STYLING THE SELF: FASHION AS AN EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A GLOBAL WORLD

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ABSTRACT

While the phenomenon of globalisation has been widely debated, there is a lack of academic discussion dealing explicitly with the connection between media and globalisation (Rantanen, 2005: 4). This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by investigating the impact of mediated globalisation on identity construction and fashion-sense. The study considers both the macro theory of globalisation and a micro-focus on the lives of four women from an Indian South African family.

The aim of the study is to investigate some of the forces that influence the daily dress decisions of these four women, in particular the influence of magazines, television and cinema. Three broad conceptual areas are explored; identity, cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity, using the methodological approach *mediagraphy* (Rantanen, 2005).

The project reveals that all four participants possess complex, multi-faceted cultural identities. However, while the media has certainly played a role in constructing these layered identities, it is not the only force that has contributed to the participants' complex sense of self. Also, while all participants tend to use mostly Western media texts, this has not resulted in a process of cultural homogenisation. As one of many forces in the participants' lives, the media has contributed to fostering cultural heterogeneity. Although hybridity differs, each participant creatively uses clothing to convey their mixed cultural identity.

INTRODUCTION: The Forces That Influence Dress Decisions

While the study of fashion may not appear to be a very academic pursuit, the reality is that "everywhere in the world, people make daily decisions about what to wear or how to dress" (Eicher et al, 2000: xi). This study aims to investigate the influence of mediated globalisation on these daily dress decisions by exploring how magazines, television and cinema influence a sense of cultural identity and how this identity is then expressed through fashion or style of dress. The decision to focus on these channels was based on the fact that they are all visual media and are therefore appropriate in a study concerned with fashion, a visual phenomenon (Cannon, 1998: 24).

The need for a study stems from the scarcity of academic discussion dealing explicitly with the connection between media and globalisation (Rantanen, 2005: 4). While it is obvious that media plays a pivotal role in the process of globalisation; it has largely been ignored or glossed over by theorists (Rantanen, 2005: 17). This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by investigating the impact of mediated globalisation on identity construction and fashion-sense. It considers both the macro theory of globalisation and a micro-focus on the personal lives of four individuals and in doing so hopefully contributes to shedding light on the impact of mediated globalisation.

The four individuals participating in this study were women from my Indian South African family: my paternal grandmother, my grandmother's sister, my grandmother's niece and myself. The project addresses the following three research questions: (1) How have magazines, television and cinema affected the participants' sense of cultural identity? (2) Have magazines, television and cinema led to the fostering of cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity amongst the participants? (3) How is this cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity then expressed by the participants through fashion?

As is clear from the above three questions, this project is concerned not simply with the connections between cultural identity and fashion sense, but rather more specifically with how these connections are influenced by a globally mediated world. Since the oldest participant in this study is 85 and the youngest 21, changes over the years in the relationship between media, identity and dress are also explored.

While studying the personal lives of individuals may lead to the discovery of intriguing insights regarding globalisation, it also presents certain limitations as the research relies on personal testimonies, memories of media consumption and mode of dress. Memory is not always reliable and in certain instances the participants were unable to provide specific answers or examples because they experienced trouble recalling details from the past.

In addition to this, the fact that this project conducted research with only four individuals means that the conclusions must be treated with due care. The insights gained in this project cannot simply be taken to represent how mediated globalisation affects identity and fashion sense, as the reality of just four participants cannot be assumed to be the general reality of all people. The purpose of this project is not to draw definitive or general conclusions but rather to explore the complexities surrounding the influence of mediated globalisation on the lives of the four participants.

Before the research findings are discussed, a theoretical and conceptual framework will be outlined to highlight the main theories and concepts relevant to the study. This will be followed by a literature review, where some past studies dealing with issues surrounding fashion will be explored. An explanation of the methodological approach is given, and the research data analysed and discussed.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Globalisation: A Connected World

Since this project is particularly interested in the connection between cultural identity and fashion in a global world, the over-arching theory that informs this project is that of globalisation. The definition of this nebulous concept 'globalisation' has often been debated and though it is widely accepted that globalisation exists or is occurring "there is no straightforward or widely accepted definition of the term, either in general use or in academic writings" (Schirato & Webb, 2006: 2).

According to Tomlinson, "Globalisation refers to the rapidly developing…network of interconnections and inter-dependences that characterize modern social life…the idea of the increasing 'flow' of goods, information, people and practices across national borders" (1999: 2). Tomlinson's definition suggests that globalisation is a phenomenon that links or connects people. This definition also implies that these connections allow a global 'flow' to occur – a flow of tangible entities, like people, and a flow of intangibles such as information and practices. Importantly, Tomlinson makes use of the words "across national borders". A defining characteristic of globalisation is that, as a phenomenon or process, it permeates national boundaries.

Like Tomlinson, Giddens regards globalisation as a force of connectivity, defining globalisation "as the intensification of world-wide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (1993: 64). The notion of the world as a linked society suggests the disintegration of national boundaries as people become more connected to one another. Servaes and Lie adopt a similar position, writing that "globalisation is seen as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life" (2003: 7). Servaes and Lie's use of the word "worldwide" once again suggests the idea of globalisation transcending national boundaries.

This project explores how the participants' fashion choices have been influenced by living in a global world where traditional boundaries are dissolving and increased connectivity is taking place. The inevitable question then; is how are people more connected in this global era?

Mediated Globalisation: Travelling the World without Leaving Home

The project is concerned not simply with globalisation but, rather, with mediated globalisation which refers to the idea "that one of the salient features of globalisation in the modern world is that it takes place increasingly through media and communications" (Rantanen 2005: 8). In other words, people are connected to and influenced by global flows through the media.

The notion of mediated globalisation suggests that individuals or communities can reside in one physical place and still be subjects of and participants in globalisation: "Though increased physical mobility is an

important cultural aspect of global modernity as a whole, it is fair to say that for most people most of the time the impact of globalisation is felt not in travel but in staying at home" (Tomlinson, 1999: 150). Media such as the telephone, television and internet allow people to transcend time and space without moving from their domestic place. It would appear that Rantanen's definition of globalisation would best suit the purposes of this project because she emphasises the connection between globalisation and the media: "Globalisation is a process in which worldwide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space" (2005: 9).

While globalisation is the overarching theory that informs this project, there are three main conceptual areas that provide the underlying framework. The first is cultural identity, the other two deal with cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity. Within the cultural homogenisation debate, issues relating to Westernisation and cultural imperialism will be discussed while within the cultural heterogeneity debate, issues relating to globalisation and hybridisation will be explored. The three conceptual areas are inter-linked because they all inform each other.

Identity: Asking 'Who Am I?' in a Chaotic World

When discussions revolving around cultural globalisation occur, the question of identity is inevitably raised. There has "been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of identity" (Hall, 2008: 1). Globalisation is regarded as being responsible for transforming the world into an uncertain place, such that the search for identity has become increasingly problematic and difficult: "In a world which is increasingly compressed…the conditions of and for the identification of individual and collective selves and individual and collective others are becoming ever more complex (Robertson, 1991: 71-72). In conducting research with the four participants it will be interesting to discover the extent to which mediated globalisation has complicated their sense of self. It will also be intriguing to explore the ways in which these complexities surrounding their identities are conveyed through their mode of attire.

Cultural Identity: My Group is Not Your Group

The notion of individual and collective selves and individual and collective others, is an important one in the discourse of identity. This project is particularly interested in the idea of cultural identity as people tend to define who they are according to the cultures and groups they belong to and those that they do not (Barker, 1999; Crang, 1998; Jenkins, 2004). A key aspect of cultural identity is the construction of a sense of self based on similarity and difference, on membership and identification with certain groups and not with others (Hall, 2008: 4). People establish who they are by signalling who they are like and who they are different from: "Identity is a matter of knowing who's who…It is the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference" (Jenkins, 2004: 5).

Jenkins's above reference to "establishment and signification" is important. Signification refers to the idea that identity is constructed and conveyed through a system of signs (Jenkins, 2004: 5). People draw "upon a wide palette of accessories in the human world" to express their identification with particular groups (Jenkins, 2004: 49). These accessories include music, cars, religious practice and, of course, fashion (Niessen & Brydon, 1998: 24).

The idea of identity being created and expressed through symbols and signs suggests that a process of establishment is involved, whereby people actively construct and mould who they are (Jenkins, 2004: 5). Barker uses the term "identity project" to suggest that identity is always something that is worked on (Barker, 1999: 3). The "plasticity of identity" (Barker, 1999: 2) suggests that defining who one is, is not a fixed or static activity, but rather an organic, ongoing process (Hall, 1999: 47).

It can be argued that the plasticity of identity has increased with the advent of mediated globalisation: "We must not lose sight of the fact that, in a world increasingly permeated by the products of the media industries, a major new arena has been created for the process of self-fashioning" (Thompson, 1995: 43). The global media have facilitated a world-wide flow of cultural texts and products, providing people with unprecedented access to a myriad of cultural resources (Barker, 1999: 3). The variety of resources available has complicated the construction of identity because "people almost everywhere are subjected to intangibles, objects and ideas that lack a definite place" such that "the volume, pace, and reach of decontextualized culture is cutting people from their familiar moorings" (Niezen, 2004: 38). Identities have become multiple, fragmented and

contradictory as people are exposed, through the media, to different ideas and other ways of life (Grossberg, 2008: 6). If 'culture' is accepted as referring to the idea of shared meanings amongst a collective or group (Barker, 1999: 11), then it is inevitable that mediated globalisation has influenced people's sense of cultural identity, as people are increasingly exposed to a multitude of meanings.

Since this project is concerned with the notion of cultural identity, the participants will be required to reflect on their membership to particular groups or cultures. As cultural identity is actively established and signified, as discussed above, links will be drawn between the participant's use of fashion to construct and convey their cultural affiliation. This cultural affiliation will be explored in relation to the participants living in a global, mediated world, so as to investigate the influence of this on the participants' sense of group membership and belonging.

Since mediated globalisation has resulted in the shrinking of the world, "we all know more about what are for us the far corners of our earth…" (Wallerstein, 2000: 93). This exposure and access, to far-away ways of life, hold implications for culture. An important question to ask is if the global flow of texts, through the media, results in cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity.

The Homogenisation Thesis: Culture Clones

Mediated globalisation is often regarded as a threat to cultural diversity as it supposedly results in a process of homogenisation. The homogenisation thesis views "globalisation as synchronisation to the demands of a standardised consumer culture, making everywhere seem more or less the same" (Tomlinson, 1999: 6). The word that epitomises the notion of homogenisation is "standardised". The homogenisation thesis is based on the idea that the global flow of cultural commodities results in uniformity as different cultures lose their uniqueness and, instead, begin resembling one standard culture.

Similarly, Holton (2000) suggests that the homogenisation thesis focuses on the standardisation of culture. He writes that "the most widely held belief about globalisation and culture is probably that of convergence toward a common set of cultural traits and practices" (2000: 142). If cultural homogenisation is about standardisation the inevitable question, then, is what or whose culture provides the standard in today's global world?

Americanisation: The Global Tyranny of Ronald McDonald

The rise of Western media conglomerates that have global reach, such as Viacom, News Corporation and AOL Time Warner, has led to the commonly-held belief that the West provides the cultural standard in today's world (Lull, 2000: 54) . In short, homogenisation is often regarded as being equivalent to Westernisation (Holton, 2000: 142). Since the West appears to wield the most power in terms of the spread of culture, the movement of Western ideas and practices across the globe is termed "dominant flows", with culture supposedly spreading from the centre (the West) to the periphery (the non-West) (Thussu, 2007).

The idea of Western culture dominating the global scene is often narrowed down to the idea of American culture, in particular, as the standard against which the process of homogenisation takes place. Appadurai argues that "most often, the homogenisation argument subspeciates into either an argument about Americanisation, or an argument about 'commoditisation', and very often the two arguments are closely linked (1990: 295).

Within the discourse of cultural homogenisation, Appadurai's mention of commoditisation refers to the notion that a standardised Western culture of consumerism is sweeping across the world (Holton 2000). The homogenisation thesis proposes that a process of McDonaldisation is occurring, whereby local cultures are disintegrating as the American fixation on commodities spreads across the globe to create an international consumer culture (Nederveen Pieterse, 1996: 1391). The majority of brands that are globally recognised are American by origin, which supposedly supports the homogenisation thesis in its argument that American culture has taken over the world (Benyon & Dunkerley, 2000: 14).

In exploring questions of culture in a global world, it is necessary to investigate if any of the participants, to any extent, have had their identities Westernised or Americanised. Have any of the four women found themselves more in tune with, and better able to relate to, a homogenous Western culture, rather than the

culture passed down to them from their ancestors? Furthermore, how is this struggle over identity expressed through mode of attire?

Cultural Imperialism – The Death of Local Culture?

Critics of cultural homogenisation argue that the Americanisation of the world has a detrimental effect on local cultures (Lull 2000: 195). These critics propose that the global spread of American culture is equivalent to a form of cultural imperialism, which is "the idea that certain dominant cultures threaten to overwhelm other more vulnerable ones" (Tomlinson, 1999: 80). In other words, the cultural imperialism thesis suggests that the global dissemination of American culture erodes the indigenous cultural diversity of peripheral communities as the McDonaldisation of the world "threaten[s] to swamp the cultural networks of more local units, including nations and ethnic communities" (Smith 1990: 175).

Under the notion of cultural homogenisation, the idea of cultural imperialism will be explored to investigate if and to what extent the four participants have had their traditional and ethnic cultural identities influenced by Western media texts. It will be interesting to discover if there is a difference in the occurrence and degree of cultural imperialism across the four generations. Furthermore, if a process of cultural imperialism has occurred, how is this articulated through fashion?

Re-thinking the Homogenisation Thesis

The homogenisation thesis is a problematic one. It has been widely rejected by scholars who believe that it "overstates what is happening" and "simplifies very complex cultural processes" (Lull 2000: 231). For example, the thesis proposes that the purity of national cultures is threatened as they are exposed to an American way of life. Wallerstein (1990) challenges this idea by questioning the assumption that any nation actually has its own pure culture. Since most nations consist of a diverse group of people, Wallerstein questions "What is the evidence that any given group has a 'culture'? [...] surely not all presumed members of any of these groups act similarly to each other and differently to all others" (1990: 33).

Furthermore, it can be argued that no nation or community can claim to have a pure culture. Culture is an organic entity that is in a state of constant flux "oscillat[ing] dialectically between permanence and change, between tradition and innovation" (Lull, 2000: 238). Before the advent of mediated globalisation, national cultures were exposed to outside ideas and practices. It is simply that "globalisation mainly extend[s] […] and accelerate[s] cultural tendencies that have long been in place" (Lull 2000: 265). If a nation state cannot have a common culture, let alone a pure common culture, then mediated globalisation cannot be accused of destroying something that does not really exist in the first place.

Another factor that the homogenisation thesis fails to take into account is the idea of contra-flows (Thussu 2007). The homogenisation thesis suggests that there is a one-way flow of messages and texts, from the West to the non-West. Such a notion does not consider that, in reality, there are contra-flow messages that are produced by the periphery and circulated around the globe. Thussu argues that "there is evidence that global media traffic is not just one way" and that the emergence of new media has "enabled the increasing flow of content from the global South to the North" (2007: 23).

This project shall take into account these critiques of the homogenisation thesis when investigating if the four women under study have experienced any degree of cultural standardisation. For example, the question of cultural purity will be touched on when exploring the media consumed by the participants and the effect this has had on their sense of cultural affiliation and consequently mode of dress. It will be intriguing to explore if the dominant flows or the contra media flows that the participants are exposed to influences their daily fashion choices.

Cultural Heterogeneity: Diversity Rather than Standardisation?

Despite the fact that certain peripheral states globally circulate their own cultural products, there is still a dominant flow of texts from the West to the periphery (Hannerz, 2000: 107). This dominant flow, however, does not necessarily mean that a process of homogenisation occurs. A major criticism of the homogenisation thesis is that it fails to acknowledge that "people creatively modify the messages they are given from the media and elsewhere to fit their own ways of thinking and living" (Lull 2000: 64). An Americanisation of culture is not necessarily occurring because individuals act with agency, actively manipulating texts to suit

their local contexts (Appadurai, 2003: 7). The heterogenisation school of thought proposes that the global flow of cultural products can actually act as a catalyst for the emergence of diverse and unique cultures (Rantanen, 2005: 94).

By examining the four women's exposure to visual media, the possibilities of culturally diverse identities will be examined. Furthermore, if cultural heterogeneity is a reality amongst the participants, the ways in which their fashion choices reflect this will be discussed too.

Globalisation: A Melting-Pot of the Global and the Local

Globalisation is characterised by the interaction of the global with the local (Tomlinson, 1999: 181). The global and the local are not necessarily binary opposites with the former invading or dissolving the culture of the latter. Rather, the global and local interact in dynamic ways that results in "a kind of cultural give-and-take" (Lull, 2000: 241). This interactive relationship between the global and local is often referred to as 'globalisation'. Roland Robertson is credited with using the term in 1995 to describe "the targeting of goods and services on a global scale, but aimed at local markets" (Benyon & Dunkerley, 2000: 20). Global companies, guided by commercial imperatives, customise their global offerings to suit local contexts (Rantanen, 2005: 100; Thussu, 2007: 21).

It is not only global companies that engage in this process of globalisation, but also local audiences who indigenise global texts and commodities (Rantanen, 2005: 100). Individuals draw on their local and cultural belief systems to put their own original spin on global products brought in from dominant or centre states (Lull 2000: 230). The introduction of global products into local contexts is not the end of the cultural transaction; rather, it is the beginning as individuals then manipulate and appropriate these global products to produce something new and unique. This process is often referred to as 'indigenisation', whereby the global is re-defined in terms of the local (Lull, 2000: 244; Appadurai, 2003: 32). The term 'creolisation' is also used to describe this process whereby "the peripheral culture absorbs the influx of meanings and symbolic forms from the centre and transforms them to make them in some considerable degree their own" (Hannerz, 2000: 127).

In investigating the possibility of cultural heterogeneity amongst the four participants involved in this study, the notion of globalisation will be included. It will be interesting to discover if the participants' exposure to global media texts has influenced their identity formations as they experience interactions between the global and the local. It will be even more interesting to discuss if this global-local identity is constructed and conveyed through 'globalised' fashions.

Hybridity: A Kaleidoscope of Cultures

Rather than a standardised American culture sweeping across the world, the process of indigenisation results in the formation of new and original hybrid cultures (Lull, 2000: 243). Hybridity can be defined as the mingling and blending of different cultures (Nederveen Pieterse, 1996: 1392). The unprecedented level of contact between different cultures (Tomlinson, 1999: 142) often leads to indigenisation, which in turn results in the formation of new hybrid cultures: "there is now a world culture, but… it is marked by an organisation of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity" (Hannerz, 1990: 237).

The emergence of new and dynamic cultures implies that the global flow of culture, even if it is dominated by the West, does not result in a standardisation of culture but, rather, cultural diversity: "The global circulation of images, ideologies, and cultural styles, facilitated by the multinational cultural and communications industries, actually fuels symbolic creativity, lessens homogeneity, and increases cultural diversity" (Lull, 2000: 232).

I believe that one of the most exciting aspects of this project will be to explore the possibilities of the four participants possessing hybrid identities. If it is the case, such a discussion will involve exploring the extent to which the media have encouraged mixed identities. The manner in which fashion is creatively used to express hybridity will also be investigated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to place my research project in context, this section shall provide an overview of some of the studies that have been conducted relating to fashion. These studies will be explored under relevant themes connected

to the notion of fashion. A specific, formal definition of what the term fashion refers to is difficult to achieve because the concept of fashion varies amongst different people in different contexts (Molnar, 1998). In this project I have chosen to adopt a broad definition of fashion by taking it to mean mode of dress and bodily adornment (Molnar, 1998: 41). Rather than adopt the limited view that fashion is something that belongs on runways and red carpets, it is more fruitful to regard fashion as something that ordinary people engage in and with everyday (Eicher et al, 2000: 3). This focus, on ordinary individuals and their use of fashion, is essentially what my research project deals with.

Fashion and Identity: Changing Outfits, Changing the Self

A study conducted by Craig Thompson and Diana Haytko (1997) clearly suggests a connection between people's identities and their fashion-sense. The study based its conclusions on data collected from interviews conducted with American college students, between the ages of 20 to 30. According to Thompson and Haytko (1997), fashion provides people with a platform to express both their individuality and their conformity to the cultures and groups they belong to. The students who were interviewed suggested that they dress in particular ways to signal their affiliation with certain groups, as well as their distancing from others (1997: 23). What was also revealed, however, is that the students simultaneously belong to a variety of groups and this is articulated in their mode of dress, whereby they adopt the "stance of being a fashion bricoleur who combines and adapts culturally available resources to make something new" (Thompson & Haytko, 1997: 27).

Thompson and Haytko (1997) make passing reference to the fact that media like magazines influence how students dress, particularly by including images of celebrities that the students aspire to look like (1997: 29). Another interesting point that is made is that young people often dress "to fit into a community that is symbolically present but that may be distant from one's current setting" (Thompson & Haytko, 1997: 28). While the media obviously plays a role in connecting people to distant others, this connection is not directly or explicitly made by Thompson and Haytko. Therefore, while their study's conclusions regarding the connections between fashion and identity are certainly applicable to my research project, I aim to extend these connections by directly examining the role that media plays in terms of identity and fashion-sense. Furthermore, while Thompson and Haytko explored the use of fashion amongst young adults, my research project adopts a broader outlook by investigating the mode of dress of four different generations of women.

The Global, the Local, the Hybrid: Wearing Mix 'n Match

Mona Abaza's (2007) research study, "Shifting Landscapes of Fashion in Contemporary Egypt", investigates the multi-faceted nature of culture and dress by exploring the use of fashion in contemporary Egypt. As a result of globalisation, Egyptians have been exposed to a diversity of cultural ideas and images from around the world. As a result of this myriad of cultural influences, a variety of fashions exist side by side in Egypt, including Western fashion, 'Islamic chic', and 'ethnic chic' (Abaza, 2007: 281). These different fashion genres are indicative of the interaction between the global and the local occurring in Egypt. On the one hand, modern Egyptian people "remain infatuated with Western dress" (Abaza, 2007: 293). On the other hand, a process of Westernisation is not necessarily occurring because there has been an increase in the use of Islamic dress. This Islamic mode of attire has been re-invented into a sophisticated style known as Islamic chic, which includes wearing the traditional headscarves in bright colours to match attractive long dresses and pants (Abaza, 2007: 288). Islamic chic can be regarded as a hybrid fashion genre as it incorporates traditional Islamic attire with elements of Western style. Another example of hybrid fashion in Egypt is that of ethnic chic, which is a local form of fashion that incorporates Indian, Chinese and Southeast Asian elements with indigenous Egyptian dress to develop "some sort of globalized hybridized aesthetic" (Abaza, 2007: 291).

Like Abaza's study, this project is interested in the interaction between the global and the local and how this dynamic is expressed through mode of attire. While Abaza's conclusions regarding 'global' fashion are relevant to this project, I have not chosen to examine the general fashions of a nation like Abaza does with Egypt. While all the participants in this project were born in South Africa, one has spent a few years living abroad and another still currently lives in the UK. Thus the focus in this project is not on a particular nation of people, but rather on four specific individuals and their use of fashion as an expression of their unique cultural identities. Since South Africa is such a diverse country, it would actually be impossible to investigate the dress trends of the nation, thus it would be more appropriate to focus on specific individuals.

Like Abaza's study, a research project undertaken by Stephanie Assman (2008) also explores the dynamic between local traditions and global influences in terms of fashion. Her study, "Between Tradition and Innovation: The Reinvention of the Kimono in Japanese Consumer Culture", discusses the case of kimono-wearing in Japan. The Japanese clearly distinguish between Western clothes and Japanese clothing and wearing a kimono is regarded as a conscious decision to return to one's true Japanese identity (Assman, 2008: 361). Many of the participants interviewed by Assman (2008) articulated their belief that wearing kimonos connected them to their Japanese cultural identity especially as the kimono is regarded as a national symbol that is passed down generation to generation. Western clothes tend to be worn the majority of the time, with kimonos only used on special occasions (Assman, 2008: 360). Despite this apparent process of Westernisation, the kimono has been kept alive in Japanese culture by its constant revival and re-invention (Assman, 2008: 362). Kimono magazines have modernised and hybridised the traditional outfit by depicting it in combination with Western accessories like handbags, jewellery and shoes (Assman, 2008: 372).

Assman's study focuses on issues of the global and local and how these are expressed through hybridized fashion. My research project shall deal with similar issues by researching if any of the four participants adopt hybrid forms of attire. This study, however, moves beyond Assman's study to also explore how the global, specifically through the media, have influenced the individual participants' fashion sense.

Media and Fashion: I Read, I Watch, I Wear

In her study on the influence of magazines on women in Ecuador, Erynn Masi de Casanova (2003) directly examines how media can influence how women choose to dress. De Casanova concludes that women in Ecuador perceive the consumption of magazines "as cosmopolitan, a sign of prestige" (2003: 90). The women aspire to the lifestyle portrayed in magazines like Cosmopolitan, desiring to be 'a Cosmo girl' who is sophisticated, stylish and modern (de Casanova, 2003: 91). This desire, for a more modern, Western lifestyle is expressed by the women through their mode of dress. Wearing the Western fashion items that are depicted in magazines is perceived as a sign of modernity, upward mobility and superiority (de Casanova, 2003: 92).

De Casanova's study raises interesting points regarding the Westernisation of people's identities and fashion sense through magazine consumption. My research project shall also investigate the possibility of Westernisation of the four women under study in exploring the question of homogeneity, in terms of their identities and the way they dress. Unlike de Casanova who only chose to focus on one specific medium, I aim to adopt a broader approach by studying the influence of three media forms as I believe that people in today's global world tend to be exposed to and influenced by more than one medium.

Like de Casanova, Khadidia Toure's (2007) research on the reception of Brazillian or Mexican telenovelas by women in Mali describes the link between media and fashion-sense. In "Telenovelas Reception by Women in Bouake and Bamako", Toure suggests that the identity changes occurring in Mali, as a result of globalisation, are visible in the way women are dressing (2007: 49). In particular, Malian women often attempt to emulate the fashions that are depicted on these telenovelas (Toure, 2007: 49). The modern lifestyle portrayed in telenovelas has encouraged many young Malian women to abandon more traditional fashion in favour of contemporary styles, including printed T-shirts and permed hair-styles (Toure, 2007: 49, 51).

Toure's findings regarding the abandonment of traditional modes of attire for more modern fashions are relevant to this study. Like Toure, I intend to explore if any of the four participants have chosen to wear more modern clothing items instead of traditional or ethnic fashions. Like De Casanova, Toure chose to only explore the influence of one medium (television) and one kind of text (telenovelas) on people's fashion sense. I intend to move beyond this by taking into account the participants' consumption of three different media as well as various texts within each medium.

Fashion and Gender: The Forbidden Mini-Skirt

Although the scope of this project does not allow for a full exploration of the notion of gender, it is important to mention that gender is closely linked to cultural identity and studies on fashion have highlighted the use of fashion as an expression of gendered identity.

For example, Andrew Ivaska's (2002) study on the banning of mini-skirts in Dar es Salaam in the 1960s, reveals how fashion is related to issues of gender. The male-dominated ruling government at the time decided that mini-skirts and other revealing clothes were indecent forms of attire for young women (Ivaska, 2002:

584). According to Ivaska these forms of fashion were banned not only because they were revealing, but also because they represented female independence, mobility and wealth-accumulation, thus threatening male superiority in Tanzanian society (2002: 599). It is clear, therefore, that fashion is not simply about the way people dress, but rather is an activity that is loaded with cultural meaning.

An important point that Ivaska makes is that "many of the key studies on fashion focus exclusively on its Euro-American dynamics" (2002: 587). My research project seeks to address this imbalance by focusing on four individuals of Indian origin who were born and raised in South Africa. Furthermore, the intention is for my project to add to the body of literature concerning fashion. Fashion is often not considered as a topic worthy of scholarly pursuit (Niessen & Brydon, 1998: ix). Yet "how we dress our bodies has significance that has intrigued people for centuries. Human beings, in every society on the globe, dress themselves for many and varied reasons" (Eicher et al, 2000: 3). Since fashion is a universal phenomenon that forms part of people's everyday lives I believe it is worthy of study. Fashion has increasingly been awarded academic attention by social psychologists, art historians, folklorists and sociologists (Niessen & Brydon, 1998: x) and I hope another dimension can be added to the discussion by examining fashion from a media and cultural perspective.

METHODOLOGY

This section shall outline how the research for this project was conducted. The academic frameworks and paradigms that informed this project will be discussed first. An explanation of the methodological approach that was used will then be provided, followed by a discussion of the specific research methods employed.

The Interplay of Cultural and Media Studies

This project was conducted within the paradigms of both cultural and media studies. According to Rantanen, cultural studies have "concentrated on the broader issues of culture instead of media" (2005: 3). The project draws on cultural studies when it discusses how people's lives have been influenced by globalisation, particularly in terms of culture and when it focuses on the connections between fashion and identity which have become "the central theme of cultural studies" (Barker, 1999: 2). The project, however, moves beyond traditional cultural studies to also embrace media studies. This approach is also necessary because the project is interested in explicitly exploring the influence of the media, in the form of magazines, television and cinema. When examining cultural identity, I believe it is important to include the role of the media in the discussion, especially if culture is taken to mean "the order of life in which human beings construct meaning through practices of symbolic representation" (Tomlinson 1999: 18). In a global world, it is largely through the media that people are exposed to symbols and thus develop their culture (Tomlinson 1999: 151) and it is necessary to employ both approaches as "the media are the dominant representational aspect of modern culture but its meanings are mediated by the 'lived experience' of everyday culture" (Barker, 1999: 7).

The Interpretive and Constructivist Traditions: Reality is Created, Not Found

This project employed an interpretive and constructivist research approach because "cultural and media studies stress critique and interpretation" (Tomaselli, 2005: 35). Since this project is concerned with cultural identity and its expression through fashion, an interpretive approach was adopted to explore "the ways that people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through… personal style and social rituals" (Deacon et al, 1999: 6) and because it "is characterized by a concern for the individual" and its "central endeavour…is to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al, 2001: 22). In order to understand this world of human experience, it is also necessary to adopt a constructivist research approach which is based on the assumption that "social and cultural life are continually reproduced and modified through the myriad activities of everyday life" (Deacon et al, 1999: 7). By exploring the participants' media consumption and mode of dress I am inherently investigating how these actively create meaning, and thus reality because an underlying assumption of media and cultural studies is that reality is constructed, not found (Tomaselli, 2005: 39). The decision to combine an interpretive approach with a constructivist one is based on the fact that the two overlap to a large extent in this project. The intention is to explore how the media constructs meaning and reality for the participants, but the focus is on how the participants appropriate that constructed meaning and interpret it in their individual ways, which then finds expression through their dress sense.

Mediagraphy: Ethnography and Beyond

Researchers who adopt an interpretive and constructivist approach tend to employ ethnographic practices (Deacon et al, 1999: 6). Ethnography is intended to offer "an account of the behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, and values of the people under study" (Shimahara, 1988: 78). This research project is ethnographic in the sense that it is interested in the connections between self, media and fashion so as to discover why the participants behave the way they do (Machin, 2002: 1) and because the intention is to discover "how people invest their world with meaning" through fashion (Deacon et al, 1999: 7).

The methodology took the form of mediagraphy, a special kind of ethnography. Rantanen developed mediagraphy so as to have a tool "that expresses the central role played by media and communications" in the process of globalisation (2005: 13). According to Burawoy, it would appear illogical to use ethnography as a means of studying globalisation because how can ethnography, which focuses on the micro and everyday life, "grasp lofty processes that transcend national boundaries?" (2000: 1). Rantanen answered this question by developing a tool that moved beyond traditional ethnography by enabling researchers to study the consequences of the macro phenomenon of globalisation on a micro level, in terms of the lives of individuals (Rantanen, 2005: 12, 15). Mediagraphy is the most appropriate methodology to use in this study since it takes into account both global processes and individual experiences.

While Rantanen (2005) employed mediagraphy to study four generations of three different families, limitations in terms of time and resources limited my study to four generations of one family. This scaling down does not affect the major aim of mediagraphy, which is essentially to examine the life histories of individuals, from different generations, and then to relate them to one another so as to identify similarities and differences (Rantanen, 2005: 15). By studying different generations, the aim is to investigate how the lives of individuals have changed over time (Rantanen, 2005: 13). This will allow the study to explore how, over time; changes in media have influenced the participants' sense of cultural identity, and consequently their mode of dress.

Research Methods: Questioning Others, Questioning Myself

The participants in this research project included my grandmother, my grandmother's sister, my grandmother's niece and me. The decision to include only four participants in the study was based on the fact that qualitative and ethnographic research tends to use smaller samples, especially for smaller scale studies such as this where there are limitations in terms of time and resources (Cohen et al, 2001: 93). The sample for this particular study was selected using the method of non-probability sampling. In particular, the method of purposive sampling was employed so as to allow me to "handpick the [people] to be included in the sample" so as to "build up a sample that is satisfactory to [my] specific needs" (Cohen et al, 2001: 103). My sample was specifically selected to suit the purposes of this study which investigates the changes in media-use and fashion across generations. The individuals that made up the sample were therefore selected because there is approximately fifteen to twenty years between each of us (ranging in age from 21 to 85), which provides a good variety across generations. To ensure that the research project was conducted ethically, each participant was provided with an informed consent form to sign (see Appendix 1), detailing the nature of the research (Cohen et al, 2001: 50). In addition, pseudonyms have been used to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

In order to gain an understanding of the participants, ethnography typically employs qualitative methods so as to enable the researcher "to penetrate beneath surface appearances and reveal the harder realities there concealed" (Woods, 1988: 91). I therefore decided to engage in qualitative research by means of interviews and self-reflexivity.

I conducted one-on-one, face-to-face interviews with my grandmother and her sister to gather data relating to their cultural identities, media usage and fashion sense. Unstructured interviews tend to be used when "one wishes to acquire unique, personalized information about how individuals view the world" (Cohen et al, 2001: 270). Although I wished to gain an in-depth understanding of each subject, I decided to structure each interview around a standard set of questions so as to make data organization and analysis more systematic. I therefore made use of semi-structured interviews which "promote an active, open-ended dialogue" but which employ an interview guide to ensure that certain questions and topics are covered (Deacon et al, 1999: 65). I adopted a flexible approach when interviewing by following up points or anecdotes that I believed were relevant to the research topic "as people do not answer in neat linear ways, they often make conceptual leaps" (Deacon et al, 1999: 69). In order to put the participants at ease, they were first asked general introductory questions and once a rapport had been established more detailed, complex questions were asked (Deacon et

al, 1999: 74). I was unable to interview my grandmother's niece in person as she currently resides in London. A set of interview questions were therefore e-mailed to her, to which she replied via e-mail. I asked her to respond again as I believed that some of her answers required clarification or elaboration.

In the global mediagraphy conducted by Rantanen (2005), she includes herself in the research such that she, the researcher, becomes one of the participants (Rantanen, 2005: 16). I have also decided to employ this method of self-reflexivity by including myself in my research project, as the youngest of four generations of women in my family. Ethnographic research using qualitative methods often encourages self-reflexivity, which involves the researcher 'writing' herself into the research (Machin, 2002: 88). According to Burawoy, global ethnographers are not left untouched by globalisation, "indeed [they] cannot be outside the global processes they study" which is why self-reflexivity is recommended when conducting a mediagraphy (2000: 4). The question guide which will be used in the interviews with the other participants will also be used as a guide for my self-reflection (see Appendix 2). A possible limitation of self-reflexivity is that it may be difficult, as the researcher, to remain unbiased. In an attempt to guard against the possibility of bias and to provide some distance between myself as the researcher and myself as the participant, I will use the third-person when analysing myself.

INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

The oldest participant in this project is my paternal grandmother, Lakshmi. Born in 1924 in Pietermaritzburg, 85 year old Lakshmi has lived in South Africa all her life and has travelled overseas to India and to the UK, both trips in the later years of her life. As one of ten children, Lakshmi left high school after she completed grade nine. She did not pursue a formal career as her time was spent caring for her family and running a household. As she grew up in a traditional Indian household, she can speak Telegu and Tamil in addition to English and Zulu.

The next participant in the study is Lakshmi's youngest sister, Suvali. Born in 1945, there are approximately twenty years between Lakshmi and Suvali. Like Lakshmi, Suvali was born in Pietermaritzburg and has spent most of her life living in South Africa. She has had the opportunity to travel more widely than Lakshmi, visiting India, Japan, France, Italy, Germany and Holland. She also spent five years living in the UK. She was married a few years after she matriculated and like Lakshmi she has spent her time raising her three children and maintaining a household.

Suvali's daughter, Maya, provides the next generation in this project. Born in Durban in 1970, 38 year old Maya has spent most of her life in South Africa. After receiving her Masters in Law, Maya worked as a legal academic, as well as a product developer for a financial services company. After she married, Maya moved to London and has spent the last eleven years living there. Out of the four participants, she has travelled the most to other countries including Spain, Germany, France, Italy, Turkey, New Zealand, Singapore and Morocco. She recently established her own fashion line which is currently being sold in a London boutique.

Sertanya (me) is the youngest participant in this project. Born in Durban in 1987, the 21 year old student has lived in South Africa her whole life. So far, she has only travelled abroad once when she visited America as a child. She hopes to be able to travel widely soon. She is not entirely sure what career path she will pursue but is interested in the field of arts and culture.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section shall now examine the data that was gathered using these methods. The findings will be discussed in relation to the concepts explored earlier in order to investigate the correlation between the theoretical concepts and the lived reality of the participants. Since reality is never clear-cut it is particularly challenging in this section to separate or categorize concepts. For the sake of coherence, however, the discussion will be structured around the three broad areas identified in the conceptual framework, namely identity, cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity. In certain instances, however, overlapping of these three areas will be unavoidable. To provide some sort of structure and consistency under each of the three areas, findings will be discussed starting with the oldest participant through to the youngest.

The Complexities of Identity: Starting in South Africa, Living in London, Imagining India

There is no neat or simple way to talk about identity because it is necessary to "question the assumption that identity is a fixed thing to be found […] rather than an entity to be possessed, identity is constituted through descriptions of ourselves with which we identify" (Barker, 1999: 9). The fact that this project is especially interested in cultural identity further complicates matters because, as Raymond Williams famously put it, culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Barker, 1999: 11). These complications surrounding the notion of cultural identity were revealed during the research process as the participants expressed the complexities of who they are.

Lakshmi: The Soapie-Watching Indian South African

Although Lakshmi has only visited India once in her life, she feels a powerful connection to this far-away land because its customs have been passed down to her from her mother. While she lives on the African continent, Lakshmi's daily life is infused with Indian traditions. Every day she prays according to the Hindu traditions that have been handed down over centuries, she cooks spicy Indian dishes and she still speaks Tamil and Telegu to some of her relatives because "They are the Indian languages, I can't lose them" (Lakshmi, 85). Lakshmi's Indian cultural identity is a classic example of "the idea of pastness" whereby "tradition appears as a coherent body of practice and customs handed down over generations" (Crang, 1998: 166). In other words, Lakshmi identifies with the Indian culture because she perceives it as her heritage.

While Lakshmi feels a strong bond to her Indian roots, she also acknowledges South Africa as the country she belongs to. Lakshmi identifies with two 'groups' – she does possess an Indian identity, yet simultaneously she feels a strong connection to her South African national identity. Lakshmi's dual identity supports the idea that "identities are always contradictory, made up out of partial fragments" (Grossberg, 2008: 91).

While it is obvious that Lakshmi possesses a dual identity, there is not a very strong or direct link between the media she consumes and how she defines herself. In terms of magazines, Lakshmi does not remember reading them until about 15 years ago. As a teenager and, later, as a young married woman living during Apartheid, there was always a shortage of money so the limited finances were not wasted on luxuries like magazines. Lakshmi also noted that magazines were not very popular amongst her generation when they were growing up. The only magazines she currently occasionally reads are the club-card magazines posted to her by local stores Clicks and Edgars because she is an account holder at both stores. While she enjoys reading these two magazines, neither has had a remarkable impact on her sense of self possibly because she has only been exposed to them in the latter part of her life and because she reads them very infrequently.

Similarly, television appears not to have made a huge impact on Lakshmi. It can be argued; however, that television has actually created a new type of culture that Lakshmi belongs to. The first access to television that Lakshmi had was during the early 1980s when the family that rented the lower storey of her house bought their own television set. The wife of the family downstairs would invite Lakshmi to watch American soap-operas (soapies) with her every evening. The soapie watching became a type of ritual, as the two women watched them together and discussed the plot twists. It can be argued that Lakshmi became assimilated into a type of soapie culture because "many jokes, phrases, expressions, and events heard and seen on television provide a common set of 'experience' for people" (Meyrowitz, 1985: 145). Even today, Lakshmi will occasionally discuss the events of *Days of our Lives* and *The Bold and the Beautiful* with her sisters and cousins. Therefore, while television may have not influenced her identity as an Indian South African, it has resulted in Lakshmi belonging to a strange type of virtual soapie culture.

In terms of cinema, the only time Lakshmi visited the cinema to watch a film was when she was a girl and lived within walking distance of the local cinema. Lakshmi remembers that when she visited the Grand Theatre to watch European and American films she was forced to sit separately from the white patrons. It was at times like these that Lakshmi says she felt distinctly Indian because the seating arrangements emphasised that aspect of her identity. When she attended the Indian cinema in town to watch Hindi and Tamil films, Lakshmi enjoyed having the freedom to sit anywhere. In analysing the connection between her cinema experiences and her cultural identity, it is interesting that for Lakshmi it was not so much the content of the films that were as important as the fact that where she was allowed to physically be in the cinema impacted on her sense of self. In the Grand Theatre Lakshmi was Indian because she had to be, but in the Indian theatre she was Indian because she wanted to be. This fight over identity epitomises "the struggles and shifts" people engage in as they attempt to negotiate who they are (Crang, 1998: 62).

Lakshmi's use of fashion as an expression of cultural identity will be discussed in more detail under the sections on homogeneity and heterogeneity. It is important to note here, however, that Lakshmi's media consumption has not directly influenced what she chooses to wear. Although she notices the clothes in the magazines she reads and although she likes to look at the clothes worn by the characters on the soapies she watches, this does not have any influence over how she chooses to dress:

I look at the clothes in the Edgars magazine but very seldom [do] they have [clothes] for my age. I don't like all this modern fashion with the sleeves cut off and backless. So I only look for the clothes when I go to the shops and have a chance to look around. (Lakshmi, 85)

For Lakshmi, the media does not play a central or direct role in constructing her sense of style. When she was younger, she and her sisters were influenced by the fashions they saw in local stores, rather than anything they saw in the media. This was probably because they had only limited access to media. With the help of her mother, Lakshmi would sew her own outfits based on the designs she had seen in shop windows. Although she does not sew her own clothes today, Lakshmi's fashion sense is still not influenced directly by the media. She prefers to visit the shops and view the clothes on offer there. This is the type of shopping she is accustomed to since she grew up making purchases at local markets where she would have to shop around the various stalls to find the most affordable items.

The next participant whose cultural identity will be discussed is Suvali. Although she and Lakshmi are sisters, they differ widely. The fact that there is approximately 20 years between them means that Suvali grew up in a world quite different from the one that Lakshmi experienced.

Suvali: The Traveller with a Fashionable Family Heritage

Like Lakshmi, Suvali also believes that she simultaneously has an Indian and a South African identity. While the former is her cultural heritage, the latter is the country she grew up in and where she raised her own children. But she also believes that her identity extends beyond simply being an Indian South African, to encompass something much wider:

I am an Indian and I'm proud of that, and I'm South African and I'm proud of that too. But I don't believe in putting a label on things. I'm open to other cultures…how else would I end up with the grandchildren [that] I have? (Suvali, 64)

Two of Suvali's children have married interracially so Suvali is the proud grandmother of three racially (and culturally) mixed grandchildren. Suvali's mixed family, coupled with her travels and the fact that she spent five years living in the United Kingdom, have all resulted in her adopting a broad and open approach to other cultures. This open approach also means that she does not like to simply pigeon-hole herself as an Indian living in South Africa. In fact, even before she had the opportunity to travel, Suvali grew up surrounded by other cultures. As a child she used to play with the other neighbourhood children who were not only Indian but also Black and Coloured. Thus, even in the 1950s, when the media were not as dominant as they are today, cultural interactions were occurring. It is important to remember that mediated "globalisation mainly extend[s] and accelerate[s] cultural tendencies that have long been in place" (Lull, 2000: 265).

As Suvali grew up, however, she did become exposed to more media which influenced her cultural identity to a certain degree. When she married in her 20s, there was more money available from her new family that allowed her to purchase magazines. Although Suvali cannot recall the specific magazines she read, she remembers that they tended to be house and design magazines from abroad. Today, she still enjoys reading these types of magazines, as well as women's magazines such as *Elle* and *Fairlady*. In terms of television, Suvali first had access to one in the late 1970s. She did not, however, spend much time watching television because she was too busy looking after her children and running a household. Today she has the time to watch as much television as she wishes to. She particularly enjoys watching documentary shows on The History Channel, BBC Knowledge, National Geographic and the Travel Channel. Although Suvali does not visit the cinema much today, it was a frequent pastime for her and her friends when they were teenagers. Suvali remembers walking to her local cinema in Pietermaritzburg to watch both Indian and Western films.

Like Lakshmi, Suvali's media consumption has not had a direct or concrete influence on her sense of cultural identity. Rather, the influence has been much more indirect and abstract. As Suvali grew up and began to be exposed to foreign media, she felt that her view of the world expanded:

When I read [these magazines] or watched American films I felt more knowledgeable about life. I felt like I was moving out of a small community and learning more about the world. You become open to anything. (Suvali, 64)

For Suvali, the influence of the media did not lead to any specific changes in how she viewed herself as an Indian South African. Rather, the change occurred on a more general level. Through the media, Suvali was exposed to new ways of life such that she felt open to what the world had to offer, instead of narrowly defining herself according to her cultural heritage and country of birth. Today, Suvali enjoys watching shows on the Travel Channel and National Geographic because this allows her 'access' to new places:

These days it's so expensive to travel…but you don't even have to travel anywhere, I like to just sit in the TV room and go to places on the Travel Channel. (Suvali, 64)

Suvali has managed to capture an essential aspect of mediated globalisation. In today's global world, the media provides access to far-off places, such that physical travel is not necessarily the only way to 'visit' new places and experience new cultures. Through television Suvali has become an "armchair global traveller" because she manages to cross the globe without leaving her house (Barker, 1999: 3).

Suvali's open approach to diverse cultures has influenced how she dresses but this will be discussed in greater detail later. What is important to mention here is that Suvali's love of fashion and appreciation for beautiful clothes has been largely influenced, not by the media, but by the legacy passed down in her family. As traditional Indian women, Suvali's mother and sisters all mastered the art of sewing, stitching and embroidery. Furthermore, this skill and artistry with clothes was truly a family legacy because Suvali's grandmother (who came to South Africa by sea) was originally from a small Indian village whose residents were renowned for their embroidery skills. Throughout her life, Suvali has enjoyed experimenting with fabrics to make creative outfits. She firmly believes that her creativity with fashion has been influenced not just by her Indian cultural identity but also specifically by her family's 'culture' of sewing.

While Suvali's Indian cultural identity laid the foundations for her love of clothing, her exposure to the media did contribute to her fashion sense. Suvali remembers reading fashion and design magazines when she was in her twenties, which provided her with ideas for colours and shapes in terms of outfits. She can also recall admiring and being inspired to re-create the beautiful outfits she saw in Western films worn by actresses such as Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor. The fact that Suvali actually remembers what these screen icons wore suggests that her fashion-sense was influenced by the media more than Lakshmi's was.

Maya: South African by Birth, Indian by Inheritance, Londoner by Experience

Suvali's daughter, Maya, possesses a cultural identity that is even more multi-faceted than her mother's and than Lakshmi's. Maya acknowledges her nationality as being South African but she believes that her cultural identity as an Indian was much more important to her when she was growing up:

As I was brought up during the apartheid era I would say that my nationality as a South African was/is less important to me than my cultural identity as an Indian - the sense of being 'Indian' was one that was enhanced by the apartheid state through their strange categorization of all people and I have never felt a 'national' patriotism. (Maya, 38)

Since Maya married and moved to London a few years after South Africa's first democratic election, she never really experienced life in post-apartheid South Africa. Unlike her mother, Suvali, and her aunt, Lakshmi, she does not feel proudly South African. Although Maya is proud of her Indian heritage she certainly does not view this as her complete cultural identity. She believes that having spent ten years living in a city like London has led to her having a complex and layered sense of her cultural self: "I live within a cosmopolitan society so I would say that I relate to a diverse group of people" (Maya, 38). For Maya, she is a South African by birth, an Indian by inheritance and a Londoner by experience. This layered identity, the fact that Maya simultaneously belongs to different groups or cultures, illustrates the point that identities are not clear or fixed, "identities are never completed, never finished; they are always […] in process" (Hall, 2000b: 47).

Although Maya's cultural identity has been affected by living abroad and by her travels to a variety of countries, her sense of self has also been influenced by her media consumption. Unlike Lakshmi and Suvali, Maya grew up in more affluent surroundings which allowed her to start consuming magazines in her early teenage years. She remembers reading both South African and foreign design and fashion magazines. Although she had access to television from her childhood, she was "never a big viewer of TV apart from current affairs, documentaries and musicals" (Maya, 38). In terms of the cinema, she remembers watching American films such as *The Jungle Book, The Wizard of Oz* and *Star Wars* when she was younger. As an older person, she prefers to watch European art films such as *Amelie, Kolya* and *Les Diabloques*. Like her mother, the influence of the media on Maya has been indirect in the sense that, on a general level, it broadened her view of the world and allowed her to move beyond the small town of Durban where she grew up. Maya was able to experience some of the world through the media even before she moved abroad.

Maya believes she has a very mixed cultural identity. Aside from the fact that she lives abroad and that she has married interracially, Maya's exposure to diverse cultural ideas is the result of her consuming global media products. Her multi-faceted cultural identity has certainly impacted on the way she dresses. Like Lakshmi and Suvali, more specific examples of Maya's fashion-sense will be provided later. What is interesting to note here, however, is that Maya, like Suvali, believes that her fashion-sense has been influenced largely by her family's culture of sewing. Although Maya admits that she enjoyed reading fashion magazines so she could be inspired in terms of colours and patterns, her love of fashion has been fostered by her mother and aunts who all sew, rather than by the media.

Sertanya: The Mixed Durbanite, the Global Youth

Like Maya, Sertanya also believes she has a multi-faceted identity. She believes that this identity is the result of being exposed to a myriad of cultural practices and ideas. The more ideas she is exposed to, the more her identity shifts and re-moulds itself because "identity can only be understood as process, as 'being' or 'becoming'" (Jenkins, 2004: 5). Sertanya believes that, currently, she lives in a mediated global world which has hugely influenced her sense of self. She thinks, however, that her mixed identity emerged as a young child, even before she was greatly exposed to the media. From the age of three she attended a Jewish pre-school where she had mostly white friends. Her earliest memories in terms of religion are not of Hindu religious practices, but of reciting Jewish prayers in a synagogue. By the time she was in primary school, she had more white Christian friends than Indian ones but she did experience a certain degree of Indian culture at home. During her high school years, Sertanya's friends were a diverse group of people in terms of race, religion and culture, including Indians, Blacks, Whites, Taiwanese, Germans, Italians, Hindus, Christians and Muslims. This was also the period when Sertanya began to feel proudly South African and it was also the time when she began to be interested in her Indian roots. Therefore, without even considering the influence of the media, Sertanya possessed a multi-faceted identity simply because she was exposed to and interacting with such diverse cultures.

Aside from this actual physical contact with others, Sertanya's sense of self has been greatly influenced by the media she consumes. Her cultural identity has been affected much more by the media than the other three participants. This is probably because she has grown up in a mediated world unlike the others who had time to forge a sense of self before they were greatly exposed to media. Sertanya first began reading magazines when she was a teenager. Aside from Time Sertanya enjoys reading women's lifestyle and fashion magazines. In terms of television, she loves the fact that her family has DSTV because this allows her to watch programmes from abroad. Aside from watching sitcoms and films, she enjoys MTV as well as documentary channels such as The History Channel and BBC Knowledge. Although she watches many films at home on the satellite movie channels, she also enjoys visiting the cinema with friends. The movies she enjoys watching include the latest Hollywood blockbusters or European art films.

Unlike the other three participants, Sertanya's sense of self has been more directly influenced by the media. She believes she is not only part of a South African culture or an Indian culture but that she also exists as part of a global youth culture. By consuming texts that are globally circulated, such as MTV music videos, Hollywood blockbuster films or the latest teen television series, Sertanya forms part of a group of youth who are globally dispersed but connected as a community via the media. Sertanya firmly believes that her cultural identity extends beyond her nationality as a South African and ethnicity as an Indian to encompass her sense of being a young individual in a global world. Sertanya's layered cultural identity suggests "the essence of culture as restless nomadic movement" (Tomlinson, 1999: 29). She is never simply defined by her membership to one particular culture or group because she simultaneously belongs to different groups.

Sertanya's mode of dress has been greatly influenced by her exposure to global media texts. This connection, between her media consumption and fashion-sense, will be explored in more detail along with the other participants in the following section. But to put it briefly, Sertanya believes that how she dresses has been influenced more by her belonging to a youth culture, than her identity as an Indian or a South African. And since this youth culture is created through the global media, it follows that her fashion sense has been affected by the global media

The Homogeneity and Heterogeneity Debates: More of the Same or a Unique Sense of Style?

In discussing each of the participants' cultural identities, certain issues related to cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity have been raised already. This section shall now specifically discuss questions of homogeneity and heterogeneity in relation to the participants' media use and fashion sense. Since the media consumption of each participant has been mentioned already they will not be described again in detail here. Rather the media consumption will be analysed in light of the cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity debates. I have chosen to discuss the notions of homogeneity and heterogeneity together for each participant because I believe these notions to be two faces of the same coin – they are so inter-linked it would be unwise to separate them especially when discussing the lived reality of individuals whose lives cannot always be neatly categorized and separated.

Lakshmi: Spanish Heels, Saris and Shawls

As a teenager, Lakshmi lived in a relatively small, closed-off community where she was taught to follow Indian traditions by her mother. It was surprising, therefore, to discover that as a teenager Lakshmi wore western-style dresses with Spanish heels. It would be easy to assume that this western mode of attire adopted by a traditional Indian girl was influenced by the media she was exposed to. On closer examination, however, this is not really the case. In terms of the three media that this project is specifically interested in, the only one Lakshmi had access to as a teenager was the cinema. Although Lakshmi cannot specifically recall the films she watched, many of them were from either America or Europe. The immediate assumption is that Lakshmi was exposed to Western films that led to her adopting standard, homogenised Western attire. This assumption, however, is incorrect. Firstly, Lakshmi was not only exposed to dominant Western media flows because she also used to watch many Indian films when she was younger. Secondly, the dresses that Lakshmi sewed and wore were modelled on the dresses displayed in local store windows, not on dresses Lakshmi had seen in the movies. So while Lakshmi may have watched Western films they were not the reason she wore Western fashions as a teenager. Furthermore, even though she dressed in a Western manner she still retained a very traditional Indian identity when she was younger, praying in the traditional Indian way, being taught to run an Indian household by her mother and speaking Indian languages.

When Lakshmi married she had to abandon her Western dresses and heels because it was necessary that she dressed like a proper Indian wife. She had to wear traditional Indian saris everyday, even when performing household duties like cooking and cleaning. Lakshmi remembers that it was very important as an Indian woman to be dressed in a proper sari with a whole collection of bangles on one's arms before serving food to the men in the family. Not dressing up properly was regarded as a lack of respect. This example illustrates how "culture influences the way we dress" because in every culture "certain limitations always exist that define what is appropriate dress" (Eicher et al, 2000: 40). This example also suggests that Lakshmi's mode of attire was influenced by traditional Indian gender expectations – she was meant to dress in a particular manner to symbolise her role as a good Indian women and a proper Indian wife. Lakshmi's dress sense during her married years was not influenced by the media she consumed (in fact, she did not have access to magazines, cinema or television during her marriage) but rather by the Indian culture she belonged to. Therefore, when Lakshmi was a young married woman, she dressed in a manner to express her traditional Indian identity which was closed off from the influence of the media.

Today, Lakshmi wears Western clothes the majority of the time in the form of dresses, skirts, and blouses. According to Lakshmi she now wears Western clothes because they are more comfortable and convenient compared to wearing a six metre long sari. While Lakshmi believes that her adoption of Western clothes is for practical reasons it is also likely that her increased exposure to Western media has influenced her to loosen her ties to formal, traditional Indian attire. I would argue that Lakshmi's media consumption has not directly influenced what she wears but rather indirectly pushed her towards adopting more relaxed Western outfits. By watching American soapies and reading English-medium magazines Lakshmi has become more comfortable

with living in a Western world. She no longer lives in a small, closed Indian community and has become more comfortable with wearing Western clothes.

Lakshmi's current mode of attire is not necessarily a case of her adopting homogenised Western fashions. She has not completely abandoned traditional Indian attire. When attending formal functions such as weddings or her grandchildren's graduations, she will proudly wear a sari. She also wears a sari when she visits her local ashram or temple to pray:

I have to wear a sari when I got to [the] ashram because it's respect for my religion, even if I go to the temple I must wear a sari because even though I don't live in India wearing a sari is my culture.

<div align="right">(Lakshmi, 85)</div>

Therefore, although Lakshmi wears Western clothes the majority of the time a process of cultural imperialism has not occurred because she has not lost her Indian culture. If anything, it is for the most special occasions, like weddings, and in the most important contexts, like religious settings, that Lakshmi chooses to dress in an Indian manner. In these situations Lakshmi wears a sari to signal her affiliation to Indian culture because "individuals use visual media to indicate to themselves and others whether they think they belong with another individual or group" (Cannon, 1998: 24).

Even though Lakshmi consumes mostly Western media this has not resulted in a complete Westernisation of her fashion-sense because her mode of dress often exhibits signs of cultural heterogeneity. Often, Lakshmi's physical appearance simultaneously incorporates Western and Indian elements. While she tends to wear Western blouses and long skirts, Lakshmi will often wear, over her outfits, shawls that have been sewn and embroidered in India. She also wears her hair in a traditional Indian manner everyday, in a plait which is then twisted around into a bun. The "intermingling, combining, fusion, melange" (Tomlinson, 1999: 141) of these various elements that make up Lakshmi's daily dress can be regarded as an expression of her hybrid identity as an Indian women living in South Africa consuming Western media.

Suvali: Mini-Skirts, Beehives and Indian Plaits

Like Lakshmi, Suvali consumed mostly Western media when she was younger and she still does today. In terms of magazines, television and cinema, the only non-Western texts she was exposed to when she was younger were Indian films. The magazines she reads today are either from overseas or are South African versions of overseas magazines, such as *Elle South Africa*. Most of the television programmes she watches on channels like CNN, BBC Knowledge and the History Channel are created in America or Europe. Similarly, most of the films she watches are from the West because she rarely views Bollywood films.

While Suvali consumes Western media, her identity has not become homogenised because she is still connected to her Indian roots. This is evident from the fact that she still prays in the traditional Hindu manner and is an expert at cooking Indian food. While an individual may be exposed to Western media this does not immediately result in their identities becoming homogenised. The media is, after all, only one of the forces that play a role in people's lives.

The complexities surrounding the fact that Suvali consumes Western media while still retaining a sense of being Indian are expressed in the way she dresses. Throughout her life Suvali has worn Western outfits. Like Lakshmi, she also grew up wearing dresses. As a young woman, however, Suvali dressed in more daring Western outfits than Lakshmi did. While Lakshmi had worn only long dresses with sleeves, Suvali wore short dresses, mini-skirts and sleeveless tops as a young woman. The reason for the differences in how the sisters dressed is that, while Lakshmi grew up as part of a conservative Indian community, Suvali grew up as part of a more liberal generation. Furthermore, Suvali believes that she and her friends were influenced by the stylish images they saw in the cinemas and on magazine pages. She can recall dressing up in the 1960s in mini-skirts, platform heels and beehive hairstyles because these were the trends depicted in the American and European media she consumed. Today, Suvali continues to wear Western clothes such as pants, skirts, blouses and dresses.

Despite her affinity to Western fashion, Suvali cannot be described as possessing a homogenised fashion sense. Like Lakshmi, her sense of style incorporates various cultural influences. While Suvali adopts Western attire most of the time she chooses to wear a sari if attending a special function, especially an Indian function. Her choice is based on the fact that at such Indian functions she wishes to "fit in and be part of the 'Indianess'

present at [these] functions" (Suvali, 64). So while Suvali may often wear Western clothes, in certain contexts she deliberately wears a sari to express her membership to Indian culture. After all, "the notion of identity involves two criteria of comparison between persons or things: similarity and difference" (Jenkins, 2004: 4). Suvali therefore wears a sari to Indian functions to express her conformity to Indian traditions.

Aside from wearing Indian attire to Indian functions, Suvali's fashion sense is not completely westernised because she blends Indian and Western elements to create her own unique style. The manner in which Suvali dressed for her wedding illustrates her mixed fashion sense. She wore the traditional heavily-beaded sari that is typically worn by an Indian bride. She also wore her hair in the traditional wedding style in a long plait entwined with flowers. However, while traditional Indian brides have their hair pulled straight back at the front Suvali desired a more contemporary look so she styled her hair into a beehive at the front. This fusion of old Indian style with more modern trends clearly suggests Suvali's hybrid fashion sense and is an example of "how people engage with media imagery to express themselves […] to construct their identities" (Lull, 2000: 167). Suvali's wedding hairstyle can be regarded as a type of indigenisation because she adopted the beehive, a global fashion trend, but literally re-shaped it to suit her Indian plait. Even today Suvali wears outfits inspired by different cultures, such as Western blouses, skirts made from Chinese fabric, and Indian-inspired shawls. Her fusion fashion sense led Suvali to quip that she "dresses across the globe in a week".

The differences in how Suvali dressed on her wedding day and how Lakshmi dressed on hers illustrates the impact the media can have on people. Unlike Suvali, Lakshmi dressed according to every traditional Indian marriage custom, which meant that she did not even choose her own sari because it was chosen for her by her future family. The fact that Suvali was exposed to more media than Lakshmi accounts for Suvali's more modern appearance on her wedding day. Suvali took a trend she had observed in the media, beehive hairstyles, and manipulated it to blend in with her Indian outfit. This idea, of images and ideas from the media being manipulated and re-shaped, will be discussed further in the following exploration of Maya's fashion sense.

Maya: The Sari-Cutting Hybrid Designer

Like her mother, Maya has mostly consumed Western media products during her lifetime. For example, when she was younger she enjoyed Hollywood blockbusters such as The Wizard of Oz and Star Wars. During her adult years she has enjoyed European art films such as *Amelie*. The magazines she reads include the European editions of *Vogue* and *Wallpaper,* both high-fashion magazines. The few television programmes she watches are made for American or European channels such as CNN, The Discovery Channel and The Travel Channel.

Although Maya has been exposed to mostly Western media products she strongly rejects the idea that her identity has been homogenised or Westernised. She refers to herself as "a cosmopolitan" because she feels that there are many cultural forces that have influenced her sense of self. The fact that she lives in London may lead to the assumption that she has been assimilated into an English way of life but this is certainly not the case. According to Maya, London is "a global city, not an English city". Most of the Londoners she knows are either from other European cities or from Asia or Africa. Thus, while Maya may live in England and consume mostly Western media this does not necessarily mean that she has become culturally homogenised: "I think having access to global media does influence one's identity but for me it doesn't do so in an acute sense" (Maya, 38). For Maya, being exposed to global media while growing up in South Africa did not have a homogenising effect, but rather simply expanded her view of the world and led to her being more open to a variety of cultural influences. These various cultural influences are evident in the manner in which Maya dresses.

Maya has worn Western outfits her entire life but, inspired by the creative sewing of her mother and aunts, she has always enjoyed re-working and manipulating the clothes she buys:

I was brought up by a very creative mother and aunts who made all my clothes and therefore I am very influenced by their sense of craft and artistry. It makes me very critical of products and my interaction with them. I am seriously fussy about clothes, when buying something there is always something I don't like about it. The haberdashery may be all wrong or I'll change a hemline, or reconstruct it in some way to make it individual to me. I don't think this is normal, is it? Perhaps I do have a passion for fashion! (Maya, 38).

While Maya does purchase Western clothes she always creatively modifies them to suit her own individual style because "the underlying unity of the fashion process in all cultural contexts […] is the manipulation of

appearance to enhance or maintain a positive self-image" (Cannon, 1998: 25). Her mode of dress can therefore not be regarded as homogenised because she always personalizes her purchases.

Furthermore, Maya's fashion sense often incorporates both Indian and Western elements. She recalls expressing her cosmopolitan identity when she was younger by wearing Indian sari silk blouses over short Western dresses. Her mode of attire on her wedding day also indicates her culturally diverse identity. Maya chose not to wear a traditional red beaded sari as she was more interested in dressing in a way that expressed her individuality rather than her conformity to cultural expectations. Instead of buying a red sari she bought silver organza material and draped it as a sari. Instead of wearing the traditional long plait, Maya chose to adopt a more contemporary look by simply leaving her hair down in a smooth and sleek hairstyle (such a hairstyle was made popular in the 1990s by actresses such as Jennifer Aniston on the hit American series Friends). The fact that Maya chose not to dress in the typical Indian manner does not suggest that her identity had been westernised. Rather, her mixed fashion choices suggest her complex multi-faceted identity. She draped the material she bought into the form of a sari because she did have a sense of affiliation to Indian culture. But she also adopted a more contemporary look because as part of a global media audience she had a very open, liberal view of the world and wished to express this through a modern wedding outfit. Maya's fusion wedding outfit illustrates how "as cultures come into contact with each other through processes such as colonialism or globalization, innovative items or ensembles of dress emerge […] People balance their own cultural traditions with the demands of a global society against their own desires to express individual tastes" (Eicher et al, 2000: 48).

As a fashion designer, Maya's creations also express a fusion of the Western with the Indian. The dresses she creates are Western in the sense that they tend to be sleeveless, short, fitted styles such as cocktail or shift dresses. A clear Indian influence is observable, however, because many of the dresses are made from cut-up saris. Even the dresses that are made from normal material are designed in bold jewel colours reminiscent of Indian outfits, such as peacock blue and magenta. Maya's designs are also inspired by Indian elements in other more subtle ways:

I love saris because when a sari is draped on [a woman] it sculpts the body like no other dress will. I think a lot of my attitude to design is based on the principles of draping fabric onto the body. (Maya, 38)

Maya's designs can be described as hybrid fashion because they incorporate a mix of different cultural influences. In a sense, her designs can be regarded as an example of globalisation because they blend global trends with local traditions. In this case, the global refers to the Western trends of dresses being short, fitted and sleeveless. The local refers to the Indian cultural dress traditions that have been passed down to Maya by her family. So while Maya grew up surrounded by Indian cultural influences she was also a consumer of Western media that exposed her to ideas from other parts of the world. These mixed ideas constantly re-shaped her identity "because the increasing traffic between cultures that the globalization process brings […] is accompanied by an intermingling of disembedded cultural practices producing new complex hybrid forms" (Tomlinson, 1999: 141). Maya's fusion fashion line is thus an expression of her cultural heterogeneity.

Sertanya: The Westernised Indian Made in China?

Like her cousin Maya, Sertanya also believes that her identity is more heterogeneous than homogenous. Despite her belief that her identity is influenced by diverse cultural forces, Sertanya consumes mostly Western media. In particular, the media texts she consumes are American. As a child the movies she watched at the cinema tended to be Disney films such as the animated Pocahontas and Beauty and the Beast. Today, most of the films Sertanya watches are mainstream Hollywood films such as the latest romantic comedies or popular blockbusters. The only non-American films that Sertanya has watched are European art films and a few Indian art films (she detests Bollywood). The magazines Sertanya reads, such as Glamour and Marie Claire, are South African versions of American or European magazines. In terms of television, most of the programmes that Sertanya watches are American such as Grey's Anatomy, Ugly Betty and Prison Break. Even the documentaries that she enjoys watching about far—off places such as India or Tibet are made by Western filmmakers for Western channels such as National Geographic.

It is clear from the above examples that there is a dominant flow of Western texts in terms of Sertanya's media consumption. She does believe that there is a large part of her identity that has been westernised because of her exposure to these media texts. Unlike her grandmother Lakshmi who grew up in a relatively closed-off community, Sertanya feels she has grown up in a much more 'open' world. She has not just grown

up surrounded by the culture of her family or local Durban community but also by a global youth culture created and communicated through the media. For this reason Sertanya often thinks that her identity as a young person comes before her identity as an Indian. She cannot speak or understand any Indian languages, does not like Indian media channels or texts and only started becoming interested in Indian culture a few years ago.

While it may appear that Sertanya's identity has been completely homogenised or westernised, this is not necessarily true. Despite the fact that Sertanya lives in a mediated world, there are institutions, other than the media, that play a role in her life. For example, growing up in an Indian family, even a very liberal one, means that Sertanya never truly perceives herself as completely Westernised because she always feels there is an Indian aspect, however small, that influences her sense of self. Her fashion sense, for example, illustrates that an "important characteristic of […] global mass culture is its peculiar form of homogenization. It is a homogenizing form of cultural representation, enormously absorptive of things as it were, but the homogenization is never absolutely complete" (Hall, 2000a: 28).

In order to understand how the process of cultural homogenisation is never complete or total in Sertanya's life, two points can be raised in terms of her mode of dress. First, although Sertanya mostly wears Western items of clothing the majority of these clothes are not actually produced in Western countries. To signal her membership to youth culture Sertanya tends to dress in clothes that are worn by young people around the globe, including jeans, t-shirts, short skirts and sleeveless tops. These casual, revealing clothes tend to be associated with American or European culture. The irony, however, is that the majority of these 'Western' clothes in Sertanya's cupboard are made in Asian countries such as China, Taiwan and Indonesia. Sertanya was particularly shocked to discover that her pair of Converse sneakers, a long-standing symbol of rebellious American youth culture, were in fact made in Vietnam. Sertanya believes that it is not really credible to describe her fashion sense as Westernised if the clothes she wears are actually made in various parts of the world.

Secondly, Sertanya believes that her fashion sense cannot be described as homogenised because she feels that her outfits tend to be hybridized. She is influenced by the Western youth fashion trends that she sees on channels such as MTV and in magazines such as Glamour but she often takes these trends and re-negotiates them. She does not blindly adopt what she sees in the media but rather manipulates the images shown to incorporate them into her own individual style. For example, while Sertanya may wear American-style jeans and a t-shirt she may choose to wear them with a pair of Indian beaded shoes. She also often wears Western outfits with belts or headbands made out of pieces of sari material and accessorised with colourful beaded Indian and African jewellery. Sertanya can be regarded as engaging in a process of creolisation when she dresses because she appropriates Western fashions but re-works them to include elements of her Indian cultural identity, as well as African elements inspired by her South African nationality.

Like Maya, Sertanya believes that her mode of dress incorporates so many different influences and elements because she herself is made up of so many different influences. Her multi-faceted, heterogeneous identity is the result of simultaneously belonging to a variety of groups including Indian, South African and mediated youth culture. It must be remembered that

As the world grows seemingly smaller through the improvement of communications […] the separation of cultures one from another is being challenged at the same time that awareness of other cultures is being heightened. The change in structure of society around the world is clearly visible in dress. (Eicher et al, 2000: 51)

Sertanya has grown up in a global world, exposed to a myriad of cultural ideas both through physical contact with diverse others and through the media so her hybrid identity is articulated through her mixed mode of attire. Since identity is always something which is constructed, items, such as clothing, are used to establish and convey this construction: "Identity, that is to say, comes from the outside not the inside; it is something we try or put on, not something we reveal or discover" (Frith, 2008: 122).

SOME THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

By researching four generations of women, the aim of this project has been to explore the links between the media, cultural identity and fashion sense, over the years. The study sought to investigate whether exposure to these three media forms has resulted in cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity amongst the participants and

consequently how each participant's sense of culture is expressed through dress. Before such questions could be answered, the relevant terminology was discussed under the three broad conceptual areas of identity, cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity. This was followed by an exploration of a few past studies concerned with fashion. Following this literature review was a methodology section that sought to clarify the paradigms, methodological approach and research methods employed in this project. Finally, the actual data was analysed and discussed in relation to the relevant concepts.

The analysis of results reveals a surprising number of similarities across the four generations. While it may be easy to assume that Sertanya, as the youngest participant who has grown up in a global world, has a more multi-faceted identity than the oldest participant, Lakshmi, this is not the reality. Each participant pointed out that their cultural identity is not limited to their Indian ethnicity. Even Lakshmi and Suvali who grew up without great access to the media indicated that they believe themselves to have dual identities as Indians and South Africans. Thus, complexities surrounding identity were present even before mediated globalisation. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that all four participants believe that their hybrid cultural identities are the result of not just the influence of the media. Each of them has been exposed to a variety of cultures whether through travel, living abroad or simply through direct interaction with diverse others. The point is that even in a global era, there are many factors, other than the media, that impact on people's sense of self.

This is not to suggest that the media exert no influence at all. The flow of media texts across the globe has certainly affected the participants to varying degrees. The influence of the media on the participants' cultural identities, however, tends to operate on a more indirect and general level. Sertanya was the only participant who thought that her exposure to magazines, television and cinema directly influenced her cultural identity by allowing her to belong to a global mediated youth culture. In terms of the other three participants, the media indirectly influenced their cultural identities by broadening their view of the world and their position in it, thereby moving them away from limited, narrow perceptions of themselves.

While all the participants consume mostly Western magazines, television programmes and films, these media texts have not resulted in a process of cultural imperialism and homogenisation. On the contrary, it can be argued that exposure to these texts has led to cultural heterogeneity amongst the participants. The media of magazines, television and cinema have allowed the participants to be exposed to a whole host of ideas, images and practices from across the globe. Rather than the end result being Westernisation, these various ideas and practices interact with the cultural influences already present in the participants lives (such as their Indian traditions), to produce cultural diversity and heterogeneity. There are differences in how this has occurred for each participant but those are detailed in the previous section. The general conclusion that can be drawn here is that exposure to the media of magazines, television and cinema has had a heterogenising effect, rather than a homogenising one, on each participant's cultural identity.

While Lakshmi, Suvali, Maya and Sertanya each possess their own unique fashion sense, the common factor is that each of them dresses to express who they believe they are because "in reaching the third millennium, we see an enormous variety of ways that humans dress themselves to communicate with others" (Eicher et al, 2000: xi). Each participant uses bodily attire to communicate their cultural identities by communicating their affiliation to certain groups. It is interesting to note that across all four generations fashion is used to express cultural hybridity. Once again there are obviously specific differences in terms of how each participant does this, but the important commonality is the creative use of dress to convey complex cultural heterogeneity.

It must be remembered that the above conclusions have been drawn based on research conducted with four generations of women from one family. This study was limited in terms of time and resources. So while interesting discoveries have been unearthed in this project regarding the four participants, a deeper and broader understanding of the connections between media, cultural identity and mode of attire can be achieved by conducting further research with more families. In fact, valuable insights regarding the influence of mediated globalisation on fashion sense can probably be gained by conducting a research project that simultaneously includes families of different cultural backgrounds. A greater understanding of the impact of mediated globalisation on cultural diversity could then be achieved.

In today's mediated world people are exposed to images, ideas and practices from across the globe. While it is possible, depending on the situation, that a certain amount of cultural homogenisation occurs, it is also important to bear in mind that globalisation can foster heterogeneity and hybridity by opening up a whole new world to people. Perhaps the only thing to be certain of is that "the trick today is to be culturally light on our feet. We live not in worlds composed of distinct socio-cultural influences which we experience in serial

fashion, but in shifting universes of cultural impulses that constantly require us to sort, synthesize, and create" (Lull, 2000: 268). While it is highly possible that the four participants in this study may continue to negotiate and re-work their cultural identities, one factor that will remain constant is their creative appropriations of fashion items to express their sense of self.

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