

THE ROLE OF DRESS IN WOMEN'S TRANSITION FROM IRANIANS TO IRANIAN-
AMERICANS: A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

by

FATEMEH GHAYOURNEJADIAN

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Kim Hiller Connell

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Abstract

Acculturation can be a difficult process for many immigrants, and because there is a large number of Iranian immigrants living in the United States (over one million), the focus of this study is to understand how women cope with moving from a country with conservative standards to a more liberal country and the role dress plays in their acculturation process. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to: 1) explore Iranian dress standards and the effect these standards have on Iranian-American women's lives; 2) gain understanding of the role of dress in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans; 3) apply Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs motivational model to the women's acculturation process; and 4) compare two distinct generations of women—women born before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and women born after the Revolution. This study utilized a qualitative approach and collected data through semi-structured interviews with 11 women.

The women did not express any traumatic psychological effects caused by the conservative dress standards in Iran. The main impact of the dress standards was the physical discomfort caused by wearing the hijab in hot weather. Dress played a significant role in the women's transitions process. More freedom in dress in the United States has allowed the women to express themselves much more than when they lived in Iran, leading to higher self-esteem and confidence levels. The women expressed a desire to sustain their Iranian heritage, and both generations shared similar perceptions of American dress standards prior to immigrating to the United States. Differences included higher consumption levels by the younger generation and their higher knowledge about the fashion industry and trends.

The findings can be useful for Iranian women as they transition to an Iranian-American lifestyle. Additionally, it can also be beneficial to women from other countries who share similar

experiences. Furthermore, the results may assist in aiding different organizations which help Iranian women integrate into the U.S. culture. Finally, retailers with target markets similar to the women of this study can use the findings to better understand the habits, needs, motives, and overall consumer behaviors of their clientele.

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participants for their time and attention to this research project and for sharing their experiences with me. Thank you for allowing me to achieve this important educational goal.

Dedication

To my Goddaughter, Jazmin.

You were born with potential.

You were born with goodness and trust.

You were born with ideals and dreams.

You were born with greatness.

You were born with wings.

You are not meant for crawling, so don't!

You have wings, learn to use them and fly.

~ Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī ~

Preface

This thesis is written with the utmost respect for the Iranian culture and current dress laws within Iran. The information provided and the findings of the study are not the opinions of the author.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

In 1935, the Persian government changed the country's name from Persia to Iran. Many Iranians living inside and outside of the country refer to the people of Iran as Persians or Iranians. Due to the high usage of the term "Persian" amongst Iranians to this day, this paper uses both terms interchangeably.

According to the United States 2000 Census there are over one million Iranian-Americans living in the United States (Ansari, 2009). The largest group of Iranian-Americans lives in Los Angeles, with other large communities in New York, New Jersey, Washington, DC, Seattle, and Houston (Ansari, 2009). Due to the large population living in the Los Angeles area, many Iranian-Americans refer to L.A. as "Tehrangeles" or "Irangeles", which is a term combining Tehran, the capital of Iran, or Iran with Los Angeles. Nearly all Iranian-Americans are either citizens or permanent residents of the United States ("Survey of Iranian Americans," 2008).

Approximately 60% of Iranian-Americans have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to a 28% national average. Additionally, more than one in four Iranian-Americans holds a master's or doctoral degree, the highest rate among 67 ethnic groups studied (McIntosh, 2004). Additionally, due to their high level of educational accomplishments as well as a 20% higher median family income than the noted national average, Iranian-Americans tremendously contribute to the United States economy (McIntosh, 2004). Research from surveys of Fortune 500 companies as well as additional major companies indicate that "more than 50 Iranian-Americans hold senior leadership positions at companies with more than \$200 million in asset values including General Electric, AT&T, Verizon, Intel, Cisco, Motorola, Oracle, Nortel Networks, Lucent Technologies, and eBay" (McIntosh, 2004, para.3). Furthermore, Iranian-Americans also have a distinguished role in academia. Previous research indicates that more than

500 Iranian-American professors have taken part in teaching and doing research at top-ranked universities in the United States. Some of these universities include MIT, Harvard, and Yale, as well as many other colleges through the country (McIntosh, 2004).

Due to the high number of Iranians living in the United States, and particularly important to the study, Iranian women, it is imperative to study both Iranian and Iranian-American cultures for a better understanding of how Iranian women adapt to cultural changes as they transition to living in the United States and becoming Iranian-Americans. Therefore, this research focuses on one aspect of Iranian and Iranian-American culture—dress. Through interviews with Iranian-American women, the study will explore social-psychological aspects of dress within the context of Iranian-American women, focusing on issues Iranian immigrants face related to the changes in their identities and general adaptation to a new culture. Some of the major issues include negative impacts of discrimination, low confidence and low self-esteem levels, difficulties in understanding and accepting a bicultural or multicultural identity, as well as many other related factors which lead to adaption or rejection of American dress standards. With a gap in the research on the socio-psychological aspects of the role of dress in helping or hindering Iranian women's transition process to a new culture, the study will focus on the perceptions of Iranian dress history, Iranian dress standards and their effect on women's personal and professional lives, as well as a comparison between different generations of Iranian-American women. For this study, it is anticipated that taking a closer look at the motivational needs theorized by Maslow will guide understanding of the Iranian-American women's overall transition process.

Brief History and Overview of Iran

Iran is located in the Middle East, between Iraq and Pakistan, bordering the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Geographically, the

country is slightly smaller than Alaska. It has a population of 78,868,711 people and a 1.05 male to female sex ratio. According to the Iranian government, about 71% of Iran's population is between the ages of 15 and 64 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012), with a further breakdown which reveals that over 19% of the population is between ages 15 and 24 and almost 33% is between ages 25 and 46; 5% are 65 or older, and a little over 24% are 14 or younger (Cultural Heritage News Agency, 2012). The median age in the country is 26.8 years. The urban population covers about 71% of the population. Iran is very diverse and is home to multiple ethnic groups including 61% Persian, 16% Azeri, 10% Kurd, 6% Lur, 2% Baloch, 2% Arab, 2% Turkmen and Turkic tribes, and 1% other ethnicities. The major cities where a majority of Iran's population resides are Tehran, the capital of the country, with 7.19 million people, Mashhad with 2.592 million, Esfahan with 1.704 million, Karaj with 1.531 million, and Tabriz with 1.459 million of the population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

In 1979, through the Islamic Revolution, the ruling monarchy was overthrown, forcing Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi into exile, and Iran became an Islamic republic (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). The current government system in Iran is a theocratic republic government—a system that recognizes Allah as the supreme leader. Sharia law, the religious law of Islam, forms the basis of the religious legal system in Iran. About 98% of people living in Iran are Muslim, with the other two percent being either Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, or Baha'i (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

The primary language spoken in Iran is Persian and Persian dialects (Farsi) with some secondary languages including Turkic and Kurdish; as well as some very small percentages of Luri, Balichi, Arabic, Turkish, or other languages. Literacy within the country is high. Typically,

anyone over the age of fifteen can read and write; and over seventy percent of Iranian women are literate (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

According to Article 44 of the Iranian constitution, Iran's economy consists of three sectors: state, cooperative, and private ("Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution," n.d.). Article 43 in the constitution describes the economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran as an economy with "objectives of achieving the economic independence of the society, uprooting poverty and deprivation, and fulfilling human needs in the process of development while preserving human liberty" ("Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution," n.d.). The labor force in Iran consists of 25% agricultural occupations, 31% industrial occupations, and 45% service related occupations. However, Iran currently suffers from double-digit unemployment. According to the Iranian government, the unemployment rate for the country was an estimated 14.6% in 2010 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). Furthermore, high underemployment among Iran's educated youth has led many to seek overseas jobs, resulting in a significant brain drain (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). In terms of the current environmental issues in Iran, the country suffers from a large amount of air pollution, especially in urban areas such as Tehran, mainly due to vehicle emissions, urbanization, water pollution from raw sewage and industrial waste, among many other causes (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

Iran's detailed history and current structure is beyond the scope of this research. However, areas discussed in this research about the history were chosen in hopes of helping readers understand the country's past and present day and where the women were born and lived before moving to the United States. In addition to understanding the history of the country, a focused look on the history of women's dress over the years is significant to this research.

History of Women's Dress in Iran

Similar to other countries, throughout history, dress standards and norms in Iran have changed alongside the country's power and government transformations. "Perhaps the biggest struggle in Iranian fashion history has been the struggle between the old and the new. Iranians have notoriously been fashion innovators trying to balance expectations of the different tastes in this vast country" ("The History of Iranian Fashion," 2004, para.1). Before the nineteenth century, Iranian dress was very traditional and clothing types varied depending on the diverse ethnicities in the country. Some common examples of designs included many bright colors within one garment, multiple layers of flared skirts, hand beading and embroidery details, pants worn under skirts, as well as many varieties of headscarves (see Figure 1.3). Many believe that before the Islamic Revolution women did not wear headscarves; however, headscarves have been part of the Iranian tradition and culture for hundreds of years. "In the countryside, women have always worn headscarves, which are usually lively and colorful to protect hair from dust. [Also], scarves and wraps are worn often and gathered at the waists to free up the arms" ("The History of Iranian Fashion," 2004, para.1).

Pre-Islamic Revolution Dress Standards (Pre 1979)

The Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925) was the last time in Persian history when both men and women wore traditional clothing and village attire. In 1935, under the ruling of Reza Shah Pahlavi, Iran's dress norms changed immensely. Reza Shah wished to modernize the country in economic, social, political, and religious ways. Reza Shah believed head coverings worn by both men and women a sign of reversed modern mentality (Shabani, 2005). He made it his goal to remove *hijab*—the act of covering of the hair and body, as well as the actual Islamic appropriate

garments worn by the women—from the culture and even punish those who did not abide by this rule. The *chador*— a "full-length semi-circle of fabric open down the front [and] thrown over the head and held shut in the front" (Rastmanesh, Gluck, & Shadman, 2009, p. 341) — headscarves, veils, turbans, and other types of head coverings were all banned to the public.

Reza Shah visited Kemal Ataturk of Turkey in 1934; and after seeing Ataturk's interest and pull towards Western attire, he too was influenced and was "determined to accelerate his reform towards modernization" (Balasescu, 2007, p. 301). Reza Shah believed that the women of Iran should "cast their veils, this symbol of injustice and shame, into the fires of oblivion." ("The History of Iranian Fashion," 2004, para 2). He ordered his police officers to walk the streets of Iran and tear the *chadors* off the women. The upper class families and regional women began wearing more Westernized and European inspired clothing such as fashionable hats, neck scarves, short skirts, bellbottom pants, and more colorful and revealing attire. In addition to the change in clothing and fashion styles, Iranian women were beginning to familiarize themselves more with European and Western women's behaviors as well. They were adopting characteristics such as holding cigarettes in their hands in public as a fashion statement, expressing their sexuality in public settings, and overall an open-minded mentality on issues previously not common to the Iranian public ("The History of Iranian Fashion," 2004).

Although many men and women enjoyed the new lifestyle and freedom in their clothing, many disagreed and did not see it as a successful modification to the dress attire in Iran. Numerous women who were accustomed to wearing *chadors* and veils perceived not wearing the *hijab* as extremely uncomfortable. For more religious and conservative groups of women the veil served as a sign of virtue and provided protection and respect. Not wearing the veil made them feel as though they were told to walk the streets naked (Htoo, 2011).

“After the forced abdication of Reza Shah, in September 1941, many women resumed veiling. Under the pressure of the *ulama* (the religious authorities), who had partially regained influence, Muhammad Reza, the new Shah, abrogated the law forbidding the veil” (Balasescu, 2007, p. 301). Nevertheless, by this time in Iran most women had already implemented European and Western styles as a normal way of dress and only a very small group of women continued to wear veils or *chadors*.

Post-Islamic Revolution Dress Standards (1979-1997)

When the Islamic Revolution took place in 1979, traditional Islamic dress norms became highly enforced throughout the region. “On March 13, 1980, the Ayatollah (leader of the Islamic Revolution) announced publicly that women should consider it a moral duty to wear *chador*” (Balasescu, 2007, p. 301). Any woman, Muslim or not, who did not follow the new law would be faced with the “punishment of imprisonment for up to one year” (Balasescu, 2007, p. 301). During the early years of the Islamic Revolution, dress laws were highly enforced and monitored; forcing women to cover all parts of their body excluding their faces and hands. Veils and long *manteaux* (overcoats) were the most common outer garments worn by women.

Although the Islamic Revolution brought about a very sudden change in dress and fashion styles, women’s fashions in Iran have continued to change tremendously over the past few decades. Many factors drive fashion change within the country, including cultural diffusion via satellite television, the Internet, and other international means, such as traveling to European countries or to the United States and having family and friends visit Iran from other countries-in which Iranians living in Iran are exposed to many new fashions they are not familiar with; and public activities and undercover sexual lifestyles, as well as politics and religion.

Dress Standards in Contemporary Iran (Post 1997)

Under President Mohammad Khatami, elected in 1997, dress laws became more lenient, and, consequently, more difficult for the government to enforce. However, the government is apt to enforce dress standards of the country during the hot summer days, when women are eager to shed layers of clothing, shorten the length of their *manteaux* and trousers, pull back their head scarves, and even show their toes by wearing sandals (Balasescu, 2007).

The fashion-forward or modern women in Iran, and women living outside of the country, have a positive perspective on contemporary fashions styles within the country and see the transformation in the attire as an improvement on Iranian women's image. The Iranian government has a very clear and austere dress code for both men and women and a low tolerance for anyone who wishes to break the law. Even tourists visiting Iran are required to follow the rules and regulations concerning public dress code and other Islamic appropriate behavior. The authorities are concerned with the excessive makeup, hair dye, nail polish, short and closely fitted *manteaux*, skinny pants, etc.; it is safe to say that they are dissatisfied with everything viewed as trendy and fashion-forward among the youth (AFP, 2004).

Religious and conservative government officials are constantly on the lookout to educate and punish any individual caught breaking dress laws. The "moral police" walk the streets of Iran questioning women and men on their clothing choices and inviting them to reconsider their fashion styles. The process usually consists of three stages. First, the offender is given a verbal warning; oftentimes offenders of the dress code become frustrated and may speak back to the officers. In this case the offenders are asked to step inside a "Guidance Patrol" minibus and are escorted to the police station for "guidance" and to "sign a vow not to repeat the offence."

Finally, if offenders further refuse guidance, the judiciary handles the matter (AFP, 2004). For an overall summary of dress standards and sanctions in Iran, see Table 1.1.

Justification of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore social-psychological aspects of dress within the context of Iranian-American women. The interest for this study drives from a personal experience of moving to the United States, at the young age of ten, with my two older sisters and my mother and father from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although my family always respected and obeyed the dress standards of Iran while living in the country, moving to a new country where there were limited dress standards was an interesting transition. In drawing on personal experiences and exploring point of views of other women from similar circumstances, this study can be useful for future Iranian women as they transition to an Iranian-American lifestyle. In addition, the study can also be beneficial to other women from cultures which share similar experiences and standards as a more conservative culture and then the transition to a more flexible culture. Furthermore, the results of the research may assist in aiding various organizations which help Iranian women integrate into the United States culture. Finally, possible retailers with the particular clientele and target market will better understand the women studied; their habits, needs, motives, and overall behaviors.

Definitions

Chador (or veil)— A "full-length semi circle of fabric open down the front [and] thrown over the head and held shut in the front" (Rastmanesh, Gluck, & Shadman, 2009, p. 341).



Source for Image:

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/ftimages/2009/01/16/1231608943739.html>

Hijab—The act of covering of the hair and body. The term is also referred to the actual Islamic appropriate garments worn by the women, such as the veil or scarf.

Islamic appropriate Hijab:



Source for Image: <http://www.styleguru.com/entry/in-photos-tehran-fashion-show/>

Islamic inappropriate Hijab:



Source for Image: <http://digitaljournal.com/article/288297>

Maghnaeh— This is a large piece of fabric, sewn slightly different than the basic scarf, covering the head, hair and shoulders. This type of covering has been worn with a *manteau* as the main form of hijab in Iran since 1981 (Poya, 1999). It is a common part of the uniform expected to be worn by female students in Iran.



Source for Image One: <http://rey-hane.com/Gallery/maghnaeh.htm>

Source for Image Two: <http://www.fashion-hijab.com/one-piece-hijab-003493.html>

Manteau (or Roopoosh) — A loose garment, such as a coat, with sleeves and buttons or another form of closure down the center. This is the most commonly used type of covering worn by most Iranian women in Iran.



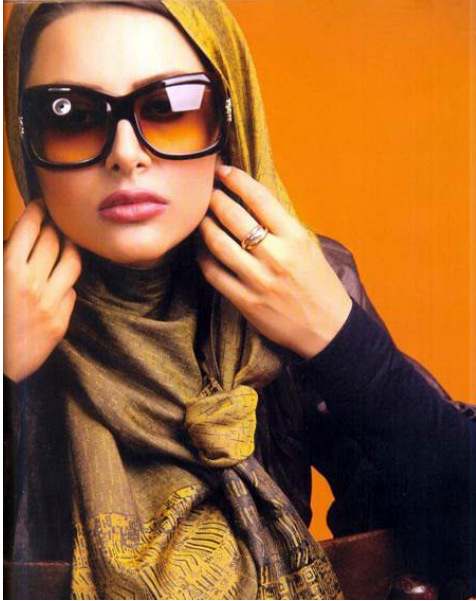
Source for Image: <http://www.brommel.net/2010/11/muslim-fashion-iran.html>

Niqab— A form of head covering which completely veils a woman's face, leaving only her eyes visible ("Wraps off the Republic," 2009). This form of covering is not common in Iran.



Source for Image: http://www.muslimbase.com/niqab-veil-c-416_500.html

Roosari (or scarf) — Usually a square piece of fabric folded into a triangle; commonly worn by Iranian women. This form of head covering comes in a variety of styles and methods for wearing.



Source for Images: <http://www.pixdooni.com/1390/>

Figure 1.1 Map of the Middle East



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (2012)

Figure 1.2 Map of Iran



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (2012)

Figure 1.3 Traditional Dress of Iranian Women



قزوینی



گیلانی
Gilan



مازندرانی



بوشهری
Bushehr



آلبرز
Alborz



گیلان
Gilan

Source: http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Women/traditional_dress_of_iranian_wom.htm

Table 1.1 Overview of History of Women's Dress in Iran

Years	Dress standards	Sanctions	References
Pre 1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1935: Reza Shah considered all sorts of head-coverings as signs of backwardness • Modernized and Western influences • 1941: Muhammad Reza Shah abrogated the law forbidding the veil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1935: <i>Chadors</i> were torn off the women's heads and bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shabani (2005) • Balasescu (2007)
Post 1979-1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Islamic dress norms • Moral duty to wear <i>chador</i> • Covering of the hair, neck and body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imprisonment for up to one year • Women were taken to police stations • Intensive verbal warnings on the streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balasescu (2007)
Post 1997-Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Islamic dress norms • Covering of the hair, neck and body • Women dress more modern and with more Western influences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imprisonment for up to one year • Women are taken to police stations • Intensive verbal warnings on the streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balasescu (2007)

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

This chapter reviews literature related to this study. The first section centers on the fashion industry and fashion trends in contemporary Iran. The second section of the chapter discusses research related specifically to some influential factors of fashion change within the country, including cultural diffusion, public activities, politics, and religion. The third part of the chapter seeks out to explore socio-psychological characteristics of Iranian-American immigrants. Finalizing the literature review, section four investigates women's potential motivational needs in their acculturation process to the United States.

The Fashion Industry and Fashion Trends in Contemporary Iran

Due to visits back to Iran and contact with family and friends still in Iran, Iranian-American women remain exposed to information regarding fashion in Iran. Therefore, to form a better understanding of women's transitions from Iran's culture to a Westernized culture, it is imperative to first explore the fashion industry and current fashion trends in Iran.

Currently there is not a well-established fashion industry in Iran; and perhaps the best way to describe Iran's fashion industry is "undercover," with word-of-mouth being the main marketing method. Many fashion designers, tailors, and seamstresses have no professional training or education and are mostly self-taught in terms of technical and creative aspects of the industry; and it is not possible to have a career as a fashion designer like in Western countries. Designers, models, photographers, and other persons involved in the fashion industry must abide by Islamic laws and their work must be suitable for the conservative Muslim society. Still, many creative and passionate individuals have acquired other ways to pursue a profession in fashion (Sayah, 2008).

Research shows that higher end fashion is blooming behind closed doors more than ever before seen in the years following the Islamic Revolution (Sayah, 2008). Hasti Pourmarz and Ghazal Mogavar, two fashion designers from Tehran, stated in an interview that it is not always easy for designers to create trendy clothes within the rules with which they must comply. However, they find ways by using and mixing different colors, patterns, and patchwork techniques to add more interest to what the government mandates as appropriate dress. Sadaf, another fashion designer in Tehran believes designers in Iran have a disadvantage over Western designers due to the lack of permitted advertising (Sayah, 2008). She explains that although she might be creating beautiful fashions, she is not aware of her competition and other talent in Tehran. Sadaf feels as though not being able to show her talent is similar to her being "an artist without a gallery." In Alexandra Balasescu's research and interviews with elite Tehrani designers he concluded that according to the designers and their clients, there are "no more than ten to twelve well-known designers in Tehran" (Balasescu, 2007, p. 302). Balasescu (2007) presents a remarkably detailed image of the fashion marketplace in Tehran. He writes:

In Tehran, one may easily find tailored ready to cut clothes to measure. In Enghelab Street between its intersection with Vali Asr and the Ferdousi Square there is a long series of tailors' shops for men. Zaratousht Street, west of Vali Asr is the well-known textile quarter, and there are also tailors for both men and women in this neighborhood. These shops usually offer their clients suits and dresses, cut to measure, that are copied directly from Western fashion magazines. They are open to the public all year around and are very much considered to be part of the fashion scene (p. 302-303).

Designers organize couture fashion shows in their homes or studios. The advertising for the shows, as previously mentioned, is always word-of-mouth, with men not permitted to attend. Presentation of the collections is through catwalks and post-show receptions where garments are hung on hangers or displayed on the designers' tables, couches, and chairs for clients to observe

closely. Many designers use friends, daughters, or neighbors as their models for their private fashion shows (Balasescu, 2007).

There is also significant interest in the modeling industry in Iran. Studios are available in Iran where models learn catwalk skills from professional modeling coaches. In an interview regarding modeling in Iran, Forouzan Shahkoupa, a modeling coach states:

Modeling was an unknown thing in Iran but now many people know what a model is, what she does, and what kind of job it is. People's view of female models has changed. The models only take up this job only if their physique is appropriate for the job. For instance, a person who is 5'4" does not let herself try modeling ("Iranian Models Take 'hijab' to the Ramp," 2011).

In Iran, professional models primarily work for Islamic fashion shows produced by the government or other Islamic appropriate fashion shows put together by local designers. Wages for professional modeling is poor, and it is the passion that the women have for the profession that keeps the models interested and determined to continue ("Iranian Models Take 'hijab' to the Ramp," 2011).

Tehran, in contemporary Iran, is a rainbow of colored scarves, *manteaux*, trousers, accessories, and nail polish. Unlike previous years when women wore mostly black or dark colors, bright colors are extremely popular and commonly mixed with the traditional colors for a more modern turn on Islamic dress. Although women are required, per Islamic law, to cover their hair and body, the dress codes do not stop Iranian women from wearing trendy clothing underneath their *hijab*. Not only are women wearing more colorful clothes, they are also wearing more tailored and shorter *manteaux*. Often, to comply with government requirements, the women only wear the overcoats and veils in public, while the real outfit worn beneath is specific to the occasion or event the women are attending. Some common trends noted amongst Iranian women especially in northern Tehran are designer accessories such as shoes, handbags, sunglasses, and

jewelry. European and American designer labels and brands are particularly important to these women and are a "must have" in their clothing collections. Only the most traditional and religious women wear *chadors* and the very conservative *niqab*—which completely veils a woman's face, leaving only her eyes visible ("Wraps off the Republic," 2009).

Elaborate hair and makeup is also a trend amongst Iranian women; the more the better. They often wear heavy black eyeliner, colorful eye shadow, bright and glossy lipstick, and rose or bronze colored blush (Hilsum, 2002). Their hair is almost always colored and well kept with blonde, red, or caramel highlights. Although the government forbids nail polish, it is also an important fashion trend among Iranian women, with shades from red to yellow to black as well as white tip French manicures and nail art commonly seen on the fingernails of women.

The younger generations are extremely fashion conscious, but new trends and dress norms of present day Iran are not exclusive to the youth. Women in their thirties and older are also particularly fashion conscious and eager to update their looks regularly. Because most women in this age group are housewives or have part time jobs, many spend a portion of their time in beauty salons, malls and bazaars, at private fashion shows, or simply watching Fashion TV and other fashion related programming on their satellite television to obtain additional information on what is new and fashionable ("The History of Iranian Fashion," 2004).

In addition to accessories, makeup, hair and nails, another trend seen in Iran is rhinoplasty. "In Iranian cities and on university campuses, in public transport vehicles and collective taxis, seeing young women, and sometimes young men, with surgical dressings on the nose is a daily occurrence" (Gazagnadou, 2006, p. 106). For his article, "Iranian women and cosmetic nose surgery," Gazagnadou (2006) interviewed 12 plastic surgeons and 40 females. His observations and results proved that rhinoplasty is one of the most sought-after forms of

cosmetic surgery by Iranian women of all ages. The women believe that they need the operation because their nose is "too large, or even enormous (too large, too wide, too big)" (Gazagnadou, 2006, p. 107). It may be that the women today view plastic surgery on their face as a way to modify their appearance and be more fashionable. However, there may be more to this trend. In his article Gazagnadou writes:

Indeed, further study has shown that this negative conception of the nose was already present among Iranian women of the prosperous classes at the time of the monarchy, and it appears that during the 1950s and 1960s, women in the entourage of the Shah had already had nose operations. The envied types of female nose were the European nose (the French 'snub' nose or the Italian nose, shaped like that of actress Gina Lollobrigida) and/or the American one. These models were diffused in Iran through fashion magazines (Le Breton, 2001) and European and American movies, and by Iranian women who travelled regularly between Iran, Europe, and the United States. These women became aware of the possibilities of cosmetic surgery to conform to the 'ideal' shape of nose (p.107).

Many believe that the reason why Iranian women today, more than ever before, wear a lot of makeup, highlight their hair, wear shorter and more colorful clothing, choose expensive dramatic accessories, and subject themselves to plastic surgery is because the strict dress standards have made them want to focus on the areas of their body and face that they are able to display more openly.

Influential Factors of Fashion Change in Iran

As mentioned in the previous section, research shows that there are many new fashion trends emerging on the streets of Iran as well as an inspiring and active fashion industry. Women are thrilled for new looks and ways to update their overall appearance. The literature also points to some possible influential factors leading to new trends and fashion change in Iran. This section will discuss the three most significant influential factors discovered to help readers further understand the fashion scene in Iran, the importance of fashion to the Iranian women, and

Iranian women's actions and behaviors in achieving a fashionable lifestyle regardless of the Islamic boundaries.

Cultural Diffusion: A Focus on Satellite Television, the Internet, and other International Influences

Influencing fashion change in Iran is much more than what is available to purchase in retail stores and bazaars or what a favored group of people wear. Satellite television and the Internet have the most significant influence on fashion change in Iran, with satellite television becoming particularly popular among Iranian families over the last two decades. Many families gather around the television to watch international movies and shows while becoming familiar with other cultures around the world. The Iranian public was first introduced to satellite television “at the 6th International Book Festival at Tehran in 1993 when monitors downloading international channels from a satellite dish attracted large crowds” (Barracough, 2001, p. 30). During the early years when satellite television began spreading to all parts of the country and more people began to purchase satellite dishes, there was an extreme battle between political parties whether to ban the usage of satellite television or to allow it to the public. Some members of the Islamic Republic saw “the media as an instrument with which to advance their ideology and re-enforce their hegemonic position” (Barracough, 2001, p. 26). Others however, believed that the broadcastings from other parts of the world, particularly the United States, would promote “secularism, undisciplined behavior and corruption among the people” (Barracough, 2001, p. 26). The more conservative members of the government believed and are still confident that “one cannot live in [the Iranian] culture, [the] history, and [the] nation but expect things that coordinate and harmonize more with the cultural, national and historical climate of other countries” (Barracough, 2001, p. 27). They feel as though when people watch other cultures

through satellite television, the country is losing its culture and the impact of Western lifestyles is "chipping away" at the history, traditions, and religious aspects of Iran altogether.

For many years Iranian television networks only carried three channels and although, over the years, the government has increased the number of channels to seven, the Iranian population is not satisfied and continues to want more entertainment. The Islamic channels provide content such as politics, news, cultural, educational, and intellectual programs, music and sports, as well as other Islamic appropriate subject matters (Barraclough, 2001). Due to the limitations on what can actually be aired in a conservative society, many Iranians believe the programs provided by the government to be unexciting and not entertaining enough, thus causing them to watch international shows and movies via satellite television.

Satellite programming normally offers hundreds of channels from all over the world with over thirty Farsi speaking channels provided. Some Farsi speaking networks include ITN (International Television Network), Tapeshe, NITV (National Iranian Television), PEN (Persian Entertainment Network), IPN (International Persian Network), PMC (Persian Music Channel), and Tamasha. Each channel is organized in its own way; carrying a variety of entertainment. Commonly they all provide movies, music videos, live talk shows, international episodes, fashion reports, etc. from all over the world, especially American, European, Turkish, Arabic, or Indian cultures. They also offer music videos produced by Iranian artists outside of Iran, which is extremely popular within Iran. The chief source of fashion information within Iran is Fashion TV, a channel dedicated entirely to new runway fashion trends from Paris, Milan, Tokyo, New York, and elsewhere. Through this channel, millions of Iranians can see couture fashion shows, new designers, models, and other fashion related information. In terms of fashion change in Iran, there is no other influence greater than Fashion TV.

The convenience of viewing any channel from the provided list exposes people all over the country to information, trends, and lifestyles from beyond their highly conservative motherland. They do not have to imagine what life is like in other countries; satellite television affords them a glimpse of how other cultures dress and behave in their public and private lives. Even though well over half of Iran's population own satellite dishes, the government officially bans satellite television in the country and anyone found breaking this law must pay an expensive fine and may even serve jail time. However, the law has not stopped the population from watching their favorite international programming (Motevalli, 2003).

Internet accessibility in Iran has made a tremendous impact on the everyday lives of many Iranians. As another medium for information available to the public, young Iranians can view "western websites containing information on issues ranging from politics to Picasso, Shakespeare to Shakira" (Motevalli, 2003, p. 56). Under the strict Iranian regime people do not have access to all genres of books in public libraries. Hence, the Internet has opened many new doors for the public. The Internet has also become a means for people, especially young Iranians, to socialize and meet others from all over the world. Many Iranians have Facebook, Twitter, or other social media accounts. Moreover, the Internet has also opened a lot of Iranians' eyes to Western events; they can now search for any major event in the United States and see what outfit their favorite celebrity wore or other highlights of the event. As a result, they now have easy access to all forms of information and can dress according to online inspirations (Motevalli, 2003).

In addition to satellite television and the Internet, there are other ways in which the general Iranian population is exposed to fashions and cultures outside of the country. For example, the diffusion of trends and styles also occurs through travel to places such as London,

Paris, the United States, Turkey, and Dubai by privileged members of the society. Often travelers bring back fashion magazines, catalogs, or other forms of fashion communication. Iranian-Americans or Iranian-Europeans traveling to Iran also feed the fashion cravings of permanent Iran residents. Another point of reflection is that the reverse influence is also observed—fashions and trends in the motherland influence Iranians living outside of Iran. Much of the Persian culture and tradition are still practiced in Iran and a majority of people living away from those traditions and experiences are extremely eager to go back home to visit, refresh their sense of "Persian Pride," and calm their nostalgia (Balasescu, 2007). One example of a trend spread to the U.S. from popular culture in Tehran is hairstyles worn by artists such as Sassy Monkan; the hairstyle has become a huge trend amongst Iranian males living in the United States. Although the style may not have originated in Tehran, people living in U.S. have already adopted it. As can be noted, "global communication has made all the difference" (Hilsum, 2002, p. 30); it has never been this simple for Iranians living under Islamic rule to obtain information on the newest styles and fashions. The external influence; however, is not the only motivation for fashion change in Iran.

Public Activities and Undercover Sexual Lifestyles

Urban young adults who comprise the majority of Iran's population (70% of Iran's population is under the age of 30) are highly mobile, highly educated (84% of young Tehranis are currently enrolled in university or are university graduates, with 65% of these graduates being women) and underemployed (there is a 45% unemployed rate amongst this age group) (Mahdavi, 2007, p. 446).

Many young Iranians, both male and female, are dissatisfied with the Islamic regime—in particular with dress limitations, as well as rules relating to public behavior towards the opposite sex. The government system in Iran does not allow public displays of affection between males and females. If seen together in public, the law requires men and women to provide government

officials or the "morality police" with documentation stating the nature of their relationship. The government forbids the notion of boyfriend and girlfriend. For an unmarried or unrelated couple to be seen together in public is punishable by lashing and/or imprisonment and the punishment for pre-marital and extra-marital sex is death by stoning (Mahdavi, 2007).

As previously stated, the strict dress laws have caused many Iranian men and women, especially the younger generations and residents of Tehran, to rebel against the system. The dress laws and youth's rebellious attitudes have impacted their dress choices and have also made a significant impact on public demeanor and private lives to an extent, perhaps, never seen in the history of Iran. As a result, private lifestyles of the youth today have assisted in the shift of the direction of Iran's fashions. The socio-political climate in Iran has made it incredibly difficult for people to meet and build relations in terms of potential marital partners (Mahdavi, 2007).

Iranians used to have arranged marriages. Although in contemporary Iran some families still practice this tradition, younger generations have taken it upon themselves to take action and find short-term sex partners, as well as their future husband or wife. The young adults are "now using their bodies and sexualities to rebel against a repressive regime; they refer to their behavior as a sexual revolution" (Mahdavi, 2007, p. 446). To further understand how private lifestyles and public gatherings in an Islamic setting have a major impact on dress choice and fashion change, a closer look into the daily lives of this large segment of the Iranian population is necessary.

Due to inflexible laws of the Islamic government, many young Iranians cannot socialize in public to a satisfying degree. As formerly introduced, anyone unmarried or unrelated cannot, by law, interact on a romantic level in public. However, youth have figured out ways to get around this law and interact with the opposite sex. They occupy their days by going on "group activities such as hiking, attending dance classes, going to beauty salons, spending time with

friends at coffee shops or Internet cafes, joining clubs and organizations or sometimes just walking or driving through the busy Tehran streets looking for potential partners” (Mahdavi, 2007, p. 448).

Organized at a friend or family member's house, the private activities include drinking, dancing, sex, and drugs such as opium, hashish, and marijuana (Mahdavi, 2007). Because of the competition level young individuals have for attention from the opposite sex, they modify their appearance and fashion styles on a daily basis. They are constantly updating their makeup, hair, nails, clothing, and accessory items to stand out. This constant desire to be chic and stand out in their public and private lives motivates the youth to stay on top of current trends filtered through satellite TV and the Internet. Given that so many members of this group of people are unemployed, attending school, and unmarried, they have a significant amount of free time to devote to their physical appearance.

Politics and Religion

In addition to the influential factors discussed above, politics and religion also play a major role in fashion change and the Iranian fashion industry. The first chapter highlighted some current fashions in Iran and the sanctions facing women who break dress standards. This section will further discuss fashion trends in contemporary Iran and the actual role the government and religion play in Iran's fashion industry.

The main goal of the Iranian government is to keep its citizens from adopting Western (or any other) clothing styles and to maintain the conservative Islamic image. Women's roles and public behavior in general are a huge topic of discussion in Iran. A Muslim women must be modest in the eyes of the country, thus challenging Islamic dress laws is serious and against the law. Although there are dress codes for men and women (men are not allowed to wear shorts,

short sleeve shirts, un-Islamic graphic T-shirts, or extreme hairstyles such as a mohawk or too much hair spray and hair gel), it is more common for women to be stopped on the streets for dress violations.

Observing the inappropriate daily fashion styles on the streets of Tehran and elsewhere has become a source of frustration and alarm to the Iranian government; so much so that on July 2006, the Iranian police force, the commerce ministry, and the state broadcasting corporation, IRIB, hosted the first Islamic 10-day dress exhibition in the hopes of promoting the notion of Iranian women dressing fashionably while keeping in mind the values presented in the Qur'an (Tait, 2006). The religious authorities are concerned with Iranian women following Western or European norms and are aware that "crackdown" on the streets has proven to be generally unsuccessful. Therefore, their strategy is to continue promoting fashionable Islamic clothing as a means for women to stop following other cultural influences. The fashions seen on the Islamic catwalk are conservative; exhibiting long and dark colored overcoats and *chadors* with sleeves. Many women attending these exhibits are dissatisfied by the government's efforts at creating fashionable Islamic clothing. Regardless of the female public's opinions about the creativity and edginess of the collections, religious authorities, and designers continue to promote Islamic attire in hosting their annual dress fairs. The Iranian government and religious authorities are well aware of the external influences on the young population and are hopeful in keeping the image up to par with Islamic standards (Tait, 2006).

Socio-Psychological Characteristics of Iranian Immigrants

Understanding characteristics of Iranian-Americans living in the United States and their overall experience in their transition to a new culture helps better recognize their point of view and perception of the importance of dress in their lives. This section explores the history and

characteristics of Iranian-American immigrants and their overall acculturation process. It points out the motivational needs of why Iranians move out of their motherland to live in another culture. Furthermore, this section discovers social and psychological issues Iranian immigrants face related to the changes in their identities and general adaptation to a new culture. Some of the major issues include negative impacts of discrimination, low confidence and low self-esteem levels, difficulties in understanding and accepting a bicultural or multicultural identity, as well as many other related factors. Additionally, this section discusses Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of motivational needs to help visualize potential motives as to why Iranians immigrate to the United States as well as their potential choices in lifestyles and most importantly to the study, their choices in dress.

Acculturation of Iranian Immigrants

Most Iranian-American immigrants living in the United States share similar characteristics as Iranians in Iran as they are generally first generation immigrants. In Iran, social class is a major factor among the society, thus social class and status influence the "nature of migration to the United States" (Jalali, 1996, p. 347). Many Iranian families who move to the United States are generally from the elite, educated, Westernized, and business class families, which holds a small percentage of the population of Iran (Jalali, 1996).

Since the 1950s there have been three waves of Iranians immigrating to the United States. The first wave of Iranian immigration was from 1950 to 1970 and these immigrants came from the larger cities in Iran. Most of this group of immigrants were familiar with the Western culture as they had more exposure to it, were "highly educated, affluent, and belonged primarily to the elite and professional middle-class groups. Most were engineers, dentists, teachers or scientists; and their skills allowed them to adapt well to the new culture" (Jalali, 1996, p. 348). The second

wave of Iranian immigrants was right before the 1979 revolution (1970-1978). This group of immigrants was fairly similar to the first wave immigrants in their social status and education levels and are currently scattered throughout the United States. The third wave (1978-1984) came mostly after the historical 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranians from this group were different than the first two groups because they had less exposure to the Western culture, were not as highly educated, and did not have as great of economic resources. Many of the immigrants from the third wave fled the country because of connections and previous services they provided for the Shah and his family. Iranians under similar conditions have continued to immigrate to the United States since 1984. In addition to political reasons for leaving Iran to live in the States or other countries, most Iranians also leave for better economic, personal, and professional opportunities for themselves and/or their children (Jalali, 1996).

Many Iranians coming from the Islamic regime, "experience extreme cultural shock, alienation, frustration, and depression in adjusting to life in the United States" (Jalali, 1996, p. 348). In moving here, many lose their ties with their families, their social standing, and their occupations. Due to an overall uncertainty regarding their future, many have a difficult time settling into the new culture. Depending on what part of the United States they move to, Iranians may have more financial and psychological support from other Iranian immigrants, such as the Los Angeles area, as living amongst other Iranians aids in experiencing less cultural shock.

Jalali's (1996) study on Iranian immigrants illustrates three common modes of adaptation to the American culture: denigrating the old culture, denying the new culture, or biculturation. In denigrating the old culture, Iranians fully adopt the American culture and lifestyle. They keep away from other Iranians and disapprove of their old traditions and beliefs. Conversely, when the new environment and new culture becomes so frightening, some Iranians cannot abandon their

old traditions and deny the new culture by only associating with other Iranians and attempting to create an environment similar to their country of birth. Most families; however, "attempt to integrate the two cultures and tolerate the conflict and anxiety of crossing cultural boundaries. Important attachments to the old culture are maintained, along with a productive assimilation of the new culture" (Jalali, 1996, p. 357).

Research shows that of the three waves, the third wave of Iranian immigrants into the United States experienced the most psychosocial stress and psychological symptoms due to disruption of their families' integrity and unity by "political, ideological, and physical separation. This subgroup's traumatic entry to American culture has often been marked by disappointment, failure, and a sense of hopelessness" (Jalali, 1996, p. 358). The younger generation of Iranian immigrants also experience discomfort, stress, and depression in social settings among their peers and the school environment causing them to have more difficulty learning the new language and adapting to the American culture. Frequently, Iranian parents hold onto old traditions and beliefs more than their Westernized children, thus causing many conflicts between the two generations. Traditionally, Iranian families are very patriarchal, with the father being the head of the household and the one making decisions on the children's choice of friends, social activities, dress and overall manner and behavior. Westernized children have a difficult time finding a balance between the new norms and their parents' old-fashioned expectations (Jalali, 1996).

One of the major conflicts between the older generation of Iranians (the parents) and the younger generation (the children) is the dissonance between Westernized male and female interactions versus the very traditional Iranian male and female interactions. In Iran, women are taught to be conservative, to be attractive and innocent, to be respectful, to speak and laugh

seldom, and to be caring wives and mothers (Hanassab, 1993). The lack of freedom for Iranian women common in Iran is difficult to practice in a culture that exposes young women to Westernized culture through their peers, schools, and media. Furthermore, adopting Western values leads to more permissive sexual lifestyles and premarital relationships; leading to the need for more freedom in dress (Hanassab, 1993). It is certainly vital to this research study to explore the acculturation process between the two generations, in this case the generation of women born before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the generation born after the Revolution, to compare and contrast differences and similarities between their experience from their much conservative culture to a new and very open-minded culture.

There is a gap in this research area on how the role of dress helps or hinders the transition process to a new culture for an immigrant. This research study primarily focuses on social and psychological aspects of dress in understanding the Iranian-American female immigrants. A way to analyze what motivates the Iranian women to change or not to change their style of dress when they move to a new culture is through Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of motivational needs (Maslow, 1943). The sections following will demonstrate Maslow's theory as a framework to better comprehend from where the motivation to adopt or not adopt the Western culture stems. However, first a closer look on the concept of bicultural and multicultural personality characteristics of immigrants in the United States is presented to draw possible conclusions on what may further motivate the women to adapt or reject the American dress standards.

Bicultural and Hybrid Identity Characteristics

Through globalization, many cultures from all over the world influence each other, causing them to become alike in many ways. Research indicates that one significant way in which many cultures influence each other is through acculturation of immigrants to new cultures,

especially the Western culture. There are also a variety of other ways in which globalization has allowed for this intertwined concept to exist, such as through television, the Internet, traveling, and many other forms of interaction and communication (Arnett, 2002). As briefly introduced in the last section, one of the ways in which immigrants adapt to a host culture is by also holding onto characteristics from their birth culture. Much research exists on the idea of a bicultural or multicultural identity. Because the main form of acculturation by immigrants in the United States is through the process of establishing a bicultural identity, it is vital to the study to define the terms in more depth and better recognize the applicability of this theory to the Iranian-American women of this study.

There are four aspects of identity issues related to the effects of globalization on the psychology of individuals. The first aspect is the development of a *bicultural identity*, where a part of an individual's identity is characterized by the local culture in which she/he lives in, while another part is characterized by the influences from the global culture. The second identity issue is the concept of *identity confusion*. This is most common among young individuals in non-Western cultures. "As local cultures change in response to globalization, some young people find themselves at home in neither the local culture nor the global culture" (Arnett, 2002, p. 777). A *self-selected culture* is the third identity aspect, in which individuals form an identity based on choosing to associate with similar people who do not wish to be affected by the global culture and its standards. Finally, "identity explorations in love and work are increasingly stretching beyond the adolescent years (roughly from ages 10 to 18 years) into a post adolescent period of *emerging adulthood* (roughly from ages 18 to 25 years) (Arnett, 2002, p. 777).

Previous research has shown an inconsistency in the personal experiences involved in acquiring two cultures, even two languages. Some researchers have argued in the past that

biculturation and bilingualism are "psychologically handicapping and stressful, provoking anxiety and depression" (Chen, Martinez, & Bond, 2008, p.805). On the other hand, there are other scholars who view the issue of biculturation and bilingualism as having a positive impact on the well-being and intellectual development of individuals (Chen et al., 2008). Although there has been mixed views on the positive or negative impacts of a bicultural identity on an individual's social or psychological well-being, the importance of this topic is highly relevant to the personal experiences of the Iranian-American women in this research. Chen et al. (2008) provide a magnificent description of actual skills needed by an individual to develop and to maintain biculturation. In their article they write:

Enlarging on the alternation model, LaFromboise et al. (1993) theorized about a set of skills needed to develop and maintain bicultural competence: (a) knowledge of cultural beliefs and values in both cultural contexts (being aware and knowledgeable about cultural history and practices); (b) positive attitudes toward and attachment with both groups (feeling good about interacting with and being a member of both cultural groups) (see also Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997); (c) bicultural self-efficacy (developing the belief that one can be competent in both cultures; (d) communication ability (acquiring the majority group's language and nonverbal patterns when interacting with members of that group); (e) expanded role repertoire (enlarging the range of behaviors appropriate for different cultural groups or occasions); and (f) groundedness (establishing social networks to buffer acculturative stress). According to LaFromboise et al. (1993), bicultural individuals who develop these skills (which relate to identity, language, knowledge, and behavioral domains) should achieve better physical and mental health, while acquiring resources in a second cultural system and its associated benefits (p. 808).

This thesis mainly focuses on the concept of a bicultural identity. However, immigrants often experience other types of characteristics such as a *hybrid identity*. This form of identity is where individuals "develop identities that combine their native culture, the local culture to which they immigrate, and the global culture, thus leading to a multicultural identity or a complex hybrid identity" (Arnett, 2002, p. 778). Understanding the psychological issues related to this overall concept will establish a wholesome approach to what characteristics the Iranian-

American women have and how these characteristics relate to the role of dress in their transition process and overall lifestyles.

Motivational Aspects in Cultural Transitions

Dr. Abraham Maslow's widely accepted theory of human motivation is based on the notion of a universal hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1943). His theory includes five essential levels of human needs, ranked from the lowest level, biogenic needs to the highest level, psychogenic needs. Maslow asserted that individuals begin by meeting needs from the lowest level and work their way up to their higher-level needs. According to the theory, as an individual fulfills a level of needs and feels satisfied, new and greater needs surface that the individual is motivated to accomplish (Maslow, 1943). Maslow uses a pyramid to illustrate the order of humans needs established in his theory (see Figure 2.1).

Using the pyramid to represent the hierarchy, Maslow (1943) explained the lowest level of human needs, which are the physiological needs such as food, water, shelter, air, clothing or sex. These needs are all required to sustain biological life and are needs that an individual must meet prior to being capable of meeting other, higher order needs. Moving up on the hierarchy is the need for safety and security, such as the need for protection, order, stability, and familiarity. After achieving the second level of needs, the social need or the need for affection, friendship, or belonging becomes "the driving force behind an individual's behavior" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009, p. 116). The human egoistic needs of prestige, status, and self-esteem are the second highest need on Maslow's hierarchy. These needs can be directed inwardly, such as a person's need for self-esteem or personal satisfaction; outwardly, such as a person's need for status or recognition; or they can be a mix of both.

Following the egoistic need is the highest and least achieved motivational need, or the need for self-actualization or self-fulfillment. This level of self-actualization is distinguished as the utmost ability for an individual to understand the self and others, including the ability to "distinguish genuine from dishonest or scripted motives; to accept and respect others as whole human beings; to resist enculturation and cherish one's own and others' individuality while simultaneously experiencing the self as interdependent with humanity" (Bauer, Schwab, & McAdams, 2011, p.124). Maslow believed that individuals who fulfill this level of need have high psychosocial maturity or well-being (Bauer et al., 2011). One key factor represented in Maslow's theory explains that although one of the motivational needs may be fulfilled at a given time, it is not to say that that particular need may not become active and necessary again in an individual's life. Furthermore, the theory also clarifies that there are "some overlaps among the levels, as no need is ever completely satisfied" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009, p. 116).

This research study primarily focuses on social and psychological aspects of dress among Iranian-American women. However, it is also important to comprehend basic human needs and their relevance to this study. For example, when Iranian women move to the United States and a new culture, according to Maslow's hierarchy (1943) there will be primary needs to meet prior to meeting social and psychological needs. For this study, it is anticipated that taking a closer look at the motivational needs theorized by Maslow will guide understanding of the Iranian-American women's overall transition process.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

As previously mentioned, there is gap in the research on the socio-psychological aspects of the role of dress in helping or hindering Iranian women's transition process to a new culture.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore social-psychological aspects of dress within the context of Iranian-American women.

The objectives of this project are to:

1. Explore Iranian dress standards and the effect these standards have on Iranian-American women's lives.
2. Gain understanding of the role dress plays in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans.
3. Apply Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs motivational model to the women's acculturation process.
4. Compare social-psychological aspects of dress between two distinct generations of Iranian-American women—women born before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and women born after the Revolution.

Research Questions

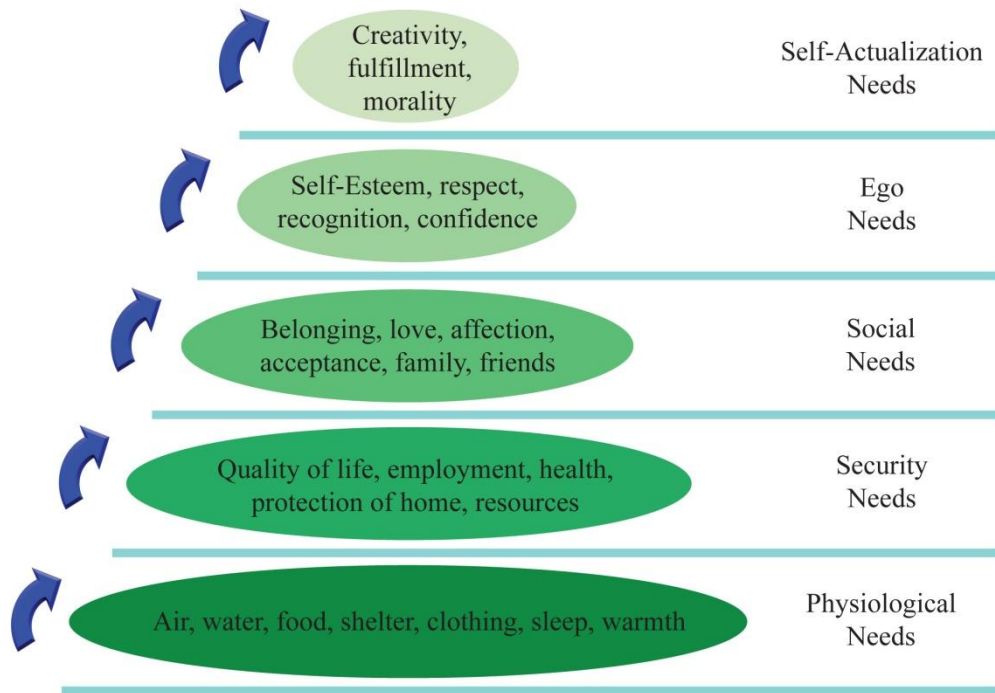
With the above research objectives in mind, this thesis sets out to answer a number of specific research questions.

1. In addressing Research Objective One: What do Iranian-American women know about the history of dress standards within Iran?
 - a. Is there is a difference in understanding in dress limitations between the older and younger generations of Iranian-American women?
2. In addressing Research Objective One: How do Iranian-American women perceive dress standards in Iran?
 - a. Did the women challenge dress standards while living in Iran?

- b. How do perceptions differ between the older and younger generations of Iranian-American women?
- 3. In addressing Research Objective Two: How do Iranian-American women perceive dress norms within the United States?
 - a. How do perceptions differ between the older and younger generations of Iranian-American women?
- 4. In addressing Research Objective Two and Three: What role did dress play in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans? What motivational factors lead to adoption or rejection of American dress standards?
 - a. How did the women's style of dress change upon immigrating to the United States? What motivated the change?
 - b. Did the role played by dress in the transition differ between the older and younger generations of Iranian-American women?

Figure 2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Motivational Model



Source: Maslow (1943)

Chapter 3 - Research Method

From the perspective of Iranian-American women, this thesis explores social-psychological aspects of dress; Iranian dress standards and the effect these standards have on Iranian-American women's lives; the role dress plays in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans; applying Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs model to the women's acculturation process; and differences in the social-psychological aspects of dress between two distinct generations. In order to accomplish these objectives, this thesis utilized qualitative research methodology. Because qualitative research captures complex realities (Strauss, 1987), it was a particularly appropriate approach to investigating the research questions of this thesis.

This chapter outlines the research method used in the study for data collection and analysis. It gives details about all method areas including the population of interest, participant selection, the procedures taken to conduct the research, the instrument used to collect data, and the process of data analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing issues of the study's trustworthiness.

Population of Interest

The population of interest for this qualitative study was Iranian-American women. To ensure the women had experienced American culture for a significant length of time, this study focused on women having lived in the United States for at least five years. Additionally, with dramatic changes occurring in Iran due to high Western influences in recent years, it is vital to capture the women's experiences prior to these most current changes. Furthermore, in order to investigate a variety of viewpoints, the population included women from two diverse generations: women who were born before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and experienced life

during the rule of the Shah and women who were born after the Revolution and experienced life during the Islamic Republic rule.

Sampling Strategy

This research study involved both purposive, criterion based and snowball sampling procedures for selecting research participants. Purposive sampling is a technique in which the basis for the selection of participants is certain characteristics relevant to the phenomenon of interest (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003). Snowball sampling is "a nonprobabilistic form of sampling in which persons initially chosen for the sample are used as informants to locate other persons having necessary characteristics making them eligible for the sample" (Bailey, 1994, p. 438).

The objectives and research questions for this thesis informed the selection criterion guiding the sampling plan for the study. Therefore, the criterion participants must have met for participation in the study included being Iranian-American, female, and having lived within the United States for at least five years. The study also included Iranian-American women from diverse parts of Iran, including participants originally from Tehran, the fashion capital of Iran, as well as other cities such as Shiraz, Esfahan, Karaj, and Sari.

Recruitment of the participants for this study was via the researcher's personal relationships as well as through chain referral. Chain referral "relies on a series of participant referrals to others who have experienced the phenomenon of interest" (Penrod, 2003, p. 101-102). In this process, "the chains of referrals (or multiple snowballs) are carefully established and meshed together to form a sample that more closely resembles a representative sample of the study group" (p. 101-102).

When setting a goal for an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study the researcher must take into consideration that as the study progresses and more data is gathered, it does not prove that more information, or new information, is observed (Mason, 2010). Keeping in mind that qualitative research centers on meaning and not making generalized statements about hypotheses—as would a quantitative study with much larger sample sizes— at the outset of this research study, the goal was to recruit seven to ten participants from each generation. However, data saturation—the point in which no further new information emerges through the data collection process (Creswell, 2007) —was established after five interviews with women from the older generation and six interviews with women from the younger generation. Previous scholars have established that one major factor leading to data saturation in a qualitative study is that small studies, which have "modest claims" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 114), might attain data saturation earlier "than a study that is aiming to describe a process that spans disciplines" (Mason, 2010, n.p.).

Data Collection Strategy

With approval from the Institutional Review Board involving Human Subjects at Kansas State University, the primary data collection strategy employed in this thesis was semi-structured, also known as focused format, interviews. In this type of an interview, clear objectives for interviews are established; however, flexibility remains for asking new questions and following new information that arises during the interview process (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

There were multiple means for conducting the interviews with the participants. Although as many of the interviews as possible were face-to-face with the participants, due to the geographic location of a number of participants, the researcher conducted some of the interviews over the phone. Due to the possible sensitivity of the topic, the researcher chose one-on-one

interviews rather than focus groups to reduce the risk of frustration for the women and to create a relaxed feeling for each participant to share her true experience. Additionally, face-to-face interviews were conducted either in the homes of the participants or another location chosen by the participant, such as a quiet area in a restaurant or a coffee shop, to increase comfort for the participants. Furthermore, before the interview questions were presented to each individual, the researcher informed each participant that the main purpose of the research was to appreciate their opinions and beliefs and that there were no right or wrong answers to the interview questions (Fischer, 1993). Both the phone and face-to-face interviews were recorded by a professional tape-recorder, which permitted the interviews to be fully transcribed for efficiency and proper analysis of data. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

Prior to starting the interview, each participant had the opportunity to review a consent form, which gave the researcher permission to use the information with the understanding that the participant's identity and personal information would not be exposed and would remain confidential. For the phone interviews, the consent forms were either emailed or mailed to the participants prior to the interview. The forms were then either scanned and emailed back or mailed back to the researcher with each participant's signature. Additionally, before starting the interviews, the researcher described the goal and purpose of the study to each participant.

Interview Instrument

Semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to introduce a topic and guide the discussion by asking more specific questions (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In this study the main goal of each individual interview was to understand each participant's personal and lived experiences, not only their beliefs or attitudes about the topic (Kvale, 1996).

The researcher utilized an interview guide to facilitate the research questions. This guide was a written list of the objectives of the interview and the topics and questions that the interviewer attempted to cover. Each interview started by asking some general questions that helped the participant relax and get comfortable with the researcher. These questions included:

1. Could you please tell me a little bit about yourself and the story of how you came to live in the United States? How old were you when you left Iran? Did you move directly to the United States?
2. What were some of your everyday roles in Iran? What are some of your roles in the States? Examples: student, homemaker, mother, businessperson, doctor, etc.
3. How is your life different in the U.S. compared to when you were in Iran? How is it the same?

After the opening questions, the study's research questions led the remainder of the interview. Each participant was asked a set of questions related to each research question in the study. Slightly different questions were asked of the younger generation of women compared to the older generation as some topics related to the research questions in regards to issues prior to the Islamic Revolution could obviously not be answered by the younger generation of women. The complete list of interview questions are provided in Appendix A.

Due to a number of the study's participants not being fluent English speakers, the researcher (who is fluent in Farsi) translated the English interview questions into Farsi for the participants' maximum comprehension. Utilizing the back translation method, the Farsi list of interview questions was translated back to English by an external individual who is also fluent in both English and Farsi and had not seen the original list of English questions. This assured complete accuracy of the researcher's translations of the questions from English to Farsi.

Data Analysis

The procedure used in analyzing qualitative data consisted of coding the data, synthesizing the codes into broader concepts and themes, and interpreting the results (Creswell, 2007). Upon completion of each interview, it was fully transcribed for data analysis purposes. The researcher transcribed seven out of the eleven interviews herself and hired undergraduate students to transcribe the remaining four. The researcher then fully reviewed all transcriptions, while listening to the recordings, to insure complete accuracy of the transcriptions. As previously stated, several of the research participants were not fluent in English and the researcher had conducted the interviews with these individuals in Farsi. Therefore, in transcribing these interviews the researcher translated them from Farsi to English.

The overall data analysis process began while the interviews were still in progress and it gradually developed throughout the study. Upon completion of each interview, the researcher reflected upon the interview and noted emerging themes and concepts. The researcher also reflected on topics that needed following up with the participant and questions that were necessary to include for the remaining interviews.

After all of the interviews were complete, common themes and concepts were more closely examined in order to "build toward an overall explanation" of the study (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 226). The researcher kept a file with all emerging concepts and continuously worked and refined the themes and categories to form common concepts among all interviews. Additionally, the researcher read each interview multiple times, organizing the content as it pertained to each research question. All answers to the interview questions were color-coordinated to fit which research question they addressed. Additionally, within each color-coordinated research question, themes and concepts were underlined, highlighted, circled, or

squared; noting their application from broad to more specified themes. This stage in the analysis required various procedures of categorization, abstraction, comparison, and integration (Spiggle, 1994).

The data analysis procedure was a repetitive process of reading, coding, revising the codes, and debriefing the codes with a peer debriefer. The utilization of a peer debriefer is recommended by scholars such as Creswell (2007) to reinforce the credibility and validity of the study by allowing an external party to review the researcher's inquiry practices and methods. The peer debriefer in this study asked questions about the methods and interpretations made by the researcher and worked to keep the researcher honest and cognizant of possible personal biases (Creswell, 2007). The researcher provided the peer debriefer with all documents and methods used up to that step in the data analysis procedure. With comments and a fresh perspective shared by the debriefer, this communication process allowed for even more precise angles on coding the data. Appropriate sections of the interview transcripts were precisely re-read and analyzed to obtain patterns and themes among all interviews.

For the final data analysis, all materials from all interviews that had a common theme or concept were placed in one category and all materials were compared for fine distinctions in meanings. The research questions structured this stage of data analysis. With the research questions in mind, the themes were all reexamined and peer debriefed to note any final areas of refinement. Upon confidence that the themes selected were appropriate and answered each research question, the researcher made interpretations and conclusions; also providing direct quotations from the participants to better support the findings of the study.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The last section of this chapter highlights the importance of the study's trustworthiness. Scholars typically evaluate the trustworthiness of a study through standards of validity, reliability, and objectivity. Therefore, this final section of Chapter Three discusses these issues.

The fundamental standard of validity leading this qualitative research is based on criterion established by Lincoln and Guba (2005), which explains that within qualitative research methodologies, validity must be evaluated based on how secure the researcher is in acting upon the research findings as well as how certain the researcher is in applying public policy or engaging in social action on the basis of the findings.

The focus of validity in a qualitative research study is usually a measure of whether or not the data interpretations and conclusions are representative of the reality of the situation and the research participants. Lincoln and Guba (1999) suggest a standard of *truth value* as a measure of a study's validity or credibility. The concept of truth value is the assumption of the existence of multiple realities and that "reality" is fundamentally a multiple set of mental constructions made by humans. Consequently, Lincoln and Guba propose that a research study exhibits truth value when the researcher displays sufficient representation of multiple constructions of reality and that the findings of the study are credible to the individuals who originally constructed the multiple realities. Thus, a valid and credible study is one that applies research methods and procedures that increase the likelihood of credible conclusions within the study and that also demonstrates the credibility by having the constructors of the realities approve the research findings.

To exhibit truth value in this study, after conducting each interview, the researcher analyzed and summarized all interviews; and offered each participant with the opportunity to

review or discuss the material and provide feedback on the researcher's interpretations and conclusions linked to the participant's interview. Most of the participants did not prefer to review the written conclusions offered and preferred verbal feedback. Two participants from the younger generation reviewed the researcher's written conclusions and offered feedback via phone. The researcher verbally followed up with the remaining participants where further clarifications and interpretations were needed.

Additional measurements for determining the validity of research finding are also presented by Lincoln and Guba (2005). The two authors believe that a primary criterion for validity of a study relates to the fairness and the degree to which the research findings represent the voices of all research participants. To adhere to this standard, this study represented all thoughts and beliefs of each participant used for the study without excluding information due to controversial or nonalignment with the rest of the findings.

As well as the importance of validity in rating the trustworthiness of a study, this study also took into consideration reliability. This research increased the reliability of the study through the continuance of a quality "audit trail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). Throughout the study, the researcher recorded detailed and precise field notes of the methods and procedures to exhibit how data were collected and analyzed. Details included in the audit trail included raw data (interview transcripts and field notes), products from data reduction (code guides and summary memos and displays), and process notes. The information gathered was detailed enough allowing others to follow the process of data analysis and conclusions of the study as they wish.

Finally, in addition to the validity and reliability of a study, trustworthiness of the findings of a study also depends on the neutrality of the researcher throughout the research process and the objectivity of the conclusions. The focus of the neutrality of a study is on how

the research participants and conditions of the study determine the findings of a study and not the biases and point of view of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). During the process of conducting a research study, personal bias of the researcher has the potential to affect what he or she decides to see, hear, and record. Correspondingly, personal bias may also persuade data analysis, interpretations, and conclusion of the study. An excellent researcher is aware of his or her personal biases and understands what effects the biases may have on both data collection and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). “Bias requires us to identify the perspective that we bring to our studies and to anticipate how that may affect what we report” (Wolcott, 1995, p. 165). Therefore, in this research study, the researcher kept a research journal where she worked to be self-aware and open-minded about personal biases and their potential effects on the research process. These personal biases and their impact on the study are outlined in Chapter Six’s discussion of the study’s limitations.

Chapter 4 - Knowledge and Perceptions of Iranian Dress Standards

Chapters Four and Five present the findings of the study as they relate to each research question of the study. This chapter begins with an overview of the study's sample. Additionally, the chapter outlines the major themes and concepts related to the study's first two research questions, covering topics related to when the women lived in Iran. Chapter Five provides the findings from the third and fourth research questions, illustrating topics related to the women's experiences within the United States. Furthermore, Chapter Five provides a section summarizing the findings of the study; leading to interpretation and discussion of the findings in Chapter Six. Chapters Four and Five utilize quotations from the participants to illustrate the themes and concepts.

Introduction to the Participants

As detailed in Chapter Three, the sampling methods used for this research study involved both purposive, criterion based and snowball sampling procedures. The objectives and research questions for this thesis informed the selection criterion guiding the sampling plan for the study. Therefore, the criterion participants must have met for participation in the study included being Iranian-American, female, and having lived within the United States for at least five years. The study also included Iranian-American women from diverse parts of Iran, including participants originally from Tehran, the fashion capital of Iran, as well as other cities such as Shiraz, Esfahan, Karaj, and Sari.

A total of 11 women participated in this study, representing two diverse generations of Iranian-American women: those born before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and those born after the Revolution. Specifically, six participants were from the younger generation and five

participants were from the older generation of Iranian-American women. Prior to collection of data, the researcher contacted 20 possible participants; however, data saturation was established after interviewing 11 women and the researcher determined that further interviews were not necessary. All participants were originally born in Iran and have lived in the United States for at least five years. To offer a better understanding of the study's participants, Table 4.1 outlines each of the participants' ages and a description of her main roles and characteristics.

Prior to discussing the interview questions related to the study's main research questions, each interview asked some general questions that helped the participant relax and get comfortable with the researcher. Through analyzing the dialogue that resulted from asking these questions two interesting themes related to their motivations for coming to the United States and perceptions of differences between Iranian and American cultures emerged as common among the Iranian-American women.

Motivation for Immigrating to the United States

Almost all participants interviewed moved to the United States with their immediate family for increased educational opportunities. The older generation wanted advanced educational opportunities, as well as other opportunities, for their children; and the younger generation wished for themselves the possibilities of higher education in the United States. When asked to tell a little bit about themselves and the story of how they came to live in the United States, almost all respondents mentioned the increased opportunities present in the United States versus Iran, especially noting educational advancements. Participant #1 describes this decision as follows:

Participant #1, Younger Generation: My father used to go to college [in the U.S.] back in the 70s, he got his bachelor's at Jacksonville State University, and he always had a dream that we [my two sisters and I] have the same opportunity to continue education

here overseas as opposed to back home...so when I was like 9 or 10 years old they [my Mom and him] had a serious conversation...and they decided it's best if we sold everything back home and moved to the United States.

Again, Participant #5 had a similar response as to why her family moved to the United States.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: One of the main reasons was that we were three girls and a boy so I have two sisters and a brother; and my family wanted a better life for us. Unfortunately there are not that many opportunities for women in Iran to succeed or progress. One of the reasons my dad decided to move us to the United States was for better opportunities for us.

In addition to the responses from the younger generation of women, the older generation also validated this reasoning. Three out of five of the participants from the older generation had a definite answer as to education being the main cause of their immigration to the United States.

Participant #7, a mother to three daughters, explains her decision for moving as such:

Participant #7, Older Generation: We came to America because the living environment here is much better. The most important thing and reason for why we came here was for the children. We wanted them to be educated, because in Iran there is not a lot of opportunity for further education for our kids, and we wanted to live better so for that reason we came to America.

The other two older generation women did not express increased educational opportunities as the primary motivation for immigrating. One of these women does not have any children and the other woman communicated different factors influencing her departure from Iran.

Participant #10, Older Generation: I came here to visit my brother, sister, and my family. The first time I came here was as a guest and after that, because I got a green card, I came here, and I liked to come stay here and I like America.

However, for the most part, the women articulated more overall freedom, opportunities, and advancements available in the U.S. as their reasons for their immigration. Education is an extremely significant part of life for most Iranians inside or outside of Iran. Frequently, Iranian families move to other countries for further possibilities in education and careers for themselves

or their children. This data proves the main reasoning as described by the participants, as all women in the younger generation have established careers and most have college degrees.

Differences between Roles and Lifestyles in Iran versus the United States

In addition to asking the participants why they immigrated to the United States, the researcher also asked them to reflect on how their lives are both similar and different in the United States compared to when they lived in Iran. Through this discussion, most of the participants spoke about a number of differences between the two cultures in terms of daily activities and lifestyle roles.

Societal Advancements in America

Both generations of Iranian-American women expressed their belief that there are significantly more opportunities for societal advancements in the United States, especially for women. They believe that living in the U.S. provides them more exposure and involvement within society than they were permitted in Iran. For example, the women are able to interact more with the public through their work environments or other social settings. Participant #7, from the older generation, as well as Participant #2, from the younger generation, elaborate on their belief regarding this opportunity.

Participant #7, Older Generation: In my opinion living in America is much more advanced, my environment is more free, I see society a lot more, I learn more things, there are more people around me, I can live better. Life was also good in Iran, but not as much as America. In America, I can have more educated people around me and be more in touch with them. In Iran, we are supposed to just be a housewife, take care of the children, and tasks related to that...and most women, not all women, a small population of women can enter the workforce, but a lot of them are in the house.

Participant #2, Younger Generation: I'm very thankful I am here, my whole family is here, my daughter is actually growing up here in this culture, in this community,...overall, I have a great time, my family is all here, they're all educated, finished up their college.

Responsibilities and Roles of Students

When asked about differences in everyday roles and overall lifestyle between Iran and the U.S., the younger generation of Iranian-American women mainly spoke about their roles as students. One of the differences noted between Iran and the United States in terms of lifestyle is that a majority of students in Iran do not work and attend school at the same time. Most Iranian children solely attend school, complete homework assignments, help their mothers with household chores, and play with their friends.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: I was a student in Iran; and I'm still a student here, but also I work part-time, which I didn't used to work when I was back in Iran because it's not usually what students do back in Iran.

Most of the younger generation of women in this study mentioned the acceptance of responsibility as a child to be much quicker in Iran than observed in the United States. When the women were younger, such as in their early teens, they attended school, were very involved in academic activities, and helped their mothers with chores and younger siblings.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: I was 12 or 13-years old so my roles were basically just to play around and be a little 12-year old, but back home everything is different like being 12-years old back home is different than being 12-years old here. Some families here still have a baby sitter for someone who is 12-years old here. I was helping Mom cook and take care of two younger siblings so even as a 12-year old compared to a 12-year old here a lot of the roles were different. You accept responsibility much quicker than here. You still have a childhood of course, you do almost everything a child would do here in America except you just accept and understand responsibility way faster and way sooner than here.

More Independence and Busier Lifestyles in the United States

Most of the women in the younger age group also spoke about the ability to be more independent as a teenager in the United States versus in Iran. In Iran, a majority of teenagers do not have access to vehicles, jobs, or other resources, thus making them feel as though they do not have much freedom to be independent or involved in society. On the other hand, due to more

freedom and opportunities in the U.S., such as jobs, driver's licenses, and cars, as well as having more of a social life with both males and females; the participants feel that an individual has the capacity to be much more independent in the United States.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: When I used to be in Iran, I used to drive but not that much. I used to just get the car and go out with my friend and come back home, that's all. But here I just go to different offices to take care of my doctor [health], I go shopping, I go to work, I go to school. I became more independent here. Let's put it that way. There I couldn't do anything without my Dad or my Mom's help...I think everybody gets independent [here]; we have no choice because everybody is working here nobody can give you a ride or spend extra time with you so you have no choice but to learn to be independent.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: Well I can work. I can definitely become something for myself. And this is something we were unable to do back home. So just the fact that I'm independent and I don't have to depend on anyone. That's the most important thing to me.

Additionally, the participants from the younger generation also described life as being much busier in the United States than in Iran, as the need to balance more tasks and roles has become evident in the younger participants' lives. Most of the women in this age group are married and have children. If not married, they are recent college graduates and working. As

Participant #1 explains:

Participant #1, Younger Generation: My role here now, as a 29-year old, I am a pharmacist practicing in the state of Georgia. I do have a little girl, she is 3 months old. I do have a husband so my roles as opposed to I guess a Middle Class, a normal 29-year-old back home is a little bit different in that I think I have had the opportunity to continue education here. I believe I have been granted the opportunity to actually go to school. I paid for my college using the whole scholarship and I took out loans so even though it was hard to do, at least you have the opportunity...But I believe that the fact that I was able to continue education is what makes my roles different from...whether I was back home or here now.

Only one of the participants from the older generation also spoke to how, compared to Iran, her lifestyle in the United State is much busier.

Participant #7, Older Generation: Everyday roles [in Iran]...housewife, in addition, taking care of the children, shopping, going out, get-togethers with the family, going to parties,

and things like this...[did not work] just a housewife...worked only as a way of having hobbies, like sewing, flower making...as hobbies...Everyday roles in America consists of working at my own restaurant ...all I do is cook...I work doing things related to this, but in Iran I had different jobs [hobbies]...but here my job is just cooking...much busier because I am in society more, but in Iran I was at home more...

Furthermore, there are certain expectations and overall cultural differences between the two countries that the participants discussed. For example, a girl finishes high school in Iran and most likely gets married, starts her own family, and in most cases does not obtain any further education. There are also less career opportunities for women in Iran compared to the United States. In the U. S., women attend school and most have part-time or full-time jobs while attending school. Additionally, there are more job opportunities available to them upon graduation. Furthermore, most get married at an older age compared to if they lived in Iran.

Participant #2, Younger Generation: ...it was very limited to be able to do things that I can do in U.S....and education wise and having the ability to even get a job after high school or even during the time you are in high school...like in U.S. when you are in high school you are 16-years-old you can actually go find a part-time job somewhere and make yourself money, but back in Iran you can't do that, especially if you're a girl you have to stay home, finish high school, and the minute you finish high school someone is knocking on your door and you have to get married to this guys and not being able to continue your education.

Indolent Lifestyles of the Older Generation

Finally, compared to the younger generation and one woman in the older generation, a majority of the participants in the older age group of Iranian-American women communicated living a less busy life in the U.S. as opposed to their lifestyles in Iran. With the exception of Participant #7, who is a small business owner, all participants in this group are currently retired and have a much less complicated lifestyle.

Participant #10, Older Generation: Before the Revolution, I was very educated, I taught, I went to college, I went to parties, I exercised, I went to English classes, I went to do different activities. We went to the mountains and so many other activities...family parties, other gatherings...things that everyone had, I did also...and after the Revolution I

was still in education, continued teaching. I did not exercise anymore for personal reasons...my age would not allow me to do so...again there were gatherings, traveling, and things like that. Here now, I study the English language, I learn a little bit about computers and book related things. Other than that now I don't work here. I don't go to work or have a particular job that I have to do.

Although their own lives are less busy, the older generation of Iranian-American women in this study acknowledge the overall lifestyle for a family in the U.S. as being much faster and demanding as compared to life for a Iranian family living in Iran. In Iran, most families have the father working and providing for his family, the mother taking care of the household, and the children attending school and studying as well as helping with chores around the house. The perception of family life expressed by the Iranian-American women in this study presents much more complex lifestyles for the American families, such as less time spent together and more time dedicated to work or individual careers of each family member.

Overall, the main reason for immigration to the United States is due to higher educational opportunities among many other reasons. Although both groups of women expressed education as a major motivation for moving, significant differences existed between the older and younger generations in regards to daily roles and lifestyles. The younger generation spoke about the differences in roles as a student living in Iran as compared to a student's life in the United States. Additionally, more independence as a teenager in America versus in Iran was established among the younger generation of women. In general, the younger generation of Iranian-American women claimed much busier lifestyles as compared to the older generation of women, mainly due to differences in age between the two groups.

Research Question One: What do Iranian-American women know about the history of dress standards within Iran?

Research Question One focused on what Iranian-American women know about the history of dress standards within Iran and whether there were any differences in the understanding of dress limitations between the older and younger generations. Three considerable themes surfaced upon analysis of the data related to this research question: an understanding of the evolution of dress standards over time, perceptions of punishments for not adhering to the standards, and observations of recent, dramatic changes in Iranian dress. The sections following further discuss each theme, including similarities and differences noted between the two generations.

Evolution of Iranian Dress Standards

All participants from both generations of Iranian-American women were aware of the current Iranian dress standards as having to cover the entire body, including hair and feet, leaving only the hands and face exposed.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: ...it's not really a clothing. It's more of something that covers you from head to toe. I can't even describe what exactly it is but it's called a chador. But for as long as I can remember I had to cover my head and I had to wear a long sleeve, towards like mid calf, something called a manteau. That would cover everything except for my hands. The only thing that was showing was my face and my hands...

Participant #7, Older Generation: This manteau and scarf should be worn so that the entire body is covered. Hijab has to be followed completely...only their hands and their face can show...the rest, the entire body must be covered...

Often when asked about dress standards, the participants would confuse fashion trends with actual standards and dress laws established in the country. This was common among both generations of women.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: I saw some great styles. Like the skinny jeans and like the converse, you know higher converse boots. Their fashion to me I think it's just so beautiful but the fact that they have to put a scarf and like a long jacket on top of that I think it kind of takes away that fashion. What they do is they try to put different accessories to make up for that scarf and the cover up jacket that they have to wear.

Participant #8, Older Generation: The colors, the way they used them as shawls is beautiful...not the old way of all the black and depressing or low-spirited...no not like that anymore...it has changed a lot...the clothing are more lively...even the manteaux they wear, they use lively colors...shorter pants, I've seen it with my own eyes...open-toe sandals...nicely painted nails...long...

With the exception of being knowledgeable about traditional Persian clothing, the younger generation only minimally spoke about dress standards before the Islamic Revolution and could only recall as far back as the time of Mohammad Reza Shah. This indicates a gap in the younger generation's understanding of the history of dress standards with Iran; revealing most of their awareness to be on the current Islamic dress laws.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: I know that back in Iran there are different traditional cultural clothing that the different states in Iran have. I know like most of them are more of a traditional outfit than where I used to live. Like basically in the one state that I know my Dad's from, Shiraz...they have a very beautiful traditional outfit. It's a baggy skirt with a beautiful shirt. I mean it's just totally different. But back in Tehran we would wear just the same thing that we are wearing now. I mean I know that the covering part of the scarf and the chador and the whole covering of your arms was what I saw most of the time. Other than that, we do have very traditional beautiful clothing in different parts of Iran...I know that the women were able to wear short skirts with tight tops and high heels [during the time of the Shah]. They didn't have to really cover their hair and body and I know they were more comfortable of what kind of clothing they want to choose. It was pretty much just like being in the U.S. but of course back in the day the Shah was allowing everyone to have that kind of freedom. I know that was the difference. I wasn't there but I heard these are the things that were going on.

The information the younger generation had in regards to traditional Persian village attire is due to the current availability of the traditional garments as a form of appreciation for the different ethnicity or an admiration for the actual garments as being art. The younger generation of women did not express any additional knowledge in regards to dress standards during the time

of the Mohammad Reza Shah other than what they had heard from their parents or grandparents or had seen in the family portraits from that time period.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: Well for as long as I can remember I had to start covering up early on, so I had to wear head covers and I didn't necessarily wear the chador...But for as long as I can remember I had to cover my head and I had to wear long sleeve...manteau. That would cover everything except for my hands. The only thing that was showing was my face and my hands when I was back in Iran and of course a little bit of the hair as far as the fashion was involved there. That was the clothing that I remember in Iran. And I had to go to school the exact same way even from first grade. You couldn't walk around without covers...[before the Revolution], to be honest with you, I mean I've seen pictures of my mom but that's about it because I was born after the Revolution so I don't really know things personally. But I have seen pictures of my mom and the dress standard and the dress code was the same as the United States I believe.

As compared to the younger generation, the older generation of women had much more comprehension of the history of dress laws within Iran. They were able to recollect information on dress laws from the Islamic Revolution, dress standards during the times of Mohammad Reza Shah and Reza Shah, as well as traditional clothing in the history of Iranian culture. The major difference between the two generations of women is clearly the fact that the older generation lived through the time of Mohammad Reza Shah and had actual experience and familiarity with that time period. Additionally, the older generation were able to speak about the extreme changes that have happened within Iran in terms of dress standards, including Reza Shah banning all women from wearing the chadors, Mohammad Reza Shah giving the women the option to choose whether they wish to cover or dress similar to the Western cultures, and the more firm laws set forth by the Islamic government.

Participant #7, Older Generation: History of dress in Iran as far as I know is extremely...it has two different time periods. It was very different...there was the period related to Shah when we were free to wear anything and there were no dress restrictions...whatever style of dress we wanted to wear like America, we could wear, but after the Revolution around 32 years ago, we were forced to follow a very strict dress standard or hijab, which is called manteau and scarf...and all the women, whatever clothing they wear are required to cover themselves with two

things, the manteau and the scarf. This is the main difference between fashion in Iran and America, in terms of current dress...[historically], ...Reza Shah forced women to get rid of their chadors and scarves...he forced them to take it off...and another time [women were] forced to put them on. What are Iranian women supposed to do in the middle of all this? Are they supposed to wear the clothes with force and not wear the clothes with force?

Both generations of women expressed the beauty in the traditional cultural clothing, more freedom and options in dress standards before the Islamic Revolution, and referenced a great deal of Western influence when speaking about clothing worn during the time of the Shahs. The traditional clothing was described as being colorful, layered, flowy, comfortable and easy to move in, and having interesting sequins and other details; yet still being conservative and modest.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: But before [the time of the Shahs] I feel like it would go according to each city and states' native ways. Like for example, we have different cities in Iran where we call the fashion as Mahali which means it like village [attire]...it's like every, I mean not even village itself because sometimes even a big city would have their village outfits and if you want to go that far back, it kind of revolves around what the villagers' outfit it like. Which is a lot of color, a lot of sequence, a lot of different types of fabric altered together that covers the hair, that covers all the [body], it's very flowy, it's easy to dance in, it's a lot of things like that.

All participants referenced the clothing worn during the time of the Shahs as being similar to the Western standards of dressing. Additionally, almost all participants mentioned miniskirts being a significant fashion item during the time of the Shahs.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: Yeah, I know that the women were able to wear short skirts with tight tops and high heels [during the time of the Shah]. They didn't have to really cover their hair and body and I know they were more comfortable of what kind of clothing they want to choose. It was pretty much just like being in the U.S.

However, none of the older generation of women expressed a personal desire to wear the miniskirts or other revealing clothing.

Participant #11, Older Generation:...because I never wore revealing clothing, not even during the time of the Shah...I didn't like to wear revealing clothing back then or I don't now...

In terms of dress standards during the Islamic Revolution, all of the participants mentioned the requirement to be covered outside of the house, with the freedom to wear what they desired underneath their chadors or manteaux—the clothing they wore inside the house never changed or had any limitations placed upon them.

Participant #9, Older Generation:...even after the Revolution they [the people] know about fashion really well but they cannot have it in appearance, outside...even [among] their family [they wear fashions]...they travel...they use fashion but under the chador...

Perceptions of Punishments

When the participants were asked, “Historically, what happened to women if they did not follow the standards?” the women from both generations did not know what punishments or consequences existed for breaking dress laws before the Islamic Revolution. Their answers to the question always corresponded with punishments after the Revolution.

Participant #7, Older Generation: During Shah's time since there was no real attention or force on what women should wear...or taking the chadors off with force or wearing them with force...during Shah's time it was OK...but during the Islamic Revolution chador, roosari and manteau had to exist...if it didn't women were forced to go to jail...if the women didn't wear hijab they had to be punished...really bad punishments and by force they had to wear the chador and roosari.

Both generations of women were able to speak to the consequences for breaking dress laws post-1979. Most of the participants expressed their understanding that the punishments were harsher during the beginning years of the Revolution and less severe as the years passed.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: Well, they got beaten; they send them to jail...it was heavy punishment...serious...I mean mostly in the beginning of the Revolution, you had no choice...that was it...It was like that...but as time passed the manteau became shorter and shorter and shorter and sleeves became shorter and shorter and shorter...

Although the women discussed knowing about tough punishments for violating dress laws, they always referenced these punishments as something they had heard about but none of the women in this study had ever, personally, experienced the intense punishments. Participant #3 and Participant #11 discuss their point-of-view on punishments and dress laws in Iran.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: ...short pants they were called Bermuda...it was one of the first trends that came so everybody started wearing that. At first I didn't feel comfortable wearing that, [they were] maybe like five inches away from your foot. It was so revealing for that time, and I remember if they caught you, they used to have these razors...how do you call it, and they put...they scratched your feet. And then sometimes they just put you behind their Jeeps and take you straight to the station and they humiliated you. I never ever experienced it but I heard they just call you, say mean things to you, sometimes they even beat you.

Participant #11, Older Generation: ...the things that they say...I don't want to lie or say something false. People say that they are taken to jail, but I have never seen it with my own eyes.

Instead, the women spoke about minor warnings or payment of fines being the only actual experience the women had while living in Iran. Therefore, there is a disconnect between their perceptions of punishments and actual first-hand experiences.

Participant #2, Younger Generation: For example, if you put your sunglasses on top of your head, they'll charge you like \$100...it's a penalty for it...if you show like a little bit of the hair, there is a certain amount of money, fee that you have to pay...

Participant #11, Older Generation: I was walking with my daughter once and she saw a police car, and the police are polite, but she was so scared to see them...I asked her, "Dear why are you so scared?"...they [the police] came out and said, "Ma'am fix your scarf."...I said, "OK, my scarf is slippery and it slipped down, I will fix it."...they said OK and left...

The older generation of women spoke about difficulties they faced due to dress changes during the different government systems in Iran. Due to their familiarity with dress standards during the time of the Shah, the women were constantly nervous after the Revolution and were always concerned about the appropriateness of their hijab.

Participant #11, Older Generation: The stress of possibly having a little bit of your hair out, the stress of your clothing being tight, there was all stress...the clothing is not even an issue dear...wasn't it the case during the time of the Shah? Whoever wanted to would wear a chador or a roosari...but now the stress that is there because of the clothing...Because I lived in Iran, it wasn't a big deal for me...wearing of the roosari and roopoosh is not a big deal...it is just the constant stress and being nervous that is the problem...

Additionally, the older generation of women spoke about the low-spirited and depressed feelings they formed due to the changes in dress standard from the time of the Shah to the very conservative laws during the Islamic Revolution. Furthermore, the women expressed their lack of motivation to be well put together or dressed-up after the Revolution, due to always having to cover up. In terms of their activities and gatherings outside of the house, the older generation also spoke about the decrease in their ability to be comfortable with their husbands or male family members when outside of the house because of the overall culture expectations regarding the behavior of women.

Participant #7, Older Generation: The main affect [Islamic dress standards] had was that it put a separation between my orderly wants or needs that I used to have. For example, there could have been styles that I wanted to follow; however, because I had to wear the manteau and scarf, I would pay less attention to the styles I was supposed to have. I would get low-spirited and in terms of my mentality, I would get a little depressed...the happiness and joyfulness that I was supposed to have related to clothes would die away because I was constantly forced to wear a manteau, because I was forced to wear scarf. I didn't want to fix my hair anymore; I didn't want to wear put-together clothes anymore because everything would be covered under the chador and scarf. The main affect was that it made the Iranian women low-spirited.

Participant #9, Older Generation:...because whenever we went outside somebody came and said take your scarf and move it more forward and something like that, my husband didn't want to talk to them [to get into a conflict], so we couldn't go to restaurants, we couldn't go outside, in public. My husband didn't like it so it changed our life. It made us upset and because of that we couldn't have fun, we couldn't go to parks...

Participant #8, Older Generation: For someone like me, if I am using myself as an example, I was what I always was...the only difference was that there was a manteau and scarf added to me [my style]. It didn't really have a bad impact on me no no...

Recent Changes in Iranian Dress

As previously mentioned, both generations of women recognize the Islamic hijab in Iran as having to cover everything including the hair and feet and leaving only the hands and face exposed. However, both generations also discussed recent and significant changes related to dress within Iran. While the actual dress standards by law remain the same within Iran, more and more people are pushing the boundaries on these laws and the government has become more lenient about the dress standards.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: It's more in Tehran....whenever you see something like really really fashionable, it is usually from Tehran. In Esfahan there are people that, but because Esfahan is more conservative, it's harder for them because the way people look [and] treat you is not the same as if you were in Tehran. In Tehran, the population is a lot and there are lots of girls so it's not like Esfahan or Mashhad. I've heard in Shiraz it is the same but I'm pretty sure it's not the same as Tehran...

Most intensive changes are apparent in northern Tehran; however, changes in clothing are noticeable in almost all cities in Iran.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: I think people in Shiraz are divided into two categories...the ones who are right after Tehran...they copy everything they do there. There is another group that is more conservative...and they are from old families...they still hold on to their values, so yeah I think Shiraz has a mix of the different people.

Overall, in terms of knowing the history of dress standards in Iran, both generations of Iranian-American women are knowledgeable on dress standards after and during the Islamic Revolution. However, the older generation is much more knowledgeable on the history of dress standards than the younger age group. Both generations have extreme negative perceptions of punishments for breaking the dress laws, but have never actually had first-hand experience with the punishments discussed. Moreover, both generations of women perceive rapid changes occurring in Iran concerning dress.

Research Question Two: How do Iranian-American women perceive dress standards in Iran?

The second research question in this study focused on Iranian-American women's perceptions of dress standards in Iran. Additionally, questions were asked to assess the women's attitudes about the dress laws and if they had ever challenged these laws. Two important themes emerged upon analysis of the data related to this research question: Iranian-American women's innate desire to be conservative by nature, and a look at thermal comfort of the hijab and the women's perceptions of Iranian dress standards. Differences and similarities between the two generations of women are established.

Conservative by Nature

Regardless of where the participants are living, they consider themselves to be conservative by nature. In other words, they perceive themselves as being conservative both when they lived in Iran and now as they live in the United States.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: I think Iranian people are conservative; it has nothing to do with the new revolution or anything. Even back in the Shah time, they used to wear like open dresses but they used to be so conservative...you cannot just wear it anywhere...maybe you put those clothes on and go to the club but when they used to come back to the family they used to wear more conservative [clothing].

The older generation of women specifically brought attention to their conservative nature even during the time of the Shah. With much more freedom available at that time compared to after the Islamic Revolution, a lot of women still felt that it would be inappropriate to wear clothing that were similar to the revealing Western or European attire available at the time of the Shah.

Participant #11, Older Generation: I never wore revealing clothing, not even during the time of the Shah, because as I said my religion says that you should be a certain way so that it is not distracting to other people. I didn't like to wear revealing clothing back

then or I don't even now. I wore regular clothing...everyone has a culture and tradition that stays with them. The culture stays the same...

One main explanation provided by the women was their belief in the family values and upbringing of women within the Iranian family structure. The women in both generations described the overall family system and respect levels in Iran as the main motivation for not wearing revealing clothing.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: I guess because I grew up with the culture, I still try to practice it as much as I can...that hasn't changed...I feel like I definitely adapt to the American culture but with maybe a touch of Persian culture just to make sure that you know I still, like I was telling you in the beginning, I still have the same values. I am not going to be out there showing all skin, just because I didn't grow up like that. You know, I was covered most of the time...

In addition, the younger generation of women who had children or were pregnant, articulated a strong desire to raise their children with the same values and traditions.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: There are certain mannerisms...respect for elderly...My family, we are all very close to each other so we are very respectful to our parents. I am trying to teach the exact same thing to my son obviously growing up...There is a lot more freedom of choice [in America]. I think sometimes it's too much freedom. Sometimes I don't really understand some of the outfits or clothing that I see on other people... I feel like I wouldn't let my daughter dress like that going outside because I feel like it triggers kidnapping or just makes a difference...

Furthermore, the participants noted their desire to be conservative regardless of the circumstances or where they live. However, the women did feel limited in terms of expressing their personal styles within the standards set by the Iranian government. Both generations of women were asked about their opinions on the conservative annual fashion festivals offered in Iran. As the fashion festivals have been organized in the past decade, most of the participants were not aware of their existence. The participants who moved to the U.S. after the start of these fashion exhibitions were aware of them and mildly responded to their interest in the design of the garments or other aspects of the shows.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: Yeah I saw the pictures...all of their fashion were with hijab...it's like I kind of found it good...they're trying to bring the fashion and all those stuff into boring [clothing] like people have, but at the same time I found it weird...the way they tried to play with...you know they were so limited, they didn't have that much to do...all they did, they changed the pattern of the chador, pattern of the manteau...some of them were really good...I mean I was like "OK that's interesting!"...we felt better...

The women who were aware of the Islamic fashion shows provided by the government did respond as though the clothing were very conservative, yet still contained interesting and beautiful elements. The women's concerns were not related to the modesty of the clothes, but more so related to the designs not fitting their personal style. Therefore, the women did not perceive the Islamic fashions negatively.

In general, a conclusion from this study is that the women all perceived conservative and modest dress as important and appropriate to wear. Both generations of women shared this perception and it was unrelated to where they lived and the dress laws and norms of that particular country.

Thermal Comfort and Perceptions of Dress Standards

In discussing with the participants their perceptions regarding dress standards in Iran, the main concern was not the aesthetics of the coverings, but rather the lack of physical comfort in the clothing as it related to changes in weather. Hot weather-related discomfort emerged as one of the primary reasons the participants found the dress standards “oppressive” and they all expressed their discomfort during the hot summer days in Iran while having to wear the mandated hijab. The use of phrases such as *miserable*, *torturous*, *absolute disaster*, *avoid going out altogether*, *always stressed* were used by the participants from both generations to describe their feelings about wearing scarves, chadors, or manteaux during the summers in Iran.

Participant #9, Older Generation: Yes, it's not comfortable; of course it's not comfortable! Even before the Revolution, I was always a very hot-natured person, even during the time of the Shah. In winters, I never had long-sleeve dresses on; I had short-sleeve dresses. I never put on pantyhose because it made me very hot. I just had pantyhose and jackets for two months, just during the coldest times...for two months of winter so it was very hard for me after the Revolution to always have to put on. I would sweat very, very bad and I was always angry because of that. I wasn't comfortable, so it made me nervous [frustrated]...it was miserable, I would just get a taxi and go buy something, put it in the taxi and go back home...

Participant #1, Younger Generation: They were comfortable except for they were hot, like in the summer it was an absolute disaster to try to be out. Like in the winter I didn't really care because obviously I was warm and cozy, but in the summer oh my God like I remember just being miserable. And sometimes we would avoid going out all together like on super hot days. I mean we couldn't because we'd have to take the bus because we didn't have a car. A lot of people don't have cars back home, it's not like here so to be in a crowded bus or taxi and just sweating everybody sweating, no. So yeah it was uncomfortable as far as weather wise but not uncomfortable as far as, you know, wearing the actual garment, no.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: Of course it was uncomfortable because specifically during the summer, it was hot and we still had school and then you still have to cover and it's I don't know it's like 40 degrees Celsius outside but you still have to cover and the hijab is usually...you cannot wear bright colors so...there is sunlight...you have to wear dark colors...

No key differences existed on how the two distinct generations felt about the hot weather and the mandated dress laws, as almost all women felt extremely uncomfortable with having to wear the clothing during these times. One particular participant from the older generation did not express as severe feelings towards this issue as the rest of the women. She felt that wearing lighter weight fabrics and fewer layers may assist in this area. Participant #10 describes her point-of-view as such:

Participant #10, Older Generation:...in winter because it is really cold, we used winter coats, like here they use winter coats...and during the summer, it is hot so you were a t-shirt under your manteau, a thinner cotton manteau and no it doesn't cause any trouble...

However, because the older generation of women was familiar with clothing during the time of the Shah, they had a more difficult time with other aspects of hijab compared to the

younger generation of women. This older age group also spoke about other uncomfortable aspects of the hijab such as the baggy clothing getting in their way while trying to take care of everyday tasks or the use of dark and heavy coverings having a negative impact on their overall happiness and mood. Although some of the participants in the younger age group expressed similar beliefs, overall this generation of women did not utter the same exact feelings as the older generation of women. The younger aged women explained their feelings towards having to wear the hijab as something they were just used to doing or that they did not know any better.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: To be honest, I didn't really feel anything because I was so young and to me it was like "ok". I'm one of those people that, if someone tells me I have to do something, then I do follow the rules. So for me it didn't really like...yeah in the summer time when it got really hot, it would bother me but then I didn't know anything else so I was just like "Oh, ok. I guess it's the fashion so I have to do it anyway."

Although the women felt tremendously uncomfortable with wearing the hijab during hot days or when performing daily routines or activities, almost all participants in both age groups did not wish to challenge the Islamic dress laws while living in Iran. In Iran, if women do break the dress laws, their families are implicated, thus embarrassing the parents and creating a bad image for the family. Because of the desire not to cause any trouble for themselves or their families, many of the participants spoke about wanting to follow the rules as much as possible. As a result of this mind-set, the Islamic dress standards were not a vital reason for the participants immigrating to the United States.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: ...and in my family we didn't look for any trouble...you know we didn't try to go like weird or like go against the standards...

Participant #6, Younger Generation: I'm one of those people that, if someone tells me I have to do something, then I do follow the rules...

Some of the women from both generations believe the reason why there is pressure to be accepted in terms of clothing in the Iranian culture may be due to high standards Iranians have

even related to the way they dress. The women mentioned the extreme attention to clothing and fashion by Iranian women inside and outside of Iran. Some believe that perhaps due to even more firm dress laws presented after the Revolution, women desire to be more over-the-top and extreme than usual; wearing their hijab in the most exaggerated ways, applying excessive makeup and jewels, and wearing over-the-top styles of clothing underneath their coverings and in private events.

Participant #8, Older Generation:..but currently the younger generation that are living in Iran...the girls, like I said, their style of living has changed...the scarves are worn in the middle of the head...they wear their scarves so beautifully...they style their hair so much more attractively. The hair is out, the manteaux are short, really chic pants, beautiful makeup, their nails are done. It has changed a lot...

Based on the findings noted, it is apparent that the main issue associated with wearing the hijab is not due to the lack of trendy or fashion-forward garments offered. However, the women's dissatisfaction with the hijab was the discomfort caused during hot weather. Additionally, the women all shared their belief and desire to be modest and dress conservatively regardless of the country in which they live.

Table 4.1 Sample Description

Participant #	Age	Characteristics
Participant 1	29	Participant 1 is from Shiraz, and she lived in Turkey for seven months before moving to the U.S. with her immediate family in 1996. She is married, has a three-month old baby girl, is a practicing pharmacist, and has lived in Georgia since coming to the United States.
Participant 2	35	Participant 2 is from Karaj, and she lived in Turkey for a year with her immediate family before moving to the U.S. in 1994. She is a mother to a three-year old baby girl, lives with her parents, and is a customer service representative for a large company in Georgia; where she has lived since immigrating to the United States.
Participant 3	23	Originally from Esfahan, Participant 3 moved directly to Florida with her brother in 2005. She has much exposure to other cultures as her family traveled during the summer while still living in Iran. The participant is currently a college student and lives in Georgia.
Participant 4	29	Participant 4 is from Shiraz, and she only lived in Turkey for a week to obtain a Visa before moving to the U.S. with her immediate family in 2004. Her family traveled and lived in Austria for two months every summer while they were permanently living in Iran. She had a bachelor's degree in accounting and is now working in Georgia.
Participant 5	31	Originally from Karaj, Participant 5 lived in Turkey for eighteen months with her immediate family before moving to the U.S. in 1994. She is married, has a 3-year old son, and is pregnant with a baby girl. As a practicing dentist, she has been living in California for the past two and a half years. Previously, she lived in Georgia.
Participant 6	28	From Karaj, Participant 6 lived in Turkey for a year and a half with her immediate family before moving to the U.S. in 1995. She is married, has been working as an accounting assistant in California for the past two years, and previously lived in Georgia.
Participant 7	54	Originally from Shiraz, Participant 7 lived in Turkey for seven months before moving to the U.S. in 1996. She is married, has three daughters, lives in Georgia, and is a small-business owner.

(Table 4.1 continued)

Participant #	Age	Characteristics
Participant 8	57	Participant 8 is from Tehran and lived in Turkey for a year and a half before moving to the U.S. with her husband and four children. She has three daughters and a son and is currently retired. She lives part of the year in Georgia and part of the year in California.
Participant 9	63	Participant 9 is from Tehran and moved directly to the U.S. in 1994. As a former teacher in multiple subjects in Iran, she continued to teach solely Farsi classes to English speaking individuals in an academy in New York City. She is married, has a son, and is currently retired and living in Georgia.
Participant 10	50-60	A former teacher in Tehran, Participant 10 came directly to the U.S. in 2005. She was not comfortable sharing her exact age and provided a range within which her age fits. She is single, retired, and currently living in Georgia. She still wears hijab.
Participant 11	68	Originally from Sari, Participant 11 moved to the U.S. in 2004 after living in Turkey for six months. She is married, has two daughters and two sons, is retired, and lives in Georgia.

Chapter 5 - Perceptions of American Dress Standards and the Women's Transition to Iranian-Americans

This chapter provides findings of the study related to the third and fourth research questions. Research Question Three focused on Iranian-American women's perceptions of dress norms within the United States and the fourth research question examined the role dress played in the women's transitions from Iranians to Iranian-Americans. Similar to the previous chapter, key themes are presented under each research question as well as supporting quotations from both generations of participants.

Research Question Three: How do Iranian-American women perceive dress norms within the United States?

The third research question examined how Iranian-American women perceive dress norms within the United States, and, once again if there were any differences between the older and younger generations of women who participated in this study. To answer this research question, during the interviews the women were asked to discuss their understanding of the American culture related to dress, their level of comfort with the lack of dress limitations presented in America, nostalgia or longing for any elements from the Iranian culture in terms of clothing, knowledge of the fashion industry since their move to the United States, and any changes in their shopping behavior and purchase levels since immigrating.

Related to the third research question, three main ideas emerged. First, the participants perceived more relaxed dress norms in the United States and expressed a very positive response to the comfort level in these dress norms. Second, the participants from the two generations had

differing levels of knowledge about fashion within the United States. Finally, the participants engaged in higher levels of fashion consumption after immigrating.

Perceptions of Dress Norms in the United States

Perceptions of American clothing and dress standards were considerably different before the women move to the United States compared to how they view the culture after living in the U.S. and experiencing American styles of dress first hand. Prior to living in the United States and prior to the increased ease of access to satellite television and travel, the women who participated in this research perceived the American way of dress as very revealing; including the frequent use of miniskirts, shorts, spaghetti strap tops, and high heels.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: Actually when I was back in Iran I use to think it was miniskirts and short, short, short shorts, all day long. I think that was just because the 70's movies or whatever. I use to think there was no such thing as covering your legs. And I actually had an aunt that told me, "Remember when you go to America don't wear, don't wear a lot of stuff, don't wear a lot of short skirts. You need to make sure that...remember where you came from, don't wear those short skirts." So I think that was like the perception. Short, legs all out, and like 70's kind of stuff.

When asked what they thought about the American culture related to dress since living in the United States, almost all participants from both generations referred to dress norms in the United States as free and comfortable. The term *comfort* was used interchangeably by both generations; implying the comfort (or freedom) to wear whatever an individual wishes, as well as the comfort in the casual sense of style in the United States.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: Well, they're open...but it depends what state you go to...they have different values, in the south, they are more conservative...but when you go to like the north or west...they are wearing everything...and what else I think here because they are free they can wear anything they want they're not going crazy about it, but in Iran everything was at the extreme...so I think everything is balanced here...

Participant #11, Older Generation: [Americans] don't bother anyone...it is not forced...they wear a top and a pair of pants...they don't wear any over the top clothing...it's about the fact that they have freedom...and the way that people had

described [Americans] to be, now I see it does not exist...they wear basic things...even in parties they don't wear any over the top clothing...it is a culture and tradition that they are used to here...The families in Iran must wear over the top clothing and have over the top jewels...but here they don't have things like that...they are comfortable...

Additionally, the participants from both generations of Iranian-American women commented that, in Iran, there is a lot of judgment placed on your dress and appearance, especially when an individual behaves against appropriate ways of dressing.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: Yeah since I was like in middle school I always said I don't want a dowry I don't want to stay here please send me out because it's so hard, especially in Esfahan the way that people think and the way they look at you...I just hate it...they are more nosey, like people in Iran just in general...neighbors they want to know exactly what you do it's not their business to know what I do and what I'm not doing...

On the other hand, the participants felt that in the United States they not only have the freedom to wear what they want, but they are also not constantly worrying about what they wear and pleasing others so as not to be judged.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: Here it's your choice, but in Iran people judge you...it's not your choice anymore. For example, if you wear something here in front of your dad or somebody you don't feel comfortable, they might not judge you...it's your own idea and feeling, but in Iran you don't have that choice...they are going to judge you and talk behind your back...

The only context in which the younger generation expressed the approval of others as still being important within the U.S. was middle and high school.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: ...the difficulty just in the beginning. When you know I was wearing things that I had purchased in Turkey. I was wearing them in the United States and I think that made me wear, I mean it's weird but that made me wear the exact same thing. Blue jeans and a black long sleeve shirt, I would wear it for 2 weeks straight in school. I would come home and wash it and just wear it again. I would wear the exact same thing because I was too scared that anything else I would wear I would be made fun of, but other than that, that was the only bad experience I had as far as change of clothing everything else has been okay.

Additionally, in the older generation, Participant #9 expressed some hardship at the beginning when she moved to the United States. Having to wear the hijab, due to her husband's

job at an Iranian organization at the time, was difficult for her as she did not feel she could be comfortable in the new culture with having to cover her body and hair per the Islamic dress laws.

Participant #9, Older Generation: ...when I came here...of course because my husband worked at an Iranian organization, I had to cover myself so I had everything, scarf, long dress with pants...and it was very difficult for me because I wasn't comfortable and my son didn't like it so it made a very deep distance between my son and I...the hijab did...because he didn't like me to go in front of his friends and school with my hijab and so it was difficult and caused a separation between my son and me...At first I was not able to go out with my friends because they did not have any cover or hijab, but I had, so I could not go out with them but after I took it off and changed my clothes my relationships got better....

Furthermore, among the older age group, some of the women supposed that due to more diversity and exposure to various cultures in the United States, Americans are more open-minded and care less about what people wear on a day-to-day basis.

Participant #10, Older Generation: Some people don't really care about it...and when we go out to stores sometimes there are people like me also...our covering is different it is more like the U.S, but just a roosari added... but Arabs, Afghans or other countries...I have even seen here men and women who are from other countries whether African or European...the way they dress is completely different than Americans...I have seen a few times even they [Americans] encouraged [the scarf] and said how pretty it is...but no one cares about what I wear and why...wearing the roosari or not is not important for them...

In terms of the women's comfort levels with the lack of strict dress standards within the U.S., almost all of the participants pointed out their continued belief in the importance of moderation in wearing revealing clothing, as well as maintaining a sense of modesty in dress. All women in this study believed that there is, at times, too much freedom in dress in the United States. Examples discussed by the participants included teenagers' styles and the lack of coverage of certain body parts caused by the clothing being too small or not appropriate for a certain body type. The women find it inappropriate to wear revealing clothing, such as really short shorts or low-cut tank tops. One participant strongly expressed her concern for too much

freedom in clothing for teenagers as it may lead to unwanted attention or serious problems such as harassment or abuse.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: There is a lot more freedom of choice. I think sometimes it's too much freedom. Sometimes I don't really understand some of the outfits or clothing that I see on other people. I don't think people really pay attention to their body types when they are putting something on. But it is really a personal choice, its personal freedom...I go outside and I see a 9, 10 year old wearing practically nothing...teenagers they are at a point...becoming women to the point of mature adults you know, I feel like that could lead into people around, typically men that are...sex offenders or anything like that. I feel like I wouldn't let my daughter dress like that going outside because I feel like it triggers kidnapping or just makes a difference. Clothing makes a difference to me. So when I see that I feel like that might be too much freedom or parents and or families aren't really paying attention to something like that...so we [can] keep our kids and teenagers safe.

In general, both the younger and older generations of Iranian-American women were extremely satisfied with the overall freedom in dress presented in the United States. Furthermore, although the participants stated appreciation for traditional Iranian attire and saw that style of dress as having qualities of beauty, uniqueness, and interest; and expressed a perceived lack of those qualities in the American dress culture, the women in both generations did not express any strong nostalgia or yearning for the Iranian culture related to dress.

Fashion Industry Knowledge

For further understanding of the women's perceptions regarding dress norms within the U.S., the researcher asked the participants whether their knowledge about the fashion industry had increased since they moved to the United States. There were major differences in answers among the younger and older generations of Iranian-American women. Almost all participants in the younger age group believed they had a considerable increase in knowledge about fashion and clothing, whereas most participants in the older generation did not acknowledge an increase and expressed a lack of interest altogether for fashion due to their age.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: Yes, I would say it has increased and I owe a lot of it to my little sister who keeps me on my toes about what matches and what doesn't and what patterns not to wear. She very much constantly makes me change.

Participant #9, Older Generation: No, my [knowledge] is the same...yeah...because I was here before I knew about it...so...

All of the women believe that when a woman is younger, she experiments and pays more attention to fashion and clothing compared to when she is older. The younger age group in this study also confirmed their feeling towards this thought. They too believe that when they were younger, such as high school and early college years, they paid more attention to fashion trends and experimented more with their clothing choices.

Participant #4, Younger Generation:...but in here, lately I feel like I became a little bit [casual] myself....I mean, I'm not saying I'm not wearing those kind of clothes anymore, but I'm not, I don't have a hunger for them. If I feel like oh it's pretty I wear it, if it's not pretty or I'm not in the mood I don't...

Both groups of Iranian-American women believe that there is much more availability of sources for learning about the fashion industry and fashion trends because of easy access to television, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, and fashion shows.

Participant #8, Older Generation: Yeah, here you see and learn more and better...your mind changes and things...from TV, and clothing shows...

Participant #2, Younger Generation: Normally I get my information from TV or People magazine because it has a lot of styles on it...and also I have a cousin who is in the fashion industry...

However, in terms of detailed understanding of how the fashion industry operates, such as seasonal fashion shows, designers, models, or the development and production of clothing, the women of both generations could not elaborate on their knowledge in this area. Only one participant was able to explain, minimally, her interpretation on the process of creating seasonal fashions.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: I think of runway models, I think of designers getting together and like grading, you know, like this is a good trend for the fall ...you know like, what is that thing called? Fall fashion show? Or..? Fashion week!...I think of that. Literally that's what the fashion industry is like...colors, patterns, styles... they whip it up together, and that's what the next season is going to be like. That's what I think.

Higher Consumption in America

For a fuller understanding of the women's perceptions of dress norms within the United States, the researcher asked the women to reflect on whether or not the lack of dress standards in the United States impacted their shopping behaviors and consumption levels. Related to this, a finding of the study is that, due to much more freedom in choices and more convenient availability of a variety of styles, most of the women engage in higher consumption levels in the United States compared to when they lived in Iran. Furthermore, among the participants there were mixed opinions as to whether or not the increased consumption of fashion was positive or negative; and both generations of women believed that higher consumption levels are more associated with younger women.

Most of the women believe that, compared to Iran, the attitude and overall American culture is more focused on consumption. The observation of the women is that due to mass production and fast fashion in the United States, consumers continuously change their clothing and consume at higher levels. They believe that individual clothing items are worn fewer times due to fast changes in fashion as well as the low quality of the actual garments. The women commonly expressed their experiences with decreased apparel quality in the United States.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: ...and honestly the materials, they are awful. It might be hard for you to believe, but I have a shirt still that I brought from Iran and I've washed it maybe like 20 times before and it's still the same, but whatever I bought like 10 days ago...after I washed it twice, I feel embarrassed to wear it again...

A few of the participants also brought attention to, in the U.S., the need to update wardrobes frequently and wear a variety of clothing, versus in Iran, repeating outfits on a regular basis.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: ... and because of the attitude...you feel you cannot wear something more than once or twice, so it either goes in your closet...so if you look at my closet right now there's like a bunch of clothes that I don't need any more, or they're good but because I wore it I don't feel like wearing it anymore...

However, most of the participants also acknowledge the increase in mass production even in current day Iran as most clothing in Iran is now imported from China.

Participant #10, Older Generation: It is not only because of the name...but the quality too, you can use it more...but now unfortunately there are clothes in Iran that are made in China that are unfortunately awful and have cheap prices, when you wash it once or twice, you cannot use it anymore...I prefer that when I purchase something I can use it for a long time...

Participant #4, Younger Generation: I don't know how it's changed right now because I have been out for 8 years...maybe it's the same story there because of China and mass production and everything...but it used to be what you find in Shiraz you might not find in Tehran and vice versa...and even Tehran had more stuff...I mean people from other states used to go to Tehran for shopping so it's not like that...I know here New York and LA are like the capital of fashion and if you want something special you have to go to these two states...but otherwise you feel like everything is mass production.

Although it is much easier to find clothing with a wide range in styles in the U.S. and more stores are available from which to purchase clothing, the women expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of uniqueness and individuality of the stores and fashions offered in the United States. Most women, especially the older age group, described their closets in Iran as having more custom-made clothing, as well as more fashions bought from small Iranian boutiques and garments imported or purchased from different countries around the world. This allowed the women to feel unique and special in their one-of-a-kind fashions.

Participant #10, Older Generation: ...always, there is no difference...Shah's time or not...even our shoes, we use to have a shoemaker make it for us...even now we purchase Italian made shoes...it was more famous...and still...you know when the clothes have names it is also because they have better quality... I didn't really purchase

clothing because I would have it custom-made and some of them whether then or now I purchase from outside of the country...with great fabrics from Europe and France...and when I came here, I bought clothes from here...I didn't really purchase a lot here like that...I didn't have a need for it really...

Although there was some variation in the overall answers regarding personal levels of consumption since immigrating, most of the participants did express gratitude for personal choice in the United States. With the shopping experience being more convenient in the U.S. (in terms of window displays, fitting room availability, sales during the holiday seasons, or returns after purchases) the participants also spoke of how impulse buying is more common in the United States compared to Iran.

Participant #2, Younger Generation: I'll just go out and you know grab some stuff, especially when everything is on sale so...[laughing] that's a good time! During holidays, around the holidays, yeah I'll do a lot of shopping...

Participant #5, Younger Generation: Obviously I have more freedom [here]. You can try on dresses and you get to see what everything would look like obviously before you purchase it so you definitely have more freedom, a lot more choices then you had back home so you can just decide different things. And I like that.

Participant #10, Older Generation: ...the sales people, you can return or exchange the clothing or [they] help you...

However, most of the women also believe that clothing purchases should be on the basis of a person's needs and not wants.

Participant #8, Older Generation: What's important is how much clothing you personally want to purchase...how many times you want to go shopping...how much do you need the clothing...if you have clothing already then you don't have a need to purchase it...

Overall, the perceptions of American dress standards were greatly different while the women lived in Iran compared to their perceptions upon their immigration to the United States. The women view American dress styles as very comfortable, with a relaxed sense of fashion. The increase in fashion knowledge is primarily apparent among the younger generation of women in this study, bringing attention to the appropriateness of the positive relationship

between more fashion knowledge and younger age of consumers. This is one major difference noticed between the two generations of women, regarding this research question. Moreover, due to much more freedom in choices and more convenient availability of a variety of styles, higher consumption levels were evident in the United States compared to when the women lived in Iran. However, the women had mixed opinions as to whether or not the increased consumption of fashion was positive or negative; and both generations of women believed that higher consumption levels are more associated with younger women.

Research Question Four: What role did dress play in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans?

The final research question of the study focused on the overall role that dress played in the women's transitions from Iranians to Iranian-Americans. In other words, the study was interested in learning what motivational factors lead to adoption or rejection of the American dress norms and how the women's style of dress changed upon immigrating to the United States. As with previous research question presented in this chapter, this section discusses the differences between the older and younger generations of women. Data analysis established four major themes related to this research question. First, the influence of an intermediary country assisted in the women's transition process. Second, all of the participants articulated higher self-expression and confidence levels in the United States. Third, a combination of motivational factors led to the women's choices to adopt or reject American dress norms. Finally, both groups of women noted the importance of sustaining the Iranian culture and family beliefs.

Influence of Intermediary Country

In discussing their immigration experience, almost all participants from both generations of women spoke about the role an intermediary country played in their overall transition from the Iranian culture to the American culture. Frequently, Iranians trying to immigrate to the United States first move to another country such as Turkey or the United Arab Emirates to acquire visas and apply for permanent resident status for the United States. In this study, many of the women lived in Turkey for a short time (6-18 months) prior to immigrating to the United States. In almost all instances, moving to Turkey prior to permanently living in the U.S. helped in the participants' transition from Iranian to American culture. With Iranians commonly perceiving Turkey's culture as a mix of both Iranian and American cultures, the participants recognized the move to Turkey as an important step in easing the transition process.

Regarding dress, all of the study's participants who lived in Turkey prior to the United States set aside their hijab upon moving to Turkey and gradually began experimenting with the Turkish trends and dress norms.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: No, I actually, I adjusted to the kind of fashion that they had in Turkey so I took the [hijab] off. I wasn't really wearing a scarf or anything else so...We were already out so I just thought, you have the freedom to just take it off so that's what I did! My most particular fashion would be when I started just dressing like a tomboy... it actually happened in Turkey and then when I first moved to America. It was like, yeah because I just wanted to cover up. I just didn't want to...I guess I was still stuck in the whole women have to you know back home cover up, wear baggy stuff...

Participant #7, Older Generation: I put aside the manteau and roosari and freely wore whatever clothing I wanted to...It was sudden...the first day I got to Turkey I got rid of my hijab...

In terms of more detail on changes in their dress, with the exception of one participant from the older generation who continues wearing hijab in the United States, all participants

mentioned removing their scarves immediately upon leaving Iran; sometimes even as early as leaving the airport in Iran. However, the women showed a less sudden and more gradual change with the rest of their wardrobe. For example, some of the participants from the younger generation expressed their interest in experimenting with trends in Turkey, yet still being mindful of how they were used to wearing clothing.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: I think the change has been different obviously from Turkey to United States...as a single girl and then you know meeting my husband and being married. So that has, all that has changed. I feel that definitely I have had a different change every step of the way as far as clothing is concerned. But it hasn't been anything, it was a shock in the beginning but obviously it has been a gradual change...

As there were differences in dress standards and styles between Turkey and the United States, after the women moved to the U.S., their overall style of dress underwent another change. Thus, the women had to go from the dress standards in Iran to more freedom and initial experimentation with trends and new styles in Turkey, to complete freedom of choice and more confidence in trying new styles in the United States. Living in Turkey tremendously helped these participants in their transition to the American culture.

Participant #2, Younger Generation: ...especially when I moved from Iran to Turkey because I lived in Turkey for a year and then we moved to U.S....and when I moved to Turkey...more European and...because of that I noticed a lot of changes and people they wore different dresses and different styles and that actually puts me into like the fashion and fashion things...to find out what is new, what is up-to-date and what am I going to wear that I'm going to be in the same level as everybody else...so yeah a lot of changes especially when I moved from Iran to Turkey...of course when I moved to U.S....everything changed [again]...

A few of the participants also attributed their comfort in adapting to the American culture to their prior exposure to other countries and cultures through travel. Being able to see how other cultures interacted with the opposite sex, how they dressed, and their overall cultural behaviors,

provided these women opportunities to see beyond what was available to them in Iran through television or the Internet and really experience a different culture.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: Well, for me personally I didn't really see anything different because I used to travel a lot so I had the chance to experience people from different countries in Europe and other countries outside of Iran so it wasn't something shocking to me...plus my family is mixed with Americans and Europeans and they travel to Iran a lot...

In comparing the two diverse generations of women studied, related to this theme, the role of an intermediary culture considerably assisted both age groups in their overall transition process. Although all the women who moved to Turkey took off their hijab, the younger generation experimented more with the Turkish dress standards and fashion trends. Moreover, the younger generation of women who were exposed to other cultures in addition to the Iranian culture due to traveling or the influence of satellite television and the Internet, expressed higher interest levels in applying elements and influence from other cultures in their overall dress styles.

The Role of Dress in Increasing Self-Expression and Confidence

The lack of dress limitations in the United States has had a considerable impact on the participants' dress choices and overall lifestyles. This is mostly obvious in the answers provided by the younger generation of women in this study.

The younger generation of women who attended middle school or high school in the United States had a more challenging transition than the older generation of women. School systems are very different between Iran and the United States. In Iran, the institutions separate boys and girls and there are strict dress codes and uniforms which all students must follow. Because the younger women who attended middle or high school in the U.S. were not used to the freedom presented in the United States, they faced more severe cultural differences than some of the other participants in this study. Even participants from the younger generation who came to

the U.S. at an older age and only attended some high school in the U.S. did not experience the same complexities. Two reasons may be due to the age they were when they moved here and the actual year they moved here, as Iran has shown dramatic cultural changes in its youth in the past decade.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: ...because of course at the beginning we didn't know what brands were, we didn't know how to dress ...we had always had to wear school uniform, which is the hijab and the long jacket and what not, you know...when we came here, of course we were resented a lot because of the way we dressed, I used to share clothes with my sisters, which is something very common back home, you share your clothes and that's what you do!...but, I guess it's not very common here and kids were very hurtful, so little by little, when I got to know some people that ended up being my true friends, they taught me what Polo was, they taught me what this and that was...

Upon immigrating to the U.S. and starting middle or high school, the participants described the reactions of some American students as negative and unwelcoming. Furthermore, among most of the younger generation of women this caused significant self-resentment and low self-esteem. For example, the women spoke about peers not accepting them in school due to their lack of knowledge and familiarity with dress standards and trends in the U.S. In addition, they spoke about being teased, made fun of, laughed at, or bullied by some of the different cliques present in their schools. Clothes had a huge impact on whether the women were accepted or considered outcasts in their schools. The participants also discussed the importance of other factors affecting their overall appearance, such as darker facial hair, and parents' strict dress rules as influential in their adaptation to a new culture.

Participant #6, Younger Generation: I think the hardest time of my life was when I moved to U.S. And I think after two or three years of being here trying to get adjusted, it was hard...in Iran, you're not supposed to really pluck your eyebrows or wax or anything until you're getting married. Just being in America as a Middle Eastern, obviously you have some facial hair that you can't really do anything about unless you wax it. It was hard for me as my parents wouldn't allow me to do something like that. It was hard for me to wear what I really wanted to wear and to represent myself without anyone just giving me a hard time. I think those were the

toughest times because I really didn't care because whatever I was wearing, they still would give me a hard time. They wouldn't really allow me to be myself...Until now, I always tell my friends, until I was a junior in high school when I did a talent show,...after that I felt like "Oh, I finally fit in!"...It was extremely hard but then I learned that I've found my confidence. Now I feel like I really don't care what everybody is thinking around me. This is who I am so you like me for who I am or not. So it doesn't really bother me anymore now. I'm stronger now. I think it was more of me being weaker [before], just didn't know really what to say. I was just trying to fit into the culture.

Although most of the women in this age group expressed the difficulties they faced in school related to the way they dressed, all of the women showed gratitude for having at least the opportunity and freedom to be able to experiment with different styles and trends on their journey to self-discovery and maturity. The younger generation learned about fashion trends, brand names, and other aspects of the fashion industry mainly in high school. With logos and designer brands being an important way for teenagers to communicate what cliques they belong to or how popular they are, the Iranian-American women quickly began to pay attention to their near environment and the appropriateness of their fashion choices. Again with much attention to age, the younger generations felt that overall it may be easier for one to adapt to a new culture when younger, in terms of learning the language or new behaviors; however, compared to the older generation, they showed more discomfort in terms of their clothing in their initial move to the United States.

Despite the initial acculturation challenges faced by the younger generation related to dress, the freedom in dress in the United States has improved self-esteem and confidence levels for most of the participants in this study.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: It [the freedom] definitely has improved it [self-esteem and confidence] especially for someone like me...I do thrive on how I do look a lot...it makes me feel better, it puts me in a better mood, you know...some girls are like you know, "I just wish I could get my hair and nails done today, it makes me feel better."...in addition to hair and nails and stuff is the way you dress of course so if I'm having a down day I put on more makeup than I usually do, I love pink and turquoise

and green so you know I wear that and it makes me feel better...so definitely...it just brings out your self-confidence, your self-esteem, you feel like the sky is your limit, add a pair of high heels, you can take on the world! Of course!

Participant #7, Older Generation: 100% it [the freedom in dress] has increased my self-esteem and confidence!...and I can make decisions a lot easier [also].

The two women from the younger generation who moved to the United States with already having exposure to satellite TV and other cultures due to traveling, expressed a less definite answer in terms of U.S. dress norms contributing towards higher self-esteem and confidence levels.

Participant #3, Younger Generation: Well, for me personally I didn't really see anything different because I used to travel a lot so I had the chance to experience people from different countries in Europe and other countries outside of Iran so it wasn't something shocking to me...plus my family is mixed with Americans and Europeans and they travel to Iran a lot...

With approval and judgment from others still holding a vital role in how the women in both generations choose to dress, almost all participants believed that age is a huge factor on the intensity of how much attention an individual places on their actual fashion choices.

Participant #11, Older Generation: ...now I am at an age that it is not important to me anymore...at the beginning I would go to the stores and look around, it was a change for me...but now I'm not even in the mood for that...when the age goes up too...

Overall, the lack of dress limitations in the United States has had a considerable impact on the Iranian women's dress choices and overall lifestyles. However, the impact has been mostly apparent within the younger generation of women in this study. The overall freedom available in lifestyles in the United States is the main reason for why the women have higher confidence levels.

Participant #2, Younger Generation: When I moved from Iran to the U.S, I still had a little bit of the old school or Iranian style or fashion, but as you grow up with the U.S. culture and friends around you, TV, magazines and things like that, it will change you totally in a different way...what to wear, how to wear it, where to go, who to talk to, or you know things like that...so it's a big change and I'm still learning. Every day it's a

new style, every day there is a new fashion designer out...

As a result of the lack of limited dress standards within the United States and freedom in the overall lifestyles, the women are able to better express themselves through their clothing; leading to improved quality of personal and family lives, enhanced relationships and communication levels with others, and more successful careers. The main difference between the two generations is that the role of dress has had a much more important impact on the lives of the younger generation of women than the older generation. With age being a major concern in this idea, the older generation's lives did not require the importance of clothing to be a significant factor than the role of clothing in the lives of the younger generation of Iranian-American women.

Factors Motivating Changes in Dress

In addressing what motivated the women to adopt or reject aspects of clothing styles in the American culture, a few major concepts surfaced. The researcher asked the women whether they responded better to the aesthetics and fashion styles of Iranian clothing or whether they were more open to Western trends and styles. None of the participants in this research favored one culture over the other. There were various factors such as garment color, comfort, fit, price, and quality that shaped their overall preferences. However, for the most part, the participants did not hesitate to adapt to the American dress standards, as long as they were remaining true to their conservative way of dressing. Out of all of the participants, only one of the women from the older generation continues to wear hijab. This participant made note that she does not wear manteaux or chadors here in the United States and mostly wears pants or long shirts; however, she also prefers to wear head coverings such as scarves.

Participant #10, Older Generation: Here, I wear scarves, but I don't need manteau because when I wear shirts and pants or skirt and jacket sets and socks...it's different...but I personally like to wear a scarf...but in Iran, because the law is to wear a roopoosh, I use roopoosh and scarves... but here, I use the clothing that everyone has but with a scarf...

Additionally other than mentioning the possible physical discomfort during the summer months, the women were respectful of having to wear the hijab per Islamic law if they were to go back to Iran. Overall, the women in this study believe that if they still lived in Iran, they would dress very similar to how they do in the United States.

Due to their conservative mind-set, the participants primarily expressed changes to how they dressed since immigrating to the U.S. in terms of the color and fit of garments. Almost all of the women mentioned color. Women in Iran are required to wear dark colors such as blacks, grays, browns, or navy. However, both generations expressed the importance of color in clothing and showed positive reactions to the ability to wear more colors here in the United States. The participants often described color as a means for uplifting a mood, bringing joy and happiness, or having a positive impact on their mental health.

Participant #7, Older Generation: Most Iranian women...wear black manteaux and scarves and that color is depressing in itself...it depressed you...and if they don't wear black they are required to wear dark colors...[not] bright or cheery colors like red or blue or purple; colors that can have a positive effect for the women, that can give the women attention...and that definitely 100% has an impact...

Participant #1, Younger Generation: I'm in love with the idea of wearing colors, so I think it would have had an impact of depression in my life if I have to wear black all the time, if I have to wear gray all the time...so I can say it has dramatically changed my life because I'm able to do what I want to do as far as expressing who I am through fashion...

In addition to color as a motivational factor in fashion choices, the women expressed the need to wear comfortable clothing that fits their body properly. For example, they did not display interest for clothing that may be too short or too tight for them. As previously noted, Iranian

women are very conservative and body conscious when making purchasing decisions and when actually wearing their garments. The women addressed the importance of clothing in their lives and the freedom in the United States as allowing them to be comfortable in who they are, how they chose to dress for a specific occasion or simply running errands, as well as their personal satisfaction and feeling good about themselves. Furthermore, the impact of clothing at work and the ability to be more presentable at work was appreciated by the younger generation of women.

Participant #1, Younger Generation: Comfort and then... not having the... if I don't have the time to, to dress a certain way guess what? It's not going to happen. Like if I'm going to the mall and if I have to wear shades that are big enough to cover my face because I don't have eye makeup on, and just throw on some lip-gloss that's what's going to happen. So it is significant as far as it makes me feel good and it makes me feel better about myself...

Participant #2, Younger Generation: Well, it helped me a lot, especially when it comes to my work. I work with a lot of professionals and with a lot of high power people in the United States and also worldwide because [of] our company...so to live in this country, and being able to wear like a women's suit and be able to wear something elegant and nice and go in front of the customer and talk to them and to be able to have a presentation in front of hundreds of people, it gives me a great feeling...it's a great feeling for someone to live in this country and again be able to do what she or he wants or wear what he or she wants to wear...

The importance of designer brands and labels varied based on the age of the women both while living in Iran and after moving to the United States. Both generations were more concerned with the quality of the clothing than the logo or designer labels. Most of the participants' exposure to designer brands occurred after moving to the States, as labels were very rare in Iran fifteen or more years ago. According to the participants, the main difference related to designer brand and labels between the two countries is that labels available in Iran are more than likely counterfeit products. Due to the high demand and desire to wear designer labels, Iranians living in Iran pay a lot of money for products that are not real and are poor quality.

Participant #4, Younger Generation: ...it is available here and it is not as expensive as it used to be in Iran...you know they are [also] real...again in Iran because the demand is high and the supply is low...the prices are high and you get something fake...

Price was a key element in the participants' decisions regarding whether or not to purchase designer labels here in the United States. They felt that if they had the financial ability to afford such products than they would make the purchase; as a result getting a better quality item also.

Participant #8, Older Generation: It depends on your financial situation...if you can you will...and the labels you buy can last you longer and you can use them for longer...

To summarize, the older generation in this research study did not show a deep curiosity in following fashion trends or wearing designer labels; however, their major appreciation was for the comfort and freedom of not having to wear the hijab. This is with the exception to one participant who chooses to continue wearing hijab with respect to her faith and religious beliefs. All of the participants described the American culture in terms of dress as casual and relaxed, thus allowing them to have ease-of-mind and complete freedom to express themselves in whatever way they choose.

Sustaining the Iranian Culture

Overall, the Iranian-American women from both generations showed sincere gratitude and a positive take on their experience and transition to a new and very different culture; in terms of dress as well as other aspects. The younger generation noticed bicultural and multicultural characteristics within themselves upon their immigration and growing up in the United States. They were thankful for the opportunity to pursue further education and experience more freedom in their overall lifestyles.

A key finding in this thesis is the conservative nature of the Iranian-American women and their attention to sustaining the Iranian traditions and family structure in their lives as well as raising their children with the same beliefs and values. This was remarkably consistent among both generations of women studied; with their generation not playing any factor in how strongly the participants felt about passing on their heritage to future generations. The participants showed intense passion for their culture and their upbringing. They did not show any negative feelings towards Iran and spoke only about the opportunity to have freedom in higher education and a better lifestyle for their families as the main reason for immigrating to the United States.

Participant #5, Younger Generation: The fact that I lived in Iran for 14 years, I still have the same values as a Persian girl. That hasn't changed. I still speak Farsi that hasn't changed...there are certain things that haven't changed since I moved [17 years ago], but obviously there are some that have. I have learned English in the United States. I am now bilingual. And I went to school here. I was able to finish high school, go to college and then go to a doctor school...There are certain mannerisms...respect for elderly...I see Persians as being warmer to people when they're in the family. Families are a lot closer and that still is the same for me. My family, we are all very close to each other so we are very respectful to our parents. I am trying to teach the exact same thing to my son obviously growing up.

In general, dress has made a significant role in the women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans. The influence of an intermediary country has proven to assist in the women's overall transition process, including ease in their transition related to new dress standards. Additionally, the freedom in dress in the U.S. has provided the women with higher self-esteem and confidence levels. In comparing the two diverse generations of women studied, related to this research question, the main difference is that the role of dress has had a much more important impact on the lives of the younger generation of women than the older generation. With age being a major concern in this idea, the older generation's lives did not require the importance of clothing to be a significant factor than the role of clothing in the lives of the younger generation of Iranian-American women. Furthermore, the older generation in this

research study did not show a deep curiosity in following fashion trends or wearing designer labels; however, their major appreciation was for the comfort and freedom of not having to wear the hijab.

Chapter 6 - Discussion

As the final chapter in this thesis, Chapter Six discusses and concludes the findings as they relate to each of the study's four research objectives. In addition, the chapter presents implications to establish how the findings of this research can contribute to current knowledge and assist in resolving gaps in the literature, as well as providing possible practice strategies for the apparel and textiles industry. Limitations as well as recommendations for further research in this area conclude the chapter.

Research Objective One: To explore Iranian dress standards and the effect these standards have on Iranian-American women's lives

The first research objective in this thesis focused on Iranian dress standards and the possible effects the standards have on Iranian-American women's lives. Before comprehending how the Iranian dress standards affected the women, the study explored actual dress standards set by law in Iran. The study aimed to capture what the women from both generations perceive about Iranian dress standards. The older generation of women was aware of the freedom available in dress before the Islamic Revolution, dating to the time of Reza Shah. Based on conversations with older women or seeing family portraits, the younger generation of women was slightly familiar with dress laws before the Revolution. Both generations of Iranian-American women demonstrated a thorough understanding of what dress expectations are, per Islamic law, since the 1979 Revolution.

Although the actual Islamic-appropriate dress laws in Iran have not changed since the Revolution, a drastic change in the past 10 to 15 years has allowed women to have more freedom in dress; and as a result more people are pushing the boundaries of the dress laws in Iran.

However, all participants in this study explained their lack of interest in breaking the dress laws and causing trouble for themselves or their families.

As a whole, the women in this study did not experience traumatic psychological effects as a result of the Iranian dress laws while living in Iran. Other than the extreme physical discomfort caused by the extra layers of hijab during the hot summer days or the decrease in the opportunity to express themselves through their clothing, they did not have any concerns about wearing the hijab.

Research Objective Two: To gain understanding of the role dress plays in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans

In general, the study demonstrates that dress played a significant role in the women's transitions from Iranians to Iranian-Americans. The role of dress is different in the experiences of the older and younger generations of women in this thesis as well as slight variations between the experiences of the individual participants within each generation. However, for both generations, the importance of dress is most evident at the beginning years of the acculturation process.

Compared to the other women, the youngest group of women who came to the United States in the mid 1990s had a much more difficult time adapting to the American culture and understanding dress differences between the two countries. As a result, the impact is obviously more dramatic for this group of women. First, most of the members in the younger generation did not face the increased Western and other cultural influences in Iran before moving to the United States. Their main introduction to a culture outside of what they were familiar with was when they moved to Turkey to obtain a visa. Although living in Turkey for a short time assisted in broadening the outlook of these women to other cultures, the way people dress in Turkey does

not directly mimic that of the United States. After moving to the U.S., the women still had to get accustomed to the American dress standards.

All of the participants in the younger generation, who were at an age where they attended middle or high school after moving to the United States, felt like outcasts among their school peers. Much of their uneasiness was due to others teasing them for their lack of knowledge on fashion trends and dress norms in the United States. Along with unfamiliarity with dress standards, the women also could not speak the language and did not know personality characteristics appropriate among American children; all leading to a very difficult time in their lives. Some of the participants expressed sincere hurt by how other children treated them due to the way they dressed in middle or high school. However, these women still showed a great amount of gratitude for living in the United States and looked at their experience as a learning lesson and a time that they just had to overcome. Two of the women from the younger generation moved to the United States after high school. While they attended college in the U.S., dress did not play as extreme of a role in their transition. These two women were also well traveled and had access to satellite television and the Internet while living in Iran. In a way, their transition process already began in Iran. The differences in customs and dress standards between Iran and the U.S. were more of a blur to these two participants than any other participant from either the older or the younger generation.

In terms of the role dress played in the older generation's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans, the findings bring attention to their age. The main impact dress standards have had in the lives of this group of women was during the Islamic Revolution and the new Islamic dress laws. Because the women were much younger back then and clothing played a more vital role in their lives, the change in the standards correspondingly had more of an impact

at that time. When focusing on the role of dress in their transition to the American culture, the major finding is, with the exception of the one participant who continues to wear hijab in the U.S., the relief and comfort of not having to wear the hijab in hot weather as well as when performing daily activities. Additionally, the older generation had a much easier transition, in terms of dress, than the younger age group. For example, the one participant who continues to wear hijab since immigrating to the United States has not experienced any prejudiced or other negative behavior towards her for choosing to follow the Iranian dress standards. Contrary, participant 9 did express some hardship at the beginning when she moved to the United States. Having to wear the hijab, due to her husband's job at an Iranian office at the time, was difficult for her as she did not feel she could be comfortable in the new culture with having to cover her body and hair per the Islamic dress laws.

Research Objective Three: To apply Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Motivational Model to the women's acculturation process

Within the context of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model (Maslow, 1943), exploring the women's motivational factors in their overall adaptation to a new culture as well as their adoption or rejection of American dress standards was a key goal of the study. Interview questions associated with this part of the research question focused specifically on addressing the women's motivational needs in their transition process to the American culture. This section will summarize the findings of the study as they relate to Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid (see Figure 6.1).

Findings in this research support previous literature on the possible motivational factors of Iranian immigrants, including the need for better economic, personal, and professional opportunities for themselves and/or their families (Jalali, 1996). Due to the primary focus of this

research being dress, this thesis did not include in depth exploration of the reasons why the women moved to the United States. However, as can be noted from the study's data, the participants' emigration from Iran was not primarily motivated by Iranian dress standards. Rather, most of the participants spoke about their primary motivation for immigrating to the United States being increased educational and economic opportunities.

By providing a summary of the motivational needs of the study's participants, within the context of Maslow's hierarchy, it is possible to contribute towards understanding the social and psychological aspects of dress among Iranian-American women. This serves to outline factors which led to the women's adoption or rejection of American dress norms. Although the utmost significance of all human needs as conceptualized by Maslow is not relevant to this thesis, addressing the women's needs from the lowest level or biogenic needs to the highest level or psychogenic needs will expectantly illustrate a wholesome motivation for immigration and transition to the United States.

Maslow (1943) conceptualized the lowest level of human needs as being physiological needs such as food, water, shelter, air, clothing, or sex. These are needs which are required to sustain biological life and that an individual must meet prior to being capable of meeting other, higher order needs. Related to this study, in terms of the most basic human needs, the women in this study did not address any physiological motivations for immigrating to the U.S. Their main motivation for moving to the United States related to Maslow's second level of human needs—security. Maslow illustrates this second stage of human needs as the need for protection, order, stability, and familiarity. With more resources, better employment opportunities, more healthcare availability, much more educational opportunities, and an overall better quality of life, the Iranian women saw the need for security as the number one reason for wanting to live in the

United States. At this stage of human needs, the Iranian-American women were not overly concerned with the greater freedom in dress that living in the United States would allow, nor was the focus on the adoption or rejection of American dress standards.

Moving up on the hierarchy of human motivational needs, the third level of Maslow's (1943) pyramid is social needs, including the need for affection, friendship, or belonging. This need quickly became apparent as one of the most important needs expressed by the women in this study as it highly corresponded with their overall transition process. Among the participants, this level of human needs was noticeable as a motivational factor leading to adoption or rejection of American dress standards. Specifically, it is in this stage of human needs that the role of dress is significant in the transition process of the women. As the need for acceptance by family or peers and the need for a sense of belonging to a culture became important in the transition process, some of the women were highly challenged. Due to difficulties experienced by some of the women at school or among peers in the way they dressed, the women were impacted in a negative way and experienced some psychological damage moving forward in their transition to the American culture.

The human egoistic needs of prestige, status, and self-esteem are the second highest level of needs on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy. These needs can be directed inwardly, such as a person's need for self-esteem or personal satisfaction; outwardly, such as a person's need for status or recognition; or they can be a mix of both (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). With ego needs being a fundamental human need that pertains to most satisfaction and happiness in an individual's life, the role which dress played in this stage of the participants' transition process was particularly crucial. With more freedom in dress in the United States, both the older and younger generations of women were able to express themselves much more than when they lived in Iran, leading to

higher self-esteem and confidence levels. Dress played a vital role in this stage of the women's transition process and their desire to fulfill this human need. The need for acceptance by others was closely linked to the confidence and self-esteem levels of the Iranian-American women. For example, when the younger generation of women's clothing choices was accepted in their social settings, these women were more respected by peers and colleagues and recognized for their educational and career success and achievements. Their clothing and how they presented themselves through their sense of style enhanced their social and psychological well-being.

As Maslow's (1943) theory explains, self-actualization needs are the highest level of human needs and rarely achieved by individuals. Reflective of this assertion, this study did not reveal any findings demonstrating the role dress played in meeting the needs of the participants at this higher level.

Maslow's theory on human motivational needs also explains that although one of the motivational needs may be fulfilled at a given time, it is not to say that that particular need may not become active and necessary again in an individual's life. For example, an individual may be at a stage where the need to be recognized and respected by others is significant in his or her life; however, it does not prove that the individual's need for love, affection, or belonging is fully met and completely set aside. Maslow's theory clarifies that there are "some overlaps among the levels, as no need is ever completely satisfied" (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009, p. 116). This concept holds true in the role dress plays in rejection or adoption of the American dress standards as the women expressed some overlaps among the stages of their needs and the role of dress becoming important at different times. For example, some of the women expressed paying attention to American dress norms and having the need to be recognized and respected in their work environment or school settings in the American culture. But also, they frequently expressed the

need to sustain simultaneously their traditions and sense of belonging to the Persian culture and heritage.

Research Objective Four: To compare social-psychological aspects of dress between two distinct generations of Iranian-American women

The research set out to compare the social-psychological aspects of dress between two generations of Iranian-American women—those born before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and those born after the Revolution. There were difference and similarities between the two diverse generations of women depending on the research questions and the components within each question. This section in the chapter will compare the findings established for the two generations and point out the major similarities and key differences.

Major Similarities

One of the similarities common among all of the women in this study was that to begin with, almost all participants were motivated to immigrate to the United States for a better life and for more educational opportunities. This could be due to the fact that many of the participants in the younger age group moved to the United States with their parents, thus causing both generations to share the common interest of having better educational opportunities upon immigration. Seven out of the 11 women lived in Turkey for a short time in acquiring their Visa before permanently living in the United States. What these women from both generations have in common is that they all felt that the intermediate country assisted in their overall transition process in familiarizing them with an additional culture other than that of Iran.

Similarities apparent in the answers shared by the women on questions related to understanding their lives while they were still living in Iran were that all of the participants in

this thesis have much more exaggerated perceptions of punishments on breaking Iranian dress laws than they have personally experienced. The women were not fond of breaking dress laws while living in Iran and only showed dissatisfaction towards the hijab during hot weather.

Prior to moving to the United States the women all had a different perception of the American culture and dress standards. They believed Americans to be individuals with a lot of freedom in dress, thus wearing more revealing clothing such as miniskirts and tank tops. After moving and living in the U.S. permanently, the women altered their perceptions of the American dress norms as the relaxed, casual, and free-spirited way of dress was more evident to the women. All of the participants expressed gratitude for the freedom in dress; however, they also believed there to be too much freedom at times. For example, the youth and teenagers in America having the freedom to wear revealing clothing may cause unwanted or unsafe situations to arise for them.

In the years that the Iranian women have lived in the United States and have formed an Iranian-American identity, they have noticed an increase in their ability to express themselves through their dress and have obtained much higher confidence levels as a result. Although the women felt that the social environment of the American culture and the freedom presented here helped in their transition, they also expressed a strong sense of sustaining the Persian heritage and family value systems they grew up with.

In general, the major similarity between the two generations of women detected was their innate desire to be conservative regardless of their age and in which country they are living. Among all of the women, what most motivates them to dress a certain way is whether the clothing is comfortable, has an appropriate fit, is a reasonable price, and is of high quality.

Key Differences

There were fewer differences found among the two generations of women than there were similarities. Also, the differences noticed were more general lifestyle differences and less so social-psychological differences. One main difference between the two generations is that the younger generation of women has much busier lifestyles than most of the women in the older generation. As most of the participants in the older age group are retired, they spend their time at home with family or visiting with friends. The younger generation is more independent and has the responsibility of balancing a demanding family life as well as a hectic work schedule.

In addition to overall lifestyle differences, the knowledge in fashion trends and the fashion industry is much higher among the younger age group. Most of the women in this group showed higher levels of knowledge in the U.S. than the time they lived in Iran. The older generation did not express any major comprehension in fashion trends or the industry upon their immigration to the United States. Furthermore, variations in the knowledge of the history of dress standards in Iran existed amongst the two age groups.

Due to less possible interactions in the American society by the older generation, the older generation of women did not express major changes in their shopping behavior nor did they speak about any significant increases in their purchase and consumption practices in the United States versus in Iran. On the contrary, the younger generation of Iranian-American women in this research declared much higher interest in fashion and consumption in the U.S. as compared to when they lived in Iran. In terms of the women's overall characteristics in their personalities, the younger age group displayed more traits of bicultural or hybrid personalities than the older age groups. This notion is largely due to the age of the younger generation and more opportunity and desire to adopt attributes from both cultures at a younger age.

Implications of the Study

In reviewing the findings of this study, implications emerged. One theoretical implication is based on the finding that Iranian or Iranian-American women are conservative by nature. As history has proven, clothing styles in Iran, dating back to the ancient Persian village attire, are modest and utilize many layers in the garments. Also, with young Iranian girls growing up in a very family-oriented culture, they are taught to be very modest—in their behavior as well as in their dress choices. Regardless of religion or government system or country in which the women live, most Iranian women choose to carry on these traditional characteristics and intend to pass down their beliefs to their future generations.

There are also practical implications to this study. Within the United States there are several organizations which help Iranian women and children better adapt to the American culture and lifestyle. Some examples of these organizations include the American Iranian Anti-Discrimination Center, the Association of Senior Iranian Immigrants of Orange County, California, the Association of Iranian American Professionals in San Diego, California, Dr. Modjtahedi Scholarship Fund, and the Iranian Cultural Center of Dallas/Forth Worth, Texas USA. These organizations assist in transitioning recent Iranian immigrants as well as aiding Iranian-Americans who have lived in the U.S. for a long time in maintaining their birth culture and language. The results of this study will certainly facilitate more knowledge for such organizations as the results provide examples of previous women's experiences transitioning into a new culture, potentially guiding future immigrants in their acculturation process. Additionally, by better understanding the women's habits, beliefs, and family lifestyles, the results may also help to make the lives of many Iranians and Iranian-Americans much easier and successful in the future.

In terms of implications applicable in the industry, companies who have a high Iranian-American clientele, such as retailers in Los Angeles, may benefit from the findings of this research. As all participants expressed an importance in the quality of their clothing and were willing to pay higher prices for their fashions as long as their standard in quality is met, possible retailers can market their more expensive, yet high quality, products to this target market's needs. Additionally, small boutiques and stores all over the country who specialize in carrying one-of-kind and unique clothing styles and accessories may certainly benefit from having a target market such as the Iranian-American women in this study. Both generations of women may be targeted for this particular shopping demand as the younger and older generations in this thesis showed a high need for individualistic and unique fashions rather than mass-produced, low-quality pieces.

Limitations

As with any research study, there were limitations that must be addressed. Initially when creating the interview instrument, it was not apparent that some of the interview questions may come across as biased or already leading to particular assumptions about the participants. None of the participants showed discomfort with the construction of the interview questions. However, while interviewing the participant from the older generation of women who still wears hijab, the researcher felt that some of the wording in the questions may be leading in favor of women who wish to dress without hijab after moving out of Iran. Although the participant never appeared to be uncomfortable or expressed any concern that the questions were inappropriate, perhaps for further research in this area, the wording of the questions can be created with even more reflection and caution.

The second limitation presented in the study is that most of the participants moved to the southern region of the United States. More specifically many of the participants lived in Georgia, which is a conservative state. Living in Georgia could have possibly supported the women's decision to choose to be more conservative and have a more casual sense of dress even after moving to the United States. There was only one participant from the older generation who lived in another region in the country, New York. She explained the dress norms in New York to be different than those acceptable in the South, as women in New York dress more like Europeans and pay more attention to dressing up than the relaxed styles apparent in Georgia. Although some of the participants from both generations have lived in other states in addition to Georgia, their initial exposure to the American culture was when they moved to Georgia. Therefore, a suggestion for future research would be to include Iranian-American women living in more diverse regions of the United States.

Finally, due to most of the women's experience with living in another country for a short period of time before immigrating to the United States, the severity of the overall transition process from directly coming to the American culture from the Iranian culture may not have been captured. The women who moved to the United States within the past decade also shared the increased opportunity and desire by Iranians living in Iran to travel outside of the country; thus allowing for more contact with other cultures and different dress standards outside of Iran. With the significantly high influence of globalization, and specifically influence from satellite television and the Internet, it might be beneficial to be even more specific in the criteria established when selecting participants for similar studies in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

The development and conclusions of this thesis effectively contribute to a variety of aspects in the overall knowledge in this area of research. However, further research in this area is recommended. The first recommendation for further investigation is that there needs to be more in depth knowledge in understanding the mental health and psychological conditions of Iranian children and adolescents in their transitioning to the Western culture and the impacts on their lives of the bullying and other forms of discrimination in schools. Most of the participants from the younger generation of women in this study expressed severe concerns and reflected on the extreme difficulties they experienced while attending middle or high school in America; related to dress or other issues. The negative impact of the bullying and discrimination the women experienced was clearly evident even years later. More research in this area would be beneficial in providing more support to assist younger Iranians in their transition in the school settings in the United States.

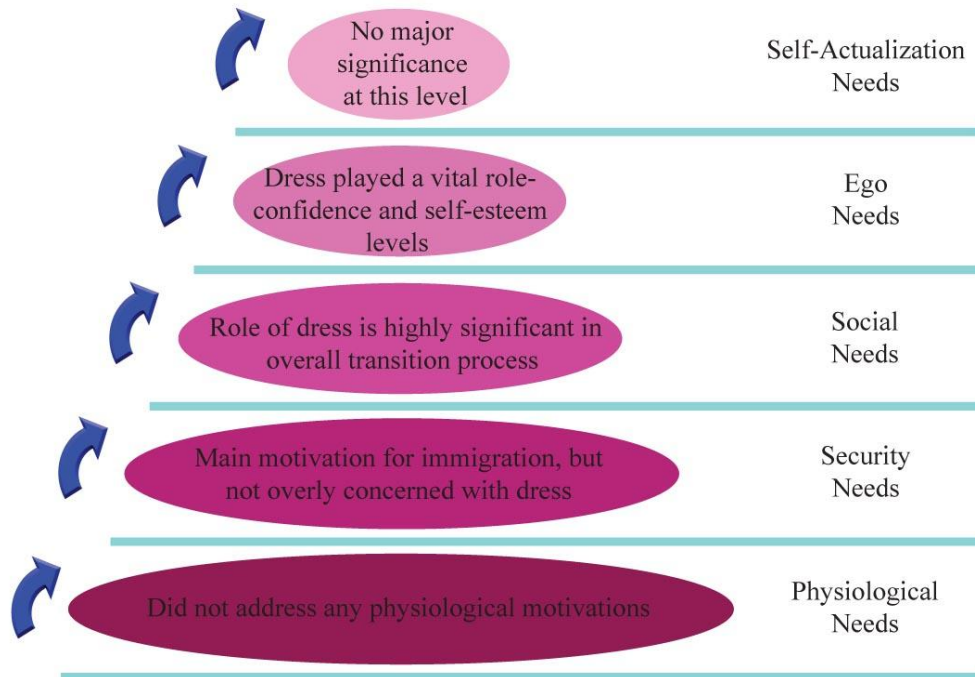
Secondly, the impact of color on mood was expressed by the participants, revealing an interesting area of opportunity for further investigation. As the study illustrates, women in Iran are required to wear black or dark colors when they are out in public. Although many women living there do not always follow this rule and, in recent years, there has been less enforcement in mandating that women wear black or darker colors, many Iranians and Iranian-Americans still choose to wear a lot of dark colors, and black seems to be a dominant color in their wardrobes. This particular research proved the women's desire to wear more color in their transition to the American culture; however, it did not focus on why women choose to wear black or dark colors. Frequently, Iranian women use bright colors as an accent to their primarily black clothing. An interesting approach for further research may be to look at the impact of color in apparel and the

desire for Iranian consumers to experiment with a wide range of bright colors when they are required to wear dark colors, such as black, all the time in Iran. Another component in this possible area for further research is to simultaneously dissect the reasoning behind why Iranians favor the color black as a foundational color in their wardrobes even after emigrating out of Iran and having more freedom to wear any color, at any time, to any extent.

Finally, it is critical to consider further research related to the effects of globalization on the Iranian culture. Iranians are extremely family oriented and pay significant attention to respect when communicating with one another, especially respect from children to parents or elders. The impact of satellite television, the Internet, and increased travel outside of Iran is increasingly breaking down the strong traditional Persian heritage. The main group of individuals affected by this multicultural phenomenon is older generations of Iranians, as they clearly recall what their culture used to be like. With nearly three-quarters of Iran's population under the age of 30, and with the dramatic interest from the Iranian youth wishing to experience life outside of their motherland and as a result shedding the heritage so delicately passed down by their ancestors, the overall culture of Iran is becoming intertwined with a mix of cultures from all over the world; particularly the Western culture. All eleven participants in this study passionately expressed their desire to sustain the Persian heritage and to continue passing their traditions and family value system to their children. It is vital to explore if the same dedication is felt by Iranians still living in Iran, or are they comfortable with accepting the outside influence which has been profound in the past decade or more.

Figure 6.1 Iranian-American Women's Motivational Needs

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs-within the Context of
Iranian-American Women**



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Appendix A - Interview Questions

Research Question 1: What do Iranian-American women know about the history of dress standards within Iran?

1. Could you please tell me what you know about the history of dress standards within Iran?
2. Historically, what happened to women if they did not follow the standards?
3. Could you please tell me what you know about current dress standards within Iran?
4. What is your understanding of what happens to women if they do not follow the standards?
5. Older generation: How did the 1979 Islamic Revolution and new Islamic dress standards affect your style of dress, lifestyle, and overall mentality on the issue?

Research Question 2: How do Iranian-American women perceive dress standards in Iran?

1. What was your knowledge of the fashion industry and fashion trends while living in Iran?
2. While living in Iran, were you aware of the annual Islamic fashion festivals? If yes, can you please elaborate on the styles offered and if you found them to be fashionable? Why or why not?
3. Can you please explain the level of which the dress standards in Iran impacted your everyday choices or activities?
 - a) Were you comfortable with the Islamic dress standards? If not, how did you express yourself? Did you express yourself through your clothing?
 - b) While living in Iran, did you agree or disagree with Iran's dress code?
4. How did the dress limitations affect your shopping behavior and purchase levels in Iran?

Research Question 2.a: Did the women challenge dress standards while living in Iran?

1. Can you please describe your style of dress while living in Iran?

2. Were the actual garments expected to wear, such as the *chador* or *manteau*, physically comfortable for you to wear? Please explain.
3. Do you feel that you challenged the Islamic dress laws in any way? If yes, how?
4. Can you please explain if the intensity of the Islamic dress laws had an impact on your decision to move to the United States?
5. How did the Islamic dress standards affect other aspects of your life in addition to dress choices? (Ex. holding hands in public, dating before marriage, hobbies, outdoor activities, etc.)

Research Question 3: How do Iranian-American women perceive dress standards within the United States?

1. What is your understanding of the American culture related to dress?
 - a) After moving to the United States, what is your understanding of the fashion industry and fashion trends?
 - b) How have the lack of dress limitations impacted your shopping behavior and purchase levels? Please explain.
2. Are you comfortable with the lack of dress restrictions presented in America?
3. Is there anything that you miss and wish existed in the Western culture in terms of dress standards?

Research Question 4: What role did dress play in women's transition from Iranians to Iranian-Americans?

1. How do you feel your dress changed upon moving to the U.S.? Was it a gradual or sudden change?

2. Can you please explain how the lack of dress limitations in America has impacted your dress choice and overall lifestyle?
3. How has the freedom in dress in America improved/hurt your self-esteem and confidence, your personal and family lifestyle, or your career? Please elaborate further.

Research Question 4.a: How did the women's style of dress change upon immigrating to the United States? What motivated the change?

1. Did you respond better to the aesthetics and fashion styles of Iranian clothing or are you more open to Western trends and styles? If both, why? Explain.
 - a) After your move to the States, how long did it take you to remove your scarf, *chador*, veil, *manteau*, coat, etc.?
2. Does the familiarity and habit of dress limitations keep you (mainly older generation) from wanting to adapt to the Western dress cultures even after your move to the United States?
 - a) Are you afraid that if you adapt the Western dress culture, you may have a difficult time going back to Iran?
3. What motivational factors lead to adoption or rejection of American dress standards?
 - a) What are three motivational factors leading your overall style of dress?
4. How important were designer brands and labels for you while living in Iran? How important are they now that you live in the United States?
 - a) Do you purchase more or less designer labels than you did in Iran? Please explain.
5. Overall, how has your experience and transition to a new and very different culture been in terms of dress? Please explain.

- a) On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest, how significant is fashion and clothing in your overall lifestyle?

Appendix B - Scholarly Manuscript

Fulfillment of this requirement of the thesis has been met by providing a scholarly manuscript based on the findings of the study to the student's major professor, Dr. Kim Hiller Connell. This manuscript will be submitted for review to *Fashion Theory*.