oil was initially discovered, Saudi Arabia lacked an indigenous population with the technological skills and labor expertise imperative to the establishment of Saudi Arabia's oil industries (Shoult & Flack, 2002). To fill this gap, ARAMCO, the large oil monopoly in Saudi Arabia, flooded the country with experienced, foreign oil labor (Nezami, 2003). Though the Saudi government has focused on educating and returning work to nationals, even today 8,000 out of ARAMCO's 54,000 employees are Americans, Europeans, and Asians (Simmons, 2011). This steady flow of foreign workers has opened Saudi Arabia to new influences (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Harper, 2003; Jerichow, 2003; Keating, 2004; Pompea, 2002; Wilson, 2004). Foreign workers entering the country bring with them their families, customs, traditions and comforts of home, which, in turn, influence Saudi households (Nezami, 2003; Pakka, 2006). For instance, customs foreign to Saudi culture such as the eating of meals at a table with silverware have been adopted by Saudi families (Pakka, 2006).

Saudi Arabia's foreign–run oil companies also introduced capitalism to the country. Saudi Arabia does not, however, practice a true form of capitalism (Wilson, 2004; Champion, 2003). The form of capitalism present in Saudi Arabia is shaped in large part by the country's history, religion, and conservative social foundations and does not allow for a truly open economy (Champion, 2003). For example, the Saudi government has control over the market and takes half of all oil revenues. However, the government does not control foreign exchange, encourages private businesses, and limits trade barriers (Champion, 2003; Wilson, 2004). Functions of capitalism aside, there is no doubt that this economy has provided Saudi Arabians

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with a much higher level of disposable income than they had experienced before the discovery of oil. This, in turn, has afforded Saudis the ability to enter the materialistic world where the purchase of new products is encouraged. Relatedly, Saudis have begun to adopt new forms of private sphere dress, owing in part to increased access to disposable income and in part to increased exposure to diverse consumer products, some of which have been introduced by foreign workers (Long, 2005; Pakka, 2006; Yamani, 2004). Of interest in the present study is whether these trends may have supported the shift from traditional styles to more globally recognized Western fashions.

Culture

Family is key to a healthy Saudi culture. According to Islam, family is not only a biological, but also a social and a religious unit (Dahl, 1997; Nasr, 2003). Dress is an outward expression of one's values and morals. Therefore, immodest dress is considered destructive to family units and marriage bonds (Al-Dabbagh, 2006). In Saudi Arabia, the familial unit is strong and ties between children and parents are carried throughout life; children are always close to their kin, even when great distances separate them (Long, 2005; Wilson, 2004). Because of this closeness, family events are major occasions. The dress choice for an event, such a wedding or baby shower, is culturally charged by competition for "best dressed" (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Kelly, 2010). Such events provide women with the opportunity to see and discuss one another (Al-Munajjed, 1997), and many women will spend large sums of money on dresses and accessories in an attempt to outshine the other women at these events (Kelly, 2010). The interest in always having the newest and most expensive fashions may contribute to the growing desire for Western dress and to a waning interest in more traditional styles.

Gender Roles and Western Influences

The religion of Islam mandates a strict separation of non-relative, adult (post-pubescent) males and females in schools, mosques, work places, and other areas of public and private life (Al-Dabbagh, 2006; Doumato, 1992; Goodwin, 2003; Pompea, 2002). In all public occasions, separation is carried out by the wearing of a veil to shield a woman's body from the male gaze (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Quran 33:59). The veil acts as both a physical and symbolic partition between the sexes (Bullock, 2003).

Within Saudi Arabia, traditional gender role expectations for men and women differ in significant ways. Men are associated with affairs outside of the home and women are thought to "reign" within the home (Nasr, 2003, p. 102). Further, women's lives are restricted in many ways by Saudi law; they are not allowed to drive, are required to cover their bodies in public, and must be accompanied by a male relative when traveling in public areas (Doumato, 2003; Goodwin, 2003; Keating, 2004; Wilson, 2004; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). However, as discussed below, Saudi Arabian women are gaining access to more freedoms, particularly in the arenas of education, career opportunities, and marriage (Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2009; Al-Tamimi, 2004; Fatany, 2007; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). Very recently, in fact, women have gained the right to vote and hold office in the country's top advisory board (Said, 2011). For Saudi Arabian women, this is a huge advance toward having their voices heard (Jamjoom & Levs, 2011).

Education of Women

With the passage of time, women in Saudi Arabia have gained increased access to education. The first private schools for girls became available in 1929, but these were only accessible to girls from elite families (Alamri, 2007; Hamdan, 2005; Wilson, 2004). Beginning with the rule of King Faysal ibn Abd al Aziz in the 1960s, however, women were allowed and

encouraged to become educated in public primary schools (Alamri, 2007; Prokop, 2005). Since their inception, all public schools for girls have been financially supported by the Saudi government– a practice that continues today (Hamdan, 2005; Wilson, 2004). On all levels, the number of educated women in Saudi Arabia has greatly increased in the last three to four decades (Al-Faisal, 2005; Alamri, 2007; Al-Munajjed, 1997; Pompea, 2002; Prokop, 2005). The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency reported that in 1969 only 126,581 girls were attending primary and secondary schools, while the number for the same statistic jumped to 3,060,767 in 2010 (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, 2011).

Riyadh's King Saud University was the first university to open a women's campus in 1979 (Hamdan, 2005). Since that time, many other public universities have developed women's campuses. Private colleges for women also are in operation. Together, these facilities have greatly increased women's opportunities to seek higher education (Hamdan, 2005). According to recent statistics compiled by the Saudi government, women constitute 62% of students enrolled in higher education (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2009), exceed men in graduation rates (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, 2011), and carry 21% of the scholarships given to students to study abroad (Advancement of Saudi Arabian Women, 2009; Wilson, 2004). In particular, funding to study abroad has provided Saudi Arabian women expanded opportunities to experience new cultures and has likely contributed to the changing styles of private sphere dress adopted by Saudi Arabian women, as these women observe and emulate the fashions they see outside of Saudi Arabia.

Women in the Workforce

Once kept out of the workforce due to factors such as a lack of education and social barriers prohibiting their freedom to work, Saudi Arabian women are now becoming more

involved in work outside of the home (Barakati & Ariani, 2010; Pharaon, 2004). In 2005, only 3-5% of Saudi workers were female (Al-Bakr, 2005), but by 2009, this number had increased to 15% (Advancement of Saudi Women, 2009). The motivations of Saudi Arabian women to work or start a business within a cultural context that still defines "breadwinning" as part of the male gender role are varied (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Wilson, 2004), but include reasons such as self-expression, self-esteem, and achievement (Wilson, 2004). For some women, working also provides a means by which to obtain a sense of independence and security or to fill the time (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010).

Among those Saudi Arabian women who are employed, many work in the traditionally acceptable fields of health and education (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Doumato, 1992; Prokop, 2005; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). However, it is becoming more common for women to assume positions in media and banking and other non-segregated fields such as retail (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Barakati & Ariani, 2010; Fatany, 2007; Goodwin, 2003; Pompea, 2002). This gradual integration of women into positions that have traditionally been held by men – and into jobs that place them in the workforce alongside men– reflects slow shifts in attitudes about the employment of women (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Al-Tamimi, 2004; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2010; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004).

Nonetheless, a debate remains relative to the role of Saudi Arabian women in the workforce, and in particular, whether they should be allowed to assume non-traditional roles. Interestingly, another aspect of this debate has focused on an aspect of dress– the veil (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Barakati & Ariani, 2010). The veil acts as a protective barrier so that women may safely– in accordance with the teachings of the *Wahhabi*– interact with men in areas such as the workplace and university.

Marital Roles

  Arranged marriage is traditional in Saudi Arabia, but the way this arrangement is carried out depends on familial convictions (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Goodwin, 2003). Under Islamic law, women have the right to refuse a proposed marriage and also to meet their prospective husband one time before they are married (Al-Jaziri, 2010; Al-Munajjed, 1997; Binothaimeen, 2002; Goodwin, 2003; Hamdan, 2005; Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). In practice, however, there is much variation in how arranged marriages ensue. In some cases, bridal couples do not meet one another prior to the wedding, and in other instances, they may meet several times.

  Marital roles and rules in Saudi Arabia are defined by Islam, but perceptions of how these roles should be played out have been changing (Al-Gehani, 2008; Al-Jehani, 2005; Al-Swailem, 2007; Goodwin, 2003; Maki, 2004). Traditionally within Islam, there have been several rights reserved for husbands and wives, which have dictated the roles that men and women have assumed (Al-Jehani, 2005; Syed, 2004). For instance, a prospective husband must pay a dowry or "bride price" for his wife as a means by which to demonstrate his capability as a financial provider. He also must pay for his wife's food, clothing, and home (Syed, 2004) and must groom himself well; be devoted only to his wife; be zealous for her purity (i.e. encourage the wearing of the veil to shield her beauty); help with the housework, especially when she is sick; and not hinder her from work or study. The wife, on the other hand, fulfills the role of maintaining the home and bringing up proper children (Bullock, 2003; Syed, 2004). This entails appropriately using the money the husband gives her, not leaving without the husband's permission, maintaining the family's privacy, and creating a healthy and peaceful home. Similar to the husband, wives are expected to groom themselves, which includes wearing clothing that appeals to their husbands (Bullock 2003). Both parties are responsible for living together civilly

and with respect as well as maintaining mutual sexual satisfaction (Al-Jehani, 2005; Bullock, 2003).

As Saudi Arabian women have begun to access more freedoms in education and work, marital roles have experienced shifts and conflicts not seen before in traditional Saudi households (Al-Gehani, 2008; Al-Jehani, 2005; Maki, 2004). Now, women and men are both going to work or school outside the home (Doumato, 2003). Although husbands are still financially responsible for their wives' basic needs, this change in freedom has caused a great shift in marital roles for wives. Women are now working a "double shift," going to work and then coming home to care for their families and the home (Long, 2005; Maki, 2004; Neal, Finlay, & Tansey, 2005). This has been cited as a cause for tension and instability in homes, as husband's roles have not mirrored the changes in women's roles, and husbands are rarely seen sharing in the household work-load (Al-Gehani, 2008). Women who work or go to school outside the home note that this tension is one of their biggest problems (Maki, 2004) and often prioritize family members' needs over their own, as their duties elsewhere leave them with limited personal time (Al-Swailem, 2007).

Changes are being seen in these households, however, and some researchers have begun to advocate for increased realization of the ways in which wives' roles have changed as well as for increased contributions from husbands to the work of the household (Al-Jehani, 2005). Further, researchers have suggested that although, traditionally, Saudi husbands have held the authority within the family unit, it may be time for wives and husbands to begin to share this authority, particularly now that women are earning their own money and gaining independence through education (Al-Jehani, 2005; Maki, 2004). The hiring of maids is also becoming

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increasingly common within Saudi families where the wife works or is a student (Al-Swailem, 2007).

Despite these increasing freedoms in Saudi women's lives, there is evidence to suggest that in some households, husbands continue to assume dominance and control over their wives such that their wives may experience some degree of oppression (Fatany, 2013, Maki, 2004). This dynamic has its roots in historical social norms as well as in government restrictions that privilege men in decision-making in all aspects of life, which increases burdens on Saudi wives' shoulders (Doumato, 1999; Fatany, 2013; Mills, 2009). In Saudi courts and in all family law, including divorce, the husband's word is always taken over the wife's (Al Huwaider, 2009). Therefore, in conservative Saudi society, where the institution of marriage is sanctified, there are prejudices against divorced women, as divorced women are regarded as having done something wrong (Al Huwaider, 2009).

Women's Dress in Saudi Arabia

Definitions of Dress

Dress is a crucial aspect of culture, and changes in dress often reflect changes within a culture or cultural system (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2000). Common to many definitions of dress is the notion that dress is part of a nonverbal communication system that comprises a system of sensory codes and symbols that convey meaning to others about the wearer (Eicher, 1995; Entwistle, 2000). In this vein, Barnes and Eicher (1992) suggested that dress conveys the historical, geographical, local, social, and age related identities that constitute the self. For the purpose of this study, dress will be conceptualized as the "act of altering [one's] appearance" (Kasier, 1997, p. 5). Dress, so defined, includes any intentional modifications to the color, texture, shape/size, and/or scent of the body as well as the addition of enclosures (e.g., body

coverings such as clothing) and attachments (e.g., insertions, clips, adherends, hanging items) to

the body (see also Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). Also included within this conceptualization

of dress are the processes of planning, contemplating, or evaluating the social consequences of

one's appearance (sometimes referred to as "appearance management") (Kaiser, 1998, p. 5).

Relative to this study, the term dress can be further broken down into the more specific sub-

categories of ethnic dress, Western dress, and postmodern dress.

     According to Eicher and Sumberg (1995), ethnic dress and traditional dress are

synonymous. Ethnic dress encompasses all items, garments, and modifications of the body that

incarnate the past traditions and members of a group in order to preserve and provide

significance for a cultural heritage (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Eicher and Sumberg (1995)

argued that, although ethnic dress does change over time, change in ethnic dress happens very

slowly such that a single generation will not notice a change in a given form of ethnic or

traditional dress. In addition, Craik (1994) claimed that this form of dress can be defined as

"costume" because it is unchanging (or changing slowly, as Eicher and Sumberg would suggest)

and projects a sense of cultural diversity when compared with any other region.

     Western dress takes its cue primarily from European costume and art (Craik, 1994;

Niessen, 2011) and frequently looks to previously fashionable styles for design inspiration

(Craik, 1994). However, some forms of contemporary Western dress (particularly those

characterized as "postmodern") do borrow from other, non-Western cultures (e.g., Yves Saint

Laurent's use of ethnic influences in his haute couture lines) (Niessen, 2011). Mass production

techniques and a high rate of media promotion encourage the consumption of Western clothing

and the notion that in adopting various fashions or looks, wearers establish a personal, rather

than a cultural, identity (Craik, 1994; Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Increasing global access to

Westernized media has further promoted Western dress in cultures around the world (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995).

Some authors have characterized many contemporary Western dress forms as "postmodern". *Postmodern dress* borrows from multiple cultures and can arguably be defined as global fashion (Kaiser, 1998). That is, postmodern forms of dress often encompass design characteristics inspired by many different cultures, and thus, have been characterized by some as superficial and lacking in cultural individuality (Craik, 1994; Morgado, 1996). Further, postmodern dress changes quickly (Morgado, 1996) and challenges modern rules and conventions for dressing, encouraging difference and diversity in style (Morgado, 1996). For instance, the postmodern fashions encompass and value styles worn by subcultural groups; looks "recycled" from past eras (e.g., vintage clothing); looks that call into question norms for gendered appearances; and combinations of colors, patterns, and garments that challenge traditional aesthetic conventions (Kaiser, 2005; Morgado, 1996). During the postmodern era, then, multiple styles or looks are simultaneously fashionable and emphasis is placed upon the creation of an individualistic look.

The Veil: Public Sphere Dress

One can hardly discuss the topic of women's dress in Saudi Arabia without acknowledging the veil and how its components and ideology affect both lawful participation in public spheres and individual choice in private spheres. The veil is important to the family unit in Saudi Arabia. It acts as a shield to protect the honor not only of the women who wear it, but their families as well (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Kahf, 2008). As previously stated, the veil is not the specific focus of this study but it is important to understand

what the veil is and how it may contribute to the feelings of Saudi Arabian women concerning freedom in dress.

The veil is one of the most recognizable items of dress in Saudi culture. Most girls begin to wear the veil between the ages of ten and thirteen (Rabolt & Forney, 1989). In the Arabic language, the veil is known as the *hijab*. The *hijab* is a general term can be interpreted differently – resulting in different forms of the veil – depending on the Islamic ruling school of thought (Al-Ahmad, 2000; Ali, 2005; Khoja, 2009; Le Renard, 2008). Within Saudi Arabia, in accordance with the *Wahhabi* school of thought, the *hijab* is defined as a full-body cover (Al-Ahmed, 2000) that has three specific purposes: to hide a woman's body, to separate the female and male as well as Muslim and non-Muslim individuals, and to conform with the ethical and religious rules of Islam (Mernissi, 1975; Nasr, 2003). The Quran and Saudi law mandate that Saudi women wear the *hijab* around any male who is not next of kin.

Within Saudi Arabia, *hijab* or veiling includes the wearing of an *abbaya,* a head-scarf*, and* a *burqah* or *niqab* (Goodwin, 2003; Kelly, 2010; Long, 2005; Omair, 2009; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). The *abbaya* is required by law to be worn in public and is an ankle-length black robe that covers the entirety of a woman's body except for the hands, feet, and face (Doumato, 2003; Kelly, 2010; Long, 2005; Omair, 2009; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). The *burqah* and *niqab* are sheer fabrics that cover the entirety of the face (*burqah*) or leave an opening only for the eyes (*niqab*) (Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Omair, 2009). The head-scarf is one recognizable and modern form of the *hijab* in which the head and hair are covered, but the face is left exposed (Omair, 2009). Like the *burqah* and *niqab*, the head-scarf is worn with the *abbaya*, particularly by women residing in urban areas.

Some work has examined Saudi Arabian women's perspectives on the veil. As part of their exploration of Saudi Arabian women's traditional dress and apparel preferences, Rabolt and Forney (1989) considered the motives that prompted Saudi Arabian women to veil. Of the participants surveyed, one-third cited tradition as the main reason for wearing the veil, and another third indicated that religion motivated their decision. Roughly one-quarter suggested that both religion and tradition were equally important in shaping their decision. Only a small percentage claimed that protection was a factor in their reasoning (Rabolt & Forney, 1989). Additionally, Saudi Arabian women's views on the veil may be shaped in part by their relationships with their husbands. For instance, both Al-Manajjed (1997) and Le Renard (2008) found that Saudi Arabian women's decisions to cover their faces through the wearing of the *niqab* in broader society, or in specific contexts such as the workplace, may reflect their husbands' preferences.

In other work, researchers have invoked in-depth interviews to explore the meaning of the veil for Saudi Arabian women, with findings suggesting that women may wear the veil for the sake of displaying their honor, their purity, their commitments, and their faith (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003; Goodwin, 2003). Although women varied in the meanings they attached to the veil, across the studies, many participants expressed positive feelings about wearing it, noting that its familiarity made them feel comfortable and at ease (Bullock, 2003).

There is some disagreement within Saudi Arabia regarding the degree of body coverage that should be required for women within the public sphere (Al-Ahmad, 2000; Ali 2005; Khoja, 2009). Although some have questioned the strict rules governing how and when to wear the *abbaya* (Yemani, 2004), much of the debate has focused upon the face veil (*burqah* or *niqab*). That is, some Saudis do not believe that the wearing of the *burqah* or *niqab* should be required

(Kandiyoti, 1991), as the Quran does not specifically address the wearing of a face veil (Ahmed 2005); it is the general idea of bodily modesty or coverage for a woman that is addressed within the Quran (Quran, 33:59, Yemani, 2004). In her study, Goodwin (2003) found that the degree to which women adhere to wearing the veil depends on how they feel they will be judged in the end by *Allah*. Some women, however, believe that the veil is a tool to suppress and oppress women, a view that also is shared by some Westerners (Bullock, 2003; De Voe 2002; Lindisfarne-Tapper & Ingham, 1997; Ruby, 2006). This perspective may contribute to Saudi Arabian women's wish to abandon traditional garments as a way to distance themselves from a lack of freedom in public dress (Lindisfarne-Tapper, 1997). In fact, in recent years, some Saudi Arabian women have begun to unveil their faces both in Saudi Arabia and when traveling abroad (Goodwin, 2003). Researchers have speculated that this movement toward unveiling of the face can be attributed to increases among Saudi women in international travel, education in Western countries, autonomy in their marriages, and more nuclear families (versus all extensions of one's family living under the same household) (Bullock, 2003). According to Pharaon (2004), these women are even encouraging their friends and family to abandon the veil, as well. While in the United States, in particular, many Muslim women from several nationalities have chosen to unveil themselves, or to unveil, re-veil, and then unveil again (Khalid, 2011). This choice has been described by these women as, "highly private, emotional and religious" (Khalid, 2011, para. 4). For some of these women, the choice to unveil came at a time of change in their life as well as times of spiritual reflection. For them, unveiling meant demonstrating this change and showing their convictions that the veil does not define their faith (Khalid, 2011). An entirely different reason that some women unveil is for concerns of safety (Bullock, 2003; Ahmed, 2005). Post–9/11, many Muslim women fear wearing the veil due to persecution (Ahmed, 2005). One final reason some women

choose to forgo the veil is that in their culture, the veil has become synonymous with poverty and low social status (Bullock, 2003).

The majority of Saudi Arabian women, however, still choose to wear a veil, often as a symbol of their national pride and religious convictions (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003; Omair, 2009; Ahmed, 2005). For other Saudi Arabian women, wearing the face veil is simply customary and follows the tradition of Muhammad's wives as opposed to religious dogma (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Chatty, 1997). And, in other cases, Saudi Arabian women may choose to veil to demonstrate their support for other women who choose to cover (Ahmed, 2005).

The veil is a very public form of dress (i.e., it is worn in the public sphere) and one that represents an obvious departure from mainstream dress customs of the contemporary Western world (Bullock, 2003). Thus, it is not hard to understand why many Westerners examining Islamic or Saudi dress have chosen to focus their research upon the veil (e.g., Doumato, 1992; Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Pharaon, 2004; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). At the same time, these researchers have neglected the less obvious garments of Saudi Arabian women – the dress they wear beneath the veil (Al-Dabbagh, 2006; Keating, 2004).

Traditional Saudi Arabian Women's Dress for Private Sphere

It is crucial to understand that the public and private sphere**s** of Saudi culture are not the same. For adolescent girls and adult women, modesty reigns supreme in public dress and is achieved through the wearing of the *abbaya*. However, dress worn in private spheres – or that which is worn underneath the *abbaya* – is not subject to the same strict religious guidelines as is dress worn in the public sphere (Kahf, 2008; Le Renard, 2008). Rather, private sphere dress is subject to other influences (Keating, 2004; Long, 2005), including tribal heritage, geographical region (urban verse rural), education level, socio-economic status, age, and contact with Western

cultures (Fatany, 2007; Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Yamani, 2004). In some regions, especially in

urban centers, the guidelines that dictate what is appropriate in the private sphere are rather

flexible (Levy, 1935; Pharaon, 2004), especially for women, who may have fewer restrictions

than men with respect to dress requirements (Yamani, 2004).

The traditional private dress in Saudi Arabia has a rich history, but has undergone rapid

change or become nearly obsolete since the introduction of Western influence in the 1930s

(Campbell, 1999; Long, 2005; Pompea, 2002; Yamani, 2004). Today, very few women wear

traditional private dress, and those who do typically reserve its use for times of special

celebration or specific religious occasions (Campbell, 1999; Iskandarani, 2006; Kelly, 2010). For

the rest of the population, Western dress is the popular style. Thus, though the *abbaya* is worn in

public, Western styles dominate the private sphere (Levy, 1935; Lindisfarne-Tapper & Ingham,

1997; Rabolt & Forney, 1989).

Traditional private dress in Saudi Arabia is defined as:

> [a dress] that is long, covering the ankles, with long sleeves and preferably, a high collar.
> The collar also keeps the chin high and looks 'dignified.' The dress preserves modesty by
> minimizing exposure but must be well tailored and close fitting, following the lines of the
> body and especially the *mikassam* (waist) (Yamani, 2004, p. 156).

All traditional private clothes in Saudi Arabia are modest and similar in basic style, but

they differ from region to region in terms of the materials, colors, patterns, and ornamentation

techniques used (Iskandarani, 2006; Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). Though little is known about

the fabric that has been used for women's traditional dress (due in part to the lack of

documentation and in part to the fact that, in public, these garments are covered by the *abbaya*),

Kennett (1995) describes the traditional private dress of Saudi Arabian women as being colorful

and richly embroidered around the front opening of the garment, the arms, and the sleeves.

Shades of red, orange, and green have been commonly used in the embroideries, and many

different colors of background fabric have been used, depending on regional preferences (Iskandarani, 2006; Long, 2005; Yameni, 2004).

Within Saudi Arabia, women in various regions have developed their own forms of traditional dress (Long, 2005). For instance, the *zabon* – a long, fitted dress held together by six buttons of silver, diamond, or gold – is unique to the *Hijaz* region of the country (Iskandarani, 2006; Yamani, 2004). That *Hijaz* has maintained region–specific traditional dress is somewhat interesting, as *Hijaz* is the home of Mecca and therefore attracts many pilgrims and visitors, who in turn, exert an on-going influence on the styles of *Hijazi* women (Iskandarani, 2006; Long, 2005). The *thob* – a somewhat loose-fitting dress that often is intricately embroidered and beaded but that is relatively easy to make and wear (Iskandarani, 2006; Yamani, 2004) – is another example of a dress that differs in color and style of fabric and embellishment from region to region.

Western Influence on Saudi Arabian Women's Dress

Although the private sphere dress of Saudi Arabian women has changed more slowly than other nations – perhaps due to the fact that Saudi Arabia has never been under Colonial Western rule – once the change began with the introduction of oil, the pace of change has been very rapid (Alireza, 1987; Long, 2005; May, 1980; Pompea, 2002; Wilson, 2004). In a matter of only a few decades, the traditional private dress that had been worn for centuries prior to Saudi Arabia's birth (Al-Bassam & Sudqi, 1999) was discarded in favor of modern (Western) fashion (Kelly, 2010; Long, 2005; Yemeni, 2004). This shift is demonstrated well in findings from Al-Dabbagh's (2006) longitudinal study of Saudi Arabian women's dress preferences for home and private social functions, which revealed that between 1981 and 2004 there was a dramatic shift in preferences toward more Westernized dress. However, it is important to note that when referring

to the influence that Western style has had on Saudi dress, it is mainly in reference to the private sphere. In public the *abbaya* is still traditionally defined and required, however, it has been suggested that even this most traditional garment has in recent years reflected some subtle Western influences, such as the addition of designer labels and embroidered logos (Alireza, 1987; Doumato, 2003; Kelly, 2010).

The introduction of Westernized media – including television, the Internet, and movies – into Saudi Arabia has been identified as a significant influence on the culture and dress of the region (Fatany, 2007; Goodwin, 2003; Yamani, 2004). For example, Yamani (2004) has argued that as early as the 1950s, Egyptian films based on Western lifestyles infused Western views into Saudis' lives, inspiring new fashions, especially among the elite. Mernissi (2005) has proposed that several popular Arabic television channels now feature shows that take their cues from Western media, mixing Westernized images, themes, and values with those of the Arabic culture. Images of scantily dressed women have provoked debates between representatives of the entertainment industry and Islamic authorities, but also have become sources of inspiration for Arabic women, who invoke them as guides for their choices of dress in the private sphere (Mernissi, 2005; Zuhur, 2005). Thus, according to some, contemporary Saudi Arabian women are faced with a quagmire – they must battle between mimicking fashions and behaviors as presented within the media and adopting more traditional and moralistic fashions and behaviors that have always been present within their culture (Zuhur, 2005). In this vein, Le Renard (2008) observed that although women attending university in Saudi Arabia are required to conform to expectations for traditional Saudi Arabian dress (e.g., they must wear long skirts), they also manage their appearances in such a way so as to display acute awareness of Western fashions.

Researchers have explored a variety of factors that may explain the adoption of Westernized dress by Saudi Arabian women, including education, travel, age, work experience, and socio-economic status. For instance, Rabolt and Forney (1989) used an oral survey approach to explore the dress preferences of female Saudi Arabian nationals and found that women who were more "cosmopolitan" (i.e., who had traveled outside of Saudi Arabia), more highly educated, younger, and had worked outside of the home preferred to wear more Westernized dress in private settings than did those who had not traveled, were older, and had not worked outside of the home. With respect to dress worn in public, findings revealed that "almost everyone" surveyed preferred to wear traditional outer dress (p. 27), likely owing to the fact that at the time the research was conducted, there were lawful and social consequences for women who did not veil themselves while in public (Forney & Rabolt,1997; Kelly, 2010; Omair, 2009; Rabolt & Forney,1989). Overall, the researchers found less change in public sphere dress choices as compared to private sphere dress choices. The researchers hypothesized that these findings may reflect the moral sanctions placed on women in public, and, in particular, religious laws prohibiting the wearing of Westernized dress in public. Thus, in the participants' eyes, the private sphere was the only place where it was truly acceptable for them to create their own identity through dress (Rabolt & Forney, 1989).

Studies of women's dress within other Arabic Gulf countries also can provide some insight into Saudi Arabian women's dress, owing to the cultural and religious similarities among the countries in the region. Forney and Rabolt (1997) adopted an oral survey approach to quantitatively examine Qatari women's dress choices, comparing results from this inquiry to findings from their prior exploration of Saudi Arabian women's dress choices (1989). Participants included 50 Qatari women with a median age of 25 years. As was the case for Saudi

women (Rabolt &Forney, 1989), analyses of the Qatari data revealed a strong positive

relationship between higher socio-economic status and the decision to wear Western dress

(Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). Analyses also revealed that, compared to

Saudi Arabian women, Qatari women were more likely to adopt less traditional styles of private

dress, opting for a more Western look as opposed to garments featuring traditional motifs and

designs (Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). However, results of this comparison

must be interpreted somewhat cautiously, as the study of Saudi Arabian women was conducted

almost 10 years prior to the study of Qatari women's dress.

Based upon in-depth interviews with female undergraduate students attending university

in Kuwait, Kelly (2010) found that participants noted the rapid change in dress that is occurring

within their culture. According to participants, their grandmothers wore traditional styles of

Kuwaiti dress during their early adult years as well as during their elder years. By comparison,

participants indicated that their mothers dressed in both modern/Westernized clothing as well as

traditional/Kuwaiti styles, depending upon the occasion. However, the students, themselves,

reported wearing almost exclusively Western fashions, which likely reflects that they are

continually introduced to and surrounded by international ideas while attending the university.

Guiding Theoretical Framework

Three related theoretical frameworks – symbolic interaction theory, the dramaturgical

perspective, and Gergen's (2011) notion of the saturation of the self – provide a rich foundation

for an interpretive study exploring married Saudi Arabian women's construction and

presentation of the self through private sphere dress.

Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interaction theory is an apt lens for considering the ways in individuals use dress to develop representations of their identities as well as to make identifications of others whom they observe (Stone [1962] in Roach-Higgins, Eicher, & Johnson, 1995, p. 23). As Stone reminds us, identity reflects one's location within social context; "when one has an identity, he [she] is situated" (Stone [1962] in Roach-Higgins, Eicher, & Johnson, 1995, p. 23). Because people have multiple roles that they fulfill in life, they necessarily have multiple identities, which, taken together, constitute the self.

Symbolic interactionists also view the body as invested with meanings that are produced through everyday interactions (Shilling, 2003). These meanings provide a basis for people to use the appearance of their bodies to establish their identities in social contexts through discourse about the self (i.e., "identity talk") as well as through the manipulation of their bodily appearances (Hunt & Benford, 1994; Stone, 1962). In turn, others assign meaning to these self-presentations and act toward people on the basis of these meanings, drawing upon them to fit together their lines of action with others and to develop feedback or reviews of others' bodily self-presentations (Stone, 1962). Individuals reflect upon the reviews that others provide to them and may integrate these reflected appraisals into their sense of self, using them to imagine future reactions to their physical selves (i.e., to take the role of a specific or generalized other) and to guide future body–related behaviors and interactions (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Stone, 1962). In this way, people may use others as "looking glasses" (Cooley, 1902) to tell them who they are, how they should appear, and how they should behave (Stone, 1962). Of particular interest in the present interpretive study is the role of husbands in shaping Saudi Arabian women's construction

and presentation of the self through dress within the private sphere, including their preferences

for traditional and/or Westernized self-presentations.

Dramaturgical Perspective

Like symbolic interaction theory, the work of Erving Goffman (1959) focuses upon the

construction of the self within social interactions as well as the messages that managed

appearances send to observers. Goffman (1959) likens the self, social interactions, and life to

theatrical productions, and for this reason, his perspective is described as "dramaturgical." Within

this perspective, individuals are viewed as social actors who, in their various interactions, enact

diverse "selves," influencing others' definitions of them and of the self. These definitions are

shaped by actors' "fronts," or their appearances, behaviors, and the setting in which the

interactions occur, and serve to guide subsequent interactions. Goffman describes the activity that

serves to influence others in this way as a "performance" (1959, p. 24).

According to Goffman (1959), the staged nature of social life is evident in people's

division of settings into "front stage" and "back stage" regions. Most social settings, he argues,

include a front stage. It is within the front stage region that individuals enact performances and

selves through the use of setting, appearance, and manner (Goffman, 1959; Kaiser, 1998). The

setting can be thought of as the backdrop and physical layout of the area in which the human

interaction will occur. Appearance includes dress, hairstyle, and make-up and conveys the

performer's social status. Manner includes behaviors, gestures, and style of speech and helps on–

lookers to predict what role the performer will take on the stage (Goffman, 1959). Conversely, in

the back stage region, the "impression fostered by the performance [may be] knowingly

contradicted" (p. 112). In this vein, Kaiser (1998) has suggested that three types of activities

occur within the back stage region: preparation for the front stage, relaxation between stages, and

tasks better done alone (Kaiser, 1998). Of relevance to the present study is the notion that Saudi Arabian women act on two distinct front stages – one in the public sphere and one in the private sphere. Much of the private sphere in Saudi Arabia cannot be considered as part of Goffman's back stage, as this is an area in which women are free to present themselves in a manner which they choose to their family and peers. It is a place where much care is still given to self-preparation and presentation.

Similar to Goffman, Eicher (1981) proposes that individuals may present different aspects of the self to differing audiences. More specifically, building upon Stone's work on appearance and the self, Eicher suggests that there are three "conscious" components of the self that relate to dress: the public self, the intimate self, and the private self. The public self is "rooted in reality" and is presented to the most generalized audience, conveying information about aspects of the self, such as gender and occupation. Within the context of Saudi Arabia, the public self would be presented at mixed-gender occasions in which women would be required to observe *hijab*. According to Eicher, the intimate self is what one shares only with one's "intimates" or significant others (e.g., family and close friends). In Saudi Arabia, dress presentations of the intimate self would not require veiling for adult women in contexts in which the intimates comprised close family members (males and/or females) and/or friends who were exclusively female. Finally, Eicher defines the secret self as that which is reserved for an intimate partner or only for one's self (Eicher, 1981). Thus, dress expressions of the secret self may or may not be shared with others and may represent fantasy dress. Within the Saudi Arabian context, women's expressions of this self could or could not include *hijab*.

The Saturation of the Self

Gergen's (1991) work on the "saturation of the self" also can provide insight into the ways in which societal pulls can influence and allow for diverse presentations of identity and a swift change in cultural dress. Gergen argues that in the postmodern era, contemporary modes of communication (e.g., the Internet, television, movies, and magazines) and travel present to us numerous, far-away realities (both "actual" and fictitious) that are often in conflict and that expose us to diverse attitudes and possible ways of being. In such a cultural moment, the adoption of a generalized other– or a unified sense of a communal attitude (Mead, 1934) – becomes somewhat problematic. Thus, rather than to adopt the perspective of a generalized other, individuals experience what Gergen has referred to as "social saturation," or a dense population of the self in which one considers numerous significant and generalized others whose "voices" represent diverse and often incompatible perspectives. Gergen uses the term "multiphrenia" ("many minds") to refer to this pattern of self-consciousness, which may be characterized by a sense of feeling torn or uncertain about who we are or should be, sometimes even undermining the notion that there exists a single "true" or "real" self. In such a context, the question becomes not "Who am I?" but "Who can I be with you?" (Cahill & Sandstrom, 2011, p.182).

Gergen's (1991) notion that identity is not fixed, but rather, is constructed and reconstructed in concert with the diverse realities faced in everyday life is well–suited to explore how Saudi Arabian women construct presentations of identity using dress within the private sphere. Saudi Arabia, in many ways, represents a country in which bringing together old influences as well as those born out of the new era of economic advancement creates constant change in everyday realities. Travel, education, and the expansion of media and technology have

added more possibilities to the list of realities women face each day (Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Le Renard, 2008; Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). Yet, despite these possibilities, Saudi Arabian women are steeped in cultural and Islamic tradition – they are being pulled in rather divergent directions by these facets of their existence. It is of interest in this study to discover how Saudi Arabian women make daily dress decisions by negotiating the many traditional and modern influences present in their everyday lives.

Summary

Previous research has provided valuable insights relative to the ways in which the discovery of oil has brought quick paced economic and social change to Saudi Arabia (Fatany, 2007; Hamdan, 2005; Long, 2005). Prior work also has explored various angles related to the forms of dress worn by Saudi Arabian women within the public sphere, with much attention dedicated to considering the practice of veiling (Doumato, 1992; Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Pharaon, 2004; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). Much less research, however, has examined the private sphere dress practices of Saudi Arabian women. Further, the modicum of work that has considered this topic is rather dated (Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Rabolt & Forney, 1989), and thus, may not reflect the contemporary cultural milieu of Saudi Arabia. As noted, in recent years, the forms of mass media available in the country have increased exponentially, as have the number of women seeking higher education, traveling abroad, and working outside of the home (Fatany, 2007; Mernissi, 2005; Sadi & Al-Ghazali, 2009; Zuhur, 2005). These factors represent a new realm of possibilities for Saudi Arabian women. Of interest in this study was how these new ways of thinking and being may shape Saudi women's expressions of the self through private sphere dress.

Additionally, much of the previous work on the topic of Saudi Arabian women's private sphere dress has been conducted by Western researchers and has employed *a priori* categories for purposes of data collection (e.g., Doumato, 2003; Rabolt & Forney, 1989; Winter & Chevrier, 2008). As such, this work may reflect certain Western assumptions about dress within the Arabian Gulf. With the present research, this bias was avoided because the work was conducted by a Saudi Arabian researcher and invoked an interpretive, grounded theory approach that allowed for meanings to emerge from the Saudi participants themselves.

Finally, the present work contributed new insights relative to the ways in which Saudi husbands may contribute to their wives' construction and presentation of the self through dress in private sphere. Although prior work has suggested that Saudi husbands may play a role in their wives' decisions about public sphere dress (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003), researchers have not explored the potential role of significant others (husbands or otherwise) in shaping self-presentations in the private sphere (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003).

Thus, the present work addressed existing gaps in the literature by exploring meaning in Saudi Arabian women's private sphere dress, seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. How do married Saudi Arabian women use dress to construct the self within context of the private sphere?

2. What meanings do married Saudi Arabian women and men associate with various forms of private sphere dress available within the contemporary Saudi marketplace, including traditional and Western forms of dress? How do these meanings shape married Saudi women's self-presentations within the private sphere?

3. How do important others in married Saudi Arabian women's lives shape their presentations of self through private sphere dress?

4. What role do Saudi husbands play in shaping married Saudi women's dress for the private sphere? How do interactions between Saudi wives and husbands lay a foundation for Saudi women's self-presentations through private sphere dress?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

To explore how married Saudi Arabian women construct and present the self through their choice of dress for the private sphere, as well as the role of the women's husbands in shaping their presentations of self, a grounded theory approach and constant comparison processes were used. The grounded theory approach emerged from sociology and involves "the study of experience from the standpoint of those who live it" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522). Its focus is upon generating meaningful understanding of events, especially human action and experience. Although the formal aim of grounded theory research is to develop concepts of a theory (e.g., categories, properties, and hypotheses), much of the work conducted within the grounded theory tradition does not generate the formulation of a new theory (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

For the purposes of this study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Saudi Arabian women and their husbands. A photo elicitation or wardrobe analysis component was incorporated into the wives' interviews. Interviews yielded rich, interpretive data (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Merriam & Associates, 2002) that was ideal for exploring the social, familial, and personal influences surrounding Saudi Arabian women's choice of dress in the private sphere. Further, grounded theory's roots in the views of the participant (Creswell, 2009) and its recognition that meaning is derived from social interactions (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992) were well-suited for the present work exploring the potential influence that husbands have on the decisions of their spouses in Saudi Arabia.

Data Collection

Sample

Fifteen married Muslim Saudi couples residing in two metropolitan areas within the Hijaz/western region of Saudi Arabia (i.e., the cities of Jeddah and Medina) were interviewed for this study. Purposeful, nonprobability sampling was used to fulfill grounded theory's aim to uncover the conceptual framework that explains the phenomenon being studied (Baker, Wuest & Stern, 1992). The sample size of 15 couples yielded a rich body of data that included a range of themes and ideas. Although it is not clear that total saturation was achieved for all themes, as the data collection drew to a close, there was redundancy in many concepts.

Couples in the sample had been married for between three months and 35 years; most of them shared a middle-class or upper middle-class lifestyle. Wives' ages ranged from 20 and 60 years (mean = 30 years). All but two wives had pursued some form of post-secondary education: eleven obtained bachelor's degrees, and two held graduate degrees. Although a majority of the wives were homemakers, three worked outside the home in white-collar positions (human resources, education), and one was a student. To maintain a focus upon the lived experiences of women whose primary cultural lens was that of Saudi Arabia, wife participants also were purposefully sampled to only include women who had not lived outside of Saudi Arabia (however, wife participants who had traveled abroad were included in the sample).

Participants' husbands were also interviewed to gain an understanding of their role in shaping Saudi Arabian women's dress within the private sphere. Husbands' ages ranged from 20 to 67 years (mean = 35 years). All husbands had received higher education degrees: four held associate's degrees, four held bachelor's degrees, and seven held graduate degrees. Four

husbands had lived abroad while they were students. Husbands' occupations varied (e.g., electrician, engineer, HR manager, physician).

An initial list of potential participants was identified through two key informants who lived in Saudi Arabia and maintained a wide social circle of married Saudi Arabian women meeting the sampling criteria for the study. Although the researcher and participants may have had a common relative or friend, the researcher and participants were first-time acquaintances. The researcher emailed potential participants (wives and husbands) an informational letter (in Arabic) describing the research project. Individuals who were interested in participating in the research were asked to confirm their interest with the researcher via email. The researcher then contacted participants via email or phone to address any questions that they may have and/or to schedule interviews.

Interview Procedures

An in-depth, semi-structured approach was used for the interviewing process. Wives and husbands were interviewed separately, and a set of questions was constructed to guide topics of discussion. Following Kunkel (1999), wives' interviews included a photo elicitation and/or wardrobe analysis component in which they are invited to bring photos of themselves wearing private sphere dress and/or garments worn in the private sphere to the interview. These artifacts (i.e., the photos or the garments) were used to guide discussion during the interview.

To avoid "leading" participants, interview questions were phrased in an open-ended manner and were only used as a loose guide to develop topics of conversation between the researcher and the participants. Interview questions focused upon (a) what participants wish to express/wish their wives to express about the self through dress worn in the private sphere, (b) how participants [participants' wives] make decisions about dress worn in the private sphere, (c)

how participants viewed the wearing of traditional and Western dress within the private sphere (for the self or for their wives), and (d) how wives and husbands interacted about the wives' dress worn within the private sphere and to what degree this affected wives' decisions about dress.

Interviews with wives and husbands were conducted separately so that both parties were free to answer questions openly and without the influence of the other. Wives' interviews were conducted face-to-face in Saudi Arabia in a private setting (e.g., in the participants' homes), lasting between 40 and 90 minutes. To honor Saudi cultural customs that mandate separation of unrelated men and women, husbands' interviews were conducted over the phone or via Skype. Husband interviews lasted from 20 to 50 minutes. Three husbands chose to speak English in their interviews, but all other interviews were conducted in Arabic. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and when necessary, translated into English by the researcher (a native Arabic speaker who also speaks fluent English). In addition, this translation process was overseen by native Arabic speakers in The Department of Foreign Language and Literature at Colorado State University.

According to Seidman (2006), conducting a pilot study is an important step in in an interpretive study. The purpose of the pilot study is to help the researcher refine their tactics by alerting them to the elements of their technique that supports the research objectives. Therefore, the researcher conducted a pilot study with a married couple possessing characteristics similar to participants in the sample prior to initiating the data collection procedures. In the present study, conducting the pilot study was especially helpful in assisting the researcher with the refinement of the interview schedule used for purposes of data collection.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory and constant comparison processes were used to analyze the data collected. This type of analysis recognizes that data interpretation, though it strives to explore the participants' experience from their points of view, will indeed be influenced by the researcher's view of the world and the researcher/participant interaction (Willig, 2008).

Interview data were transcribed and analyzed using the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). With this approach, meanings are discovered using the constant comparative process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Verbatim transcripts of the interviews were first prepared and read multiple times in order to gain an overall impression of the interviews. After "unitizing" the data to divide it into meaningful "chunks" or fragments (Guetzkow, 1950), the researcher took fragments from five couples' interviews, comparing and analyzing them to develop key concepts. Through the process of "open coding," important concepts were identified and were grouped together under higher order, more abstract concepts or categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As the data analysis continued, the researcher constantly re-explored and expanded upon the initial coding scheme, writing memos to acknowledge interpretive frameworks and to develop insights into connections between concepts and categories (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Once this process was completed with the initial group of interviews, the concepts and categories were developed into a coding guide that was applied to the remaining interview data, continuing until the researcher "saturated" the categories (Boeije, 2002; Gibson & Brown, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher continued to search for new meanings and themes that emerged within the data during and after the coding guide was applied to the data.

Next, the researcher engaged in "axial" and "selective" coding to search for higher–order connections (i.e., relationships) within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In particular, the researcher: (a) explored the data for patterns and connections among emergent themes (selective coding) and (b) examined the circumstances or contexts that gave rise to various themes (axial coding) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Of particular interest in these analyses were how various interactions between Saudi Arabian wives and husbands set a context for Saudi Arabian women's presentation of the self through dress. Conclusions resulting from the identified themes and meanings were presented in a narrative form.

To establish the trustworthiness and dependability of data collection and analysis, the researcher used journaling (reflexivity) and peer review. These quality controls aided in yielding a more reliable, accurate, and rich understanding of the data. Journaling enabled the researcher to trace the evolution of her thoughts throughout the research process and fostered reflection and introspection about data collection and analysis, which, in turn, generated ideas that were used for interpretive purposes (Willis, 2007). Throughout the coding process, the researcher and her advisor met to explore meanings identified within the data, negotiating meanings until mutual understanding was achieved. Additionally, two audit coders checked the researcher's application of the coding guide to approximately one-fourth the data (26% of the transcripts). Disagreements in category assignments were negotiated. Interrater reliability with the first audit coder[1] was 93.15% Interrater reliability with the second audit coder[2] was 96%. The interrater reliability was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements in coding decisions by the total number of coding decisions made. The audit process was suspended after the audit coders checked 26% of the transcripts because the level of agreement between the researcher and the audit coder was acceptable.

Issues of Researcher Subjectivity

With the grounded theory approach, the researcher interprets the data while recognizing and making transparent the potential impact that his/her own lived experiences and background may have on the research (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992; Creswell, 2009; Luca, 2009). Luca refers to this practice as "embodied bracketing" and suggests that by placing one's assumptions and preconceptions "in parentheses," a researcher is able to access them throughout the research process for purposes of reflection while also fully acknowledging how they may shape the findings. Thus, here, I recognize my subjectivities and the impacts they may bring to bear on this inquiry.

As a married Saudi Arabian woman, I brought unique personal characteristics to the study. I was born and raised in the *Hijaz* region of Saudi Arabia, and thus, I have been influenced by the same culture as the participants. This culture more readily accepts some Western ideals as compared to other central regions of the nation (Long, 2005). I also have lived in both Medina and Jeddah, where the data were collected. These are cities that are more accepting of multi-culturalism, as they were the original urban societies of Saudi Arabia and continue to be the resting spots for religious pilgrims from many cultures (Long, 2005; Yamanni, 2004).

My interest in the present research topic can be traced to my undergraduate studies at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, where I earned a degree in fashion design. It was there that I observed my mentors' passion for traditional Saudi Arabian dress and the associated movement to preserve and rekindle this dress form. My interest in the topic was further piqued by my awareness of a seeming cultural turn toward traditional Saudi Arabian attire for special occasions, particularly among younger generations.

As a fashion designer, my profession is driven by women's desires or convictions about displaying their self through dress. Already, personal communication with my Saudi customers has pointed to a barrage of outside influences dictating women's choices in ordering or purchasing clothing. Understanding the many perspectives and influences surrounding these feelings will help me further develop my career.

Finally, my travel abroad to study at Colorado State University has certainly influenced my world view. Here, I have studied fashion design and also have had the experience of being a part of a large population of Islamic students and their families. Thus, I have had the opportunity to live in a foreign culture and to have the support and sometimes the opposition of persons sharing my language, faith, and cultural heritage. While in this context, I also have chosen to pursue many relationships with American students and community members, as well as those from other foreign cultures (i.e., beyond the Arabian Gulf), and in so doing, I have sought to understand how these individuals view the world. My return to Saudi Arabia to collect my data was my first trip to my homeland in two and a half years; thus, it is possible that my immersion in the American culture for the past 30 months somehow shaped the lens through which I viewed the data.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The first audit coder checked the researcher's application of coding categories used for the analysis reported in manuscript 1

[2] The second audit coder checked the researcher's application of coding categories used for the analysis reported in manuscript 2

CHAPTER IV

MANUSCRIPT 1

Constructing and Presenting the Self through Private Sphere Dress: An Interpretive

Analysis of the Experiences of Saudi Arabian Women[∗]

In Saudi Arabia, women's presentation of the self through dress is shaped to a large

extent by the setting in which the dress is worn and the audience for whom the presentation of

self is made (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Long, 2005). In the public sphere – that is, anywhere outside of

the home where women are in the presence of males who are not considered to be next of kin –

Saudi women are required by law to practice *hijab* or veiling (Le Renard, 2008). For Saudi

women, observing *hijab* includes the wearing of traditional forms of dress (e.g., the *abbaya* with

a head-scarf and *burqah* or *niqab*) that cover the entire body except for the hands and eyes

(Long, 2005). Dress conventions for Saudi women are different, however, within the private

sphere, which encompasses women's interactions with their next of kin (male or female) and/or

with women to whom they are not related. These interactions may occur within private homes or

gender-segregated locations (i.e., spaces where only women are allowed). So defined, the private

sphere of Saudi women encompasses a broad range of situations and contexts, including their

interactions with other women at gender-segregated schools, workplaces, shopping centers, and

events (e.g., weddings, holiday celebrations) (Al Munajjed, 1997; Le Renard, 2008). In contrast

to their public sphere dress, Saudi women's private sphere dress is open to individual choice and

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may include traditional Saudi styles (e.g., modest, long dresses with long sleeves), or, in recent years, Western styles (Le Renard, 2008).

To date, the bulk of the research examining Saudi women's dress has focused upon dress worn in the public sphere, providing detailed descriptions of the garments worn (e.g., the *abbaya*) and exploring diverse perspectives on *hijab*/veiling (Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Pharaon, 2004; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). In contrast, relatively little empirical work has considered Saudi women's private sphere dress practices, especially from the perspectives of the wearers themselves, perhaps owing to the relative impenetrability of outside researchers into the private sphere of Saudi women. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to explore how Saudi women construct and present the self through their choice of dress for the private sphere. Of interest were the women's views on traditional versus Westernized dress for the private sphere and the role of others in shaping their presentation of self through dress.

Literature Review

Cultural Context of Saudi Arabia

The cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia, including its dress, cannot be separated from its religious ties to the Islamic faith. In the Saudi context, Islam is viewed as not only a religion, but also as a system of law and a way of living (Long, 2005; Pharaon, 2004). Sexual morality is required within all social roles, with women's modesty more strictly guarded than men's (Al-Dabbagh, 2006; Al-Munajjed, 1997). As such, female modesty is emphasized within government sanctions controlling women's appearances and conduct, as exemplified in the requirement that women observe *hijab* while in the public sphere (Long, 2005). Further, women are forbidden to interact socially with men other than their husbands and immediate male relatives, as doing so is viewed as immoral (Doumato, 2003). Thus, most of the time, a separation of non-relative, adult

males and females is mandated in schools, mosques, workplaces, and other areas of public and private life (Pompea, 2002). In public situations, separation is upheld by the wearing of a veil to shield a woman's body from the male gaze (Al-Munajjed, 1997), with the veil acting as a physical and symbolic partition between the sexes (Bullock, 2003). Within the private setting of the home, the separation of women from males who are not next of kin is achieved by female seclusion in separate quarters reserved for family and female friends (Rabolt & Forney, 1989).

Since the discovery of a sizable oil reserve in the country in 1938, Saudi Arabia has experienced large-scale economic shifts, rapid industrialization and modernization, and increased contact with the West (Long, 2005; Wilson, 2004). Thus, although Saudi Arabia is a country steeped in tradition, its culture – particularly the country's views on the roles and status of women – has undergone much change over the last several decades, especially in recent years. For instance, although the first Saudi university for women did not open until 1979 (Hamdan, 2005), women now constitute 62% of students enrolled in higher education (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2009). Further, although they were once kept out of the workforce due to a lack of education and social barriers prohibiting their freedom to work, Saudi women have become more involved in a variety of occupations, including those traditionally held by men (Fatany 2007; Pharaon, 2004). There also have been recent increases among Saudi women in international travel (Fatany, 2007). And, in 2011, women gained the right to vote (Said, 2011). Taken together, these developments represent noteworthy shifts in thinking about the role of women in Saudi society as well as new realms of possibility for Saudi women.

Saudi Arabian Women's Dress for Private Sphere

Traditional Dress. Traditional dress encompasses all garments and modifications of the body that incarnate the past traditions and members of a group in order to preserve and provide

significance for a cultural heritage (Eicher & Sumberg, 1995). Traditional dress not only defines its wearer in terms of ethnic or cultural origin, it also provides insights into cultural values and ideals (Forney & Rabolt, 1997; Rovine, 2009). The traditional private sphere dress of Saudi Arabia pre-dates the country's birth in 1932 by several centuries (Al-Bassam & Sudqi, 1999; Long, 2005) and has been characterized as a long-sleeved, floor-length dress with a high-collar. The dress is designed to follow the lines of the body and to preserve the wearer's modesty by minimizing bodily exposure (Yamani, 2004). Kennett (1995) describes the dress as being colorful and richly embroidered around the neckline, arms, and sleeves. Shades of red, orange, and green are typically used in the embroideries (Iskandarani, 2006; Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). Although all traditional private sphere dress in Saudi Arabia is modest and similar in basic style, some regional variations do exist.

The traditional private dress in Saudi Arabia has a long history but has undergone rapid change and has become nearly obsolete since the discovery of oil in the 1930s and the subsequent introduction of Western influence (Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). It has been suggested that today relatively few women wear traditional private sphere dress and that those who do typically reserve its use for times of celebration or religious occasions (Iskandarani, 2006).

Western Dress/Influences. Although the private sphere dress of Saudi women has changed more slowly than that of other nations, the pace of change has been rapid since the introduction of oil (Long, 2005; Pompea, 2002; Wilson, 2004). In a matter of only a few decades, the traditional private sphere dress that had been worn for centuries has been discarded in favor of Western fashions such as dresses of varying lengths, trousers, and shirts (Al-Dabbagh, 2006; Long, 2005; Yemeni, 2004). This change is well demonstrated in findings from Al-Dabbagh's (2006) research examining consumer responses to the Saudi ready-to-wear

market, which revealed that between 1981 and 2004 there was a shift among Saudi women in preferences toward more Westernized dress for private sphere use.

The introduction of Westernized media – including television, the Internet, and movies – into Saudi Arabia has been identified by cultural scholars and critics as a potentially significant influence on the culture and dress of the region (Fatany, 2007; Yamani, 2004). Yamani (2004) has argued that as early as the 1950s, Egyptian films based on Western lifestyles infused Western views into Saudis' lives, inspiring new fashions, especially among the elite. Mernissi (2005) has proposed that several popular Arabic television channels now feature shows that take their cues from Western media, mixing Westernized images, themes, and values with those of the Arabic culture. Images of scantily dressed women have provoked debates between representatives of the entertainment industry and Islamic authorities but also have become sources of inspiration for Arabic women, who invoke them as guides for their choice of dress in the private sphere (Mernissi, 2005; Zuhur, 2005). According to some, these expanded possibilities for self-expression through dress pose a quagmire for contemporary Arabic women, who experience a tension between adopting fashions and behaviors promoted as desirable within the Westernized media and adopting more conservative and moralistic fashions and behaviors that traditionally have been valued within their native culture (Zuhur, 2005). For many, the result is a balancing act, of sorts. For instance, based upon her field study exploring Saudi women's lifestyles, Le Renard (2008) observed that although women attending university in Saudi Arabia were required to conform to expectations for traditional Saudi dress (e.g., they had to wear long skirts), they also managed their appearances so as to display acute awareness of Western fashions.

Varied factors may explain the adoption of Westernized dress by Saudi women. Rabolt and Forney (1989) used an oral survey approach to explore the dress preferences of Saudi

women nationals and found that women who had higher socioeconomic status, had worked outside of the home, were more "cosmopolitan" (i.e., had traveled outside of Saudi Arabia), were more highly educated, and were younger were more likely to wear more Westernized dress in private settings. Overall, findings revealed less change in public sphere dress choices as compared to private sphere dress choices (i.e., less movement toward Westernized dress). The researchers hypothesized that these findings may reflect the moral sanctions placed on women in public, and, in particular, religious laws prohibiting the wearing of Westernized dress in public. Thus, in the participants' eyes, the private sphere may have been the only place where it was acceptable for them to create their own identity through dress.

Theoretical Framework

This work takes as its point of departure the interactionist premise that the dressed body plays an important role in the acquisition and development of identity and a sense of self (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992; Stone, 1962). That is, symbolic interactionists view dressed bodies as social objects invested with meanings that are produced through social interactions (Shilling, 2003). These meanings provide a basis for people to use dress to help announce or communicate identities so as to position themselves as social objects (Stone, 1962). In turn, others assign meaning to these self-presentations and act toward people on the basis of these meanings, drawing upon them to fit together their lines of action with others and to develop feedback or reviews of others' dress (Stone, 1962). Individuals reflect upon the reviews that others provide to them and may integrate these reflected appraisals into their sense of self, using them to imagine future reactions to their dress and to guide future body-related behaviors and interactions (Mead, 1934; Stone, 1962). In this way, people may use others as "looking glasses" (Cooley, 1902) to tell them who they are, how they should appear, and how they should behave.

Like symbolic interaction theory, Goffman's dramaturgical perspective focuses upon the construction of the self within social interactions as well as the messages that managed appearances send to observers. Within this perspective, individuals are viewed as social actors who, in their various interactions, enact diverse "selves," influencing others' definitions of them and of the self (Goffman, 1959). These definitions are shaped by actors' "fronts," or their appearances, behaviors, and the setting in which the interactions occur, and serve to guide subsequent interactions (1959, pp. 23-24). According to Goffman (1967), social interaction also is guided by the feelings that individuals attach to different self-presentations and the desire that they feel to present a viable self, or a self that is socially acceptable in a given context. As such, within the context of the dramaturgical perspective, the self can be conceptualized in terms of "impression management," with dress acting as a symbol of the self invoked in the service of constructing positive impressions and avoiding negative ones as individuals enact various role performances (Goffman, 1959; Guy & Banim, 2000; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Schouten, 1991).

Finally, Gergen's (2000, 2011) work on the "saturation of the self" can provide insight into the ways in which dress is used to construct and present identity and the self within swiftly changing, postmodern cultural contexts. Gergen (2000, 2011) argues that in the postmodern era, contemporary modes of communication and travel present to us numerous, far-away realities that are often in conflict and that expose us to diverse attitudes and possible ways of being. In such a cultural moment, the adoption of a generalized other – or a unified sense of a communal attitude (Mead, 1934) – becomes somewhat problematic. Thus, rather than to adopt the perspective of a generalized other, individuals experience what Gergen (2011) has referred to as "social saturation," or a "dense population of the self," in which they consider numerous significant and generalized others whose "voices" represent diverse and often incompatible perspectives. Gergen

(2011) uses the term "multiphrenia" ("many minds") to refer to this pattern of self–consciousness, which may be characterized by a sense of feeling torn or uncertain about who we are or should be, sometimes undermining the notion that there exists a single "true" or "real" self. Gergen's (2011) notion that identity is not fixed, but rather is constructed and reconstructed in concert with the diverse realities faced in everyday life is well–suited to exploring how Saudi women construct presentations of the self using dress within the private sphere. Saudi Arabia in many ways represents a country in which bringing together old influences as well as those born out of the new era of economic advancement creates constant change in everyday realities. Of interest in the present study is discovering how Saudi women make daily dress decisions by negotiating the many traditional and modern influences present in their everyday lives.

Justification and Research Questions

Relatively few researchers have examined Saudi women's private sphere dress practices; prior work in which private sphere dress is discussed has, for the most part, been limited to descriptions of Saudi traditional dress as artifacts and to propositions by Saudi scholars and cultural critics about the shift from traditional to Western dress and the role of Westernized media influences in shaping this shift. Of the three empirical studies that were identified, only one was focused upon Saudi women's private sphere dress practices, specifically (Rabolt & Forney, 1989); the other two examined broader topics (e.g., the Saudi apparel market, Saudi women's lifestyles) and provided limited exploration of private sphere dress (Al-Dabbagh, 2006; Le Renard, 2008). Although Rabolt and Forney offered insights regarding the factors that may influence Saudi women's adoption of Western dress for the private sphere, they did not consider if and how Saudi women may use private sphere dress to construct the self or to make meaning in their lives, nor did they consider the role of others in shaping Saudi women's presentations of

self through private sphere dress. Further, Rabolt and Forney are Western researchers and employed *a priori* categories for purposes of data collection, and this work is now over 25 years old. Thus, findings may reflect Western assumptions about dress within the Arabian Gulf and may no longer accurately represent the contemporary cultural milieu of Saudi Arabia and the realities of Saudi women's lives, which have seen much change in recent years (Fatany, 2007).

With the present research, measures were taken to avoid Western bias, a married, Saudi female researcher collected the data for the study using an interpretive approach, which allowed meanings to emerge from the Saudi participants themselves. Specifically, guided by an interactionist, dramaturgical theoretical approach, this work addressed existing weaknesses and gaps in the literature by exploring meaning in Saudi women's private sphere dress, seeking to answer the following questions: How do Saudi women use dress to construct the self within context of the private sphere? What meanings do Saudi women associate with various forms of private sphere dress available within the contemporary Saudi marketplace, including traditional and Western forms of dress? How do these meanings shape Saudi women's self-presentations within the private sphere? How do important others in Saudi women's lives shape their presentations of self through private sphere dress?

Method

For the present work, an interpretive, qualitative approach that drew upon grounded and reflexive processes to data generation and analysis was adopted. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 Saudi women. Purposive, nonprobability sampling was used to recruit participants from two metropolitan areas within Saudi Arabia (i.e., the cities of Jeddah and Medina). An initial list of potential participants was identified through two key informants who

maintained a wide social circle. An informational letter was sent to the potential participants through email, and interested individuals were contacted to schedule interviews.

Participants ranged in age between 20 and 60 years (mean age = 30 years) and had been married[3] between 3 months and 35 years. All but two participants had pursued some form of post-secondary education. Although a majority of the participants were homemakers, three worked outside the home in white-collar positions (human resources, education), and one was a student. Husbands' jobs varied, but most participants shared a middle-class or upper middle-class lifestyle. Though several participants had traveled abroad, none had lived abroad.

An in-depth, semi-structured approach was used for the interviewing process. Interview questions focused upon (a) what participants wished to express about the self through dress worn in the private sphere, (b) how participants made decisions about dress worn in the private sphere, and (c) how participants viewed the wearing of traditional and Western dress within the private sphere. The interviews also included a photo elicitation and/or wardrobe analysis component in which participants were asked to bring photos of themselves wearing private sphere dress and/or garments worn within the private sphere. These artifacts were used to guide discussion during the interview. All interviews took place in private settings (e.g., the participants' homes), were conducted in Arabic, and lasted between 40 and 90 minutes.

Interview data were translated into English, were transcribed, and were analyzed using constant comparison processes (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Through the process of "open coding," key concepts within the data were identified and were grouped together under higher order, more abstract concepts or categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Next, the concepts and categories were developed into a coding guide that was applied to the data, continuing until the categories were saturated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At the final stage

of analysis, the researcher used "axial" and "selective" coding to search for higher–order connections within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To establish the trustworthiness and dependability of data collection and analysis, the researcher used journaling and peer review. Specifically, the researcher maintained a journal to foster reflection about data collection and analysis. The researcher also met with her advisor throughout the coding processes, exploring meanings identified within the data until mutual understanding was achieved. Additionally, an audit coder checked the researcher's application of the coding guide to 26% of the transcripts[4]. Disagreements in category assignments were negotiated. Interrater reliability was 93.15% and was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements in coding decisions by the total number of coding decisions made.

Emergent Themes

As participants spoke about the lived realities of presenting the self through private sphere dress, their accounts crystallized around three key themes: (a) conceptualizing the desired self, (b) making sense of the marketplace: the role of traditional and Western dress in mobilizing desired selves, and (c) looking glasses: the role of others in mobilizing desired selves.

Conceptualizing the Desired Self

Throughout their accounts, participants spoke of using private sphere dress to construct a "desired self" – or representations of idealized identities. In so doing, they referenced varied "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954) that resembled closely the co-existing views of the self identified by Guy and Banim (2000) as the various "women" their participants wanted to be or feared they might become. Here, I adapt Guy and Banim's conceptualization of the self as including varied and co-existing views but modify these views to fit with our data.

Women Participants Wanted to Be. Much in the spirit of Cooley (1902), who proposes that individuals often present themselves to "seem a little better than [they] are" (p. 352), participants' accounts of private sphere dress reflected a desire to manage the impressions "given off" in such a way as to construct a desirable self-presentation (Goffman, 1959, p. 2) for the self and others, conceptualized here as The Woman I Want to Be (Guy & Banim, 2000). Implicit here are participants' conceptualizations of how they wanted to look or appear before others when presenting the self in private sphere dress as well as the various considerations that contributed to their construction of these desired self-presentations. Constructing the desired self – or the Woman I Want to Be – was seen as successful when presentations achieved a chosen image because the clothing worn produced a sought-after visual outcome or induced positive feelings of confidence. Participants identified several aspects of the Woman They Wanted to Be (i.e., the desired self). Aspects of the desired self echoed both personal and broader cultural values and often reflected an enduring quality in participants' lives, to a great extent "reflecting images that [had] already been" (Guy & Banim, 2000, p. 316).

The most central theme in participants' accounts of their efforts to construct desired selves through private sphere dress revolved around a theme of authenticity, particularly the capacity of dress to reliably express one's true or essential self. Thus, although at various junctures in their narratives participants acknowledged that they used dress to convey diverse facets of their selves, they also found a great deal of security and psychological comfort in wearing dress that was "like the real me" (cf., Pines & Roll, 1984): "It's my favorite, I love it to death [because] I just feel like wow, this is me" (Participant 14, 28 years). Frequently interwoven within discussions of dress as a tool to represent the "genuine self" was a commitment to

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wearing dress that was thought of as "straightforward," "natural," and "simple in its design" – or dress that conveyed that one was "not a fake person" (Participant 14, 28 years).

In activating the desired self – or the Woman I Want to Be – participants also emphasized the construction of a unique appearance, preferring to shop at local boutiques rather than mass merchants as they sought to construct distinctive self presentations. For participants, the assembly of a unique appearance – or having private sphere dress that was unlike that of others – was viewed as an expression of one's originality, personality, and creativity as well as a conduit for enhanced self-esteem: "I like to be unique and I hate to find someone who is wearing something like me…it just has a negative influence. Being unique makes you look nice or special" (Participant 13, 37 years). Like the participants in Guy and Banim's (2000) sample, the participants in the present study sought uniqueness in careful measure, acknowledging that constructing appearances that were "too unique" could detract from one's capacity to foster a positive impression in the eyes of others.

Another aspect of the desired self revolved around the issue of social class. By and large, participants readily acknowledged the contextual importance of class within Saudi culture: "You know, Saudi society really judges people through their dress. You will find them looking for famous brands or not, they will look at your watch, your shoes, to your outfit" (Participant 13, 37 years). Perhaps for this reason, participants frequently characterized the Woman They Wanted to Be as one whose socioeconomic status was inscribed upon her private sphere dress for others to see. In other cases, however, audience considerations prompted participants to dress outside of their social class so as to conceal from on-lookers their "true" social class membership, misrepresenting the self as either less or more well-off than was really the case (see Goffman, 1959). For instance, middle class participants occasionally adopted status symbols of higher

classes to gain acceptance among wealthier acquaintances. Conversely, more well-off participants noted that they sometimes dressed in the simpler dress of the middle class out of a desire not to call undue attention to the self and/or not to attract people for the "wrong" reasons:

> I am from a well-known family, so everyone will expect me to show off my dress…but, I don't like when someone will only be my friend because of my family…Sometimes, I want to hide my identity, and that's why I wear simple dress because I don't want my dress to tell people that I am from this family. (Participant 13, 37 years)

As noted, the Islamic religion exerts a powerful influence upon Saudi life (Long, 2005). When taken with Goffman's (1959) proposition that social interactions are shaped by an individual's desire to present a socially acceptable self, it is perhaps logical that religion would play a significant role in the daily choices of Saudi life – including what to wear. As such, it is not surprising that participants' accounts of the desired selves they wished to construct through their private sphere dress practices were frequently predicated upon the concept of modesty, as guided by the principles of the Islamic faith:

> The nice and fancy clothes can be modest, especially for evening dresses, it doesn't have to be revealing to be nice…the message I want to show through this dress is that I can have a fancy, chic dress that is modest and that pleases God. (Participant 2, 22 years)

Not all participants, however, embraced the same degree of modesty in their private sphere dress; some women, such as Participant 2, espoused more conservative dress norms, whereas others were more liberal in their interpretation of what constituted modest private dress. For instance, participants varied in how they regarded *awrah*, the traditional Islamic teaching based upon prophetic scripture and consensus opinion stipulating which portions of the body must be covered for various audiences and settings[5](Padela & del Pozo, 2011). Some noted that

awrah was just a "starting point" for modest private sphere dress, whereas others felt that so long as the minimum guidelines of *awrah* were met, modesty had been achieved. Further, some participants acknowledged shifting norms of modesty for private sphere dress in contemporary Saudi society, disapprovingly suggesting that for some Saudi people "the signal for how they decide what is fancy or not is how revealing of your body it is" (Participant 2, 22 years).

In characterizing desired self presentations for the private sphere, several participants also shared that they wished to represent the self as a "fashion trendsetter" who maintained a stylish image worthy of admiration by others: "I want people to see me as pleasing and beautiful. By wearing trendy dress, I want to show others that I know what clothing choices are tasteful and stylish" (Participant 15, 27 years). For these participants, then, assembling a "high-fashion" image necessitated everyday interactions with the fashion market and with other trendsetters. Participants described regularly engaging with fashion publications, and some even made shopping pilgrimages to far-away destinations such as Italy and Beirut, which were conceived of as rich sources of high fashion goods. In addition to seeking validation of the self through the creation of a fashionable appearance (Stone, 1962), participants who most valued presenting the self as "trendy" cherished their roles as "fashion advisors" for friends and family members.

Other factors that emerged as salient in participants' attempts to construct the Woman I Want to Be included the desires to present the self in an "age-appropriate" manner and to accrue an expansive private sphere wardrobe that accommodated diverse presentations of the self.

Women Participants Did Not Want to Be. As they characterized the selves they wished to present to others, participants sometimes engaged in a form of identity management through consideration of what they did *not* wish to convey about the self, which Freitas and colleagues (1997) have referred to as an "identity not!" (p. 323). That is, by referencing identities that they

wished to avoid – or the Women They Did Not Want to Be (cf., Guy & Banim, 2000) – as a guide for the construction of their self-presentations, participants shaped "the unknown into a knowable opposite" (Garrison, 1982, p. 229), seemingly quelling anxieties relative to issues of body image and cultural demands for propriety.

Many participants expressed concerns about the body, particularly the notion that their bodies did not conform to cultural body ideals, which, like those in the West, emphasized thinness. Participants spoke of the ways in which they used private sphere dress as a means by which to conceal aspects of the body that were regarded as flawed: wearing looser shirts, for instance, to camouflage a fuller waist. At the same time, however, they revealed angst relative to the possibility that their ability to obscure their perceived defect from the view of others would somehow be compromised, causing them to reveal an undesired presentation of the self – The Woman I Do Not Want to Be (Guy & Banim, 2000). For instance, they sometimes felt that their capacity to wear certain types of clothing was undermined by their desire to present the body in a certain manner: "I like to show my good features and hide my flaws…If I see something really beautiful, but it does not fit my body, then it will be ugly" (Participant 3, 22 years).

In other cases, participants expressed concern about presentations of self that would somehow bring dishonor to the self or to Saudi society as a result of disregard for norms of cultural propriety. In many cases, the issue of modesty was at stake here. Poised at a cultural crossroads with standards for modesty in a state of fluctuation, participants spoke of the trickiness inherent in navigating the thin line between constructing a fashionable appearance and one that pushed the boundaries too far past the cultural norms of modesty (cf., Zuhur, 2005):

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Sometimes you will see something you like from these Western things, but you will never wear it….Not everything in the West is appropriate here. It's not appropriate for our culture, our society, and our environment. (Participant 12, 31 years)

Thus, patent immodesty was regarded as an identity to be avoided and was conceptualized as a manifestation of the Woman I Don't Want to Be. In fact, Participant 7 (24 years) remarked that dressing in an immodest fashion disgraced not just the self, but Saudi culture as well.

For other participants, the Woman I Don't Want to Be was one who was "underdressed" for an important social event – a social faux pas reflective of one's social standing and class which was thought to bring discredit to the self and potentially to one's family (cf., Goffman, 1959). Finally, participants expressed concern that they may select private sphere dress that made them look older than they actually were, such that their impression management techniques may fail and they would not continue to look "young and beautiful" (Participant 10, 40 years).

Making Sense of the Marketplace: The Role of Traditional and Western Dress in Mobilizing Desired Selves

As participants described their attempts to mobilize desired selves, they frequently referenced the dress resources available to them in the contemporary Saudi marketplace. At the center of these discussions were the meanings participants assigned to various forms of dress available within the marketplace, including traditional dress as well as Westernized styles.

Participants characterized traditional dress as both supporting and undermining desired self-presentations, or the Women They Wanted to Be. Notably, participants regarded traditional dress as buttressing their desire to present the self as modest and as having a rightful position within Saudi culture for the purpose of honoring customs and feeling "in the spirit" of their

ancestors (Participant 15, 27 years). By wearing traditional dress for holidays and cultural

gatherings, participants constructed identities intended to pay homage to long-honored beliefs

and ways of life. Religious occasions, such as Ramadan, were noted as times during which the

wearing of traditional dress was particularly appropriate – owing to its modest design – and held

nostalgic meaning: "During Ramadan, since we were kids, we have seen people wearing

traditional dress, and because it's the religion, it inspires us to wear these kinds of modest

clothes" (Participant 8, 29 years). The wearing of traditional dress was construed by all

participants as central to substance of certain traditional celebrations. For instance, 22 year old

Participant 3 noted that, absent of traditional dress, the essence of the (female-only) *Ghomrah*

party, a customary Saudi bridal celebration (Iskandarani, 2006), would be lost: "The bride and

her family must wear the traditional…they are losing the value of the party if they do not."

Not all participants, however, viewed traditional dress as the mechanism through which

to realize The Woman I Want to Be. For instance, younger participants in particular often

expressed the view that traditional dress was outdated and was inconsistent with the role

demands of their everyday lives, calling to mind Hobsbawm's and Ranger's (2012) observation

that cultural traditions are constantly evolving:

> I feel it is archaic and it is not appropriate for the place that I am going or spending time.
>
> I never…wear it. I feel [traditional dresses] are artifacts - we put them on display to
>
> watch it, not to wear it" (Participant 1, 28 years old).

For women like Participant 1, then, Westernized dress (e.g., jeans, t-shirts, "short" dresses)

offered a viable sartorial alternative for mobilizing desired selves – or the Women They Wanted

to Be – and one that was highly regarded for its fashionability, ready availability, comfort,

practicality, versatility, and low cost:

It's comfortable and [provides] more variety with the different options of tops for the different occasions. Even older women could wear jeans – but not with a t-shirt. They need more formal shirts or loose tops to wear with the jeans (Participant 11, 25 years).

A common thread running through participants' discussions of Western dress concerned the issue of modesty and the opinion that some Western fashions (e.g., above-the-knee dresses, low-cut dresses or shirts, low-waisted pants) could not easily accommodate Saudi standards of modesty. For some participants, this posed no dilemma; these women espoused the belief that personal standards of appropriateness for dress must be met no matter the fashion (i.e., traditional or Western), and that therefore, immodest Western fashions should not be worn. For many participants, however, the Saudi culture demands for modesty and the fashion-forward stylings of Western dress available in the marketplace did represent a quagmire of sorts, echoing the premises of Gergen's (2000) work on multiphrenia and social saturation and inciting a sense of tension and uncertainty. These women were drawn to the fashionability of less modest Westernized looks but at the same time felt that their desire to look fashionable was complicated by their obligations to the Islamic faith. Twenty-seven year old Participant 15, for instance, struggled with navigating the modesty versus (Western) fashion dilemma, but ultimately concluded that her "fashion desires [were] stronger than [her] religious convictions."

Looking Glasses: The Role of Others in Mobilizing Desired Selves

Woven throughout participants' accounts was evidence that they invoked specific and generalized others (Mead, 1934) in their lives as looking glasses to tell them "who to be" and "how to appear" (Cooley, 1902), viewing themselves through the eyes and impressions of these others as they sought to stage presentations of the self within the private sphere: "I wasn't convinced I should wear it, but because most people told me it was really nice, I changed my

mind. I mean, people liked it, so why not? Everyone cares about people's opinions" (Participant 11, 25 years). Participant 11's acknowledgment that "everyone cares about people's opinions" was shared among many participants and often was associated with a broader observation that Saudi society was a highly "judgmental" one in which the dressed body was viewed as constituent of one's identity: "You are judged according to how you are dressed" (Participant 12, 31 years). In turn, this assumption about Saudi life rendered looking glass processes and reflected appraisals (Cooley, 1902) as salient in shaping decisions about what to wear, particularly when their private sphere interactions included people who did not know them well.

Participants mentioned diverse others – including their husbands, in-laws, mothers, sisters, and friends – as shaping their thoughts about what constituted an appropriate presentation of the self for the private sphere. At a most basic level, participants' accounts reflected a desire for validation from these various others that their dress choices were appropriate for an occasion (e.g., adequately modest), becoming, and/or fashionable, and they managed their appearances in such a way as to elicit reviews to this effect (Stone, 1962). Husbands emerged as the most influential "specific others" in shaping participants' mobilization of the desired self for the private sphere, perhaps reflecting the significance of pleasing one's husband as a tenet of Islamic teachings (Al-Jehani, 2005). Inherent in many of the women's accounts about their husbands' influence upon their dress was the notion of a woman's "adornments" as instruments of sexual attraction, which also is a precept of Islamic ideology (Bullock, 2003): "I will look for something to attract him and help him not to look at other women…the most important time I care about my appearance is when I am with my husband at home" (Participant 2, 22 years). Culturally, in-laws were perceived by Saudi women as "having their husband's ear," and, and as such, they also

exerted an important influence upon private sphere dress, particularly for new brides who were not well acquainted with their in-laws.

In addition to identifying specific others as significant in guiding desired self-presentations for the private sphere, participants spoke to the role of the mass media and the fashion industry – invoked as generalized others – in shaping ideas about what was "trendy" or "fashionable" within a Saudi milieu rife with shifting meanings and traditional as well as Western influences (cf., Fatany, 2007; Yamani, 2004): "I just think looking at [Western and Arabic] magazines or watching a fashion TV show or going window shopping will help me to recognize and decide what is stylish and what is not" (Participant 15, 27 years). Important to note, however, is the critical lens with which participants approached Western fashion and media information that did not fit with their personal value systems or that may elicit negative reviews among others. For instance, Participant 15 remarked that she would not wear short dresses or skinny pants such as those promoted in magazines "particularly in front of religious people. I am not that religious, but I don't like to disrespect their values."

Participant 15's comment that she doesn't wear certain types of clothing in front of "religious people" out of respect for their values reflects Goffman's (1959) propositions about audience segmentation, or the notion that people may manipulate their appearances – going so far as to use dress to become someone "new" for different audiences – in such as way so as to invite their audience to look upon them favorably and/or to elicit positive reviews of the self. Saudi women's "audiences" and roles in the private sphere are quite varied, considering that diverse occasions, such as weddings, family gatherings, holiday celebrations, and everyday life at school and work may occur within the private sphere. As such, within the context of the private sphere, participants were constantly adjusting and redefining themselves to construct a

presentation of self that embodied the desires of their specified audiences and that allowed them to adjust the presentation of the self to suit the diverse roles that they adopted in their lives, some of which were relatively new to female role-takers in the Saudi Arabian context (e.g., professional). Participant 15 (27 years) explained her many private sphere audiences and how her desired self was different for each:

> For work, I mostly adopt professional dress with suits…I want to show that I'm a respectful, well-educated teacher who follows the rules[6]. With my family, I don't care what I wear, I will be in my ugly, soft pajamas. They have seen me on the worst days and are never going to judge me because of how I dress. At a special occasion, I want to be seen as fancy with elegant taste…At home my message is that I am a sexy wife. I show my body with either tight or exposing dress. I don't want my husband to stop looking at me with grateful eyes thinking that he married the most beautiful woman in the world.

Participants' felt need to present different selves for different audiences was prompted not only by the diverse nature of the interactions that occurred within the private sphere but also by the complex and evolving nature of the Saudi Arabian cultural context itself, which simultaneously exposed participants to traditional and modern influences. For instance, participants' narratives were filled with accounts of wanting to appear "trendy" and "modern" (e.g., dressed in the latest Western styles promoted with the fashion magazines) for some audiences and modest and more traditional for other audiences. That is, in the spirit of Gergen's (2011) work on social saturation and multiphrenia, participants were exposed to multiple possibilities for presenting the self and as a result found themselves at the mercy of diverse societal influences or pulls, carefully navigating these influences by crafting differing versions of

the self for presentation to differing audiences. Some women navigated these waters with aplomb and seemed rather comfortable constructing differing fronts for differing audiences:

> If you're going to a social event only for girls, it will be different than if there are older ladies…I want to respect their age and I won't wear something short or revealing. But, if I am just with my friends, I will wear whatever is fashionable. (Participant 13, 37 years)

For others, however, the perceived need to present diverse and sometimes incompatible versions of the self was a source of tension, stress, and/or ambivalence. For instance, 27 year old Participant 15 spoke about the differences between her views on modest dress and those of her mother, noting that her mother's more conservative dress requirements for her "make me feel a lump in my heart to stop wearing [above-the-knee clothes]...but I don't want to stop." For these women, deciding what to wear on a given occasion or for a given audience could consume much time and energy, and when a satisfactory conclusion could not be reached, these participants occasionally decided to forgo participation in said occasion.

Discussion and Conclusions

Findings from the present work add new insights about the previously little understood private sphere dress practices of Saudi women by identifying how Saudi women use various forms of private sphere dress to construct the self and identity, by lending understanding about the meanings associated with various private sphere dress forms, and by shedding light about the role of others in shaping the construction of the self through private sphere dress. Specifically, findings demonstrated that, in many ways, the identities that participants constructed through the use of private sphere dress were multilayered ones that reflected the multidimensional nature of the self (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and the intricacies of the evolving Saudi cultural context. The fulcrum around which participants' accounts revolved was the notion that both traditional and

Western dress were instrumental in helping them to fashion diverse aspects of the desired selves – or the idealized identities – that they wished to mobilize within the context of the private sphere. Traditional dress was deeply valued by many participants, but was regarded as a contextually bound form of dress that was largely reserved for holidays and special occasions (Iskandarani, 2006). On a daily basis, Westernized dress was adopted to mobilize idealized identities and to avoid the mobilization of dreaded identities (Al-Dabbagh, 2006). Although, in some regards, these identities – such as a desire not to violate certain norms for bodily appearance – were similar to those enumerated by Guy and Banim's (2000) British participants, others, such as concerns around modesty, reflected the participants' immersion within the Saudi cultural context. As was evident in the data, participants varied in their views on modesty, with some holding tight to their Islamic values, regardless of context and audience, and others creatively adapting their looks depending upon the situation and the audience at hand (and the roles adopted for that audience). Indeed participants' adeptness at adapting their presentations of the self for various audiences lends support for the assertion that, in a global, postmodern context characterized by exposure to diverse realities and possibilities for ways of being, the question becomes not so much "Who am I?," but rather, "Who can I be with you?" (Cahill & Sandstrom, 2011, p. 182). Although some participants grappled with these questions and the demands of balancing diverse possibilities for presenting the self in stride, others experienced the incompatible cultural pulls on the self as stressful and were not able to reconcile how they should present the self through private sphere dress (Gergen, 2000, 2011; Zuhur, 2005).

Interestingly, although findings echo in many ways Gergen's (2011) proposition that identity is not fixed but rather is constructed and reconstructed in accord with the various realities one faces, participants also spoke to the notion of expressing the "authentic" self as a

component of their desired self, suggesting perhaps that some aspects of the self, are, in fact, "chronically accessible" and represent a "core" self (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 957). Of interest here is the recognition of this fact by participants as well as the value placed upon accessing and revealing this self to others through private sphere dress.

One limitation of this work is that the interviews were conducted in Arabic and were translated into English for analysis such that some subtle nuances in meaning may have been lost. The sample comprised Saudi women who had not lived abroad and who were residing in metropolitan areas, and thus findings yielded understanding about the private sphere dress experiences of women with these specific characteristics. In future work, it would be valuable to explore the private sphere dress practices of Saudi women who had lived abroad for extended periods of time and/or who were residing in rural areas of the country. Of interest would be whether, given the differing socializing factors at hand, these women would experience a "saturation of the self" similar to that described by participants in the present sample. Also of interest in future work would be a more in-depth exploration of women's interactions with specific others and the role of those interactions in shaping the use of private sphere dress to construct and present the self. For instance, it would be interesting to consider the lived realities of women who were not married, as the present work focused exclusively upon the experiences of married women for whom interactions with spouses and in-laws were quite significant. Finally, because issues of social class emerged as so salient for the middle-class participants in the present study, it would be intriguing to explore how lower or upper class Saudi women might think about such issues as they construct and present the private sphere self through dress.

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[3] Only married women were included in the sample because the data for the present study were part of a larger inquiry examining how Saudi women's private sphere dress is shaped by their interactions with their husbands.

[4] The audit process was suspended after the audit coders checked 26% of the transcripts because the level of agreement between the researcher and the audit coder was acceptable.

[5] Literally translated, *awrah* refers to the idea of vulnerability or nakedness (Wehr, 1994) and to the attendant notion that vulnerable or intimate body parts should not be exposed. As noted, for women, *awrah* is situational. For instance, *awrah* restrictions specify that a woman in the company of other women must cover the area from the navel to the knee. According to *awrah* guidelines, however, a woman does need not to cover any area of the body when she is in the company of her husband (see Padela & del Pozo, 2011).

[6] Participant 15 worked in a public university setting as lecturer. The "rules" she notes here refer to formal standards of modesty required of all women employed by the Saudi government.

CHAPTER V

MANUSCRIPT 2

The Marital Relationship and Saudi Arabian Women's Private Sphere Dress[*]

In the Islamic country of Saudi Arabia, family is key to a healthy culture, as family ties

are strong and Islam reinforces the importance of the familial unit (Long, 2005). Many aspects of

life – including dress – are an integral part of the family unit and the marriage bond (Al-

Dabbagh, 2006). How women present themselves through dress is often seen as a representation

of their family, allowing context and audience considerations to play a critical role in shaping

self-presentation (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Long, 2005). In one context, the public sphere – locations

outside of the home where women are in the presence of males who are not considered to be next

of kin – Saudi women are required by law to practice *hijab* or veiling (Le Renard, 2008). For

Saudi women, observing *hijab* requires wearing the *abbaya* with *a burqah or niqab*, a form of

traditional dress that covers the entire body, leaving only the eyes and hands exposed (Long,

2005). Dress conventions for Saudi women are different, however, within the private sphere,

which encompasses women's interactions with their next of kin (male or female) and/or with

women to whom they are not related. These interactions may occur within private homes or

gender-segregated locations (i.e., spaces where only women are allowed). The private sphere of

Saudi women encompasses a broad range situations and contexts, including their interactions

with other women at gender-segregated schools, workplaces, shopping centers, and events (e.g.,

weddings, holiday celebrations) (Al Munajjed, 1997; Le Renard, 2008). In contrast to their

public sphere dress, Saudi women's private sphere dress is open to individual choice and may

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[*] A version of this manuscript, "The Marital Relationship and Saudi Arabian Women's Private
Sphere Dress," has been accepted for publication in the International Journal of Home
Economics. Permission has been granted by the editor to include this version.

include traditional Saudi styles (e.g., modest, long dresses with long sleeves), or, in recent years, Western styles (Le Renard, 2008).

Most of the existing research exploring Saudi women's dress practices has focused upon dress worn in the public sphere, providing detailed descriptions of the *abbaya* and examining varied perspectives on the practice of *hijab* (e.g., Doumato, 1992; Fertile-Bishop & Gilliam, 1981; Pharaon, 2004; Rabolt & Forney, 1989). In contrast, a modicum of work has examined Saudi women's private sphere dress practices, especially from the perspectives of the wearers, themselves, perhaps owing to the limited access of outside researchers into the private sphere of Saudi women. Further, although it has been suggested that Saudi Arabian husbands may play a role in their wives' decisions about public sphere dress (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003), researchers have not explored the potential role of husbands in shaping Saudi women's private sphere dress. Thus, the purpose of the present interpretive study was to address existing gaps in the literature by considering the marital dyad as a context for Saudi women's presentation of self through dress within the private sphere.

Related Literature

Marital Roles within the Islamic Saudi Context

Traditionally, marital roles within Saudi Arabia have been defined by the teachings of Islam, with specific roles and expectations circumscribed for husbands and wives (Al-Jehani, 2005; Syed, 2004). As the head of their households, Saudi husbands have customarily been expected to provide food, clothing, and shelter for their wife; to groom themselves well; to be devoted only to their wife; to guard their wife's identity; and "to be zealous for their wife's purity" (i.e., to encourage their wife to shield her beauty by wearing the veil); to assist their wife with housework; and to *not* hinder their wife from work or study. Saudi wives, on the other hand,

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have traditionally been expected to submit to their husband's authority, to maintain the home, and to bring up "proper" children (Bullock, 2003; Maki, 2004; Syed, 2004). This entails appropriately using the money they receive from their husband, not leaving the home without their husband's permission, maintaining the family's privacy, and creating a healthy and peaceful home. Like husbands, wives have been expected to groom themselves, which includes wearing clothing that appeals to their husband. Both parties have been responsible for living together with respect and for maintaining mutual sexual satisfaction (Al-Jehani, 2005; Bullock, 2003).

In recent years, as Saudi women have begun to access more freedoms, these traditional gender role expectations have begun to be redefined in some ways. For instance, as women have gained independence through education and work, they have questioned whether the husband's authority within the family should be shared with the wife (Al-Jehani, 2005; Maki, 2004).

Saudi Women's Private Sphere Dress

As noted, Saudi women wear two primary forms of dress within the private sphere: traditional and Western. The traditional private sphere dress of Saudi Arabia pre-dates the country's founding in 1932 by several centuries (Al-Bassam & Sudqi, 1999; Long, 2005) and takes its form as a long-sleeved, floor-length dress with a high-collar. The silhouette is close fitting yet modest, minimizing bodily exposure. Frequently, the neckline, arms, and sleeves of the dress are richly embellished with colorful embroideries (Kennett, 1995).

Although the traditional private sphere dress of Saudi Arabia has a long history, it has waned in popularity since the discovery of oil in the 1930s and the ensuing introduction of Western influences/media (Long, 2005; Yamani, 2004). Iskandarani (2006) has suggested that in contemporary Saudi society, women rarely wear traditional private sphere dress, reserving its use primarily for times of celebration and religious occasions. Al-Dabbagh's (2006) research

provides empirical support for the proposition that traditional dress is declining in its popularity for everyday use; her findings revealed that, between 1981 and 2004, there was a shift among Saudi women in preferences toward more Westernized dress for private sphere use.

The adoption of Westernized dress by Saudi women may be explained by diverse factors. Using an oral survey approach, Rabolt and Forney (1989) examined the dress preferences of Saudi women nationals and found that women who had higher socioeconomic status, had worked outside of the home, were more "cosmopolitan" (i.e., had traveled outside of Saudi Arabia), were more highly educated, and were younger were more likely to wear more Westernized dress in private settings. Overall, findings indicated less movement toward Westernized dress in public sphere dress choices as compared to private sphere dress choices. The researchers proposed that these findings may reflect Islamic laws forbidding the wearing of Westernized dress in public. Thus, from the perspectives of the participants, the private sphere may have been the only place where it was permissible for them to express their own identity through dress.

For some contemporary Saudi women, the expanded possibilities for self-expression offered by the introduction of Western dress into the marketplace pose a dilemma of sorts. Zuhur (2005) has suggested that these women may experience a sense of being torn between adopting fashions promoted within the Westernized media and adopting more conservative fashions that traditionally have been valued within their native culture. For many, the result is a balancing act; for instance, based upon her field study exploring Saudi women's lifestyles, Le Renard (2008) observed that although women attending university in Saudi Arabia were required to conform to expectations for traditional Saudi dress (e.g., they had to wear long skirts), they also dressed so as to display awareness of Western fashions.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic interactionists regard the dressed body as a social object invested with meanings that emerge through social interactions. These meanings allow individuals to use the appearance of their own bodies to establish identity and to draw inferences about others' appearances (Stone, 1962). In turn, these inferences guide individuals' interactions with others and form the basis for the feedback that interacting individuals provide to others about the body and self. Social feedback, or "reviews," of one's body and self can be positive or negative and thus, may represent a validation of or a challenge to a given presentation of the self through dress (Stone, 1962). Individuals reflect upon reviews about their dressed bodies and may integrate these reflected appraisals into their sense of self, using them to imagine future reactions to their physical selves (i.e., to take the role of a specific or generalized other) and to guide future dress-related behaviors and interactions (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Stone, 1962). In this way, people use others as "looking glasses" (Cooley, 1902) to tell them who they are, how they should dress and appear, and how they should behave toward their bodies and those of others (Stone, 1962).

Empirical findings lend support for the interactionist premise that women come to see their bodies through the eyes of their husbands. For example, in prior work with US samples, husbands' evaluations of their wives' appearances have been linked to their wives' appearance self-assessments (Oh & Damhorst, 2009; Pole, Crowther, & Schell, 2004). Taken together, this work suggests that over time, a woman's self-perceptions of her appearance may come to mirror her "accumulated understanding of [her] spouse's appraisal of [her] body and appearance" (Oh & Damhorst, 2009, p. 43). Thus, there is both theoretical and empirical support for the proposition that a woman's sense of the appearance is produced, in part, through her interaction with her husband. To date, however, research has not yet explored how, within the context of Saudi marriage, interactions between wives and husbands may shape Saudi women's dress within the

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private sphere. Yet, both the cultural context of Saudi Arabia, in which Saudi husbands have traditionally been viewed as guardians of their wives' identities (Maki, 2004), as well as prior work suggesting that Saudi husbands may exert an influence upon Saudi women's public sphere dress choices (Al-Munajjed, 1997; Bullock, 2003), support the likelihood that Saudi women's private sphere dress decisions may be negotiated within the context of their marriages. The questions that then arise are: What meanings do Saudi Arabian husbands and wives associate with various forms of private sphere dress available within the contemporary Saudi marketplace, including traditional and Western forms of dress? How do these meanings set a context for Saudi women's dress-related interactions with their husbands? Further, what role do Saudi husbands play in shaping married Saudi women's dress for the private sphere? And, how do interactions between Saudi wives and husbands lay a foundation for Saudi women's self-presentations through private sphere dress?

Method

Institutional Review Board approval for this study was obtained from Colorado State University. An interpretive, qualitative approach that drew upon in-depth interviews with 15 married Saudi couples was adopted.

Participants

Purposive, nonprobability sampling was used to recruit participants from two metropolitan cities in Saudi Arabia (i.e., Jeddah and Medina). Two female Saudi informants provided initial contacts. Couples had been married for 3 months to 35 years. Wives' ages ranged from 20 and 60 years (mean = 30 years), and husbands' ages ranged from 20 to 67 years (mean = 35 years). Most participants share a middle-class or upper middle-class lifestyle. All but two wives had pursued some form of post-secondary education: eleven obtained bachelor's

degrees, and two held graduate degrees. Although a majority of the wives were homemakers, three worked outside the home in white-collar positions (human resources, education), and one was a student. Though several wives had traveled abroad, none had lived abroad. All husbands had received higher education degrees: four held associate's degrees, four held bachelor's degrees, and seven held graduate degrees. Four husbands had lived abroad while they were students. Husbands' occupations varied (e.g., electrician, engineer, HR manager, physician).

Procedures

All participants were interviewed by the researcher, a married female Saudi researcher. An in-depth, semi-structured approach was used to explore guided topics of discussion. Questions focused upon (a) how participants view the wearing of traditional and Western dress within the private sphere (for the self or for their wives) and (b) how wives and husbands interacted about the wives' dress worn within the private sphere and to what degree this affected wives' decisions about dress. Interviews with wives and husbands were conducted separately. Wives' interviews were conducted face-to-face in Saudi Arabia in a private setting (e.g., in the participants' homes), lasting between 40 and 90 minutes. To honor Saudi cultural customs that mandate separation of unrelated men and women, husbands' interviews were conducted over the phone or via Skype. Husband interviews lasted from 20 to 50 minutes. Three husbands chose to speak English in their interviews, but all other interviews were conducted in Arabic. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and, when necessary, translated into English by the first author (a native Arabic speaker who also speaks fluent English).

Analysis

Data were analyzed using constant comparison processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Data were divided it into meaningful fragments. The researcher then took fragments from five wife

and five husband interviews, comparing and analyzing them to develop key concepts through the process of open coding. These key concepts were developed into a coding guide, which was applied to the whole of the data. Finally, the researcher used axial and selective coding to search for higher–order connections within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To establish trustworthiness, the researcher used journaling (reflexivity). Additionally, an audit coder checked the application of the coding guide to the 26% of the data[7]. Interrater reliability was 96% and was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements in coding decisions by the total number of coding decisions made. Disagreements in coding were negotiated.

<center>**Results: Emergent Themes**</center>

In the spirit of the interactionist tradition, findings revealed that, among the Saudi couples in the sample, the marital relationship set a context for the negotiation of meanings about the private sphere dress worn by the wives. Specifically, three themes related to private sphere dress emerged from analyses: (a) traditional and Western dress for the private sphere, (b) "his place" and "her place" in shaping private sphere dress decisions, and (c) forging the private sphere self through lived interaction.

Traditional and Western Dress for the Private Sphere

To understand how married Saudi couples negotiate meanings about women's private sphere dress through their interactions, it is important first to understand the meanings that they associated with the various forms of dress worn within this context (i.e., traditional and Western). Although individual preferences for traditional versus Western dress were somewhat varied across the sample, a set of meanings about each of these forms of dress emerged as shared across numerous participants. Perhaps the clearest example of such an association was the linkage of traditional dress with modesty or conservatism and the teachings of Islam: "I'm in

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love with traditional or Eastern dress…it takes into account the rules of Islam in terms of

modesty" (Husband 2). Traditional dress also frequently was viewed as central to substance of

certain traditional celebrations, such as the *Ghomrah* party, a customary Saudi bridal celebration:

"The bride and her family must wear the traditional…they are losing the value of the party if

they do not" (Wife 3). Finally, for everyday contexts, traditional dress was regarded as outdated

and as the province of more mature women. Conversely, Western dress (e.g., jeans, t-shirts, short

dresses) was viewed as fashionable and trendy, as potentially immodest (i.e., not all Western

dress was viewed as equally immodest), and as youthful in its design:

> Western dress is more chic…(Husband 1)
>
> Not everything in the West is appropriate here. It's not appropriate for our culture, our
>
> society, and our environment. (Wife 12)
>
> …the first time my husband saw me wearing skinny jeans with a revealing top….he told
>
> me that I looked younger and he didn't recognize me….he thought I was our daughter!
>
> (Wife 10)

In varied ways, the aforementioned meanings formed the basis for wives' and husbands'

interactions about private sphere dress (cf., Stone, 1962). As Zuhur (2005) reminds us, for many

Saudi women, opposing cultural pulls in contemporary Saudi society may produce a sense of

conflict about whether to adopt traditional styles that are consistent with Islamic teachings or to

wear trendier (and often less conservative/modest) fashions that are promoted as desirable within

the Westernized media. For a number of participants, this sense of conflict was played out within

the context of the marital relationship. Here, wives and their husbands held differing views

regarding the appropriateness of various forms of private sphere dress, inciting a sense of tension

for the wives. For instance, some husbands, such as Husband 6, valued traditional styles and

modesty in dress and regarded much Western dress as inappropriate (i.e., too immodest) for their wives, asking their wives not to wear such clothing in front of anyone other than them. This request was met with irritation on the part of Wife 6, who appreciated Western fashions and felt conflicted about trying to simultaneously appease her husband's bid while satisfying her own tastes: "Sometimes, he wants me to change my clothes and that pisses me off….sometimes I will cancel going out." In other cases, however, wives whose husbands expressed an affinity for Western dress expressed concern that their husbands would not support their decision to wear traditional dress for selected occasions, such as cultural events or celebrations: "My husband would make fun of me if I wore traditional dress" (Wife 15). Here, then, wives found themselves balancing their wish to heed cultural conventions for wearing traditional dress, which they held dear, and their desire to secure a validating response toward the self from their husbands (cf., Stone, 1962), which resulted in a measure of ambivalence. Interestingly, in one case, a couple (#5) who had initially disagreed about the wife's private sphere dress – with the husband preferring traditional/modest dress and the wife preferring sparser, Western dress – came, over the years, to align their views on the matter, with the wife eventually mirroring her husband's partiality for more modest styles. In the spirit of Oh's and Damhorst's (2009) work, then, Wife 5 gradually developed an "accumulated understanding" of her husband's perspective, which in turn, seemingly came to shape her construction of the self through dress (p. 43).

"His Place" and "Her Place" in Shaping Private Sphere Dress Decisions

As noted, symbolic interaction theory emphasizes the ways in which meanings arise through interactions. In turn, these interactions may contribute to a common or shared perspective that is developed over a period of time within a given cultural context (Charon, 1998; Heilman, 1976). In the present study, a shared understanding was observed across participant

accounts with respect to the roles expected of husbands and wives on matters related to wives'

private sphere dress practices. Here, we conceptualize these expectations for behavior – or these

"prescribed roles" (Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, & Carr, 2009) – in terms of "his place" and

"her place" within the context of Saudi marriage.

Both husbands and wives addressed several components of "his place." All participants,

including wives who worked outside of the home, discussed the importance of the husband in

providing funding for his wife's wardrobe. This expectation was linked to Islamic teachings

imploring the husband to provide for all household needs as well as to cultural beliefs about the

wife's appearance as a reflection of her husband's character (e.g., religious values, social class)

(Al-Munajjed, 1997). In some instances, participants also expressed that purchasing of clothing

for one's wife embodied an expression of affection.

Other aspects of "his place" revolved around the husband's provision of guidance to the

wife about her private sphere dress. For instance, in the early days of their marriages, many

husbands established parameters of acceptability for their wives' private sphere dress,

particularly relative to the issue of modesty. Violating established norms of acceptability resulted

in challenges to the wives' self-presentations (Stone, 1962) from the husbands: "My rules

regarding clothing originated long ago – since we got married…I don't care about anything

except for modesty…if she picks something short and revealing, then I will interfere, because

she has broken our agreement." (Husband 6)

In other cases, husbands provided more "gentle" or flexible advice or opinions on (i.e.,

reviews of) their wives' private sphere dress selections. Implicit in much of the dialogue

surrounding the provision of advice about dress was a desire on the part of husbands to give their

wives "space" to make their own dress decisions. Sometimes, advice offered to this end was solicited by wives, and in other cases, it was offered without invitation:

> She has the complete freedom to choose what she wants to wear, and I only give her my opinion if she asks me to. (Husband 12)

> From the day [a couple] gets married, her husband is her guardian angel, and he is responsible to take care of her. Her dress is part of her, so it is part of his responsibility to advise her as to what is appropriate. (Wife 5)

Interestingly, a handful of husbands regarded themselves as poor authorities on the topic of women's dress and opted not to provide guidance to their wives on such matters. In some cases, these impressions of maladroitness seemingly were shaped by the husbands' literal separation from the female sphere: "I have no idea about the "other side" of these occasions. I can't really judge the dress and say what's appropriate or not. She knows more than me because, you know, in Saudi Arabia we keep the genders segregated" (Husband 10). Some wives agreed that husbands should have little, if any, "say" with respect to wives' dress decisions for anything other than intimate situations, noting that it was not a husband's "right," nor was it "appropriate" for a husband to think that he could "control" a woman's dress. When husbands of these women offered reviews of their dress, the wives sometimes disregarded them, particularly when these reviews did not validate their chosen presentations of self (Stone, 1962):

> For in front of other people, if he thinks [a certain outfit] is nice, then thanks! If he doesn't, then it is not his business…I say, "thank you for giving your opinion, but I think I am going to wear it, anyway. (Wife 2)

The primary component of "her place" – the Islamic obligation of a wife to groom herself for her husband's enjoyment – was addressed at length within both the wives' and the husbands'

accounts of the wives' dress for intimate situations. Central to discussions about "her place" was the assumption that "the wife's beauty and body are for her husband to enjoy and not for the others" (Husband 5). Husbands emphasized that, for intimate moments shared between husbands and wives, wives should "look their best" (Husband 6) and dress to satiate their husbands' emotional and sexual desires through the wearing of clothing that husbands found appealing (e.g., lingerie, revealing clothing/Western clothing). Wives also found enjoyment in dressing to please their husbands, noting how the attention gleaned from satisfying their husbands' eyes filled them with a sense of pride in fulfilling their womanly roles. Some women even described special appearance rituals (e.g., applying make-up, changing their clothes) they performed before their husbands awoke in the morning or returned home from work, ensuring that they stayed the prize of their husbands' eyes.

Many wives also characterized submission to their husbands' guidelines for dress as a key component of "her place" in dress: "Submission to your husband is mandatory in the Islamic law," stated Wife 5, the strongest advocate for unquestioning obedience of one's husband. In some cases, wives deferred to their husbands' preferences for dress not only as a means by which to appease their husbands' aesthetic preferences, but also as a way to express their affection for their husbands and to seek their husbands' approval: "If he ever rejects something I wouldn't wear it... I love him and I want him to be happy about what I am wearing even if I am out of the home" (Wife 7). As noted above, however, not all wives routinely acquiesced to their husbands' preferences for how they presented themselves within the private sphere.

Finally, in articulating the various components of "her place" in dress, several wives spoke about a desire to use their private sphere dress to announce to others certain aspects of their identities (cf., Stone, 1962). For instance, in varying contexts, participants emphasized the

value of traditional and/or Western private sphere dress to communicate to others that they were modest, fashionable, unique, authentic, or affluent.

Forging the Private Sphere Self through Lived Interaction

As noted, Oh and Damhorst (2009) found that married, American couples relied on one another to inform their self-images. In a similar vein, for the Saudi wives in our sample, forging the private sphere self through dress was a task accomplished in conjunction with their husbands. As we discuss, both imagined and "real" or "lived" social feedback (i.e., reviews) from husbands was central in how Saudi wives came to construct their private sphere selves through dress.

Central to the interactionist perspective is the assumption that people come to see themselves as others see them as a consequence of role-taking (Mead, 1934), or by imagining how others regard them. In turn, these reflected appraisals come to shape self-feelings and to guide lines of behavior (Cooley, 1902). For the wives in the sample, reflected appraisals about husbands' potential responses to various presentations of the self were frequently invoked in the contemplation of clothing choices and shopping decisions: "The only reason I was a little hesitant to buy this outfit is because I wasn't sure if my husband was going to like it" (Wife 2). The accounts from the couples who had been married for an especially long time revealed that, over the years, the wives in these pairs became increasingly adept at taking the roles of their husbands, such that they developed a rather keen understanding of their husbands' perspectives on their dress. This notion of gradually building an "accumulated understanding" of one's significant other over the years (cf., Oh & Damhorst, 2009, p. 43) is aptly reflected in the following quote from Wife 5, who took pleasure in dressing in accord with her husband's preferences: "We have been together for more than thirty years. We are the same. There is no way I would be able to choose something that he doesn't like. We are of one mind" (Wife 5).

Wives also spoke about the essential role of positive and negative reviews from their husbands in shaping their presentation of self in the private sphere: "If he tells me something is nice or looks good on me, I would be extremely happy. My husband is the only person that [sic] could make me like or hate a dress" (Wife 1). Thus, as Wife 1's remark reflects, reviews from husbands frequently were valued and were used to inform lines of action regarding presentations of the self (Stone, 1962) (e.g., whether or not to wear a certain item of dress). Also reflected in Wife 1's comment is the close association of positive reviews with increased self-esteem and satisfaction. Even wives who regarded their husbands' influence upon their dress as limited still valued and appreciated positive reviews. One such woman, Wife 15, remarked, "All the wives would be very happy if they had nice comments from their husbands. It just completes me in my womanhood." Interestingly, the accounts of several husbands suggested that they were aware of the validating effects of positive reviews upon their wives and sought to praise their wives' dress, not only for the sake of asserting their opinion on their wives' appearances, but also to "help [my wife] to be satisfied" (Husband 14).

In contrast to positive reviews, negative reviews challenged wives' selves, decreasing their self-confidence and sometimes inducing confusion about their future self-presentations. In this vein, Wife 2 spoke about the trickiness in trying to decide how to present her self in a manner that allowed her to balance her own opinion and her husbands' evaluations of her self-presentations:

> I could have had a dress I really liked, but then I changed my mind when my husband told me he didn't really like it – that caused a lot of problems for me in the first year of my marriage…it really bothered me and broke me…my self-confidence was weak…(Wife 2).

As was the case with positive reviews, husbands were cognizant of the impact of negative reviews upon their wives. In the spirit of Goffman's (1967) conceptualization of deferential avoidance, selected husbands took "…verbal care…so as to not bring into discussion matters that might be painful, embarrassing, or humiliating" to their wives (p. 65), sometimes using humor to address the topic of appearance and sometimes avoiding the topic of their wives' appearances altogether. Although well-intended, this "silence" on the part of husbands was not always met with appreciation by the wives, who yearned for feedback from their husbands upon their appearances, which they relied upon as they constructed their private sphere selves:

> I don't like it when men are silent and don't comment on anything. He must talk about his wife's dress so the wife knows what he likes and what he doesn't like, so she can take his tastes into account when shopping. (Wife 7)

Conclusions

Findings extend prior work based upon Western samples suggesting that husbands may exert a shaping influence upon how wives make sense of their appearances (Oh & Damhorst, 2009; Pole, Crowther, & Schell, 2004) by examining if and how this influence may play out within a very different cultural context: the private sphere of Saudi Arabia. In a myriad of ways, findings provided ample support for the interactionist premise that the self is "something of collaborative manufacture" (Goffman, 1959, p. 253). That is, the data were replete with accounts of Saudi wives invoking their husbands as "looking glasses" (Cooley, 1902) to tell them "who to be" and "how to dress" within the context of the private sphere. Thus, as wives contemplated whether to choose traditional or Western dress or how to appear for certain occasions, they frequently reflected upon imagined and "real" appraisals from their husbands as they planned their lines of behavior.

Some wives spoke to their tendency to privilege their husbands' preferences for their dress over their own, reflecting the Islamic tradition of wifely submission to one's husband (Bullock, 2003; Syed, 2004). Such examples within the data provide evidence that within contemporary Saudi culture, conventional notions about the role of the husband in guarding – and in guiding – his wife's identity (here, as manifested through dress) certainly do persist (see Maki, 2004). At the same time, however, findings revealed that participants varied in how they conceptualized the husband's place in forging the wives' private sphere dress decisions. For instance, some wives and husbands agreed that husbands should have relatively little "say" in what wives wore within the private sphere, and some wives occasionally disregarded their husbands' appraisals of their dress (or felt ambivalent about them), lending support for the notion that symbolic interaction is an active theory of the self (Kaiser, 1997) and for Stone's (1962) premise that not all reviews are valued equally. Thus, in some contexts, a new era may be dawning in which the wives make dress decisions more independently of their husbands, which mirrors observations by Arabic scholars that in recent years, Saudi women have begun to question their husbands' authority to make unilateral decisions within the family unit (Al-Jehani, 2005; Maki, 2004).

The instances in which husbands and wives disagreed with respect to the presentation of the wife's appearance within the private sphere – the only context where it was acceptable for a Saudi woman to create her own identity through dress (Rabolt & Forney, 1989) – seemed to incite a measure of ambivalence for some wives. At the core of this ambivalence were several struggles that seemed to embody larger conflicts that are being played out within the broader cultural context of Saudi Arabia: (a) choosing between more traditional and more contemporary (i.e., Western)/less modest self-presentations and (b) deciding whether to honor one's husband or

to listen to one's own voice (see Zuhur, 2005). The challenge for home economics professionals (e.g., clothing designers, marriage and family therapists, family specialists) within Saudi Arabia lies in helping Saudi women to navigate these tensions within the evolving Saudi cultural context.

This study was limited in that the sample contained a fairly homogeneous group with respect to class. Additionally, only three of the wives held jobs outside of the home. Thus, in future work, it would be valuable to explore the experiences of participants from Saudi Arabia's elite or lower classes to secure differing views on the importance of dressing to meet social standards. Including more women who are employed also may yield new insights regarding how wives and husbands negotiate meanings about wives' private sphere dress presentations. Of interest in such a study would be if and how the greater freedoms these women might access at work would shape their private sphere dress practices and their roles within their marriages.

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ENDNOTE

[7] The audit process was suspended after the audit coders checked 26% of the transcripts because the level of agreement between the researcher and the audit coder was acceptable.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WIFE

In this study, I am interested in exploring married women's expression of self and construction of identity through clothing in the private sphere and how the marital relationship influences this expression. For the purposes of this study, I am defining the private sphere to include the home as well as women-only contexts, such as gender-segregated workplaces, schools, and social events. The questions that I ask may not address everything that you would like to discuss, so please feel free to add any information from any facet of your experience that you find pertinent. Also, if there are questions that you would prefer not to answer, please let me know.

Discussion of Photo/Clothing

1. Why did you choose this photo/article of clothing for our discussion today?

   Probe: That is, what was your reasoning behind choosing this specific photo/article of clothing to discuss? Is there something special about them? What is it?

2. How long have you had these clothes? Can you tell me about the history of how you acquired these clothes? That is, where did you get them?

   a. If you bought them, what made you decide to buy them? That is, what were the key factors in shaping your purchase? In making the purchase, did you experience any feelings of conflict/ambivalence, or, was it a clear choice? Why?

3. To what types of private sphere occasions do you usually wear these clothes (e.g., home as well as women-only contexts, such as gender-segregated workplaces, schools, and social events)? Why?

4. How do you want people to view you when wearing these clothes? What do you want people to say about them/this article of clothing?

5. How have people responded to these clothes? How have these responses made you feel? Why?

Meanings Associated with the Saudi Market, Traditional and Western Clothing

1. With respect to Saudi Arabia as a whole, what do you see as the dominant fashion trends for women's private sphere dress? Do these trends vary by specific private sphere context (e.g., home, work, school, social event)?

   a. What do you think influences these trends (market, media, Western influence, etc.)?

   b. How do feel about these trends? What do you like? What don't you like? Why?

c. Have you adopted some of these trends? Which ones? Why/why not?

2. In Saudi Arabia, private sphere dress includes both traditional and Western dress as well as a mixing of the two.

   a. How do you feel about each of those types of dress?

   b. Do you think it's appropriate to wear traditional dress? When is it appropriate?

   c. Do you think it's appropriate to wear Western dress? When is it appropriate?

   d. Do you think traditional dress is outdated or only for older generations? Why or why not?

Constructing and Displaying the Self through Dress

1. How important is your private sphere appearance to you? Why?

2. How would you describe your style for dress in the private sphere?

   a. Do you prefer to wear traditional dress or Western dress, or both? Why?
      Does this vary by context?

      Note: if they wear both, clarify whether they mix traditional and Western or whether they wear traditional and Western in different contexts (e.g., home, work, school, social events)

3. What are the different messages about the self (e.g., modesty, fashionability, uniqueness, etc.) that you want present through your private sphere dress?

   a. How do these messages vary by setting (e.g., home, celebrations, etc.)?

   b. How do these messages vary by audience (e.g., husband, extended family, in-laws, and friends)?

   c. How do you use private sphere dress to convey these various messages?

4. Do you like to be unique in your dress and stand out in a crowd or do you try to dress to blend in? Why?

5. How pleased/satisfied are you with your private sphere dress? Why?
   If you are not pleased, what would make you more pleased?

6. How do people react to your dress in the private sphere? Have you made changes in your dress in response to how others have reacted?

General Influences on Private Sphere Dress

1. Describe what or who influences your decisions on what to wear in private settings.

   a. What or to whom do you look toward as examples or ideas for your dress/why?

      People such as (e.g., role models such as sisters, mother)
      Religion/modesty
      Media (e.g., TV, movies, Internet, magazines)
      Retail environment/stores

Husband's Influence on Private Sphere Dress

1. What do you feel is your husband's responsibility in regard to your private sphere dress? Why?

2. How much influence do you feel your husband *should* have on your choice in private sphere dress? Why?

3. How much influence does your husband have on your choice in private sphere dress? That is, in what ways does your husband influence your dress in the private sphere?

   a. What types of opinions does he have on your private sphere dress?

   b. What types of things does he say to you about your private sphere dress? How do these opinions/comments make you feel? ***How do you respond to these comments?***

   c. How does he influence your style (Western versus traditional), the colors you wear, etc?

   d. Does he have guidelines, rules, or preferences for what you should wear at home, with your friends, with family members? Can you give some examples of these rules?

      Probe: Does your husband ask to look at your dress before you go out, shop with you/approve your purchases, etc.

4. Does your husband's influence upon your private sphere dress vary depending on the situation? How so?

5. In planning what to wear in the private sphere, how important is it to please yourself versus pleasing your husband? How do you balance that?

6. If you husband did not have an opinion on your dress, would you choose to dress differently? Why/why not?

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RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HUSBAND

In this study, I am are interested in exploring married women's expression of self and construction of identity through clothing in the private sphere and how the marital relationship influences this expression. For the purposes of this study, I am defining the private sphere to include the home as well as women-only contexts, such as gender-segregated workplaces, schools, and social events. The questions that I ask may not address everything that you would like to discuss, so please feel free to add any information from any facet of your experience that you find pertinent. Also, if there are questions that you would prefer not to answer, please let me know.

Meanings Associated with the Saudi Market, Traditional and Western Clothing

1. With respect to Saudi Arabia as a whole, what do you see as the dominant fashion trends for women's private sphere dress? Do these trends vary by specific private sphere context (e.g., home, work, school, social event)?

    a.   What do you think influences these trends (market, media, western influence, etc.)?

    b.   How do feel about these trends? What do you like? What don't you like? Why?

    c.   Has your wife adopted some of these trends? Which ones? Why/why not?

2. In Saudi Arabia, private sphere dress includes both traditional and Western dress as well as a mixing of the two.

    a.   How do you feel about each of those types of dress?

    b.   Do you think it's appropriate for your wife to wear traditional dress? When is it appropriate?

    c.   Do you think it's appropriate for your wife to wear Western dress? When is it appropriate?

    d.   Do you think traditional dress is outdated or only for older generations? Why or why not?

Wife's Private Sphere Appearance

1. How important is your wife's private sphere appearance to you? Why?

2. How would you describe your wife's style for dress in the private sphere?

3. How pleased/satisfied are you with your wife's private sphere dress? Why?
    If you are not pleased, what would make you more pleased?

Husband's attitudes and influences over his wife's dress

1. What do you feel is your responsibility in regard to your wife's private sphere dress? Why?

2. How much influence *should* you have over your wife's private sphere dress? Why?

3. How much influence *do* you have over your wife's private sphere dress? Why?

   a. What types of opinions do you have on her private sphere dress?

   b. What types of things do you say to her about her private sphere dress? How do these opinions/comments seem to make her feel? ***How does she respond to these comments?***

   c. How do you influence her style (Western versus traditional), the colors she wears, etc?

   d. Does you have guidelines, rules, or preferences for what she should wear at home, with friends, with family members? Can you give some examples of these rules?

      Probe: Do you ask to look at her dress before you go out, shop with her/approve her purchases, etc.

4. Does your influence upon her private sphere dress vary depending on the situation? How so?

5. If your wife had complete control over her private sphere wardrobe, how do you think she would dress?

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR WIFE

Department of Design and Merchandising
150 Aylesworth Hall SE
1574 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1574
(970) 491-1629
FAX: (970) 491-4855
http://www.cahs.colostate.edu/dm

DATE

Dear [insert name of potential participant]:

My name is Wijdan Tawfiq, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Design and Merchandising at Colorado State University. The purpose of this letter is to tell you about a research study entitled, "Constructing and Presenting the Self through Private Sphere Dress: An Interpretive Analysis of the Experiences of Married Saudi Arabian Women." I am conducting this study for my thesis. Dr. Jennifer Ogle, Department of Design and Merchandising, is my graduate advisor and is overseeing the study.

The goal of this research is to learn how married Saudi women make decisions about what they wear in the private sphere. Specifically, I am interested in exploring what married Saudi women communicate about themselves through their private sphere dress. I also am interested in understanding if and how married Saudi women's husbands may influence their private sphere dress. I have chosen to invite you and your husband to participate in this study based upon a recommendation from (name of key informant). As a married Saudi woman, your experiences with fashion and dress in the private sphere, as well as your husband's observations of your dress choices, will add understanding to our study. Enclosed is a summary of the research project for you.

If you and your husband are interested in participating in this study and consent to do so, you will each take part in separate interviews. Interviews will last about 60 to 90 minutes and will be audio-recorded. You will be interviewed in a face-to-face situation in your home at a time of your choosing. Your husband will be interviewed via telephone or Skype (depending upon his preference) at a time of his choosing. I – a female, Saudi researcher – will conduct interviews with both you and your husband. Topics of discussion during your interview will include:
a) your preferences for private sphere dress;

b) your views on various forms of private sphere dress, including traditional and Western forms of dress;
c) how you use dress to express yourself within the private sphere;
d) the role your husband plays in influencing your private sphere dress; and
e) how your husband views your private sphere dress.

To your interview appointment, you will be asked to bring an example of your favorite private sphere dress/clothes or photos of yourself wearing your favorite private sphere dress/clothes. These items (i.e., the clothing or photos) will be used to guide discussion during the interview. I will not keep personal clothing or photos.

If you and your husband decide to participate in this research, please know that any information you share will remain confidential. Numeric codes will be assigned to the audio-recordings of your interview and your interview transcript. Only Dr. Ogle and I will know your identity and have access to the key of numeric codes. Upon completion of this research, I will destroy the list of numeric codes. Also, please know that your interview comments will not be shared with your spouse. Reports of findings will be shared with other researchers and may include comments from your interview. However, no identifying information will be included that would link you to your comments. In addition, your participation is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any point in the study.

There are no known risks to participating in this project. Also, there is no known benefit to you from participating in this project. However, what I learn from this research will provide understanding about Saudi women's private sphere dress at a time when private sphere fashions are changing quickly (e.g., traditional styles are being replaced by Western dress). Further, very little is known about this topic, as most research on Saudi women's dress has focused upon that worn in the public sphere (e.g., the veil).

If you and your husband decide you are willing to participate in this research, please complete the attached form and email it to Wijdan Tawfiq at wtawfiq@kau.edu.sa by [date]. Upon receipt of the completed form, I will telephone you to arrange for your participation in an interview. If you have any further questions regarding the specifics of this research project, I can be reached at the email address mentioned above or at 055-435-4358. You also can contact Dr. Ogle via email at ogle@cahs.colostate.edu, or by phone at (001) 970-491-3794. If you have questions about human research participants' rights, please contact Janelle Barker at janell.barker@colostate.edu or (001) 970-491-1655. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration about your participation in this research.

Sincerely,
Wijdan Tawfiq, B.S.   Jennifer Paff Ogle, Ph.D.
Master of Science Candidate   Associate Professor

Enc.: project summary, contact information form

APPENDIX IV

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER FOR HUSBAND

Colorado State University

Department of Design and Merchandising
150 Aylesworth Hall SE
1574 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1574
(970) 491-1629
FAX: (970) 491-4855
http://www.cahs.colostate.edu/dm

DATE

Dear [insert name of potential participant]:

My name is Wijdan Tawfiq, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Design and Merchandising at Colorado State University. The purpose of this letter is to tell you about a research study entitled, "Constructing and Presenting the Self through Private Sphere Dress: An Interpretive Analysis of the Experiences of Married Saudi Arabian Women." I am conducting this study for my thesis. Dr. Jennifer Ogle, Department of Design and Merchandising, is my graduate advisor and is overseeing the study.

The goal of this research is to learn how married Saudi women make decisions about what they wear in the private sphere. Specifically, I am interested in exploring what married Saudi women communicate about themselves through their private sphere dress. I also am interested in understanding if and how married Saudi women's husbands may influence their private sphere dress. I have chosen to invite you and your wife to participate in this study based upon a recommendation from (name of key informant). As a married Saudi man, your observations of your wife's dress choices, will add understanding to our study. Enclosed is a summary of the research project for you.

If you and your wife are interested in participating in this study and consent to do so, each of you will take part in separate interviews. Interviews will last about 60 to 90 minutes and will be audio-recorded. You will be interviewed via telephone or Skype (depending upon your preference) at a time of your choosing. Your wife will be interviewed in a face-to-face situation in your home at a time of her choosing. I – a female, Saudi researcher – will conduct interviews with both you and your wife. Topics of discussion during your interview will include:
a) your preferences for your wife's private sphere dress;

b) your views on various forms of women's private sphere dress, including traditional and Western forms of dress;
c) how your wife uses dress to express herself within the private sphere;

d) the role you play in influencing your wife's private sphere dress.

If you and your wife decide to participate in this research, please know that any information you share will remain confidential. Numeric codes will be assigned to the audio-recordings of your interview and your interview transcript. Only Dr. Ogle and I will know your identity and have access to the key of numeric codes. Upon completion of this research, I will destroy the list of numeric codes. Also, please know that your interview comments will not be shared with your spouse. Reports of findings will be shared with other researchers and may include comments from your interview. However, no identifying information will be included that would link you to your comments. In addition, your participation is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any point in the study.

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If you and your wife decide you are willing to participate in this research, please complete the attached form and email it to Wijdan Tawfiq at wtawfiq@kau.edu.sa by [date]. Upon receipt of the completed form, I will telephone you to arrange for your participation in an interview. If you have any further questions regarding the specifics of this research project, I can be reached at the email address mentioned above or at 055-435-4358. You also can contact Dr. Ogle via email at ogle@cahs.colostate.edu, or by phone at (001) 970-491-3794. If you have questions about human research participants' rights, please contact Janelle Barker at janell.barker@colostate.edu or (001) 970-491-1655. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration about your participation in this research.

Sincerely,
Wijdan Tawfiq, B.S.   Jennifer Paff Ogle, Ph.D.
Master of Science Candidate   Associate Professor

Enc.: project summary, contact information form

APPENDIX V

PARTICIPANT CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

Thank you for taking the time to fill this contact information form. Please provide the following contact information:

Your Name: _____

Your spousal's name: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone (Optional): _____

In what city do you currently live? _____

PARTICIPANT DATA SHEET

Participant Code #:

The following questions ask for information about you. Please circle the response or fill in the blank with the answer that best describes you.

1. What is your age? (Please fill in the blank)

    _____YEARS

2. To which tribe does your family belong? (Please fill in the blank)

    _____

3. How long have you been married? (Please fill in the blank)

    _____YEARS _____MONTHS

4. How many children do you have?

    _____

5. Who lives in your household? (Please fill in blank)

    _____

6. Do you work outside of the home? (Please check the appropriate box)

    _____NO

    _____YES

    If so, what is your occupation? (Please fill in the blank)

    _____

7. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Circle the appropriate

    number)

1) COMPLETED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (grades 1 through 8)
2) COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL (grades 9 through 12)
3) 1-3 YEARS OF TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL, OR COLLEGE
4) COMPLETED BACHELOR'S DEGREE
5) SOME GRADUATE WORK
6) COMPLETED GRADUATE DEGREE

8. In what city do you currently live? (Please fill in blank)